A WELCOME FROM THE AUTHORS

Welcome Colleagues,

The video you are about to view was a delight to create, and we hope you enjoy watching it as much as we enjoyed putting it together.

These classroom scenes were captured over two months at Burley School in Chicago. At Burley, Principal Barbara Kent and Assistant Principal Mary Beth Cunat have led a multiyear move toward inquiry learning in their building—and they also moved heaven and earth to help us document it.

Video producer and director Margaret Broucek of Heinemann put together an amazing group. Videographers Mike McEachern and Tim Plum gathered compelling pictures and sound of kids and teachers at work. Their crews were so unobtrusive that kids forgot about the five extra people in the room, and simply did their inquiries, spontaneously and authentically. And Larry Mondi of Larry Mondi Productions served as our sage video editor and voiceover coach.

Thanks also go to the editorial and production team at Heinemann, publisher Kate Montgomery, designers Lisa Fowler and Jenny Jensen Greenleaf, and production editor Patty Adams.

We appreciate the use of some great texts in these DVDs. Thanks to Okapi Educational Materials for James Talla's Animals of the African Grasslands *and thanks to Heinemann for the use of* All Wrapped Up: The Many Tasks of Mummy Makers *from* Toolkit Texts *by Harvey and Goudvis.*

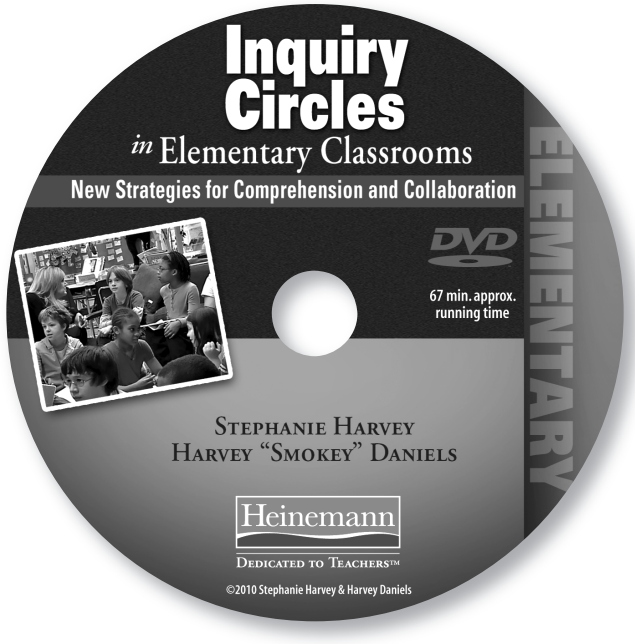
Above all, our thanks go to the wonderful kids and the three amazing teachers who allowed us into their classrooms: Kristin Ziemke Fastabend, Debbie King, and Michele Timble. When we first visited their classrooms, we were knocked out by their skill and commitment. Now that we have worked, planned, and thought together for almost a year, we have become lifelong fans and, we hope, friends. Thanks, guys!

Steph and Smokey

New Strategies for Comprehension and Collaboration

Inquiry Circles
in Elementary Classrooms

STEPHANIE HARVEY
HARVEY "SMOKEY" DANIELS



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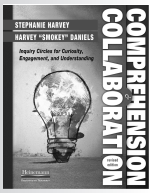
CONTENTS

Kristin Ziemke Fastabend, First Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Explore and Discover Resources

As the kids in Kristin's classroom begin to study African Animals, Kristin gathers and collects multiple resources to immerse them in the unit study and fire them up about the topic. She floods the room with African animal books, images, videos, artifacts, and even toys so they can engage in free exploration and discovery to nurture their curiosity and stimulate their imagination.



• **SEE CHAPTER 5,** *Setting Up Your Inquiry-Based Classroom, pp. 98–120.*

• **SEE LESSON 30,** *Explore and Use Multiple Sources, p. 181.*

QUESTIONS

- Does anything you see in this segment change the way you have been thinking about gathering resources?
- What kind of challenges do you anticipate having as you collect resources to support the curriculum in your own school and classroom?
- What did you notice Kristin doing that you could try?

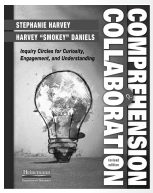
INVITATIONS

- Live a curious life. Be a scavenger! Be on the lookout for resources that might relate to your classroom inquiry. Check out garage sales, stoop sales, etc. to find the best resources to stimulate kids thinking.
- Before you begin a curricular unit, plan with others—the school librarian, the public librarian, teachers of the same curriculum—and gather up resources. Expand your notion of text. Include trade books, picture books, magazines, newspapers, posters, and images. Large photographic calendars offer a wonderful source of information for kids to explore.
- Go beyond images and text when gathering resources. Kristin realized that toys were a terrific resource for primary grade kids and used these models to stimulate conversations and questions and help kids make connections to the big ideas in the curriculum. She also flooded the room with artifacts and even helped the kids create a box with sand on one side to represent the desert, and tall grass growing on the other side to replicate the African savannah!

Kristin Ziemke Fastabend, First Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Work in Small Groups

During work time, the kids collaborate in their inquiry circles. They search multiple resources for information, jotting and drawing their learning and questions on large charts. Kristin moves about the room conferring with various inquiry circles and joins one to review the previous day's lesson and extend their learning. At the end of the small-group work time, Kristin gathers the kids back together. She shares some kids' work and then has them turn and talk to each other about what they learned and what they wonder.



• **SEE LESSON 9,** *Stop, Think, and React to Information, p. 160.*

• **SEE LESSON 15,** *Turn and Talk, p. 166.*

• **SEE LESSON 31,** *Questioning and Wondering, p. 182.*

QUESTIONS

- What do you notice happening in Kristin's room that allows her to meet with a small group virtually uninterrupted? What are the other kids doing? Why do they seem so engaged? How does the environment support independence—the room arrangement, accessible resources, the collaboration reminders, the size of the inquiry circles?
- What do you notice about Kristin's tone as she confers with the small group?
- What do the kids gain by gathering back together after the small-group work time? Does this seem like a worthy expenditure of time? Why or why not?

INVITATIONS

- After you have done a whole group mini-lesson, think about meeting with a small group to review the lesson as Kristin does here. This allows the kids to personalize and internalize the learning that occurred in the large group and to apply what they learned with Kristin's help in their inquiry circles.
- Consider bringing the class anchor chart when you meet with small groups to refer back to the whole group lesson. This supports kids to focus on what they've learned and to apply it.
- Discuss with colleagues options for other kids while you meet with small groups. In active learning classrooms, when we meet with small groups, the other kids need to be doing thoughtful work—reading, writing, drawing, talking, listening, and investigating. Inquiry circles give kids a wonderful opportunity to engage in all of these components of active literacy as they work together.
- This is not the first time Kristin has asked her kids to turn and talk to each other during large group instruction. This active learning practice allows kids to engage in the information and process it. Kristin's kids have been doing this all year. Before you ask kids to turn and talk to each other in a large group the first time, invite someone in to model the strategy with you. Ask kids to notice what you were doing and co-construct an anchor chart of Turn and Talk Guidelines for them to refer back to when they try it themselves. You may need to model this collaboration strategy several times in different contexts to support kids to do it independently.

Kristin Ziemke Fastabend, First Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Model and Practice a Nonfiction Strategy and Reflect on Collaboration

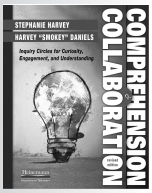
Kristin models a comprehension lesson on nonfiction features and their purposes. She thinks out loud and shares how she pays attention to features and uses them to better understand her nonfiction reading. The class co-constructs a Feature/Purpose anchor chart to support them as they move forward. During collaborative practice, the kids work together in their inquiry circles to add captions, close-ups, and labels to their African animal murals. When they gather back together to share, Kristin asks them to reflect on how their inquiry circle collaboration went during work time.

QUESTIONS

- Why does Kristin spend so much time modeling her own thinking about features and their purposes? Is this time well spent?
- What do you think about the way in which Kristin handled Arman's comment which was unrelated to the topic but seemingly important to him? How does she value his thinking but still move on?
- How can you facilitate art making in your primary grade classrooms? How can you support kids to use art to help them show their learning and demonstrate understanding? What if you are not completely confident about your own art work? What might you do?

