

Guiding the Conversation

Inquiry in Social Studies – Kelsey’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 elementary school teacher is reflecting about how inquiry in Social Studies has impacted her 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 in her context.	Question(s): What does inquiry mean to you? Do you agree that inquiry is a “natural way of learning”? Why or why not?
Clip 2 Synopsis: Teacher discusses how teaching through inquiry relates to classroom management.	Question(s): Do you agree that it is important to have clearly set expectations when teaching through inquiry? Why or why not? How does inquiry promote a student-focused environment where students are engaged and self-manage their learning?



Clip 3 Synopsis: Teacher discusses how teaching through an inquiry approach meets the essence and intent of the social studies curriculum.	Question(s): How does the inquiry approach help to meet the essence and intent of the program of studies?
Clip 4 Synopsis: Teacher discusses some promising practices for inquiry in social studies, including project-based learning, backwards planning and assessment for learning.	Question(s): What effective practices in teaching through inquiry have you discovered?
Clip 5 Synopsis: Teacher discusses her “wax museum” project.	Question(s): What would need to be considered when creating a project to promote inquiry, as opposed to a more traditional approach? What is the enduring, long-lasting impact of inquiry-based learning?
Clip 6 Synopsis: The teacher discusses how inquiry has affected teaching practice	Question(s): How has adopting an inquiry-based learning approach affected your teaching?