

# TURNING LEARNING INTO ACTION: A WORKBOOK FOR ILLINOIS SOCIAL STUDIES TEACHERS



# TURNING LEARNING INTO ACTION

## INTRODUCTION

Inquiry-based and justice-centered learning experiences in K-12 classrooms do not happen without the planning and support of committed teachers like you! This guide is designed to support you in turning your learning about inquiry and justice towards curricular action! It is composed of two parts. In part one, you will set curricular goals, reflect on the assets and limitations that may support or hinder these goals, identify barriers and obstacles, and set timelines. In part 2 you will solicit feedback on your goals and timeline from others and consider the long-term sustainability of your plan. Throughout the guide, you'll find examples from Seth, a high school teacher, using this process to transform a World Studies course. These examples are intended to support your imagination, reflection, and creation as you move through this experience.

## WHAT'S AN INQUIRY-BASED AND JUSTICE-CENTERED SOCIAL STUDIES CURRICULUM?

### What is curriculum?

Curricula are the tools that mediate learning in our classrooms. These might be text, primary resources, lesson and unit plans, scope and sequence.

Curricula, like you as teachers, serve as facilitators of knowledge and hold important relationships to inquiry-based and inclusive learning experiences.

**Inquiry-based and justice-centered learning experiences are not void of curriculum, instead students through their inquiries, necessitate curriculum that meets the needs of their investigations.**

For teachers, this can be a challenging task. It requires our curriculum to be fluid and generative enough to support students' inquiry into their worlds and their actions. In this case curriculum isn't necessarily prescriptive or pre-determined.

**So what does this mean for you and your efforts to support inquiry-based and justice-centered learning experiences for students?**

It does not mean you have to know everything about everything. Think about how your curriculum facilitates learning, not how it is the learning.

Inquiry-based and inclusive curriculum requires continuous assessment of student progress so that you, and other stakeholders in your classes, can make suggestions, share resources, and support your students' rich inquiry that moves them beyond their current understanding of the topic(s) being investigated and/or the actions being taken.

Inquiry-based and inclusive curriculum is ever-evolving. It is not concrete. It is malleable and flexible, meeting the needs of your students where they are in the inquiry process.

# **PART ONE**

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- **Goal Setting: Outputs and Outcomes**
- **Reflecting on Assets, Limitations, and Experiences**
- **Identifying Barriers and Obstacles**
- **Timeline**

# GOAL SETTING: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Directions: In this activity, you will identify a curricular goal for your action plan, including identifying what outputs and outcomes are associated with your action plan goal.

**Outputs** are typically thought of as (physical or digital) artifacts you will create.

**Outcomes** are the (measurable) results that are expected.

1. In 50 words or less, describe a specific curricular goal that will allow you to move toward inquiry and/or justice.

An example:

Seth's goal is to transform the Middle East unit of his World' Cultures class from a unit that is based on banking knowledge to a unit that is inquiry-driven and justice-centered. With his support, he wants students to develop questions, conduct research, and develop artifacts that effect change.

2. What is the rationale for pursuing this curricular goal? (e.g. What is the bigger 'Why?' behind your goal? What needs are you responding to? How might this goal relate to reflections you've had during this learning series?)

There are several reasons why Seth has identified this specific curricular goal:

1. Seth's past students who have taken this class have valid and constructive criticism of the World Cultures curriculum. This criticism is divided into three main categories:

a. The unit is ethnocentric in that the exploration of regional history, issues, and cultures focus on U.S. interests and history (e.g. the history of the Middle East begins with European colonization, focus is placed on the economics of oil, religious diversity is introduced in the context of global conflict).

b. The unit doesn't focus much on the cultures or identities of the people who live in this region nor on the diversity of cultures.

c. Students who have identities that intersect with course content feel unseen or misrepresented in curriculum and believe that the course may reinforce stereotypes.

2. Seth believes this unit follows a "banking model of education" in that most of the learning activities focus on knowledge or application of skills. Seth believes that invoking an inquiry-based, justice-centered approach, will provide students with increased agency as changemakers rather than as passive receptacles of knowledge who only have as much agency as he agrees to give.



