



CKEC Social Studies Teacher Leadership Network APRIL 2014



"Our Democratic Republic will not sustain unless students are aware of their changing cultural and physical environments; know the past; read, write, and think deeply; and act in ways that promote the common good." ~The College, Career and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography and History p. 5

CKEC Social Studies Teacher Leader Network - April 22nd meeting

--Introduction – *Today's Focus: How do I use classroom assessments and discussions to engage students in civic discourse and inquiry learning?*

Grade Band groups – HS: Kathy Swan & Nichole Caskey (side hallway), MS: Terry Rhodes & Kelly Clark (front room), Elem: Debbie Waggoner (main room)

--Investigating the C3 indicators for your grade band – *What does C3 mean for my grade?*

--Discussion of Classroom Assessment in Social Studies – *How do I use Socratic Seminar as a tool for civic discourse in the classroom?*

--Using the Beyond the Bubble Materials to Analyze student work – *Does the student work reflect the C3 indicators and show evidence of student learning?*

LUNCH – What is our plan for sharing social studies professional learning across our district?

Afternoon Mini- Sessions –

-- Text-Dependent questions – grade band examples / Liz Tronoski & Kelly Clark (front room-(HS>Elem>MS)

-- Compelling questions take 2 - Follow-up practice writing compelling questions / Kathy Swan & Nichole Caskey (side hallway- Elem>MS>HS)

-- Balanced assessment in Social Studies – engaging students in self-reflection & goal setting / Debbie Waggoner & Terry Rhodes (main room-MS>HS>Elem)

CKEC Social Studies Network Facilitators

- **Debbie Waggoner**, debbie.waggoner@education.ky.gov KDE/CKEC Instructional Specialist – Math & Social Studies Emphasis
- **Kathy Swan**, kswan@uky.edu Social Studies Education Associate Professor – University of Kentucky
- **Nichole Caskey**, nichole.caskey2@harrison.kyschools.us HS Social Studies Teacher - Harrison County Schools
- **Terry Rhodes**, terry.rhodes@education.ky.gov KDE/CKEC Instructional Specialist – Science & Social Studies Emphasis
- **Kelly Clark**, kelly.clark@education.k.gov KDE Literacy Consultant

Today's Materials can be accessed at:

www.debbiewaggoner.com/apr-2014-social-studies.html



Exploring the College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework

Work together with your team to analyze your assigned section of the C3 Framework Indicators from the list below. Reflect upon the indicators and your own background experience to brainstorm how each may be applied in classroom practice.

- A. Dimension 1 Experts Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries (pgs 23-27)
- B. Dimension 2 Experts Civics (pgs 31-34)
- C. Dimension 2 Experts Economics (pgs 35-39)
- D. Dimension 2 Experts Geography (pgs 40-44)
- E. Dimension 2 Experts History (pgs 45-51)
- F. Dimension 3 Experts Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence (pgs 53-57)
- G. Dimension 4 Experts Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action (pgs 59-64)

As you discuss the document, record intended impacts on teaching and learning in the chart below. Highlight connections to the *TPGES Framework for Teaching*. Record group ideas on large chart paper for gallery walk.

Impact on Teaching	Impact on Learning
<i>Teachers will...</i>	<i>Students will...</i>

Can Assessment Improve Learning? Thoughts on the C3 Framework

Bruce VanSledright

The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards charts a bold new path, which differs in a number of ways from standards and frameworks of the past. Its pivotal idea is that deep understanding of the sociocultural world—a key objective of a social studies learning experience in school—depends heavily on inviting children and adolescents to investigate, inquire into, and build knowledge about that world. Its design and message displace the old approach that turned on an image of learners holding passive acquisition roles in the face of other people's understandings. Instead, if pursued as developed, the C3 Framework asks learners to engage in actively participating in their own knowledge growth under the expert tutelage and guidance of social studies teachers.

The design and structure of the C3 Framework is deeply rooted in decades of research on how children and adolescents learn.¹ Those who have conducted empirical studies on that learning process have noted repeatedly that, if deep understanding is the goal, children and adolescents must ask questions about what they do not understand, embark on an investigative journey that begins to address those questions, explore resources for learning, develop evidence-based understandings, and be able to communicate them cogently and coherently. Because they are novices, children and adolescents need guides and facilitators in the form of teachers who assist and help to discipline and focus the process in order to insure success.

With some exceptions, this has not been what we typically do, nor is it what we do today. Rather, we ask learners to sit much more passively as we adults tell them how things are, how the sociocultural world works. We ask them to trust that we are telling them

My point here is to argue that this practice is a deeply flawed effort, uneductive at best and fundamentally irresponsible at worst, particularly if deep understanding is the goal. To understand, students need to learn how to question, to think, to investigate the sociocultural world, to that in disciplined ways, and to communicate what they understand in defensible forms. They need to have substantial practice at this enterprise. That practice will take time. The C3 Framework recognizes this concern and is structured to provide guidance as a means of steering around it. What it does not speak to quite as clearly is that the remedy involves at least two major accompanying changes.

One is a change in social studies state content standards and their indicators, refocusing them around rich questions and reducing their breadth at any given grade level. The second involves approaches to assessment. The latter change is the focus of my comments here.

New Framework, New Assessments

The approach to assessment that I suggest is based upon the need to move away from testing and toward assessment. It coheres closely with the design of the C3 Framework, and in fact, I would maintain that it is necessitated by that design. Broadly speaking, it involves shifting the conversation away from tests as a means of sorting and ranking students and towards embracing

assessment as a means of educating in social studies.² The approach I outline is a classroom-based, teaching and learning approach. Some refer to this as formative assessment. I will call it diagnostic performance assessment; as I proceed, I hope to make the meaning of that concept clear.

