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## Learning Through Inquiry

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David L. Lawrence Convention Center  
Room 325

**Learning Through Inquiry (Concurrent Session)**  
**October 7, 2005**

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*Note:*

*This is an outline version of the presentation slides for our session. If you wish to have the slides themselves sent via email to you, please message Violet Harada.*

1. Session targets

- What is inquiry?
- Why is it an effective way to learn?
- How are information literacy and inquiry connected?
- What does it look like in practice?
- How can we plan together to produce inquiry learning experiences?

2. The power of inquiry

- Students help define the experience.
- They help to identify the questions.
- They use a range of sources to find needed information.
- They create products for real audiences.
- They learn by doing.
- They assess their progress.

3. Guided inquiry

- Instructors take the lead in setting parameters for projects.
- Instructors and students generate questions.
- Instructors guide students in retrieving and making sense of data gathered.
- Instructors and students negotiate on tasks and products.
- Instructors and students co-design assessment tools.
- Instructors and students assess for learning.

4. Goals of inquiry

- Connect - relate to prior knowledge and experience.

- Wonder - stimulate curiosity, ask meaningful questions.
- Investigate - locate and evaluate information from various sources.
- Construct - create personal meaning, organize and synthesize information, create quality products.
- Express - communicate knowledge and understanding.
- Reflect - assess process, reflect on essential questions, assess product or performance.

#### 5. Connecting inquiry with information literacy

- Connect - engage, motivate, tap experiences.
- Wonder - explore topic, raise questions, predict.
- Investigate - identify focus, plan search, locate and retrieve information.
- Construct and express - organize data, create meaning, communicate learning.
- Reflect - assess process, assess product.

#### 6. Roles of the library media specialist

- Co-planner.
- Co-teacher.
- Partner in assessing for learning.
- Provider of teaching and learning resources.

#### 7. Questions to guide the planning

- What do we want students to know and be able to do?
- How will they show that they know?
- How will their performance be measured?

#### 8. Steps in planning for inquiry

- Begin with a generative topic.
- Determine essential questions.
- Identify standards to be addressed.
- Decide upon a performance task.
- Outline an assessment plan.
- Create a plan for learning.

#### 9. Attributes of a generative topic

- Focuses on ideas rather than on facts.
- Generates meaningful questions.
- Suggests many avenues of investigation.
- Requires use of multiple resources.
- Addresses required standards.
- Is appropriate for grade level, students.

#### 10. Attributes of an essential question

- Gets to the heart of the problem.
- Is broad and overarching.
- Is open-ended.
- Invites other questions.
- Requires decision-making or problem solving.

#### 11. Addressing standards

- Content area: What important ideas and concepts will students learn?
- Language arts: What communication skills are needed to learn the content?
- Information literacy: What search skills will be the focus for the unit?

#### 12. Designing the performance task

- What will be required for a final product?
- How will students demonstrate their knowledge and skills?
- Who will be the target audience?
- What will be the context for the final product or performance?

#### 13. Creating an assessment plan

- What will be assessed? (Concepts, skills, product, performance)
- Who will do the assessing? (Teacher, LMS, student, peers, parents)
- How will evidence be gathered? (Observation, examination of student work, personal communication)
- What tools will be needed to measure quality and record results? (Checklists, rubrics, graphic organizers, reflection logs)
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*[Note: the specific strategies suggested in some of following slides focus on a project entitled, "A Nation of Immigrants," where students research their own ancestors and prepare trunks containing artifacts, family trees and student-drafted diary accounts. As a class, they also create a choral poem about being a nation of immigrants based on their collective research.]*

#### 14. Strategies to CONNECT

- In classroom: examine contents of teacher's trunk, read and discuss "The New Colossus," relate discussion to topic and essential questions.
- In library: explore web sites, examine related pieces of literature, begin a family tree.

#### 15. Strategies to WONDER

- In classroom: generate questions about the immigrant experience, decide which questions are most essential, begin a K-W-H-L chart about ancestors we are curious about.
- In library: decide questions to ask about people on the family tree, determine which questions best address the essential questions, make a question web for personal topics.

#### 16. Criteria for questions

- Target important information about the topic.
- Ask *who, what, when, where*.
- Ask *how* and *why*.
- Encourage making connections.
- Lead to other questions.

#### 17. Strategies to INVESTIGATE

- In classroom: brainstorm where and how to find information, examine documents, write interview questions, read and gather information from fiction and non-fiction sources.
- In library: plan the research, brainstorm criteria for selecting and evaluating sources and information, gather information from Internet and other sources.

#### 18. Planning the research

- What do I want to know? (Use student-generated questions)

- How can I get information? (Interview parents, grandparents and examine library sources)
- What documents should I gather? (Birth certificates, immigration papers, photographs, letters)
- What will I do with the information? (Keep a diary, pack a trunk, contribute to choral reading)

#### 19. Questions for evaluating sources

- Does the source have knowledge related to my questions?
- Is the source reliable and easy for me to access?
- Can the information be verified in other sources?
- Does the source have information that will contribute to my project?

#### 20. Strategies to CONSTRUCT

- In classroom: examine models of diary entries, use notes to write diary entries, create an outline for the choral presentation.
- In library: use sources to validate information and expand ideas, explore literary sources for ideas to include in choral reading.

#### 21. Strategies to EXPRESS

- In classroom: examine diaries for words and phrases to include in choral reading, collaborate for choral reading, assign parts and rehearse, use feedback to improve choral reading.
- In library: videotape rehearsal, critique and make improvements.

#### 22. Strategies to REFLECT

- In classroom: use logs to reflect throughout the process, respond to essential questions, assess the final presentation, work on generalizations about the immigrant experience.
- In library: use logs to reflect on important aspects of the search process, construct a comparison matrix, use rubric to assess phases of the inquiry process.

#### 23. Value of classroom-library partnerships

- Teachers bring content expertise, knowledge of students, curriculum leadership.
- Library media specialists bring research process expertise, knowledge of resources, curriculum knowledge.

#### 24. Benefits for students

- Increased self-direction.
- Higher levels of comprehension.
- Greater motivation.
- More real world learning.