

Shared Inquiry

Learning Goal: Shared inquiry is the act of reasoning together about common texts, questions, and problems. It is a goal of the core curriculum to advance students' abilities to develop and pursue meaningful questions in collaboration with others. Through the habits of shared inquiry students will be able to carefully consider and understand the perspectives and reasoned opinions of others, reconsider their own personal opinion, and develop rhetorical skills.

Learning Outcomes: With increasing proficiency, students will

1. Advance probing questions about a common text or other object of study; and
2. Collaborate in sustained lines of inquiry; and
3. Reexamine judgments in light of evidence and collaborative discussion; and
4. Engage in inclusive, respectful conversation with others.

Rationale (i.e., the intention of the proposed outcomes): The goal of Shared Inquiry is about skills and attitudes, rather than particular knowledge. The first three outcomes are the major skills that we aim for students to learn:

1. Starting with a common text (as in Seminar) or other object of study (as in a science lab), we want students to be able to ask the sorts of deeper and more challenging questions that drive forward discussion and the search for knowledge.
2. Based on those initial questions, we want students to be able to work together in the sustained pursuit of an answer, rather than each student pursuing his/her answer individually.
3. Based on that sustained pursuit of an answer, which will bring to light new evidence and a variety of differing opinions, we want students to learn to reevaluate initial hypotheses, both their own and those of others, with the goal of making more informed judgments at the end of the shared inquiry.

The final outcome is both a skill and an attitude. It is intended to highlight the character of the shared inquiry, one of openness and civility in the critical examination of ideas. Such habits are established by sustained practice and develop as students progress through the curriculum.