Sparking Inquiry in Humanities
Hello!

I’m Kate Jackson, 7th grade ELAR, Hays Middle School
Starting year 8 in middle school education and 4th year in Prosper.
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1. Why?
2. What Does it Look Like?
3. PBL sparks
4. Day-to-day management tips
5. Closing

Questions/Ideas: https://padlet.com/kejackson1/sparkinginquiry
Why?
WHAT DO YOU WANT KIDS TO DO WITH TECHNOLOGY?

WRONG ANSWERS

• Make Prezis
• Start Blogs
• Create Wordles
• Publish Animoto
• Design Flipcharts
• Produce Videos
• Post to Edmodo
• Use Whiteboard
• Develop Apps

RIGHT ANSWERS

• Raise Awareness
• Start Conversations
• Find Answers (to their questions)
• Join Partners
• Change Minds
• Make a Difference
• Take Action
• Drive Change

Technology is a tool, not a learning outcome.
Student Autonomy

★ Student-centered learning is key!
★ “Having choices allows children through young adults feel empowered that they have control or ownership over their own learning.
★ This, in turn, helps them develop a sense of responsibility and self-motivation.”

-Barbara McCombs, PhD

https://www.apa.org/education/k12/learners
Learning how to learn

65% of tomorrow’s workers will have jobs that don’t exist today.

Which one is the most meaningful, productive struggle?

1
2
3

Choice

★ Students work hard when they get to choose = ENGAGEMENT
★ Built in differentiation and scaffolding.
★ Appropriate challenges
★ Combats apathy
★ Intrinsic motivation
★ **Social-emotional learning** increases
What Does Inquiry Look Like
In a digital classroom?
Types of Student Inquiry

By: @trev_mackenzie

Structured Inquiry
Students follow the lead of the teacher as the entire class engages in one inquiry together.

Controlled Inquiry
Teacher chooses topics and identifies the resources students will use to answer questions.

Guided Inquiry
Teacher chooses topics/questions and students design a product or solution.

Free Inquiry
Students choose their topics without reference to any prescribed outline.


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Structured Inquiry Examples:

- Students think about / investigate the essential question throughout the unit and teacher controls the learning activities along the way.
- You ask: “What is a complex sentence,” and you all answer the question together with your lessons.
  - Tech tools: Screencastify/Video your lessons, Teacher uses Google Docs - Explore feature, and whole-class, structured Hyperdocs.

**Controlled Inquiry Examples:**

- Teacher asks a question and gives the students the same resources to explore.
- Ask a question: “What was going on in the 1950s,” then giving them a list of sources to explore.
- Key features - students can work at their own pace, teacher makes sure the content is readable and accessible.
  - Tech tools: [Symbaloo](https://www.symbaloo.com), [Student-paced Hyperdoc](https://www.edpuzzle.com), or teacher-curated [Youtube Playlist](https://www.youtube.com), [EdPuzzle with questions](https://www.edpuzzle.com) or [Site](https://www.edpuzzle.com).
**Guided Inquiry Examples:**

- Teacher asks questions and students find their answers/design something to show their learning
- Ask a question: “What defines humanity,” and then allowing students to investigate the questions on their own. They also design something to show their learning (more choice)
- Key features - students have autonomy, students are engaged in their own questions, productive “rabbit holes”
Free Inquiry Examples:

- Teacher allows students to choose the questions, the topic, the learning path, and the product.
- Example: genius hour, passion project, or 20% time
- Key features - the ultimate student choice activity. This can be a bit of a free-for-all if you aren’t careful.
  - Tech tools: Anything you can think of!

# Vetted Tech Tools I Use...

## Secondary Tools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Infographics</th>
<th>Videos</th>
<th>Presentations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Drawings</td>
<td>Web/Video</td>
<td>Google Slides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Piktochart</td>
<td>ScreenCastify</td>
<td>Google Sites</td>
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<td>Canva</td>
<td>Adobe Spark</td>
<td>BlendSpace</td>
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<td>Adobe Spark</td>
<td>PlayPosit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Voice Recorder</td>
<td>Voice Recorder</td>
<td>Flippin</td>
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## Elementary Tools

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comic/Story</th>
<th>Podcasting</th>
<th>Timelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Google Drawings</td>
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<tr>
<th>Mind Maps and Images</th>
<th>Journaling and Discussion</th>
<th>Virtual Maps/Tours</th>
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<td>Google Drawings</td>
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<tr>
<td>MindMap</td>
<td>Book Creator</td>
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<td>Sketchpad</td>
<td>Flippin</td>
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PBL = Mostly Guided Inquiry

1. I pose a question / we come up with a few base questions based on reading or concept
2. Students research and find answers on their own based on their background knowledge and interests
   a. I allow them to go down the “focused” rabbit holes if they are still investigating the original idea
3. Students explore alternate ideas or opposing ideas
4. They choose how to present the material
Utopian Society - Example

