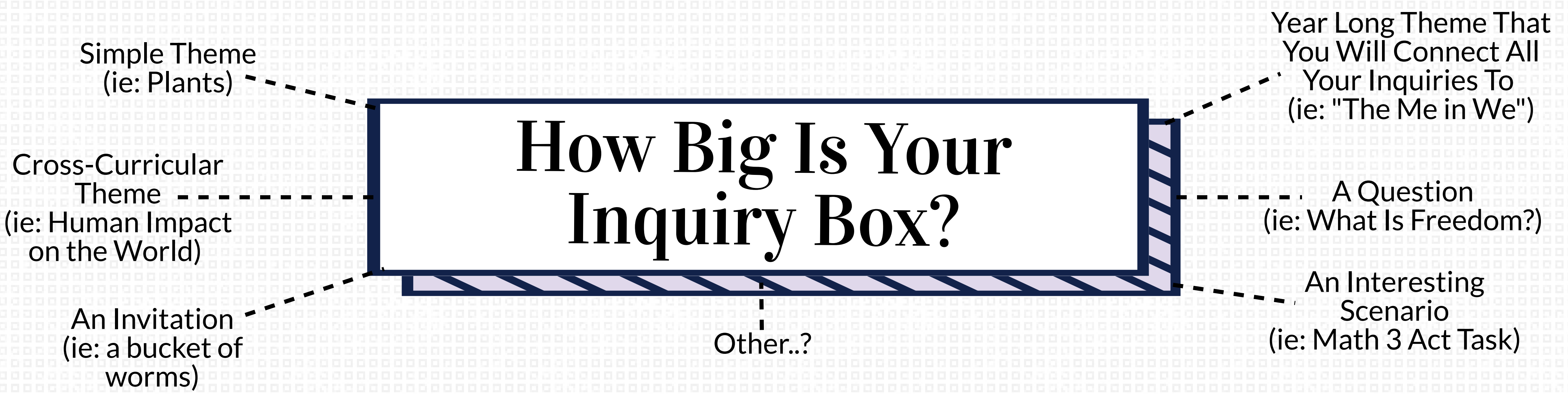


Creating a Culture of Inquiry

“ INQUIRY IS A BALL TOSS - AS TEACHERS, WE TOSS AN INQUIRY BALL TO STUDENTS, BUT WE DON'T KNOW WHAT BALL THEY WILL TOSS BACK TO US. ”

Inquiry is a culture that you will co-create with your students. There is no recipe and no set procedure for inquiry. Exploring wonders will take you and your students on a new adventure every time. When you create a culture of inquiry, the process of learning is valued over the products that are created, and the questions are valued over the answers.

Choose Your Own Inquiry Adventure



Inquiry can take:

Hours

Days

Weeks

Months

Years

Variety is best!

The Provocation Cycle

THIS PHASE OF INQUIRY IS VERY IMPORTANT AND MIGHT CONTINUE FOR AN EXTENDED AMOUNT OF TIME. IT WILL HELP STUDENTS DISCOVER QUESTIONS THEY CARE ABOUT.

MULTI-MODAL PROVOCATIONS

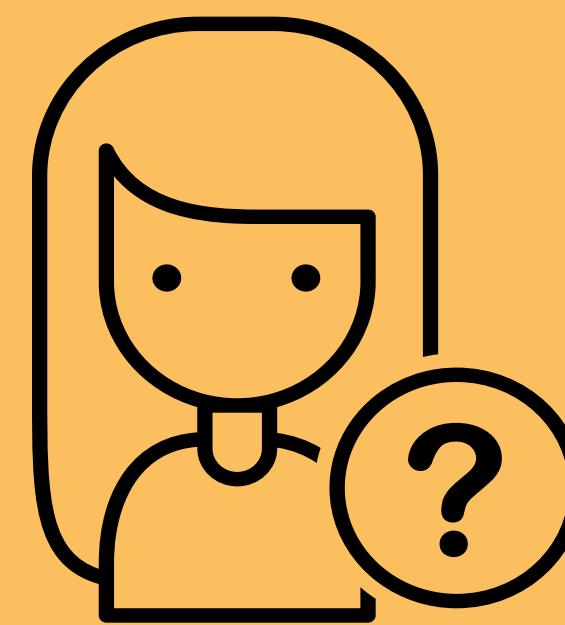
What will you provoke your students to think and wonder about? Let your students' voices guide you as you determine how to continue to provoke their thinking throughout the inquiry cycle!



