



Best Practices in Social Studies: Part One

Disciplinary Literacy & Inquiry

Virtual Professional
Development
June 4, 2020

Disciplinary literacy is distinct from "content area" reading

“Disciplinary literacy is more aimed at what we teach (which would include how to read and use information like a scientist), than how we teach (such as how can students read science text well enough to pass the test). The idea of disciplinary literacy is that students not only have to learn the essential content of a field, **but how reading and writing are used in that field**. On the other hand, content area reading focuses on imparting reading and study skills that may help students to better understand and remember whatever they read.”

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

What we are doing in literacy is not working.

NAEP reading scores have been flat since 1998, with just a third or so of students performing at a level that NAEP defines as “proficient”. Performance gaps between lower-income students and their more affluent peers, among other demographic discrepancies, have remained stubbornly wide.

Panel of experts at NAEP conference all agree:

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

Daniel Willingham, a psychology professor at the University of Virginia who writes about the science behind reading comprehension.

“Whether or not readers understand a text depends far more on how much background knowledge and vocabulary they have relating to the topic than on how much they’ve practiced comprehension skills. That’s because writers leave out a lot of information that they assume readers will know. If they put all the information in, their writing would be tedious.”

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

But if readers can't supply the missing information, they have a hard time making sense of the text regardless of their reading level. If students arrive at high school without knowing who won the Civil War they'll have a hard time understanding a textbook passage about Reconstruction.

Worse yet, what if they don't know about the
montillation of traxoline?

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

“It is very important that you learn about traxoline. Traxoline is a new form of zionter. It is montilled in Ceristanna. The Ceristannians gristerlate large amounts of fevon and then brachter it to quasel traxoline. Traxoline may well be one of our most lukized snezlaus in the future because of our zionter lescelidge.”

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

Directions: Answer the following questions in complete sentences. Be sure to use your best handwriting.

1. What is traxoline?
2. Where is traxoline montilled?
3. How is traxoline quaselled?
4. Why is it important to know about traxoline?

From the insight of Judith Lanier - University Michigan

The Marginalization of Social Studies

Research consistently demonstrates that social studies receives the least amount of instructional time in the elementary grades when compared to the amount of time afforded to other core content areas.

College, Career, and Civic Life

Students are denied opportunities to succeed in college, career, and civic life when social studies is marginalized.



Students in low-income communities have less access to social studies instruction in elementary school.



An increase in time devoted to social studies in elementary schools resulted in higher scores on the Nation's Report Card for 4th grade U.S. History.

Civic Engagement

Preparation for civic life was the primary purpose for establishing public schools in the United States. Students who receive effective social studies instruction are:



More likely to vote and discuss politics at home.



Four times more likely to volunteer and work on community issues.



More confident in their ability to speak publicly and communicate with their elected representatives.

44%



Of districts surveyed have reduced time for social studies since the enactment of No Child Left Behind.



23%

of American 8th graders are proficient in civics, according to the most recent NAEP assessment.

Reading

Content knowledge makes weak readers better readers.

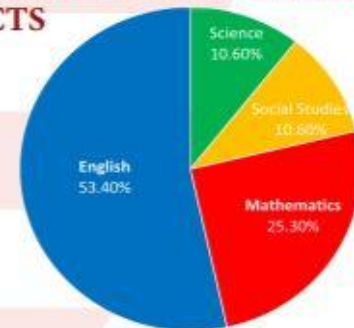


Reading assessments require background knowledge from social studies disciplines like civics, economics, geography, and history.¹

Poor readers with strong background knowledge display better reading comprehension than strong readers with low background knowledge.²

2nd graders who had 60 lessons of literacy-rich social studies instruction scored 23% higher on reading assessments.³

TIME SPENT ON CORE ELEMENTARY SUBJECTS



U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS)

What to do?



Dedicate at least 45 minutes of daily instructional time to social studies in grades K-5.



Assess social studies skills and content.



Support social studies professional learning.



Use high-quality social studies curriculum and materials.

