

# Environments and Attitudes that support Curiosity & Inquiry

Susan Stacey

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## introduction and background

- Inquiry as an 'umbrella'
- Emergent Curriculum, Reflective Practice, Pedagogical Documentation
- No matter how we name our own practice, if it is play-based, flexible, responsive...then it involves inquiry
- Frameworks?

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## we are born to inquire

- Children want to know how the world works
- How do we respond to this curiosity?
- Protocols for reflecting upon children's actions:
  - The Cycle of Inquiry
  - What, So What, Now What?
  - The Thinking Lens (Carter and Curtis)
  - See, Think, Wonder (Project Zero, Harvard)

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### The original Cycle of Inquiry



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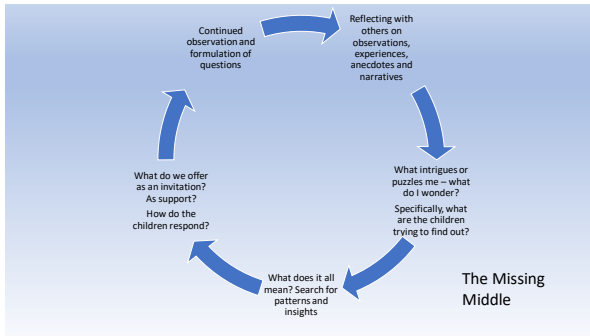
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### Learning to Pause

- Think about when to push forth. Do we know what children are curious about, and why?
- Consider when to wait.
- Think about when to forget about it for a while!

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studio areas as a place of curiosity



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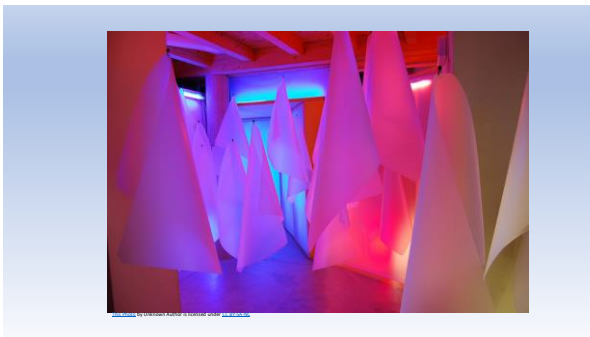
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The natural world in a small corner, addressing how things grow, or not



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The classroom as a workshop for ideas, and to nurture curiosity



• ...and a way to work with frameworks....

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Inquiry is supported by promoting curiosity through....

- Supporting 'risky thinking'
- Making thinking visible & records what we are all curious about
- Supporting teacher growth in the form of asking questions and finding answers
- Nurturing and supporting relationships

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**Studios are:**

Safe places for considered risk-taking

Places of diversity in all forms

Places of Adaptability

Filled with failures, full of success

The meeting place of thinking and doing

**With thanks to**

London  
Bridge Child Care Services  
Inc; London, Ontario



**In the studio:**

We explore our techniques

We form visions and work to achieve them

We define problems and creatively engage to solve them

We learn from conversations

We integrate what we know in news ways with new materials and new goals

We learn by doing, making, iteration, experimentation, and trial and error

We reward initiative, creativity and risk-taking

We see that there are no single, fixed solutions to problems

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No studio? Inquiry anywhere and everywhere...




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Intriguing materials that are provocative

• (infant room, London Bridge, Ont)



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Books that support children's 'finding out about stuff.'



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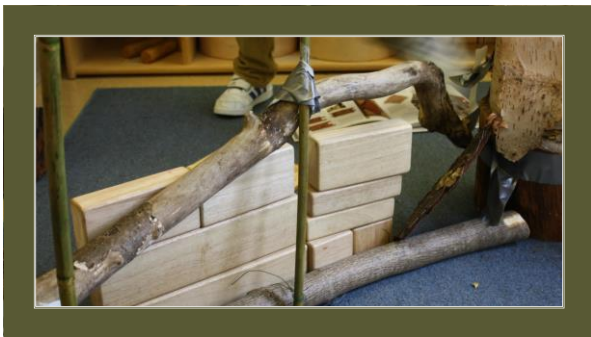
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The children's questions:  
How does our brain  
work? What does it do?



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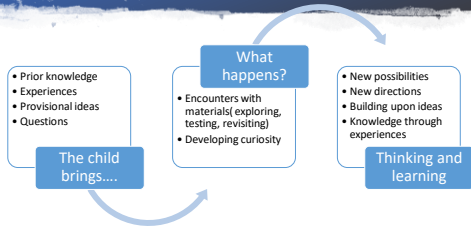
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## Using encounters with materials as a form of inquiry



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Encouraging interesting and alternate forms of expression....



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....leads to interesting theories from children, and questions/ideas for teachers



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Closing thoughts....

- “ We are always amazed, surprised, incomplete. We must constantly update ourselves in response to children’s changes.”
- “We know where we aim to go, but ‘it depends’ how we get there...getting there will change, depending on the variables.”

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Susan’s  
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Books available in U.S. through  
Redleaf Press ([www.redleafpress.org](http://www.redleafpress.org))

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