

Digging Into Archaeology

Using Artifact Analysis to
Promote Inquiry In the
Social Studies Classroom



Sarah Harris
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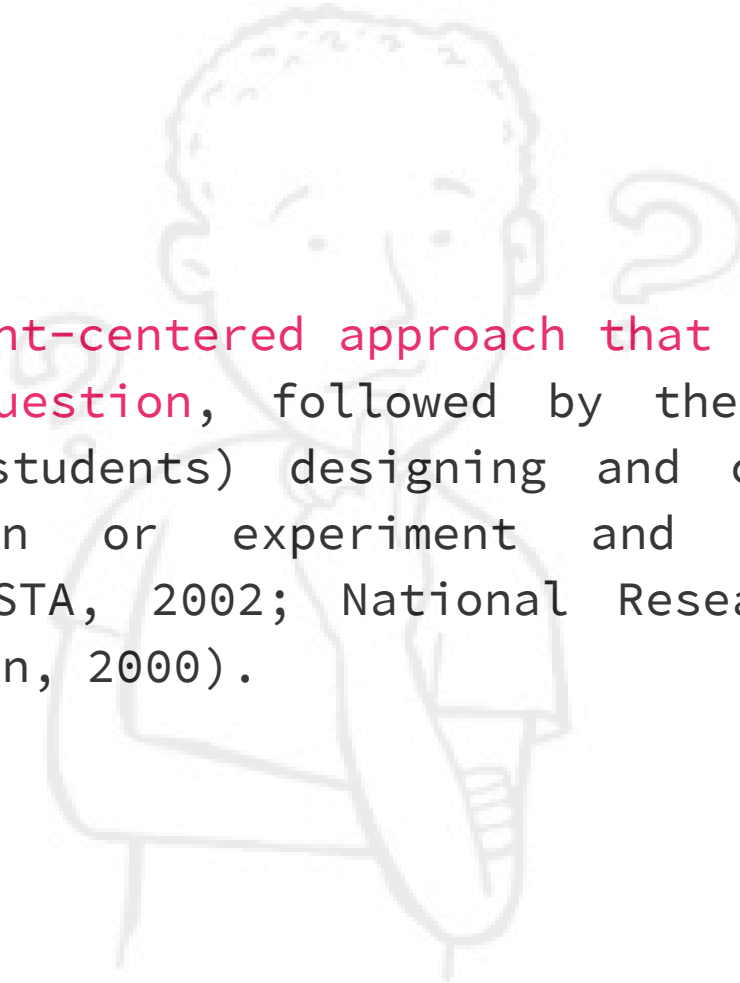
Kayla Pittman
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Wethersfield, CT

What is INQUIRY?



INQUIRY is...

“...a student-centered approach that begins with a student’s question, followed by the student (or groups of students) designing and conducting an investigation or experiment and communicating results” (NSTA, 2002; National Research Council, 1996; Colburn, 2000).





“The best scientists and explorers have the attributes of kids. They ask questions and have a sense of wonder... They never stop asking questions, and I never stop asking questions, just like a five year old.”

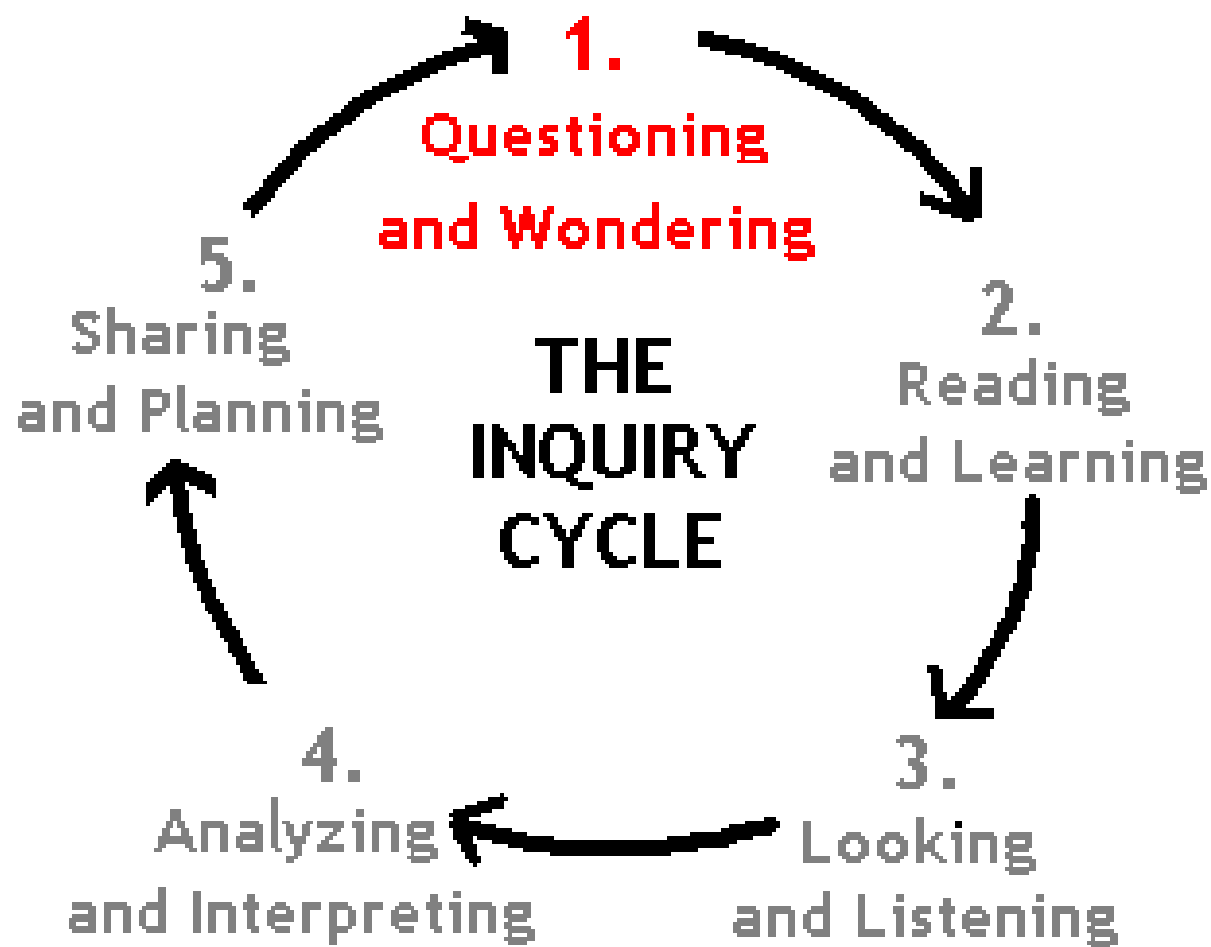
Sylvia Earle, Marine Biologist

**Inquiry is not a single activity or lesson.
There is not one “*right*” way to promote inquiry in your
classroom.**

Inquiry has many different faces...

The Pedagogical Core of the C3 Framework—The Inquiry Arc

- Dimension 1: Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
- Dimension 2: Applying Disciplinary Concepts and Tools (Civics, Economics, Geography, and History)
- Dimension 3: Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
- Dimension 4: Communicating Conclusions and Taking Action





Why Use Archaeology to Promote Inquiry?

Skills & Characteristics of Successful Archaeologists

- Analytical
- Patient
- Observant
- Able to Multitask
- Flexible
- Knowledge of History
- Understanding of Basic Anatomy & Osteology
- Technologically Savvy
- Anthropological
- Thorough
- Drawing Skills
- Statistical Skills
- Unbiased
- Research Skills
- Tenacious
- Geological Skills
- Able to Read Maps
- Language Skills
- Able to Delegate
- Knowledge of Laws
- Conservation Skills
- Team Player
- Goal/Detail Oriented
- Open to New Ideas
- Able to Work Under Pressure
- Integrity/ Ethics
- Strong Communication Skills



Archaeology...

... is “*the study of past cultures through the analysis of material (physical) remains people left behind*” (National Archaeological Institute of America, 2012)

... allows our students to transcend the two-dimensional history of textbooks and explore the past in three dimensions.

... is a field fueled by questions and thus provides an incredible vehicle for inquiry in the classroom.

Structured Inquiry: Question Formulation Technique

Your group of 4-5 participants is preparing to conduct an archaeological dig! Soon, you will receive an assemblage (collection) of artifacts. What questions will you ask in order to understand the lives and experiences of past peoples?

Ask as many questions as you can.

Do not stop to discuss, judge, or answer any questions Write down every question exactly as it is stated

Change any statement into a question.



Prioritizing Questions

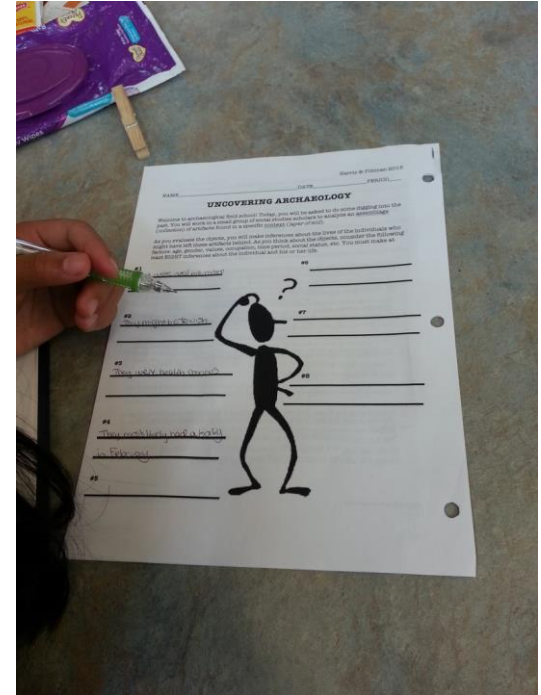
As an archaeologist, time and funding are limited. As a group, identify the three questions that you believe are most significant to understanding the life and experiences of past peoples...



