

Exploring personal passions through inquiry

- HANDOUT
- TEXT SLIDES ONLY

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What can more independent inquirers do??

1-3-6 consensus

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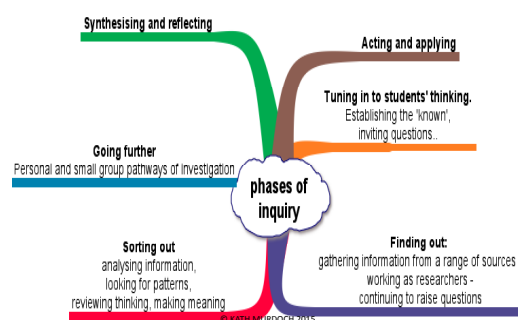
Choices about...

- **What** they will inquire into
- **How** they will inquire into it
- **With whom** they will collaborate
- **Where** they will do this inquiry work
- **When** they will attend to aspects of the task
- **How** they will share their learning
- **What** they will “do” with this learning
- **How** they will assess their success
- *What choices did you give your students today?*

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Sequencing the inquiry



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Why is a more personalised approach so important?



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Increased motivation, inspiration and engagement

- *What kinds of tasks keep us inspired?*

Those we see as having worthwhile **purpose**

Those that help us develop greater **mastery** of skills

Those in which we feel we have some **autonomy** – some choice and control.

(Daniel Pink)

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Building independence as learners

- When we give students real choices in their learning, we give them the opportunity to show us (and themselves) what they can really do as learners. Personalised inquiry nurtures independence and builds learning power.

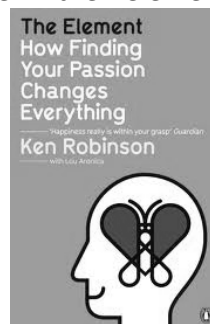


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An opportunity to be 'in their element'

- *"Being in your element is not only about aptitude, it's about passion: it is about loving what you do...tapping into your natural energy and your most authentic self."*

Sir Ken Robinson, *Out of Our Minds: Learning to be Creative*



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Management...

- "If we were learning about things we are really passionate about then everyone would be focussed and the teachers would be happier I think"
- (year 4 Hartwell PS)

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Fighting sham inquiry...

- "...that is... teaching practices that look like inquiry, sound like inquiry but on closer inspection, are revealed to be just as unhealthy for student learning as a uniform diet of teacher direct instruction...at the root of sham inquiry is the fundamental misunderstanding that real inquiry is largely about teachers do as opposed to what their students do..." Fosnot 1996

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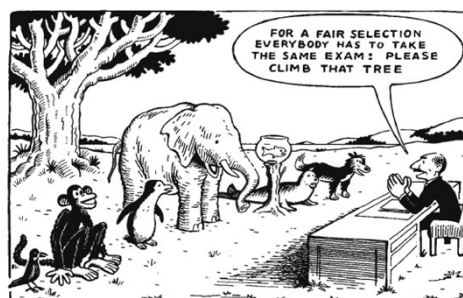
We offer more potential for developing and transferring skills and dispositions

Personalised inquiries bring the 'skill set' of the inquirer into focus. While students vary in terms of WHAT they investigate – they collaborate and share skills and processes.



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We differentiate



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And recognise and value unique ways of seeing the world



We have *unprecedented access* to information!!

- “if you're interested in what the ancient Egyptians ate for breakfast, or how to carve a duck decoy, or simply want to learn to speak Portuguese, a few persistent mouse-clicks will summon this and virtually any other form of knowledge you desire, as if you have conjured an obedient genie from a magic lamp. It's all there for us...”

• Elizabeth English, Archer school LA

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..so OUR role is transforming

To help students explore...

- HOW to **locate and access** relevant, reliable information
- How to **record and analyse** information
- How to **critique and interrogate** information
- How to **find problems and think creatively** to help solve them
- How to **create and collaborate** (locally and globally)
- How to **communicate powerfully** and in multiple contexts
- How to **reflect**, regulate thinking and **self manage**

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What does personalised inquiry look like?

- Students spending time identifying their passions, interests, wonderings, hopes, dreams, needs...

