Overview of the Guided Inquiry Process

Open

This is where the teacher (or students) indicate the direction for the research. The aim of this step is to motivate and engage students in the process and topic. Consider the type of research task that you would like your students to complete and develop the task statement and research questions if you intend to provide them or guidance if students are developing their own.

Activity suggestions
- Have a hook to get students attention
- Presentation of general topic area
- Visual introduction to topic
- Individual, small group or class mind map activity to ascertain prior knowledge
- Class discussion about the topic area based on key questions teacher/TL devise

Immerse

Consider how you can engage students broadly with the topic area. This may be a group or class activity and is a time for students to identify what they already know about the topic, build background knowledge and identify ideas they would like to explore further.

Activity suggestions
- Group/class discussion
- Mind map activity (individual or in groups)
- Worksheet asking key questions
Explore

The aim of this stage is exploring a variety of ideas related to the topic. Students build their general understanding of the topic prior to focusing their research. Browsing and scanning a range of resources and reading when they find ideas that interest them. At this point in the research process students may feel overwhelmed and confused by the varied ideas presented to them and the guidance provided by the teacher and TL can help students to develop meaningful questions.

Activity suggestions
- Book some library lessons
- Revise resource types and how to search for information
  - Primary sources
  - Secondary sources
  - Source type (print, digital, articles, books, websites, audio visual, etc.)
- Revise browsing, scanning and skimming techniques
- Inquiry journal where sources are referenced and ideas and questions are written down.
- Use inquiry log to track resources (attached to Guided Inquiry Research Process handout) and reference using the appropriate guidelines book located in the library.
- Students may share ideas found in the explore phase with pair and share or small groups to build the foundation knowledge on the topic.

Identify

In this stage of the process students focus their research by developing an inquiry question based on their exploration work. Students need to sort through the information and ideas they have gathered to create a question or questions that will be the basis for the rest of the research task.

Activity suggestions:
- Model question construction.
- Encourage students to revise questions and ideas in their inquiry journal to identify a focus area.
- Provide a sheet to scaffold question development that includes questions surrounding:
  - Interests within topic.
  - Learning goal identification.
  - Amount of information available on topic.
  - Time allowance for research assignment.
Gather

The inquiry question devised in identify will determine the information students gather. At this point of the research task students should have a narrow focus to their information gathering. Students need to explore a wide variety of sources and formats.

Activity suggestions:
- Book some library lessons
- Effective note making strategies (template attached to Guided Inquiry Research Process worksheet and many online options).
- Referencing using the senior or junior guidelines booklet.

Create

Students communicate their knowledge about their inquiry question. At this stage students need to synthesise their ideas. Students need to determine the best way to present their ideas in a meaningful and interesting way.

Activity suggestions:
- Categorise research drawing similarities and differences in ideas using mind map.
- Review inquiry log and journal to guide final product and synthesise ideas.

Share:

Students share the product they have created and what they have learnt with other students and maybe a wider audience. The product created may influence how students share their knowledge with others.

Activity suggestions:
- Introduce/revise with students key elements of presentations and leading a class discussion
- Developing discussion questions (guiding questions on Guided Inquiry Research Process sheet)
- Ideas for sharing knowledge:
  - A whole class discussion
  - Small group discussions
  - Web 2.0 tools to share with a wider audience
Evaluate

Students reflect on their learning continually throughout the Guided Inquiry Process. At the end of the process students do a reflection for self-assessment regarding content learning and the research process used. Ideally students will reflect on their learning soon after they share their knowledge. There is an evaluation sheet in the Guided Inquiry Research Process handout that can be modified to suit the focus of your research.

Teacher Evaluation:

It is also important for teachers to evaluate the research task.

Consider the following questions:

1. Was the final product produced by students of a high quality and what I expected?

2. What would I change if I used this task again?

3. What aspects of the task worked well?

4. Did the task provide for a range of student abilities, allowing able students to be challenged while allowing all students a sense of achievement?

5. Did the students enjoy the task and did the task promote effective learning?