

READING WRITING IN THE DISCIPLINES

Creating a Classroom Culture Video Transcript

Darby Masland:

So we're not going to answer this question today. Today, we started the process of breaking down this question. What you guys are going to do moving forward is continue the process of breaking down this question, and then eventually you're going to find the answer.

When learning is student-directed, they need something concrete to centralize their thinking. One of the hardest parts is really keeping students on track, focused, and giving them the resources that they need to succeed while so much of their time is independent from me. So a lot of the walls are filled with resources for them to use -- standards, student work. We kind of base everything we do around the five social studies standards. So usually they need to know the geography of the region we're studying. They might be looking at a reading about how geography has impacted the development of a region. They may be reading a textbook to get more information on that. And all those general practices fall under geographic reasoning, social studies standard three. So within that range, they know what they need to know at the end of the day, so they can choose what resources will best help them get to that point. The walls are filled with reminders and expectations in the class, standards for them to reference.

And what are you working on now?

Cheyenne:

The terra cotta soldiers. This picture.

Masland:

What standard is that?

Cheyenne:

Um... I don't know. Um...

Masland:

It's right there for 14.

Cheyenne:

It's standard... I think it's SS.4, right?

Masland:

Yeah, I agree.

We have conferences happening where I'm meeting one on one with the student. The meat of the conference is really getting students to identify their struggles and the challenges they're having within the standards and working toward resolutions on their own.

So anytime you're analyzing a primary or secondary document, that's gathering relevant information, right?

Cheyenne:

Yeah.

Masland:

So you're gathering information from it looks like both the picture and some background information.

One of the shifts about really having students think about the standards on a daily basis and match what they're doing every day to a standard has been that students develop a sense of professionalism, and they develop a sense of pride in being able to speak that academic language.

Student:

We defined the words we think will come up on the unit test, and we decided to make a poster out of it. And this would be standard SS.4, gathering information.

Masland:

When students have the ability to speak that academic, that professional language, it gives them a stronger sense of what they're doing in the classroom, why this is important beyond, "I need to know this for the test on Friday."

Student:

We used our own prior knowledge as well as knowledge from the textbook to come up with these definitions. For example, the four noble truths, when Miss Darby was talking about it, she said that Buddhists and Siddhartha were the basic principles of life, basically, or facts about life.