The suggestions I make, although geared toward classrooms and close to teaching and learning in those types of contexts, apply more broadly to the way states assess social studies learning. For example, the state of Maryland accomplished this feat for a decade prior to the inception of No Child Left Behind. The approach was called The Maryland State Performance Assessment Program (MSPA).³ It was designed to ask children and adolescents to show how well they understood what they had learned through experiences in which they performed them, individually and sometimes in small groups.

An Assessment Structure

The design and administration of diagnostic performance assessments for classroom use should be based on a structure that supports the dimensions and flow of the C3 Framework. My suggestion here follows principles outlined by a group of scholars commissioned by the National Research Council to generate advice about constructing assessments that produce the best evidence possible about what students know and what they could do with that knowledge.⁴ The last clause is important. Knowledge by itself can be rather shallow. It matters most when we can put it into action and accomplish brilliant things with it. It represents an authentic measure of what we know. Traditional and typical testing approaches are flawed precisely because they miss this point. They test for bits of knowledge divorced from the powerful and rich ways in which knowledge enables us to think clearly, act, and critically and reflectively navigate our worlds. In many ways these tests tell us little more than whether or not learners can read and comprehend

and memorize. They tell us precious little about a learner's capabilities. In contrast, the design of the C3 Framework is all about growing learners' capabilities.

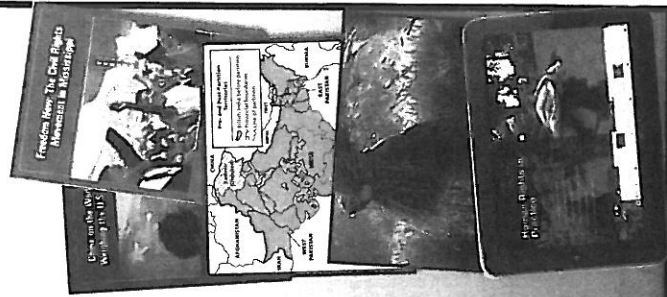
The assessment structure has three interconnected parts: cognition, observation, and interpretation. They form the three pillars upon which strong assessments are built. Assessment begins with the cognition pillar. Cognition refers to the thinking learners need to do in order

capacities farther. That is what much of a social education is about; it frames a good share of the work of social studies teachers.

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the question, along with the sorts of concepts (e.g., change over time, evidence, historical significance, and context) they would need to understand and be able to apply to it. Fitting these pieces together would require a theory of how students would (a) pose the question and search out sources to address it; (b) read, think strategically, and use concepts to make sense; (c) draw evidence from the sources in order to make claims of understanding; and (d) communicate those understandings. The research literature on learning history is useful here as a source for drawing up a robust theory of cognition in history.⁶ All of these portions of cognition and how they fit together, of course, would frame how this question would be investigated and taught.

Observation refers to the way in which diagnostic performance-assessment tasks would be designed to observe learning in action. We cannot see learning or cognition take place in the mind; all we can see at present are their proxies.



course, then it would be important to know something about the kind of thinking of which eighth graders are capable in addressing this question. We also need to know about the kinds of resources necessary to assist these students in broaching

Therefore, we need tasks that allow learners to display for us how they think and understand. If assessment is to give us diagnostic power, we must have tasks that require *both* displays of thinking and the understandings that derive from them. These tasks can take on myriad forms, from the DBQ-essay response, to constructing a small website that details the learning process and the evidence-based claims advanced to address a question, to an oral presentation in class, or a blog.⁷

Once observations are complete, we effectively hold evidence of student thinking and understanding (or its absence) that must be interpreted consistently, signaling the introduction of the interpretation pillar. Therefore, we need interpretive tools, often referred to as rubrics. Rubrics must be linked to the theory of cognition we began with. Rubrics must gauge thinking processes, and the concepts required to do so, as well as the understandings of the question (i.e., claims students make). They must be robust and reasonably sensitive to both the thinking processes and the goals of those processes. I cannot overstate how important it is to develop and

dence of student learning, and problems and impasses to that learning. They expose where little learning has taken place either in thinking capability, subsequent understanding, or both. Equipped with this evidence, we are then better able to diagnose where the problems are, and why learning breaks down. This allows for opportunities to adjust teaching practices, reteach, and then reassess in an ongoing, cyclical effort to improve learner's capabilities to think and understand, in this case historically, but also in other social studies subjects.

The most apt analogy that comes to mind is from medicine. Serious physical maladies require treatment. Doctors assess patients to diagnose the problem largely because the problem's source is often invisible. The assessment data serve as evidence for a diagnosis and for prescribing a treatment. The treatment, tailored to the patient, arrests the malady. In my foregoing example, the same set of assessment-diagnosis-treatment-reassessment principles and cycles are at work, only in a classroom context. The cycles begin with a deep and strong grasp of what it means to learn social studies. The C3 Framework attempts to lay out

use sharp, sensitive rubrics that are tied as closely as possible to the cognition pillar. The C3 Framework contains a number of indicators in the History section of the document (Tables 20-23) that could serve as the basis for designing rubrics.⁸ The numerous tables in the C3 Framework used to cross-reference the indicators of the Common Core Standards for English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies can also be useful.⁹

Table 1 contains a sample rubric for one of the indicators for high school history in the C3 Framework:

D2.His.11.9-12. Critique the usefulness of historical sources based on their maker, date, place of origin, intended audience, and purpose.

This indicator requires identification of the document, the correct attribution of the document to its author, and the identification of the perspective of the author.

