

Innovations in Thinking and Learning

Elaine Heaver – Students Reflect on Inquiry-Based Learning

STUDENT: I think there was a change because from the year before last year, it was kind of just we were given information and facts, and then we studied about it. And then we were given a couple worksheets. And to finish off the unit we had either a test or a project. But I really liked inquiry-based learning a lot better because we dug really deep -- instead of just smoothing out the surface, we dug really deep into one part of the unit, and we learned a lot about that. As well as everything else.

STUDENT: The way we did it was really fun. Like, the -- how we could, like, search up -- like, find the answers to, like, our own questions. And how we did, like, all our projects and stuff. Like the model. I really like the model. Like, where we built a model of a -- of what we wanted our colony to look like. Like, we built a little miniature colony and we did a tour, kind of. Like, where we would do a video, and we would record audio. And, like, we'd basically be saying, like, "And on your left is the -- all the habitats where the people live," and stuff. So that was really cool.

STUDENT: We did a lot of our own research. And it taught us how -- our teacher taught us how to know if it's a reliable source or not. So it'd help me in the future. It's going to help me in the future because now I kind of have a feel for what is a reliable source, what is an unreliable source.

STUDENT: The Knowledge Forum was -- it was a website where you ask big questions, and everyone could add on. It was like a causal model on the internet. And there were lots of different questions. "How did the universe start?" You could add your opinions about that. How planets are formed, how -- your opinion on those kinds of things. And what comets are. It was definitely -- it was a really fun thing to do. I think because it was on the internet it got lots of kids who aren't really having fun with writing to go on and definitely participate more than they would if it was just a writing assignment.

STUDENT: That was probably my favorite thing to do because you got to connect your ideas with other people.

STUDENT: Knowledge Forum helped me with my learning because we -- so with everyone together -- it was our class, our teacher, even our principal, and parents and brothers and sisters -- we were all on Knowledge Forum.

STUDENT: Anyone from anyone's family was allowed to be on it. And you could contribute questions. So there'd be a question in the middle, and everyone could

contribute questions or ideas or answers to it. And then you could keep going on asking questions or answers.

STUDENT: Lots of people were finding ways to say, "Yes, this could have happened," or disprove it. And that's how it challenged me of, like, thinking about, "Is that one possible? Is that possible?" "Why would it be possible? Why would it not be possible?"

STUDENT: And as we thought of big questions -- main big questions -- we added it as a slide to Knowledge Forum. And so we all came together and, like, we all, like, went on the website. And we thought, like -- the main question brought answers, but that also brought questions from the answers.

STUDENT: There were lots and lots of people adding and disproving different ideas. And it was definitely building my knowledge and lots of other people's.

My parents thought it was a really good idea. They definitely wanted me to participate more and encouraged me to go on the website more often.

STUDENT: Even though it was a science unit, we did touch base on math and literacy, actually. We did causal models.

STUDENT: We did math and everything. We did geometry --

STUDENT: And the squared centimetres of the base and how big it would be. And then we actually designed it with materials.

STUDENT: And we had to figure out what the exact size was for the water, and how much water we were bringing. And how much -- like, one litre was an ounce. And we figured out -- No, one litre was a kilogram. And we just figured out millilitre were an ounce. And it all worked out really well for -- it helped, I think, with basically every subject.

STUDENT: When we had the astronomer visit our class, it definitely generated some interesting questions for us to continue on in our knowledge building.

STUDENT: We were also solving, like, problems that they had in the real world. It wasn't just to, like -- just for fun. Just to do it, like, just to -- yeah, for fun. We were just, like, solving problems that scientists were trying to figure out as well. Because they're actually doing this Mars mission, and it's going to launch -- like, the first people are

going to launch in eight or nine years, I think, now. And then two years later they're going to send a few more. And another few two years after that.

STUDENT: It's a really fun experience to do. And it's, like, exciting to come to school every day to experience, like, all the questions that people have, and all their ideas.

STUDENT: I think learning should be fun. And that was definitely a really fun thing to do.