

## The Techniques of Personal Enquiry

Learning is both an art and a science and despite a willingness and desire to improve their performance, many learners find the very process of learning difficult both to adopt and to manage. They can be easily distracted by someone or something that is more immediately meaningful to them than the task in hand.

Thus, it has been found to be helpful to reluctant or disengaged learners to take themselves through a structured process of enquiry, action and knowledge construction that builds personally relevant, meaningful and valuable knowledge that is useful to them in their particular situation or environment.

So, what makes this process personally engaging and distinctive?

- The subject matter engages a self-motivated and self-selected interest by focusing on something the learner wants to learn about;
- It harnesses the process of enquiry with the object of personal interest and with established bodies of knowledge;
- It enables the learner to demonstrate their knowledge according to their own assessment and performance criteria;
- It is itself a journey, developing new learning skills and improving *Learning Power* at the same time;
- The focus on assessment focuses attention on both learning outcomes and the learning process;
- As a learning methodology, it requires learner-centred facilitation;
- The use of a 'workbook' or scrap book as a learning journal records insight, understanding and knowledge construction;
- Sharing experiences with others, including difficulties and moments of clarity, validates performance externally.

## Engagement of the Reluctant Learner

A workshop for learning and development executives across a number of international corporates in North America identified a number of principles appropriate to the management of change among workers valued for their commitment and loyalty but unable to break with outdated working practices. Their conclusions have since proved successful in persuading the most reluctant learners to reconsider their lack of flexibility and their intransigence.

- **Authenticity**  
Investigation of an object of genuine interest to the learner, maintaining their curiosity as their learning journeys progressed and it increasingly mattering to them that they should reach a satisfactory outcome to their enquiries;
- **Enquiry**

A live investigation provoked, challenged and fulfilled an individual's desire to answer questions and resolve any problems that emerged giving them greater clarity, confidence and conviction, not just about what they already knew but what they were able to discover;

- **Rigour**

An unwillingness to compromise the value of hard evidence because new knowledge was important to the overall outcome, an outcome that would invoke pride in performance;

- **Identity**

A recognition that the construction of personal knowledge extended the learner's awareness of who they were, and more importantly, who their friends thought they were;

- **Engagement**

Constantly finding that new knowledge added value to the argument and had real relevance to the investigation;

- **Integrity**

The enquiry enabled the development of connected intelligence across the social, cognitive, affective and physical domains of knowing, with newly lived experience providing renewed purpose;

- **Collaboration**

Seeking out an audience and prompting discussion;

- **Flexibility**

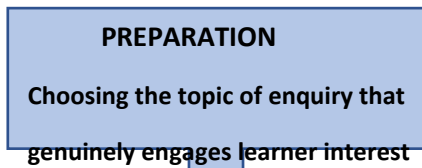
Being prepared to construct argument and counter-argument, choosing when to compromise and when to use received wisdom and factual evidence as illustration;

- **Reflection**

Getting used to being listened to as a recognised contributor, gaining new skills as a listener and acting on new knowledge.

**STAGES OF ENQUIRY**

1. Choosing and deciding



2. Observing and describing

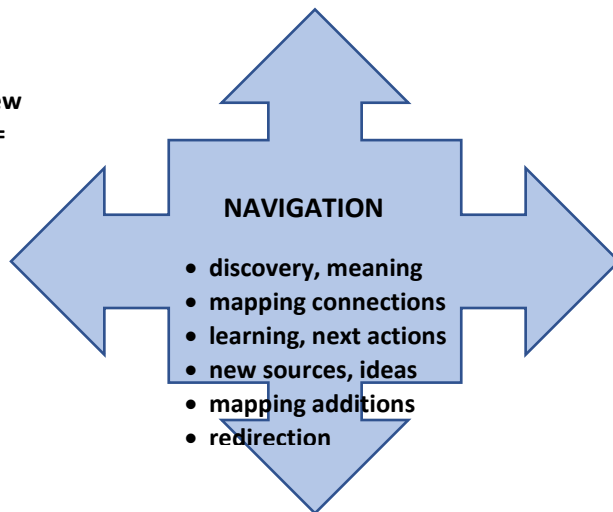
3. Questioning and wondering



4. Uncovering new learning and = re-telling the stories

5. Mapping and Navigating

6. Recording



**7. Incorporation**

**8. Validation**

**9. Reflection**