Examples of Provocations: Play tables, nature walks with intention, expert speakers/mentors, stories, videos, quotes, poems, experiments, ads, images, documentaries, your students' wise words, blogs, field trips, primary and secondary sources, political cartoons, artifacts, local issues/dilemmas, news articles/reports, food, scents, sounds, magazines, fun facts, questions, shared experiences, non-fiction books, etc...

TEACHER MODELING

Model asking questions that don't have easy answers - "I wonder how big the universe is..."



Teachers are co-learners. It's okay to not know all the answers.

MAKE STUDENT THINKING VISIBLE

Create multiple opportunities for students to make their thinking and questions visible to each other in many ways.

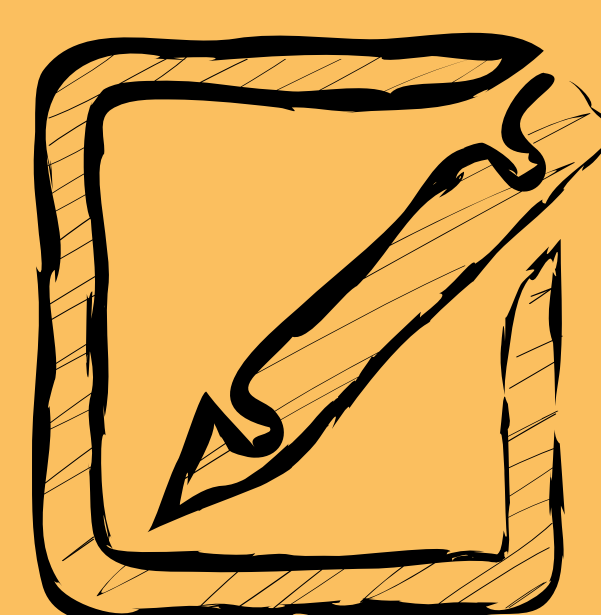
A) Students Share Verbally in knowledge building circles, with partners, in a small groups, etc.

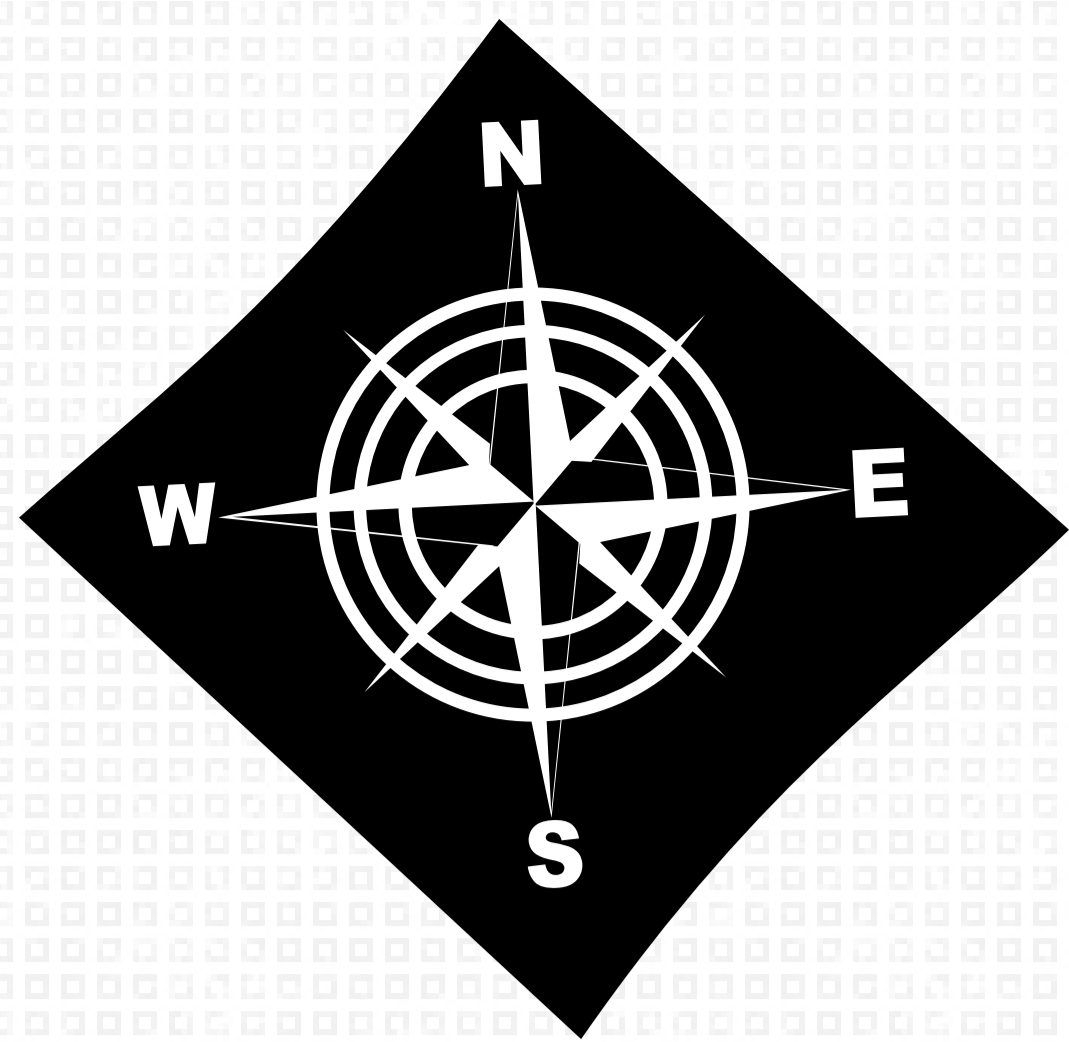
B) Teacher Documents Thinking with a wonder wall, Google Doc, anchor chart, sticky notes, etc.

