

**EDES 542 Assignment #2 Explanation for Presentation here:**  
<http://prezi.com/to2xr4rvwgpm/developing-an-inquiry-culture/>  
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Please note that most of my effort went into both learning to use the Prezi application and making my Prezi presentation, which is the focus of this assignment for me. Therefore, the following explanation is a guide to that presentation, and is not meant to be an exhaustive discussion of relevant literature, course readings and other media, as these were included as inspiring and illustrative quotations, photos, and videos within the presentation itself.

My school is geared more toward inquiry than most, as we are part of the International Baccalaureate Programme, and have a group of fairly flexible, open-minded teachers. Nonetheless, we have much work to do in increasing our use of the inquiry approach to learning. I have decided to focus on the Middle Years Programme (MYP) in our school in order to keep my plan manageable.

### **My Inspiration and Goals**

My plan has been inspired by two major sources. The first is the George Couros Identity Day blog entry (at <http://georgecouros.ca/blog/archives/791>). I forwarded this link to the new MYP coordinator at our school. We had an ensuing (but casual) discussion about the blog post and both agreed that Identity Day would be, for our purposes, best as an end-of-year inquiry done through grade 6, 7 and perhaps 8. It

could help students develop the skills, independence and confidence necessary to conduct a meaningful Personal Project inquiry, which is started at the end of grade 9 and continues until the early spring of grade 10. Currently, I am concerned that some of the Personal Project students are a little at loss for this sudden extreme independence in pursuing something of passion and relevance for them, despite the guidance they receive from the MYP Coordinator and teacher mentors.

My second major inspiration comes from our two-year experiment with an MYP-wide Glocal (global/local) Day. While both years (one focused on poverty, the other on food) have been deemed a success, we still have concerns regarding whether or not this activity sticks with the students; instead, perhaps they go merrily on their way without ever really thinking about it again. Glocal Day consists of teams of teachers (so at least we already have collaboration to some degree) planning what I consider frontloading activities. While very creative and engaging, they are merely a taste of the various elements of the issue du jour. I would love to see this as an MYP-wide inquiry: either an open inquiry on any element of the Glocal Day theme, or a curriculum-based inquiry that could be backmapped to learning outcomes specific to each grade, which I mention in my presentation “introduction”. I also feel that it may be less risky for individual teachers when several grades and subject areas are involved, as teachers can provide support to one another.

### **Explanation of Format**

For my presentation, which has been created specifically for the MYP teachers of our school, I wanted there to be a focus on the review, reinforcement, learning, inspiration, and reflection of inquiry-based teaching. Like students, each teacher is at a different stage of classroom inquiry practice. Prezi, as my presentation tool, was therefore an excellent medium for my message. It allows me (or others who may go back and take another look at the presentation) to backtrack, zoom, and focus on areas where further questions, comments, or ideas are taking root. I do have a point early on in the presentation to remind presentees that they may post burning questions, comments or ideas. During the actual presentation, this could be on a wall in the room, or a technological “wall” through a web 2.0 application such as Wallwisher or a wiki.

My Prezi is set up so that I briefly introduce the ideas around Glocal Day and Identity Day. I don’t, however, go into too much more detail in the presentation as I want everyone to contribute to how these inquiries might work, with the guidance of those more comfortable with the inquiry process and the requirements of the MYP. Then, the Prezi moves in a clockwise fashion through different frames. Each frame represents key questions, which were actually developed for the Primary Years Programme (PYP), but the use of them should be continued at the MYP level, as they involve abstract questioning levels that can take years to master: MYP students still find questioning meaningfully and at higher levels a challenge. Some of the MYP teachers have been exposed to the key questions because they have done some teaching at the PYP level, but most of the MYP teachers have only been

introduced to the questions very briefly by me, or have never set eyes on them before. Therefore, this format is meant to either introduce or reinforce the key questions. Separating the Prezi into key question frames also allows for, after the initial overview, revisiting frames for more detailed discussion at later dates, if time and learning limitations require it (there is a lot to discuss here).

## **The Key Question Frames**

### What is it like?

I provide some basic, and hopefully inspirational definitions and descriptions of inquiry, as well as teacher-friendly resources. I hope that teachers will be able to revisit the presentation for ideas.

### How does it work?

The next level of questioning frame focuses on a brief description of the process of inquiry. I include images of both “The Habits of Mind” (Costa & Kallick, 2009, p. x) and some elements of the IB Learner Profile (as represented with my own students’ collages) because it is important for students to develop these characteristics as part of the inquiry process, and in order for the inquiry process to succeed. Additionally, in this frame I assure teachers that they will still be able to cover all required learning outcomes through formative activities, as at this point in the presentation I

imagine some teachers would be panicking about this. I also provide a brief quotation from Kuhlthau, Maniotes, & Caspari (p. 5, 2007), describing the integration of information seeking skills into the inquiry itself.

### Why is it like this?

Here, I provide some brief quotes explaining what inquiry provides to students. I also add a cheeky reminder from a former grade 6 student about making students participate in required activities. While I believe it is only partly directed at me, as a) I was never meek about it and b) there were no rats involved, I did insist they write some poetry. In my defense, I had a vision of our classroom walls being filled with poetry, I only required they try out a few of specific poetic forms and concepts to which I taught (although admittedly had a summative activity requiring that they demonstrate understanding of some of these), and otherwise let them go nuts with form and topic matter.

### How is it changing?

Here, I provide a quote, videos and images demonstrating the change from a traditional factory model of education to an inspirational vision espousing 21<sup>st</sup> century learning, the latter of which inquiry is a key part.

### How is it connected to other things?

In the next frame, I provide quotes illustrating connections both in the making meaning and synthesizing information (as well as some of my student group images exploring thinking around poetry and human migration patterns), as well as the idea of individuals making connections with others.

### What are the points of view?

I felt there were two elements in this frame. The first is the notion that educational stakeholders have differing perspectives. The second, which I felt was of greater relevance for the purpose of this presentation, is the need for students to develop the skills to think for themselves, as they must be able to analyze and understand different perspectives in order to function effectively in this world (Schlechty, 2009, p. 16).

### What is our responsibility?

In the following frame, clockwise, I expand the basic key question to, “What is our responsibility to stakeholders, and what responsibility must stakeholders take?”

While I do not provide examples for each stakeholder involved, I do give a quote outlining what schools should be for students’ sake, as well as a video that gives specific examples of the skills we are responsible for helping developing in students as teacher-librarians and teachers.

## How do we know?

The final frame asks a number of questions of the presentees for reflection purposes and adds images as final food for thought. I supply the Inquiry Approach vs. Coverage Approach comparison (Harvey & Daniels, 2009, p. 56), especially to spark discussion amongst us as to where we are as teachers of inquiry. I hope to use the potential of the Identity and Glocal Days in combination with the reflective springboard that is the Inquiry Approach vs. Coverage Approach comparison to develop opportunities and action plans for teacher and school improvement in inquiry techniques.

### **References for both this explanation and the presentation:**

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