

Material Inquiry

Material Inquiry is a learning methodology that explores the way tools and materials spark curiosity, wonder and a need to know.

What is a Material Inquiry workshop?

Material Inquiry workshops are experiential and participatory explorations of *material learning*, a way of knowing that entangles making and doing with learning. Participants individually and collectively enact an open-ended investigation into their own learning, and then critique their experience in terms of their teaching practice.

Workshops are customized for specific groups—whether middle school science teachers, high school art teachers, administrators, or other stakeholders such as parents, school board members or investors, or indeed, a mix of all of these. Materials on offer might include simple electronics, clay or paint, computer code, or a wide variety of craft materials.

An introductory *Spark* workshop begins with materials that have been chosen specifically for the participants involved. Several potential routes emerge as the event unfolds, including talking, drawing and writing as a meta-cognitive, formative assessment process, and making and building activities prompted by the facilitator or by self-initiated inquiry. Workshops end with conversations about the role of materials in teaching and learning.

Workshops are not designed to teach any particular skill—these are not tutorial workshops. Rather, the focus is on exploring a way of thinking.

The Workshop Sequence

Spark. A participatory workshop that introduces material learning. The Spark workshop can be conducted as a stand-alone event. (2 to 6 hours)

Review. A seminar exploring the research and literature that informs our work. Review seminars explain and unpack the Spark workshop for participants who have experienced it. (3 to 6 hrs)

Perform. Participants produce and then deliver a material inquiry ‘event’ that connects to their own practice. Performances are video taped and critiqued with conversation. (Variable duration)

Presentations: We are also available to introduce Material Inquiry in presentation format for larger audiences, such as keynote addresses or as part of panel discussions.