C) Use Making Thinking Visible (MTV) Strategies (see www.rcsthinkfromthemiddle.com)

STUDENT SELF REFLECTION

Students continually record their questions and thoughts in inquiry journals. Encourage students to include visuals as well as words.





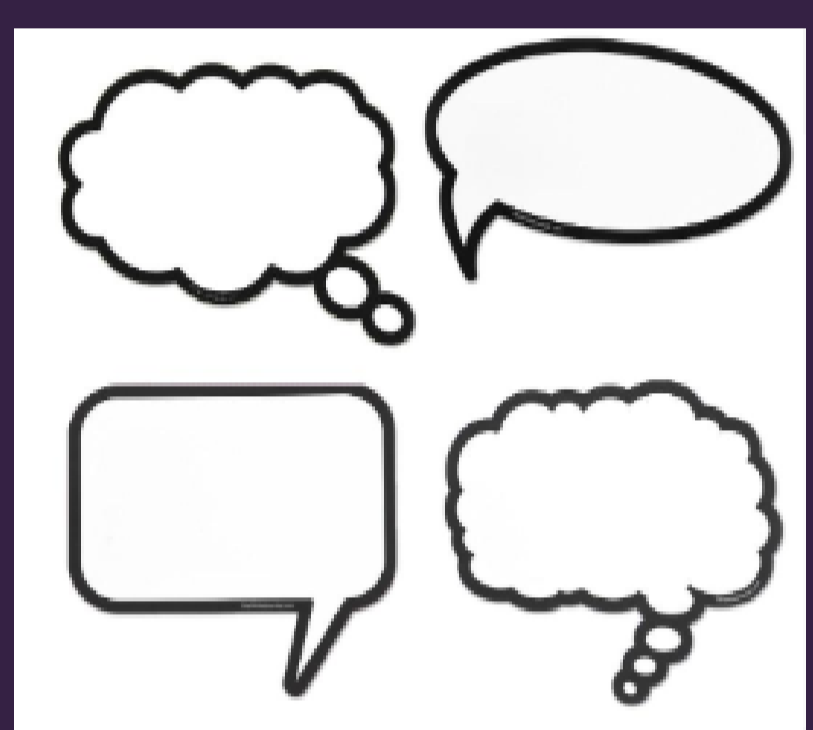
Teachers will know it is time to move on to the next phase of inquiry when they feel that **ALL** of their students have a question they care about or a connection to the theme.



Question Selection



Have students choose and record their favourite questions by referring to their inquiry journals, their conversations throughout the provocation cycle, and the teacher documentation of class wonders.

