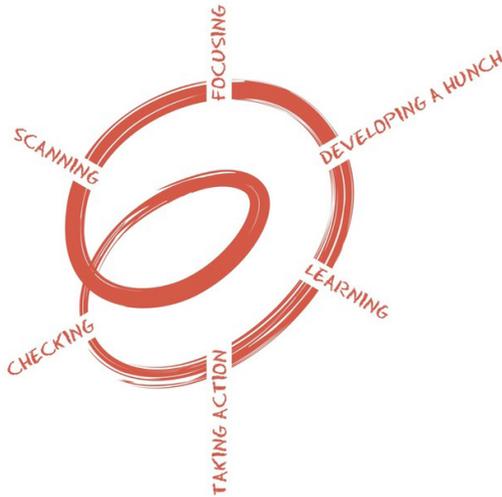


Whole
Education

Spirals of Enquiry



Narrowing the gap in a sustainable way

“This is the only project we’re doing which really starts with what the children say, do and need”

- Headteacher, Primary School

About the Whole Education Network

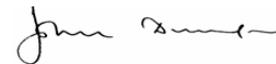
Whole Education is a dynamic partnership of schools and organisations committed to redefining today’s educational offering. We believe that all children deserve an engaging and rounded education that supports academic achievement, but also develops the skills, knowledge and qualities needed to flourish in life, learning and work.

As a national network, Whole Education: facilitates shared-learning and collaboration between innovative schools; exposes teachers to world-class thinking and approaches; and supports effective professional development, enabling its member schools to move beyond delivering the national curriculum to building a stronger foundation for learning – a ‘whole education’.

Our Mission:

- + To help children and young people to develop a range of skills, qualities and knowledge they will need to succeed and thrive in life, learning and work
- + To help make learning more relevant and engaging, with young people taking ownership of their own learning
- + To support learning across various settings (online, outside, at home, through volunteering and work) while engaging the wider community

As a truly school-led network, all of our initiatives are shaped, developed, and in many cases, delivered by our members.



Sir John Dunford

Chair, Whole Education



Introduction and rationale

Narrowing the gap is one of the most pressing issues facing schools today. Despite considerable investment via the Pupil Premium and a ramping up of system incentives, achievement gaps in many schools remain stubbornly wide.

This programme addresses the issue by supporting small school teams to engage in collaborative enquiry, using the Spirals of Enquiry model. Designed by Dr. Judy Halbert and Dr. Linda Kaser, and originating out of British Columbia in Canada, Spirals was identified by Whole Education schools as having potential to address this problem because:

- + it has been shown to lead to **sustained improvements in student outcomes** when used over time, in particular for groups who have historically underachieved
- + it is based on gaining a deep understanding of learners' experiences of school and their learning processes and using these insights as the basis for **evidence-informed action**
- + it is **tried and tested**; 70% of BC schools use Spirals, many for over a decade, and the approach is also being used in New Zealand, Australia and South Africa
- + it is underpinned by **high quality research** on effective professional learning and the OECD 7 principles of student learning



Why should we engage with Spirals of Enquiry?

As a school:

- + Help narrow the gap through sustainable strategies
- + Stimulate and/or further develop a culture of professional enquiry
- + Develop leadership and change capabilities in staff at all levels
- + Engage with international, evidence-based research
- + Learn with and from a growing national and international network of colleagues using Spirals
- + Opportunities for staff to be trained as Spirals coaches and support others across the country and within local groups

As a Teaching School Alliance or Multi-Academy Trust:

- + Strengthen between-school networks through regional and national Spirals events
- + Opportunities for staff to be trained as Spirals coaches to support others and scale approach within TSA or MAT
- + Be supported in research and development remit

“As a result of the Spirals project, my staff have moved on in their thinking so much and have shared discussions with schools from all over the country.”

- Headteacher, Primary School





The Spirals of Enquiry model

The Spiral starts with a 'scanning' phase where deep insights are uncovered which can then guide future action. Teachers interview students using four key questions about their learning and experience of school. The questions are based on seven principles distilled from research from the OECD about what makes effective learning.

