Coiro, J., Dobler, E., & Pelekis, K. (2019). *From Curiosity to Deep Learning: Personal digital inquiry in grades K-5*. Stenhouse Publishers, Pp. 229, ISBN 978-162531157-3

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The timing of this book could not be more pertinent to educators around the globe. Professors and teachers are scrambling to put their classes online because of the Coronavirus. The need for implementing collaborative technology into their curriculum is urgent. Although the concepts and tools in *From Curiosity to Deep Learning* could be used by all educators, it is a resource manual to help K-5 teachers and library media specialists design class and individual projects that foster collaborative learning with ready-made guides for technology-enhanced lesson plans.

The Personal Digital Inquiry (PDI) concepts of reading, discussing, collaborating, and reflecting are not new, nor limited to the elementary grades. Coiro mentions that Seneca, a Roman philosopher, taught these methods. However, Coiro, Dobler, and Pelekis spell out in detail how to integrate these concepts into a K-5 classroom by providing resources to inform teachers’ lesson plans, the digital devices and tools relevant for current classrooms, and figures and tables to illustrate each chapter’s concepts.

*Curiosity’s* authors collectively have over 50 years of experience in education. Coiro, a 30-year veteran of the classroom and now a professor of reading and digital literacy at the University of Rhode Island, developed PDI. Dobler, a former library media specialist, now teaches information literacy and language arts at Emporia State University in Kansas. Pelekis, an elementary teacher in Scarsdale, New York, has been implementing PDI for over a decade.

Coiro and her compatriots believe students become engaged in their own learning when they are given “voice and choice” (p. x). These experts promote students’ “voice” by having teachers *listen* to their students’ answers. They foster “choice” by allowing the students’ questions to be studied more in depth during the school year; thereby shaping the class’ curriculum; and choosing what technology they may use in completing their assignments.

*From Curiosity to Deep Learning* is textbook style, with chapter overviews and bulleted learning strategies at the beginning of each chapter. Each chapter includes Personal Digital Inquiry (PDI) lessons that contain three elements: Personal—The authors emphasize building relationships with students; Digital—They offer technological enhancements for each lesson; Inquiry—Students reflect and take action.

The text is divided into two parts. The chapters in Part I build an understanding of PDI layer by layer. Here the authors present models of personal inquiry through analysis and reflection, and an explanation of the PDI triangle, which contains questions for teachers to use to foster student ownership and learning with intent. By “learning with intent,” the authors mean “inquiry-based efforts are really geared toward moving students ever closer to becoming self-directed learners empowered to use their knowledge and turn it into action in ways that matter to them” (p. 78).

Part II integrates PDI into teaching and learning. The chapters contain detailed examples of how elementary teachers and library media specialists have applied the PDI process in their classrooms. In particular, Chapter 8 elaborates on the four practices used to create a culture of inquiry within PDI: Wonder and Discover, Collaborate and Discuss, Create and Take Action, and Analyze and Reflect illustrated in a color-coded circle (p. 18). The circle’s center features the question, “How will digital texts, tools, and technologies be used to support and/or facilitate each of these inquiry practices?” By this query, the authors encourage teachers to consider the role that technology may, *or may not*, play in the teaching and/or learning connected to the PDI framework. Coiro and her crew created a website, [bit.ly/PDInquiry](http://bit.ly/PDInquiry), along with a QR code to supplement each chapter’s information. The website contains digital versions of student artifacts and a study guide for each chapter*.*

In the book’s forward, Stephanie Harvey, a scholar in the field of comprehension and inquiry, describes the PDI process:

As kids ask questions, they are given time to address them and discover answers. As they work collaboratively, discussions naturally emerge. As they create new ideas and share them, they want to act. Ultimately, they analyze their findings and reflect on them. (p. x)

The role of the teacher in PDI is to provide scaffolding for their students’ inquiry processes, but gradually release responsibilities to the students themselves. Instructional scaffolding is a metaphorical term meaning the temporary support teachers offer students to build new knowledge. Once the student masters a task, the teacher gradually removes the support. The challenge for teachers who are planning for PDI is to maintain a balance of giving enough support to guide students’ inquiry, but not so much that the students lose their sense of agency.