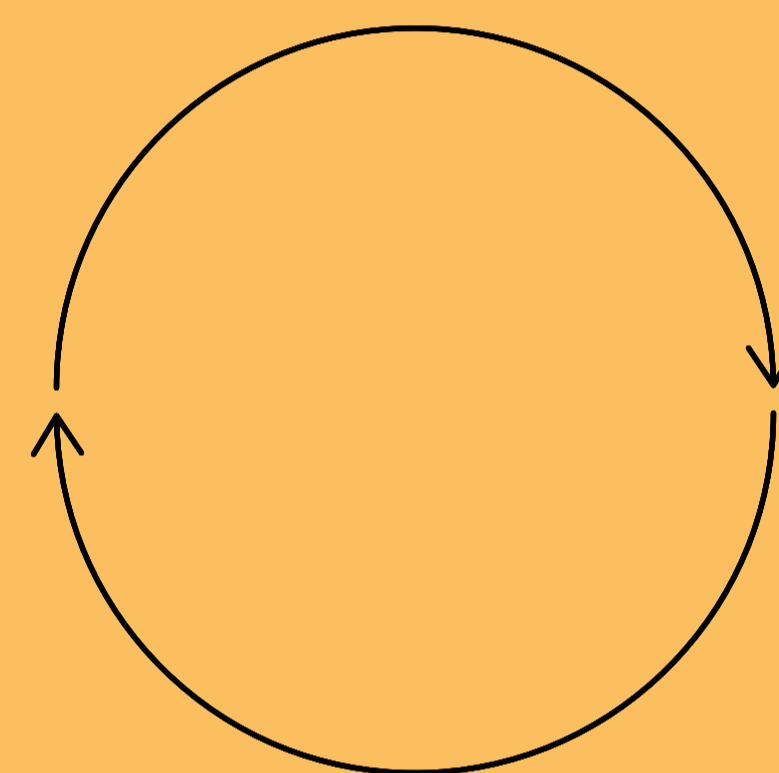


Sharing Circle

Students share their favourite questions with each other in a sharing circle.

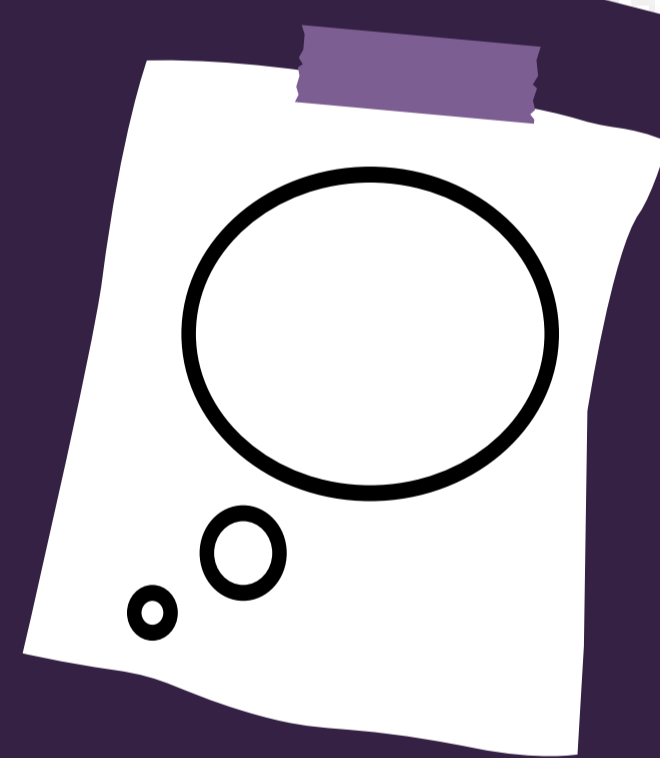
They will pay attention to new questions that are sparked in their brains as they listen to each other.

The sharing circle will continue as students share the new questions that were sparked by others. This continues until all the questions are exhausted.



Burning Questions

Students select the question(s) they want to explore in depth. This question might change and evolve throughout the inquiry.