Four Spirals of Enquiry scanning questions:

- 1 Can you name two people in this school/setting who believe you can be a success in life?
- 2 What is the purpose of what you are learning and why is it important?
- 3 How are you doing with your learning?
- 4 Where are you going next with your learning?

OECD 7 Principles of what is needed for effective learning:

- 1 Learners at the Centre
- 2 The Social Nature of Learning
- 3 Emotions are Integral to Learning
- 4 Recognising Individual Differences
- 5 Stretching All Students
- 6 Assessment for Learning
- 8 Building Horizontal Connections

"The value of questioning children is just unbelievable"

- Teacher, Primary School



The Spirals of Enquiry model

Following 'scanning' there are five more stages which lead to evidence-informed action.

1. Scanning

Asking carefully crafted questions of learners that help us to understand their perspectives on how and what they are learning.

2. Focusing

Exploring the issues raised by learners to identify priority areas for further enquiry.

3. Developing a hunch

Exposing the beliefs and practices that have a bearing on this issue: what am I doing that's contributing positively and negatively?

6. Checking

Making sure we had the impact we expected. Have we made the difference we hoped for? If not, why not? What else do we need to do?

5. Taking action

Applying new learning and practice with a clear sense of the impact we expect to have for learners as we do so.

4. New professional learning

Seeking out fresh ideas and developing new practice by engaging with colleagues, other schools and with research evidence.





What support is available?

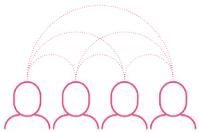
The programme runs over the course of a year, and is supported by 3 face-to-face events, coaching calls and webinars.



Launch event



Coaching call or webinar



Midway event



Coaching call or webinar



Celebration and impact



Following completion of the first year, schools are invited to join events in subsequent years, either as a refresher or to engage new staff.



What has the impact been so far?

A pilot project took 12 schools through the Spirals process over an 8 month period. Schools reported impact including:

Impact for pupils

- + improved progress in reading, with 75% of target group making Outstanding progress (6 APS)
- + increased attendance in extra-curricular activities
- + greater ability to self and peer-assess
- + more accommodation of challenge
- + deeper engagement and attendance at year 9 options process

“The kids feel a lot of time has been invested in them from the enquiry. They feel a lot more empowered”

- Assistant Head, Secondary School

“Particularly for the vulnerable children, the way they talk about their learning and their aspirations for themselves is so different. There’s been clear evidence that what is happening is working.”

- Teacher, Primary School

Impact for leadership and professional learning

- + more purposeful collaboration
- + increased reading and use of research
- + increased engagement in and motivation for professional learning

“Staff are asking about it”

- Secondary team

“The Spirals process has informed beliefs to make a shift in our thinking and practice”

- Primary senior leader



Case study | Primary School

Scanning

The four questions were asked of a group of Year 4 and 5 PP-eligible boys. Results showed that these children could only see limited relevance of what they were learning and weren't clear on how to improve. The team checked this with some high-achieving girls, which revealed that they thought learning was important to pass tests and that quality work meant neat work.

Focusing

This opened up a number of lines of enquiry, but the team decided to focus their energy on developing formative assessment practices.

Developing a Hunch

While teachers were sharing learning objectives frequently, this wasn't having the desired impact. The team had the hunch that teacher talk is focused on the task rather than the learning, that learning itself isn't celebrated enough as good in itself, and that a language of learning isn't shared across the school.

New Professional Learning

The team read Ron Berger's book 'Leaders of their own Learning' and discussed how peer-critique, use of assessment data and the notion of quality work could support formative assessment practices.

Taking Action

A number of formative assessment practices were introduced: the team decided to stop filing away children's tests and instead use them as a learning tool; a 'critique gallery' was trialled in Year 5; the idea of 'quality work' was explored with students as a basis for children providing peer feedback.

Checking

The team re-scanned the same children at the end of the year and found that they could speak with greater clarity and understanding about their next steps. They want to proceed by asking the questions of all children in the school and exploring new lines of enquiry.



