Exploring the cycle of Inquiry

- An online workshop with Kath Murdoch
- TEXT SLIDES ONLY (learning samples and images removed)

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We are inquiring into...

- **What** the inquiry cycle is and its place within a broader inquiry culture and framework.

- **How** the cycle can help us design for deep learning through inquiry

- How can an inquiry cycle help us reframe the way we think about ‘summative assessment’?
Getting ready to learn...

• What might you need to DO to help you learn?  

• What might you need to be?

Take a moment...how can you draw on your “learning assets” to get the most out of our time together?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>As a mindful self manager</th>
<th>As a resourceful researcher</th>
<th>As a careful communicator</th>
<th>As a compassionate collaborator</th>
<th>As a thorough thinker</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Be focused and present</td>
<td>Ask questions</td>
<td>Offer ideas and suggestions through the chat and when invited</td>
<td>Help others with tech issues</td>
<td>Connect to what you know</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take risks and challenge yourself</td>
<td>Be curious</td>
<td>Listen carefully to what others have to say</td>
<td>Take on responsibilities in a small group</td>
<td>Think ahead (how might I use this?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stay positive even when there are setbacks</td>
<td>Record information to refer to later</td>
<td>Respect the ideas of others</td>
<td>Be empathic</td>
<td>Reflect on your practice</td>
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</tbody>
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If the goal of **deep learning** is to be attained, we must find ways to tackle the twin problems of ‘too much content’ and too much telling.’ (McTighe and Silver 2020:2)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Inquiry as an approach to teaching: the pedagogy</th>
<th>Inquiry as an approach to planning/designing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Approaches to teaching that invite learners to be curious, question, investigate, make connections, transfer and continuously reflect.</td>
<td>Authentic, concept based, emergent and integrative</td>
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**Inquiry is...**

is an approach that consciously positions the learner an _active participant in a process of investigation_. Questions, both teacher and learner initiated, help drive the learning.

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Inquiry ...

emphasises the **construction of conceptual understandings** together with the development of core, **generic competencies and dispositions**.

Inquiry is

a ‘**stance**’ that sees child as competent, capable learner, adult as skilful facilitator and co-researcher, curriculum as fluid and contestable.
THE “CYCLE OF INQUIRY” IS ONE PART OF A BIGGER PICTURE.

• A piece of the pie...
Use a concept-based approach

Seek cross curriculum connections

Have a big picture in mind and allow the journey to unfold
Aim for authenticity:

- primary sources, real audiences, real issues and problems, Hands on materials and experiences

• Plan with colleagues
• Invite learners to contribute to the planning
• Collaborate with experts beyond the school
Build in opportunities for learners to ‘go further’ with their interests and questions

Familiarise them with the process so they can design their own inquiries

Moving from ‘topics’ to concept based inquiries

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Questions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anzac day</td>
<td>Why and how do we commemorate events in the past?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explorers</td>
<td>How does exploration change people and places?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plants</td>
<td>What do living things need to grow and survive?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasons</td>
<td>How does where we live (our location) affect HOW we live (lifestyle)?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Behind every great journey of inquiry...

- Is a group of teachers who have given careful thought to the conceptual understandings, skills and dispositions the inquiry is targeting.
- Is a group of teachers willing to plan responsively and let go of a desire to have the whole thing mapped out week by week. They know and trust the themselves, the kids and the process. They are willing to wait, watch and listen.
- Is a group of teachers who know their curriculum and can see the connections with the inquiry.

Framing the (shared) inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Compelling question/s</th>
<th>Understandings</th>
<th>Targetted Assets</th>
<th>Curriculum (Aus)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Why and how do living things adapt? | To survive in the environments in which they live, plants and animals (including humans) develop both behavioural and structural adaptations. Design and creativity can help humans find ways to adapt to rapid change. When change is rapid or unexpected, some living things are unable to adapt which, in turn, impacts on survival. | As researchers, how can we effectively gather and record information from photographs, videos and direct observation? As collaborators, how can we give and receive constructive, effective feedback | Science
  Biological Science
  Scientific endeavour

Design Technologies

Humanities
  Civics and Citizenship (taking responsibility)
  Geography (diverse environments)

Capabilities: Ethical thinking |
An intuitive process

- Human beings are inquirers. When we have a problem, challenge, desire or need to find out – we are curious and investigative by nature! The process we use as we journey through an inquiry in the classroom reflects, in many ways, a process many of us use intuitively.
Generally speaking...

