


Skookum Stories - Critical Thinking Steps

name/date: _____

Take a look at the graphic below -- as you can see, critical (and creative) thinking are important part of the way we do Social Studies these days:

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Towards Curricular Competency in Social Studies

general skills

- ▶ practice **research** and **inquiry** skills
Ask questions; gather, interpret, and analyze ideas; communicate findings and decisions.
- ▶ develop ability to build and tell powerful **stories**
Make authentic connections to learning, and employ timeless principles of storytelling in order to form different kinds of narratives related to subjects and ideas in Social Studies

historical/geographical/critical thinking

- ▶ establish **historical and/or geographic significance**
Why we care, today, about certain events, trends, and issues in history.
Ex: *Why was the Battle of Britain in 1940 significant for Canada and the War Effort?*
- ▶ use a variety of **data** including primary source **evidence**
How to find, select, put in context, compare, challenge, and interpret sources for a historical argument or an event.
Ex: *What can an interview with person who was a "hippie" teenager in the 1960s tell us (or not tell us) about the Counterculture Movement in Canada?*
- ▶ identify **patterns, continuity and change**
What has changed and what has remained the same over time.
Ex: *How different are the lives of Chinese Canadians between the 1950s and today?*
- ▶ analyze **cause and consequence**
How and why certain conditions and actions led to others.
Ex: *What were the causes of the World War One?*
- ▶ understand **interactions and associations**
Interconnectedness between ideas, events, and things; in particular, the ways in which humans and the environment influence each other.
Ex: *How did farming practices in the Prairies influence and respond to drought conditions in the 1930s?*
- ▶ take **historical and/or geographic perspectives**
Understanding the "past as a foreign country," with its different social, cultural, intellectual, geographical and even emotional contexts that shaped people's lives and actions, including a sense of place.
Ex: *How could William Lyon Mackenzie King (later a Canadian Prime Minister) say "that Canada should remain a white man's country." in 1908?*
- ▶ consider the **ethical dimensions** of historical interpretations (or geographic problems) and resulting **value judgements**
How we, in the present, judge actors in different circumstances in the past; when and how crimes and sacrifices of the past bear consequences today; what obligations we have today in relation to those consequences.
Ex: *What should be done about the poor living conditions on some Aboriginal Reserves?*

Historical thinking concepts adapted from: Peter Seixas, Lindsay Gibson, and Kadriye Ercikan (2015). A Design Process for Assessing Historical Thinking in Kadriye Ercikan and Peter Seixas (Eds.), *New Directions in Assessing Historical Thinking* (pp. 102-103). New York, NY: Routledge.

Source for geographic thinking concepts: Kamilla Bahbahani, Niem Tu Huynh, Roland Case (ed), and Bob Sharpe (ed) (2008). *Teaching About Geographical Thinking* (pp. 3-8). Vancouver, BC: The Critical Thinking Consortium.

Source for curricular competencies: BC Ministry of Education. "BC's New Curriculum: Building Student Success." (2016). Retrieved Apr 27, 2016 <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum>.

Other references: see <http://www.thielmann.ca/new-bc-curriculum.html>.

So, how do we apply critical thinking concepts to the Skookum Stories project? How can we use them to make inquiry questions that will guide the project? Here is a simpler form of the concepts:

CONCEPTS	EXAMPLE OF CRITICAL THINKING
significance	what parts of the story are of an importance that goes beyond the immediate situation? what makes something "historically significant?"
evidence	objects and documents conceal as much as they reveal -- what's going on with each source? what story does it tell? what kind of evidence is needed to tell the whole story?
patterns & change	hearing the old stories -- how are things different now and how are they the same? what are some the timeless patterns that seem to be in play?
cause & effect	did some of the interesting choices, local events, global trends, or random circumstances have serious consequences for the family?
perspectives	do different bits of evidence tell conflicting stories about events? what kinds of different points of view can be found in family stories and sources?
ethical dimensions	sometimes stories compel us to action, or highlight serious issues in history; are their any important lessons to be learned or judgements to be made from examining the past?

Using these “Big 6” concepts, try to write a question that connects each of them to the research you’d like to do for your Skookum Stories project:

CONCEPTS	EXAMPLE OF CRITICAL THINKING
1. significance	what parts of the story are of an importance that goes beyond the immediate situation? what makes something “historically significant?”
your question, and any thoughts you have about what you’ll use to answer it:	
2. evidence	objects and documents conceal as much as they reveal -- what’s going on with each source? what story does it tell? what kind of evidence is needed to tell the whole story?
your question, and any thoughts you have about what you’ll use to answer it:	
3. patterns & change	hearing the old stories -- how are things different now and how are they the same? what are some the timeless patterns that seem to be in play?
your question, and any thoughts you have about what you’ll use to answer it:	
3. cause & effect	did some of the interesting choices, local events, global trends, or random circumstances have serious consequences for the family?
your question, and any thoughts you have about what you’ll use to answer it:	
4. perspectives	do different bits of evidence tell conflicting stories about events? what kinds of different points of view can be found in family stories and sources?
your question, and any thoughts you have about what you’ll use to answer it:	
5. ethical dimensions	sometimes stories compel us to action, or highlight serious issues in history; are their any important lessons to be learned or judgements to be made from examining the past?
your question, and any thoughts you have about what you’ll use to answer it:	