



## Using enquiry questions in learning activities.

The following slides are taken from the Scottish Council on Archives workshop on enquiry learning.

They have been adapted for use as a free-standing resource for archives staff. Please use this set of slides in conjunction with the resource files available in the Education section our website

[www.scottisharchives.org.uk](http://www.scottisharchives.org.uk)

This workshop is about using Enquiry Questions as a way of exploring archive records with school students.

The approach can also be used with older students, community groups and others.

Enquiry questions are intended to move beyond information-gathering to foster students' curiosity about a subject, inviting speculation, invention, comparison as a means of discovering knowledge and understanding for themselves.

Enquiry learning encourages students to make decisions about the direction of their research.

Read the following extract from Christian Watt Marshall's book *A Stranger On The Bars*

“My mother came home again from Fife, once more in a broken state. We were all stunned. Even after 60 years it's still painful. In the first week we tried to tell ourselves it wasn't true but, when a large parcel arrived from the military hospital in France where James had died, we were forced to accept the grim reality.

My sister opened it and screamed at the pitch of her voice. It was the possessions of the late Private James Sim – a Gordon kilt and a tunic drenched in blood with two of my mother's letters in the pocket. My mother wanted to know why Margaret had screamed, but we never told her. I said it was the green coat she had sent to Perth to be dyed black. I showed my mother the coat which had arrived with the same post.

We dug a hole on the brae head under the clothes poles, and when our neighbour Gamrie Donald realised what we were doing, he dug it deeper for us. He was a kind man. We buried the kilt and tunic and most of the small trifles in the parcel. We kept James' watch, but hid it away from my mother. At least some of his blood had returned to his birth place.”

*Once you have read the extract by Christian Watt Marshall, consider the following questions:*

- How did receiving the parcel change the women's experience of James' death ?
- Why do you think they never told their mother about the kilt and tunic ?
- Why might they have chosen the brae head under the clothes poles to bury the kilt and tunic ?
- Why was it important to Christian Marshall that James' blood 'returned to his birthplace' ?
- Why do you think they chose his watch to keep ?

*These are examples of enquiry questions which are intended to promote discussion and speculation in a group.*

*Enquiry questions do not have straightforward answers. They are pathways in discussion and further research.*



Here is another example of using enquiry questions to investigate archived records. This activity is taken from the Hard Vrocht Grun resource about the domestic experience of World War One, published by Aberdeenshire Council in 2014 and used by permission.

Read through the newspaper articles from 1914 on the following pages, and consider the questions that follow.

*Arthur Burn was the only son of M.P. Colonel Burn and the grandson of the Laird of Fyvie. He was killed in action on October 30th 1914 at the age of 22.*

**LIEUT. ARTHUR H. R. BURN  
KILLED IN ACTION.  
M.P. 1904.  
LORD LEITH'S GRANDSON.**

Lieutenant Arthur Herbert Rowley Burn, 3rd Royal Dragoon, was killed in action on Tuesday, intelligence of his death, fighting for his King and country, having been communicated to his mother, the Hon. Mrs Burn, wife of Colonel C. Rowley Burn, and daughter of Lord and Lady Leith of Fyvie.

Lieutenant Burn, who left Oxford to join his father's old regiment, the 3rd Royal Dragoon, about two months ago, had been at the front for only ten days. He was 22 years of age, having been born on June 25, 1882, in Eng-



Mr Arthur Burn.

land, while his father was aide-de-camp to the Duke of Connaught. Prior to entering Oxford, after having received his earlier education at Bonn, he spent a year at Heidelberg, Germany, studying the language. He left Oxford, he stated, only this autumn.

Much of his time was spent on the Fyvie estate, and his love for that district was intense. Combining with a splendid physique a modest manner, a simplicity of manner and disposition, he was regarded by all the tenants and residents with feelings of esteem. An expert rider, and possessed of a fondness for the gun and rod, Lieutenant Burn was a thorough and skilful sportsman.

Tactfulness in the regard in which he was held was afforded in the spontaneity of the rejoicing on the Fyvie estate which he attained his majority. The blow is all the more heavy in view of that recent event.

No details are yet available as to the circumstances in which Lieutenant Burn met his death. Colonel Burn, his father, is at present also serving with the Expeditionary Force, and has been in action.

Lord Leith of Fyvie's only son lost his life in South Africa during the war of 1899-1902. The other members of the family of Colonel and the Hon. Mrs Burn are Mrs Laura Maxwell and Master Robert Ian Alpinson.