We have a **REASON** to inquire!

We **take stock** of the known - we have theories about how we think it might work

We **gather** new information (in different ways)

We **filter**, **evaluate**, critique...re-think

We express and share ...and we ask new **questions**,

We **reflect** and redirect our efforts

We **act/share/produce**...

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**A MODEL FOR DESIGNING A JOURNEY OF INQUIRY**

- **Tune In**
  - Establish purpose and relevance
  - Provider context and wonder
  - Access and document prior knowledge, existing theories and ideas
  - Formulate questions
  - Consider ways to find out

- **Find out**
  - Use a range of resources & methods to gather information (read, view, interview, survey, experiment, observe)
  - Critically assess the value of the information gathered
  - Document along the way.

- **Sort Out**
  - Make sense of the information gathered
  - Analyze, organize, compare, contrast, sift and sort
  - Reflect, respond and express new thinking
  - Revisit questions, refine and add new ones

- **Go further**
  - Use the questions as the basis for extended inquiry
  - Establish purpose and work with intended learners and their teachers

- **Reflect and act**
  - Consider ways to apply/extend learning
  - Make connections back to big ideas
  - Evaluate the process
  - Consider unplanned questions
  - What else? What now?

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WHAT is the purpose of my inquiry cycle?

To help scaffold design (planning), teaching and learning

To give educators (and learners) and learners a common language

To provide a transferable scaffold (across disciplines and over time)

To support a more connected, integrative learning experience

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Tune in... (to learners’ thinking)

• Establish purpose and relevance
• Provoke curiosity and wonder
• Access and document prior knowledge, existing theories and ideas
• Formulate questions
• Consider ways to find out

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Find out

• Use a range of resources & methods to gather information (read, view, interview, survey, experiment, observe)

• Critically assess the value of the information gathered

• Document along the way.

• Refine/generate more questions

SORTING OUT INFORMATION GATHERED FROM EXCURSION TO THE WETLANDS (EPS PRIMARY)
Sorting out through documentation

As we observe and guide children through a journey of inquiry, we invite texts IN to the process and we encourage the creation of texts.

One powerful text (to express and inform) is the documentation of the process itself... (written, drawn, photographed, recorded...)

Reflect and act

- Consider ways to apply/use/share learning to make a difference (So what?)
- Make connections back to big ideas – now what do we understand?
- Evaluate the process
- Consider unanswered questions
- What next? What now?
AND FINALLY…..LET’S BUST SOME MYTHS ABOUT THIS CYCLE…

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The big one… ‘Inquiry is a subject’

• Nope.

• It’s an approach to designing, teaching and learning

IF I HAVE SAID IT ONCE, I HAVE SAID IT A 1000 TIMES

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Myth #1 - This is a step by step, linear process

• NOPE...

• It’s messy and recursive but it DOES move forward. The path is a winding one.

Myth #2 - Each step of the process is separate from the rest.

• Nope.

• The phases blur. I can be ‘finding out’ while I am hearing someone else’s theories during tuning in!

• Finding out and sorting out often interweave
# Myth 3: A ‘cycle’ makes it too formulaic. Learners should be free to inquire in a way that suits them

- Nope (well mostly nope)

- It only becomes a formula if you let it! Show kids how flexible the cycle is. Help them see it as a framework not a recipe.

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#4 If we use a cycle of inquiry, we are ‘doing inquiry’

- Nope

- This is one slice of the inquiry pie... and won’t really be effective without the other elements.

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# 5 The cycle of inquiry is for extended ‘units’

- Nope.

- In essence, the process can apply to short and spontaneous inquiries too.

# 6 The Inquiry cycle is for planning purposes

- Nope.
- Well yes...but it is also for TEACHING and learning purposes!
- Making it visible and part of the classroom discourse helps learners grow to use it more intuitively.

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Thank you for exploring the cycle of Inquiry with me!

e-mail me at kath@kathmurdoch.com.au (and sign up for the newsletter while you are there...)

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