INQUIRING MINDS LEARN TO READ AND WRITE:
PREPARING TO TEACH THROUGH AN INQUIRY APPROACH

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The Inquiry Stance
promotes teacher, student, and institutional growth when…

- teachers become reflective practitioners and action researchers, learning from the field, from reflection on their practice, and directly from their students about how to best teach them.

- teachers serve as peer coaches and thinking partners working together to promote the most powerful teaching and learning.

- teachers create inquiry environments for and with students, collaborating with them on creating disciplinary knowledge and culture.

A Motivational Survey

How Good a Motivator am I? A Self-Reflection Checklist

(based on current motivation research: (Bandura, 1998; Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Pajares, 1996; Smith and Wilhelm, 2002)

Usually = 4 points   Sometimes = 2 points   Never = 0 points

_____1. I believe my students are trustworthy and communicate this to them.

_____2. I believe a teacher should care about students and express this caring.

_____3. I believe my students are competent and can become more competent with proper assistance.

_____4. I attend to student interests and provide some level of choice.

_____5. I help students to do things and to know how to do things and to talk about how to do things.

_____6. I avoid labeling students.

_____7. I send explicit invitations to succeed, both to my students as a group, and individually.

_____8. I listen to what my students really say; I noodle around trying to get to know them.

_____9. I make good use of student experts in my class - getting kids to teach each other and share their expertise.

_____10. I use heterogeneous groups and interest groups to build interdependence and to highlight and use different students' strengths.

_____11. I avoid overemphasis on competition, rewards and winning -- though I may foster a fun, gamelike atmosphere where every one can win and succeed.

_____12. I help students to evaluate themselves; to build, articulate and apply their own critical standards.

_____13. I communicate high expectations to all my students

_____14. I focus on future success vs. past failure.

_____15. I name what students can do, focusing on their abilities and achievement; I celebrate student expertise.

_____16. I negotiate, help set, and communicate clear goals as I highlight focus and and higher purpose to the work that we do.

_____17. I provide continuous feedback to students about how they are doing, and create learning situations that provide immediate feedback.

_____18. I frontload unit work by starting with what students already know, activating background and building interest and a sense of purpose.

_____19. I foster connections to students' current life concerns.

_____20. I encourage the reading of a variety of different kinds of texts.

_____21. I encourage fun, humor and laughter in the classroom, including the reading of humorous texts.

_____22. I use artifacts and concrete objects in my teaching, and ask students to design artifacts and concrete objects that make knowledge visible and reasoning accountable.

_____23. I welcome and encourage multiple responses to class questions and projects.

_____24. I model the behaviors that I value for students (e.g. I read; I am pleasant).

_____25. I am passionate about reading and about ideas and I model and communicate this passion.

_____26. I teach my students for who they are and who they might be RIGHT NOW in the present moment (not for who I think they should be and be able to do sometime in the far off future).

_____27. In my classroom, we read texts that can be related to real world situations and activity.

_____28. The activities in my classroom allow students to identify and use their expertise.

Total - 98-110+ = You are a most excellent motivator! 88-97 = Good   78-87 = Fair   >77 Try something different!!!!

*Example here is adapted from Wilhelm, Jeffrey (2002). Action Strategies for Deepening Comprehension. New York: Scholastic.

Conditions of FLOW experience

- A clear *purpose, goals* and *immediate feedback*

- A *challenge* that requires an appropriate level of skill and *assistance* to meet the challenge as needed to be successful

- A sense of *control* and *developing competence*
    - voice, opinion, identity staking, choice, naming growing competence

- A focus on *immediate experience*
    - current relevance, make things, do things, immediate function, fun, humor

- *Importance of the social*
    - group work, peer assistance, social purpose, negotiate and share what is learned
    - relationships with authors, peers, characters, teachers
    - social contract: get to know me, care about me, address my interests, assist me and don't give up, be passionate,

Q. What kind of curriculum meets these demands?

A. Inquiry

Relationships with

- Family

- Friends

- Classmates

- Authors

- Characters

- Teachers

The Social Contract

- My teacher will try to get to know me as an individual.

- My teacher will care about me.

- My teacher will address my interests in some way either outside or inside the classroom.

- My teacher will assist me to learn and will work hard to make sure I have learned.