Case study 2 | Primary School

Scanning

The team asked the four questions of 20 pupils across the school, including a range of abilities, ages and boys and girls. They found that some of the children didn't enjoy reading, rarely read at home for pleasure and associated reading with tests. This aligned with an attainment gap for these children.

Focusing

The team decided to focus on how they could develop a genuine love of reading and encourage reading at home to improve reading outcomes.

Developing a Hunch

The team wondered whether they had provided enough high-quality reading resources for the students and if they were sufficiently inspiring the children about the joy of reading.

New Professional Learning

The team explored reading for pleasure strategies by visiting other schools in the network.

Taking Action

The team purchased 'bug club', an online, personalised reading library which engages students and assesses progress and updates the teacher, and trialled it with a group of students. They also created a programme of author visits and peer reading buddies.

Checking

Planners show that students are reading more at home, and further conversation shows they enjoy and are engaged in their reading. Communication with parents has also improved. 100% of the target group are predicted to make Good Progress (5APS) and 75% of our target group are predicted to make Outstanding Progress (6+APS).

"I favour this [professional learning] over any other thing we've done in school."

- Teacher, Primary School



Case study 3 | Secondary School

Scanning

Scanning revealed that year 9 PP-eligible students were engaged in learning but weren't clear on where they were going after school other than a 'job' and students felt there was a lack of support around careers information and guidance.

Focusing

The team thought they would have most impact by focusing on improving the year 9 options process for these students so that students are equipped for their ambitions beyond school.

Developing a Hunch

While the school offers a large number of optional careers information opportunities, the PP-eligible students are not attending. Staff have a 'take it or leave it' approach and there is little personalisation.

New Professional Learning

The team researched how other schools systematically approached engaging students in wider conversations about careers and settled on the importance of involving parents or other support networks chosen by the student.

Taking Action

Each student in the target group was given some questions to think about before the Christmas break, and then 20-30 minute meetings were held between the student, parent or carer, the class teacher and a member of SLT which focussed on future aspirations and the steps needed to realise these goals. Importantly, the student led the conversation and all participants were bought into the process.

Checking

The team saw a marked increase in engagement in the options process among the target group, with students becoming active participants. Staff have become proactive rather than reactive and see the importance of getting the options process right. In the longer term, the team will be tracking the retention rate of this group from programmes of study.



The programme facilitators



Drs. Linda Kaser and Judy Halbert

Linda and Judy co-lead the Network of Inquiry and Innovation in British Columbia. They have served as principals, district leaders and policy advisors with the Ministry of Education. They're Canadian representatives on an OECD international research programme. They are also the authors of Leadership Mindsets (2009) and, most recently, Spirals of Inquiry for Equity and Quality (2013). They have worked intensively with leadership groups in BC as well as in Wales, Australia, New Zealand and England. They are deeply committed to achieving equity and quality for all learners – and to networking for innovation and improvement, both at home in BC and abroad.



Julie Temperley

Julie has designed and led research, learning strategies and evaluation as part of system change in education, health, arts and culture, early years, work programmes and in local authorities. Previous and current clients include government departments, local authorities, social enterprises, private companies, foundations and schools. Julie also works in a number of international programmes for overseas governments and institutions. Julie is a Senior Associate of Innovation Unit, and Director of her own research company Temperley Research.

The facilitators are supported by in-school coaches:

Gill Lamb

Deputy Headteacher at Northfields School, Stockton on Tees

Carmella Reece

Acting Headteacher at All Saints CE Junior School, Fleet

Candyce Rumbles

Teaching and Learning Coach at Hampton Vale Primary School, Peterborough



Get involved

People

The minimum enquiry team comprises a teacher and a middle or senior leader, but more can join the team if there is the capacity in school. Most teams also engage further staff back in school.

Cost

Whole Education Schools | £900 + VAT

Non-members | £1800 + VAT

Groups of schools receive discounts - more information available on request.

Booking or further information

For further information, or to book a place, please contact Rosie Palmer on rosie@wholeeducation.org / 020 7250 8053

“When you strip it back and say, ‘go and ask the kids about what they think’, and then that tells you where to go next, that’s pretty empowering and motivating.”

- Headteacher, Primary School



Whole Education

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