

Inquiry and Thinking

Notes from Staff Meeting September 2010

Inquiry:

- A good inquiry is designed to develop the schools goals of creating independent learners
- Good inquiry tasks require the students to find information with the context of some form of need or problem and then requires the student to apply that information.
- Then the students share the outcomes and celebrate their solutions, their decisions, their thinking and the understanding they have developed.

The Big Question:

- By having one compulsory question the children have a good example of what is expected.
- Children should be encouraged to have their own wonderings about the inquiry subject to increase their buy-in and to facilitate their increased ownership of the investigation.
- Displaying the questions in the classroom keeps the inquiry focused

Immersion Stage (Knowledge Attack)

- Ensure that students have access to sound sources of information at appropriate levels of difficulty.
- The students spend time being immersed in the context in order to become something of an Mastermind on a particular subject.
- During this time the students will cover selected achievement objectives from the NZC
- Terms are introduced and concepts clarified with discussion, videos, lecture, etc.
- The resources for this stage are carefully teacher selected.
- The children need this information gathering stage in order to be able to formulate the questions which will drive the inquiry process

Questioning:

Most important thinking requires one of these three Prime Questions:

- Why?
- How?
- Which?

Critical Literacy is not:

- Copying and pasting;
- Finding information on Wikipedia
- Undirected research

Skinny Notes:

Critical questions:

1. Have I used a range of keywords?
2. Do I understand these words?
3. Have I used my keywords and my own words to write about this topic?
4. Do I understand what I have written and will my classmates understand what I have written?

Collaborative work

- The Magic 3
- Three seems to be a good size for open communication
- Decisions are easier than with larger numbers
- If one student is absent then the group can still work
- Three is a very easy number for teachers to monitor, 'passengers' and 'dominators' are very easy to identify.

Thinking Tools

- These are the aids thinkers use to encourage, promote, facilitate, organise or represent their thinking. Tools can include proformas, graphic organisers, routines and ICT capabilities.