United States History and Constitution- End of Course Evaluation Program

Analysis of 2016 Test Result Data

**Areas of Strength**

Based on statewide item analysis data, it appears that students

- were able to apply knowledge to utilize unfamiliar texts and analyze quotes
- have been exposed to critical analysis of concepts and ideas ("Continue to work on this!")
- were strong in applying information from varied sources
- were able to analyze the trends of industrialization prior to the Civil War
- understood social studies vocabulary
- did a better job with questions on the early 20th century through World War II than they did with questions on the Gilded Age
- understood the effect of the television in the civil rights movement

**Areas Needing Additional Attention**

- Students need to practice close-reading of each question in its entirety, utilizing context clues that are provided.
- Instruction needs more focus on the Constitutional trends and concepts found throughout the standards.
- Student understanding should include historical trends, with special emphasis on that of continuity and change over time as well as cause and effect.
- Students should be encouraged to read carefully, paying attention to time period and vocabulary.
- Instructors need to focus on building student skills while concurrently teaching content. Student performance indicates that students need to become familiar with different ways of presenting information. Practice with using stimuli, especially quote analysis, will enable students to better summarize and infer. Students should be able to utilize graphic organizers to organize their own thinking and thereby stimulate the deeper understanding that comes from integrating background knowledge, making connections and asking “why?”
- Student understanding across the standards should include the complexity of situations (multiple causation) in addition to the more obvious information. (See appendix A of the Standards.)
- Student performance highlights the need for instruction that pays close attention to the support document across all standards. Likewise, the intent of the standard should not be overlooked.
- Teaching and learning should entail the most current interpretation of Reconstruction (which is included in the Support Document). Knowing the key amendments (13th-15th in this instance) is also requisite.
• Although the test items assessing Standard 4 were judged to be “very straightforward,” the standard was seen as “tough” and “not a teacher favorite,” possible predictors of resulting student scores.
• Students should be able to compare historical events and eras.
• The comprehensive context of the Civil Rights movement was not clear to students. Civil rights strategies utilized during the movement and the discriminatory practices that they were specifically designed to address/correct must be coupled with a sense of both chronology and place to reach the level of depth and understanding required.

• General overall observations:
  o “Pay attention to change over time. Read carefully. Look for key terminology and ask ‘what is the test-question really asking?’”
  o “Focus on having students make inferences and draw conclusions with appropriate knowledge.”
  o “Pay attention to the previous and future knowledge [part of the Standards] to guide teaching approaches...think of ways to build upon previous knowledge and to lay groundwork for future instruction...”
  o “Again, carefully read the entire question and all distractors before answering the question.”
  o “Instruction should target ‘free-citizens-vote’ for the Reconstruction amendments.”
  o “Found the items (questions) to be fair, aligned [to the Standards and the Support Document], and straightforward, while they required understanding/conceptual knowledge (Appendix C) and the Literacy Skills [for Social Studies] (Appendix A).”
  o “US History in South Carolina is not ‘PDF (People Dates Facts)’ history...” [That is, that instruction should aim for comprehension and analysis, rather than concentration on memorization.]
  o “Don’t forget to continue working on the suggestions from last year, too...remember that the tests are different each year.”
  o “We are also seeing much of what the committee last year noted.”