# Chapter
# 2

# An Inquiry Approach to Planning With Primary Sources

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*If you don't know where you are going, you'll end up someplace else.*
—Yogi Berra, Professional Baseball Player

Take a moment and think about your time in the classroom … as a student! Can you recall a lesson, lecture, or activity vividly? Was there a science lab, like dissecting a frog or exploring communicable diseases? Perhaps you remember a Socratic Seminar in an English class or a programming class, where you built a website. What about a history class focused on recreating an event or historical time period? If you can recall a lesson or experience from your time in the classroom, odds are your teacher developed a well-designed, well-thought-out lesson plan before engaging you as the learner. Lesson plans centered on inquiry, which activate students' minds and engage them in the learning process, create a lasting impact. The planning process is arguably the most important element of a classroom teacher's practice since planning accounts for nearly every facet of a classroom including aspects such as the content taught, understanding relationships with and between students, differentiation for individual learners, and the physical layout of the room. As such, your process of intentional planning, particularly with inquiries, becomes vital to implementing a powerful, meaningful learning experience.

In this chapter, we will describe a planning process for developing social studies inquiries with a focus on questions, sources, and tasks. We will posit multiple ways of conceptualizing an inquiry and introduce you to several blueprints for designing an inquiry. First, we would like to draw attention to the most important factor in your planning process—the students. After all, you will not be teaching sources or even standards for that matter. You will be teaching students!

# Keep the Focus on the Students

We are all big fans of teaching with sources. We find ourselves fascinated by the historical mysteries that we uncover when we come across a compelling photograph or recording that reveals clues about a time long ago. We love following the breadcrumbs of the past to revelations in the present. However, not every source connects with us or our students.

Knowing your students is the very first, and perhaps most important, step in planning for an inquiry. Before you begin looking through curated source sets or searching the Library of Congress collections, stop and think about who your students are, what your students' prior experiences are (both in and out of the classroom), and what your instructional goals are. Ayers et al. (2000) argue the following:

> The good teacher communicates a deep regard for students' lives, a regard
> infused with unblinking attention, respect, even awe. An engaged teacher begins

with the belief that each student is unique, each the one and only who will ever trod the earth, each worthy of a certain reverence. Regard extends, importantly, to an insistence that students have access to the tools with which to negotiate and transform the world. (pp. 2–3)

Below, we will describe in detail three particular ways to keep the focus on students during the inquiry planning process: (a) ground your planning in culturally relevant pedagogy, (b) know your role in selecting sources, and (c) be aware of developmentally appropriate practices with regards to sources.

# Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) defined three criteria for culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). First, teachers must attend to the academic success of all their students and promote rigor in their academic pursuits. Second, teachers should "utilize students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (p. 161). Third, students should be taught to question and critique cultural norms and values as well as examine issues of power and inequities in society with opportunities to act—termed *critical consciousness*. It is important to note, though, that educators have engaged in this work long before Ladson-Billings named this phenomenon CRP in 1995 (Paris, 2012). In fact, Muhammad (2020) asserts that African philosophies of education, Black literacy societies in the 1800s, and Black-centered schools in the early to mid-1900s promoted this form of pedagogy.

Culturally relevant pedagogy is a powerful lens to utilize when trying to conceptualize what we mean by "keep the focus on students," the title of this section. Though all three criteria are crucial in developing CRP, the second one (i.e., cultural competence) can be quite useful when planning for an inquiry and selecting sources to use with students. Ladson-Billings (2006) defines *cultural competence* as

> helping students to recognize and honor their own cultural beliefs and practices while acquiring access to the wider culture, where they are likely to have a chance of improving their socioeconomic status and making informed decisions about the lives they wish to lead. (p. 36)

Finding ways to ensure that the curricula (e.g., the inquiry topic and the sources selected) are relevant to students' identities and cultures in some way promotes higher forms of interest among students, supports student-teacher relationships, and provides an avenue for students to examine their position in society with regards to privileges and oppression. Therefore, we strongly advocate for a culturally relevant approach to planning an inquiry that highlights students' cultural identities, ways of knowing, lived experiences, and interests— especially when it comes to selecting sources to use.

# Your Role in Selecting Sources

We recognize that the selection of appropriate primary sources is just one step in the inquiry planning process. However, your role in selecting sources is pivotal to the overall design of your inquiry, the experiences students have during the inquiry process, and the learning outcomes. As a teacher, you have choices to make when you design an inquiry. With millions of digitized sources available on the Library of Congress website, the selection process can seem overwhelming. Before we share some strategies for selection, we should note that when we use the term "sources," we are referring to both primary and secondary sources.

