

Making Curiosity Part of the Curriculum

Facilitation Guide

What is it?

All students are naturally curious, and schools can provide a variety of opportunities for them to tap into their curiosity by exposing them to new knowledge, information, and skills. Use this video featuring a school that has created time for students to embrace their curiosity as an example of how educators can empower and engage their students by letting them pursue their own distinct interests.

Why use it?

Curiosity is our natural tendency to seek more information to better understand other people and the world around us. It drives us to ask questions like “Why?” and “What if?”—questions that enable us to dig deeper and expand our knowledge and understanding. While curiosity is an innate disposition, it often wanes as we get older and grow into the knowledge and perspectives that we have already acquired. Schools have a critical role to play in fostering students’ curiosity, and by giving students the opportunity to pursue their interests and choose what or how they want to learn, educators can reinforce the value of curiosity and creativity, helping students to see how important it is for their learning and growth. Understanding the value of curiosity is part of becoming a Principled Innovator—of becoming someone who can ask challenging questions and work to design **creative** solutions (**Practice P1**) that will bring about positive change in the world. This video from Edutopia gives a sense of how one school has gone about prioritizing student-driven learning and made it part of their daily curriculum, not only tapping into their students’ curiosity to motivate their learning, but also setting them up with skills that will serve them well in the future.

What you need

- Time: 20 minutes
- Video: <https://www.edutopia.org/video/explorations-making-curiosity-part-curriculum> (4 minutes)
- Small group or class



Instructions

Step 1: Prepare

Watch the video and prepare prompts for the discussion.

Step 2: Situate

Situate the viewing by explaining that the video spotlights the way that one school based in San Diego, California, incorporates student curiosity into the daily curriculum. Provide participants with the following definition of curiosity from the Principled Innovation framework:

“Curiosity is the inclination to ask challenging questions of ourselves and others to better understand the world around us in order to make a positive change.”

Step 3: Present

Present the video to the participants or have them watch it on their own.

Step 4: Discuss

Discuss what the school in the video does to engage the natural curiosity and interests of students. Consider using the following questions:

1. What did you find particularly interesting about this video and the school it features?
2. What concrete steps does this school take to encourage students' curiosity?
3. How is the process they use different from simply offering students a set of choices or electives?
4. Why do you think more schools don't do this kind of activity? What might be some obstacles to starting an “explorations” style period in a school, and how might you overcome those obstacles?
5. Based on the example of this school, what do you think might be a connection between curiosity and innovation?