Supporting And Leading Inquiry Through The LLC
Using research to make connections and inferences
By Nancy Marcil

*Inquiry-based learning can really help advance the current library program at my school to better meet the expectations of the LLC model while having a big impact on student learning (an impact that hopefully has repercussions beyond school). *As mentioned in the Leading Learning document "To meet their learning potential and participate fully as successful learners and contributors our students need learning opportunities and new environments deliberately designed to engage and inspire." (Leading Learning 7)*

*Scaffolding inquiry seems to lead to better success; students need guidance; leaving it too much open may lead to frustration and less learning overall. *As mentioned by Trevor MacKenzie in his article "Bringing Inquiry-Based Learning Into Your Class: A four-step approach to using a powerful model that increases student agency in learning": "Inquiry is most successful when strongly scaffolded." (MacKenzie)*

*By scaffolding inquiry it will lead to it looking different in year 1 in the LLC, compared to year 3 or 4, once students have had more experience (with time I will be able to do more open/free inquiry with the older grades as they will be ready for it) *"The Types of Student Inquiry act as a scope and sequence to support learners in their journey toward Free Inquiry." (MacKenzie)*

*Choosing a model to guide inquiry is important to have common language throughout the school. Different inquiry models have similar steps (often just different terms). When picking the best model for K-6, I should strive for easy-to-understand language and a model without too many steps (easier for young kids). *"Popular models have from 5 to 20 different steps, so it's important to choose one that is appropriate for the grade level, subject-area, and duration of the project." (McAuliffe)*

*Inquiry is about being curious – having time for free exploration is important as it will lead to questions naturally (finding ways to let students explore a new subject, even in structured inquiry, is important) *"Traditional assignments don't allow for the complex, constructive process of learning through two important phases of research: exploring and collecting. Typical assignments limit students' ability to learn from a variety of sources and often result in a simple copying exercise." (Maniotes 10) "During that exploration stage, students build the necessary background content knowledge so they can think critically throughout the rest of the process. When that stage is (too often) ignored, both the inquiry process and the resulting product suffer, and students are even less likely to learn, use, and transfer critical thinking skills." (McAuliffe)*

*Knowing how to ask good questions is important to meaningful inquiry; students will need to learn what makes a good inquiry question (again the importance of teaching skills through a scaffolded approach) *(Wiggins and Wilbur)*

*Research is one part of the inquiry process (research projects on their own do not necessarily touch on all the components of inquiry-based learning, which is why following a specific inquiry model can be helpful, to not overlook or skip important steps) (like all the other steps, students need to be taught how to properly conduct research, though this may look different from K to 6) *"School librarians can be leaders in inquiry learning because they know the research process and are able to help teachers design better learning experiences for students, experiences that support their learning through research." (Maniotes 16)*

*Reflection is an important part of any inquiry model (and it's a step that should be connected or "in play" during all the other steps) (knowing that having different emotions during an inquiry project is also important to consider; letting students know that it is normal to feel frustrated at times, that learning is not always

linear, are important things to remember) *"calls for reflection at every point"* (Ekdahl 6) *" Inquiry recognizes and supports the emotional aspect of learning"* (Maniotes 14)

*Linking inquiry to real life situations, or meaningful topics for kids, will lead to better inquiry projects and more profound learning (which also points to the fact that moving students from structured inquiry to free inquiry is an ultimate goal, as this will lead to students taking more ownership over their learning and promoting lifelong learning skills) *"encourage students to have more authority over their own knowledge and inquiry […] ensure new learning takes place in active, collaborative, and social contexts, real or virtual"* (Ekdahl 5)

*Teaching inquiry skills will help me address other literacy skills (can be a great way to link learning and touch on the many other important facets related to the TL's teaching role, such as informational literacy, digital citizenship skills, reading/writing/communication skills, technology, etc.) *"Figure 1. Librarians who facilitate student-led inquiry are more likely to teach other essential information literacy skills"* (Lance and Maniotes)

*I can see how leading inquiry lessons in the library setting, in both English and French, will be an asset to my school, though it will present challenges too, as each group will have different needs. *"Creating a French environment in a dual-track setting is a challenge and requires active support and fostering of the use of French inside and outside the classroom."*("Handbook For French Immersion Administrators" 5) *"All staff in the school—teachers, office staff (as they are often a parent's first contact), custodial staff, and support staff such as librarians—should have a general understanding of, and a positive attitude towards, all programs offered in the school."*("Handbook For French Immersion Administrators" 46)

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