Let us examine criteria for selecting appropriate sources using a Teaching with Primary Sources blog post, "Selecting Primary Sources, Part I: Knowing Your Students." Notice how each criterion highlights the needs, background, and interests of the students:

- **Content**: Will your students want to look closely, ask questions, and learn more about this particular primary source?
- **Age-appropriateness**: Is the content suitable for your students? Is the content too complex?
- **Length**: Will the length of the letter, diary entry, or newspaper article affect student comprehension? Is an excerpt more appropriate?
- **Readability of text or handwriting**: Is text clearly printed and legible? Will cursive handwriting impact your students' understanding?
- **Reading level of students**: Will your students be able to decode the text of the primary source?
- **Prior knowledge needed (historical; vocabulary)**: Do outdated terms need to be defined? Will your students understand the content of the primary source? (Suiter, 2011)

To tempt our students' palates with a taste for learning, we use sources to respond to each student's need to find purpose and challenge in their classwork, which is at the core of effective teaching. Our lessons need to be compelling for students, both individually and collectively. We invest our time in identifying sources that excite our students and drive them to think and puzzle over the content. This intentionality in planning communicates to students that you have designed learning experiences specifically for *them* and that the experiences are important and relevant to them now and for the future.

Additionally, the selection of sources positions you as a decision-maker with the authority to choose content that either reinforces dominant narratives or challenges them through *counternarratives*, which emphasize first-person accounts from diverse individuals and communities often not represented in the curriculum (Bell, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017). Dominant narratives are stories that "are not often questioned because people do not see them as stories but as 'natural' parts of everyday life" (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28). These narratives express stories of privilege (e.g., racial, gender, class, heteronormative, and cisnormative) and seek to distort and silence individuals and groups in the margins of

society (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) while maintaining the status quo. Counternarratives challenge the dominant perspectives and center stories on individuals and groups who have been marginalized in our society based on race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Providing sources that depict counternarratives (i.e., stories that challenge whiteness, heteronormativity, settler colonialism, and male-dominated perspectives) and reframe representations of minority groups away from "narratives steeped in pain or even smallness" creates spaces for students to build affirming identities of themselves (Muhammad, 2020). These opportunities sustain "the lifeways of communities who have been and continue to be damaged and erased through schooling" (Alim & Paris, 2017, p. 1).

Generally, collections may lack representativeness or be missing perspectives that were not originally curated for inclusion (Berson & Berson, 2020), and the Library of Congress's collections may also be the same. Therefore, consider selecting sources through a critical lens. Some questions to consider when selecting sources include:

- Who is marginalized or privileged by the representation in the image?
- Whose account of a particular topic or issue is missing? Whose voices are silenced?
- Whose voices are dominant?
- Whose reality is presented?
- Whose reality is ignored?

The selection of sources matters to students and impacts the ways students view themselves historically and presently in our pluralistic society. Moreover, your selection can promote anti-racist teaching by providing students with stories, experiences, and perspectives that dismantle whitewashed, dominant narratives of the past.

# Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Developmentally appropriate strategies for the use of sources capitalize on the social and active nature of students' learning. Inquiry-based learning with sources sparks students' curiosity and builds on prior experiences to make academic content meaningful and engaging. Sources provide a conduit for students to use their real-world experiences and background knowledge to make inferences about time and place (Fuhler et al., 2006). In the primary grades, exemplary instructional models demonstrate how to engage young learners in source inquiry with familiar objects, images, and sounds. Elementary-age students often have difficulty understanding that their lives today are different from people's way of life long ago (Morgan & Rasinski, 2012). Students may struggle to understand concepts of historical time, especially young learners who tend to analyze information from the vantage point of their own personal experience and current time frame.

As older students develop knowledge of historical events, people, and time periods, students may find sources most engaging when they have an opportunity to question, evaluate, and challenge these informational sources. Rather than focusing on learning

strategies that rely on the management and recall of historical data, students employ the tools of historians and explore archival evidence, using other sources to corroborate, enrich, and extend their thinking about events and people (Nokes, 2012). Teachers may also support students' critical thinking by introducing multiple perspectives using sources.

# An Inquiry Approach

An inquiry approach to learning can be defined as when students actively construct meaning from sources in order to answer an overarching question that they either develop on their own or that has been provided for them to investigate. Inquiry focuses on process skills instead of specific subject matter content (Maxim, 2014). John Dewey (1916), a prominent educational philosopher who promoted this approach to learning in the early 1900s, argued that students may not be as refined as the professionals, but they can still question, inspect, inquire, discover, and explore their world. In fact, Swan et al. (2020) suggest that students inquire on a daily basis, often making evidence-based decisions without recognizing this as an inquiry process.

True inquiry is open-ended, unstructured, and iterative (Maxim, 2014). Students develop questions and seek sources they can evaluate to help them answer questions. A structured inquiry approach scaffolds this process for students and has the teacher bear some, if not all, of the responsibility for developing the inquiry question and also for gathering the majority of sources for analysis. There are also variations in between, so think of inquiry as a continuum with open inquiry at one end and structured inquiry at the other (Maxim, 2014).