UN-PLANNING

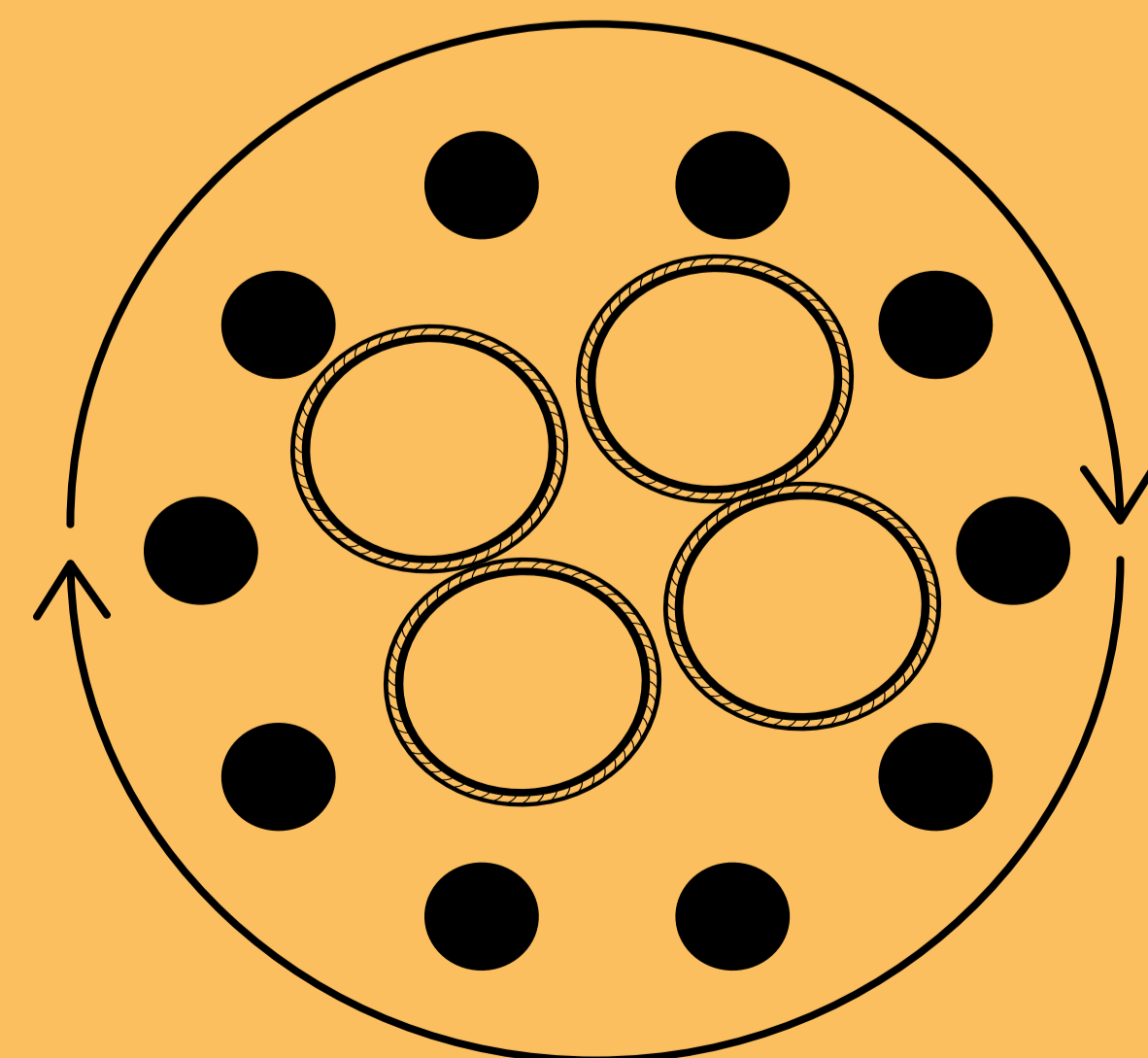
DECISION TIME

Students explore their own individual questions.

A common theme emerges from student questions that they will explore as a class.

The class votes to determine the order they will investigate the most popular wonders (as a large group).

Students sort their questions to form inquiry teams.