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

Subject Area*	Grades K-2		Grades 3-5		Grades 6-8		Grades 9-12		Total	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Math	80	10.23%	190	7.92%	201	8.55%	214	8.95%	685	8.65%
Science	100	12.79%	166	6.92%	225	9.57%	282	11.79%	773	9.76%
ELA	83	10.61%	245	10.22%	247	10.50%	223	9.33%	798	10.07%
History	162	20.72%	959	39.99%	743	31.59%	715	29.90%	2579	32.55%
Geography	89	11.38%	212	8.84%	258	10.97%	300	12.55%	859	10.84%
Civics	45	5.75%	145	6.05%	210	8.93%	213	8.91%	613	7.74%
Economics	29	3.71%	68	2.84%	89	3.78%	155	6.48%	341	4.30%
Health	60	7.67%	68	2.84%	75	3.19%	77	3.22%	280	3.53%
Physical Education	57	7.29%	100	4.17%	50	2.13%	34	1.42%	241	3.04%
The Arts	54	6.91%	198	8.26%	198	8.42%	99	4.14%	549	6.93%
Technology	23	2.94%	47	1.96%	56	2.38%	79	3.30%	205	2.59%
Total	782		2398		2352		2391		7923	
Total Social Studies**	325	41.56%	1384	57.71%	1300	55.27%	1383	57.84%	4392	55.43%

*Source: Robert Marzano's research for Building Background Knowledge for Academic Achievement (2004)

** Social Studies includes History, Geography, Civics, and Economics

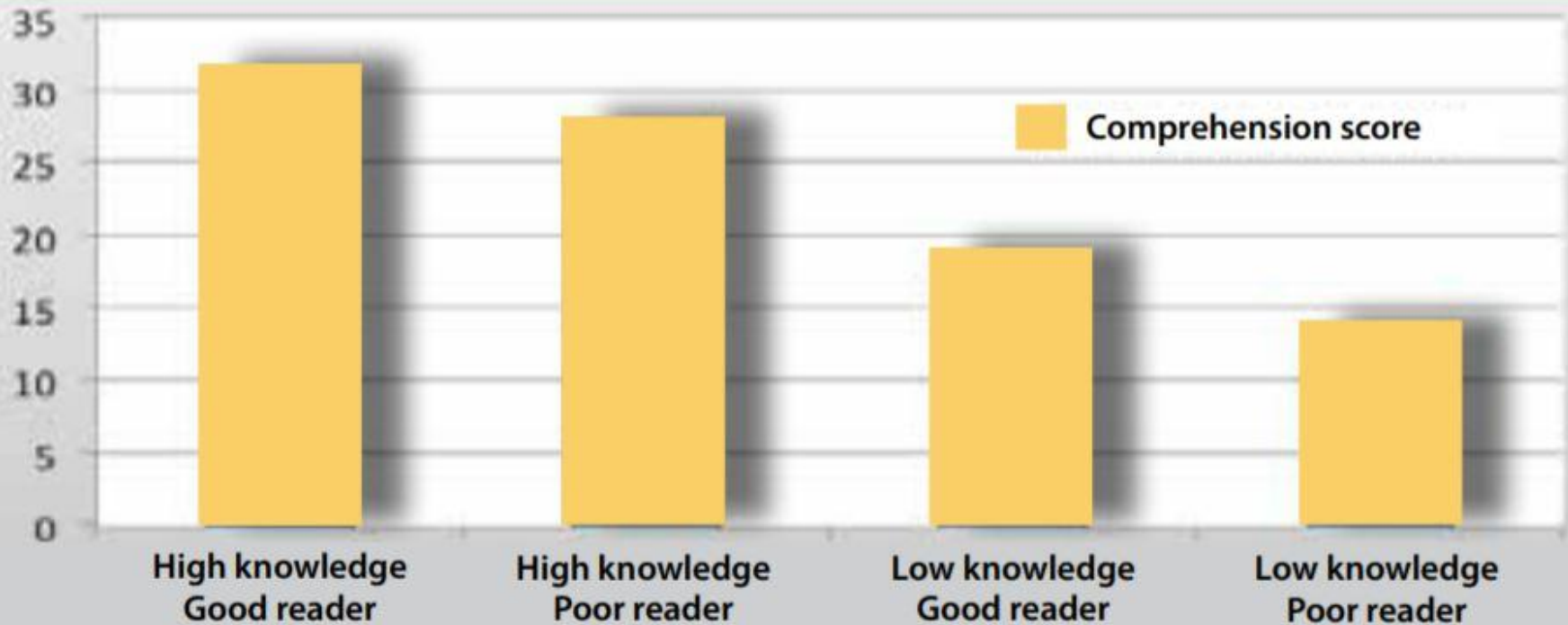
Why Literacy in Social Studies?

