



# Meaningful Experiences in Inquiry-Based Learning

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# What is Inquiry-Based Learning

- ▶ Students engage in inquiry projects that are meaningful to them
- ▶ These inquiry projects should relate to students' interests
- ▶ Inquiry process is shared between students and instructor
- ▶ Process is shared, results vary

# The Three-Phased Model (Katz & Chard, 2014)

- ▶ Phase One – What we Know and What we Want to Learn
- ▶ Phase Two – Conduct Research
- ▶ Phase three – Representation and Dissemination

# Phase One – What we Know and What we Want to Learn

- ▶ Instructor generates an overarching theme for the class
- ▶ Students reflect upon their knowledge / understanding of the topic
- ▶ Brainstorm knowledge and ideas and develop a concept map
- ▶ Ask and write research questions
- ▶ Come up with ideas and methods to investigate these questions

# Phase Two – Conduct Research, Accumulate Experiences

- ▶ Read articles, stories, histories
- ▶ Watch videos
- ▶ Conduct experiments
- ▶ Conduct observations
- ▶ Qualitative observations
- ▶ Measurements
- ▶ Conduct interviews
- ▶ Speak to specialists

# Experiential Learning

- ▶ Components of an experience (Dewey, 1934)
  - ▶ Temporal and complete
  - ▶ Unified by emotion and reaches culmination
  - ▶ Immersive
  - ▶ Can be understood only upon reflection

# What makes an experience meaningful?

- ▶ An experience changes the understanding of prior experiences
- ▶ Used to understand future experiences
- ▶ Can bring deep conceptual change
- ▶ Nuanced conceptual change

# Creating Meaningful Experiences

- ▶ What was a meaningful experience for us?
- ▶ What would be a meaningful experience for the child / student?
- ▶ What is the context for this experience?
  - ▶ Is there something we love and we want the child / student to love?
  - ▶ What does the child find meaningful?
  - ▶ How is it connected to the material from school?
  - ▶ How is it connected to what we think is important?



# Phase Three – Representation and Dissemination

- ▶ Write a paper about the project
- ▶ Present the project orally
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation
- ▶ Poster presentation
- ▶ Play
- ▶ Visual representations
- ▶ Songs

# Inquiry-Based Learning: Challenges

- ▶ Integrating activities from many curricular areas
- ▶ Coordinating different activities in different phases
- ▶ Achieving educational standards
- ▶ Creating new activities and experiences for the students
- ▶ Planning

# Inquiry-based learning: Benefits

- ▶ Individualizing
- ▶ Accommodating learning styles and special needs
- ▶ Being creative with team members
- ▶ Being creative with students
- ▶ Learning new things from colleagues and students' perspectives