



2024 INQUIRY MATTERS CONFERENCE

APRIL 20TH, 2024
CENTER FOR INQUIRY

PROGRAM

7:45 a.m. – 8:15 a.m.

Registration, Continental Breakfast, Professional & Children's Books Sales & CFI Expert Projects

8:15 a.m. – 8:40 a.m.

Opening Song: "Inquiry is Learning on Purpose"
Rutland Martin and his 4th Grade Class at CFI

Why Inquiry Matters

Heidi Mills, Emily Whitecotton, Liz Baranik, Brandon Foote, Lyn Mueller, Sequoia Hampton, Hannah Frederick, Tameka Breland, Kavon Barger, Brooke Fonder, Shelley Williams, Floyd Dinkins, with students, Tristyn Caldwell, Silas Kent, Jacob Spigner & Special Guests

8:40 – 8:45

Remembering Joan Stevenson & Honoring Jennifer Wilson's Legacy, Appreciations & Conference Forecast
Heidi Mills and Emily Whitecotton

9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

Professional & Children's Book Sales & CFI Expert Projects
"Raise Your Words, Not Your Voice!" in Our Gathering Place

Tianna Myers & 5th Grade Class at CFI

10:15 a.m. – 11:15 a.m.

Concurrent Sessions

11:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Professional & Children's Book Sales & CFI Expert Projects
"Increase the Peace" Projects In Our Gathering Place
Colavito McKie, Jr. & 5th Grade Class at Lewis Greenview Elementary

11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Closing Address: Teaching for Impact

Heidi Mills, Emily Whitecotton, Liz Baranik, Rutland Martin, Jennifer Barnes, Tianna Myers with CFI Students, Michelle Floyd, and Regina Skeeters with Lewis Greenview Students

9:00 AM- 10:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

DEVELOPING MEANINGFUL PARENT-TEACHER PARTNERSHIPS

Jessie Steedly & Taylor Wuerfel (CFI)

Parents are our partners in growing learners! When teachers connect with, educate, and empower parents, they see that students begin to truly thrive. In this session, speakers will share about Curriculum Nights: a structure used to teach parents about what learning looks, sounds, and feels like in the classroom. See how classroom blogs and take-home resources can empower parents to be teachers, too.

201

K-2

ILLUMINATING LEARNING AND IGNITING EXCITEMENT THROUGH INQUIRY

Lane Chappell, Shantel Cowling, Katherine Sanders & Students (SFE)

First grade teachers from Satchel Ford Elementary will present on their students' spring inquiry project focusing on the moon and the night sky. They will discuss the process of creating an inquiry unit based on students' authentic work through moon journals and how these journals ignited learning across the curriculum. These teachers will share not only student work but also the culminating astronomical experience that included families.

202

K-2
Coaches

GOOD MORNING SCHOLARS! TEACHING AND LEARNING WITH MORNING MESSAGES

Michelle Kimpson (LforL)

The morning message is an essential part of the literacy framework in an early childhood classroom. This session will explore meaningful and interactive ways for embedding social and academic concepts in the morning message. Participants will leave with an understanding of how to create morning messages that reinforce literacy skills, strategies, and content learning.

204

K-2

CREATING LOVING WRITING UNITS THAT CENTER STUDENTS' INTERESTS AND IDENTITIES

Eliza Braden & Valente' Gibson (USC & JCE)

This session aims to demonstrate effective ways of integrating the identities and interests of culturally and linguistically diverse students into the literacy curriculum to teach them foundational reading and writing skills. During the session, attendees will have the opportunity to learn from the presenters about two writing curricular units designed to showcase and celebrate the resilience, beauty, brilliance, joy, and accomplishments of culturally diverse communities. Furthermore, the presenters will share their insights on the evolution of an environmental justice argumentative writing unit and a historical and contemporary information unit.

104

3-5

BUILDING MATHEMATICAL REASONING THROUGH BOARD GAMES

Brandon Foote (CFI)

Board games are not only an excellent way to build community in the classroom. Used intentionally, teachers can use their design to unlock new mathematical understandings that can uncover, and even go beyond, the math standards. In this session, we will discuss strategies for using board games as a launching point for deep mathematical discussions. Board game suggestions for the classroom will also be shared.

