

## Spreading Inquiry Practice, Gr. 7

Female: [00:00] I—I have to say, Nancy, you’ve made my job as a literacy/numeracy coach quite easy because you’ve been very open and accepting of trying new things. I think your teaching stance is of—of a learner, you know? And so when I said, “Hey Nancy, well(?)—you want to try this?” You said, “Okay.” You know? And you were very welcoming and open to try new things and to be vulnerable. And to make mistakes, you know? The first inquiry we did, we weren’t that impressed with it.

Female: Mm-hm. Yeah.

Female: Right? But we used that as a, as a springboard for, “Okay, what are we going to do? What—how are we going to change it and make it better?”

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: And you notice, some of the teachers in this school came by and watched the inquiry as we were going on, like, they would come and set up a chair and for forty minutes they sat there because they wanted to learn a little bit more about what it was all about. And you saw people come by to see, to see what, what, what—the products that the kids were do—making, and to see our thinking.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: You know, and asking us questions. And I think if you get one person to, to try something new then maybe some other people would be willing to take risks too.

Female: That’s what I was going to say actually, that what I’ve seen from the staff is that they’re very interested in what you’re doing. We presented your inquiry model at the s—at one of our staff meetings and talked a little bit about it. And they were intrigued and then a little scared about it. But they were intrigued. And then they started coming into your classrooms—or your classroom. And they want to observe, and “What is it all about?” So I think it’s creating a bit of a buzz. And it’s, it’s a good thing. So obviously you’re—you—they’ve seen that the kids ... They also see that the students are very interested. They see the students are really intrigued themselves. So they’re coming to school saying, “Oh, you know, we have this project or that you—presentation to do.” And they’re really, really excited. So I think that makes a difference.

Female: We had spoken about—oh, when the other teachers were coming to observe.

Female: Yeah.

Female: And after they left, we, we, we kind of sat down and said, “Well I hope they saw this,” and “I hope they noticed this.”

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: And there’s a lot of nuances that happen in your classroom that, to the sort of unaided eye ...

Female: Mm.

Female: ... or if you’re not looking for it, you’re going to miss.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: During the knowledge building circles, you're sitting at the student level, right?

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: You are part of the knowledge building. And you're building on their knowledge and they're building on your knowledge and each other's knowledge as well. And I don't think—if you don't noti—you—a teacher might not notice that that's what's happening.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: A teacher might not notice the accountable talk that's going on. So I think that you go back to the idea of how we get this out there. And I don't know that there is a recipe for this, because we planned five days of inquiry, right?

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: And then—who knows where they're going to take us.

Female: Right.

Female: And so the five days are understanding what inquiry means, teaching them and modeling over the course of the term to generate—and questions and wonderings. Having them generate their own wonderings and organize their wonderings and fitting themselves into groups. But then it's sort of self-directed.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: **[02:53]** Right? So it's, it's—makes it difficult for teachers who are used to planning out six weeks of a unit lesson based on curriculum expectations, where we're just doing sort of five/six days of a unit. And yet the unit goes on for six weeks.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: You know, I know we had spoken about that.

Female: Yeah. And just the flexibility too, right?

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: I think as teachers you're—the truth is, is we're bounded by deadlines and you—at the outcourse(?), we've got to meet those deadlines. But, you know, within sort of the context of inquiry, you have to be able to give the kids the space that if they need another week to sort of continue their research, because you ... And that happened with Geography, that, that we just had such a momentum going. We had an idea where—that—wh—where that end result would—might end. But we realized the momentum's so high that they—we need to sort of extend it. And, and that's okay. And it's, it's giving them those, those skills of, of flexibility, right?

Female: But the teachers need it too.

Female: Yeah.

Female: Teachers need to be flexible to say, “Okay then, I’ll give them another week,” or whatever. And, and that is difficult.

Female: But I think that with this kind of model, you have to be very fluid, very ... You really have to gauge it according to the students and where they’re at and how fast they’re moving. That’s what I think. And so therefore they can move—some are going to move a little faster than others. But, I mean, you have to be flexible for that.

Female: Yeah. And one of the other things that I think has helped you as—your ability to integrate this inquiry into your balanced literacy block, kind of thing.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: Like, you’re, you’re not just doing a science block.

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: This—your, your inquiry is embedded throughout your day, really. And so I know, one comment you made for me ...

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: ... is, “This is the first year that you haven’t been sort of freaked out over marks at report card time ...”

Female: Because you’ve been able to sort of...

Female: Mm-hm.

Female: ... let the kids get through their thinking and their thinking has been so good, it’s been easy for you to, to identify their thinking.

Female: Right.

Female: So(?) a lot of thinking.

Female: Yeah.

[END OF RECORDING – length, 04:53]