

Mini Inquiry Cycle

You can try an inquiry project for a month, a semester, or a year. Try it alone, with a partner teacher, or with your department, and see how you feel. Here are some guidelines for using inquiry.

1. Brainstorm a list of questions. They should be open ended and could start with *What* or *How*. For example: How can I get my students to love reading? What gets my students interested in polynomials? How can I help cultivate a school environment where a student can feel comfortable on a social and emotional level, while lowering the affective filter that he or she experiences in the classroom? How can I increase verbal participation of girls during whole-class discussions of literature?
2. Create a plan. Try different things in the classroom. Do things you've never done before that might offer insight into your question. Ask colleagues for their ideas. Consult other resources—books, articles, and experts.
3. Implement that plan. Do these things. Pay close attention to what happens.
4. Collect data. Take notes on the results of what you try and what you hear and notice in your students. Survey your students. Look at their work.
5. Adjust your plan. Let the data direct you to actions that could help you continue to answer your question.

That's pretty much it. If you are intrigued and want to go deeper into inquiry, you can find resources in Appendix F in *Onward*, "Resources for Further Learning."

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