102

K-5

9:00 AM- 10:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

CAPTURING READERS THROUGH PICTURE BOOKS & POETRY

Nissi Jefferson (OPE)

In this session, Nissi Jefferson will share her journey of intentionally infusing picture books and poetry into elementary level curriculums to capture the hearts of striving and avid readers. She will illustrate how she uses a variety of engaging texts throughout the school year to motivate readers to make positive shifts within their reading lives and to take action as readers who inspire others to read.

203

3-5

THE POWER OF PEER COACHING

Liz Baranik with Tianna Myers (CFI)

We have the power to empower our teachers. Peer coaching provides our teachers with immediate, practical examples of new possibilities to try out for themselves. Do you see the potential for peer coaching to take hold in your school, but haven't found a way to get it started? Join Liz LeBlanc Baranik, the Reading Coach at CFI and Tianna Myers 4-5 teacher, to find out about CFI's inquiry into peer coaching and some possibilities for engaging your teachers in this richly productive and organic process.

302

K-5
Coaches

CAREERS & CULTURE: EXPLORING JOBS THROUGH CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Kristy Horton and Sarah Ostergaard & Students (HSE & USC)

This is a lively, interactive session to explore ways to captivate students' minds while weaving tales into curriculum. Focusing on award-winning children's literature about careers including entrepreneurship, participants will have the opportunity to experience interactive lesson plans to utilize these stories in classrooms right away.

301

K-5

CLAIM IT !

Beth White & Hannah Guess (IES)

For young authors, learning to construct arguments to support claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence is a valuable skill that goes beyond writing. It teaches them to think critically and communicate their ideas effectively. Integrating inquiry-based learning into argumentative writing offers a powerful approach. This session will provide practical strategies to inspire teachers to empower young writers to express themselves to persuade their readers.

101

3-8

SUPPORTING FAMILY ENGAGEMENT: INVITING PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS INTO THE CLASSROOM CURRICULUM

Jennipher Frazier, Chris Hass, Kyanna Samuel & Alexa Weeks (JCE, JMU, SES)

Interested in learning innovative ways to invite families and caregivers into your classroom curriculum? Presenters in this session will share classroom practices that welcome families to support student learning while also celebrating our students' social identities, developing a greater appreciation for diversity, and tackling issues of inequity and injustice.

303

K-5

9:00 AM- 10:00 AM

Concurrent Sessions

CULTIVATING CURIOSITY: NOTICING AND WONDERING ACROSS THE DAY

Brandi Cade & Students (CFI)

How did...? What if...? Questions come to life in spaces opened up for learners to authentically notice and wonder about their own lives as well as about the world around them. In this session, participants will explore ways to incorporate Notice and Wonder routines to build a classroom of thinkers and inquirers. Students will share the impact Notice and Wonder made in their lives this year.

103

2-5

ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN STUDENT MEDIA LITERACY SKILLS

Jamie Gregory (CCE)

It is possible for teachers of all subject areas and grade levels to embed media literacy instruction into the curriculum, particularly using an inquiry-based learning approach. Jamie Gregory will demonstrate activities for students to practice media literacy skills by asking their own questions and reflecting on their own observations to engage in critical thinking.

304

3-12

STILL LEARNING AFTER ALL THESE YEARS

Lyn Mueller & Emily Whitecotton (CFI)

Since 2000, only two people have been the administrative leader at the Center for Inquiry. In those 24 years, there have been a lot of lessons learned about inquiry and how to create a school-wide culture of inquiry. Join these two leaders as they talk about what they've learned, what they're still learning, and what might be important to pass along to others.