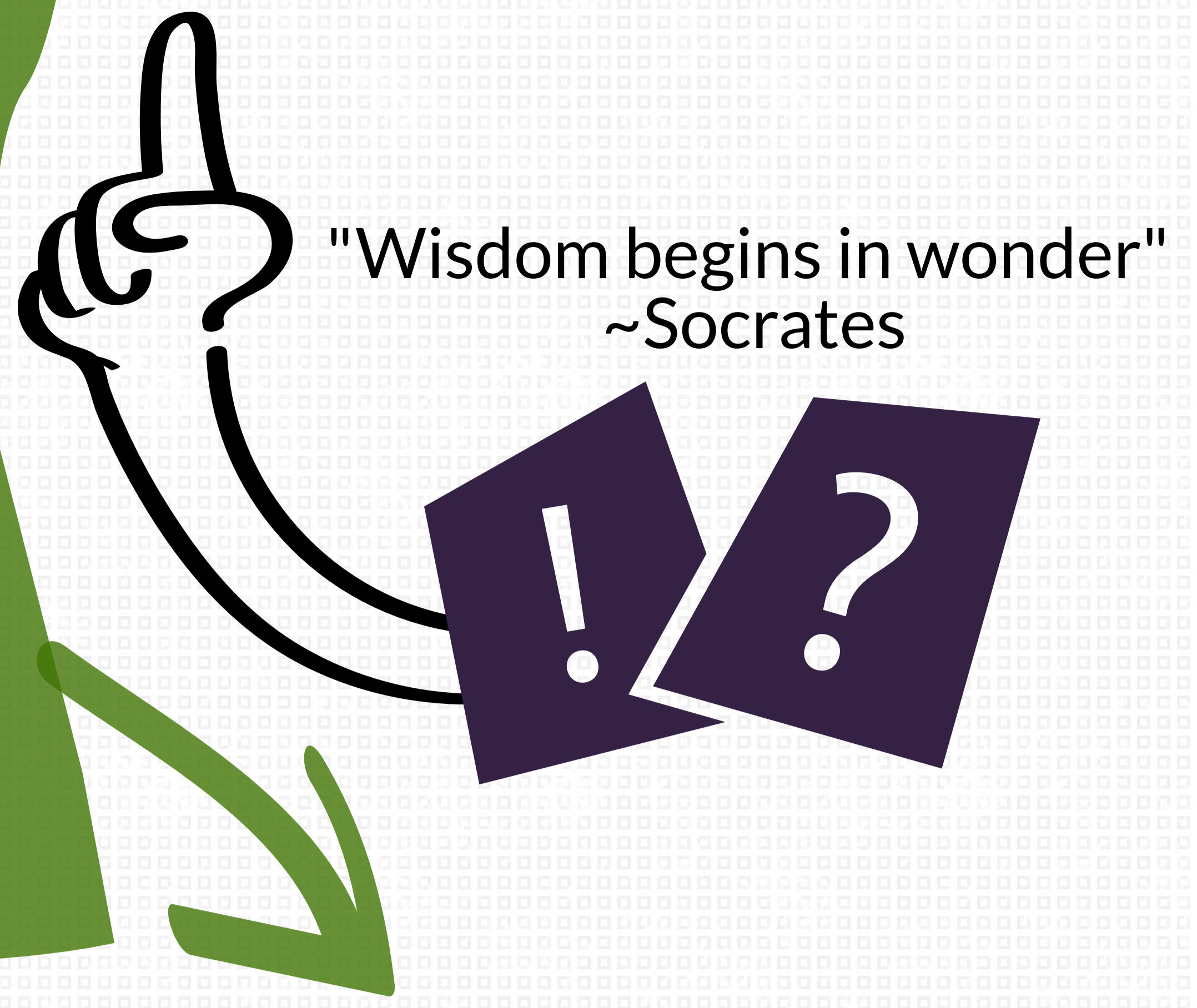


Have students go around the circle and sort their own questions (consider using hula hoops) into groups with related questions.

WHAT'S NEXT?

As a class, in an inquiry team, or as an individual:

- 1) Determine the big theme(s) that unites their questions.
- 2) Think about and record all other questions connected to that theme.
- 3) Use these questions to determine a larger overarching question(s).



Record Your Thinking

CONSIDER THIS



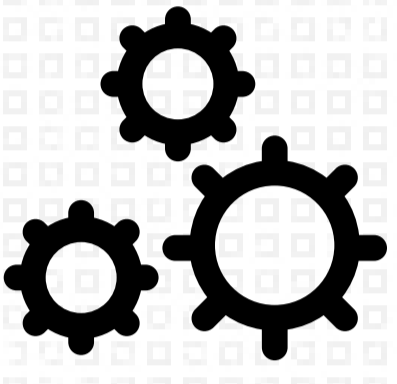
What do we already know or what do we think we know?



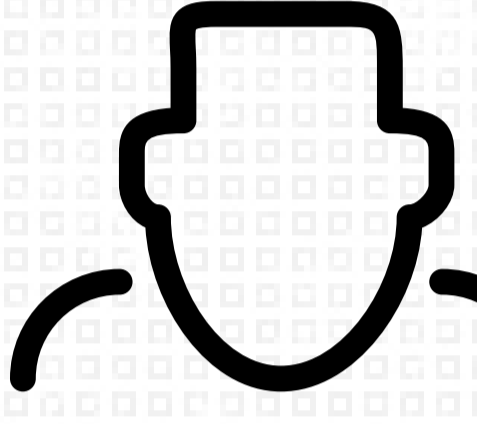
What do we predict we will find out when we start to explore our question(s)?



How can we start to explore our topic?



REMEMBER:



inquiry is NOT a "one size fits all."

Now that we have our question

THE 'ANTI-RESEARCH' PROJECT

It is about TRANSFORMING our THINKING!

