

Week 13 Agenda: U4 Student-Led Inquiry

India and South Asia: From Area Studies to Ethnic Studies

This unit is exciting! Students now have enough content knowledge of their own to meaningfully engage with some self-directed academic inquiry. This week is designed to set that up. Students will get their curiosity working with discussions – with peers and community members – and will begin to gain some extra background on a topic of their choice.

Optional Readings for Teachers or as Class Text

- “Chinese Tea in World History” by Marc Jason Gilbert in *Education About Asia’s* Fall 2008 issue (<https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/chinese-tea-in-world-history/>)

LESSON #1: Chai and Chat

Optional Bell-Ringer: You’ve learned a lot in this course – but there’s still room to ask: What do you wish you’d learned about South Asia, but haven’t yet?

Purpose

- As we move into student-led inquiry, we need to get their creative minds sparking. Discussion and reflection are a great start to the process of allowing students to direct their own learning. It’s also an opportunity to draw your community – South Asian and people with academic expertise in the region – into your classroom. You may have had guest speakers earlier in the course (wonderful!). The goal here is slightly different. We want students to actually get to chat and exchange ideas in smaller groups rather than in a whole-group format. You could certainly re-format this lesson to have a single guest speaker, though, if it works better for you in your own class context. I’ve provided some discussion prompts, but really the idea is to have students reflect on what they’ve learned about South Asia so far and what they’re still curious about.

Prep

- Re-group your seating arrangement into sets of 3-4 (If you don’t have any guests, plan to have your students mix with each other)
- Ideally, plan for each group to have one community member and 2-3 students (you could have some all-student groups and some mixed groups if needed)
- Provide any guests with some sense of what to expect – what are you hoping they’ll chat about with your students? Is just introducing themselves enough? Maybe have your students brainstorm questions ahead of time?
- Have a set of discussion-starter cards printed and placed at each discussion grouping – groupings that will include a guest should have cards specific to that guest

- Have a timer available to project on a screen (<https://classroomscreen.com/> has a nice one...don't forget to choose a chime that isn't awful to hear or be prepared to introduce some music as a signal to transition between groups...you could try Radio Garden <http://radio.garden/visit/>)
- Have chai available! How authentic the preparation is depends on what you're able to do. Perhaps your school has a culinary program that can support you? Perhaps members of your classroom community are able to bring some in and you can heat it up in crock pots? Perhaps you'll order it from a local establishment? Perhaps you'll just use powdered "chai" mixed with hot water from kettles?

Procedure

1. Have your small groupings seated in their sets of 3-4
2. Give your groups 10 minutes or so to chat (use the timer to ensure several rotations happen) – they can chat freely, and should if they are able, but once they've introduced themselves if the conversation seems to lag you should have some discussion-starter cards (below) available at each grouping – groupings that include a guest should have some questions that are specific to that guest (template below).
3. Rotate the students between groupings so they get to interact with several guests (if you don't have any guests, you still should have them change their discussion partners)
4. To wrap things up, tell students that the next time you meet you'll be choosing research topics – so they should ponder what they've talked about to see if it's shaken any interests loose

Non-Guest Grouping Discussion-Starter Cards

<p>If you could travel to anywhere in South Asia, where would it be?</p>	<p>Why do you think so much of our course has been focused on India instead of other parts of South Asia?</p>	<p>In South Asia many people speak a mother tongue – and then several others to some extent. How many languages do you speak? Why?</p>
<p>How does understanding South Asia enrich your life here in the U.S.? How might it benefit you professionally?</p>	<p>As you've studied South Asia, has it been more of a mirror – reflecting your own experience – or a window – allowing you to understand people who are very different from yourself?</p>	<p>Which aspect of South Asia do you wish we'd spent more time studying?</p>
<p>Which is most intriguing to you as an interdisciplinary approach – Area Studies, International Studies, or Ethnic Studies? Why?</p>	<p>When learning about unfamiliar topics, are you more into politics, economics, or social/cultural topics?</p>	<p>Which of the following perspectives do you find the easiest to consider when learning about something? The hardest?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Class • Gender • Race/Ethnicity

Guest Grouping Discussion-Starter Card Template

LESSON #2: Choosing a Research Question

Optional Bell-Ringer: What is a question that you still have about South Asia? It could be a topic we've covered, but you'd like to look at it from a different perspective. It could be a topic we've covered based on one place, but you're curious about how that same idea would look in a different part of South Asia. It could be a topic you think we've missed!