“The batsmen were merciless against the bowlers. The bowlers placed their men in slips and covers. But to no avail. The batsmen hit one four after another with an occasional six. Not once did a ball look like it would hit their stumps or be caught.” Tierney and Pearson (1981)



Why Literacy in Social Studies?

For Comprehension, Knowledge Matters More Than Reading Ability



Study from Recht and Leslie (1988)

Maine SAT Rubric - Analysis

- Offers an insightful analysis of the source text and demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of the analytical task
- Offers a thorough, well-considered evaluation of the author's use of evidence, reasoning, and/or stylistic and persuasive elements, and/or features of the student's own choosing.
- Contains relevant, sufficient, and strategically chosen support for claims or points made
- Focuses consistently on those **features** of the text that are most relevant to addressing the task.

Maine SAT Rubric

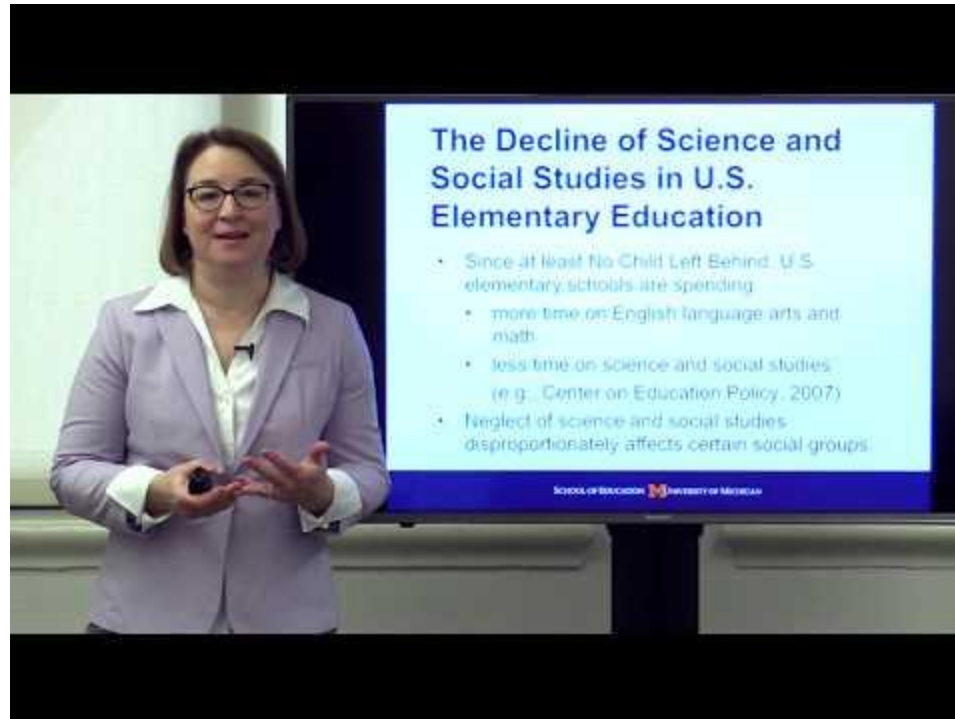
- Each test is scored by two readers
 - Each reader gives a score of 1-4
 - Each student gets a score of 2-8
- Average score for reading (and writing) is a 4
 - Both readers scoring it a two
- Average score for analysis is a 3
 - A one (see next slide) and a two out four