1. Teacher: “How can we be a more peaceful society?”
2. Students: answer and find evidence for each answer. They have to justify each answer to the question and explain their thought processes.
3. Students explore alternate ideas or opposing ideas with group members. They TRY to poke holes in each other’s answers.
4. They then go back to research to solve it / prove them wrong
5. They choose how to present the material
   a. I usually give them suggestions of technology tools to try, but give them choice.
PBL Sparks
Current Events: Podcast

Students choose current events to research: 1 local, 1 state, 1 US, and 1 global.
★ Students choose stories and write it on the current events graffiti wall then adding to it with hashtags as they research
★ Take a VR tour of some of the places your students choose
★ Research and take notes
★ Get another group’s perspective / opposing ideas
★ Record a podcast to discuss the stories in depth! (Screencastify, WeVideo, Flipgrid, GarageBand, etc.)

Winning podcast can go on the announcements.

Student research document
“Interview” past/present unsung heroes and create a class book with interactive material for the local library. Include QR codes to digital content!

- Create several multigenre writing pieces per interviewee.
- Examples: art piece, rap song, metaphor poem, personal profile or news article, diary, biography, recipe for success, personal narrative, expository essay, etc. based on that person’s story or life. (Choose 4 of above?)
- Record the interviews with phone, take notes on collaborative Doc and send to subject to verify
- use tools like Canva.com to create visually-pleasing layouts
- Create a video “commercial” or “Spotlight” feature using WeVideo
Design a multimedia museum exhibit with app smashing (Slides, Docs-Explore, Canva, Screencastify, etc.)

Students unpack and critique the practice of dividing societies into “civilized” and “primitive.”

Student teams each select and research an ancient society and gather artifacts to present as part of their exhibit.

Teams choose a theme and title for the exhibit and consider how to present the complexity of the society they are studying.
How can I survive middle school without losing myself?: Survival Guide

- Read literary texts about the transition to middle school.
- Research informational text about adolescent psychology and neurodiversity.
- Students create Google Form - conduct surveys of peers and parents.
- Create a video/ commercial for school // diary // advice column // brochure.
Why did civilizations fall from their Golden Ages, and what lessons can we learn from what happened?

Students choose a particular civilization (Ancient Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece, Rome; the Tang Dynasty in China; the African empires of Ghana, Mali, and Songhai; the Maya, Inca, and Aztecs; the Gupta Empire in India, etc.). They conduct research on their civilization’s golden age and why it declined or ended, then they communicate their learning to the public in the form of an argument: should that civilization have fallen? Do all civilizations fall? What can we learn?

Choice of presentation method for argument! Debate, PSA, Rap, etc.
Ocean Awareness Contest

Kate Jackson @mrsjacksonelar · May 3
I love these kids! This is a partner group’s climate change parody poem as a response to their research! ‘Everyone wanted to sing it’ #nctevillage #prosper4ward #PISDRise

Kate Jackson @mrsjacksonelar · Apr 11
My #PISDRISE Ss were OUTRAGED that people don’t care enough about our oceans/earth. A student wrote an email to Epic Games persuading them to put an ad in a Fortnite map to advocate for “clean earth strategies”! I didn’t even ask them to write anything yet! #transformprosper

Create a piece about a coastal/marine species, place, or system that will be threatened, altered, or lost due to climate change.
### Products

**Art Work**
Choose at least one:
- Painting
- Drawing
- Printmaking
- Digital art
- Sculpture
- Photography
- Collage

**Poetic**
Free verse or rhyming poem acceptable.
Must contain an extended metaphor.
**Plus:**
Video yourself reading your poem: 2-3 minutes

**Prose**
Choose at least one:
- Fiction (creative)
- Nonfiction (descriptive)
- Analytical essay(s)
- Political advocacy
- Opinion article(s)
- Newspaper

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Create a piece about a coastal/marine species, place, or system that will be threatened, altered, or lost due to climate change.
Day-to-day Management
If you choose to do PBL in groups, have each group create a contract that lists 3-5 rules for behavior or norms and consequences. They all sign and you just help facilitate. The last consequence is that the person gets kicked out of the group and has to start over.

(This never happened over the course of 10 PBL units in an on-level class at the end of the day)
In a typical PBL classroom, students conduct research and work while teacher runs workshops. Students also complete “DIYs.”

I, personally, felt more effective facilitating discussion and doing more walk-throughs every day posing high-level questions.
Classroom Management

I have WAY fewer discipline issues in PBL structure / Guided Inquiry mode because students are allowed to follow the rabbit holes and investigate their own ideas.
Closing Thoughts:

★ Don’t give your students the answers!
★ Let them struggle productively.
★ Don’t forget **structure**.
★ Take the pieces that work for you and modify them.
★ Always have something for them to do. Don’t make it more “stuff” make it **more engaging** and give them **more choice**.
★ Always ask, does this answer the question to the most depth and complexity it could possibly have?
Thanks!

ANY QUESTIONS?

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