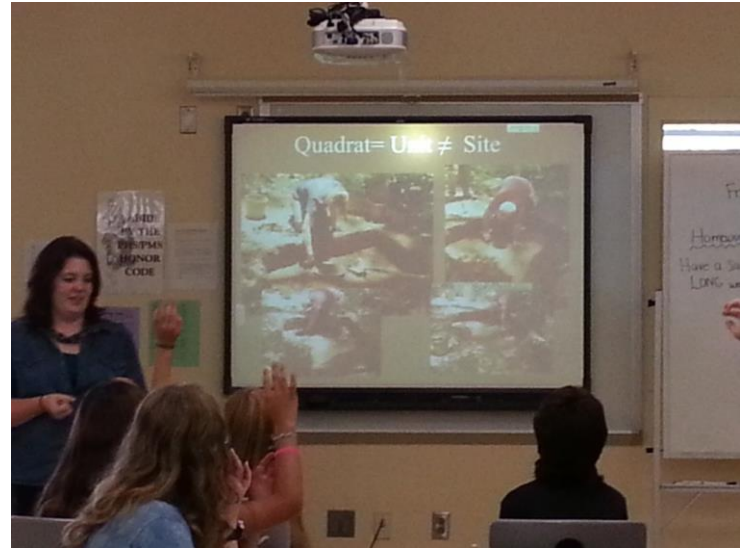
Analyzing Artifacts

Each group will analyze an assemblage (*collection*) of artifacts. As you explore the artifacts, consider what you might be able to infer (or what you want to know) about the individual(s) who might have used the artifacts.

As you examine the artifacts, use the provided handout to record your inferences. Be sure to provide specific evidence to support your inferences.



Archaeology in the Social Studies Classroom: History in 3D!





Portland Middle School Archaeology Workshop August 2015



What would INQUIRY look like in YOUR classroom?

Working in groups, discuss how you might implement an inquiry-based hands-on activity in your classroom. How might you collaborate with a local historical society or museum educator to create authentic experiences for your students?

Remember: There is not a single *“right”* way to use inquiry!



Where Have All the Historians Gone?



Historians are all around us! Visit [local historians](#) at..

Your Local Historical Society

Museums

Preservation Agencies

Local Colleges & Universities

Cultural Resource Management Firms

Senior Centers (Oral histories can be incredibly powerful!)

→ Parents, grandparents, teachers, and students can also be great

Launch Your Own Classroom Archaeological Expedition!

It's an easy and cost-effective way to get your students thinking like historians!

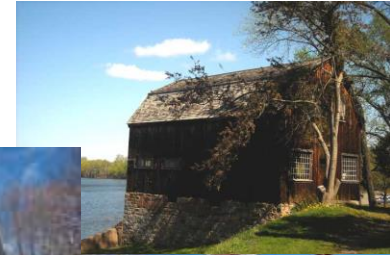
STEP 1 → Collect “clean” garbage or items lying around your house and classroom. Remember, even the most “boring” items are significant to an archaeologist!

STEP 2 → Visit your local grocery store to obtain brown paper “artifact bags”.

STEP 3 → Organize the materials into bags. You may choose to place items together deliberately or randomly.



Wethersfield Historical Society Resources



Six historic properties

Largest maritime collection outside of Mystic

Articles from the Community provide quick access to local history

Substantial collections, award-winning exhibits

Small enough to offer a personalized experience, large



Wethersfield Studies Program

- ❖ Established in 1992 for Wethersfield High students
- ❖ Town of Wethersfield as text
- ❖ Success lies in strong relationship between the High School & the Historical Society
- ❖ Pre-visits & site visits
- ❖ Hands-on experience: collections & properties
- ❖ Specifically targets “at risk” students

Get Started!



Visit www.diggingarchaeology.weebly.com to access materials you can use to begin your own archaeological workshop!

Suggested Pre-Workshop Reading, Vocabulary & Questions

Inquiry Activity Handout

Inferences Activity Handout

Primary Source Materials

Contact Information for Sarah & Kayla

[The Right Question Institute](#)

[Sample QFT Small Group Document](#)

“The scientific mind does not so much provide the answers as ask the right questions.” – Claude Levis Strauss

