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TEXT SLIDES ONLY.

- Busting some myths about the inquiry cycle



- Text slides are available as a PDF
Copyright on images from the classroom prevent me from providing the full set of slides.

Truth is a slippery thing...

- I've been teaching for 31 years
- I have 2 passports
- I enjoy playing tennis in my (rare) free time!

What is a myth?

'a widely held but false belief or idea'

- *a fictitious or imaginary person or thing.*
- *an exaggerated or idealized conception of a person or thing.*

- Like all professions, teaching abounds with myths!

...about teaching

- Those who can, do – those who can't teach!
- Kids were better spellers in the old days.
- Early childhood teaching is glorified baby sitting
- Private schools offer a better education
- No one teaches handwriting anymore

...and learning

- Getting an 'A' is a reliable indication of understanding
- The smarter you are - the faster you think
- Age determines readiness to learn
- High self esteem = good learning
- Homework for primary students improves learning
- You are born smart – or not

- Can you add to the list?

Using some visible thinking routines to explore truth

- Arrange the cards from those ideas you believe to be most to least true

- How and why do myths evolve?
- What makes them problematic?
- What can we do to keep myths at bay in our school community?

When myths pervade...

- The concept of neural networks also helps explain why established habits, beliefs, and judgments are so difficult to change. Imagine the gradual formation of a riverbed. The initial flow of water might be completely random—there are no preferred routes in the beginning. **But once a creek has been formed, water is more likely to follow this newly created path of least resistance.** As the water continues, the creek deepens and a river develops. ... The brain is only human; it relies on established ways. **As interneuronal connections increase, they become more difficult to overcome.** (Burton, 2008, p. 52)

- Myths may begin as misconceptions. Misconceptions may arise from limited experiences that go unchallenged - or even reinforced by similar (still limited) experiences.
- Misconceptions become the 'frame' for which the mind seeks reinforcement.



Inquiry is what happens when we 'do units of work'

Or

It's inquiry time!

Inquiry is about how we teach and about how children learn...

- across the day
- across subject areas
- across age groups

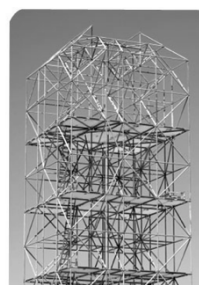
- Understanding a cycle of inquiry can help us *design learning experiences* that better scaffold thinking and understanding....

- BUT the cycle of inquiry suffers from its own myths...

#Myth 1: The inquiry cycle is like a recipe – if you don't use it as is...the learning won't work out.



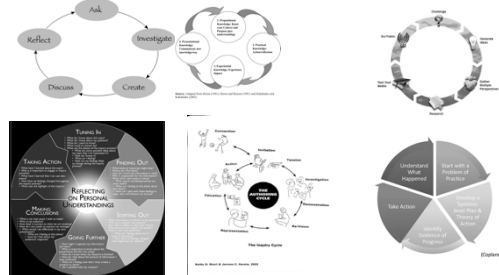
The cycle is a FRAMEWORK designed to scaffold thinking



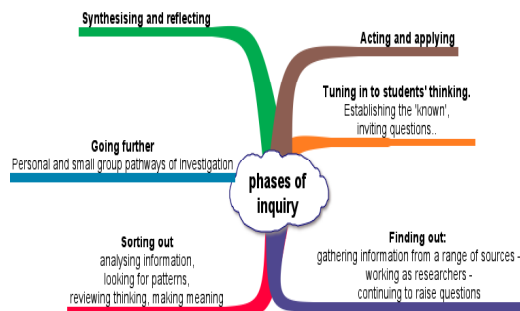
2. There is 'a' (best) cycle of inquiry...



There are *many* interpretations to work with



Sequencing the inquiry



Myth 3 Phases of inquiry are contained, neat and sequential.



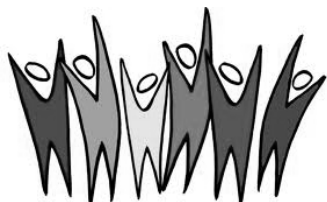
"stages" are interlinked, messy and connected



#myth 4: All inquiries work the same way



Inquiry processes differ according to context and purpose



5. Inquiry teachers are not explicit and they never use direct instruction



- Effective Inquiry teachers are highly explicit. 'Direct instruction' is part of the repertoire – it's generally used at point of need and not as the 'default' pedagogy... but it IS used.

Myth 6: Using a 'cycle' as a guide, we can plan a complete unit of inquiry for students – then teach it.



Planning is emergent and 'recursive' informed by learning along the way



#Myth 7: The inquiry cycle applies to long term 'units' that run over several weeks



A cycle of inquiry can occur within a lesson, a few hours, a day....



Myth 8. Effective inquiry cycles occur as a result of careful teacher forethought and meticulously planned experiences.



Inquiries can sneak up on you when you least expect it!



Myth 9. An inquiry comes to an end.



There will always be new questions, more avenues to explore, new possibilities.



#Myth 10: The inquiry cycle is mainly about planning



The inquiry cycle is about learning



- And a final, well worn myth....

- Inquiry is basically a bit 'soft'. It is less demanding for teachers because you go with the flow – you learn along with the kids. It lacks rigor and structure.



- **inquiry and integrated pedagogies require more, not less of teachers: more diverse teaching tools and more in-depth and comprehensive subject knowledge (Darling Hammond...2006, 186).**

What inquiry myths may be prevalent in your school?

Kids think that...

Staff think that...

Parents think that....

- How can we do some myth busting back at school?

Some myth busting strategies

- Find and acknowledge the '**grain of truth**'
- Always invite people to **support their claim** with evidence 'tell me more about that? What makes you say that? How did you come to that understanding?
- Nurture **open, honest and courageous conversations** at team and staff level

- Build **trust** - this enables assumptions to be challenged in a safe environment
- Emphasise **collaborative planning**, teaching, assessing ... individuals help 'check and balance' each other
- Persist to find the **original source** of ideas/quotes/strategies

- Embrace the 'and' rather than the 'or'
- Don't let *often* become always; *should* become *must*; *rarely* become *never*; *could be* become is...
- Remember – 'the enemy is orthodoxy' (Graves: 1985)

- Burton, R. (2008) On being certain believing you are right even when you are not. St Martin's Press
- Zmuda, A. (2010) Breaking Free from Myths About Teaching and Learning: Innovation as an Engine for Student Success, ASCD
- Graves, Donald (1985) The Enemy is Orthodoxy. *Highway One*, v8 n1-2 p153-63 Win-Spr 1985