MEDIA
CENTER

K-5
Instructional
Leaders

School Key

CFI: Center for Inquiry
CCE: Christ Church Episcopal Upper School
GES: Gilbert Elementary School
HSE: Heath Springs Elementary
IES: Irmo Elementary School
JCE: Jackson Creek Elementary
JMU: James Madison University
LforL: Literacy for Learning Consultant
LGE: Lewis Greenview Elementary
OPE: Oak Pointe Elementary
R1: Richland School District One
SE: Smithland Elementary
SFE: Satchel Ford Elementary
USC: University of South Carolina

Social Media

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10:15 AM-11:15 AM

Concurrent Sessions

INQUIRING INTO INQUIRY-BASED TEACHING AS AN EARLY CAREER TEACHER

Katie Koon (CFI)

In this session, a second-year teacher reflects on her experience with inquiry-based teaching as she displays the authentic possibilities of inquiry for early career teachers. Through this session she reflects on and demonstrates some of her experiences of incorporating inquiry into daily learning with her students, as she continually investigates the power of language, structure, and authenticity of inquiry in her classroom each day.

204

K-3

BEGINNING WITH THE END IN MIND: INTENTIONALLY PREPARING STUDENTS TO CONSTRUCT MEANINGFUL EXPERT PROJECTS

Tiffany Palmatier & Students (CFI)

Tiffany will share how she sees careful planning as a superpower that ensures students are adequately prepared to construct the expert projects interwoven into integrated units of studies. In this session, participants will have the opportunity to experience small teachers conducting expert project presentations.

202

K-3

BUILDING COMMUNITY AND CURRICULUM: THE WONDERS OF INQUIRY

Kavon Barger, Michelle Floyd & Students (GES)

In this session, presenters and participants will explore how establishing a strong community of learners can lead to endless opportunities for authentic learning experiences in and out of the classroom. Inquiry-driven experiences create a space for each member of the community to feel valued and appreciated in their learning, opening the door to risk-taking that leads to the development of solid learning identities, agency, and academic achievement. Presenters will learn about the many benefits of looping, strategy sharing, writing workshop, learning celebrations, voice, and choice through culturally responsive teaching.

102

2-5

REPURPOSING MORNING MEETING WITH INQUIRY IN MIND

Nozsa Kyler & Students (CFI)

Morning meetings have long been used as a time for greetings and reviewing the forecast for the day. However, it can be given more purpose with inquiry at its heart. Through the use of journals and articles, morning meetings become a place where kids can ask questions about their world and think up together. It becomes an additional space for them to learn and grow as academic beings, community members, and citizens of a democratic world. Come prepared to learn not only how you can implement this in your own classroom, but also to engage in a morning meeting with fellow second graders.

303

2-5

EXPANDING THE ART OF INQUIRY THROUGH WRITING

Colavito McKie, Jr. & Students (LGE)

Often times, teachers struggle with developing writers or getting students to find joy in writing. Students should be equipped with more to do, than answering questions. They need to know how to ask them and how to find credible answers. Students are inherently curious. When they ask questions in the learning process, they are instantly more invested, motivated, empowered, and engaged. This session will provide teachers with insight on how to use South Carolina's Inquiry Standards, as a catalyst for change in writing.

304

3-5

10:15 AM-11:15 AM

Concurrent Sessions

CONTINUING TO COACH THE COACH: THE EVOLUTION OF A COACHING COMMUNITY

Shelly Curcio, Chris Burkett & Master Coaching Teachers (USC)

Who is going to coach the coach? This is the question that sparked the continuation of an inquiry-oriented coaching academy aimed at developing school-based teacher educators' coaching capacity. This session will elaborate on the coaching academy's guiding framework, share strategies for developing coaching content and pedagogy, and highlight lessons learned to inform the continued evolution of this work..

203

K-12
Coaches

FALLING IN LOVE WITH WRITING ALONGSIDE YOUR WRITERS

Megan Drayton (OPE)

Megan will share how she has shifted her classroom community's perspectives on themselves as writers through authentic forms and functions of writing. She will incorporate an interactive experience to immerse you in this process. You walk away with the positive reminder of the importance of positioning yourself as a writer, thinker, and learner in front of and alongside your writers.

103

3-8

GUIDING READERS TOWARD AGENCY AND INDEPENDENCE THROUGH REFLECTIVE PRACTICES

Laura Dean & Rutland Martin (CFI)

This session will examine how classroom structures and discussions can empower readers to improve on their own craft. Through videos and student reflections, this session will support teachers in guiding early readers towards agency and ownership of their own miscues and think deeper about how they can extend their reading ability in a way that is personally meaningful.