# GOAL SETTING: OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES (cont.)

3. What outputs and outcomes are associated with your goal?

**Outputs:** What artifacts will you create?

**Outcomes:** What are the (measurable) results expected?

## Outputs

- A revised unit calendar Seth will use to schedule inquiry-based learning activities.
- Written notes or lesson plans that Seth will use in each unit to “stage” or provoke student-driven inquiry questions.
- (Example: The Middle East Unit curriculum requires teachers to explore an essential question related to identity. After first asking students to consider their own identities using resources from this learning series, he plans to use class discussions of current events, and a visit to an actual Egyptian mummy that has been at NCHS for decades, to inspire students to identify areas of interest that will allow them to explore identity).
- Planning documents for planning peace circle discussions around identity.
- A series of sources that will allow students to frame actionable inquiry questions that connect unit content and objectives to their own interests.
- A set of documents, differentiated for as needed, that explains the process, the expected outputs, and a timeline with due dates.
- A list of community resources that could provide support for each inquiry question students develop (e.g. representatives from local masjids/mosques and synagogues; a representative from Nicor, BP or Citgo; staff from local non-profits; remaining Naperville farm families).

## Outcomes

- Each student in class, alone or on teams, will engage in a student-driven free inquiry that will result in measurable action.
- Each in class will complete narratives describing each step of the inquiry process including the action they took and reflections of learning.
- Each student will contribute to a team artifact will be taken into action to effect change.

# REFLECTING ON ASSETS, LIMITATIONS, AND EXPERIENCES

Directions: In this activity, you will be asked to think through a curricular unit you will be teaching before the I3 Professional Learning Series ends. You will then be asked to consider what ideas or concepts are operating within this curricular unit and to reflect on your own personal assets, limitations, and experiences related to these ideas/concepts. Finally, you will develop a plan to increase your assets related to these ideas as part of your broader goal.

**1. List the ideas/concepts that are operating within the curriculum you are working to make more inquiry-based and justice-centered?**

Seth knows there are a wide variety of ideas that are operating in this unit. These ideas include Islam, Judaism, Christianity, Conflict, ethnicity, and "The Middle East." In addition, each country in the Middle East is itself a concept.

**2. Which of these ideas do you believe you need to reflect on before you implement your curricular goal? Why do you believe this idea is important to reflect upon?**

Since Israel and Palestine are likely to emerge in this unit, Seth has decided to consider both as important ideas to consider.

Read Seth's example reflection here:

<https://bit.ly/ConceptReflectionEx>

**STOP  
HERE**

**Complete this exercise:**

## Reflecting on your Assets, Limitations and Experiences

1. List the idea or concept that is related to the curriculum you will be working with? This idea could be the name given to the unit itself (e.g. reconstruction), an important concept in the curriculum you will be working with (e.g. justice, gender).
2. Explain all of the ways that you learned this idea or concept (e.g. personal connections or experience, academic contexts, family, news coverage, or other media).
3. How might the way you learned this idea/concept shape your beliefs about this idea/concept?
4. Based on your answers to questions 1 & 2 what are possible limitations to your understanding of this issue/concept?
5. **For classroom teachers:** How might these limitations influence how you understand and engage with this idea/concept in your classroom?
6. **For LSC's Administrators and other roles:** How might these limitations influence how you understand and engage with this idea with the people who you are learning with or teaching?

# REFLECTING ON ASSETS, LIMITATIONS, AND EXPERIENCES (cont.)

3. After working through the concepts exercise, what reflections do you have in terms of the assets and limitations you are carrying into this learning experiences, curriculum, or unit?

After compiling the exercise, Seth realized he had several assets but also that there were limitations to these assets. Seth has good knowledge on the history and conflict in Israel/Palestine, a sound understanding of Islam and Judaism, and even a decent understanding of the history of Jewish people. He is also familiar with the conflict since 1948. That said, Seth acknowledges that he knows almost nothing about other aspects of Israeli identity and Palestinian identity. He realized also that he needs to make sure that he organizes the inquiry to focus on a more multi-dimensional concept of identity. Otherwise Seth's instruction is likely to reproduce his limited understanding of Palestinian and Israeli identities.

4. What short- and long-term moves do you need to personally take to address these limitations? (Note: Later in this workbook, you will be asked to complete a timeline. Be sure to add these steps to the timeline).

In the short term, Seth realized that if he aims to organize an inquiry around identity, that he should probably know way more about the various dimensions of both identities. He thinks this might mean some individual exploration in the short-term but a deeper personal exploration of these identities in the long-term.

5. How might your assets and limitations impact how you engage with students? How might these assets and limitations shape your approach to inquiry in this learning experience, curriculum, or unit?

Seth thinks he will need to stage the inquiry so that it shows multiple dimensions of identity and that these dimensions need to be explored as part of the inquiry. Perhaps the inquiry is a class-wide inquiry where students investigate aspects of identity in teams and then come together at the end.

# IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES

Now that you have investigated your individual assets and identified how these assets might be added to, we invite you to think about the structural barriers that might stand in the way of your goal. [Example responses can be found on the following two pages.](#)

Thinking about your school, your community, and your district, what barriers could stand in the way of your success? (e.g. existing curricular constraints, PLC (Professional Learning Community) rules, common assessments, administration, final exams requirements, community pushback etc.)

<b>1. What barriers do you expect to stand in the way of your goal? (e.g. existing curriculum, PLC structures, administration, community)</b>	
<b>2. How could these barriers impact your goal?</b>	
<b>3. What needs and interests might underlie these barriers or the people who uphold them?</b>	
<b>4. How might these needs and interests be met/addressed?</b>	



# IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES (cont.)

Example:

## 1. What barriers do you expect to stand in the way of your goal? (e.g. existing curriculum, PLC structures, administration, community)

Seth thinks achieving his goal of moving the Middle East unit to one based on free inquiry will be personally and professionally challenging. World Cultures is a course that has been taught at NCHS for at least two decades, probably more. It is a course that employs the use of six social studies perspectives for understanding culture: Language, Economics, Government, Social Structure, Arts and Literature, and Religion. Although the curriculum maps and the 2022 Illinois Social Science Standards have been written to incorporate an inquiry-driven approach, it has proven difficult to actually implement this approach.

Seth believes he will face the following barriers:

**Change Means More Work.** Seth acknowledges that it is simply easier to continue to do what has been done in the past. All of the curricular materials and assessments have been written. This will take more time and effort. It is simply easier to go with the flow.

**MTSS (Multi-tiered System of Support) AND PLC (Professional Learning Community).** Seth's PLC and MTSS systems have been created to address existing pedagogical and curricular models. Even though Seth knows the state and school district support the idea of inquiry, he believes adding inquiry would make it much more difficult for his students to be supported by other members of his curricular team. He believes inquiry will make them better social studies students and richer human beings but could result in lower grades.

**Relationships with Colleagues.** Seth likes and trusts his colleagues in his PLC. Moving to inquiry could disrupt that trust and those friendships as he will likely be viewed as a rogue who believes he does not have to play by the rules.

**Limited Time.** Seth will be teaching four different classes next semester. Moving to inquiry will add to

his already considerable workload. However, having had success with free inquiry before in other courses, he knows it is the right way to go but that it will be messy.

**Co-teaching.** One Seth's World Cultures course will be with a co-teacher he has not worked with before. This co-teacher will also be teaching the same course with a colleague as well. If Seth does an inquiry approach and his colleague does not (likely), it will likely confuse this co-teacher. Additionally, he is pretty confident that his co-teacher is unlikely to be familiar with inquiry and may struggle to integrate it. At very least, Seth believes he will have to spend considerable time with this co-teacher making sure she understands the approach and can support students. In addition, the co-teacher is likely to express any confusion to his colleague who teaches the same course.

**Student Adjustment.** World Cultures is a semester-long course. All students Seth has in class will already be familiar with the "traditional" way to teach world cultures. This means they will have to learn a new method which may be taxing.

## 2. How could these barriers impact your goal?

Since Seth's aim is to shift from a model rooted in "banking knowledge" to an inquiry model, any one of these barriers has the potential to drastically impact his goal. Seth has tried in the past to make this change and failed primarily due to social pressure. Last year, when his good friend who also teaches the class asked him to co-plan during a common free-period, he couldn't refuse. This ended up Seth trying to do both a banking model and inquiry. This was too much and not sustainable and after the first unit, he had to abandon inquiry and return to the "traditional method." Seth believes most of the barriers I have listed above push him toward the status quo and he hopes that he won't cave to this pressure again. He also believes he might because it is very difficult to "go rogue" because it contradicts the strong value he places on relationships.

# IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES (cont.)

## 3. What needs and interests might underlie these barriers or the people who uphold them?

Seth thinks there are many needs and interests that underlie these barriers, many of which he shares:

**Fatigue.** Seth believes his colleagues have been subject to many new initiatives and may be doing everything they can to just get by.

**Time.** Seth believes that many colleagues believe it is just plain easier to continue to go with the status quo.

**Lack of Resources.** Seth has not been able to locate great resources for inquiry and thus struggles to support his colleagues.

**Students.** Seth believes his colleagues want to do the best that they can for students and that inquiry will introduce confusion.