- *My teacher will be passionate about the subject and about teaching

6Ms Teaching Heuristic

Process For Teaching Inquiry

1. Set up
   - MOTIVATE – with essential question and frontloading, personally connect students to content

2. Standards or goals
   - Meeting them through MULTIPLE MODALITIES and MEASURES

      o Articulate major learning goals, both conceptual (what) and strategic (how).
      o Provide multiple ways for learning and demonstrating learning of the standards/end goals/ enduring understandings through independent culminating projects

3. Sequence or scaffold for gradual release of responsibility by
   - MODEL – *for* – Teacher does/students watch
   - MENTOR – *with* – Teacher does/students help and students do together/teacher helps
   - MONITOR – *by* – Student does/Teacher assesses and helps as needed

Inquiry Unit Template #1

Curricular Topic or Text:

Essential Question:

- **Personal connections/points of contact for students:**

- **Disciplinary importance:**

- **Possible resulting social actions:**

Conceptual Knowledge:	Procedural Knowledge:
• (What you want the students to know and be able to talk about and think with as conceptual tools)	• (What you want the students to be able to do and perform)

- **Frontloading Activity:**

- **Scaffold of Activities:** For exploring and practicing concepts - leading to capacity to complete culminating project - demonstration of developed understandings in actual accomplishment
- Curricular coherence – how does one activity lead to the next; how does one activity make use of knowledge developed in previous ones (layering!).

• Activities	• Connection to Conceptual and Procedural Knowledge	• Formative Assessments and proof of one's learning

• **Culminating Project**		
• **Composition/meaningful Making Project Description:**	• **Sequence of Project/ Ways Students will get after the Five Kinds of Knowledge necessary to composing throughout the unit:**	• **Summative Assessment/Proof Positive of Learning- Criteria and Benchmarks:**

- **Opportunities for Formative Assessment throughout the unit:**

- **Possible Multimedia and Social Action Extensions of the Writing Assignment/Culminating Project:**

Asking Essential Questions/Guiding Questions
Asking Essential Questions to Frame Instruction

"Being told is the opposite of finding out."
                                                -Jimmy Britton

"The only thing worth learning is learning how to learn."
                                                -Seymour Papert

1. Question Criteria:
- must be open-ended; contended; with multiple perspectives and possible answers

- non-judgmental

- emotive force/intellectual bite or ediginess- addresses students' point of view

- immediate relevance and use to students – will lead to enduring understandings

- succinct and pointed

- data is available – can be ascertained and developed

- not so general as to be undoable; not so specific that it can be answered quickly

- addresses the "heart of the discipline" being studied and essential disciplinary knowledge

- should lead to new questions asked by the students

- should lead to transformed ways of understanding, being and behaving in the world – both individually and as part of collective social action

2. Common problems with questions:
- merely information retrieval; does not require creating data or constructing new understandings

- begs the question

- leading

- too generic

- too narrow and specific

Topic: Relationships
Question: Where do our marriage customs come from?
Problem with Question: information retrieval
Revision: What makes a good relationship?

Topic: Civil Rights
Question: How did we win the fight for civil rights?
Problem with Question: begs the question
Revision: What are basic human rights and how can they be secured and protected?

Topic: Survival
Question: Why is it bad that animals are going extinct?
Problem with Question: leading
Revision: Who will survive?

Topic: Identity
Question: Who am I?
Problem with Question: generic
Revision: What do I think is worth fighting for? Where do I belong?

Tips for Generating Questions

Tip: Put Standards into question forms

Asking Macro-Questions – Wiggins and McTighe

Wiggins and McTighe critique most standards as being too vague, focusing on the rote learning of information, and as not identifying what constitutes adequate evidence of learning. Put standards into question forms ... p. 27

Tip: Reframe a required text, topic or standard by focusing on why it matters!

Tip: Ask questions of application!

Tip: Inquiry and Design – What questions drive the disciplines? What problems inform current research?

Tip: Consider the heart of the matter. What is the true importance of this curricular topic? Why do I love teaching it? What must kids remember and carry away regarding it?

Tip: Look around the community for issues that intersect with the topic.

Tip: Ask questions about quality that require students to make judgments.

Tip: Ask ethical questions – What should we pursue? What should we do with the knowledge we have?

Social and health problems
- o What is waste and its effects?
- o Who is hungry and what are its effects?
- o What is a good house?
- o What does it mean to be healthy?