If rubrics are thorough, robust, and applied consistently, they generate evi-

Table 1. Sample Rubric for Indicator D2.His.11.9-12*

Identification: Identifying an Account	Attribution: Attributing an Account to an Author	Perspective: Assessing Author's Perspective
<p>3 Clearly and correctly identifies the account, dates it, and speaks to its origins</p> <p>2 Correctly identifies the account, adds the date, but does not note the origin</p> <p>1 Only correctly states the account's identification by name</p> <p>0 Does not identify the account or provides a mistaken identity</p>	<p>3 Attributes the account to the correct author and speaks to who the author is</p> <p>2 Only notes the correct author</p> <p>1 Notes an incorrect author</p> <p>0 Does not attribute the account</p>	<p>3 Clearly describes the author's perspective using context-embedded cues from the text (or painting, photo, etc.)</p> <p>2 Describes the author's perspective, but without noting any context cues</p> <p>1 Notes a perspective but misses details and/or appears to misinterpret the author</p> <p>0 Neglects to assess the author's perspective</p>

*The indicator is in *College, Career, and Civic Life (CC) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: State Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History*, 48. The C3 Frameworks are accessible online at www.socialstudies.org/. The rubric is adapted from Bruce A. VanSledright, *Assessing Historical Thinking and Understanding: Innovative Designs for New Standards* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 94.

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clearly and concisely what that learning looks like and how to teach to it. It presents a powerful guide. We need powerful assessments to assist in bringing it all together. **9**

Notes

1. For example, see the research reviews in *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education*, eds. Linda S. Levack and Cynthia A. Tyson (New York: Routledge, 2008).
2. It is entirely unclear what educative effect this sorting and ranking has. Policy makers have argued that it would drive better teaching practice. Legislation such as No Child Left Behind was built around testing as a means of driving improved practice, at least in rhetoric. However, policy analysts, for instance, who have carefully studied such tests-as-leverage approaches, remark on how little real influence they have on improving learning or teaching. Children are still left behind for many of the reasons cited here in our commentary. This, too, see David K. Collier and Sam Marshall, *The Ordeal of English: Deaf Education, Regulation, and the School?* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009).
3. For more on this program, see www.irsdp.state.edu/irsdp/irsdp-implementation.html
4. James W. Pellegrino, Naomi Chudovsky, and Robert Glaser, eds., *Knowing What Students Know: The Structure and Design of Educational Assessment* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press, 2001).

5. National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS), *College, Career, and Civic Life (CC3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: State Guidelines for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* (Silver Spring, Md.: NCSS, 2013), 66-68, 72, 76, and 81. Accessible online at www.ncss.org/cc3

6. See, for example, reviews of this literature by Kerth C. Barton, "Research On Students' Ideas About History," in *Handbook of Research in Social Studies Education*, 239-258; David Hicks, Stephanie van Haver, Peter Doehline, and Phillip VanFossen, "Learning Social Studies: An Evidence-based Approach," in *AJZL Educational Psychology Handbook, Vol. 3: Application to Learning and Teaching*, eds. Karen Harris, Steve Graham, and Tim Urdan (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2012), 283-307, and especially the explanation of Peter Lee, "Putting History in Practice: Understanding History in How Students Learn History," in *Handbook of Educational Psychology*, eds. M. Swanson, Doreen and John Beardsford (Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press), 31-78.

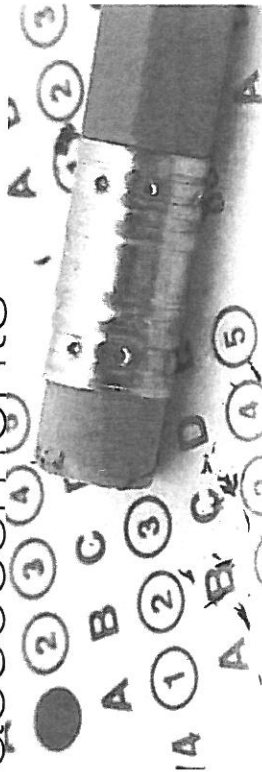
7. In history, examples of such tasks can be found at <http://irispes.com/2013/05/08/assessment-questions-for-social-studies/> and <http://www.irsdp.state.edu/irsdp/irsdp-implementation.html>. For more detail in Bruce A. VanSledright, *Assessing Historical Thinking and Understanding: Innovative Designs for New Standards* (New York: Routledge, 2014). This latter volume integrates some of the indicators of the historical literacy strands of the Common Core State Standards in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

8. *College, Career, and Civic Life (CC3) Framework for*

Social Studies State Standards: State Guidelines for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History, 46-49

9. Sample rubrics can also be found at the sources cited in Note 7. For additional guidance, see also the work of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium at www.smarterbalanced.org/sample-1001, and reformer David Chalmers Monte Sam, "What Makes a Good History Essay? Assessing Historical Aspects of Argumentative Writing," *Social Education* 76 (November/December, 2012), 294-298.

Beyond the bubble in history/social studies assessments



To prepare students for assessments tied to the Common Core, teachers need tools and tests that help students analyze primary and secondary sources and develop written historical arguments.

By Joel Breakstone, Mark Smith, and Sam Wineburg

The wait is over. The Common Core State Standards have arrived in public schools. Like a long-awaited Hollywood blockbuster, the Common Core has been the subject of intense anticipation, speculation, and scrutiny. Teachers and administrators hurried to get ready. A mini-industry of how-to guides, curriculum maps, and professional development workshops has sprouted. Yet, despite all this effort and the welcome focus on literacy, teachers of history/social studies still lack adequate resources to implement these standards. The biggest trouble spot is assessment.

The Common Core introduces ambitious goals for student learning. In history/social studies, students are expected to analyze primary and secondary sources, cite textual evidence to support arguments, consider the influence of an author's perspective, corroborate different sources, and develop written historical arguments — crucial skills if students are to succeed in college and beyond. They also represent a radical turn from what was emphasized during a decade of relentless standardized testing. But if students are to master these skills, teachers need tools to monitor growth, identify where students are having trouble, and figure out how best to help them. What tools do teachers have to do this?

