

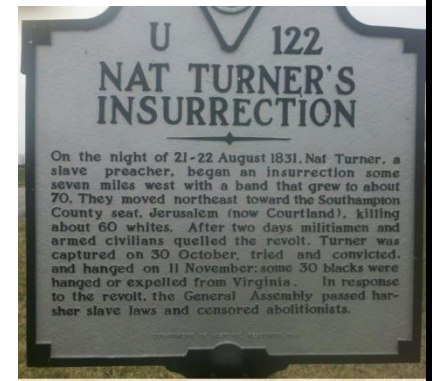


Mr. Barge's Instructional Tip of the Week!

Letting Go!

Today marks instructional day 47 and we have hit the quarter mark of the 2019-2020 school year. As I reflect on my own instructional practice this year, I am reminded of the feedback that our Quality Review evaluator had for the Murrow community a few years ago, "There are good practices happening throughout the building, but it is important that we start to 'let go' more in the classroom." At times, we all find ourselves doing a bit more "handholding" in the classroom and hesitate to "let go."

After monitoring my students' progress with a variety of skills that we have been emphasizing in the classroom as well as my students becoming a bit more accustomed to working in their Presidential Teams (group work), I decided to do just that, "let go" some more. The other day, I provided my students with some background information on Nat Turner's rebellion in the form of a short reading. I then asked the students to write a 2-3 sentence summary of the event. They shared their responses with their team members as I was "circulating with a purpose" and providing feedback when needed. After I was confident that the class understood the event (if not I would have done a quick "check-in" with the class to clarify), I then showed the class a series of visuals of Nat Turner (ranging from artwork, to newspaper headlines, to comic book covers, to artwork on magnets – yes, magnets) and asked the class how the artist/author would answer the AIM ("Was Nat Turner a 'hero' or a 'madman?'"). After a brief discussion on why there would be differing views on Nat Turner's legacy, we jumped right into the documents (3 primary source documents) to have students come to their own conclusions. The students were then responsible with answering the AIM question based on the evidence that they received and write their responses, with supporting evidence, in the form of a historical marker that would be seen on the side of the road. Of course, there were supports in place to ensure that all students had access to the material (supplemental reading, vocabulary to assist them with the documents, a two minute youtube video, or samples/models). I simply circulated with a purpose to monitor their progress and discussions to ensure that all students were learning and engaged.



As uncomfortable as it may be at times, it is important that we "let go" to allow students to be engaged in the work that is needed to prepare them for college, career and life. For a vast majority of the lesson, students took ownership over their learning and engaged in student to student discussion and accepted the role of a historian to evaluate the legacy of a historical figure. Circulating with a purpose and my ongoing assessment/check-ins allowed to me assess their learning and provide guidance where needed.

Keep in mind this is just one technique to "let go" in the classroom. Please continue your efforts to "let go" and provide student-centered, rigorous instruction for all students. Additionally, please mark your calendars. We will have a faculty town hall on Tuesday, November 26, 2019 (auditorium) to share our community's quarterly progress and next steps in addition to discussing some school wide issues that will help us provide the **CARE** that our students need and deserve.

... because at Edward R. Murrow High School, we **CARE** about our students!