INVITATIONS

- Notice how Kristin shares two different models of close-ups, an authentic close-up of a map of the Midwest that she found in the newspaper and a close-up of hyena jaws that she drew herself. This shows kids that she lives a curious life reading the paper and thinking about the world and that she applies her learning to her own life. How might you try this?
- At one point as she models the feature lesson, Kristin says "I think it was Elizabeth and Adrian who taught me something about hyenas." She often shares what she has learned from other kids. Inquiry based pedagogy fosters classrooms where everyone is a learner. Think about your own language with the kids and consider how you might let them know that you are a learner as well as a teacher.
- Reading, writing, and art are interconnected and synergistic. Art is central to the learning in Kristin's room. Kids' art-making is much more than a charming decoration for refrigerator doors—it is a representational activity vital to their development as readers, writers, thinkers, and investigators. Think of ways to get more art into the curriculum. Art rocks!
- When Kristin gathers the kids back together after the work time, she asks them to turn and talk about how the inquiry circle collaboration went. It is not uncommon to have kids share the content they learned, but too often we forget to share the process. Consider having kids reflect on their collaboration process as well as the content.

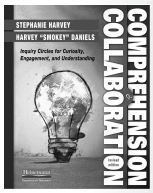


• **SEE CHAPTER 2,** *What We Know About Comprehension, pp. 23–47.*
• **SEE CHAPTER 3,** *What We Know About Collaboration, pp. 48–67.*
• **SEE LESSON 4,** *Use Text and Visual Features to Gain Information, p. 155.*
• **SEE LESSON 31,** *Questioning and Wondering, p. 182.*

Kristin Ziemke Fastabend, First Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Take Learning Public and Teach Others

Kristin's class spends about two and a half weeks on the African animal study. As a culmination to the unit, each inquiry circle presents their animal mural to the class and shares their new-found knowledge. Kids in the audience jot down their thoughts and questions as they listen to the presenters. The presenters engage the audience by having them turn and talk about what they learned and what they wonder about the presentation topic. Kristin reminds them that the more they learn about a topic, the more they are likely to care about it. She reviews a chart that they created earlier in the African inquiry that shares several ways people can make a difference, through activism, awareness, and aid. She concludes by having them turn and talk about some ways first graders can take action and make a difference.



• **SEE LESSON 25,** *Being an Attentive Audience, p. 176.*

• **SEE LESSON 39,** *Sharing Learning with Posters and Murals, p. 190.*

• **SEE** *Researcher's Workshop, pp. 219–221.*

• **SEE** *Taking Action, pp. 231–232.*

• **SEE** *Open Inquiry and Research, pp. 287–295.*

• **FOR MORE INFORMATION** *on curricular inquiries, see Chapter 9, pp. 210–244.*

• **FOR A LOOK** *at an extended primary-grade curricular inquiry, see Antarctica, pp. 215–221.*

QUESTIONS

- What most surprises you about Kristin's instructional approach?
- What do you notice about the language Kristin uses with the kids? Is her tone inviting? How so?
- Why is it important to have kids share their learning with the other kids? Are there any district or state standards that you can meet through these presentations? What are some things you notice that you might have your kids try as they make presentations to the class?

INVITATIONS

- When we know something well enough to teach it, we know it pretty well. Kristin's kids share their learning every day in a variety of ways, occasionally more formally as shown. Invite them to share their learning daily but also in a more formal way at the end of a project or when they are really excited about some new learning.
- Notice how the kids take notes on the information that is being presented. They have been doing this all year in the large-group minilessons that Kristin models, so it is a natural extension for them to take notes when kids are doing the teaching. For those who cannot write or draw quickly enough, have them code the Post-its with L's and ?'s to avoid frustration.
- Notice how the kids present the information and then ask the audience to turn and talk about it. This follows naturally from the guided discussions they have every day with Kristin. Have the kids try facilitating the turn and talks as they present. As you can see from this segment, they love to be the teachers!
- Notice how Kristin talks about advocating for a cause. She explicitly helps the kids understand what advocacy is and what they can do to make a difference. When kids engage in inquiry based learning, they often find that they care a lot and want to take action. We need to be available to help them find the resources and the will to acquire knowledge and actively use it. How might this advocacy look in your classroom?