JOEL BREAKSTONE and **MARK SMITH** are codirectors of the Teaching with Primary Sources program, and **SAM WINEBURG** (wineburg@stanford.edu) is the Margaret Jacks Professor of education and history, all at Stanford University, Stanford, Calif.

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Multiple-choice tests continue to dominate assessment across all subjects, but especially in history (Martín, Maldonado, Schneider, & Smith, 2011). It's easy to understand the affinity for multiple-choice tests: They're quick and inexpensive, and the number-right score provides a seductive (if false) sense of precision. But expecting multiple-choice tests to measure sophisticated cognitive capacities is like using a pocket-knife to do surgery. Multiple-choice questions are perhaps suited to measure aspects of factual recall, but they are ineffective for gauging the higher-order thinking demanded by the Common Core.

If students are to master analytical skills, teachers need tools to monitor growth, identify where students are having trouble, and figure out how best to help them.

But this doesn't stop state departments of education from trying to use them, often with absurd results. Consider this standard from California's History/Social Science Framework. It asks students to "interpret past events and issues within the context of an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present day norms and values" (California State Department of Education, 1998, p. 41). Historians refer to this as the ability to overcome presentism (Hunt, 2002), seeing beyond our brief lifetime into the expanse of human history and how people in the past conceived of their world.

Now, consider an item used to measure this understanding on California's year-end state test:

- Which was one outcome of World War II?
- A. England and France increased their overseas possessions.
 - B. The communists gained control over most of Western Europe.
 - C. Japan and Germany became dominant military powers in their regions.
 - D. The Soviet Union emerged as an international superpower. (California State Department of Education, 2009, p. 23)

Strong students will readily identify D as the correct answer, but what happened to interpretation? Or placing events in context? What happened, in short, to *thinking*? If we want students to develop the skills laid out in the Common Core, it makes little sense to ask them to pick facts from a bounded list of dubious distracters.

But what are the alternatives? In history/social studies, the most highly touted one is the document-based question made famous by the College Board's

Advanced Placement Program. Widely known by its acronym, the DBQ asks students to read 10 to 12 documents, formulate a thesis on their basis, plan an argumentative essay, compose that essay, and then proofread it for clarity, coherence, and correctness—all in one hour. To its credit, the DBQ calls on many of the literacy skills identified by the Common Core: the ability to read multiple sources, evaluate claims, and mount arguments using evidence.

Still, given all of these moving parts, it is unclear what, exactly, the DBQ measures. Is it students' ability to engage in historical thinking and arrive at a defensible thesis? Their ability to sort through and organize disparate documents? Or their ability to express themselves in writing while wiping beads of sweat from their brows under timed conditions? Clearly, the DBQ is a worthy writing task. But is it the best tool for gauging skills like those identified by the Common Core: "attending to the . . . date and origin of the information" in a source, or identifying "aspects of a text that reveal an author's point of view or purpose" (National Governors Association/Council of Chief State School Officers, 2010, p. 61)?

In one of the few studies that actually examined how students approached the DBQ, Katherine McCarthy Young and Gaea Leinhardt (1998) found that students often raided documents for appropriate quotes and facts but failed to analyze them as historical evidence. If students struggle with this college-level task, pinpointing why is hard to do since so many things are going on simultaneously. Where are the focused assessments that can determine student needs and help them build skills to succeed on a DBQ?

History assessments of thinking

When we surveyed the available options, we were struck by the chasm between the rote recall demanded by multiple-choice tests and the complex orchestration of skills required by a DBQ. And, lest we forget, before students can analyze 10 documents, they must be able to analyze one. Where are the assessments for that?

With support from the Library of Congress's Teaching with Primary Sources Program (www.loc.gov/teachers/tps/), we set out to create short, focused tasks that ask students to analyze documents from the Library's vast collection of letters, books, photographs, prints, speeches, interviews, radio broadcasts, and film clips. In partnership with the San Francisco (Calif.) Unified School District and Lincoln (Neb.) Public Schools, we have spent two years constructing, piloting, and revising assessments that provide teachers with new options. We call our exercises History Assessments of Thinking, or HATs. Each HAT asks students to consider his-

- 2) Before the Rural Electrification Act of 1936, less than 10% of rural America had electricity.
- 3) The 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote, was passed only one year before this letter was written.
- 4) At the time of Mrs. Lathrop's letter, less than 5% of American women were college graduates.

While each statement is true, students must choose the two that can help them determine if Lathrop was a typical American woman of the 1920s. Unlike a multiple-choice item, students must explain their reasoning in writing—a harder task than it might seem.

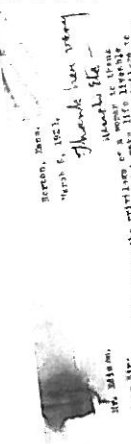
Many students have trouble figuring out which statements place Lathrop in the context of her time. Some alight on inconsequential details: "Mrs. Lathrop, who claims to have graduated from college, should have known that it was not Edison that invented the electric range, but Westinghouse." Another wrote, "George Westinghouse invented the electric range, not Thomas Edison. If she was a typical 1920s woman, she would have known that. Therefore, she's atypical."

Other students are better able to set Lathrop against the backdrop of the times. As one student wrote, "Fact 4 says that less than 5% of American women were college graduates in the 1920s. Mrs. Lathrop writes in her letter that she is a college graduate, making her atypical of American women in the 1920s." Some students strengthened their answers with specific examples from the letter: "Fact 2 states that less than 10% of rural America had electricity before the Rural Electrification Act of 1936. This letter was written in 1921, which leads to the assumption that Mrs. Lathrop is atypical because she lists many examples of her use of electricity, such as an electric curling iron, electric lighting, and an electric dishwasher." This student rightly questions whether Lathrop's expensive appliances were the norm in rural Kansas.

