For a course in history to be a useful and thought-provoking learning experience, it must engage students in the application of evidence to make reasoned arguments about the past. Facts unto themselves are useless, but I hope to illustrate that when evidence is applied to deep historical questions, history becomes something students can ‘do’ while learning the required material. We must temper our love affair with lecture and textbooks and history as a litany of facts and instead complement these traditional tools with what we know about cognition, brain-based instruction, and the growing research base on history education. For students to think of history not simply as memorization, but instead as the construction and evaluation of evidence-based arguments, they must do the following:

* See history as a discipline driven by questions
* Understand the nature of historical evidence and be able to analyze a variety of sources and apply them to historical questions
* Develop and defend evidence-based interpretations of the past

‘Why Don’t You Just Tell Us the Answer?’

Bruce Lesh