

ENQUIRY BASED LEARNING

Enquiry Based Learning (EBL) champions curiosity and encourages students to not only ask questions, but to ask robust, considered and well researched questions and share their findings with peers.

Four-level enquiry continuum

Banchi and Bell (2008) developed a four-level enquiry continuum that details the different levels of enquiry-based activity. The framework can help you design EBL activities that develop students' enquiry skills over the course of a programme.

01 Confirmation

Guided and structured; students are provided with the enquiry and given an approach on how to answer it.

02 Structured

This asks students to demonstrate understanding of the enquiry process.

03 Guided

Students are only provided with the initial question; they need to design their own way of answering.

04 Open

Students decide on their own question and approach, drawing their own conclusions.

Phases of enquiry

Regardless of the level of the enquiry task, there are some commonalities that students will experience, whether these be pre-determined or self-designed. Pedaste et al. (2015) identify these as the phases of enquiry. Students should be supported at each stage.

Orientation

The start of the enquiry journey and involves the introduction of a topic.

Concept Utilization

Helps formulate the enquiry and may include generating a hypothesis.

Finding Solutions

This is the investigation stage, and it will lead to asking further questions.

Draw Conclusions

Highlights relationships between findings and fosters further discussion.

Challenges to Designing EBL:

Developing students' confidence so that they are able ask questions is very important and can be quite challenging for large cohorts.

You need to have confidence to trust the students to take control of their own learning.



Getting Lost

students could end up headed in the wrong direction, particularly with an open enquiry approach. This is why support is key.