Michele Timble and Debbie King, Fourth Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Share Curiosity and Model Your Own Inquiry

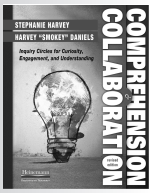
As the fourth graders in Michele and Debbie's rooms engage in a curricular inquiry on Ancient Egypt, Michele models how she lives like a researcher, asking questions, recording them in her notebook, and searching for answers. She shows how she writes down questions about anything she wonders as well as questions related to the Ancient Egypt topic. She reviews an anchor chart on how to come up with researchable questions. Curiosity is contagious. Michele understands that if she shares thoughts and questions, kids are more likely to catch the curiosity bug themselves. After modeling her own inquiry process, she releases the kids to immerse themselves in a wide range of resources on Ancient Egypt.

QUESTIONS

- What are some of the implicit benefits of keeping and sharing a research notebook with your kids? How might keeping a research notebook connect us more closely to the kids?
- Why is it important to take the time to have kids turn and talk to one another? Why do Michele's kids seem to talk about the topic at hand rather than their soccer games, the upcoming weekend, etc.? What does she do to spur their discussions?
- How can the anchor chart become an effective instructional tool? What might you do to ensure it does not become simply another decoration in the room?

INVITATIONS

- Keep your own research notebook. If this is new for you, begin keeping a notebook in the summer by simply writing down things you wonder about. Then do some research to discover answers. We often take the time to ask questions in our lives but don't take the time to answer them. Share your notebooks with the kids on the first day of school so they know right off the bat that you live like a researcher.
- Model your own inquiry. Share your notebook with the kids as Michele does. Then go beyond merely sharing your questions. Have kids join you as you use a variety of tools to search for and discover an answer to your own authentic question and lead kids through the process.
- Celebrate curiosity by asking and valuing questions. Flood the room with resources related to the topic—books, magazines, web pages, images, etc. Take time to show the kids a variety of ways to get information. Let them know that there is a wealth of knowledge right in their own school. Bring someone into the classroom from the school who can share their expertise. Also consider inviting a specialist from outside the school to share his/her knowledge.

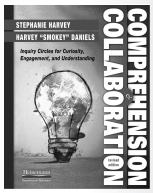


• **SEE CHAPTER 4,** *What We Know About Inquiry, pp. 68–97.*
• **SEE LESSON 19,** *Model Your Own Inquiry Process, p. 177.*
• **SEE LESSON 29,** *Create Research Notebooks, p. 180.*
• **SEE** *Mini-Inquiries, pp. 194–209.*

Michele Timble and Debbie King, Fourth Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Develop Questions and Form Inquiry Circles

Michele gathers the kids together to review their questions and to discover if there are common threads. Her goal is to make sure they have found a topic to investigate within an inquiry circle. Inquiry circles in Michele's room generally vary in size from two to five people based on their interest in the topic. To support the kids to get started with their research, Michele shares an anchor chart titled, I have my question, now what? She models her own thinking and shares how she uses a variety of ways to find answers to her questions, including reading books and magazines, going online, talking to someone, and interviewing an expert. The kids go back to their tables and continue to research their questions in inquiry circles using some of the options that Michele modeled for them as well as any they come up with on their own.



- **SEE CHAPTER 6,** *Digital Tools for Inquiry Classrooms, pp. 121–143.*
- **SEE LESSON 8,** *Ask Questions and Wonder About Information, p. 159.*
- **SEE LESSON 30,** *Explore and Use Multiple Resources, p. 181.*
- **SEE LESSON 34,** *Forming Inquiry Groups on Multiple Topics, p. 185.*
- **SEE** *Child Labor, pp. 227–231.*
- **SEE** *Complex Problems in a Rain Forest, pp. 232–233.*

QUESTIONS

- During the collaborative practice time, Michele moves about the room and confers with kids. Notice how the others stay busy working. Why do you think they stay so engaged in their work while Michele confers with other groups?
- Michele and the kids recognize that they have too many topics so they consolidate their questions and form inquiry circles based on common interests. How might you manage this? What are some ways you can support kids to come together in curricular inquiry circles?