Maine SAT Rubric - Analysis

To score a “One”

- Offers little or no analysis or ineffective analysis of the source text...
- Identifies without explanation some aspects of the author’s use of evidence, reasoning,
 - Or numerous aspects of the response’s analysis are unwarranted based on the text
- Contains little or no support for claim(s) or point(s) made, or support is largely irrelevant
- The response offers no discernible analysis (e.g., is largely or exclusively summary)

Speaking Up for Science & Social Studies

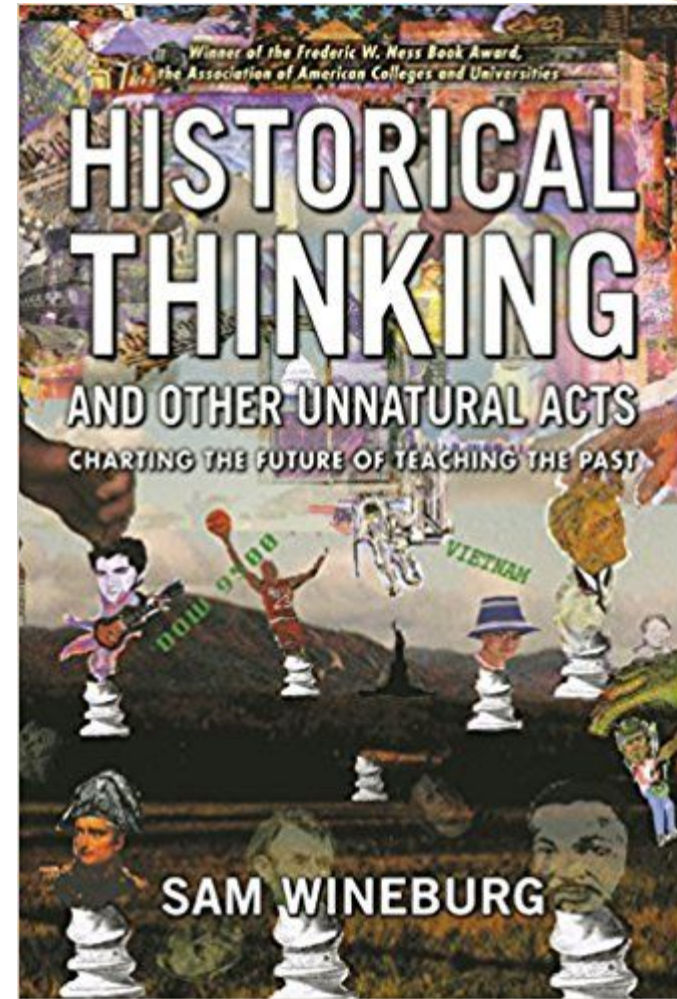
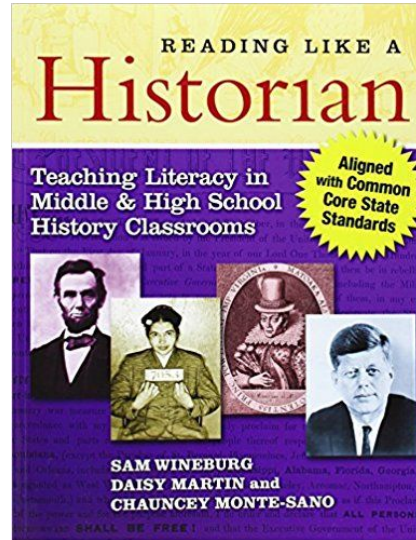


This is Social Studies

If we are doing social studies with a proper disciplinary literacy focus, then this is a...

Home Run

Why DL in Social Studies?



- Higher social studies scores
- Higher reading scores
- Gained about one extra year of reading

Why DL in Social Studies?