One of the goals of PDI is teaching how to create and take action. Teachers have students share their projects with an outside audience, and enable students to become activists in their communities. In a previous article, Coiro elaborated, “The goal of inquiry-based learning [PDI] is to develop engaged citizens, with an integrated focus on fostering individualgrowth, democratic participation, and social change” (2015, p. 160). To achieve this, one of the class projects included students promoting a local animal shelter’s needs to the public using digital tools. The shelter’s director thanked the students by making them volunteers of the month in her newsletter.

The PDI framework should also be distinguished from the personal (or solitary) learning movement; that is, students working alone on their devices for individualized or differentiated instruction. Both methods incorporate student-centered learning. The difference is that PDI emphasizes the “personal” dimension between teacher and student. The authors expounded, “The affective quality of teacher-student relationships is a central and critical motivator of student engagement and performance” (p. 11). For example, media specialist, Beth Dobler, endeavored to develop a relationship with each one of her fourth graders. She did this by offering them choices in selecting an inquiry question, resources, and project format. She reflected:

Offering choices not only let me get to know their learning preferences but also let the students know that I valued each one as a learner with unique learning needs, which went a long way to developing trust, which led to loyalty. (p. 202)

The book includes an extensive Bibliography. The research focuses mainly on the educational philosophies behind elements of PDI. For example, Harvey mentions *Curiosity* uses a “constructivist” approach (p. ix), based on Jean Piaget’s cognitive development theory that children have prior knowledge and experiences that teachers can build upon. He believes these experiences are learned through social interactions and cultural environment (Cherry, 2019).

The core of the PDI framework, inquiry, is founded upon John Dewey’s child-centered teaching philosophy. The authors pull extensively from his work. “Like John Dewey ([1938] 1997), we wholeheartedly believe that learners grow and change with opportunities to identify problems in their community, generate personal wonderings, and engage in collaborative dialogue around these problems” (p. 13). To help educators create opportunities for PDI in their curricula, the authors include appendices with practical tools such as a framework, a self-assessment tool, a questioning tool, a knowledge continuum, and a planning guide, as well as a list of media tools mentioned throughout their book. Each chapter contains vignettes of how teachers applied inquiry-based curriculum in their classrooms as concrete examples for readers to implement.

If we employ an accepted model of technology integration, like the Technology Integration Matrix (TIM; Florida Center for Instructional Technology, 2005-2020) to evaluate PDI, Coiro and her co-authors’ strategies tend to achieve the higher levels of technology integration (Adaptation and Infusion). At the Adaptation Level, “the teacher encourages the innovative use of technology tools” (Florida Center for Instructional Technology, 2005-2020, ¶ 2). At the Infusion Level, “the teacher provides the learning context and the students choose the technology tools to achieve the outcome” (Florida Center for Instructional Technology, 2005-2020, ¶ 2). For example, one of the teachers in the book gave her students the option to use one of three digital applications they prefer for their projects (Adaptation), and another used technology stations to enhance her students’ learning (Infusion).

Surprisingly, these digital scholars do not emphasize the technology part of their inquiry-based curriculum. The authors state, “It’s our goal in this book to focus on the purposes for using digital resources rather than getting bogged down in particular apps and programs” (p. 109). Instead, they recommend allowing the lesson to inform which digital application to utilize. They also suggest that teachers have the choice of not using technology when incorporating PDI. For instance, in their list of tools for organizing information (Table 4.2), the reader is given an option of using or not using a technological application for each format (p. 58).

*From Curiosity to Deep Learning* is not a guide for educational technology devices and apps, or which company’s software works best in the classroom. It does, however, contain several resources a teacher will need to implement the PDI framework. Supporting their curriculum with research and examples, Coiro, Dobler, and Pelekis speak the language of their intended audience of elementary teachers and library media specialists, and equip them with practical tools necessary to implement their own PDI curriculum. For educators needing a technology-enriched lesson plan to meeting their current online teaching needs, and for those teaching face-to-face again in the future, this book has much to offer.References

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