If students interpret the document through the lens of its time and place and provide a clear rationale for their answer, teachers can move on to more complex tasks. If students struggle, their short written responses give teachers clues about where to go next.

Flexibly assessing student understanding

The letter to Edison is an example of an assessment that focuses on historical context and students' ability to make, in the language of the Common Core, "an argument focused on discipline-specific content" (NGA/CSSO, 2010, p. 64). But there



It is not always the privilege of a woman to thank personally the inventor of articles which make life trouble for her sex. . . I am a college graduate and probably my husband is one of the best known surgeons between Topoka and Denver. . . [Our] houses is lighted by electricity. I cook on a Westinghouse electric range, wash dishes in an electric dish washer. An electric fan even helps to distribute heat all over the house. . . I wash clothes in an electric machine and iron on an electric mangle and with an electric iron. . . I rest, take an electric massage and curl my hair on an electric iron.

Please accept the thanks Mr. Edison of one truly appreciative woman. I know I am only one of many under the same debt of gratitude to you.

After reading the letter, students are presented with four facts:

- 1) George Westinghouse invented the electric range, not Thomas Edison.



are many other aspects of historical understanding. Teachers need a variety of options to monitor student progress across the full spectrum of content and skill.

Before students can analyze 10 documents, they must be able to analyze one. Where are the assessments for that?

Our assessments seek to address these needs. Consider a HAT that presents students with two letters drawn from the archives of the NAACP. Letter A references the President's reluctance to intervene at the state level to stop the brutal lynching of blacks. Letter B describes the challenges faced by black children in a previously all-white school. The dates are removed from both letters, leaving students to answer a key question: Which was written first? Instead of emphasizing the rote memorization of particular dates, this task taps into whether students can interpret documents as well as understand key components of the Civil Rights Movement.

The Power That Shaped the Nation

STATE PRESS

Journal Entry

Dear Mr. White:

...

Even a two-line response provides a window into student thinking. Some students placed letter B before letter A, arguing that the integration of previously all-white schools prompted aggrieved whites to lynch blacks. Such a claim has a certain logical appeal. But it's wrong. These students lack an understanding of the narrative arc in the struggle for racial equality (by the time the Supreme Court ruled to desegregate schools in the 1950s, lynching had been virtually eradicated).

A different type of HAT addresses a Common Core expectation that students will consider a document's date and origin when making judgments about

its trustworthiness (NGA/CSSO, 2010, p. 61). Students are presented with an image of the first Thanksgiving, painted in 1921, and must explain whether it would be useful to historians trying to reconstruct relations between Pilgrims and Indians in 1621. A 311-year gap separates the painting from the event. Yet many students skip over this information entirely. Rather than considering the three intervening centuries, ample time for distortions, myths, and legends to seep into collective memory, many students focus exclusively on the painting's rich details, never considering its attribution. One wrote, "You can see how they are interacting with each other. Without any picture, you couldn't really see how Wampanoag Indians and the Pilgrims acted." Other students, however, demonstrated a firm understanding of the importance of a document's date: "This painting was drawn 311 years after the actual event happened. There is no evidence of historical accuracy, as we do not know if the artist did research before painting this, or if he just drew what is a stereotypical Pilgrim and Indian painting." In both cases, the students' written responses provide teachers with information that informs future instruction.

This painting was drawn 311 years after the actual event happened. There is no evidence of historical accuracy, as we do not know if the artist did research before painting this, or if he just drew what is a stereotypical Pilgrim and Indian painting.

We know that effective formative assessment requires continually monitoring student progress. If students do not master a particular concept, teachers can revisit it to assess students again. To do this well, students may need to complete multiple versions of the same type of assessment. To that end, and to give teachers maximum flexibility, we have created parallel versions of each HAT that contain documents from different eras.

Conclusion

We have long understood that the form and content of tests profoundly influence the type of classroom instruction that students receive (Frederiksen,

1984; Madaus, Russell, & Higgins, 2009). If we want students to achieve the benchmarks set out in the Common Core State Standards, then we need assessments that are aligned to these skills. The educational community has shown that it can produce high-quality standards documents that lay out inspiring and worthy educational goals. But without concrete tools that assess student progress toward those goals, this new round of standards, like previous rounds, may founder on the shoals of rhetoric and verbiage. HATs will not solve this problem. But they may help ignite our creativity so that we can develop effective, efficient, and worthy tools for assessing student understanding.

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How to Create and Use Socratic Seminars

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Definition of Socratic Seminars

A Socratic Seminar is a scholarly discussion of an essential question in which student opinions are shared, proven, refuted, and refined through dialogue with other students. In classes of more than fifteen students, the fishbowl format for Socratic seminars should be used. In this format, the teacher or seminar leader facilitates the discussion. Only half the class, seated in an inner circle, participates in the discussion at one time. The other half of the class, seated in an outer circle, consists of the students who act as observers and coaches. Every student's participation is graded.

Purpose of Socratic Seminars

In a Socratic Seminar, participants seek to answer an essential question and gain deeper understanding of laws, ideas, issues, values, and/or principles presented in a text or texts through rigorous and thoughtful dialogue

Advantages of Socratic Seminars

- Provides opportunities for critical readings of texts
- Teaches respect for diverse ideas, people, and practices
- Enhances students' knowledge and research base
- Creates a community of inquiry
- Develops critical thinking, problem solving, speaking, and listening skills
- Clarifies one's ideas, ethics and values
- Maximizes student participation
- Encourages divergent thinking

Steps for Socratic Seminars

Preparation:

- Prior to the discussion, the teacher will select an appropriate text. The text must be complex and rich in ideas that promote thinking and discussion. Readings in literature, history, science, math, health, and philosophy or works of art or music may be used.
- All students will read the text prior to the discussion.
- The teacher will develop the essential or opening question for the discussion. An effective opening question arises from genuine curiosity on the part of the teacher and/or the participants, has no single “right” answer, is framed to generate dialogue leading to greater understanding of the ideas in the text, and can best be answered by reference to the text.
- The teacher may share all possible discussion questions with students before the seminar or the teacher may share only one question before the seminar starts, depending on the length of the text, complexity of the discussion question(s) and ideas presented in the text, and the time allotted for the discussion.
- Prior to the discussion, the teacher must provide adequate time for all students to record the essential question, develop their answer, and identify support for the answer.