Purpose

- The remainder of the course is student-led – they choose a research question, learn a bit about the topic, do some research to try and answer their question, and they present their investigation in the format of their choice (which serves as their final exam). We'll lead them through that process step by step. First thing has to be deciding on a research question. Because the final product will be argumentative, they may need your guidance in how to make a particular topic fit that criteria. Talking through a research question can be a great way to tweak a topic away from being simply descriptive and into argumentative.

Prep

- Look over the Research Question Selection handout (below) – are there any potential questions you'd like to add to the choices?
- Have copies of the Research Question Selection handout (below) for each student

Procedure

1. Explain to students that they will be developing a project based on their investigation of a research question of their choice. The project does not have to take the form of a paper, but it does need to contain the main *elements* of a good argumentative paper: a thesis statement and support for that thesis statement. The first task is to decide on a research question to guide them – the answer to that research question will be their thesis statement. It will be next week before they get to that at all, though. This week's goal is to decide on a question and learn enough about the topic that they will be able to look into answers next week.
2. Provide students with the Research Question Selection handout (below) and guide them as needed in completing it.

Name _____

Research Question Selection

The first step with a research paper like this is choosing a topic – which really means finding a question that you want to discover the answer to!

Your question must:

- ❖ Provide an argumentative thesis statement when you answer it (so you'll want to avoid questions that only lead to an explanation of something instead of a point you could argue about/answer in multiple ways)
- ❖ Have to do with the region of South Asia – that means South Asians in the U.S., about the region as a whole, or about one of the countries in particular (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka)
- ❖ Provide you with a starting point – it's OK to refine your question/shift your investigation as your research uncovers new information or leads you in a slightly different direction, or perhaps you'll start with looking into "South Asia" and then narrow to a particular country once you see where most of the relevant research is centered or you'll broaden as seems appropriate

Your Question:

Need some ideas? It's best if you let your curiosity guide you, but here are some usable research questions that might pique your interest or just give you an idea of what type of question leads to an argumentative thesis statement:

Historic Roots

- When considering South Asia as a region, what was the most significant impact of the 1947 Partition?
- Has communism been a positive force in South Asia?
- Should English remain one of India's official languages?
- Should Urdu remain the official language of Pakistan?
- Is it possible to have Hinduism without caste?
- Are reservation systems for historically disadvantaged groups in government and education good ways to combat poverty and discrimination?
- If Sufism disappeared from South Asia, what would be the most significant loss?
- What is the most significant way that the Bhakti movement shaped Hinduism?
- Is Buddhism still a significant influence in South Asia today?

Contemporary Trends

- Is increasing urbanization going to decrease poverty levels in India?
- Would a decline in arranged marriages in South Asia be a positive development?
- What is the most significant way that an increasingly youthful population will affect South Asian culture and/or society?

- Has Hindu nationalism significantly shaped Indian culture and society?
- Which is more significant in India today – caste or class?
- Is it inherently dangerous to be a woman in South Asia?
- Is education the best way to combat poverty in South Asia?
- What is the most significant impact of the growing middle class in South Asia?
- Was the liberalization of the Indian economy a positive development?
- Is microfinancing a good way to combat poverty in South Asia?
- Does Bhutan's policy of Gross National Happiness work – should other countries emulate it?
- Is it important for South Asians to promote living in joint families?

Violence and Conflict

- Should Kashmir be independent from both India and Pakistan?
- Is nuclear proliferation in South Asia a significant worry?
- What is the best way for the Bangladeshi government to deal with Rohingya refugees from Myanmar?
- Was language the most significant cause of civil war in Sri Lanka?
- Should India and China be allies?
- Is Sri Lanka done with civil war?
- How closely should the U.S. military work with South Asian militaries?
- Can sectarian violence be reduced in Pakistan?
- How should Pakistan deal with the effects of conflict in Afghanistan?