Jeffery Nokes (2011)

8 teachers - Same 4-week unit on the 1920s/30s

- 10 different one hour lessons
- 2 – reread the textbook, answer the questions
- 2 – reread the book with historians' strategies
- 2 – primary sources to answer content questions*
- 2 – taught primary sources with focus on historians' strategies and not the content*#

* Scored higher on content exams

Scored higher on reading/writing about history

Why DL in Social Studies?

Abby Reisman (2012)

Created 83 “document based lessons” to be taught over 21 weeks in 5 classes vs. 5 classes of “normal”.

The test group/Document based group

- Higher test scores on content
- Higher test scores on historical thinking proficiency
- Higher test scores on relating thinking to current events
- Higher test scores on general reading comprehension

Reading Like A Historian



Why Literacy in Social Studies?

According to Timothy Shanahan's research we need to do three things (and he also suggests 10 more):

- 1) Reading has to be a big part of students' disciplinary classes. Lecturing, notes, and powerpoints presentations are not enough.
 - a) In elementary grades, you have to read a variety of books and book types. Stories are great, but a narrow diet of stories alone can make you sick

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

2) If students are to read, there needs to be text... and it needs to be a disciplinary appropriate text.

- a) In history it is essential students be given opportunities to pore over conflicting evidence and alternative points of view. Textbooks have a place, but primary/secondary sources a must
- b) Elementary textbooks and trade books often report content info, but rarely from a disciplinary perspective. Historical accounts tend to tell stories rather than revealing controversies, disagreements, or use of evidence.

Why Literacy in Social Studies?

3) Disciplinary classes should have a deep dedication to imparting the content of the subjects to the students, including information about the nature of inquiry in that field.

- What does it mean to be a historian (or other)?
- What do they read and why?
- How do they report their results?
- What constitutes evidence in their field of study?
- What does criticism look like?

What DL in SS Looks Like

Tim Shanahan's Research in Elementary DL

- Have kids read all subject areas
- Focus attention on graphics and relationship to text
- Explicitly teach/model informational text structures
- Read multiple texts to compare and synthesize work
- Teach disciplinary approaches with appropriate texts

Content Area Literacy

Content area literacy asks - “What is the same across all or most of the disciplines and how do we support it?”

- Strategies (KWL, summarization, Preview chapters, table of contents, bold words, headings)
- “They Say, They Say” - Nokes

In short, it “*prescribes* study techniques” for students to use. - International Literacy Association 2017

Content Area Literacy

Disciplinary literacy asks - “What is different across the disciplines and how do we support it?”

- Strategies (Always asking who is the author/what is the bias, constantly modeling how they sourced, contextualized, and corroborated information)
- “They Say, I Say” - Nokes
- Did not read as truth, but understood it was an interpretation. **Least** sure of the validity of their texts.

In short it is a “a *description* of uses/implications of strategies” - International Literacy Association 2017

What DL in SS Looks Like

Definition of DL in SS (adapted from Nokes)

“Social studies literacy is the ability to construct meaning with multiple genres of print, non-print, visual, aural, video, audio, and multimodal texts; critically evaluate texts within the context of the work that experts in the field have previously done; use texts as evidence in the development of original interpretations of concepts or events; and create multiple types of texts that meet discipline standards.”

What questions
do you have
about disciplinary
literacy in social
studies?



Questions Are the New Answers



**WHEN YOU ASK
QUESTIONS TO STUDENTS,
ARE YOU LISTENING FOR
RIGHT ANSWERS OR
GOOD THINKING?**

@conniehamilton



Skills vs Content? Both!

The C3 Framework also answered the question about skills vs content by supporting both!

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		

In Depth Content

The content areas are broken down and more are included in the appendices of the framework.

