

Guiding the Conversation

Inquiry in Social Studies – A Lesson from Grade One

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

General synopsis: This is a lesson midway through an inquiry project in Grade 1 Social Studies. The teacher sets the stage and reviews what they have done in their learning so far. They have a student teacher whose father is coming to visit from Eastern Canada and they want to point out landmarks in Edmonton that he should visit. The project is to create something that will identify a landmark in Edmonton and entice him to see it while he is in town.

Clip 1 Synopsis: The teacher reviews a previous lesson on landmarks and sets the stage for the project.	Question(s): How does the teacher help students focus on what they learned previously?
Clip 2 Synopsis: The teacher identifies the “big question” of the project and outlines some project choices.	Question(s): Why would it be important to focus on a big question? What are the advantages and disadvantages of giving students choices? What would you need to do in advance in order to give student choices in a project such as this?



Clip 3 Synopsis: Students work on their projects independently	Question(s): How do the students show engagement in the task? What levels of engagement are evident? (disengaged, compliant, academic, intellectual)
Clip 4 Synopsis: Formative assessment/questioning of students.	Question(s): How do the teacher's questions help to assess student understanding of the outcomes?
Clip 5 Synopsis: The teacher asks questions about an unfamiliar landmark.	Question(s): Do you allow students to use each other as resources in the classroom?
Clip 6 Synopsis: The teacher gives feedback about the students' use of landmarks.	Question(s): What are some of the skills the teacher has already developed in technology prior to beginning this project?
Clip 7 Synopsis: Teacher asks questions and a student's zoo picture and helps him distinguish between a picture and a landmark.	Question(s): How do the teacher's questions help to clarify the task and the student's understanding of it?

Clip 8 Synopsis: Teacher asks questions to help clarify between city and rural landmarks.	Questions(s): How does moving from student to student help to identify any misconceptions? What type of feedback are the students receiving?
Clip 9 Synopsis: Students are writing in their inquiry logs/journals	Questions(s): What is the value in having an inquiry log/journal?
Clip 10 Synopsis: Teacher is helping a student reflect on a change she made to her idea about what a landmark is.	Questions(s): How can you support metacognition in students at this age?
Clip 11 Synopsis: The teacher brings the lesson to a close.	Questions(s): How did the teacher reinforce that doing different things was a positive thing in the classroom?
Digital Still Pictures – Question: How do these pictures demonstrate student engagement?	

