

“Curiosity is the tool that sparks creativity. Curiosity is the technique that gets to innovation” (Grazer and Fishman 2015, 62).

Chapter 3: Inquiry Learning

Inquiry learning can spark students’ curiosity and ignite their passions. Inquiry puts learners in the driver’s seat and leads them to invest in and care about the literacies, skills, and dispositions they develop during the process. As students pursue the answers to personally meaningful questions and engage in real-world projects, they learn how to learn and build their confidence. Hands-on, minds-on inquiry learning experiences help prepare young people to problem solve when confronted with the inevitable learning challenges that will characterize their futures.

Educators are responsible for creating the conditions in which inquiry learning can flourish. Inquiry doesn’t just happen; it must be expertly designed. Building connections between required curriculum and students’ interests is essential. When two or more educators plan for inquiry, they increase the resources and knowledge at the collaboration table. They push each other’s creativity and codevelop more engaging learning experiences for students. When school librarians and classroom teachers coplan, coteach, and comonitor students’ inquiry learning process, they create opportunities for students to increase their content knowledge. They help students develop future ready skills and strategies that are transferrable to other learning contexts—both in and outside of school.

This chapter includes a rationale for applying a research-based model for inquiry learning. Guided Inquiry Design (GID) is grounded in the findings of Kuhlthau’s information-seeking process research. GID provides a structure in which a team of educators share responsibility for launching, guiding, monitoring, and assessing learning outcomes. During curriculum-connected inquiry, students take responsibility for and reflect on their own learning process and products.

What you will find in this chapter:

1. A Recipe for Inquiry Learning Graphic;
2. Learning Phases in Various Inquiry Models;
3. Guided Inquiry Design Process (Kuhlthau, Maniotes, and Caspari 2012);
4. Inquiry Learning Subskills (*Tested on Standardized Tests);
5. Inquiry as a Strategy for Professional Learning.

School librarians can be leaders in codeveloping, coimplementing, and sustaining a culture of inquiry in their schools. When school sites or entire districts adopt and practice a single inquiry model, students can rely on multiple opportunities to experience deeper learning. When educators use an inquiry model to explore their own questions about teaching and learning, their understanding of the process and their confidence in their shared findings strengthen a culture of learning and improve teaching in their schools.

Works Cited

Grazer, Brian, and Charles Fishman. 2015. *A Curious Mind: The Secret to a Bigger Life*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

Kuhlthau, Carol C., Leslie K. Maniotes, and Ann K. Caspari. 2012. *Guided Inquiry Design: A Framework for Inquiry in Your School*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.