



Guiding the Conversation Inquiry in Social Studies – Alex’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, a first year elementary French immersion teacher is reflecting about how inquiry in Social Studies has impacted her teaching practice. The teacher responded to these questions, which also may be helpful for you to reflect upon, either before or after viewing the video clips:

- What’s 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):** How might the teacher’s enthusiasm for inquiry-based learning help to engage the students in their own learning? Do you agree with the statement “Kids need to live it to believe it?” Why or why not?

Clip 2 Synopsis: The teacher discusses parent observations about evidence of student learning because of inquiry.

- **Question(s):** What might parents need to know about the role of inquiry in the Social Studies Program of Studies? Can you recall a time when parents noticed excitement in their children’s’ learning? What kind of learning experience was involved?

Link to the Alberta Education Program of Studies and other resources at <http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/program/socialstudies.aspx>

For further information on learning opportunities to support implementation visit www.erlc.ca

Clip 3 Synopsis Teacher discusses what she has done in her class to create a culture of inquiry. Discussion of a project related to the election and exploration of political party views.

- **Question(s):** Why might the teacher ask them to work on investigating a party different from the one they originally chose?

Clip 4 Synopsis: The teacher describes how she had grade six students participate in a social justice fair.

- **Question(s):** What kinds of projects have you done or seen to help students develop responsible citizenship?

Clip 5 Synopsis: Teacher discusses how she teaches controversial issues and uses debate to have students think about multiple perspectives and other effective teaching practices.

- **Question(s):** What types of strategies help students make meaning of issues related to social studies?

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