Pre-Conference:

- Prior to the seminar, the teacher will determine which students will be inner circle participants and will assign each participant a coach from the outer circle. The teacher should consider students’ thinking, listening, speaking, and reading skills when pairing students.
- Just before the seminar each participant and his or her coach will meet for a pre-conference to discuss the participant's goals for the discussion. The teacher may allow a few minutes of informal discussion between participants and their coaches in order to build some confidence in the participant’s ideas before the seminar.

Seminar:

- Students sit in one of two circles (inner circle for participants, outer circle for coaches).
- Teacher poses the essential or opening question.
- The teacher may need to ask follow up questions to lead the participants to greater understanding of the text.
- Students respond to the question orally or in writing.
- Teacher facilitates the seminar discussion by guiding students to a deeper and clarified consideration of the ideas of the text, a respect for varying points of view, and adherence to and respect for the seminar process.
- Students cite evidence from the text, ask questions, speak, listen, make connections, and add insight or new knowledge to discuss their point of view in regards to the opening question.

- Teacher takes notes for evaluative purposes but provides no verbal or nonverbal feedback that either affirms or challenges what the students say. The teacher may ask follow-up questions; however, teacher questions are used sparingly and deliberately.
- When satisfied that the opening question has been thoroughly explored, the teacher asks one or more additional questions to examine central points of the text.
- Students may pose new questions when the discussion is exhausted. New questions posed must relate to students' ideas and contributions in response to the initial essential question.
- Once the text has been explored thoroughly the teacher may ask a closing question, which is derived from the text but which seeks to have students apply the topic to their own lives or the world.
- The teacher will thank students for their participation and summarize the main ideas and concepts examined during the discussion.

Post-Conference:

- After the discussion, the coaches provide feedback to the participants to acknowledge their strengths and identify their weaknesses in a post-conference.
- The teacher will grade each coach based on his or her written and oral feedback to the participant.

Rules and Roles for Socratic Seminars

The Participants:

- May only participate in the discussion if they have read the selection
- Must support their opinions with evidence from the text
- May speak at any time during the seminar with respect for the other participants
- May whisper with their coaches if the teacher allows it
- May refer to other works the class has read if the teacher allows it
- May write notes to themselves during the discussion if the teacher allows it
- May ask relevant questions of other participants

The Coaches:

- Must evaluate the participant's performance during the seminar
- Must provide oral and written feedback to the participant after the seminar
- May not speak to their participants during the seminar unless the teacher allows it
- May not speak to other participants or coaches at any time

The Teacher/Leader:

- Must provide adequate "think time" for students to respond appropriately
- Can only ask questions; cannot state his or her opinions or interpretations
- Must require participants to support their opinions with evidence from the text
- Must encourage participants to agree and disagree for substantial reasons
- May record the number and quality of participant responses
- Must determine when to conclude the seminar

Management Tips for Socratic Seminars

- Allow no more than 30 minutes for the first seminar; after students have become familiar with the seminar format, 45-50 minutes may be allotted for discussion, particularly when examining more complex texts
- Select students for inner and outer circles carefully to prevent off-task behaviors
- Share rules, expectations, and grading practices with students prior to the seminar.
- Distribute an equal number of tokens or “talking chips” to all participants; require participants to use all their tokens or chips prior to the end of the discussion
- Stop discussion to interject commentary, commend participants, or end negative behavior during the first seminar; as students become familiar with the seminar format, the teacher should not need to provide any feedback
- Eliminate the outer circle when using Socratic Seminars in classes of fifteen students or less

Options for Assessing and Evaluating Student Work in Socratic Seminars

Student participation and understanding may be assessed and evaluated using the following methods:

- Rubric to assess student conduct, speaking, reasoning, listening, and/or preparation
- Checklist of positive and negative behaviors
- Student self-evaluation
- Peer evaluation

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Accountable Talk Response Stems
Examples

I disagree with that, because ____.

I agree with ____, because ____.

I still have questions about ____.

I want to add to what (name) said about ____.

Based on my evidence, I think ____.



I don't know what you mean by ____.

Compare the risk/benefit of ____.

I disagree with the use of that evidence, because ____.

A question I have is ____.

An example of ____ is ____.

Your evidence is the same/different, because ____.

The relationship between _____
and _____ is _____.

This reminds me of _____.

I predict _____, because _____.

I understand _____.

When we _____, it helped me understand
_____.

The big idea is _____.

This is different, because _____.

This is the same, because _____.

I observed _____.

I'm confused by _____.

To expand on what _____ said _____.

Accountable Talk Focus Questions
Examples of Questions/Prompts

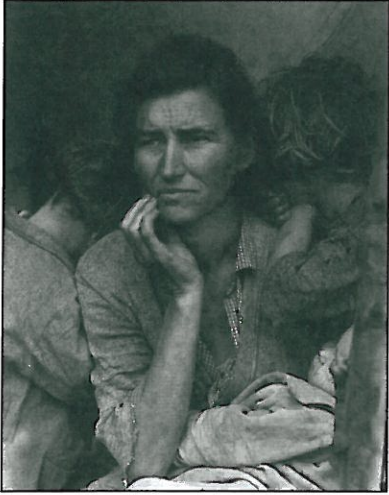
Compare your evidence with the evidence from another group.	Clarify what you mean by _____.
What evidence do you have to support that?	How could you prove that?
How can you apply what you know about _____ to this new situation?	Where did you find that evidence?
How does the evidence support _____?	What is your line of evidence?