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Inquiries WITHIN the scope of a Unit('going further)

- Student's identify interests/questions that emerge through the shared inquiry
- They work through an investigation that links with the overarching concepts/skills on which the inquiry is focussed
- They may work individually or in groups

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Tips for success with 'going further'

- Collect wonderings/interests along the way... keep going back to them and refine.
- Students are 'ready to go' when the time arrives
- Have students work in groups with similar interests

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- ‘flip’ the cycle where it feels right – sometimes individual inquiry can precede the shared investigations
- Give students some kind of planner/proforma to guide their inquiry
- Create some success criteria with students that will guide the investigation

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- Consider keeping the ‘going further’ time short and focussed...maybe over an afternoon or a day?
- Have students show the way their investigation links to the central idea

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An inquiry that allows students to explore their interests/passions

- *Investigating our passions can help us find out more about ourselves and each other*
- *When we understand ourselves as learners, we can set goals and improve our learning.*
- *People learn in different ways and for different purposes.*
- *What and HOW we learn changes as we grow.*

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3. Harnessing the power of the unplanned moment

- Small group – or sometimes whole class investigations triggered by an unplanned provocation or event.

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Innovation day...



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“Innovation day” projects

- Can I write and record a song of my own?
- How do you make cheesecake?
- What do you become an archeologist?
- Can I make my own webpage?
- How could I make a suit of armor?
- I want to find out more about the history of soccer?
- I want to make something to wear – could I make my own clothes?
- How do you make earrings?

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Making it work...some tips

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Focus on learning about learning

- Build the **repertoire of skills, strategies and dispositions** needed by the inquirer.
- Make this **repertoire explicit and accessible**.
- Highlight the **transdisciplinary skills** in your UOI and show how they can be transferred
- Have students **regularly goal set and self assess** their use of these skills and strategies

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Spend time learning about the interests, passions and talents of your students

- The fact that people can forget these simple truths when intellectualizing about children shows how far modern doctrines have taken us. **They make it easy to think of children as lumps of putty to be shaped instead of partners in a human relationship.** ~ Steven Pinker, The Blank Slate (p. 399)

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Conferring

Build opportunities for regular 1-1 learning conversations with students on a regular basis.

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- Build more student voice and choice into your teacher led/shared inquiries. Helps your students 'find' their voice and practice negotiating a learning pathway

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- Design and co-design scaffolds and systems that support the process

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- Release students from a process that always begins with a question

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Set the scene....provide experiences to wonder about

- Activating all the senses
- Sometimes, we find out before we know what we want to find out....

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Start using 'researcher's notebooks'

- A researcher's note book (similar to a writer's notebook) is where students are encouraged to be an explorer of the world on a daily basis...recording interests, questions, problems, ideas...to follow up in personal inquiry time.

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Devise systems for monitoring and record keeping throughout the process

- Rubrics
- Timelines
- Checklists
- Conferences/clinics/check ups
- Share time
- Defined number of sessions
- Journals/log books

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Model!

- Be the inquirer you want to see!
- Show students how YOU engage in personal inquiry. Share your questions, your curiosity, your failures, your discoveries, your processes..

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Start by "going further" yourself?

- @emmalinesports
- @gallit_z
- @stumpteacher
- @whatedsaid
- @tashacowdy
- @mumbaimaggie
- @sherattsam

...and SO many more

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Common pitfalls

- Teacher **fear** of 'letting go' and losing control
- Teachers letting go **too much** and losing rigour and focus
- Kids **not knowing** what or how to ask and plan
- **Insufficient modelling** and explicit instruction of the skills required
- **Insufficient scaffolding/structuring** of the process - throwing kids in the deep end (choice without support)
- Insufficient **time** given to this part of the process - rushing 'at the end' of an inquiry

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Teach students how to ask good inquiry questions

- Fat and skinny questions
- Linking individual questions to a bigger theme
- Who, where, why, what, how, when
- Using structures like Blooms taxonomy and 6 thinking hats to learn to ask different kinds of questions
- Testing out questions with each other...

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Synthesising our learning

A landscape	A natural object
A kitchen utensil	An animal
An art form	A sport

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"If people are given the given the skills and tools to use, and presented with a range of potentially powerful educative experiences, then given freedom, they will almost invariably choose one and get on with it. Once learners get in touch with their own sense of personal power, get out of their way and watch in awe"

Edwards 2004: encouraging achievement:
3

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