

### Foreword

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This book is both brilliant and practical. Either of these would be an accomplishment, so the combination is special. The book presents a model of curriculum and instruction for teaching social studies with and for inquiry. It is a user's guide that will help social studies teachers do the very thing they are asked mainly to do: design and implement inquiry lessons that teach students how to make evidence-based claims *and* how to evaluate the strength of claims made by others—textbook authors, teachers, public officials, journalists, internet trolls, and so on.

When we teach *with* inquiry, we engage students in a way of thinking so that they will learn important content. The content may be the causes of famines, why some social movements succeed while so many fail, the consequences of the agricultural revolution, the history of democracy, the fall of the Qing dynasty, the invention of human rights—whatever subject matter the curriculum requires and teachers, in their role as curriculum gatekeepers, choose to emphasize. When we teach with inquiry, inquiry is a means to learn this content. But when we teach *for* inquiry, we aim to develop students' ability to engage in this way of thinking: to make evidence-based arguments, whatever the content. When we teach for inquiry, in other words, the inquiry process becomes an end in itself, an instructional goal valued for the kind of reasoning it cultivates. When we teach *with* inquiry, we have a content goal. When we teach *for* inquiry, we have a thinking goal.

The trick is to do both, simultaneously—to teach with and for inquiry. Students learn to answer a compelling content question with an evidence-based argument. They learn what an evidence-based argument *is* in addition to learning about the causes of famines, the history of democracy, or whatever the content selected for instruction. The question students answer is inquiry-worthy because it deals with a “juicy piece of content,” as the authors of this book say. It is a compelling question around which additional questions and content swirl, like planets orbiting a star. Choosing the right “star” is at the heart of the Inquiry Design Model (IDM), and a whole course made of such stars, one well-designed inquiry after another, would be a triumph. But, I'm getting ahead of myself.

Let me return to why the book is brilliant and practical. It is brilliant because the authors' understanding of classroom inquiry is deep and generative. Their grasp of inquiry has been honed in the furnace of study and practice—in knowledge of the long tradition of inquiry in the social studies but also in real-time discussions with other scholars and teachers who are making classroom inquiry common and routine, not special and rare. Most important, their understanding has been sharpened in numerous attempts to design inquiry plans of their own and with teachers in workshops they have led and with students at the universities where they teach. The result—the IDM—is presented in the three parts and ten chapters of this meticulously organized book. At the center is the evidence-based argument. As Swan, Lee, and Grant write, “developing the skill of argumentation is the most important contribution of a strong social studies education.” *Learning to make and evaluate evidence-based arguments is the singular, unifying, intellectual goal of all social studies courses.*

The book is practical because it is grounded in the classroom work of social studies teachers and because it aims to improve classroom practice. Because it is practice-centered, the book is both realistic and idealistic. The IDM itself is practical because it lays out a clear path from compelling question to evidence-based argument. Readers will learn the model, soup to nuts. How to craft a compelling question that is actually compelling? This is detailed here. How to scaffold students' creation of an evidence-based argument that answers that question? This is

detailed here. The four dimensions of the C3 Framework’s Inquiry Arc—framing the question, mobilizing disciplinary knowledge, making and evaluating claims, and then applying and expressing them—are made real and concrete. Sticking points are revealed, pitfalls are highlighted, and rigor and quality are pursued relentlessly. Helpful examples are abundant.

The implications for civic education (education for democracy) are straightforward and potent. People living in societies that are struggling to create or maintain democratic systems of government are obligated to weigh evidence and grapple with competing accounts. They are required not to “jump to conclusions” but, instead, to be patient and evenhanded, to sort things out, to listen and read, to reason and observe, and to exercise judgment. Everything from jury duty to deliberating public policy and voting depends on “we the people” being able to pull this off. This is democratic work and intellectual work all at once, and it is not easy. It is the core meaning of the slogan “Question Authority.” Indeed, inquiry is *how* to question authority. It is intelligence in operation. It is the evidence- and logic-based way to apply the mind to problems. It is a content-rich way, obviously, because inquiry is meaningless without powerful subject matter. It is a values-rich way, too, for it unabashedly values critical thinking, experimentation, revision in light of evidence, respect for multiple perspectives, and an open future. It values, in other words, a political culture that favors science (evidence, transparency, refutation) over folklore or dogma, and it values liberal democracy (freedom, justice, popular sovereignty) over tyranny and oppression. Importantly, it does not prescribe where students should end up. It does not indoctrinate them but, rather, respects their budding autonomy and, with it, their growing capacity to make uncoerced decisions.

Nearly everyone makes evidence-based arguments. What teachers try to accomplish in inquiry-based social studies classrooms is teaching students how to make evidence-based arguments of the highest quality. This involves, for teachers, connecting theory to practice. Theory means understanding what we are doing; practice means doing as we understand, using what we’ve learned. To have a teaching practice is to study teaching while doing it, experimenting as we go. Clearly, the two are inseparable. In his 1910 book *How We Think*, John Dewey called this “the double-movement of reflection.” We humans observe and do things, and then we reflect on (theorize) what our observations and actions mean. We then test these theories in new observations and actions, and then use this new material to revise our theories, recursively. We test our countless little theories in countless new experiences, and we use the new experiences to revise our theories. This dance, this double movement, is how we get on, intelligently, in the world. The process is continuous, until we stop learning for whatever reason: maybe our theories are no longer challenged by new evidence, so they just seem “true”; or our resources dry up, or we get lazy. When we joke, “Don’t bother me with the facts, I’ve already made up my mind,” we acknowledge that our inquiry has ended, that we have become attached to a particular claim and aren’t going to pay attention to experience or evidence anymore.

What the IDM aims to do is *educate* the inherent human capacity for inquiry, shaping it from its everyday, casual form to its more rigorous, scientific form—from undisciplined to disciplined inquiry. This is why children and youth are sent to school. This is what social studies education is for. It furnishes students’ minds with the subject matter of history and the social sciences *and* it empowers them to reason with evidence—sourcing, contextualizing, corroborating, questioning. This liberates them to think outside the boxes of their upbringing and the status quo. Inquiry is a blade that can cut through the crust of conventional wisdom, leading the thinker into the unknown, thinking the not-yet-thought. This is its social justice rationale. All of our students should have access to it.

So, let’s get to it. Swan, Lee, and Grant have loads of experience developing and evaluating inquiries, and they lay it out succinctly in these pages. I invite you to let them be your coaches for planning and leading high-quality classroom inquiries.