What does teaching history and social science involve?

Assumptions we have about K-8 teaching and learning:

- Sensemaking is central to learning history and social sciences.
- Young children can begin to learn about complex disciplinary practices, concepts, and topics in age-appropriate ways. All students deserve such opportunities.
- Students come to our K-8 classrooms with knowledge and experience related to a range of topics and issues they might study in school, but students may not always have knowledge about the specific topics they will study in school. Teachers must value and elicit students' incoming knowledge and build on it to support students' analysis and sensemaking.
- History and social science investigations are a key approach to giving students a chance to develop conceptual understandings, begin to master disciplinary practices, and learn about H-SS topics. Children learn to think analytically and develop understanding through experience, not through listening alone.
- Several high-leverage practices are foundational to teaching history-social science through investigations.
- Readily available texts and artifacts (i.e., primary sources online) are often not classroom-ready or do not support inquiry when used alone (e.g., textbooks). Readily available curriculum materials often do not take an inquiry approach to learning history-social science.
- There are many texts and artifacts that can be used in history-social science instruction, but it takes time to learn how to cull through them and make good choices for the classroom.
- The C3 Framework and Common Core State Standards for Literacy and ELA highlight disciplinary practices and concepts; state standards retain the clearest delineation of topics for study in history-social science.

To support the process of inquiry, we we adapt an instructional framework for thinking about teaching social studies lessons used in science education, and call it **Engage, Experience, Argue** (or "EEA").[1] Using this framework, teachers can assess existing curriculum materials and revise them with attention to these core components of investigative lessons that provide space for inquiry.

> ***Engage*****:** Teacher poses a central question for the lesson, brings out students' initial ideas about the content at hand, and makes the content feel interesting, important, and relevant to students.
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> ***Experience***: Teacher *briefly* models a disciplinary thinking or language practice before students explore sources with small groups and form theories about the compelling question.
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> ***Argue*****:** Teacher facilitates a whole-class discussion of the lesson's most important content, and/or provides opportunities for students to communicate their interpretations and arguments about the content at hand.

[1] The 5E instructional model comes from Bybee, R. W., Taylor, J. A., Gardner, A., Van Scotter, P., Powell, J. C., Westbrook, A., & Landes, N. (2006). *The BSCS 5E instructional model: Origins and effectiveness*. Colorado Springs, Co: BSCS, 5, 88-98. Or, see https://bscs.org/bscs-5e-instructional-model. Davis and her colleagues adapted this for science education methods at the University of Michigan. For more on this see: Davis, E. A. (in press). Practice-based elementary science teacher education. In C. Cox, P. Aylwin, & L. Meckes (Eds.), *Opportunities to learn in teacher education programs*. Santiago, Chile: Catholic University Editions.