**Unfamiliarity with Inquiry.** Seth is confident that his colleagues are not as comfortable with inquiry as he is and that they believe inquiry is not appropriate for students. They believe students must learn the skills first and then engage in inquiry later in high school. Seth disagrees because he knows inquiry allows him to meet students where they are at in part because it is asset-oriented rather than deficit oriented like the model he is using now. However, he also knows that the movement to free inquiry is not an easy transition.

## 4. How might these needs and interests be met/addressed?

This is a difficult question for Seth to answer. Basically, he knows it will be taxing and even painful or distressing to shift to inquiry. He is not confident that he can guide his colleagues or address these needs and interests because he himself has not yet succeeded in this particular course with an inquiry approach, much less free inquiry. It will take him some trial and error. Additionally, the way his colleagues typically measure success is through things like multiple choice tests that assess how well students remember or apply concepts. He knows that measuring success is trickier with inquiry but that he needs to remain firm in what he knows to be true: that the products that emerge from inquiries are incredibly impressive and demonstrate knowledge in much more meaningful ways than multiple choice tests do. He thinks the best way to address these needs and interests is to communicate with his department chair (who seems perfectly satisfied with guided and structured inquiry) and his peers. Seth plans to tell his peers upfront that he will be using these methods.

# IDENTIFYING BARRIERS AND OBSTACLES (cont.)

5. What makes you hopeful and optimistic about achieving this goal?

What makes Seth hopeful and optimistic about achieving his goal is:

**Previous Experience.** Seth knows from previous experience that inquiry is transformative for students and that inquiry results in students wanting to learn the skills he would have had to frontload in the past.

**Interest.** Seth thinks organizing units in this way will connect learning to students' lives much more fluidly and that because they are driving the learning they will be intrinsically interested.

**Time.** Though inquiry takes more time in the beginning because students have to be taught to reclaim their own agency, ultimately it is like surfing—the hard work is getting up on the board, but once you do, students will ride the wave of their own curiosity because inquiry is our default orientation to life.

**Inquiry Addresses Obsessive Focus on Grades and Fear of Failure.** Inquiry is iterative and to mastery. Once students realize this failure becomes part of the process. This tends to result in perseverance, tenacity, and asset orientation!

**Colleagues.** Seth is confident that he has a lot in the bank with his colleagues. He believes he can afford to take some withdrawals. It seems to him that this is worth a withdrawal. If not now, when? Seth is not getting any younger and definitely won't get fired for this.

# TIMELINE

Directions: Making change takes planning and strategy. Use this timeline to identify the tasks and steps you will need to complete in order to achieve your goal. Be sure to include the work you will need to complete in and out of class. Sometimes it is helpful to work backwards from the goal.

TASK	DUE DATE

# **PART TWO**

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- **Identifying Who Can Give Feedback**
- **Getting Prepared for Your Feedback Sessions**
- **Reflecting on the Feedback You Received**
- **Revising Your Action Plan**



# TURNING LEARNING INTO ACTION

## INTRODUCTION

Now that you've created an action plan this workbook will guide you through a process to identify and solicit feedback from three people representing three stakeholder groups: students, colleagues or administrators, and community members (i.e. members of your community who have a stake in what you are creating but are not direct employees of the school district) prior to implementation.

## WHY GET FEEDBACK?

Before identifying who those stakeholders might be, it is important to ask "Why solicit feedback?" There are several reasons. First, soliciting feedback helps to ensure that the work we do as educators serves the needs and interests of the students and communities we serve. Second, soliciting feedback is a way of asking for input or advice that positions both parties as partners working together as a team for the common good. Finally, asking for feedback opens you to seeing new perspectives and new questions that you may not have even thought to consider!

## WHO CAN GIVE FEEDBACK?

To help ensure that feedback from stakeholders is valuable, it is important that you carefully consider who will be able to provide you with the most valuable input. Though you likely know people who belong to each of these groups that are likely to give you positive feedback no matter what, consider who is the best person to provide you feedback about this particular curricular goal. In many cases, this might be someone who has a valuable perspective on the content of the goal or perhaps the methodology you plan to use. It could also be the case that you choose this assignment as an opportunity to engage with people in your school district or community who are important allies and decision makers related to the social studies curriculum who may or may not be familiar with the revised (2022) [Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science and the Illinois Social Science Mandated Units of Study](#). No matter who you choose, push yourself to engage with people who will not automatically provide positive feedback.

# IDENTIFYING WHO CAN GIVE FEEDBACK

Directions: In this section of the workbook, you will identify people who will give you feedback on the current draft of your action plan. Please identify at least one student, one colleague or administrator, and one community member to interview for feedback. In the table below, please respond to the guiding questions for each person selected.

[See an example on the next page.](#)

\*IMPORTANT: To ensure privacy, please list students without identifying information.

Who are you choosing to provide critical feedback about your curricular goal? With the exception of students, please list names below.*	Why is this person's perspective and feedback valuable?	What wealth/ knowledge/ perspectives are you hoping this person will offer?	What critiques do you expect this person to provide?
Student:			
Colleague/ Administrator:			
Community Member:			

# IDENTIFYING WHO CAN GIVE FEEDBACK

## Example:

Since Seth's goal is to transform a World Cultures unit on the Middle East to be free inquiry, he has decided to solicit feedback from the following stakeholders described in the column on the left.

**\*IMPORTANT:** To ensure privacy, please list students without identifying information.

Who are you choosing to provide critical feedback about your curricular goal? With the exception of students, please list names below.*	Why is this person's perspective and feedback valuable?	What wealth/ knowledge/ perspectives are you hoping this person will offer?	What critiques do you expect this person to provide?
<b>Student:</b> <b>B.T.</b> Though Seth would typically have selected a current student, in this case he decided to select a recent graduate who is currently studying to be a teacher in college.	B.T. has addressed Seth and other members of the World Cultures team in the past about her dissatisfaction with the ways in which culture in the Middle East is framed in the class and sent Seth a paper she wrote for a class in which she critically reflects on her World Cultures experience. Seth respects her opinion a great deal.	BT has a considerable amount of insight and knowledge to provide both as a South Asian Muslim student who took World Cultures (in a school that is predominantly white and likely Christian). She also has spent considerable time evaluating that experience from a critical perspective in the context of her education courses.	Since BT has already expressed dissatisfaction with the current curriculum, Seth is hoping that BT will appreciate the changes he aims to make. He also expects that she will likely have ideas about how to make it better.
<b>Colleague/ Administrator:</b> <b>Patricia</b> Seth chose Patricia Sniadecki because he knows she has a good sense of district demands but also has considerable experience as a classroom teacher. He also knows she will speak honestly about this work.	Patricia is a curriculum project manager for social studies at the district office. Technically speaking she is classified as a teacher, but works directly with the curriculum and instructions staff. He chose her because he knows she has a good sense of district demands but also has considerable experience as a classroom teacher. He also knows she will speak honestly about this work.	Seth believes Patricia has an incredible pulse on state standards and their implementation in his district. He also knows that her personal philosophy aligns with inquiry but also realizes that students must meet state standards.	Seth doesn't really know what to expect as Patricia has a definite role in the district and also seems to philosophically favor inquiry. If anything, he expects that TS may have concerns that he is not teaching all of the required content and standards.
<b>Community Member:</b> I reached out to <b>Bernie Newman</b> who is a long-time and highly respected member of the oldest and largest synagogue in Naperville, Temple Beth Shalom. I also reached out to <b>Shaykh Ali Riswan</b> , who is a Shaykh at the largest and oldest mosque/masjid in Naperville.	Seth chose these community members because both are connected with religious communities that have cultural hearths in the Middle East and because both have connections with communities living in Naperville who are from or connected with the MENA countries.	Both community members serve congregations that are minorities in our community and thus have a vested interest in curriculum that address culture and religion.	Seth believes that both community members will appreciate the opportunity to weigh in on curriculum and that their criticisms may involve making sure that regardless of what students are interested in, that current conflicts must be taught and that they must be taught objectively.

# GETTING PREPARED FOR YOUR FEEDBACK SESSIONS

Directions: Before engaging each of your stakeholders in feedback sessions, consider what you want to share about your action plan and more specifically, what questions you might ask each of your stakeholders. Write down a short synopsis of your action and guiding questions that you might ask each stakeholder.

Synopsis of your action plan:

Questions to ask each stakeholder:		
Student	Colleague/Administrator	Community Member

Because there are specific considerations when soliciting feedback from K-5 and 6-8 students, please review the guide on the next page.

# GETTING PREPARED FOR YOUR FEEDBACK SESSIONS (cont.)

## K-8 Guide: Soliciting Feedback from Students

When soliciting feedback from your students, begin by explaining your action plan so that they have context for the conversation. Provide key details about the topics to be covered, activities planned, and the goals you hope to achieve. Share the purpose of this feedback session. Let students know that you value their opinions and you need their feedback to revise and improve your plan.