In addition to viewing inquiry on a continuum, there are a variety of ways to conceptualize inquiry in relation to teaching. Boyle-Baise and Zevin (2014) outline a seven-step process:

1. Raise a question that either comes from the teacher or the students.
2. Elicit hypotheses (educated guesses) from students.
3. Provide evidence for students to examine.
4. Allow students to revise their hypothesis based on each piece of evidence.
5. Draw conclusions based on all evidence provided.
6. Compare conclusions to original hypotheses.
7. Ask students how the investigation process changed their minds.

As you can see, this is an investigative process that centers students as creators of knowledge based on the pieces of evidence they find, analyze, and interpret, resulting in an evidence-based claim. Another way to view this process is through the Stripling Model (Stripling, 2009). This model includes six phases that are not linear but are meant to be explored in recursive and reflective ways: (a) connect, (b) wonder, (c) investigate, (d) construct, (e) express, and (f) reflect (see Figure 1). For a more detailed explanation of this inquiry model, check out the Summer 2009 edition of *Teaching with Primary Sources* from the Library of Congress. In addition, this Teacher Resource video  (Library of Congress, 2015) about using

inquiry with primary sources from the Library of Congress might prove helpful.

**Figure 1.** *Stripling Model of Inquiry*
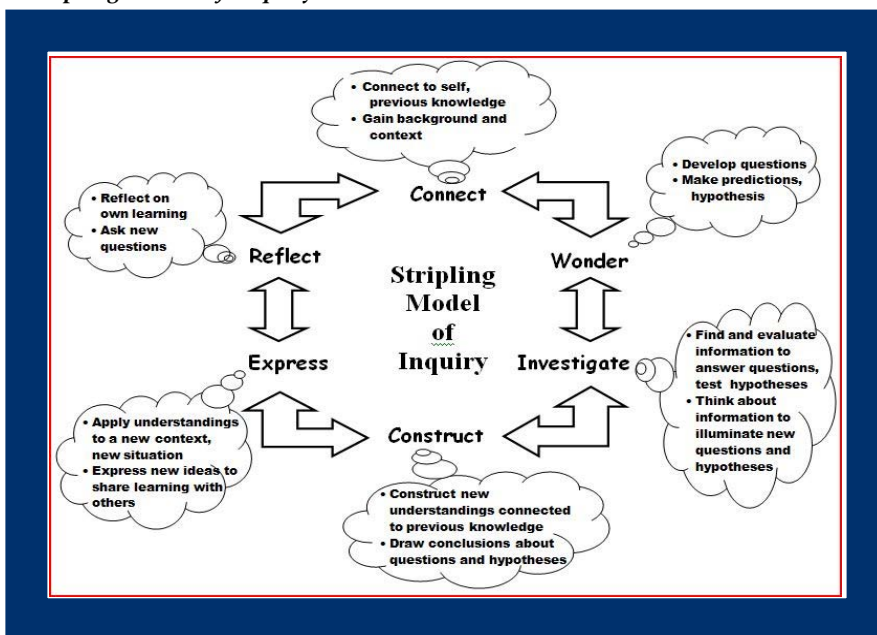
For elementary students, inquirED has designed a research-informed approach to inquiry-based learning that streamlines the process into three stages: (a) the opening, which sparks curiosity, activates prior knowledge, and introduces the essential question; (b) active inquiry, which includes student-centered learning tasks to explore and investigate content; and (c) the closing, which provides a culminating experience for the inquiry to promote informed action. In an Inquiry Field Guide, inquirEd offers tools to facilitate inquiry unit design and curricular materials that encourage sustained investigation.

The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS, 2013) College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for social studies state standards represents another way to conceptualize the inquiry process. The C3 Framework is unique in that it conceptualizes inquiry as having four dimensions. These dimensions outline an inquiry process, which is referred to as an Inquiry Arc, for teaching the social studies:

Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries

Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools

Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence

Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action

Dimension 2 is worth further discussion as it includes four subsections, each for the four most common disciplines taught in K–12 social studies curriculum. Delineating these

disciplines within Dimension 2 provides space for the disciplinary concepts and tools unique to each one to be discussed, promoting a disciplinary literacy lens for teaching the social studies. See the C3 Framework organization in visual form in Figure 2.

Saye (2017) argues that an inquiry must be systematic, rigorous, and public in order for students to develop deep understanding, and the C3 Framework Inquiry Arc can help you achieve each of these elements. First, the four dimensions provide a structure that can be utilized with students and taught in a systematic fashion. In fact, research has shown that students benefit from explicit instruction and modeling of disciplinary thinking required—especially in Dimensions 2–4 (Saye, 2017). Second, Dimensions 2 and 3 support rigorous instruction through the use of source-related work. Here, students are presented with a variety of primary and secondary sources that often represent complex texts, and they must not only comprehend them but determine how they fit together to build an argument that best answers the compelling question. Third, Dimension 4 includes a public element when students communicate their findings—making their statements known and open for public comment. This process can be described as a "holistic learning environment promoting intellectual achievement with value in the real world" (Saye, 2017, p. 342). Overall, the C3 Framework Inquiry Arc promotes a disciplined inquiry approach into the human experience through active and authentic engagement with primary and secondary sources (Cornbleth, 2015), positioning students as inquirers and you, the teacher, as a facilitator of the learning process as opposed to a transmitter of knowledge.

**Figure 2.** *C3 Framework Organization*

| DIMENSION 1: DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AND PLANNING INQUIRIES | DIMENSION 2: APPLYING DISCIPLINARY TOOLS AND CONCEPTS | DIMENSION 3: EVALUATING SOURCES AND USING EVIDENCE | DIMENSION 4: COMMUNICATING CONCLUSIONS AND TAKING INFORMED ACTION |
|---|---|---|---|
| Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries | Civics | Gathering and Evaluating Sources | Communicating and Critiquing Conclusions |
| | Economics | | |
| | Geography | Developing Claims and Using Evidence | Taking Informed Action |
| | History | | |

Note.    The C3 Framework is organized into four dimensions. From *The College, Career, and Civic Life (C3) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K–12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History* by National Council for the Social Studies, 2013, p. 12.

# Developing an Inquiry

As noted in the previous section, there are many ways to conceptualize an inquiry within the classroom. The conceptualization selected (e.g., inquirED, Stripling Model, C3 Framework, etc.) will provide you with guideposts, but developing an inquiry that challenges students to construct and build a claim is challenging. Further, creating a critical inquiry requires teachers to challenge the "commonsensical ways" of thinking and "begin with the premise that there is no such thing as neutral or objective knowledge," as outlined by Crowley and King (2018, p. 15). In doing so, it begins to frame the planning process and the materials students will access through a lens which contests traditional or dominant narratives. In the sections below, we utilize a blueprint that scaffolds the design process referred to as the Inquiry Design Model (IDM) blueprint (Swan et al., 2018). Though the IDM blueprint can be quite prescriptive as there are a series of steps outlined in a particular order that one can follow to develop an inquiry, we have found the general structure used in this blueprint helpful when designing an inquiry. This structure includes three phases of planning that Swan et al. refer to as framing, filling, and finishing an inquiry. We will now explore each in further detail below. Further examples in the chapter "Bayard Rustin: Does Your *Labor* or *Label* Matter More?" by Corey Sell, will provide additional details on utilizing the IDM Blueprint to develop an inquiry.

## Framing the Inquiry

When framing the inquiry, you need to consider the content and standards you want to teach, an entry point for students that will inspire authentic engagement from the start of the inquiry, and the end result of learning you hope will happen with students. Attention to these elements within the planning process will create a foundation for the next two phases of planning, so they are the first steps you should take in planning. Below, we describe these first steps in planning to ensure that you are set up for a successful inquiry which positions students as active and engaged learners.

## *Content and Standards*

The standards you will be required to teach will vary from state to state, and even district to district. Oftentimes, standards are related directly to the content that you are teaching, though many states have skill-based or process-oriented standards that provide minimal guidance on the specific content to teach. Previewing the standards that you are responsible for teaching is a great place to begin your planning journey. Depending on the type of standards (i.e., process, skill, or content), you will gain more insight into the social studies content you want to teach. It is important to note that content standards will prescribe specific content for you to teach, like events, people, and dates, whereas process or thematic standards tend to focus more on larger concepts and thinking processes, allowing room for you to fill in the content. Either way, the standards will jumpstart your planning process and provide some general ideas of what you will teach your students.

Another approach would be to start with the students and build an inquiry around their curiosities. This approach can be as simple as asking students or observing their interests from your work with them. Simultaneously, you can review the standards to determine where there is a fit between the students' curiosity and the required state standards. This approach will ensure that the inquiry fits with the learning interests of the students and is strongly relevant to students. Though a student-centric approach can be powerful, not all inquiries can come directly from students, and many teachers find some middle ground between starting solely with the standards or the opposite: starting solely with the students.

In either case, once you have a sense of the content you want to teach, you are ready to begin finding sources. Yes, you heard us right. It is time to begin looking for sources! In a way, a cursory search into the source world helps you determine what is out there and available if you choose to teach your selected content. This initial search is also a means for you to gain more knowledge yourself on the topic and establish a more nuanced understanding of the associated concepts and skills, which will be important when planning your inquiry.

Why start with sources and not a textbook? Well, most states throughout the U.S. have standards requiring the use of primary sources beginning in kindergarten (Veccia, 2004). The use of primary sources establishes social studies as an interpretive, evidence-based area of inquiry that requires multi-literacies to identify and interpret data from diverse sources. Primary sources are also a fundamental informational resource, which "simultaneously broadens students' worldviews and supports their critical thinking abilities" (Morgan & Rasinski, 2012, p. 586).