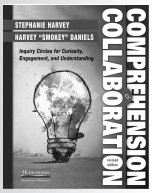
INVITATIONS

- Early in the year, Michele spends time modeling and sharing how to work independently during research time. Together Michele and the kids come up with ideas of what they can be doing during work time. Reading, writing, interviewing, talking quietly, and conducting research online are some of the activities that they have all agreed they can engage in during work time. Take time to discuss a variety of options with kids and co-construct an anchor chart, Options for Work Time, for them to refer back to if they need support.
- Notice Michele's language and actions as she confers with the two girls at their table. Think about what she says and does that prompts their thinking and nudges them to think more deeply and articulate their thoughts.
- Together with the kids, discuss the many ways that researchers find information and get answers to their questions. Let them know as Michele does that there may be ways that will pop-up for them that we haven't even considered before. Co-construct an anchor chart of different ways we find information.

Michele Timble and Debbie King, Fourth Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Create Ground Rules for Collaboration

Debbie's kids have engaged in the same inquiry process as Michele's. In this segment Debbie models a collaboration strategy called Creating Ground Rules. To demonstrate the importance of planning and working together, Debbie thinks aloud about a personal situation where she was not the best collaborator and she strategizes about what she could have done to improve the situation. The kids review an anchor chart they constructed during an earlier inquiry project on what collaboration does and does not look and sound like. Debbie sends them off to work together in their inquiry circles to create and jot down ground rules that will help their groups run more smoothly and effectively. When they come back together, they co-construct an anchor chart of possible collaboration ground rules for their inquiry circles.



- **SEE CHAPTER 3,** *What We Know About Collaboration, pp. 48–67.*
- **SEE LESSON 18,** *Creating Group Ground Rules, p. 169.*
- **SEE** *Explorers and Explorations, pp. 236–246.*

QUESTIONS

- What do you notice about Debbie's tone toward the children?
- With all we have to do, do you think we can really afford to take the time to model a collaboration strategy? Why or why not?
- What is the purpose in having kids reflect back on previous learning situations and sharing out what they remember about those? Is this worth the time?
- What is the value in having kids create ground rules and sharing them with their peers?

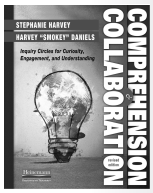
INVITATIONS

- Notice how Debbie refers back to the collaboration anchor chart that the class created during the rainforest inquiry. The purpose of an anchor chart is to connect past teaching and learning to future teaching and learning and to anchor the learner in a previous experience so they can apply what they know to a new situation. Watch how the kids talk about the rain forest inquiry and reflect on how they worked together during that project. Consider reminding kids of previous learning, so they can apply it to present and future learning.
- Notice how Debbie gives an explicit example of what collaboration does not look like in her own personal story of the crème brûlé brouhaha. Just as she explicitly teaches a comprehension strategy, Debbie explicitly teaches collaboration strategies. Share a personal story of a time when you collaborated effectively as well as a time when things did not go so well. See if this helps the kids to work together more productively.
- Try explicitly modeling a collaboration strategy as Debbie did. Choose the one Debbie did on Creating Ground Rules or feel free to try one of the other collaboration lessons (pp.166–176) we share in Chapter 6 of *Comprehension and Collaboration.*

Michele Timble and Debbie King, Fourth Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Stop, Think, and React in Nonfiction Text

Debbie models a nonfiction reading strategy that teaches kids to stop, think, and react (STR) to the information as they read. She explains that proficient readers merge their thinking with the information to make sense of it. She thinks aloud as she reads an article on Egyptian mummies, stopping frequently, jotting down her thoughts, and coding the text. She explains that annotation is a powerful reading tool and that when nonfiction readers stop, think, and jot down their reactions, they are more likely to learn, understand, and remember the information. She notes that their thoughts might include questions, connections, emotional reactions, etc. After modeling her thinking, the kids try this on their own as Debbie moves about the room conferring with individuals and small inquiry circles. The lesson concludes with the kids inviting each other to share their new learning.



