

GLOBAL ACTION FOR SCHOOL LIBRARIES: MODELS OF INQUIRY



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The publication of a new book on inquiry-based teaching and learning, forthcoming for September 2022, was celebrated in June 2022 at the annual conferences of its two sponsoring organizations, the School Libraries Section of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) and the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL). This book is the third in a series of books extending the global discussion of aspects of the *IFLA School Library Guidelines* (2nd ed., 2015). The earlier books were: *Global Action on School Library Standards* (2015) and *Global Action on School Library Education and Training* (2019).

Global Action for School Libraries: Models of Inquiry (in press) focuses on inquiry-based teaching and learning, one of the five vital aspects of the instructional work of school librarians identified in the 2015 *Guidelines*. Effective implementation of inquiry-based teaching and learning requires a consistent instructional approach, based on a model of inquiry that is built upon foundations of research and best practice. The book explains the importance and significance of inquiry as a process of learning; outlines the research underpinning this process of learning; describes ways in which models of inquiry have been developed; provides recommendations for implementing the use of such models; and demonstrates how the other core instructional activities of school librarians,

such as literacy and reading promotion, media and information literacy instruction, technology integration and professional development of teachers, can be integrated into inquiry.

Inquiry-based learning is part of “*learning to be a learner*,” a lifelong pursuit involving finding and using information. Inquiry develops the skills and understandings that learners need in new information environments, whether that be as students in post-secondary institutions, as producers and creators in workplaces, or as citizens in communities. Through inquiry-based teaching, librarians help students to build the essential skills and understandings needed for dealing with complex learning challenges in a digital world, including analysis, critical thinking, and problem solving. Special attention is given to the development of students’ metacognitive abilities which are essential to their becoming life-long and life-wide learners.

Developing Models of Inquiry for Teaching and Learning (Part 1) addresses the importance of using a model in inquiry-based teaching and learning and extends our understanding of models of inquiry by examining how the models have been developed through incorporating insights from research and from practice. Chapters 1 and 2 by Louise Limberg (Sweden) and Ross J. Todd (Australia/US) show how the work of researchers and research centres can support the work of practitioners and policy makers. Chapters 3–8 deal with the process of adapting theoretical models to create instructional models that guide and support inquiry-based teaching and learning. Part 1 addresses the benefits for librarians and teachers and for their students of using a model of inquiry in a systematic way.

Three instructional models, with roots in the US, the UK, and Australia, are examined in depth:

- US - Guided Inquiry Design (GID), based on Carol Kuhlthau’s Information Search Process model;
- UK - Framework of Skills for Inquiry Learning (FOSIL), based on Barbara Stripling’s Model of Inquiry and Empire State Information Fluency Continuum;

- Australia - Informed Learning, based on Christine Bruce’s Seven Faces of Information Literacy (later Informed Learning), the Six Faces of Informed Learning, and the GeST (Generic, Situated, Transformative) Windows.

Implementing Models of Inquiry (Part 2) provides practical examples from across the world (Australia, France, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States) on how various inquiry models or approaches to inquiry-based teaching and learning have been or are being implemented in practice. Chapters 9–20 illustrate the use of models and provide practical examples for consideration and potential application, including the lessons learned from successes and challenges.

Inquiry learning is a vital part of a student’s information-to-knowledge journey, alongside personal, social, and cultural growth. The chapter authors identify the features of effective models of inquiry, give examples of instructional strategies for implementing a model of inquiry, and explore the roles of teachers and librarians (e.g., facilitators, instructors, intervenors) in inquiry-based teaching and learning.

Lessons Learned

Creating models for inquiry-based learning involves years of research, development, and practical experimentation. Schools without a model recommended by their education authority should select a model that aligns most closely with the goals and learning outcomes of their curricula, rather than attempting to develop their own models (*IFLA School Library Guidelines*, 2015, p. 41).

Where there is no locally or nationally developed model for inquiry-based teaching and learning, a school librarian should work with the classroom teachers and school leaders to select a model. As the teachers and students apply the model, they may wish to adapt the model to serve school goals and local needs. However, caution should be exercised in adapting any model. Without a deep understanding of the theoretical foundations of the model, adaptations may eliminate the power of the model (*IFLA School Library Guidelines*, 2015, p. 43).

Inquiry can be perceived inaccurately as an assembly process where information is collected from a variety of sources and assembled into a report; this mental model of inquiry, held by students and sometime teachers, is flawed. This view is distinctly different from the discovery that authentic inquiry generates.

Inquiry is a constructivist process with a whole-child focus. Inquiry-based learning is a powerful learning strategy for a complex, uncertain, digital world and a systematic approach is essential. Inquiry-based learning needs to be embedded in the curriculum and supported by a culture of inquiry.

Translating theoretical models into instructional models is difficult and demanding work. The three instructional models featured in this book all took many years to develop, and all of these models and the supporting documentation for the models continue to be developed.

Instructional models provide the basis for structured approaches to teaching and learning, methods of delivery for lessons, and sequences of lessons that build competencies.

Working with a curriculum rooted in behaviourist pedagogy is challenging. However, opportunities for embedding inquiry learning in instruction can be identified by analysing the curriculum in depth. It is sometimes possible to identify areas where some elements of inquiry models might be applied, supporting the learning outcomes required by the curriculum including some of the lifelong learning skills demanded by employers and higher education.

Adopting a model is a first step toward intentionally teaching students the inquiry process. The notion of intentionality is an important disposition or quality for teachers and learners to embrace. Adoption of a specific model provides a lexicon for communication among educators and with students to identify and analyze the stages of the process.

Teaching the inquiry process requires that the teacher analyze the tasks that comprise the process and determine how to teach students to perform each task. Studying the component parts of the model helps answer the question, "What must I teach in order for my students to engage in authentic inquiry?" Responses to the question depend on development of a model-

based inquiry process curriculum and design of specific lessons grounded in the model.

The inquiry process generally moves from posing questions to assessing the results of the inquiry process and often generates new questions for the next inquiry cycle. The inquiry process is not always linear; the path of an inquiry may include returning more than once to an earlier stage to redirect or refine one's inquiry.

It is useful to consider the value of an inquiry model from the learner perspective. Understanding the inquiry process helps students be self-aware and to engage in metacognition. Having a model that frames the process effectively provides the learner with a roadmap for the reflection inherent in metacognition.

A goal of inquiry-based learning is to develop a mindset, a "*habit of mind*" or disposition of inquiry in learners. Attention to process raises awareness of the importance of assessment of the learner's process understandings as well as content output.

Teachers and librarians often need professional development related to inquiry, especially if the process approach is new to them. Action research and evidence-based inquiry are two approaches that support professional development related to the process of inquiry.

School librarians must be leaders of inquiry-based learning. Their leadership supports school librarians' experiential growth as inquiry learning instructors.

Collaboration between researchers and practitioners (and educational leaders) will increase the chances of developing and implementing an instructional model that is well-aligned with the school system's curriculum.

**Global Action for School Libraries:
Models of Inquiry**

Barbara A. Schultz-Jones and Dianne Oberg (Eds.)

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