

INQUIRY WITH AND IN COMMUNITY: A TOOLKIT FOR ILLINOIS SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS



Illinois
State Board of
Education



College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



INQUIRY WITH AND IN COMMUNITY: A TOOLKIT FOR ILLINOIS SOCIAL STUDIES

INTRODUCTION

K-12 social studies can be a place of imagination and action, a place of inquiry and transformation. Students, their families, and their communities are at the crux of this relationship between questioning and answering. This toolkit is designed to support stronger, more symbiotic relationships, between Illinois social studies teachers and their students, families, and communities.

It is guided by the following essential question:

***What does it mean to move
in solidarity with students,
their families, their communities,
and the world to center justice
in social studies?***

WHAT'S IN THIS GUIDE?

This guide will take readers on an exploration of community responsive pedagogical praxis and community and cultural wealth, two frameworks that can help teachers **identify the sources of knowledge, wisdom, and struggles of the community and bring them into the classroom** as student-driven inquiry to action investigations. Readers will learn about community as mechanisms to community responsiveness and conduct a community tour. The guide concludes with additional resources to continue learning.



REFLECTION: WHAT IS SOLIDARITY?

“Solidarity is not the same as support. To experience solidarity, we must have a community of interests, shared beliefs and goals around which to unite, to build [.....]. Support can be occasional. It can be given and just as easily withdrawn. Solidarity requires sustained, ongoing commitment.”

~ bell hooks

Read the bell hooks quote on solidarity. What is this bringing up for you? What is the **relationship between solidarity and inquiry-based learning**? Take a moment to record your reflections.

WHAT IS COMMUNITY CULTURAL WEALTH AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY?

Inquiry-based and inclusive social studies positions students as critical investigators and change-makers of their worlds. While this may be new for you, it requires that we, as teachers, look inward and outward. Inward towards our own beliefs and assumptions about our students, their families, their communities, and the world. Outward to identify the wisdom, strength, stories, and resources in your students' lives, their families' lives, the community, and the world that you might use in your classroom to facilitate questioning, data collection, analysis, and action.

Community Cultural Wealth

Coined by Dr. Tara Yosso (2005) Community and Cultural Wealth (CCW) is a framework that draws attention to the assets that all students bring into schools. CCW identifies six forms of community and cultural wealth: aspirational, familial, social, linguistic, navigational, and resistant.

How are you identifying and utilizing the forms of community and cultural wealth that your students hold?

Community Responsive Pedagogy

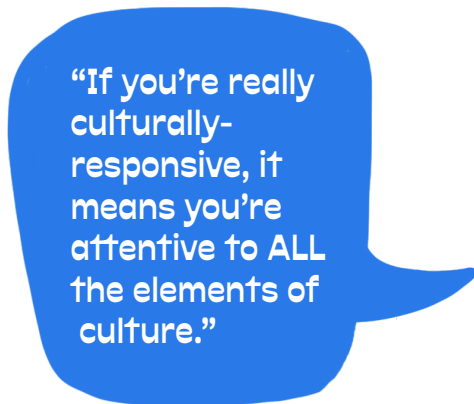
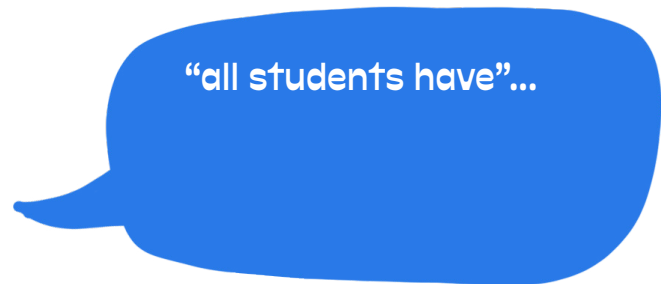
Drs. Allyson Tintiango-Cubales and Jeff Duncan-Andrade (2021) have introduced Community Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) as an inquiry-based pedagogical framework that responds to the conditions of students' and their families' lives, situated in the context of the communities they live in. The framework is rooted in three domains of practice: relationships, relevance, and responsibility.

How might these three domains guide the teaching and learning you and your students engage in?

