Trace Based Cases

The word *trace*can be used as both a noun and a verb. For example, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a trace (noun) as a sign or evidence of some past thing. As a verb, *to trace* means to discover signs, evidence, or remains, and to follow or investigate in detail. Trace-Based Cases begin with a trace of something from the past, like an artifact, photo, painting, or other visual source. During initial cases, utilize teacher-generated questions. Then, gradually release the responsibility to the students, so they can eventually ask their own questions.  
  
**Step 1: Descriptive Questions**  
Begin with some descriptive questions. These evidence-based questions provide background information to help students contextualize. However, rather than assigning these questions, work on them together with some group activities that involve a variety of sources, including: artifacts, photos, paintings, maps, charts, graphs, and written primary and secondary sources. First, provide a *trace*of something from the past, like an artifact.

* Ask: *What do you see?*
* Then, provide more resources to answer the following:
  + Who?
  + When?
  + Where?

These are all evidence-based close-ended questions that can be answered by searching for facts within a variety of sources, such as: artifacts, photos, illustrations, and paintings. Next, you want to help your students develop deeper analysis questions.   
  
**Step 2: Analysis Questions**  
Analysis digs deeper by adding *why* and *how* questions, which explore the relationship of the parts to the whole. During the analysis phase, students put pieces of evidence together to make inferences.  
  
**Step 3: Evaluation Questions**  
Evaluation questions considers implications, solutions, conclusions, or recommendations: *What if?* *So what? What now?*and *What next?*These evaluative questions can lead to further inquiry, social action, or social entrepreneurship. For example, find a problem the people experienced. How would you solve that problem with a good or service that would make the world a better place?