IV. Standards and Thinking Strategies in Social Science

Social scientists focus on research, analysis, and inquiry – the desire to find answers to complex problems and discover hidden relationships. PEBC staff developers draw explicit links to the Colorado and National Social Studies Standards as we help teachers develop and implement inquiry based research projects and analysis. Such research depends on students' effective use of the thinking strategies: an ability to generate compelling questions and thoughtfully gather, evaluate, analyze, and synthesize data.

Students read and understand a variety of materials.
(Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing, Standard 1)
We help teachers design and construct research projects that require students to pull information from multiple sources, to understand the differences and appropriate times to use one material over another.

Students read to locate, select, and make use of relevant information from a variety of media, reference, and technological sources.
(Colorado Model Content Standards for Reading and Writing, Standard 5)
We conduct demonstration lessons, modeling instructional and reading comprehension strategies for teachers. Staff developers think aloud about their own metacognitive process as they research their topics, showing how they monitor meaning while they take notes, ask questions, and determine importance throughout the inquiry process. Teachers debrief these demonstration lessons with the staff developers, deciding how to incorporate these strategies into their own instruction.

Students know how to use the processes and resources of historical inquiry.
(Colorado Model Content Standards for History, Standard 2)
We help teachers design history projects that require students to ask questions, activate background knowledge, gather data, and infer outcomes.

Students have opportunities to practice the skills of historical analysis and interpretation.
(National Standards for Social Studies Teachers, Disciplinary Standard 1 – History)
We help teachers and students determine importance and ask questions as they compare and contrast historical events, examine multiple perspectives, differentiate between historical facts and interpretations, and analyze multiple sources for information such as literature and art.

Below we highlight how students use specific thinking strategies in Social Science Research & Analysis.

Thinking Strategy	Cognitive Behaviors
Monitoring for Meaning	• Social Scientists pause and evaluate information. • Social Scientists use a variety of sources to validate information and to check for accuracy.
Activating, Using and Building Background Knowledge (schema)	• Social Scientists use their current background knowledge and how it impacts their interpretation of historical events, economic issues and culture. • Social Scientists launch investigations and ask questions based on previous interests and experiences.
Asking Questions	• Social Scientists evaluate their work by considering: What are the most effective resources and how will I access them? Do I have enough information? Have I used a variety of resources? What more do I need? Does it make sense? Have I told enough? Is it interesting and original thinking? Does my writing have voice? • Social Scientists ask critical questions of text: Is there a bias? Whose voice is left out? From whose point of view is this being told?
Drawing Inferences	• Social Scientists use primary source documents and artifacts to infer themes and patterns. • Social Scientists use research to infer why and how historical choices were made, the implications of those choices, and how those choices impact us today.
Determining Importance	• Social Scientists use their understanding of primary and secondary source text structures to uncover information and navigate text. • Social Scientists determine importance as they sift through data and information collected on the Internet or in other sources.
Creating Sensory Images	• Social Scientists use sensory images to imagine other times and places in order to relate to the experiences of others. • Social Scientists incorporate auditory, visual, and kinesthetic imagery when they write.
Synthesizing Information	▪ Social Scientists enhance their understanding of a topic by considering different perspectives, opinions, and sources. ▪ Social Scientists recognize misinformation and reconcile conflicting points of view.