

Engaging Students in Inquiry-Based Learning

In learning about the roles, responsibilities, obligations and challenges facing curators in their work, students must be involved in all aspects of the inquiry process.

Teachers need to model for students and provide clear exemplars for how to create effective, relevant and meaningful 'big questions' and related sub-questions to extend their investigations further. It is worth mentioning that students must be given opportunities to ask and answer questions connected to content that they find interesting, relevant and powerful (Watt and Collyer, 38).

Collyer and Watt suggest that a classroom environment where students can do inquiry work both individually and collectively with their classmates allows them to learn about the opinions, beliefs, interests and desires of their classmates.

Furthermore, students learn how to assess sources of information with which they are working; they analyze information, seek different viewpoints that contrast or corroborate content and consider their individual and collective responses to information in relation to believability and assumptions (Watt and Collyer, 40). In addition, students ask questions and reflect critically throughout their work; both in consuming information and in forming their own creative responses.

NOTE: If the knowledge and experience of students in designing questions is limited, the teacher can provide a list of question options where students can choose, rank and create a flow of questioning. If students have knowledge and experience, they can be expected to design their own questions and sequencing based on the goals of their particular inquiry.

Support Students in Developing Inquiry-focussed Questions

What are the qualities of an effective question for inquiry?

John Barrell. *Developing More Curious Minds* (2003) in Watt and Collyer, pg. 43

Good Questions:

- Are an invitation to think
- Are inspired by curiosity or confusion about something in the world
- Make you think about something in a new way
- Invite deep thinking and deep feeling
- Lead to more questions
- Ask you to think critically, creatively, ethically, productively and reflectively about Big Ideas in a discipline
- Are open-ended; they typically have no final, correct answer

- Point toward important, transferable ideas both within and across disciplines
- Require support and justification; not just an answer
- Recur over time and should be revisited

McTighe and Wiggins (2013); Watt and Collyer, p. 43.

Source:

Watt, Jennifer Gail, and Jill Colyer. *IQ: A Practical Guide to Inquiry-based Learning*. Don Mills, Ontario: Oxford UP, 2014. Print.