What are some ways you can describe your method to us?	What tools will you need? How will they help you?
What information do you have?	What have you learned or found out today?
How would you match _____ with _____?	What is a counterexample?
What do you need to find out in order to solve the problem?	What strategies are you going to use?

What does the graph tell you?	If the _____ continues to _____, what will be the result?
How did you reach that conclusion?	What if you had started with _____ rather than _____?
What assumptions are you making?	Have you thought of all the possible solutions? How can you be sure?
Explain the pattern you made.	Is that true for all cases? Explain.

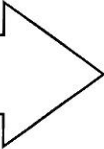
Summarize your findings.	What might be a more efficient strategy?
What can you do to test your idea?	What is the relationship between _____ and _____?
What do you think caused the _____ to _____?	How are _____ alike? How are they different?
Based on what you know, what can you predict about _____?	Do you agree? Why or why not?

Directions: Examine the photograph, the source information, and background information to answer the questions below.

	<p>Source information Title: Migrant Mother Date of photograph: 1936 Photographer: Dorothea Lange Location: Nipomo, California</p> <p>Background information: The Resettlement Administration was one of President Franklin Roosevelt's agencies that helped people from the Dust Bowl. This agency hired photographer Dorothea Lange to take pictures that would build support for its programs. This photograph was one of several that Dorothea Lange took of migrant farm worker Florence Thompson and some of her seven children.</p>
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Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

Question 2: What is one feature of the photo that might lead you to question its reliability? Explain your reasoning.

CONTINUE ON BACK 

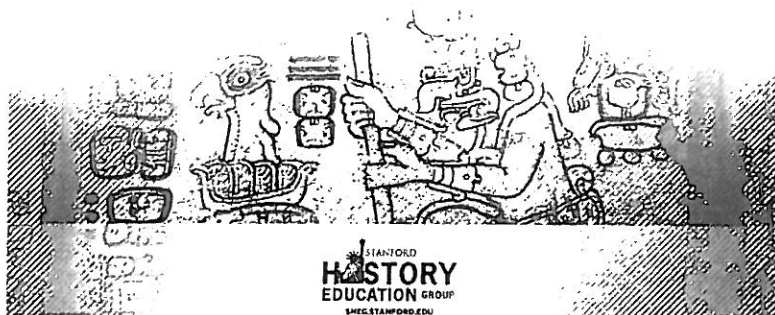
Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because _____

SOURCING

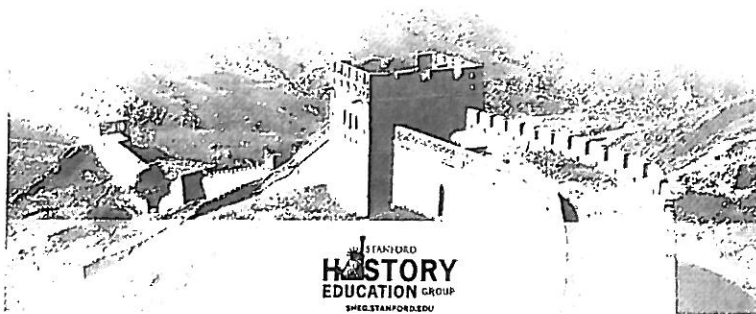
Before reading the document ask yourself:

- Who wrote this?
- What is the author's perspective?
- Why was it written?
- When was it written?
- Where was it written?
- Is it reliable? Why? Why not?



CONTEXTUALIZATION

- When and where was the document created?
- What was different then? What was the same?
- How might the circumstances in which the document was created affect its content?



CLOSE READING

- What claims does the author make?
- What evidence does the author use?
- What language (words, phrases, images, symbols) does the author use to persuade the document's audience?
- How does the document's language indicate the author's perspective?



CORROBORATION

- What do other documents say?
- Do the documents agree? If not, why?
- What are other possible documents?
- What documents are most reliable?



Lange's Iconic Photograph *Interactive Rubric*

To answer this assessment, students must consider various aspects of the photograph's reliability and also think about other information that could help them evaluate the reliability of the image. In question 1, students must explain that Lange may have been influenced by the Resettlement Administration's desire to increase support for its programs. In question 2, students need to identify an aspect of the photo that suggests Lange's influence over its content. Finally, in question 3, students must identify one more piece of information that would help them evaluate the reliability this photograph and justify their choice.

Level	Description
Proficient	<p>Question 1: Student identifies relevant background information and explains why it might call the reliability of the photo into question.</p> <p>Question 2: Student identifies a relevant aspect of the photograph and explains why it would call the reliability of the photo into question.</p> <p>Question 3: Student identifies relevant information and explains how it would help to determine the reliability of the photograph.</p>
Emergent	<p>Question 1: Student identifies background information that might call the reliability of the photo into question but does not provide a complete explanation.</p> <p>Question 2: Student identifies a relevant aspect of the photograph but does not explain why it would call the reliability of the photo into question.</p> <p>Question 3: Student identifies relevant information but does not adequately explain how it would help to determine the reliability of the photograph.</p>
Basic	<p>Question 1: Student does not identify background information that might call the reliability of the photo into question.</p> <p>Question 2: Student does not identify a relevant aspect of the photograph.</p> <p>Question 3: Student does not identify relevant information.</p>

<https://beyondthebubble.stanford.edu/assessments/langes-iconic-photograph/rubric>

Proficient Samples

Student P

Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

Since the administration wanted support for its program, photographers could have just staged migrant people. This photo could have been posed and carefully planned out.

This student provides a plausible explanation for why the photographers could have staged the photograph.