Why isn't inquiry a research project? While research might be involved, it is the teacher's role to stay very involved in this next stage of inquiry. To honour student questions and transform student thinking, teachers will continue to search for additional provocations. Listening to what is going on for students throughout the inquiry will help to inform teachers about what to bring to the students next.

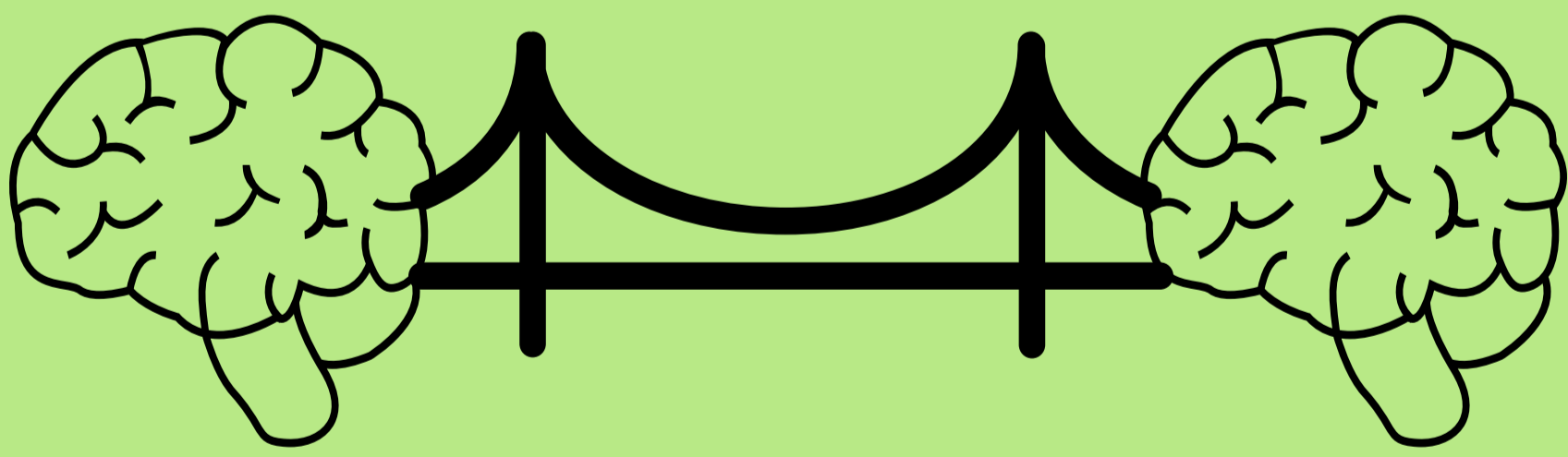
Teachers might want to consider giving students a learning map that will show which skills/curricular competencies they will be developing throughout this inquiry. These learning goals should be made explicit so students can set goals and collect evidence of their growth throughout the inquiry process. Teachers can conference with students to help them determine their strengths and stretches and to set personal learning goals.

STUDENT EXPLORATION



Students will explore their questions in a variety of ways

Teachers can scaffold learning by continuing to stretch and provoke student thinking around the theme/question(s) using: Play tables, reflections on peer's wise words, materials to think about their thinking, nature walks with intention, expert speakers/mentors, stories, videos, quotes, poems, experiments, ads, interesting images, documentaries, blogs, field trips, primary and secondary sources, political cartoons, artifacts, local issues/dilemmas, news articles/reports, food, sounds, magazines, fun facts, juicy questions, shared experiences, non-fiction books, etc...



COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE BUILDING

This is a key move in inquiry-based learning. Regardless of the structure you choose (individual, team, whole class inquiry, etc.), it is important to get small and large groups of students together.

Students will continue to share with each other in order to build on each others' ideas and push each others' thinking. This can be done with MTV strategies, knowledge building circles, and other sharing strategies.

TEACHER AS RESEARCHER

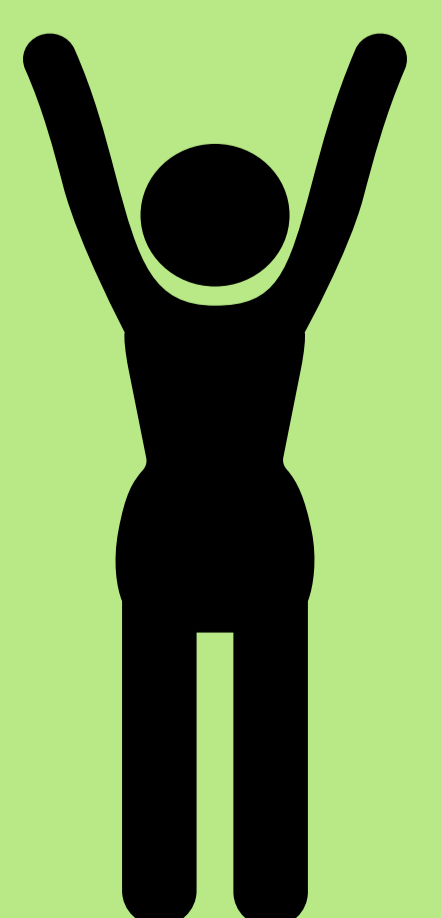
Holding the belief that all students are curious, capable, and competent.