WATCH:



Community and Cultural Wealth in Social Studies



Community Responsiveness By Dr. Jeff Duncan-Andrade

RESPOND:

- What does it mean to be a community responsive social studies educator or administrator?
- How do your curricular and pedagogical practices both identify and build upon community and cultural wealth?
- How do/might you interrogate the negative dispositions you might hold about your students and their families?
- What processes do you utilize to get to know your students and their communities as reservoirs of wisdom, knowledge and resources that support your social studies curriculum and pedagogy?
- In what ways might you improve your relationships with your students and their communities to, in return, support you in creating a more inclusive and inquiry-based social studies teaching and learning environment?



BUILDING TOWARDS COMMUNITY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY THROUGH COMMUNITY TOURS

What do you know about your students, their families and the community?

What tools do you use to identify the wisdom, strengths, struggles, and brilliance of your students, their families, and the communities that surround your school?

Community tours can be a great way to **collectively identify the wealth of resources within all communities** that can support you in the facilitation of learning experiences for your students to read and re-write their worlds.

COMMUNITY TOUR

In this activity you will be conducting a community tour of the community/communities that surround your school. So far, you've explored frameworks that, we hope, help you situate the wisdom, strengths, struggles, and brilliance of your students, their families, and the community. The revised [Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science and the Inclusive American History Mandates](#), in many ways, can be met through local inquiry-to-action experiences where students ask questions, collect information, analyze said information, and take action related to themselves, their families, and their communities. This sort of learning experience moves teachers away from holders of knowledge towards facilitators and mediators of knowledge sharing and knowledge creation.

STEPS:

1

READ

Start this lesson by reading [this article](#) on community walks as professional learning.



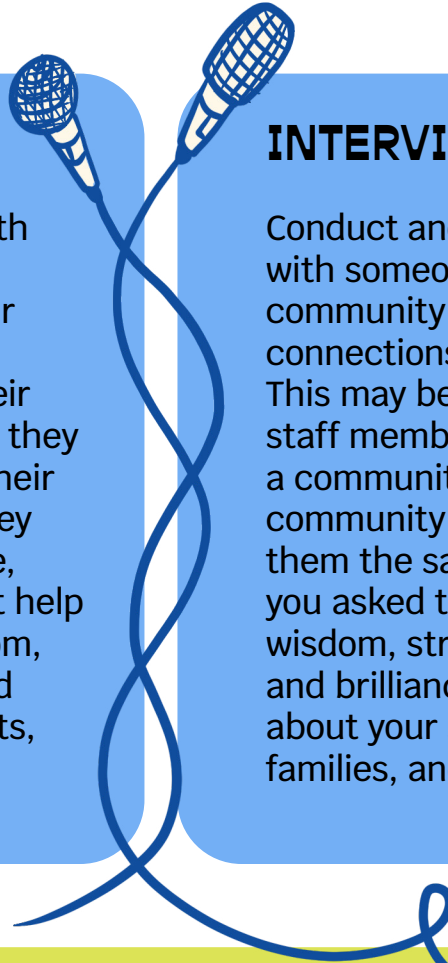
2

INTERVIEW 1

Conduct an interview with one or more students in your class(es) about their community. Ask them what they love about their community, what places they frequent, the things in their community they wish they could change or improve, and other questions that help you to identify the wisdom, strengths, struggles, and brilliance of your students, their families, and the community.

INTERVIEW 2

Conduct another interview with someone in your school community who has close connections to the community. This may be a parent, a staff member, a teacher, a community organizer, a community historian, etc. Ask them the same questions that you asked the students. What wisdom, strengths, struggles, and brilliance are you learning about your students, their families, and the community?



3

REFLECT

After completing the two interviews, consider what the interviews reveal about your students, their families, and the community surrounding your school. **What spaces, places, and people revealed might you learn more about? How might you collaborate with them?** Consider interviewing more students to learn more!



4

IDENTIFY CULTURAL RESOURCES

Next, review several of the following cultural institutions:

[Illinois museums](#)

[Illinois Online Genealogy Records](#)

[Illinois Archival Collections facilities](#)

[Illinois Historical Markers](#)

[Illinois Arts Organizations](#)

[Illinois Humanities Organizations](#)

[Illinois Community Action Agencies](#)

[Find non-profits near you \(and across the world\)](#)

Identify at least one institution or organization local/relevant to your school community. Take some time to explore this resource. Consider visiting it or reaching out to a member of the organization/institution to learn more about it.

After exploring, consider what the institution/organization you explored revealed about the wisdom, strengths, struggles, and brilliance of your students, their families, and the community?
How might you use this resource in the future?