CIVICS	ECONOMICS	GEOGRAPHY	HISTORY
Civic and Political Institutions	Economic Decision Making	Geographic Representations: Spatial Views of the World	Change, Continuity, and Context
Participation and Deliberation: Applying Civic Virtues and Democratic Principles	Exchange and Markets	Human-Environment Interaction: Place, Regions, and Culture	Perspectives
Processes, Rules, and Laws	The National Economy	Human Population: Spatial Patterns and Movements	Historical Sources and Evidence
	The Global Economy	Global Interconnections: Changing Spatial Patterns	Causation and Argumentation

Developing Questions

BY THE END OF GRADE 2*	BY THE END OF GRADE 5*	BY THE END OF GRADE 8	BY THE END OF GRADE 12
INDIVIDUALLY AND WITH OTHERS, STUDENTS CONSTRUCT COMPELLING QUESTIONS, AND ...			
D1.1.K-2. Explain why the compelling question is important to the student.	D1.1.3-5. Explain why compelling questions are important to others (e.g., peers, adults).	D1.1.6-8. Explain how a question represents key ideas in the field.	D1.1.9-12. Explain how a question reflects an enduring issue in the field.
D1.2.K-2. Identify disciplinary ideas associated with a compelling question.	D1.2.3-5. Identify disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question that are open to different interpretations.	D1.2.6-8. Explain points of agreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.	D1.2.9-12. Explain points of agreement and disagreement experts have about interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts and ideas associated with a compelling question.

Students, particularly before middle school, will need considerable guidance and support from adults to construct questions that are suitable for inquiry.

Inquiry Design Model

[IDM Website](#)

[IDM Template](#)

[IDM Research](#)

[My IDM List](#)

[My IDM Summary](#)

[A More Beautiful Question](#)

[Make Just One Change](#)

[Now That's a Good Question](#)





Knowledge is
having the right
answer.

Intelligence is
asking the right
question.

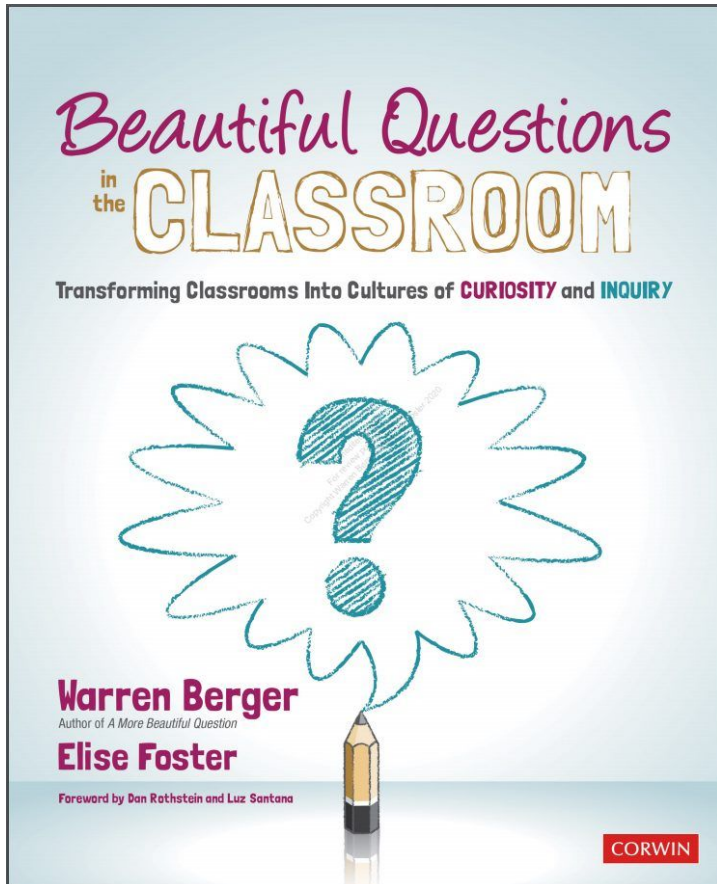
A More Beautiful Question

“Questioning can spark change in your life, your business—in the world around you. I first began to understand this as I studied some of the world’s leading innovators; many of them are masters at the art and science of asking questions. They have a knack for looking at the world around them—at the existing reality that everyone else usually just accepts—and asking: *What if we did this? Or tried that?...but this is not just a business-related issue...*” - Warren Berger - Author of *A More Beautiful Question*.