• **SEE CHAPTER 2,** *What We Know About Comprehension, pp. 23–47.*

• **SEE LESSON 6,** *Annotate Text, p. 157.*

QUESTIONS

- Why does Debbie have the kids bunched up in front of her on the floor with clipboards as she models instruction rather than sitting at their tables or desks? How does this help with interaction? Assessment?
- What do you notice about the language Debbie uses as she provides instruction in the STR nonfiction reading strategy?
- How does annotating text support kids to understand what they read? What are the opportunities and challenges of having kids annotate their thinking and code the text as they read?

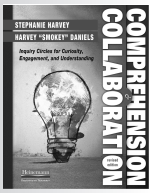
INVITATIONS

- Notice how Debbie asks the kids to browse the article for a moment and then has them turn and talk about what they think the article is going to be about. When kids preview the text, they pay attention to the photographs, illustrations, and captions, as well as the text. Readers have a much better shot at engaging in and understanding what they read if they preview it first. Give kids a chance to preview their reading before they start to read.
- After Debbie reads a portion of the article, she stops and asks the kids to turn and talk about what they noticed her doing as she read. We hear them share and it is clear that they noticed a lot. Sometimes when we think aloud, we neglect to ask kids to share what they saw us doing. Try asking kids to reflect on what they see you doing the next time you think aloud.
- After Debbie thinks aloud, she engages the kids in the process. This is the gradual release of responsibility in action. Debbie begins by modeling her own thinking and then gives kids a chance to try it right there in front of her. Too often we release kids to go off and practice independently without giving them enough time for guided practice. Spend some time in guided practice before sending them back to their tables. Then see if they have more success independently.
- Notice the respectful language the kids use as they invite each other to share their new learning. Kids are kids and few do this automatically! Debbie has explicitly modeled this process for sharing since early in the year. Take time to model respectful sharing and give kids time to practice it. Soon it will become a welcome habit!

Michele Timble and Debbie King, Fourth Grade, Burley School, Chicago, Illinois

Take Thinking Public

Debbie and Michele guide their kids through inquiry circles all year, in science, social studies, literacy, and mathematics. The kids demonstrate their learning in many different, yet authentic, ways. They take their thinking public by sharing what they have learned with their classmates every day. Their responses run the gamut from merely telling other kids what they have learned to more elaborate demonstrations. Authentic response options include written explanations, dramatic interpretations, artistic efforts, and creative use of technology. As a culmination to the Egypt inquiry, the Burley fourth graders brainstormed numerous possibilities for presenting information. Using their best collaborative strategies, the kids worked together to plan their presentations and set aside a day share. Parents and other community friends were invited in to learn from and ask question of the kids. Taking thinking public and sharing the learning is central to life in an inquiry based classroom.



• **SEE LESSON 40,** *Share Options to Go Public and Take Action, p. 191.*

• **SEE** *Capstone and Senior Projects, pp. 309–312.*

• **FOR MORE INFORMATION** *on curricular inquiries, see Chapter 9, pp. 210–244.*

QUESTIONS

- These fourth graders shared their learning in many different ways. What can you do to encourage so many diverse options for sharing?

- How do you build in time for kids to share their thinking and learning every day? Whole group sharing can take a lot of time. Do kids always need to share out with the whole group? What are some possible small group structures for sharing that would give kids an opportunity to talk about what they have learned? Think of any you have seen on this DVD as well as others that come to mind.

INVITATIONS

- Notice the variety of ways that kids shared their learning in this final segment. Think about the many ways your kids could share their learning. Set aside time at the culmination of a unit for kids to take their thinking public and share what they learned from their curricular inquiry.

- Sharing knowledge is central to inquiry based learning. Here we see the fourth graders engage in a formal end of unit share which is a terrific thing to do. But formal sharing is not the end goal of inquiry based learning. There doesn't always need to be a tangible product. New knowledge is valuable in and of itself. We want our kids to share their newfound knowledge every day. So teaching others what they have learned is equally important. Build in time each day for kids to informally share their learning and teach others in the class.

NOTES