

DOCUMENTATION — COMMUNICATION — ACTION: CO-INQUIRY MEETINGS FOR FACILITATED INTERCHANGE

SUMMARY

Collaborative inquiry (co-inquiry) meetings facilitate professional interchange for the purpose of making change. A practical way for educators to collaborate and learn from one another using documentation, co-inquiry heightens the focus on children's development and learning, promotes interaction, enhances communicative literacy and creates a culture of professional development.

The co-inquiry meeting is held weekly in a comfortable setting and lasts about two hours. Only one or two presentations are made. An individual within the group may act as the facilitator. The format for the co-inquiry meeting includes three stages: documentation, communication and action:

Documentation

1. A participant begins the co-inquiry by presenting documentation of a classroom experience to the group. The presentation should consider a problem, an observation or a situation of interest rather than a specific project or learning activity.

Communication

2. Each participant takes a turn to describe an aspect of the experience that was interesting, important or provocative.
3. Each participant takes a turn to ask a question concerning the implications of the experience for understanding teaching or learning (questions are not necessarily answered at this time and may require additional reading or classroom research).

Action

4. Participants move to open dialogue and brainstorming on how the experience could continue to be developed.
5. Based on the comments, questions and ideas, the presenter creates a “plan of possibility” that might be explored with the children in the coming week.
6. Documentation of these new experiences becomes the basis for future inquiry meetings and the continuation of the process.

To summarize, after the presentation of documentation (Stage I), communication proceeds in a circular fashion (Stage II). Each participant has a chance to comment, ask for clarification or raise a question (or pass) in the order of seating. In the action discussion, participants freely brainstorm their ideas and collaborate on planning with the presenter (Part III).

Alternatives to on-site co-inquiry include meetings before or after work and electronic interchange such as the Co-Inquiry Blog.

Abramson, S. (Spring, 2006). DOCUMENTATION — COMMUNICATION—ACTION: Co-inquiry meetings for facilitated interchange (Summary). *Co-Inquiry Journal*, 1(1), 3-4.

© All rights reserved. This publication is protected by copyright and permission should be obtained from the author prior to any prohibited reproduction, storage in a retrieval system, or transmission in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or likewise. The author can be contacted at:

shareena@coinquiry.org