

Inquiry: A Classroom Model for Today's World, Gr. 6 & 7

Female: **[00:00]** Well, we, we talk about why, why would we start looking at this type of learning at this time in education. And I think it's, it's something that's evolved and it's something that's timely and it's something that's almost critical for students in today's world. Students today come to school with a different backpack of tools. Students who come to school today have grown up with technology. They're bombarded by information and, and they have mo—endless ways of accessing knowledge that they need at any given moment.

So we have a different kind of student coming in. And because that student comes in with a—with these different tools, they also come in with different needs. They need to figure out a way they—to deal with all the information they have, to access—they, they have access but they don't always have the tools to, to maybe assess the information, figure out if it's valid, does it have bias. And, and to do so, they really need critical thinking skills. And I don't think that we've been particularly successful in the last few decades at teaching critical thinking in, in, in, in that it was set aside as something almost separate. We really want to have—give children the opportunity to think and, and engage in real life, au—authentic tasks.

So, so I guess we have different students with different needs. We also have teachers who have huge access, as, as Heidi does to resources. Information at their fingertips. They're not just relying on textbooks or the books they can take out of the public library or the school library. Kids don't have to wait to get information.

[01:35] So teachers have greater resources at their disposal by which to, to engage their students in the classroom. So that's fundamental change that has allowed us to, to move more into this, this type of learning.

So inquiry for students, I think, is—has many of the same elements as any good learning. We want them to be able to think. We want them to be able to observe, to make questions, to, to act in the way they, way they deal with information, and then maybe represent it to us. And then at the end we really want them to be reflective, so that they can, can learn not only about their own—about their own gain—gain in content and knowledge, but learn about how they're learning as learners.

Female: We're not just pulling this out of thin air. These are research-based practices. And research shows that when we work this way in our classroom, the learning is better and it's better for students.

When you begin to, to implement these practice in—practices in the classroom, you see a complete different level of student engagement. And students who were previously disengaged—and there are a lot of them who come to school and just go through the motions. They show up, they do what they have to do. Even really bright students who work hard would not necessarily describe themselves as being passionate and engaged in their learning. But when you change the environment and the culture in the classroom, you get a different level engagement.

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