### When soliciting feedback from students:

- Prepare for feedback sessions by having a way to record the feedback and take notes on the feedback conversation.
- Give explicit examples of what “feedback” means and how you use it as a teacher.
- Draw upon classroom examples of when students have previously given feedback or you have provided them with constructive feedback.
- Emphasize that there are no right or wrong answers when providing feedback and critical feedback is part of improving
- Develop feedback protocols (i.e. glows and grows; I like, I wish, I wonder; TAG) with your students to empower them to continue providing feedback on a regular basis.

### Suggested Methods of Soliciting Feedback from K-8 Students:

- Journaling (written or drawing pictures) with feedback prompts such as: “Draw or write about a topic you’d like to learn about in class?” or “Design your ideal class period—what am I doing, what are you and other students doing?”
- Anonymous Notes or Surveys: You might start a class feedback box that students can use to drop notes or provide surveys with specific feedback prompts without asking students to provide names.
- Class Dialogues: Pose open-ended yet guided feedback questions to your students. Allow them time to prepare answers before discussing as a whole class.
- Small Group Discussions: Invite a few students to have a feedback conversation before or after school or during lunch or recess, if your schedule permits. Prepare specific questions ahead of time to begin the conversation, then allow students to lead from there.

**Feedback sentence stems:**  
Share these with students to help them provide constructive feedback.

“I really liked...”

“One thing I found confusing...”

“One thing that you can work on is...”

“One of my favorite things about class is...”

“One thing I sometimes struggle with in this class..”

“I would like more....” and “I would like less...”

“I feel seen, heard, and valued when...”

“I feel invisible when...”

“I enjoy when my classmates and I...”

**Now it's time to get feedback!**

Please conduct each of the feedback sessions. Be sure to take notes!



# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED

Directions: Please summarize the feedback you received from each stakeholder and explain the extent to which you integrated this feedback into your action plan. (Note: If you record the feedback from students, please be sure that it aligns with your school district's policy regarding recording students).

## STUDENT FEEDBACK

**1. Without listing the name or any specific identifying information, describe the student you interviewed.**

Example:

BT is a former NCHS student. She identifies as Muslim and South Asian.

**2. What was the most important or valuable feedback you received from the STUDENT you interviewed? Be specific.**

By chance, BT actually came to observe Seth deliver the staging portion of the new unit during which Seth gathered students around the "NCHS Mummy" and had them write questions they were interested in on post-its. She expressed interest in the new approach and expressed a bit of shock saying "... how could I walk past this mummy for 4 years and not think twice about it." She also mentioned that at her school they "...try to learn how to frame lessons in the context of students' lives and what impacts them directly" and that starting with the mummy was a good idea. Though most of this feedback was positive, Seth knows it came on the heels of considerable criticism of the entire course in an 18-page paper that BT wrote and gave to Seth.

**3. What specific changes did you make to your action plan in light of the feedback you received?**

Based on BT's feedback, Seth decided to continue with his plans without any specific changes. This was primarily because she gave him confidence about the approach. This was especially meaningful to Seth as she had previously given highly critical feedback which itself motivated Seth to approach the course using a free-inquiry method.

# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED (cont.)

4. What impact do you think the specific changes you made will have on your instruction?

Seth believes this will make him more confident and committed about what he is doing especially because he was really concerned about student interest and willingness to do free inquiry.

5. Are there suggestions you received from I3 colleagues that you decided not to integrate into your action plan? Please explain why you decided not to integrate these suggestions.

Since Seth did not have the opportunity to have an extensive discussion about his approach to free inquiry in the Middle East unit, his free inquiry approach was in part a response to her previous feedback and he plans to solicit feedback from her again after the unit is complete.

6. What reflections or insights into your practice did interviewing a student provide, if any?

Seth believes that receiving the critical feedback from BT in the form of a paper was in some ways difficult to take, but in other ways, it spoke to the changes Seth had been working to make for a long time and gave him the confidence to work to overcome some of the social and district barriers he previously mentioned. It helped him understand, yet again, that students must be agents of their own learning and be co-creators of curriculum. He plans to solicit feedback from students in the future and advocate for students engaging in the curriculum creation process.

# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED

Directions: Please summarize the feedback you received from each stakeholder and explain the extent to which you integrated this feedback into your action plan.

