**All Students, All Standards: Instructional Strategies Institute**

**Research to Support High Impact Instruction in Social Studies**

While there are numerous teaching strategies for effective social studies instruction, the research on high impact instruction in social studies (in terms of a positive impact on student learning) focuses primarily in two areas: historical thinking, and civic knowledge and skills for citizenship. History education researchers tend to focus on how students analyze multiple historical documents and develop historical arguments, while civic education researchers focus on students’ evaluating information about public issues from multiple sources and viewpoints and develop reasoned judgments (Barton, K.C. & Avery, P.G., 2016, p. 1002). It’s important to note that while the strategies below are discussed individually, there is typically overlap among them when they are implemented in the classroom. These are three instructional strategies that research shows to have an impact on student learning:

1. [Inquiry](http://www.teachhub.com/teaching-strategies-use-inquiry-based-learning): A student inquiry approach is one that focuses “on ‘ill-structured’ problems for which there is no consensus as to a particular solution; active student learning in which students construct their own knowledge and meaning around questions that require deep or higher order thinking…” (Barton & Avery, 2016, p. 1002).
   1. The teacher integrates the application of historical inquiry, examination and evaluation of public policy, critical analysis of conflicting sources of information, problem and solution, interpretive analysis of historical artifacts, and primary and secondary source documents into learning experiences.
      * Problem/Project Based Learning: A teaching method in which students gain knowledge and skills by working for an extended period of time to investigate and respond to an authentic, engaging and complex question, problem, or challenge ([Source: The Buck Institute for Education](http://www.bie.org/about/what_pbl));
      * Questioning: Questions may be wither teacher or student created; either way, [crafting the right question is a key step that ensures students learn to critically evaluate information](http://www.edweek.org/tm/articles/2011/10/31/tln_lazar.html) and engage in the study of the content.
        + [Fostering students questions to engage students in classroom inquiry](https://www.edutopia.org/blog/strategies-for-inquiry-based-learning-john-mccarthy%20-) .
      * Document Based Lessons: DBLs revolve around a central question and includes a set of primary sources carefully selected to assist students in answering the key question. Sources are selected to be accessible for students of varying reading skills and abilities (Reisman, 2012; and [Reading Like a Historian from the Stanford History Education Group](http://sheg.stanford.edu/rlh)).
2. [Discussion](http://www.washington.edu/teaching/teaching-resources/engaging-students-in-learning/leading-dynamic-discussions/): Through discussion, students learn the skills necessary to participate in a democratic society: listening to others who may have differing opinions, talking about their views to others, and analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of controversial issues.
   1. The teacher structures and facilitates ongoing formal and informal discussions based on a shared understanding of rules and discourse.

* [Socratic Seminar](https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/teaching-strategies/socratic-seminar): Develops a deep understanding of a text understand the ideas, issues, and values reflected in a specific text;
* [Structured Academic Controversy](http://peterpappas.com/2013/06/how-to-teach-structured-academic-controversy.html) - engaging students through opposing positions to state, explain, and defend their views with evidence and logic, concluding with some type of writing such as an argumentative essay.

1. [Engagement with Sources](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/whyuse.html): Students should engage with multiple sources in a social studies classroom including: artifacts, written documents/texts, film, maps, photographs, artwork, oral histories, and other historical sources. Engaging with these types of sources help students to analyze, interpret, and respond to historical and social issues. (Barton & Avery, 2016, p. 1009).
   1. The teacher provides opportunities for students to develop historical comprehension in order that they might reconstruct the literal meaning of a historical passage, identify the central question(s) addressed in historical narrative, draw upon data in historical maps, charts, and other graphic organizers; and draw upon visual, literary, or musical sources. ([Source: NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers](http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/NCSSTeacherStandardsVol1-rev2004.pdf)).
      * [Using Primary Sources in the Classroom](http://www.loc.gov/teachers/usingprimarysources/):
        + To corroborate secondary sources
        + To teach historical perspective
        + Generate hypotheses
        + Develop critical thinking skills
        + Develop historical literacy skills ([Stanford History Education Group](https://sheg.stanford.edu/intro-historical-thinking))
          1. Sourcing
          2. Contextualizing
          3. Close reading
          4. Corroborating

Providing students with opportunities to engage in meaningful inquiry-based tasks, participate in vigorous discussions, and interpret and critique primary and secondary sources, has been shown to have a positive impact on student learning. In addition to these high impact strategies, teachers who provide appropriate instructional scaffolds and a supportive, open learning environment in their classrooms give their students the best chances to succeed in their social studies learning.

Barton, K.C. & Avery, P.G., (2016). Research on Social Studies Education: Diverse Students, Settings, and Methods. In D. H. Gitomer, & C. A. Bell (Eds.), Handbook of Research on Teaching (985-1038). Washington D.C.: American Educational Research Association.

Reisman, A. (2012) The ‘Document-Based Lesson’: Bringing disciplinary inquiry into high school history classrooms with adolescent struggling readers, Journal of Curriculum Studies, 44:2, 233-264, DOI: 10.1080/00220272.2011.591436.

National Council for the Social Studies Task Force on Teacher Education Standards (2004). NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers (2002). Retrieved from [NCSS National Standards for Social Studies Teachers (2002) (PDF)](http://www.socialstudies.org/sites/default/files/NCSSTeacherStandardsVol1-rev2004.pdf).