[Why should you care about questioning?](#)

[The Power of ‘Why?’ and ‘What If?’](#)

Beautiful Questions in the Classroom

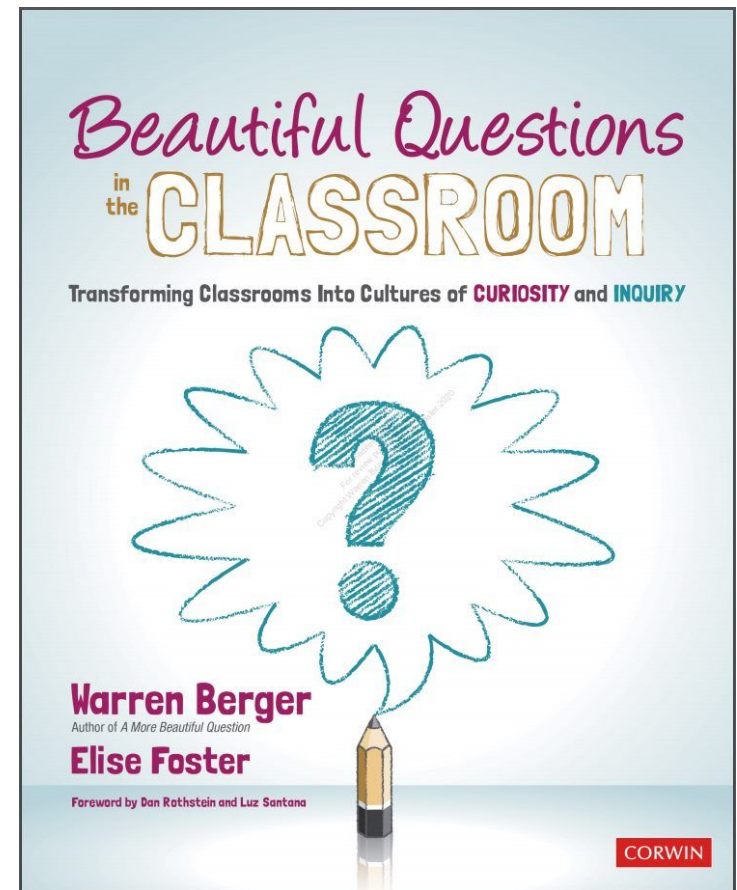


“If we think of questions and answers as stocks on the market, then we could say that, in this current environment, questions are rising in value while answers are declining. ‘Right now, knowledge is a commodity...known answers are everywhere and easily accessible’.”

Beautiful Questions in the Classroom

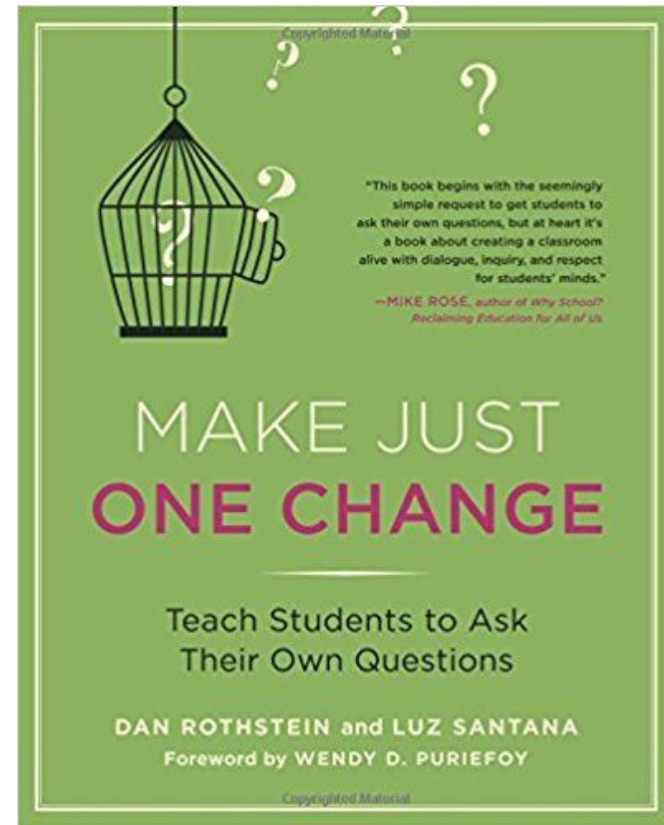
“And because we’re drowning in all this data, ‘the value of explicit information in dropping’ ...the real value is in ‘what you can do with that knowledge, in pursuit of a query’.”

P.9 Beautiful Questions in the Classroom by Warren Berger



Make Just One Change

“When you use the Question Formulation Technique, you are making one significant change in the traditional dynamic in the classroom: from using your question to prompt student thinking and work **to challenging students to come up with their own questions.**”



Compelling Questions

Compelling questions address problems and issues found in and across the academic disciplines. They require students to apply disciplinary concepts and to construct arguments and interpretations.

Compelling questions are provocative, engaging, and worth spending time on! They are meaty (open-ended and across content) and student friendly (something student care about and is accessible to them).

Adapted from QFT

- Think of your main theme or topic
 - What is your grade level or grade band?
 - What is a “theme” from earlier that might fit into your current curriculum (grade/content)?
- Ask as many questions as you can
 - Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer the questions
 - Write down each question exactly as you think of it
 - Number your questions in the order you think of them
 - Change any statements into questions

Adapted from QFT

- Categorize your questions
 - Mark as O for open-ended or C for closed-ended
 - What are the pros/cons of each
 - Are there questions that can be changed from “O” to “C” or vice-versa to better fit your theme or topic?
 - Trying switching some to check
- What are the three most important questions?
 - Mark or highlight them
 - Why did you choose these three?
 - What number questions became your top three?

Create Supporting Questions

Compelling Questions

are intellectually meaty

are student friendly

construct an argument

Supporting Questions

propel the inquiry forward

focus on descriptions,
definitions and processes

construct an explanation

More From RQI

- [Teaching Channel - Blog Series](#)
- [Asking Questions in the Age of Google - Webinar](#)

+ SUBJECTS

ENGLISH/LITERACY/READING

HISTORY

MATH

PERFORMING ARTS

SCIENCE

SOCIAL STUDIES

SPECIAL EDUCATION

VISUAL ARTS

WORLD LANGUAGES

+ LEVELS

EARLY CHILDHOOD

LOWER ELEMENTARY (K – 2)

UPPER ELEMENTARY (3 – 5)

MIDDLE SCHOOL (6 – 8)

HIGH SCHOOL (9 – 12)

GED/ALTERNATIVE HIGH
SCHOOL

HIGHER EDUCATION

Examples - Compelling Questions

Elementary - Economics: Why can't we ever get everything we need and want?

Elementary - Civics: Do we have to have rules?

Elementary - Geography: Where are we?

Elementary - U.S. History: Why do countries declare independence?

Middle School - World History: Was the development of agriculture good for humans?

Middle School - Geography: What is the greatest cost of water?

Middle School - U.S. History/ELA: Can words lead to war? (Uncle Tom's Cabin)

High School - U.S. History: Does it matter who freed the slaves?

High School - World History: Was the French Revolution successful?

High School - Civics: Do any political parties represent me?

High School - Economics: What should be done about the gender wage gap?

What questions
do you have
about inquiry in
social studies?



Professional Learning Webinars

For more information check out my [professional learning page](#) which has additional webinars about disciplinary literacy, inquiry, and the Question Formulation Technique among many others!

By the end of this week, there will be 68 sessions (and counting!) posted to:

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/content/socialstudies/prolearning>