## COLLEAGUE/ADMINISTRATOR FEEDBACK

1. What is the first/last name and position of the colleague or administrator you interviewed?

Patricia is a project manager in Seth's District. In addition to other duties she frequently facilitates curriculum for social studies across the district.

2. What was the most important or valuable feedback you received from the COLLEAGUE/ADMINISTRATOR you interviewed? Be specific.

The most important feedback Seth received from Patricia is that she agreed with him but that she and other district members have considerable constraints when it comes to curriculum. As Seth has worked through 13 learning, he has frequently reflected on the fact that there is a tension between ISBE Inquiry Standards and the large number of content area standards. Seth has wondered how a teacher can both assure that content is "covered" while at the same time guide an approach where the outcome is not known. To Seth's surprise, Patricia agreed with this tension, but, notably took it further, suggesting that the sheer volume of standards meant that it was simply not feasible to meet all of the standards that the state insists districts meet and exercise free inquiry. This was something of a revelation to Seth. He recalled how in a previous session, Dr. David Stovall had mentioned that the reason why you do something in class cannot be "because the state says so." When Seth heard Dr. Stovall say this, he had assumed that the revised state standards actually positioned him to teach in an equitable, just, and inclusive fashion. What he realized in speaking with Patricia is that no matter how equitable and just standards may be, too many standards can potentially reduce the time and space students and teachers need to inquire.

3. What specific changes did you make to your action plan in light of the feedback you received?

Seth does not plan to change his action plan at this time since he believes he is meeting the standards for this unit. That said, the conversation made him realize how important it is to limit the volume and types of standards that end up in curriculum at both the district and state levels. Too many standards can be suffocating.

# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED (cont.)

4. What impact do you think the specific changes you made will have on your instruction?

Seth will continue to approach this unit with a focus on identity, geography, and religion as is required by the district curriculum map.

5. Are there suggestions you received from 13 colleagues that you decided not to integrate into your action plan? Please explain why you decided not to integrate these suggestions.

Since Seth's action plan is consistent with district and state requirements, Patricia mostly gave positive feedback without specific suggestions for change. As before though, Seth plans to circle back to discuss how this unit went.

6. What reflections or insights into your practice did interviewing a colleague/administrator provide, if any?

The main insight was that Patricia and other members of the district in general have similar thoughts as Seth: Too many standards can suck the oxygen out of learning.

# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED

Directions: Please summarize the feedback you received from each stakeholder and explain the extent to which you integrated this feedback into your action plan.

## COMMUNITY MEMBER FEEDBACK

1. Please list the first/last name of the community member you interviewed and describe the fund of knowledge they provide. (i.e. what experiences/perspective do they bring that you expect will help you meet your curricular goal?)

2. What was the most important or valuable feedback you received from the COMMUNITY MEMBER you interviewed? Be specific.

3. What specific changes did you make to your action plan in light of the feedback you received?

### Feedback from Bernie Newman:

Seth interviewed Bernie Newman. Mr. Newman is a “gabbai” at Congregation Beth Shalom, a Jewish house of worship in Naperville. A gabbai is someone who assists with reading the Torah, making sure that each word is read/pronounced correctly. One of Bernie’s many other roles is to prepare students for their Bar and Bat Mitzvah training. Mr. Newmann is widely respected in the community for his knowledge of Judaism and his interfaith work. He has hosted countless student and educator groups including dozens that I have brought to Congregation Beth Shalom.

After providing Mr. Newman with his action plan, Seth spoke with Mr. Newman by phone for over an hour. Numerous suggestions were made. Among these were: (1) Providing students with specific, credible, and balanced sources to begin their inquiry and then letting them find others on their own (2) Provide students with specific tools to identify mis- and dis-information and provide frequent feedback on sources (3) Consider have students interview local people who have ties to Israel/Gaza (4) When students consider local action, consider the model of having students who disagree do service projects together.

Since Seth allowed Mr. Newman the opportunity to view the internal work he did when considering the concepts of Israel and Palestine, Mr. Newman also expressed grave concern about the minimal sources of information Seth was basing his views of Israel on.

By the time Seth received this feedback, he was already in the middle of the inquiry so could not act on all the feedback, though he will in the future. For now, Seth is figuring out how to get students connected with local people who have ties to their inquiries.



# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED (cont.)

4. What impact do you think the specific changes you made will have on your instruction?

Seth believes that the changes he makes will make the learning more relevant, engaging, and actionable to students. Because he plans to adopt the suggestions related to sources and mis- and dis-information in the future, he expects this will also result in a better student product as students will have more guidance.