Teachers will document what students are saying, thinking, and wondering. They will use this to both scaffold skills (ie: how to collaborate, how to use technology, how to research, how to conduct experiments, how to reflect, etc.) for students and to continue to push thinking forward.

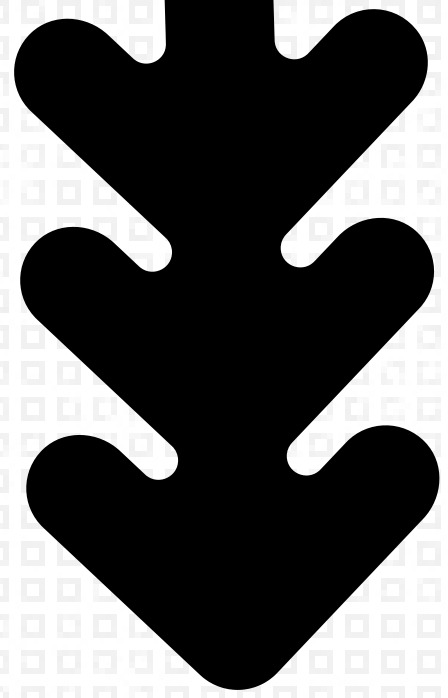
This could be done by making observations, conferencing with students, documenting conversations and wise words, and videotaping/photographing the learning moments.

STUDENT REFLECTION & SELF-ASSESSMENT

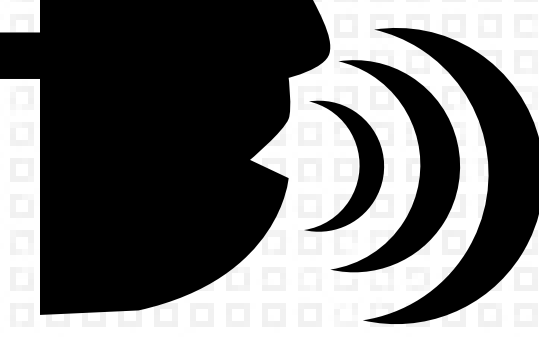
Students can use their inquiry journals to record all of their thinking, questions, observations, drawings, etc. They can use their learning map to guide them as they collect evidence and grow their curricular competencies/skills. They will keep track of how their thinking is transforming.



When students are ready, they can help you decide...



HOW WILL WE...



SHARE WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED IN A MEANINGFUL WAY?



TAKE ACTION AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE (FOR OUR SCHOOL, COMMUNITY, CITY, WORLD)?



Continue to explore these questions or move on to another inquiry. Help students to see how all of their learning is connected!

The student's role in inquiry is to:

- ask questions, reflect, discuss, seek to discover, create, uncover, and understand.
- actively participate in building the group's collective knowledge.
- take responsibility for designing ways to investigate and play, explore problems, take on challenges, and discover their passions.
- develop their competencies.
- self-assess, collect evidence of growth, and conference with teachers on a regular basis.
- share their learning and seek to make a difference.



The teacher's role in inquiry is to:

- build strong relationships with students.
- provoke thinking, honour student questions/interests, listen, observe, document thinking, and use student thinking to determine future learning opportunities.
- support students as they inquire, scaffold skills, and ask strategic questions.
- notice, name and nurture competencies, assess learning, give timely feedback, and conference with students/teams.
- give demonstrations, explain concepts (mini-lessons), redirect when required, suggest and connect students with resources that might be helpful, and provide opportunities for students to share what they have learned in meaningful ways.
- be flexible with 'un-plans,' be ready to follow the paths students take, and be ready to catch the 'ball' they toss back to us! The student is the curriculum!

//////////////////// YOU'RE ALL SET - GO FORTH & INQUIRE! //////////////////////

For More Ideas, and to see case studies of inquiry in action, go to:
www.instructionalleadershipteam.com --> Learning --> Inquiry Resources