**COLONEL BURN'S APPEAL TO  
FOOTBALLERS.**

London Shocked.

London was shocked yesterday, and rather disgusted to learn that the only result of Colonel Burn's noble and stirring appeal delivered at half-time at the Chelsea v. Nottingham match at Stamford Bridge on Saturday afternoon was one heated gaze the "Glasgow Herald". There was a crowd of 25,000 present, and a respectful attention was accorded to Colonel Burn. "As a soldier," he said, "I ask you, I can not say go. I say, 'Come, your country needs you. One man today is worth ten in a month's time. I have been at the front since the war began. I leave for the front again to-morrow—for the stage where my elder boy has already died a glorious death for his country.' The appeal fell on deaf ears, for the London Central Recruiting Office said yesterday to attribute the result to the gallant Colonel Burn's appeal.

**"I'VE GIVEN MY SON": M.P.'S APPEAL.**



Colonel Burn, M.P., makes an eloquent appeal for recruits at the Chelsea v. Nottingham football match at Stamford Bridge. "I've given my son—he's gone—and if I had nine I'd give every one of them," he said.

Arthur Burn was the son of The Laird of Fyvie, Colonel Burn, M.P

The Hard Vrocht Grun resource contains the following enquiry questions about these newspaper reports:

- *Why was Arthur Burn's death so widely reported ?*
- *Why do you think Colonel Burn chose to address a football crowd in the days after his son's death?*
- *Why do you think Colonel Burn said that if he had nine sons he would give them all in the cause of the War ?*
- *Do you believe him ? Why ?*
- *Why did Col. Burn describe his son's death as 'glorious' ?*
- *What do the newspaper reports suggest to you about media attitudes towards the War ?*
- *Why do you think the Colonel's appeal to the football crowd seemed to fail to encourage recruitment ?*



## Learning approaches in schools

Much school-based learning is still led from the front because of the need for classroom management and because of the requirement in the curriculum to achieve specific knowledge outcomes.

This is called “directed learning”.

Directed learning is useful where a particular knowledge framework needs to be established before students can decide the best directions for their own research.



## ***Directed learning and enquiry learning often go hand-in-hand.***

An unfortunate byproduct of directed learning can be an over-emphasis on getting the “right answer” at the expense of considering different perspectives on a subject.

Consequently in our schools students can end up feeling that being wrong about something is the worst thing that can happen, and they become reluctant to speculate about ideas.

This can be counter-productive when working with archive records, where we might need to consider different possibilities. For example, names can be spelled several different ways on successive census records, and we need to speculate about similarities between names in order to know where to look for further evidence.

*Here are some examples of Enquiry Questions from the British Columbia year 12 curriculum. Each question is designed to lead to further investigation of the available information, and to stimulate discussion about the relevance of information:*

- If JFK was such a popular president, why was he assassinated?
- How did codebreaking in WWII contribute towards the Allied victory?
- How did Hitler manage to captivate and motivate an entire country?
- From a terrorist's point of view, was the 9/11 attack considered a success and why?
- Did the positive effects of Lenin's rule outweigh the negative effects?
- What were the effects of the Vietnam War on America in economic, social and political terms?
- Why were Ghandi's peaceful protests more effective than violent revolution in India?
- What events changed the Italians' opinion of Mussolini from a hero to a villain?
- What were the roots of Hitler's anti-Semitism?
- What or who inspired the birth of Communism?

## ***Structures for Enquiry Questions:***

- How is -----related to ----- ?
- What is a new example of -----?
- What are some possible solutions for the problem of -----?
- Explain why ----- .
- What do you think would happen if -----?
- Why is ----- important?



These are enquiry questions because they require further definitions and a strategy to be devised before they can be answered.

We construct the questions from our curiosity, observation, interaction and imagination

In Enquiry Learning we assemble knowledge and acquire understanding in response to questions about our experience.

**Step 1 in creating an enquiry-based education activity** is choosing appropriate records and asking insightful questions.

*How do you think you can choose appropriate records ?*

## War memorials activity

Here is an example of an enquiry learning activity taken from the *Hard Vrocht Grun* resource published by Aberdeenshire Council in 2014.

It uses a set of photographs of war memorials from Aberdeenshire. You can view these photographs in the *pdf* document "War Memorial Images" from the Education section of the Scottish Council on archives website.

When you have looked through the photographs consider the questions in the next slide and make some notes about how you might formulate enquiry questions about them.