Humans Shape the Environment... and the Environment Shapes Us

- What is the best way to manage Himalayan water resources?
- What is the most important thing that can still be done to help the people affected by the Bhopal disaster?
- What is the most effective way for the Republic of Maldives to deal with climate change?

A Globalized World

- What is the most significant factor that holds South Asia together as a region?
- Should the U.S. develop a closer relationship with India than with Pakistan?
- Is medical tourism to India a positive development?
- What is the most important way that Sikhism affects the communities where it is practiced?
- How closely should Bhutan develop ties with the rest of the world?
- What is the most important way that call centers and IT services being located in India has changed culture and society there?
- Is the location of many foreign factories in Bangladesh a good thing for the people who work in them?
- Does the wide-spread practice of yoga in the United States mean that Americans are sharing in Indian culture?
- Did British imperialism in South Asia change British culture and society in a meaningful way?

LESSON #3: Researching Context

Optional Bell-Ringer: I want to argue that it is unethical to fuse Kathak dance movements with other styles of dance unless you have a foundational understanding of Kathak. What is the first thing I need to research?

Purpose

- Before students can form a thesis statement, they need the context – background – to inform it. Their first round of research has the goal of familiarizing themselves with their topic.

Prep

- Have copies of both the References: Topic Investigation and the Context: Research Question Topic handouts (below) for each student
- If students are handwriting their notes they can just use the templates as guidance/a template – otherwise you could provide them as a digital document where they can expand the space as needed
- Have research resources available (likely school/public library databases, though heading to your brick and mortar library may work just as well)
- Decide which citation style you'll want students to use (or if you'll allow them to choose)

Procedure

1. Ensure students understand the directions on both the References: Topic Investigation and the Context: Research Question Topic handouts (below)
2. Give students enough time and support to complete them

Name _____

References: Topic Investigation

Even though you're only looking for background on the topic your research question guides you to – general knowledge – you should still keep track of the references you use.

For each reference, record a citation using the style you've been assigned or have chosen:
_____ Style

Also for each reference, make note of what sort of credentials the author has (why are they qualified to provide information on this topic?). If it's a website with no particular author you'll need to pay particular attention to this notation.

This is not the final product so the citations do not need to be in alphabetical order.

There is not a required number of sources, you just need to fully understand the context of your topic (likely reading a lot more than you're writing). Just keep adding to the list as needed.

General knowledge (lots of sources have that same information) does not require a footnote or in-text citation, so you don't need to tie your notes back to a particular reference *unless* you write a direct quotation (more than three words in a row from your source should be in quotation marks), a statistic, or if your source makes an unusual point you won't find elsewhere (not as likely to happen at this stage of your research). If you do end up with one of those three things in your notes, make sure you've assigned your reference citation a number and put that number in parentheses or a circle right where you write/type your notes in case you end up putting it in your final product.

Citation 1

Why is this an authoritative source?

Citation 2

Why is this an authoritative source?

Name _____

Context: Research Question Topic

Research Question	
WHO is involved? This may be particular individuals or groups of people who share a particular role or identity.	
WHAT is this topic – how would you define or explain it? This may be very straight forward or may require a summary of many different types of contextual information.	
WHEN was it relevant? This may be a particular time period or it may be a starting point and it's still relevant today.	
WHERE is this topic relevant – which places are involved/affected?	
Other Info you think will be useful.	

Relevant Washington State Standards

SSS1.9-12.4 Gather relevant information from multiple sources representing a wide range of views while using the origin, authority, structure, context, and corroborative value of the sources to guide the selection.

SSS2.9-12.1 Create compelling and supporting questions that focus on an idea, issue, or event.

SSS2.9-12.2 Evaluate the validity, reliability, and credibility of sources when researching an issue or event.

SSS2.9-12.3 Determine the kinds of sources and relevant information that are helpful, taking into consideration multiple points of view represented in the sources, the types of sources available, and the potential uses of the sources.

SSS2.9-12.4 Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry and how, through engaging source work, new compelling and supporting questions emerge.

SSS3.9-12.1 Evaluate one's own viewpoint and the viewpoints of others in the context of a discussion.

SSS4.9-12.1 Evaluate multiple reasons or factors to develop a position paper or presentation.

SSS4.9-12.4 Create strategies to avoid plagiarism and respect intellectual property when developing a paper or presentation.