

ON INQUIRY: A CONVERSATION

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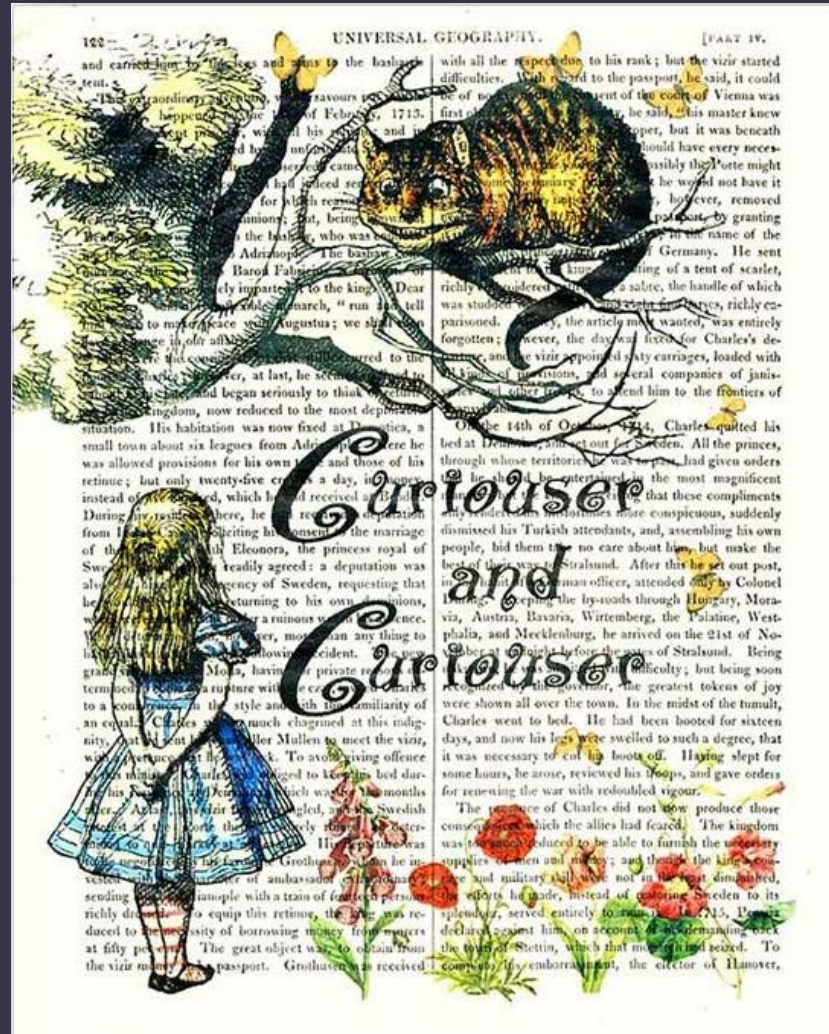
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Four Corners & Introductions

"A prudent question is one-half of wisdom."
Francis Bacon

"There are naive questions, tedious questions, ill-phrased questions, questions put after inadequate self-criticism. But every question is a cry to understand the world. There is no such thing as a dumb question." Carl Sagan



"The word why not only taught me to ask, but also to think. And thinking never hurt anyone. On the contrary, it does us all a world of good."
Anne Frank

"I think, at a child's birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift should be curiosity."
Eleanor Roosevelt.

Education Reimagined defines the paradigm shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered in the way we view learners.

The critical shift is that “Learners are seen and known as wondrous, curious individuals with vast capabilities and limitless potential. This paradigm recognizes that learning is a lifelong pursuit and that our natural excitement and eagerness to discover and learn should be fostered throughout our lives, particularly in our earliest years.”

10 Characteristics of Learner-Centered Experiences



But “inquiry” is an difficult term to define...

- Unlike science, we are not inquiring into phenomena but rather themes and compelling questions about the past and present.
- Inquiry does not require personalized learning or endless independent student research.
- Inquiry is not teacher directed, but it is **most definitely teacher curated and facilitated**.
- Questions are central to all social science disciplines and finding answers to questions is the work of the discipline, so we are allowing students to practice answering questions with source materials and to find even better questions as they work through a “problem or task.”

Inquiry Arc

- **Dimension 1:** Developing Questions and Planning Inquiries
- **Dimension 2:** Applying Disciplinary Tools and Concepts (Civics, Economics, Geography, and History)
- **Dimension 3:** Evaluating Sources and Using Evidence
- **Dimension 4:** Communicating Conclusions and Taking Informed Action



Compelling Questions for Inquiry

Compelling questions address “problems and issues found in and across the academic disciplines that make up social studies.” They “deal with curiosities about how things work; interpretations and applications of disciplinary concepts; and unresolved issues that require students to construct arguments in response.” They are intellectually meaty and reflect an enduring issue, concern, or debate. They are also student friendly and relevant.