## Developing Questions

A lesson would not be an inquiry without the use of questions. Questions can focus student learning and, if developed well, can produce powerful learning outcomes for students (Grant, 2013; Wiggins & McTighe, 2012). As with the content chosen, the process of developing questions can be a fully student- or teacher-centered process. Allowing students to engage in developing an inquiry question can ensure your content is more culturally relevant and grounded in their interests and allows for more student "buy-in" when answering questions. This process will require time as you must work with students to plan questions that can be answered through an inquiry process involving the social studies. One approach for engaging students is with the Question Formulation Technique (QFT) created by the Right Question Institute. In the QFT, students produce questions (or statements that can be turned into questions) in a brainstorm-like fashion. The teacher designs a prompt related to the overarching topic or desired learning outcomes to focus and stimulate questions. Next, students categorize their questions into closed-ended (i.e., those that can be answered with a "yes" or "no") and open-ended questions (i.e., those that require a longer explanation). Then, students prioritize the questions they would like answered and pick one or two to answer. As facilitator, you, as the educator, have an important role to step in and guide students toward

questions that the social studies disciplines could answer as well as any questions that may fit with the required standards you must teach. In a way, you are looking for these state standard connections as students are engaged in this process.

If you were to take a more teacher-centered approach, which would allow you to scaffold the inquiry process more and ensure sources are accessible to be provided for students to interpret, you would want to frame questions in a way that captures students' interest. There is not an easy prescription to follow for you to create a question. However, researchers do provide different ways to frame this pursuit that will guide you in developing this skill, which will improve with continued practice and reflection.

McTighe and Wiggins (2012) use the term *essential question* (EQ) and define it with the following seven characteristics:

1. having no single, final answer (i.e., open-ended)
2. thought-provoking or being able to spark discussion
3. demands higher-order thinking (i.e., cannot be answered by recall alone)
4. points toward transferable ideas within disciplines
5. sparks further inquiry
6. requires support and justification and not just an answer
7. recurs over time (i.e., a question that can and should be revisited again)

They argue that the aim of an EQ is to stimulate thought on concepts or big ideas that are foundational to a discipline. These types of questions should be used to organize a unit of instruction in contrast to a daily lesson.

The C3 Framework (NCSS, 2013) and IDM Blueprint (Swan et al., 2018) both use the term *compelling question* (CQ), and we find this concept helpful for teachers when developing an inquiry question. Like an EQ, a CQ is meant to frame an entire inquiry, not a single-day of instruction—we will get to those questions later. Swan et al. argue that crafting a CQ is "a way to find the common ground between content and students" (p. 31). With regard to content, the question should be "intellectually meaty," meaning the question needs to "reflect an enduring issue, concern, or debate in social studies and draw on multiple disciplines" (Grant, 2013, p. 325). With regards to students, the question should matter to them in terms of being something they consider worth knowing.

When creating CQs, Swan et al. (2018) suggest realizing the value of a "working CQ." In other words, your question will change as you move through the other phases of planning, and that is okay. Oftentimes, you may start with a CQ that centers on content but has no relevance to students like, "What happened at the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom?" As you learn more about this content over time, you will find ways to make the information relevant for your students and revise your instruction. Understand that developing your inquiry question is an iterative process that requires you to continually

come back and reflect upon your approach. That is why you may find it helpful to develop a "working CQ" in the beginning and modify it as you move further in the planning process.

## *Assessment*

You do not want to get too far into your planning process without thinking about how you will assess student learning. Planning the assessment requires you to recognize what you want students to learn from your inquiry and how students will demonstrate this knowledge. There are a variety of ways to frame student learning within a unit of instruction, but one of the more useful is McTighe and Wiggins' (1999) Understanding by Design (UbD) model. This model employs "backwards planning"—meaning you start with the end results in mind then move to plan your instruction. Identifying student learning at the beginning of your planning process ensures that you will create a pathway for students to reach these results.

Wiggins and McTighe (2012) begin the process by asking, What should students be able to know, understand, and be able to do (KUDs)? This model might be a useful means to think about what you want your students to learn by the end of an inquiry. The understandings are the big concepts and ideas, whereas the knowledge is the specific content such as people, facts, dates, etc. Lastly, the skills are the processes you want students to be able to do by the end. Recognizing the KUDs upfront will ensure that you develop robust assessments that measure your intended outcomes and that align with your instruction, which will be planned for at a later point. We suggest simply listing out your learning goals into the three categories described above and consider this a working list. You will need to pare the list down or perhaps add to the goals as you continue developing your inquiry. What matters most is that you have these end goals in mind in order to then move toward developing your actual inquiry assessments. You will develop assessments that capture student learning at the end of the inquiry (i.e., summative assessments) and during the inquiry (i.e., formative assessments). Both types of assessment development are discussed below.