5. Are there suggestions you received from I3 colleagues that you decided not to integrate into your action plan? Please explain why you decided not to integrate these suggestions.

This question is not applicable.

6. What reflections or insights into your practice did interviewing a community member provide, if any?

Seth found this to be extremely valuable and challenging. On the one hand, the interaction with a community member provided Seth some really incredible advice and opportunities to engage with the community. On the other, Seth found the experience a bit exposing, particularly because Mr. Newman thoroughly reviewed his internal work related to Palestine and Israel. That said, Seth believes growth often requires humility.

# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED

Directions: Please summarize the feedback you received from each stakeholder and explain the extent to which you integrated this feedback into your action plan.

## COMMUNITY MEMBER FEEDBACK

**1. Please list the first/last name of the community member you interviewed and describe the fund of knowledge they provide. (i.e. what experiences/perspective do they bring that you expect will help you meet your curricular goal?)**

**2. What was the most important or valuable feedback you received from the COMMUNITY MEMBER you interviewed? Be specific.**

**3. What specific changes did you make to your action plan in light of the feedback you received?**

### Feedback from Mr. Rizwan Ali:

Seth also received feedback from Mr. Rizwan Ali who is a Shaykh at the Islamic Center of Naperville. "Shaykh" is often described as a scholar but Shaykh Rizwan titles within ICN included Imam and Religious Director. Mr. Rizwan is highly respected in the community, has a background in working with youth, and holds a PhD in Educational Studies from Creighton University. Shaykh Rizwan has been active in interfaith work in Naperville, is a frequent speaker at Muslim Student Associations meetings at schools in and around Naperville.

Shaykh Rizwan Ali asked several thoughtful questions related to Seth's action plan. In reference to Question 1, Part 2 of the workbook, he asked, "How do we make sure to reduce a teacher's bias regarding the topic or a student's bias?" To this end, he provided an example where a student with an Israeli background only researches Israeli topics or a Palestinian student who researches their point of view.

Shaykh Rizwan Ali also asked "[w]ith this inquiry-model, what considerations will be put in place if the topics trigger traumas?" He also provided an example for this question as well asking Seth to consider what if "...Palestinian students or Israeli [in Seth's class]...have lost family members in conflicts, what coping mechanisms will be there? Interestingly, he also noted that History or Social Science classes discuss events that are in the past and might not have a direct correlation to a family's present well-being."

Like Mr. Newman, Shaykh Rizwan Ali was also concerned about the type and quality of sources used by students. He suggested that Seth add a question, "Can we add a question to make sure that the sources that are going to be collected will come from a variety of sources such as mainstream media, academic sources, oral histories, documentaries, and even social media resources that are highlighting important issues."

# REFLECTING ON THE FEEDBACK YOU RECEIVED (cont.)

4. What impact do you think the specific changes you made will have on your instruction?

Seth feels quite heartened by the feedback, not only because he believes he received quality feedback, but also because he believes the feedback also strengthened ties between him and these two influential community members. Seth was also impressed by the educational sophistication of the two community members and hadn't realized both had different types of educational backgrounds and both are teaching at the university level.

5. Are there suggestions you received from I3 colleagues that you decided not to integrate into your action plan? Please explain why you decided not to integrate these suggestions.

This question is not applicable.

6. What reflections or insights into your practice did interviewing a community member provide, if any?

Seth found that there was both concern related to social media posts and a willingness to use these posts as data if situated thoughtfully and appropriately. Seth was affirmed by the fact that Shaykh Rizwan Ali's comment that studying Social Science and History is situated in the past and may not address student concerns. Seth believes that the new social science standards and I3, push us to do exactly that and has already designed his unit to do that, though this will be an enduring challenge no doubt.

# HOW DID YOUR ACTION PLAN CHANGE?

How did your action plan change from how you originally conceived of it (i.e. before you presented it to your I3 Colleagues) until this point (i.e. after you received feedback from students, colleagues/administrator, and community members)? Use the space below to share a revised version of your action plan.

<b>Restate your curricular goal:</b>	
<b>What is the rationale for pursuing this goal?</b>	
<b>Restate the associated outputs and outcomes:</b>	
<b>How will you overcome barriers and obstacles?</b>	
<b>What's your timeline?</b>	



***“...it is like surfing – the hard work is getting up on the board, but once you do, students will ride the wave of their own curiosity because inquiry is our default orientation to life.”***

***~ Seth***

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