



Friday Focus

Carter County Schools

Volume 3, Issue 17

January 9, 2015

Inquiry Based Learning

"Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand." The last part of this statement is the essence of inquiry-based learning. Student involvement in learning implies possessing skills and attitudes that permit them to seek resolutions to questions and issues while they construct new knowledge. With the adoption of the Next Generation Science Standards and the soon-to-be-released social studies standards, teachers are being asked to take a closer look at inquiry based learning and how it can increase student engagement and understanding in their classrooms.



"Inquiry" is defined as "a seeking for truth, information, or knowledge -- seeking information by questioning." Individuals carry on the process of inquiry from the time they are born until they die. The process of inquiring begins with gathering information and data through applying the human

senses -- seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling. What, then, does this process look like in a classroom? It has recently been described by three stages: Gathering, Reasoning, and Communicating.

Gathering

During the initial phase of inquiry, students are working to: Obtain Information, Ask Questions/Define Problems, Plan & Carry Out Investigations, Use Models to Gather Data, and Use Mathematics/Computational Thinking.

Reasoning

In this middle stage of inquiry based learning, students use the data they have gathered. They are engaged in: Evaluating Information, Analyzing Data, Using Mathematics/Computational Thinking to Develop Evidence, Constructing Explanations/Solving Problems, and Using Models to Predict & Develop Evidence.

Communicating

In the last phase of inquiry learning, students must be able to share what they have learned by: Communicating



Information, Creating Arguments from Evidence (written & oral), and Using Models to Communicate.

The power of an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning is its potential to increase intellectual engagement and foster deep understanding through the development of a hands-on, minds-on and "research-based disposition" towards teaching and learning. Inquiry honors the complex, interconnected nature of knowledge construction, striving to provide opportunities for both teachers and students to collaboratively build, test, and reflect on their learning. (National Research Council)

The Benefits of Inquiry Learning

Research shows that inquiry-based, collaborative approaches benefit students in learning 21st century skills, the ability to work in teams, solve problems, and apply knowledge from one situation to another. (*Powerful Learning: What We Know About Teaching to Understand*, Jossey-Bass, 2008.) Our students will enter a job market that is different from the traditional workplace of their parents and grandparents. They will need to be prepared to collect, synthesize, and analyze information; they will need to be prepared to work cooperatively with others to respond to changing social, economic, and global conditions. They will also be using technology to communicate their ideas, thoughts, and final products. The traditional approaches that employ narrow tasks, rote memorization, and simple procedures will not develop critical thinkers or effective writers and speakers.

Inside this Issue

[10 Tips for Inquiry Based Learning](#)

[Inquiry Based Lesson Samples](#)

[Inquiry.com](#)

[Inquiry-Based Approaches to Learning](#)

[Youth Learn](#)

[Thinkquest Archives](#)

Upcoming Events

- January 9 Science Fair Winners Due
- Jan 12 West Academies at WCHS
- Jan 13 East Academies at ECHS
- Jan 13 2/3 and 4/5 Math Academies
- Jan 14 Preschool and K/1 Academy
- Jan 14 CTE/PLCS/ROTC Academy at CO
- Jan 15 Other Elementary Academy
- Jan 31 Super Saturday for Junior Students
- February 7 ACTC Science Fair
- February 16 PD Day