

Guided Inquiry Learning in the 21st Century

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Preface

Guided Inquiry has its foundation in my research and writings on the student's perspective of the constructive process of learning from a variety of sources. The development of this program grew from three previously published books. *School Librarian's Grade by Grade Activities Program*, (1981) presented a sequential library skills program to match the developmental stages and specific library and information needs of students at each grade level, kindergarten through eighth grade. *Teaching the Library Research Process* (1985; 2nd ed.1994) provided a program for secondary school students with detailed description of the seven stages of the information search process and practical activities to guide students at each stage. *Seeking Meaning: a Process Approach to Library and Information Services* (1993) presented the theoretical framework for a process approach to library and information services which was developed in a series of studies of the Information Search Process and offers insights into pressing problems of seeking meaning from an overabundance of information. A second edition of that book, published in 2004, incorporated recent studies and ideas including a new chapter on the implementation of a process approach to library and information services in k-12 education.

In January 2006 I officially retired to become professor emerita at the School of Communication, Information and Library Studies at Rutgers University, although I still remain active in The Rutgers Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries (CISSL). During my 20 year tenure at Rutgers my writing on the Information Search Process (ISP) was recognized as one of the most frequently cited models of information seeking behavior in the field of library and information science. Throughout those years I continued as Coordinator of the School Library Specialization in the Masters of Library and Information Science which was ranked by *US News and World Report* in 1999 and 2006 as the number one program of its kind in the country. For a number of years I have been thinking about a culminating endeavor to put together my research on information seeking behavior into a publication for teachers and school librarians. I remain firmly convinced that school libraries are an essential information center in the information age school and that school librarians are primary agents for informing schools for the 21st century.

This would have made an interesting book but another opportunity emerged that made the book even more valuable for addressing the pressing issues facing schools in the 21st century. Two of my daughters, Leslie Maniotes and Ann Caspari, have pursued careers in areas of education and our conversations over the years have broadened the scope of our thinking about teaching and learning.

Leslie Maniotes is a National Board Certified teacher with extensive background in curriculum development and assessment. She is a Reading Recovery certified literacy specialist with a masters' degree in reading. She was trained in New Zealand and has worked as a teacher advancement trainer and university instructor. Her doctoral research, completed in 2005, on the

concept of “third space” shed considerable light on ways of engaging students in learning that is central to Guided Inquiry.

Ann Caspari is a specialist in museum education with a masters’ degree in teaching from George Washington University. As a museum educator she does extensive training workshops with teachers and museum workers to improve learning at museums. She has extensive background as a museum educator at the Newport Historical Society, Paul Revere House, Calvert (MD) Marine Museum, National Building Museum, and the Smithsonian Early Enrichment Center. Her expertise on the use of community resources and object based learning expanded our understanding of the vast range of resources available for learning in 21st century schools.

This book grew out of ongoing conversations between the three of us, usually at our beach house on the Jersey Shore. When the family gathers at the beach we have time for leisurely conversations that often turns to our work, probably too often for the rest of the family. When we realized that inquiry was the dynamic at the center of each of our specializations we began to see the tremendous potential for conceptualizing 21st century schools. As we developed the concept of learning through Guided Inquiry we decided to write this book together.

This book is written for the entire school community as an instructional team joining forces to provide engaging challenging education for students in pre kindergarten through secondary school. It will be of particular interest to:

- educators who want to prepare students for work, citizenship and daily living in an information rich environment;
- educators who want to know more about inquiry as a way of learning and teaming as a way of teaching;
- teachers, school librarians, administrators and supervisors who are initiating an inquiry approach to learning in their school;
- teachers and school librarians who are using a project based approach to teaching, but want to make the projects more meaningful;
- teachers and school librarians who want to implement an inquiry approach to enhance content areas of the curriculum;
- school librarians who want to involve classroom teachers and content area specialists in an inquiry approach to scaffolding information literacy throughout grade levels;
- public librarians and museum educators who want to know about an inquiry approach and their role in working with school staff and students;
- parents who are want to see their children engaged in learning and preparing for 21st century living.

This foundational text on Guided Inquiry is organized in ten chapters. Chapter 1 introduces Guided Inquiry, considering what is it, what’s new about it, and why it is pertinent for addressing the issues facing 21st century schools. Chapter 2 presents the theory and research that is the foundation of Guided Inquiry. Chapter 3 presents new work on motivating students by connecting the curriculum to their world. Chapter 4 discusses ways for taking full advantage of varied expertise within the school and community for building instructional teams for Guided Inquiry. Chapter 5 presents a concept

approach to information literacy that develops and reinforces practical information seeking skills and strategies. Chapter 6 discusses subject area curriculum standards that are best met through Guided Inquiry. Chapter 7 provides interventions for promoting deeper learning through Guided Inquiry. Chapter 8 proposes a wide range of resources for Guided Inquiry from the school library, the Internet, public libraries, museums and the community. Chapter 9 discusses the central role of assessment in Guided Inquiry. Chapter 10 sums up important proposals presented in this book.

Many people have contributed to the ideas and content of this book, far too many to acknowledge here. We want to take this opportunity to expressly thank: The research team at the Center for International Scholarship in School Libraries (CISSL) at Rutgers particularly my wonderful colleague Ross Todd, our research associate Jannica Heinström and the entire CISSL team; Randi and Peter Schmidt and the librarians and teachers at Gill St. Bernard School who have created a systemic model of Guided Inquiry; Bridget Lydon McGrath and her students for the study of third space; Shelby Wolf for her insightful guidance; the teams of librarians and teachers in the New Jersey study of the Impact of School Libraries on Student Learning; Sue Eason and Mary Jane McNally for their insights into early drafts, and John Kuhlthau for his constant support and encouragement.

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