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Integrating Inquiry-Based Learning to Promote Meaning and Relevance Successfully in the Classroom

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Abstract: Humans are naturally curious and will take actions to understand the unknown. These actions are a part of a complex system considered to be an inquiry model of the learning process. The inquiry model is something that educators, students, and even all of society use recurrently. Inquiry learning is a form of process-learning where students develop and utilize their critical thinking skills in order to answer important questions. In my research, I discuss how inquiry-based learning improves the overall learning experience for students specifically with incorporating relevance and meaning within the process. The data was collected through literature research, classroom observations, and the implementation of inquiry-based learning strategies in the classroom. The first observation made based on the data collected was that the learning process is a dynamic system that involves the phenomena of relationships the learner has with its environment (whether it be with teachers, peers, parents, etc) and their prior knowledge. The second observation made was that scaffolding (whether it be hard scaffolding, peer scaffolding, etc.) throughout the Inquiry-based learning process is a necessary component to the attainment of knowledge. The third observation made was that pattern connections/identification and sequenced learning is an important facet to effectively use Inquiry-based learning strategies in the classroom. The last observation made was that inquiry-based learning is a style of learning that can be differentiated and utilized across all content areas. In all learning scenarios and interactions, students play an important role in the learning process. Students are agents to their own learning experience and contribute to the process of learning greatly when relevance and meaning are present. Inquiry-based learning is a learning strategy that can not only support students across all content areas, but it is an efficient strategy that incorporates relevance and meaning in the classroom.