

Can the Inquiry Approach Engage Readers and Writers?

Presenter- Jane Kruks

Bio- Presently a literacy resource teacher for School District 70, Jane uses personal inquiry herself to discover ways of creating authentic reading and writing experiences for students in order to create passionate and critical readers.

Topic- Can the Inquiry Approach Engage Readers and Writers?

In this session, participants will explore both the basic principles of inquiry-based teaching and some effective teaching strategies that lend themselves to critical thinking, response and powerful dialogue. Examples of the inquiry approach will be taken from a Gr. 7 Social Studies unit "Where in the World?"

Audience: Grades 4-10 teachers

Engaged Learning with Inquiry

"The people who are talking, discussing, thinking, struggling, and using new ideas and tools are the ones who are learning" (Wilhelm, 2007)

Jeff Wilhelm's E's of Inquiry

Inquiry...

Engages	...using an essential, disciplinary question
Explores	...what is already known and thought
Explains	...and interprets known data, making connections about it
Elaborates	...makes new connections, builds new data into what is already known
Extends	...applies what has been learned and applies what is learned
Evaluates	...by adapting and reflecting on what has been learned in new scenarios, revising understanding in new contexts

Adapted from p. 10, Engaging Readers and Writers with Inquiry

Before You Begin, some Actions to Take:

- **Teach So It Matters-** Think "What matters to me and my students" and jot down your brainstorm. Then make connections with these topics to your Learning Outcomes
- **Always Show HOW-** Shift your stance to one of Scaffolding Instruction. Practice showing how in a Meaningful Context (Think, "I do, they watch; I do, they help; they do, I help; They do)
- **Be a Collaborator with them-** Your role in inquiry is participatory and collaborative, being a mentor and a guide with an exact destination unknown.
- **Teach for Understanding, Not for facts-** you want them to learn more than WHAT in inquiry, you want them to consider why and how.

The Practical Steps in Planning Inquiry Based Lessons/Units:

- 1) Identify an essential question
- 2) Identify a final project
- 3) Create a backwards plan

An Essential Question is...

is not...

Interesting, relevant	Requires only information retrieval
Connected to your L.O.	"guess what the teacher already knows"
Has "emotive" force or edginess	Is leading in one direction, not multiple perspectives
Is open-ended	Too general or too big to be doable
Concise and clear	Too narrow and specific so answered quickly and not deeply
Has available resources to explore	
May lead to new questions	

Important: Student final responses to the essential question may differ, but a student must be able to support and explain his response with evidence and support.

Keys to Effective Discussion Using Teacher Feedback (Dillon, 1998)

1. Respond using **simple declarative statements** that comment on or complicate the student response: "Not every location benefits as much as others from having less health and disease issues."
2. **Paraphrase:** "Your point is.../ so you believe... so you discovered..."
3. **Descriptive feedback** to previous speaker regarding what they did that was powerful: "I **really like** what has been said about the importance of global warming on hurricanes and how this would affect a place to live/ I'm **confused** as to why you believe..."
4. **Ask for extensions** on previous speakers thoughts- "Can you tell me why you think that...Can you give another example of...What would a person say who disagreed with you?"
5. Ask speaker to **ask a question** to further discussion and feedback: "What question could you ask that would help us further your thinking/clarify your thinking?"
6. Invite students to ask the speaker a question
7. Provide **wait time (1 and 2)**, so all students can process the questions/statements.