GETTING DOWN & DIRTY WITH Dual Inquiry

What is historical inquiry?
Inquiry asks students to get curious: Engage, Question, Investigate.
More than the simple process of memorizing events and dates, historical inquiry is the process of “doing” history. Inquiry asks students to think like historians as they seek knowledge by analyzing sources, asking questions, gathering evidence, and forming conclusions. By utilizing historical analysis skills, such as change over time, cause and effect, and multiple perspectives, students will develop rich critical thinking ability.

What is dual inquiry?
Using dual inquiry in the classroom requires teachers to be both a teacher and a learner at the same time. Turning the classroom into a place for inquiry means admitting to our students that we are learning with them and it calls for teacher skills in guiding our learners in their own investigations. Lessons can be sparked by our own questions and curiosities, and we can model the historical thinking process and critical thinking skills as we answer questions together.

“WHAT IMPACT DID THE C.C.C. HAVE IN WILLIAMS, AZ?”
Heather: As a teacher new to the Williams area, I did not know the answer to this question. With my students, we analyzed various types of primary and secondary sources, attempting to determine how the Civilian Conservation Corps influenced this rural community. Students truly took an active role in their investigations, doing research at the local library, collecting stories from family members and exploring nearby C.C.C. sites. Ultimately, the students created a museum exhibit for the Kaibab National Forest headquarters.

“OUR FIRST EXPERIENCE – “WERE THE CODE TALKERS TREATED AS HEROES?””
Christi and Heather: As teachers, we had discussed the Navajo Code Talkers in our lessons on WWII, but we had never explored what their lives were like when they returned home. Using the historical question “Were the Code Talkers treated as heroes?” we spent hours researching primary and secondary sources, ultimately deciding upon a collection for students. They analyzed the documents, formed answers to the question, and used source-based evidence to support their opinions.

From this experience, we learned that creating historical investigations takes a lot of time! Once presented to students, these investigations can be day-long trips or month-long excursions. They prompt critical thinking skills and give students practice “thinking like historians.”

Our First Experience – “Were the Code Talkers Treated as Heroes?”

How can I use dual inquiry in my classroom?

“IS OBAMA’S HEALTH CARE PLAN A MOVE TOWARDS SOCIALISM?”
Christi: Obama’s health care plan is often labeled as being “socialist.” To explore this question, students in my economics classes and I analyzed this plan within our study of economic systems and then argued which label applied. This project demonstrated that inquiry learning is not limited to history classrooms: probing sources and wrestling with questions and answers are just as applicable to other social studies content areas.