

INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

December 11, 2015



Inquiry

[Inquiry Resources](#)
[Inquiry Videos](#)
[Inquiry Quotes](#)
[Inquiry Research](#)
[Hearts and Minds](#)
[PLC's](#)
[Strategic Plan](#)

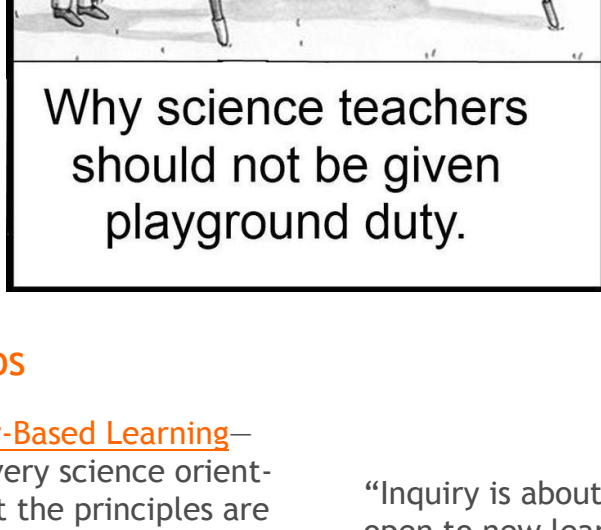
[Inquiry Resources](#)

Some thoughts [about Inquiry](#) by Kevin Godden.

[Inquiry Resources](#) by [Debbie Nelson](#), [Doug David](#), and [Carol Walters](#).

[Inquiry Learning](#) resources and ideas on [Learn71](#).

[Spirals of Inquiry](#) by Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser—an outstanding resource about the Inquiry process.



Videos

[Inquiry-Based Learning](#)—3:25—very science oriented, but the principles are easily transferable

[What is Inquiry-Based Learning](#)—6:31—background and basics

[Ken Robinson](#): How to escape education's Death Valley —19:11—a classic video that is entertaining and does a good job of demonstrating why inquiry-based learning is important

“Inquiry is about being open to new learning and taking informed action.”

- Halbert and Kaser -

“Curiosity is the cure for boredom. There is no cure for curiosity.”

- Dorothy Parker -

Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

[Inquiry Research Study](#)

A group of educational leaders have formed an “Improvement network” with the goal being to create a “adaptive learning system” in order to assess our inquiry related practices so as to ensure that every student experiences success as a learner. We are one of fifteen districts leading this work in partnership with the BC Ministry of Education, the [Network of Inquiry and Innovation](#) (Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser), and Dr. [Catherine McGregor](#) from the University of Victoria.

The purpose of our shared inquiry is to examine the processes of inquiry as they offer us a disciplined approach for effecting deep and meaningful changes that will make a difference for all learners. By mapping our approaches to inquiry we will learn more about what works best and why, and how to better show impacts. By sharing what we’ve learned, we can also accelerate learning across the province. Ultimately this enables us to give every learner the opportunity to walk the stage with dignity, purpose and options. The scope and range of this work is complex, but the benefits will be significant.

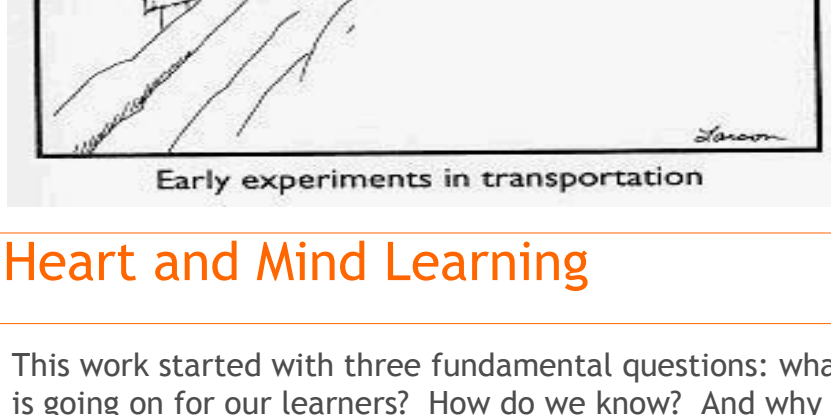
Our inquiry questions:

In what ways do district strategic initiatives in inquiry based learning act as catalysts for moving learning forward and enhancing success?

What are the most effective inquiry based approaches that support reflection and improvement in educational practice to enhance student success?

Our district is reviewing three examples, one at each level of engagement:

1. The Heart and Mind Initiatives
2. Our Professional Learning Communities program
3. Our School Board’s Strategic Plan process



Heart and Mind Learning

This work started with three fundamental questions: what is going on for our learners? How do we know? And why does it matter? To answer these questions teachers scanned, made observations, and followed their instincts. Through a variety of impetus, they developed a hunch: *service learning and compassion based projects will engage students*.

Different teams set up their projects, each one unique and fluid, and all of the projects involved students doing the work. The students bought into the different projects for a variety of reasons, initially, now they do so because of the satisfaction and value they felt in helping others. Another factor that has fueled the student engagement and buy-in is the authentic nature of the work: students are not doing abstract tasks to please a teacher, they are taking on projects, designed by themselves, to help others.

For this research project we selected four examples to focus on.

1. [Design for Change](#)—this work started from an inspiring [TedTalk by Kiran Sethi](#) and has shape-shifted and evolved over the past four years in a variety of ways. In January 2015, 12 teachers from 6 schools reconnected and began collaborating to launch a cross-district Design for Change partnership. The most famous initiative in this group is the “I Can” projects.
2. [Everybody Deserves a Smile](#) (EDAS) - this work started 12 years ago in Edmonton focused on bringing a smile to the homeless at Christmas by bringing care packages to them and reminding them that someone cares. This project is now an important part of Christmas for many of our schools and brings thousands of smiles to Valley residents.
3. Intergenerational Project—cross community projects are known to build connections, engage students, and build upon a great number of individual strengths. This project began as a partnership between Berwick residents and two Valley View kindergarten classes. It has grown to several schools, senior’s communities, and organizations.
4. Residential Schools Inquiry—how can what we learn about Residential Schools help us to be more compassionate in our daily lives? Students develop their critical thinking skills, make meaningful personal connections, and engage with others to share and develop ideas.

A lesson series created in the Comox Valley School District can be found at the [Heart-Mind online website](#). Originally created for intermediate grades (5-7), these sequenced lessons culminate in students photographing their own interpretations of what kindness looks like. The resource contains both the story behind the project’s success and the instructions that allow educators to replicate and/or adapt the activities for their classes. “We” refers to a group of teachers in our school district (along with their students) who collectively designed and implemented the project.

Will nurturing a ‘curriculum for caring’ increase our students’ sense of social responsibility and engagement in their learning?

[Inquiry for Adult Learners](#)

In this research we also selected two adult oriented, inquiry-driven, projects.

Our [Professional Learning Community](#) work began with the question of “how can teacher collaboration help us improve student learning?” We have learned a lot in the past three years and are improving our collaborative work as we go. This research is helping us to ask questions authentically and openly and to work at finding the answers. Our belief is that this will help us to continue to grow and learn.

Our School Board used the Inquiry Process to build our district’s [Strategic Plan](#). This work was driven by many inquiry questions including “in what ways can we strategically support improved learning for all students in our district?” The process the Board followed allowed for much learning, reflection, and comprehensive guiding plan for our district.



Thank you for taking the time to read this and please direct any suggestions, questions, or inquiries to me directly: Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca