

## Creating a Culture of Inquiry

Inquiry is a complex process of constructing personal meaning, applying critical thinking skills, solving problems, creating understanding, and questioning.

In its truest form, the inquiry process requires an individual to look deeper and beyond the obvious, examine information for validity, point of view and bias, and construct meaning from all of these endeavours.

Effective application of an inquiry model can transform novice learners into interdependent and independent learners, confident of their information power.

To implement an inquiry model, teacher-librarians and teachers can establish a culture of “Guided Inquiry” which integrates inquiry skills and content knowledge.

The Learning Commons is essential in helping students see the school as a dynamic learning place where they can continually connect new ideas and the curriculum to their own world.

### ■ Ideas to Consider

Instructional Staff	Learners
<b>Content</b> <b>Teacher/teacher-librarian directed</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Delivers integrated curriculum</li><li>• Acknowledges background information</li><li>• Establishes the context</li><li>• Guides the process</li><li>• Scaffolds instruction and learning throughout</li><li>• Designs inquiries based on real world situations</li><li>• Encourages developing open ended questions</li><li>• Models and teaches specific information literacy skills (e.g., information organizers, online databases, social media tools, presentation formats)</li></ul>	<b>Learner generated</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Individually explores area of interest</li><li>• Makes connections to other texts and transfers experiences</li><li>• Generates deep inquiry questions</li><li>• Uses a wide variety of print, media, electronic and human resources</li><li>• Displays learning in personally significant way</li></ul>

Instructional Staff	Learners
<p><b>Collaborating</b></p> <p><b>Teacher/teacher-librarian enabled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allows for flexible groupings based on interest</li> <li>• Facilitates inquiry process</li> <li>• Connects learning partnerships with outside experts, using technology</li> <li>• Monitors outside experts consulted</li> <li>• Contributes to/joins learning partnership(s)</li> <li>• Models learning during process</li> <li>• Leads with questioning</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learner enabled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determines scope of partnerships</li> <li>• Seeks expertise beyond the school setting</li> <li>• Contributes to a team according to own learning style and aptitudes</li> <li>• Contributes to collective knowledge creation</li> <li>• Reflects on learning with others</li> <li>• Shares in the responsibility of ownership of collaborative products</li> </ul>
<p><b>Process</b></p> <p><b>Teacher/teacher-librarian enabled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasizes multiple sources</li> <li>• Emphasizes safe and responsible use of information</li> <li>• Provides template for source validation</li> <li>• Provides guidance in effective search strategies</li> <li>• Targets specific lessons necessary to build reflective practice</li> <li>• Conferences at significant stages of the inquiry</li> <li>• Fosters the metacognition of the skills being learned and emotions encountered</li> <li>• Models reflective thinking/practice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learner enabled</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Applies prior experiences, synthesizes with new information and transfers the learning</li> <li>• Seeks multiple sources</li> <li>• Validates multiple sources for authority, bias and relevancy</li> <li>• Uses effective search strategies</li> <li>• Reflects on learning and shares feelings, findings and perspectives with different audiences</li> <li>• Reaches understandings which are personally significant</li> <li>• Thinks creatively to solve problems and make decisions</li> </ul>