5

IMMERSE YOURSELF IN THE COMMUNITY

Some stories and sources aren't accessible through google searches. Now, be an inquirer and collaborator within the community(ies) that your school serves. Get to know the people, the places, the systems, and movements, in past and present, that have shaped the community(ies) over time. These relationships, and primary and secondary resources, can be powerful collaborators in your classroom. They are reminders that you are not alone.

Immersing yourself in the community isn't something accomplished overnight or by attending a singular event. **Immersing yourself in the community is a life-long journey that is always incomplete.**

As you immerse yourself in the community(ies) that make up your school, consider:

- **What's the relationship between the community and social studies?**
- **How has (have) the community(ies) that make up your school been shaped over time through systems, structures, and movements? What role might these memories play in your students' inquiries and actions?**
- **What curriculum exists in the community(ies) and how might you build community-based archives that support your students' inquiries and actions?**
- **What educators emerge through your immersion in the community(ies) and how might you invite them into your classroom as experts and collaborators?**

Optional: Consider turning this into a project you implement with your students and/or colleagues.

How might deep explorations of your school community reveal rich, local essential questions to explore?

How might these explorations reveal primary and secondary resources that support your students investigations?

How might these explorations unearth a squad that you can tap to support your students investigations?

How might these explorations illuminate actions that are taking place in the local community that your students might contribute to and participate in?

CONCLUSION

You've learned about Community Responsive Pedagogy and Community and Cultural Wealth, and you've completed a meaningful exploration of the communities that your students come from. Now it's time to **move that learning into action**. Start by reflecting on where you are in this moment.

Please:

- Describe the community/communities that your students and their families come from and live in. **What does that mean for you as a teacher of social studies?**
- Review the interviews and community resources you discovered. **What areas are you currently implementing in your curriculum and why might that be true? What areas would you like to strengthen and why?**

Considering your relationships with students, their families, and the community. **How might you strengthen your relationships with these important conduits of inquiry and action? What support do you need? What assumptions do you need to challenge? What barriers exist that might prevent, or create obstacles, in you building deep relationships with your students, their families, and the community?**



RESOURCES

Readings/Listenings/Watchings

[Listen](#) to or [watch](#) *What's Going On: A Social Studies Network Podcast*. Episode 7 of the first season focuses on community and life in social studies.

Cuenca, A. & Nichos, J. (2014). [Ferguson is about us too: A call to explore our communities.](#)

Duncan, K. (2023). [Civic engagement in communities of color.](#) Teachers College Press.

Ferlazzo, L (2022). [8 Practical ideas for teaching social studies in culturally responsive ways.](#)

Halcorsen, A. et al. (2018). [Engaging the community with a project-based approach.](#)

National Council for the Social Studies. (2013). [The College, Career, and Civic Life \(C3\) Framework for Social Studies State Standards: Guidance for Enhancing the Rigor of K-12 Civics, Economics, Geography, and History.](#)

Resor, C. (2011). [Using community cookbooks as primary sources.](#)

Tintiango-Cubales, A., & Duncan-Andrade, J. (2021). [Chapter 2: Still fighting for ethnic studies: the origins, practices, and potential of community responsive pedagogy.](#) Teachers College Record, 123(13), 1-28.

Yosso, T. J. (2005). [Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth.](#) Race ethnicity and education, 8(1), 69-91.

Cultural Institutions

[Illinois museums](#)

[Illinois Online Genealogy Records](#)

[Illinois Archival Collections facilities](#)

[Illinois Historical Markers](#)

[Illinois Arts Organizations](#)

[Illinois Humanities Organizations](#)

[Illinois Community Action Agencies](#)

[Find non-profits near you \(and across the world\)](#)

Lesson Plans

[InquirEd](#) has online inquirybased curriculum.

Search through [Facing History & Ourselves](#) online lesson plans.

[Learning for Justice](#) has online lesson plans and resources.

[The Bard Center for Civic Engagement](#) has developed a [Civic Engagement Handbook](#) to support teachers and students with community-based projects.

This guide was created by Asif Wilson as part of **I3: Inclusive, Inquiry-based Social Science for Illinois**.

Suggested citation:

Wilson, A. (2023). Inquiry with and in community: A toolkit for Illinois social studies teachers. *Social Studies Network*. University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.



Illinois
State Board of
Education



College of Education
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

