

September 27, 2005

# Object-Based Learning and Inquiry Projects



## Objects: What can we learn from them? Why object-based learning?

Learners must be equipped with "the basics," but basic literacy and math skills are not enough. To function in a world where the amount of information doubles in months and people will change jobs many times during their working years, students need a broader set of skills and this can be partially achieved by building on the ability of the student to interpret, decipher and encode the information they receive. To succeed in the workplace and in our changing

society, people must develop higher level skills, including creativity, problem-solving, the ability to communicate in different ways, self-discipline, tolerance and critical thinking.

Object based learning is a hands on way to hone your skills of observation and perception; enhance your creative thinking and problem solving ability; and to build on and apply different ways of communicating.

## How Developed are our Visual & Analytical skills?

We tend to look at objects such as structures) very quickly, a few seconds at most. We tend to see no value in quiet contemplation and we give no time for it. We seldom ask questions about the objects we own or the structures we see or come to know why they look the way they do. We simply accept them. Ask a simple question: "Why do we make tables which are not made out of wood look

like wood?" By seeking the answers to such questions we can better understand for example, the role of designers in our society; the importance of familiar materials being use to construct things we depend on, etc.

### *Special Interest Articles:*

- **Objects: What can we learn from them? Why object-based learning?**

- **How Developed are our Visual & Analytical skills?**

- **Perception**

- **What is Inquiry Based Learning?**

- **How does Inquiry differ from the traditional teaching approaches?**

## Perception

Object-based observation provides us with the opportunity to use other senses as well as learn from others. Each person sees any one object from a different perspective. Their perspective can be unique to their culture, to their social

interactions, or to their particular way of framing an experience. As students are encouraged to share what they know, sense, feel, about an object the information that comes to the surface further enhances how others see that object.



[http://www.chevronopenminds.ca/museum\\_resources.html](http://www.chevronopenminds.ca/museum_resources.html)

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Inquiry Based Learning

## What is Inquiry Based Learning?

Inquiry is an approach to learning that involves a process of exploring the natural or material world, that leads to asking questions and making discoveries in the search for new understandings.

An old adage states: "Tell me and I forget, show me and I remember, involve me and I understand." Inquiry implies involvement that leads to understanding. Furthermore, involvement in learning implies possessing skills and attitudes that permit you to seek resolutions to questions and issues while you construct new knowledge.

"Inquiry" is defined as "a seeking for truth, information, or knowledge -- seeking information by questioning." Individuals carry on the process of inquiry from the time they are born until they die. This is true even though they might not reflect upon the process. Infants begin to make sense of the world by inquiring. From birth, babies observe faces that come near, they grasp objects, they put things in their mouths, and they turn toward voices. The process of inquiring begins with gathering information and data through

applying the human senses -- seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling.



## **How does Inquiry Based Learning differ from traditional teaching approaches?**

The inquiry approach is more focused on using and learning content as a means to develop information-processing and problem-solving skills. The system is more student centered, with the teacher as a facilitator of learning. There is more emphasis on "how we come to know" and less on "what we know." Students are more involved in the construction of knowledge through active involvement. The more interested and engaged students are by a subject or project, the easier it will be for them to construct in-depth knowledge of it. Learning becomes almost effortless when something fascinates students and reflects their interests and goals.

Inquiry classrooms are open systems where students are encouraged to search and make use of resources beyond the classroom and the school. Teachers who use inquiry can use technology to connect students appropriately with local and world communities, which are rich sources of learning and learning materials. They replace lesson plans with facilitated learning plans that account for slight deviations while still keeping an important learning outcome in focus. They meet on-target questions with, "How do you suggest we investigate that question?"

Inquiry learning and active learner involvement can lead to important outcomes in the classroom. Students who actively make observations, collect, analyze, and synthesize information, and draw conclusions are developing useful problem-solving skills. These skills can be applied to future "need to know" situations that students will encounter both at school and at work.

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