

An overview of the Integrated Inquiry planning model (Kath Murdoch, 2010)

The use of a model to guide planning and teaching is an important step in the development of both teachers' and learners' understanding of inquiry. It is intended as a framework to support thinking and conversation. It is not a one-size-fits-all recipe or a prescriptive sequence. The elements listed in the model are components in an inquiry journey and generally happen in a cyclical or broadly sequential manner but it is expected that implementation is less 'ordered' than it appears on paper. No two inquiry journeys are the same.

<p>Broad focus for an inquiry (linked to school throughlines/BIG IDEAS)</p> <p>EG: Social responsibility: <i>How do diverse cultures enrich our community?</i> <i>How and why to societies change over time?</i></p>	<p>The focus for an inquiry should be selected with a 'big picture' in mind. School and system level curriculum documents may assist. Foci will often be modified through negotiation with students or in conjunction with events or issues arising in the local or global community. The best inquiries are developed under the umbrella of overarching concepts or 'throughlines' – these might be expressed as big questions or essential statements. Sample big ideas might include: environmental sustainability, social responsibility, wellbeing and identity, the physical world, etc.</p>	<p><i>Ideally, these conversations are carried out by a team of teachers – prior to the inquiry and revisited throughout the inquiry – documentation should be reshaped as the inquiry unfolds. The 'frame' of the inquiry must be informed by students.</i></p>
<p>Generative question/s</p> <p><i>Eg: Why call Australia home?</i></p>	<p>At class/team level, the inquiry is guided by an key question /s. These are most often developed by teachers but may be informed by or modified by students. The question should capture the essence of the problem/investigation/field of interest. This question has generative potential – it is open and often provocative. Simple, short, provocative questions to which there is no single answer are the best. The question acts as a large 'funnel' into which experience, thinking and understanding are gradually shifted.</p>	<p><i>This planning should be displayed and made transparent to students. Students questions and interests can be gathered before these phases to inform teacher conversation.</i></p>

<p>Understandings, Skills and values Eg: Understanding: <i>There are many reasons why people leave their country of birth and come to live in a new country.</i> Skill: <i>in this unit we will focus on empathic thinking - learning how to express what others might be thinking or feeling about the same situation.</i> • <i>Students self assess skills and understanding at the beginning and end of the unit</i></p>	<p>At the heart of good planning , is the work teachers do to identify what it is they hope their students will come to understand more deeply and be able to DO as a result of their inquiry. Teachers should ask themselves: What is important to know about this? (Link to big ideas). What key skills , strategies, qualities and values will be enriched through this inquiry? <i>Link skills to generic areas: thinking, communication, self management, social, research.</i></p> <p>Ask yourself: How will we know if they understand? How will we know HOW they understand? What evidence would we gather?</p>	
<p>Tuning in (to students – not just the topic!) Eg: <i>On a mind map, students show what they already think about why people make Australia their new home</i> <i>These maps are compared – what are we saying? What patterns are we noticing? What are we wondering?</i></p>	<p>This element of an inquiry process is all about engagement and gathering prior knowledge and early thinking. Teachers design tasks that allow students to make their thinking visible. This is preparing the way for quality, formative assessment. Students use a variety of methods to show the thinking they already have in relation to the big idea. This will vary from very minimal to surprisingly comprehensive. Ask students: What theories do we have? How do already understand this? What connections can you already make? How could we find out more about this? Much of this happens early in the inquiry process but inquiry teachers constantly help their students connect the ‘new’ with the ‘known’ throughout.</p>	<p><i>Use early thinking evidence to refine initial plans. Keep samples to help students self-assess. Spend time watching and listening. What are your students showing you? Where to now? How can we address their needs and interests?</i></p>
<p>Finding out Eg: <i>Invite people to share their stories. As a class, students hear from several people who have migrated to Australia.</i></p>	<p>During an inquiry, students should experience the work of a researcher. They use various methodologies to gather information that help grow their thinking about the area of inquiry. These tasks should emphasize gathering data first hand and in a range of ways and should link to understanding goals. Data gathering may be through engaging with experts (using web 2 tools or in person), surveys, interviews, film, experiments, observations, emails, field work...etc)</p>	<p><i>Involve students in deciding how you might find out more. Keep building banks of student questions. Focus on teaching students the skills and strategies used by ‘researchers’ to find out about something. Build capacity to inquire</i></p>

<p>Sorting out <i>Eg: Using drama and visual art, students re-tell and interpret the stories they have heard.</i> <i>Compare and contrast using venn diagrams</i></p>	<p>The 'sorting out' tasks are about MEANING MAKING. In an inquiry, students must be given opportunities to make sense of and present their refined thinking. This involves organising, analysing and communicating information gathered using a range of learning areas – eg: through maths, arts, English, drama, music, technology, etc. Importantly, this includes reflective thinking work – revising original theories and propositions. Reviewing the big question...What meaning can we make of this data? What are we learning? How is our thinking changing?</p>	<p><i>Students will be synthesizing their learning and beginning to make connections. Keep reviewing questions and initial thinking. Show students how "Loop back" to the known and identify the new</i></p>
<p>Going Further <i>Eg: having explored the question as a class, students now develop their own question for investigation and work through a mini personal inquiry.</i></p>	<p>This element of inquiry is where students have opportunities to take more personalized learning pathways, This will depend very much on the content of the inquiry itself and the readiness of the student to work more independently. Going further means raising and revisiting questions, extending experiences and challenging assumptions. It is usually individually negotiated. May be students following personal inquiry into own questions – initiated earlier in the unit or raising new questions to investigate. This stage is characterized by differentiated programming</p>	<p><i>The emphasis here is on choice and differentiation. Here is where individuals and groups will take the inquiry into new and sometimes unexpected territory!</i></p>
<p>Concluding and acting <i>EG: Revisit the essential question: why make Australia home? Create team debates to respond to the question...</i> <i>Review the mind maps made at the beginning the unit. Reflect: what have we learned? How has our thinking changed? What can we do with this learning?</i></p>	<p>Stating revised understandings – what do we think and know now? How do we feel? High level thinking about the topic. Identifying avenues for action and application. Generalising (should be done throughout). While students have been encouraged to synthesise their thinking throughout the inquiry, now is the time to make that synthesis explicit. This may be through the use of metaphors, the formation of statements of generalization, etc. Connected to this is the importance of TRANSFER. Asking – what can we DO with this? What can I do now? How can I/we use this? Is there an action that seems important to undertake?</p>	<p><i>These phases are most often woven throughout the unit. Explicit connections must be articulated. It is good to use some synthesis strategies here to help students clarify how their concepts have changed.</i></p> <p><i>Action may be shared or individual and may emerge as a result of the inquiry OR be embedded into the inquiry itself,</i></p>