On Curiosity –

Research in the journal Neuron by Charan Ranganath

- When people are curious, a basic circuit in the brain is activated, and the brain produces dopamine, which gives us a high. The dopamine also plays a role in enhancing the connections between learning cells.
- Curious people learn and remember more.
- It is hypothesized that the link between curiosity and a “high for learning” are linked to evolutionary biology, because the more we know about the world, the more likely we will survive it’s perils.

Instead of asking,
"Do you have any questions?"
assume that all new learning spurs
questions. Instead say,
**"Think of at least two questions. We'll
share and see which ones are best for
guiding our next learning."**

FOSTERING A CULTURE OF CURIOSITY

QUESTION MATRIX

Ask better questions...

IS?
DOES?

PRESENT

HAS? DID?
WAS?

PAST

CAN?

POSSIBILITY

SHOULD?

OPINION

WOULD?
COULD?

PROBABILITY

WILL?

PREDICTION

MIGHT?

IMAGINATION

WHAT?
EVENT

WHERE?
PLACE

WHEN?
TIME

WHICH?
CHOICE

WHO?
PERSON

WHY?
REASON

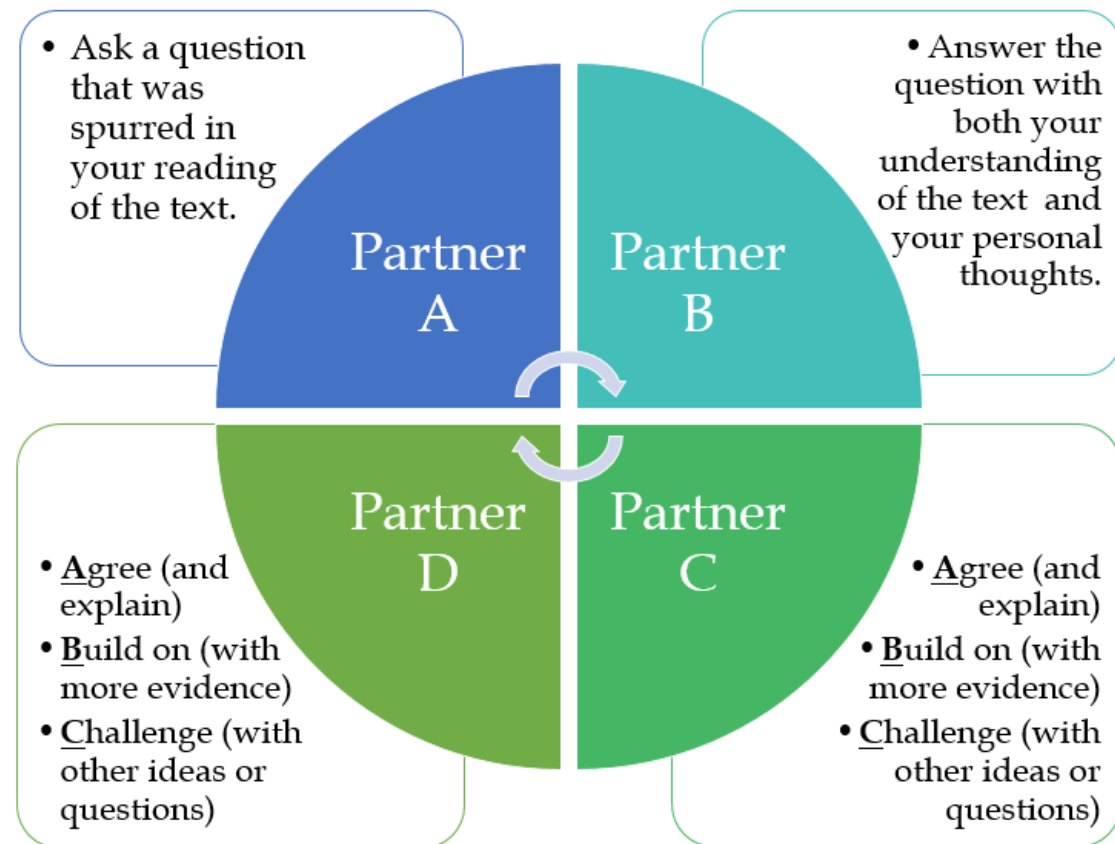
HOW?
MEANING

The general level of difficulty of question increases... A "What is?" question is normally easier to create and answer than a "How might?" question.

A Common Text to Drive Conversation

- Please read through the excerpted article, *"Harnessing Students' Curiosity to Drive Learning."*
- This article represents one viewpoint of a school with inquiry as the focus. Remember, we are always looking to understanding multiple perspectives.
- As you read through the article, please take note of questions you have. You may look to the question matrix as a guide.

STUDENT GENERATED QUESTION QUADS



REFLECTIONS

- THOUGHTS ON STUDENT GENERATED QUESTION QUADS?
- IDEAS ON SHIFTING TOWARDS A STUDENT-CENTERED INQUIRY APPROACH?

"The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing."

- Albert Einstein