Student A

Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

The background info. may lead me to question the photograph's reliability because it states that Dorothea Lange took these photos to rally support for the Resettlement Administration. Therefore, there is a bias for the Resettlement Administration and this photo may have been staged so people would support this program.

This student makes a connection between the intent of the Resettlement Administration and how Lange took the photo.

Student F

Question 2: What is one feature of the photo that might lead you to question its reliability? Explain your reasoning.

One feature of the photo that might lead me to question its reliability is the way her hand is posed on her face and the way her children are both hiding their faces. It looks posed and artificial. The photo doesn't look like a candid, honest shot.

This student raises reasonable questions about the way the children are posed.

Proficient Samples

Student J

Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

Precisely where did she take the photo (in a home setting, a photography studio, a field, etc.)?

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because the photo could have been taken in a photography studio, easily suggesting that the photo was taken with a certain purpose. The fact that Lange focused on the family and excluded a background makes it easier challenging to decipher.

This student identifies two relevant features of the photo and explains why they might call the reliability of the photo into question.

Student M

Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

I would want to know if Lange staged this picture or if this is really how she saw the mother and her children.

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because if Lange set this picture up by telling the mother and children to look this way, then this picture would be much less reliable. It would be hard to know if their emotions are real. Are these people really troubled or were they asked to act for the camera?

This student has identified a relevant piece of information that would help to determine the reliability of the photo and provided a clear explanation for why this information would help corroborate the photo.

Emergent Samples

Student D

Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

The background information above might lead me to question the photograph's reliability because the photograph might be biased in favor of Franklin Roosevelt's agencies. This might not be the whole story/facts about the Dust Bowl.

Although the student correctly notes that the photograph might favor FDR's programs, he does not explain what about the background information led to this theory.

Student N

Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

I might question the photographer's reliability because in the background info they say "this agency hired photographer Dorothea Lange to take pictures that would build support for its programs." That makes me think that maybe FDR only wants to seem like he is trying to help.

This student has identified the crucial piece of background information but has not fully explained how it might call the reliability of the photo into question.

Student O

Question 2: What is one feature of the photo that might lead you to question its reliability? Explain your reasoning.

In the photo, Florence Thompson seems to pose for the camera facing her. If the picture is taken at a moment when no one is knowing, then the photo wouldn't turn out to be so fine and perfect.

Although this student raises the possibility that the photo is staged, she does not explain how this would affect its reliability as a historical source.

Emergent Samples

Student H

Question 2: What is one feature of the photo that might lead you to question its reliability? Explain your reasoning.

One reliability that I question is that the photograph is only showing two kids and a baby. There is no proof of her having 2 children.

Questions about what who Lange chose to include in this photograph are central to some historians' theories about the authenticity of this image, but the student has not explained why this would make the photo less reliable.

Student K

Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

How did Dorothea Lange meet this woman? What was the story behind this picture?

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because it would tell me how she met this person & if this photograph was staged.

This response is definitely headed in the right direction. Unfortunately, the student only provides a very brief, incomplete explanation.

Student B

Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

I would ask Dorothea Lange to take the picture with the background included.

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because with the background, it'll give a better look at where she is and these other sad families to prove that the place was really from the Dust Bowl and people are really suffering a lot.

Additional information about the context of the photo would certainly be helpful, but this student mistakenly believes that the photo is from the Dust Bowl and wants verification of that fact.

Basic Samples

Student G

Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

It doesn't show enough background information of Dorothea Lange, anyone can take pictures of stuff. We don't know if she took any photography class or stuff like that.

The student does not explain how this would affect the reliability of the photo.

Student Q

Question 1: Why might the background information above lead you to question the photograph's reliability?

I question why photographs were needed as during the time of the Great Depression many were suffering as it was already well known, but the background tells of only 1 farm worker.

Instead of considering the background information, this student questions the purpose of such a photograph. This student also does not seem to understand that the government was seeking to build support for aid programs by showing the plight of Dust Bowl migrants.

Student E

Question 2: What is one feature of the photo that might lead you to question its reliability? Explain your reasoning.

One feature of the photo that leads me to question the reliability is why are they so dusty when they are in California. It should be cleaner than before. I think the program purposely made them look really poor and dirty so the program can get more support from the reader.

This student has concluded that migrants should be cleaner in California. Unfortunately, this document provides no evidence to support that conclusion.

Basic Samples

Student L

Question 2: What is one feature of the photo that might lead you to question its reliability? Explain your reasoning.

Florence Thompson shows her emotion in the photograph. She should have been happy about moving away from the Dust Bowl.

This student questions the reliability of the photograph because it does not match her preconceived notions of Dust Bowl migrants.

Student C

Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

I would like to know where in Nipomo, California this was taken.

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because the location of the Dust Bowl was in the Great Plains, far from California.

Although factually correct, the student has not explained how the location of the Dust Bowl helps determine the reliability of the photo.

Student I

Question 3: What is one thing you would want to know about Dorothea Lange or how she took this photo to better determine its reliability?

Does she know the situation of the Dust Bowl first hand?

This would help me determine the reliability of the photo because if she didn't know the situation first hand, she might have just made assumptions of what it was really like.

This student does not explain how these possible assumptions would influence the content of the photo.

DIRECTIONS: Each teacher who brings student work samples will meet with a small group of peers and share the samples of student work. As a group, talk through these questions discussing the purpose of the assignment and implications of student learning. Skip any questions that do not relate to the assignment or student work shared.

Analyzing Student Work Protocol

1. What was the assignment? Or purpose of the lesson/task?
2. Does the assignment/task align with any indicators from the C3 framework?
3. Does the student assignment/task meet the target/objective and assess the indicator?
4. What evidence of student learning do you see in the student work samples? Does the assignment/task allow for student misconceptions to be revealed?
5. What criteria would you use to score the student work for quality? Was a rubric used?
6. How can this assignment/task be improved to better fit the C3 Framework?