Asking Better Questions: The inquiry stance and your course question

NBE3U, Unit 1: Where We Stand, Lesson 7. 75 minutes. Teacher lesson plan.

Lesson at a glance

An inquiry stance means coming to a topic as a learner: curious, humble and ready to be changed. Good questions are specific, open and honest about what we don't know. This course asks you to carry one question all semester.

What students do: Students learn what an inquiry stance is, sort questions by type and quality, use the three course themes as lenses to generate questions, improve questions with a question ladder, draft a course inquiry question with sub-questions, and plan where to look for answers.

Curriculum expectations

Code	Students will…
A1.2	formulate increasingly effective questions to guide their explorations of themes, ideas, and issues related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit identities, relationships, and self-determination, sovereignty, or self-governance, as reflected in various Indigenous text forms, and, as appropriate, in relevant non-Indigenous texts
D1.1	identify the topic, purpose, and audience for a variety of writing tasks on subject matter related to First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures
D1.2	generate, expand, explore, and focus ideas for potential writing tasks, using a variety of strategies and print, electronic, and other resources, as appropriate and with increasing effectiveness

From The Ontario Curriculum, Grades 9 to 12: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Studies (2019), English: Understanding Contemporary First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Voices, Grade 11, University Preparation (NBE3U). A = First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Perspectives and Text Forms in Canada, B = Oral Communication, C = Reading and Literature Studies, D = Writing, E = Media Studies.

Learning goals and success criteria

Learning goals	Success criteria
• We are learning to formulate effective inquiry questions. • We are learning to plan research for a purpose and audience.	• I can explain what an inquiry stance is. • I can improve a question so it is specific and open. • I can draft a course inquiry question with sub-questions. • I can plan where to find answers, starting with Indigenous sources.

Materials and preparation

- **Slides:** Asking Better Questions deck.

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- **Handouts:** Question Ladder (page 1), My Course Question (page 2).
- **Reading log:** Students' notes from Lessons 1 to 6.

Lesson sequence

Time (min)	Part	Teacher	Students	Look for
0–8	**Warm-up**	Questions we're afraid to ask.	Write.	
8–20	**Inquiry stance**	What and why.	Note.	
20–40	**Question ladder**	Sort and improve.	Sort.	Questions improved.
40–60	**Course question**	Draft.	Write.	Specific and open.
60–75	**Plan**	Where to look.	Plan.	

Differentiation

- **Support:** A bank of starter questions for each theme.
- **ELL:** Question words chart.
- **Challenge:** Write a question that combines two themes.

Assessment

Type	Tool	Purpose
Assessment for learning	Question Ladder and course question draft	Formulating questions (A1.2), purpose and audience (D1.1) and generating and focusing ideas (D1.2)

Better questions: key points

- **Inquiry stance:** Approach as a learner: curious, humble, open to changing your mind, and aware of whose knowledge you are learning from.
- **Effective questions:** Specific, open (not yes/no), researchable, and respectful.
- **Ladder:** “Why are treaties important?” → “How do the Nations connected to our land describe the promises of their treaty, and how have those promises been kept?”
- **Themes as lenses:** Identity, relationships, and self-determination each open different questions about the same text.
- **Sources:** Start with what Nations, organizations and creators say themselves.

Teacher notes

- Students will carry their course question through the semester: it shapes the Unit 1 research brief, their reading log, and the independent study.

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- Some questions are better asked of books and sources than of classmates. Do not ask Indigenous students to speak for their communities, to share personal or family histories, or to act as experts. Every student's participation in sharing is optional.
- We strongly recommend reviewing this unit with your board's Indigenous education lead and, where possible, inviting a First Nations, Métis or Inuit Elder, Knowledge Keeper or guest speaker following your board's protocols (including offerings and honoraria). Local Nations' own sources come first.

Coming up

Lesson 8, The Names We Carry.

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