Social Science Resource Guide

Illinois Social Science Learning Standards

In this packet you will find:

- Materials to support standards implementation
- Information and resources to strengthen your teaching practice
- Supports available to educators throughout Illinois
New Illinois Social Science Learning Standards, adopted by the Illinois State Board of Education, became effective on January 27, 2016 and provide that school districts must fully implement the new standards by the 2017-18 school year. The Illinois Social Science Standards are designed to ensure that students across Illinois focus on a common set of standards that promote the development of the knowledge and skills necessary for success in college, career, and civic life in the 21st century. The vision supporting this design is to produce Illinois graduates who are civically engaged, socially responsible, culturally aware, and financially literate.

Unsure where to begin with the standards?
Check out the resources in the Implementation Starter Kit available on the new Illinois Social Science in Action page.

The Standards Implementation Starter Kit is a compilation of resources to support the transition to the new Illinois Social Science Learning Standards. The Kit Overview and User Guide include information on how to utilize all components provided as needed in your school or district.

The Starter Kit begins with a Visual Resource Guide that is intended to delineate a potential process for educators to consider as they begin to implement the Illinois Social Science Learning Standards in the classroom. The bulleted items listed on the guide include potential steps and resources currently available to support implementation.

The Resource User Guide in the kit further details resources listed and their suggested use throughout the process. The User Guide provides a suggested professional learning plan that will assist schools and districts as they work to begin implementation of the new Illinois Social Science Learning Standards in K-12 classrooms.

Beyond Starter?
Keep checking the IL Social Science in Action page for information on new resources as they are developed!

www.ilsocialscienceinaction.org
This site was created with the intent to bring together educators throughout the state to a welcoming platform to facilitate discussion, share ideas and provide instructional support related to the social science standards.

With limited resources available for travel to face to face options, this site will allow teachers to connect with others and share standards based ideas no matter how far apart they are geographically!

What do you need to do to get started? Visit the website! As you look around on the site, you will find various items that will be of interest. Participation is key for the site to be rich with teacher strategies. Share your strategies. Share your thoughts in the discussion forums.

Visit...Share...Participate...

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Inquiry-Based Learning in the Social Sciences

What is inquiry-based learning? What is the teacher's role in an inquiry-centered classroom?

A main component of the Illinois Social Science Learning Standards is Inquiry Skills, which should be implemented simultaneously with Disciplinary Concepts. The Inquiry Skills are intended to be the methods used to accomplish the Disciplinary Concepts and by design, require the use of inquiry-based learning in the classroom. Inquiry has become vital to the social sciences as educators realize as information increases, teachers simply cannot be expected to deliver all the important information in their subject area. It is an opportunity to teach students how, rather than what, to learn.

Initially, inquiry-based learning can be overwhelming. It requires a shift in thinking and a release of responsibility to the students. Instead of the teacher providing information to students through a series of lectures, students are asked to discover information for themselves and to discover information for themselves and synthesize information from a variety of sources. This does not mean students have to find sources for themselves, inquiry can still be occurring when students are cultivating information from a group of resources gathered by the teacher. The key is that students are the ones making connections and conclusions.

The teacher's role in the classroom changes, from provider of information to facilitator. Educators skilled at inquiry implementation emphasize the importance of scaffolding and supporting students as they work. As students work, educators can ask probing questions to lead their students towards higher understandings. If students are on the wrong track, teachers should take the time to redirect them. At the end of an inquiry, discussion and reflection about findings as well as the learning process are vital to solidify student understanding and skills.

Does this mean I should not directly teach anything again? No! However, it is vital that there is a balance in the classroom. If students need a whole class mini-lesson on background information or key vocabulary before beginning an inquiry, it is important that the teacher provide this. However, the Inquiry Skills and Disciplinary Concepts are given equal weight in the standards and are intended to be implemented simultaneously. This means giving both portions of the standards equal emphasis in the classroom.
Utilizing Inquiry to Emphasize Social Emotional Learning Standards

Opportunities for Social Emotional Learning in the Social Sciences

The Social Emotional Learning Standards are most meaningful to students when embedded into all curricular areas. The new emphasis on inquiry-based learning and collaboration in the Illinois Social Science Learning Standards provides numerous opportunities to incorporate meaningful social emotional learning into social science classrooms. Connecting social emotional learning to real-world situations will assist students in acquiring these skills.

The Social Emotional Learning Standards focus on several overarching areas:

- **Goal 1** – Develop self-awareness and self-management skills to achieve school and life success
- **Goal 2** – Use social-awareness and interpersonal skills to establish and maintain positive relationships
- **Goal 3** – Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school, and community contexts.

In the social sciences, students should be focusing on content and the process of inquiry. To provide students a productive and safe environment to engage in inquiry, instructors should strive to emphasize the key components of social emotional learning. Building a classroom rapport and establishing guidelines for safe discussion provides opportunity for an authentic and meaningful discussion of social emotional issues within the classroom.

Using inquiry, students will be able to practice the skills of collaboration, critical thinking, self-management, decision-making, and interpersonal skills that are inherent in the Social Emotional Learning Standards.

Inquiry-Based Learning Q & A

**Q: What key differences do I need to be aware of between the C3 Framework and IL Social Science Standards?**

A: Fundamentally both C3 and IL Social Science Standards are based on the use of inquiry in the classroom and the connection between inquiry and content. Of course, the labeling and wording of the standards does vary but one important distinction is the use of different question labels. Illinois uses the term essential question to indicate the overarching question that addresses an enduring issue and guides a unit while C3 uses compelling question. The term supporting questions in both documents is used similarly and represents questions that should be targeted a bit more specifically to the content of the unit and lead students to the ability to answer the essential question.

**Q: Where can I find more information to assist with implementing inquiry and the new standards? Since the IL Social Science Standards are closely based on the C3 Framework and both emphasize inquiry, can I utilize C3 information and resources to support implementation?**

A: Though there are some Illinois-specific resources on the IL Classrooms in Action Social Science webpage, the C3 Framework has existed for several years and does have an extensive collection of resources available. Once you have an understanding of the Illinois Social Science Learning Standards as well as the differences and similarities between them and the C3 Framework it can be helpful to utilize C3 information to inform your implementation. When you’re ready to explore, check out some of these C3 Resources:

- C3 Literacy Collaborative
- C3 Performance-Based Assessment Clearinghouse

Searching for additional information on inquiry-based learning?

Check out the Social Science page on Classrooms in Action or some of the links to blogs and articles below. Some of the following links are blogs from educators detailing what they discovered when engaging students in inquiry:

- Edutopia Inquiry
- Inquiry Based Learning: Wrapping My Brain Around It (educator blog)
- Student Historians: Inquiry-Based Learning in a Literacy and Social Studies Classroom (AUSL blog post)
- How to Set the Stage for Inquiry-Based Learning (Kids Discover)
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