**Summative Assessment.** The summative assessment details how you will determine that students have mastered your objectives and specifies the criteria you will use to assess student learning. Within the IDM Blueprint, the summative performative task provides the space for you to plan with the "end in mind" and develop this assessment. This element of the inquiry includes two parts: (a) argument task and (b) extension. The argument task is ultimately the answer to your CQ (i.e., the student's argument). Swan et al. (2018) define an argument as "a collection of claims supported by relevant evidence that answer a compelling question" (p. 48). This is your end goal of the inquiry. Therefore, at the start of your planning process, you want to construct a response to your CQ as best you can, which can be referred to as stress testing the CQ (Swan et al., 2018). This stress test will ensure that you "articulate a position or stance along with an overview of the major claims that students can potentially make at the end of the inquiry" (p. 54). You will want to develop a range of possible arguments that students might make with the sources you provide throughout the inquiry. These

potential responses to your stress testing the CQ are referred to as argument stems in the IDM Blueprint. It is crucial to pinpoint different argument stems students can make with sources at this point as this process will reveal the worth of your sources (i.e., some may not be helpful to answer the question), whereas other sources may need to be the focus. At this point, you will also realize the variety of sources you should provide so that you allow students space to develop varying responses using multiple perspectives.

The extension task provides students an opportunity to expand upon what they learned from answering the CQ. Swan et al. (2018) explain that these tasks help students make connections across the curriculum, practice communication skills, and express arguments in different modalities. For example, knowing how students might answer the CQ, you might choose to have students use a discussion protocol and share out their thinking with the class or in small groups. Another idea would be to have students create an online infographic explaining their point of view and then share this with others. The point is for students to take their argument or claim and make it public, which promotes literacy skills, such as speaking and listening.

**Formative Assessment.** The assessment phases of the individual lessons provide ideal opportunities to use sources to measure not only what students know but also how they think. At the beginning of the lesson, a pre-assessment may reveal students' prior knowledge and skills. Teachers can use this information to differentiate the lesson and provide appropriate scaffolding to meet students' individual needs. Throughout the lesson, formative assessments provide more immediate feedback about students' understanding of the concepts and skills introduced in the lesson. As students practice and refine their analysis of sources, teachers need targeted tasks to quickly gain insight into patterns of students' thinking, identify gaps in understanding, and immediately adapt instruction to address misconceptions. Think of these assessments as checkpoints in a game or on a road trip. Students may revisit items introduced earlier in the instruction, or they may demonstrate their analysis skills using new sources that are related to the topic of focus or that present diverse perspectives.

Beyond the Bubble, on the Stanford History Education Group website, provides examples of History Assessments of Thinking (HATs) that link to documents in the Library of Congress' digital archives. Short videos explain the assessments and offer multiple ideas to embed them into instruction. The website also details the following steps to inspire the design of similar formative assessments with primary sources:

1. Decide if you are assessing content knowledge or process skills (i.e., sourcing, corroboration, etc.).
2. Use one of the Library of Congress' primary source sets or search the archives for appropriate material to use in the assessment.
3. Create a question about the primary source(s) that aligns with the focus of the

assessment (Step 1). Example questions include "Which came first?" "How would this source be useful to historians?" "Is this source reliable and why?"

4. Cross-check that the assessment requires students to demonstrate the skill or content knowledge you identified in Step 1.
5. Pilot the assessment and revise as needed.

By following these steps, you can gauge students' historical understanding and evaluate their ability to apply critical thinking skills as they analyze primary source materials.

## *The Opening*

Beginning an inquiry provides you the space to capture students' attention and interest. A strong opening has the power to sustain student learning through the duration of the inquiry. The IDM Blueprint labels this element as "staging the compelling question," and it should be noted that this opening is meant for the entire inquiry (i.e., unit of instruction). Later, we will address opening a daily lesson, which you are probably more familiar with in planning (i.e., bell ringers or hooks).

Swan et al. (2018) define four purposes of an opening that you may want to think about when you design this element. First, the opening simply introduces the entire inquiry to students, and second, this introduction should indicate the relevance of the topic and question to students' lives. Third, the opening should introduce the understandings (i.e., big ideas or concepts) the inquiry will cover. Last, the entry point can be used to capture students' background knowledge and dispositions towards the inquiry content, which is a powerful means to "build early interest and engagement in an inquiry" (p. 111).

Sources are a strong resource you could draw upon to design an opening activity. For example, you could preview a source from the unit. Previewing will allow students multiple exposures to sources, which helps if the source is a particularly complex text. You could also utilize a source that intrigues students and makes them ask questions about the topic at hand. Much like how the opening of a movie can draw in a viewer, the opening of the unit can pull students in and drive them to dig deeper.

## Filling the Inquiry

The second phase in planning will help you "develop a clear instructional path that allows students to acquire the content knowledge and argumentation skills necessary for the summative performance task" (Swan et al., 2018, p. 59). In other words, you should plan out a sequence of lesson plans. There is a plethora of ways you can design lesson plans and even more templates for writing them. This work is beyond the scope of this chapter. Therefore, we will take a more general approach to planning—one that focuses on three components essential to teaching a social studies inquiry that we pull from the IDM Blueprint. These three components, which can be embedded in a variety of lesson plan designs and templates,

will ensure the integrity of teaching inquiry using the C3 Framework approach. The three components are: (a) questions, (b) tasks, and (c) sources (Swan et al., 2018). Before discussing each of these lesson planning components, we will draw your attention to the opening of a lesson, which sets the stage for the learning that follows.

## Lesson Openings

During the introduction of a lesson, you want to build a relationship between the students and the focus of study using sources. Bell ringers, anticipatory sets, hooks—the opening to a lesson goes by many names, and a key attribute to a good opening is sparking interest in the topic and making connections to prior knowledge. Leveraging sources is a great way to frame the inquiry and engage students in the lesson from the very start, creating the opportunity for mini-inquiries by presenting mysterious, intriguing, and thought-provoking content at the onset of the lesson.

In this introductory phase, you want to choose an engaging source, such as a resource that supports a clear aim, is accessible to students based on their background knowledge, yet offers a riddle or puzzle-like element. During the launch of the lesson, source analysis may take many forms. Just as efficient readers choose from a diverse complement of strategies depending on the demands of the text, teachers need to introduce students to strategic and flexible approaches to optimize learning with sources and foster active engagement.

## Questions

Though you have framed your unit with a CQ, you can still use questions to guide your daily lessons. The IDM Blueprint labels these as supporting questions (SQ), and they are a means of giving focus to particular content and of sequencing this content toward students being able to answer the CQ (Swan et al., 2018). The use of a SQ also ensures that students inquire and engage with the sources in powerful ways. A set of sources may need questions to support students in *how* they approach and analyze the sources at hand. In a sense, you can think of this work as mini-inquiries that require skills they will then use to answer the larger inquiry CQ. We suggest 3–4 SQs per unit; however, this will vary depending on your context—especially the grade level you teach.

## Sources

The sources used in your lesson plans help students build content knowledge as well as construct and support arguments related to the SQ. Three to four sources are often suggested, but the number of sources really depends on the SQ and the complexity of the sources you choose for students. The sources that you provide here (or have students acquire here) ground the disciplinary literacy work that will be asked of them and influences their perspective. It is crucial for you to select sources that represent diverse perspectives—as you will see in many of the chapters throughout this text, sources can transform the classroom.

**Scaffolding.** Understanding the extensive amount of time and resources that are necessary to lesson plan effectively, lesson planning also requires an in-depth understanding of how to scaffold student understanding. Students cannot just be given sources and be expected to "understand" content, history, or other nuanced materials. Students will need to have structures in place, within the lesson, to support the inquiry process. Similar to the scientific process or operations in math, studying social studies has methods for analysis that can be embedded within lessons. The Observe, Reflect, and Question protocol, provided by the Library of Congress, scaffolds the analysis of sources in a circular fashion (Figure 3). Students engage and re-engage with a source in an effort to build meaning and support inquiry in a guided fashion.

As noted in the protocol, an inquiry is driven by questions and the search for meaning. As you plan lessons, structuring the inquiry process for students through scaffolded measures, like the Observe, Reflect, Question protocol, helps to build their critical thinking and analysis skills.

**Figure 3.** *Teacher's Guide to Analyzing Primary Sources*



TEACHER'S GUIDE
**ANALYZING PRIMARY SOURCES**

Guide students with the sample questions as they respond to the primary source. **Encourage them to go back and forth between the columns; there is no correct order.**

**OBSERVE**

**Have students identify and note details.**

Sample Questions:

What do you notice first? · Find something small but interesting. · What do you notice that you didn't expect? · What do you notice that you can't explain? · What do you notice now that you didn't earlier?

**REFLECT**

**Encourage students to generate and test hypotheses about the source.**

Where do you think this came from? · Why do you think somebody made this? · What do you think was happening when this was made? · Who do you think was the audience for this item? · What tool was used to create this? · Why do you think this item is important? · If someone made this today, what would be different? · What can you learn from examining this?

**QUESTION**

**Have students ask questions to lead to more observations and reflections.**

What do you wonder about...
who? · what? · when? · where? · why? · how?

**FURTHER INVESTIGATION**

**Help students to identify questions appropriate for further investigation, and to develop a research strategy for finding answers.**
Sample Question: What more do you want to know, and how can you find out?

A few follow-up activity ideas:

**Beginning**
*Have students compare two related primary source items.*

**Intermediate**
*Have students expand or alter textbook explanations of history based on primary sources they study.*

**Advanced**
*Ask students to consider how a series of primary sources support or challenge information and understanding on a particular topic. Have students refine or revise conclusions based on their study of each subsequent primary source.*

*For more tips on using primary sources, go to*
***http://www.loc.gov/teachers***

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS | LOC.gov/teachers

**Note.** The Observe, Reflect, Question protocol scaffolds the analysis and interpretive processes involved in making meaning of primary sources. Prompts are provided to support the teacher in guiding students through each component of analysis and interpretation. From the Library of Congress, www.loc.gov/programs/teachers/getting-started-with-primary-sources/guides/

The scaffolding process can be tailored to the source you select. Check out some of the other teacher's guides based on the type of source below:

- Analyzing Political Cartoons
- Analyzing Motion Pictures
- Analyzing Newspapers
- Analyzing Books and Other Printed Texts
- Analyzing Maps
- Analyzing Photographs and Prints

## *Tasks*

The tasks provide a means for students to use sources in order to answer the SQ. Swan et al. (2018) define these tasks as "a series of learning experiences that enable students to demonstrate their knowledge of the content, concepts, and skills that are needed to produce clear, coherent, and evidence-based arguments" (p. 92). In a way, tasks provide opportunities for students to practice skills and learn content they will need to complete the summative performance task (i.e., answering the CQ). If viewed in this light, tasks "provide teachers multiple opportunities to evaluate what students know and are able to do so that teachers have a steady loop of data to inform his/her instructional decision-making" (Grant et al., 2014, "Formative Performance Task" section).

## Finishing the Inquiry

Oftentimes, the end result of "learning" is a score on an exam or test. However, what makes an inquiry approach to social studies unique is the summative performance task—described earlier in the "Summative Assessment" section—that allows students to respond to the CQ with an argument/conclusion leveraged from the sources used throughout the inquiry. Therefore, the ultimate aim with the summative performance task is not simply content knowledge demonstrated with a final test score but skills and dispositions, such as the ability to explore varying perspectives, build understanding by creating linkages and analyzing conflicting ideas, and communicating one's argument to an audience.

You could choose to stop students here, thinking they have answered the CQ and asking, what more could be achieved? However, finishing the inquiry (as outlined in the IDM Template with the term *Taking Informed Action*) provides students opportunities to practice citizenship (Swan et al., 2018). Here, students apply the skills and content knowledge learned throughout the inquiry to take informed action about a current issue or problem. Swan et al. eloquently refer to this phase of planning as *crescendoing* the intellectual pursuits from the inquiry into opportunities for civic action. Therefore, this phase should be viewed as the ultimate aim of a social studies inquiry, and this step of taking informed action will ensure you fulfill the purpose of the social studies as defined by the National Council for the Social Studies in 1992: "to help young people make informed and reasoned decisions for the public

good" (NCSS, 1994, p. 3).

To plan the taking informed action section, you want to start with what students learned throughout the inquiry about an issue or issues and provide space for them to think about it outside the context of the inquiry—demonstrating a deeper understanding of the issue or issues. Second, you should provide space for students to *assess* possible solutions to the issue or problem at hand, and assessment can be done in large or small groups. Finally, you want to allow students the opportunity to *act* in a way that promotes a solution to the issue or problem. This action can vary in complexity, depending upon your students and their possible forms of impact, but the desired outcome is to mobilize students as transformative agents who use their knowledge to enact meaningful changes that address contemporary social justice issues in their classroom, school, and/or community (Agarwal-Rangnath, 2015, 2020). For example, at the elementary level, Picower (2012) outlines six elements of social justice design. These elements include (a) appreciating oneself, (b) respecting others, (c) addressing issues of injustice, (d) understanding social movements to evoke change, (e) raising awareness, and finally (f) taking social action against injustice. You may want to think of action, also, in terms of the locus of the activity. Swan et al. (2018) define three areas where students can take informed action: (a) classroom, (b) school, or (c) community. Thinking about the reach of students' action here may be helpful when planning for this phase of the inquiry. It should be noted that this section, unlike the others, may require planning in conjunction with the students as opposed to planning in advance. For example, facilitating a discussion with students at the end of an inquiry about how their learning connects to a current issue or problem will provide you insight on what students are curious about and what types of connections they are making to current issues or problems. From here, you can plan out more specific ways to help students *understand*, *assess*, and *act*. Continued conversations with students will lead you to know more about what actions the students are interested in, which is important because you want students to develop an action that connects to their interests and gives them ownership of the issue or problem. The important element with regards to planning, then, is to listen to students, acknowledge their voices and choices, and provide space for them to take ownership of their actions.

# Reflective Activities

Planning an inquiry takes time, effort, and understanding of the process. As a reflective practitioner, it is important that you engage in cycles of development and explore a variety of methods relating to planning to support your growth as an educator. To help you continue to explore these themes, the following prompts and activities are provided to close this chapter:

1. Review a grade level and topic of interest linked to relevant social studies state standards in the state you plan on teaching. How would you approach teaching this standard? How might you use an inquiry approach to engage students? Using

the framework provided in this chapter, see how you would construct a lesson incorporating primary sources from the Library of Congress.

2. Head to the Classroom Materials webpage and select one lesson plan presented by the Library of Congress. Explore the description and background information and, of course, the lesson structure and internal components. What do you like about the lesson? How might you leverage these sources with your future students? How do these lessons embed an inquiry focus?

3. Planning lessons will task you with accounting for a variety of learners and a host of issues that a classroom can offer. You will most likely have a template or guide that your school or district will work from, but deliberate planning is key. Check out the templates provided by C3 Teachers to explore how to structure the daily lessons and reflect on how you will do so with a focus on inquiry.

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