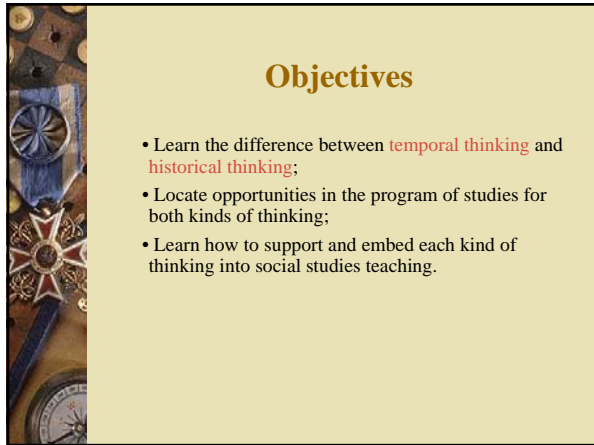


Helping primary students think about history

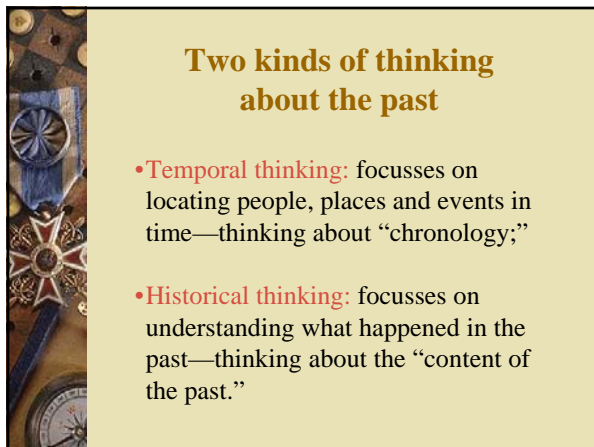
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The Critical Thinking Consortium

WebCast Presentation
October 16, 2007




Objectives

- Learn the difference between **temporal thinking** and **historical thinking**;
- Locate opportunities in the program of studies for both kinds of thinking;
- Learn how to support and embed each kind of thinking into social studies teaching.




Two kinds of thinking about the past

- **Temporal thinking**: focusses on locating people, places and events in time—thinking about “chronology;”
- **Historical thinking**: focusses on understanding what happened in the past—thinking about the “content of the past.”




Temporal thinking

- ♦ is, in a sense, “pre-historical thinking”— it is a prerequisite for thinking historically.
- ♦ involves learning the concepts that enable students to locate and mark events in time:
 - before and after
 - day and week
 - October and 1980



Three sets of temporal concepts


Set A	Set B	Set C
minute	younger	Tuesday
day	older	Wednesday
week	now	1920
long time	then	fall
short time	before	spring
soon		at Christmas in the evening



Understanding temporal concepts

1. Identify **key attributes** or defining features of each of the three sets of examples.
2. Identify several other **examples** that belong in each set (including some that are not merely variations on the existing examples).
3. Agree on a name or **label** for each set of concepts.

1




Where would you locate these temporal concepts?

	Duration measuring length of time	Seriation sequencing relative order of time	Periodization identifying ranges or periods in time
the future			
a.m. or p.m.			
yesterday afternoon			


2





Teaching concepts
(Concept attainment approach)

- ◆ Provide direct experiences;
- ◆ Provide examples (and non-examples) for students to classify;
- ◆ Identify the attributes/defining features of the concepts;
- ◆ Test new examples in light of attributes and revise the defining features;
- ◆ Ask students to generate their own examples;
- ◆ Apply concepts in ongoing class situations.



Teaching about “past events”


3



Finding opportunities for temporal thinking


- ♦ Look at the **Historical Thinking** outcomes in the skill section of the curriculum (Dimensions of Thinking) and identify those outcomes that involve “temporal thinking.” Indicate which kind of temporal concept is invoked.
- ♦ Ignore the **Critical and Creative Thinking** outcomes for the time being.

4




Learning about history vs thinking historically

- ♦ **Learning about history** involves amassing the facts and conclusions that others have uncovered about the past.
- ♦ **Thinking historically** involves interpreting and assessing why we know about the past.




Learning about vs thinking

Learning about history	Thinking historically
The answers already exist.	Student must reach their own conclusion.
Students must locate or remember the answer.	Students must go beyond the available evidence.



Comparing questions

Learning about history	Thinking historically
When did we go to the store: before or after recess?	Based on the clues in the story, when did the boy enter the house?
What was similar or different about life then and now?	What was the biggest difference between then and now (Or was life really very different)?



Key concepts in historical thinking for primary students

- ◆ **Evidence and interpretation:** using information to reach conclusions about the past.
- ◆ **Cause and consequence:** deciding who or what in the past influenced things and what was/is the result.
- ◆ **Continuity and change:** considering how lives and people are alike and different over time.



What historical thinking concept is invoked?

Look for more than one sources for each sensation.


How did it ...

- smell?
- sound?
- feel (touch)?
- taste?



QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.


What historical thinking concept is invoked?



What historical thinking concept is invoked?


How different is life then and now?

QuickTime™ and a TIFF (LZW) decompressor are needed to see this picture.



What historical thinking concepts are invoked?


	Evidence and interpretation	Cause and consequence	Continuity and change
In what ways has my community changed over time? (1.1)			
How did the physical geography of each community shape its identity? (2.1)			
How is the diversity of Aboriginal peoples reflected in the number of languages spoken? (4.2)			




Finding opportunities for historical thinking

- ◆ For your grade level, look at the **Critical and Creative Thinking** outcomes in the skill section and the **Knowledge and Understanding** outcomes in the content section.
- ◆ Identify those outcomes that involve “historical thinking” and indicate the specific concepts that are invoked.

5

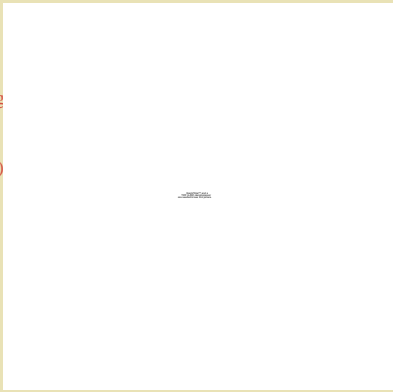



Teaching about clue and conclusion



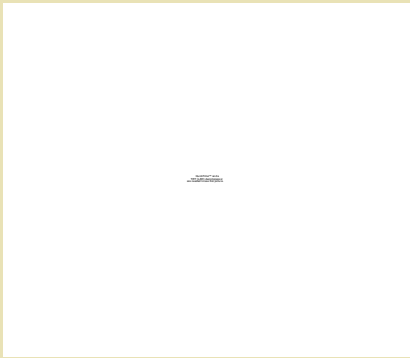
Recognizing clues and guesses (conclusion)


6





Assessing understanding of the concepts






Grade 1-2 picture study

- ♦ Introducing the concepts
- ♦ Student reflections
- ♦ Teacher reflection


—Alberta Education On-line Guide

- ♦ What are the two most interesting or significant insights about the clips?
- ♦ What lessons did you learn from these teachers' experiences?
- ♦ Where are you going next with historical thinking



Discussion of the clips

- ◆ What are the two most interesting or significant insights about the clips?
- ◆ What lessons did you learn from these teachers' experiences?
- ◆ Where are you going next with historical thinking?



Concluding points

- ◆ Historical thinking requires a shift (for teachers and students) from transmitting information to reaching conclusions.
- ◆ Requires systematically developing an array of "temporal thinking" concepts and a few "historical thinking" concepts.
- ◆ Can be infused very broadly in the primary social studies curriculum.



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