

# INQUIRY

Inquiry is what people do to move from a condition of doubt, puzzlement, wonder or dissonance to a condition of settlement, understanding, appreciation or harmony. It is a continuous movement: from an unsettled known, through inference to the unknown, through action to a newly settled known. It creates tentative belief or knowledge, and also creates conditions for further inquiry.

The goal of developing environments and materials for inquiry is to create situations that:

reduce doubt, puzzlement, wonder or dissonance by calling into question what is known;

provide resources for inference which stimulate and support suggestions that leap into the unknown;

provide opportunities and tools for acting on the basis of these suggestions in order to test them out;

provide further experiences which can call into question some aspect of the new knowledge so that the spiral of inquiry can continue.

Paul Tatter, Crossroads School, Saint Paul, 1999