Cultural issues:
- o Is sports overemphasized in American culture?

Language arts
- o What is courage?
- o What is a good relationship?
- o Where do I belong?
- o What is normal?
- o How does power affect people?

Physics
- o Where do waves come from?
- o How can waves be used?

Biology
- o How do geography and climate affect the growth of crops? Of animal populations? Of human populations and culture?
- o Why do organisms die?
- o How are we similar to bacteria?
- o Is sex necessary, biologically speaking?

History and cultural values
- o Who was/is a great person?
- o When are laws fair?
- o What is worth fighting for?
- o Are wars necessary?
- o Where does money come from?
- o Is Canadian history a history of progress?

Government
- o Is there too much or too little national power?
- o Can liberty and security be balanced?
- o Does federalism work?
- o What is a good government?

Math
- o Was geometry discovered or invented? (or any other kind of math)
- o How can we best figure rates of decay? (or any other kind of problem)

Questions of application:
- o How can we apply our understandings to solve a particular problem?

Tips for identifying culminating projects

- What's it (the topic, central concepts, procedures) for today?

- What's it for tomorrow?

- What *"work"* does it or could it do?

- How do you foresee and want kids to use it?

- When, where and in what situations can this knowledge be used?

- For social action: What changes do you and/or your students want to see and how can you work for this?

- Come up with a project that will capture (or be analogous to) these powers and purposes!

Connect culminating projects to the kinds of narrative, informational and argument texts the new standards and assessments require students to read and write.

- o Arguments of judgment and policy

- o Informational texts: listing, summarizing, describing, explaining, comparing, defining, classifying/differentiating, cause-effect, problem-solution

- o Narratives

Meaning Making Projects		
Formal Writing	**Multimedia Compositions**	**Social Action Projects**
Arguments	Video documentaries	Show video documentaries publicly
Extended Definitions	Hypermedia documentaries	Host public debate
Process Descriptions	Video How-To Guides	Volunteer work
Classifications	Websites	Hot-line project
Narrative Retellings	Digital stories	Peer Mediation Project
Fables	Multimedia Personality Profiles	Local Hero celebrations
Stories	Digital scrapbooks	Lake cleanup project
Picture Books	Webquests	Park cleanup project
Big Books	Museum exhibits	Create and maintain exhibit in local museum
Brochures	Museum kiosks	Senior Citizen visits/help days
Public Service Announcements	Public Service Announcements on Video or dramatized	Disseminate the public service announcements
Pamphlets	Timelines	Host or participate in community meetings
Dictionaries/Glossaries	Video glossaries Picture dictionaries	Present proposals to school board, city council, service groups
Guides	Murals	Letter writing campaign
Newspaper; articles	News Show/Talk Show	Thank you campaign
Case Studies	Dance performance	Waste free school project
Poetry book or cycle	Computer programs	Informational campaigns
Multigenre research	MTV videos of poems	Build: Repair or Rebuild something, e.g. engine; engine model, cabinet
How-to guides	Multigenre compositions	Career research: shadow a police officer, view medical procedures, compile interviews into manuscript
Travelogues	Public performance: concert, recital, painting, living history museum, fashion show, meeting of minds	Physical experience or challenge: learn to scuba dive, run a marathon, lose weight

How does action research/teacher research/peer coaching/thinking partnerships parallel teaching with the inquiry and design model?

Teacher Research roundtables

1. Your presentation should cover the following points:
    a) Question: Identify your research question (Essential Question)

    b) Why did this question grab you? How did it come to your attention? (Frontloading)

    c) History: Describe the history of your question: wWhy you feel it is important, how it changed and evolved as you planned your project. (Learning what experts already think and know – topical inquiry)
    If you did any reading or library/Internet research that helped you see what others think or have done to pursue this question, then review that here.

    d) Data Collection: Describe how you pursued your question: methods you used, data sources that were available (critical inquiry)

    e) Findings: what you found out (Culminating projects)

    f) So what? How did pursuing this project and what you found out inform you as a teacher? How does it help you think about your teaching? What interventions or new teaching strategies does it suggest you might try?

    g) Reflection: How did it go? What will you do differently next time? What new questions, methods, etc. might you like to try?

Resources

Smith, M. W., & Wilhelm. J. (2002). *"Reading don't fix no Chevys": Literacy in the lives of young men*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

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