104

K-4

READING LIKE HISTORIANS

Tameka Breland & Students (LGE)

Disciplinary literacy focuses on teaching students how to interpret texts while also helping develop their identities as readers across disciplines. In this session, Tameka Breland illustrates how she intentionally teaches her students to analyze primary sources while simultaneously teaching them how to think, read, and write as historians.

201

3-5

FROM THE GROUND UP: WALKING EMERGENT INQUIRERS THROUGH AN AUTHENTIC INQUIRY FOCUSING ON WWI

Alexis Pressley & Students (GES)

Alexis is a former CFI 4th and 5th grade teacher and has a passion for integrating science and social studies into other content areas. During her presentation she will explain how she successfully introduced authentic inquiry processes in a traditional public school. Alexis will discuss how social studies can be integrated with reading and writing as students focused on their own personal inquiries with topics about WWI.

101

4-5

10:15 AM-11:15 AM

Concurrent Sessions

OUR CAROLINATIP JOURNEY: NOVICE TEACHER STORIES OF GROWTH & SUPPORT

Angela Adams & CarolinaTIP (Vaviel Crane, Maria Kerr, Stephanie Lucas, and Daysia Mims)

Designed for anyone wanting a glimpse into the experience of new(ish) teachers, this presentation focuses on stories from the field as recounted by educators who student-taught just a few years ago. The teachers will share their beginnings, their growth, and what's on the horizon for them. The session will include an overview of the Carolina Teacher Induction Program and its proven support of novice educators.

302

4K-12

THE IMPROVED WRITING IMPROVEMENT NETWORK

Elizabeth Scarbrough, Cindy Van Buren & Floyd Dinkins (USC)

The S.C. Writing Improvement Network offers educators in South Carolina transformative professional development opportunities. Through comprehensive learning modules and access to micro-credentials, educators enhance their skills in teaching writing effectively. Empowering teachers with tools and strategies, the network fosters a community dedicated to advancing literacy instruction statewide. This session will focus on how to access these new resources.

MEDIA
CENTER

3-5

DECADES OF READING RESEARCH: WHAT DO WE TRULY KNOW?

Lucy Spence, Cathy Jones Stork, Kendra Lynn & Emily Whitecotton (USC, Lex. 2, R1, R2)

In recent years, we have witnessed the dissemination of selective research findings related to reading, public deception privileging a narrow body of reading scholarship, and a singular, unproven solution – teaching phonics. Compton-Lilly and Spence offer a research-based correction that centers children and argues that HOW you teach reading MUST be determined by WHO you teach. They present a confluence of evidence that establishes reading as complex, involving multiple sources of information, and distributed across multiple neurological systems. Literacy leaders across the midlands will follow by sharing work they are doing to support teachers as well as the readers and writers they serve.

301

K-5
Coaches
Admin

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EXHIBITS, CONFERENCE SPONSORS & HOST



Special thanks to the Center for Educational Partnerships at the University of South Carolina and Center for Inquiry in Richland School District Two for sponsoring this informative and inspiring conference.



Thank you to Heinemann Educational Books for offering a conference discount, and GG's Library for donating 10% of all Inquiry Matters sales to A Chance Through Literacy, in memory of our dear friend and colleague, Jennifer Wilson. We are especially grateful to welcome the authors and exhibit, "My Voice is Powerful" book series. We appreciate Panera Bread for partnering with CFI to offer breakfast.

Deepest gratitude to the Center for Inquiry for hosting the 2024 INQUIRY MATTERS conference. This professional development experience beautifully exemplifies CFI's Mission:

The students, parents and staff of the Center for Inquiry, a genuine collaboration between the University of South Carolina and Richland School District Two, are responsible for developing ourselves as more thoughtful, caring and intelligent people who delight in learning and are committed to creating a more compassionate, equitable, knowledgeable and democratic world!

Inquiry MATTERS

Please scan this QR code to access our 2024 Inquiry Matters Reflection.

Thank you for spending your morning with us. We wish you the best as you strive for what is possible.

