

Guiding the Conversation

Inquiry in Social Studies – David’s Story

This guide is intended for Professional Learning Communities groups, instructional leaders or self-paced study to help guide conversations and reflections.

General synopsis: In this video an experienced high school teacher is reflecting about how inquiry in Social Studies has impacted his teaching practice. The teacher responded to these questions, which may be helpful for you to reflect upon, either before or after viewing the video clips:

- What is your definition of inquiry?
- What have you done in your classroom to encourage a culture of inquiry?
- How has your implementation of the inquiry approach met the essence and intent of the new Social Studies Program of Studies?

Clip 1 Synopsis: The teacher discusses what inquiry means to him.	Question(s): What does inquiry-based learning mean to you? How do you promote “human curiosity” within the Social Studies Program of Studies? How do you model being a learner?
Clip 2 Synopsis: The teacher discusses what he has done in his classroom to promote inquiry-based learning.	Question(s): What have you done in your classroom to promote inquiry? How could posting outcomes in student-friendly language help to promote inquiry?



Clip 3 Synopsis: The teacher discusses a research project on NAFTA.	Question(s): Why is it important to have a foundation of understanding before asking students to form an opinion? How can you use a variety of materials to create common understanding before beginning an inquiry project?
Clip 4 Synopsis: The teacher discusses how inquiry helps to meet the essence and intent of the program of studies.	Question(s): How can an inquiry project help to uncover multiple outcomes?
Clip 5 Synopsis: The teacher discusses best practices in using inquiry.	Question(s): How could you begin to incorporate more inquiry or deeper inquiry into your current teaching practice? How can differentiating support the inquiry process?
Clip 6 Synopsis: The teacher discusses effective strategies, including the use of technology.	Question(s): How can using technology help to meet the outcomes and engage students? Which has the biggest impact on student learning in your opinion – content, process or product?
Clip 7 Synopsis: The teacher discusses how he has used blogging in social studies.	Question(s): How can the use of Web 2.0 tools facilitate meaningful dialogue and take learning beyond the classroom walls? How might you use a blog to extend classroom discussion? Would you use it for assessment? Why or why not?

Clip 8 Synopsis:

The teacher discusses how his practice has been impacted by inquiry.

Question(s):

How would the process of identifying the essential outcomes (Understanding by Design) support teachers in developing an inquiry-based approach?