*What questions come to mind when you look through these materials ?*

*What information might students need to have before they can use enquiry questions ?*

*Where's the narrative ?*

*How might these materials be relevant and interesting to students ?*

*Enquiry questions are intended to foster curiosity about the materials and the wider context in which they sit. What might the wider or related contexts be for these materials ?*

**Using these ideas, devise some Enquiry questions using the formats described earlier.**

**Try doing this before looking at the questions contained in the resource, which are listed on the next slide.**

## **Hard Vrocht Grun resource questions on Aberdeenshire War Memorials.**

*These questions are intended to be used by students in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of High School, aged around 14 years.*

What do you think was the purpose of building these memorials ?

What do you think the designers were intending to express in these different memorial designs ?

Which ones do you find particularly meaningful or appropriate ? Why ?

What purpose do they serve now ?

Look closely at the photograph of the Stonehaven memorial inauguration.

What do the hats tell you about who is attending this ceremony ?

*Further research directions:*

*Investigate the commissioning and design of your local war memorial.*

*Research different memorial inscriptions from the area. How were they chosen ?*

**Step 2 in creating an Enquiry Learning based education activity** is to get students devising their own research questions and setting about answering them with further research.

This sets a direction for their own research and gives them the task of finding appropriate sources of information.

Collaboration is the key to this activity.

While research can be undertaken individually, it is often in discussion and exchange that ideas develop and diversify.

*The Aberdeenshire resource provides three example directions for research, encouraging the students to create their own or to modify one of the ones provided.*

*Students have access to a local history society and Aberdeenshire agencies such as registrars, archives, libraries and museums to provide expertise and research materials, but the students must lead the research.*



These three research questions are provided in the *Hard Vrocht Grun* resource, within the “Loss, Return and Commemoration” unit. Students could use one of these, adapt one or devise their own in consultation with their teacher.

**What was people’s experience of loss in the Great War, and how did it affect them ?**

**How did people choose to commemorate the Great War at the time ?  
What remains now of these commemorations, and what has been added ?**

**What was the experience of service men and women who returned from fighting in the Great War, and how did it affect them ?**

**Step 3 in creating a Enquiry-based education activity is reporting the research findings.**

Students can also consider how the research might be assessed, and this too informs their choice of reporting format.

By giving students choices about what they research, how they present their findings and how their work is assessed we engage them with the education process as well as engaging their curiosity and imagination in the learning itself.

They have an investment in the outcome of the work if they have been involved in devising it.

**What reporting formats might be relevant to the War memorials topic ?**

The Hard Vrocht Grun resource provides three example reporting formats for 3rd/4th year students based on Expressive Arts approaches:

**Photography Project**

**Memorial Design Project**

**Commemorative ceremony**

# Photography project

Investigate the local war memorial; its physical surroundings, design, the details of wording, imagery and symbolism, its colouring, its history and the ceremonies associated with it.

Find a way of photographing the memorial in a way that you think reflects the community feeling it was intended to express; for example does it express pride, or sorrow, or heroism, or anger, or patriotism, or other feelings ? Perhaps it reflects a mixture of these ?

Try photographing the memorial in different light and at different times of the day, or with different types of lenses, close-up and from far away or unexpected angles. Apply photographic effects.

Create an exhibition of at least six photographs involving the memorial, which you think expresses the intentions and feelings that the people of the time had when they created it.



# Memorial Design project

Investigate your local war memorial; its physical surroundings, design, the details of wording, imagery and symbolism, its colouring, its history and the ceremonies associated with it.

Decide what it is that the memorial is intended to express. For example does it express pride, or sorrow, or heroism, or anger, or patriotism, or other feelings? Perhaps it reflects a mixture of these?

Investigate how the memorial expresses these things, through shapes and symbols, location, colour, words, texture and materials.

Create a design for your own war memorial to replace this one, expressing the same intentions and feelings. Specify the materials to be used, the size and location, the words and symbols, colour and texture.

You can create your design as a model, a set of technical drawings, computer generated images or another medium that you think accurately represents your ideas

# Commemorative ceremony

Investigate the local war memorial; its physical surroundings, design, the details of wording, imagery and symbolism, its colouring, its history.

Research details of ceremonies, rituals and traditions associated with the local memorial. Research an annual commemorative ceremony that takes place at the war memorial either locally or in a nearby town or city. Investigate the different activities that form the ceremony and what they mean, who is involved and what the ceremony means to those who attend.

Using this information create your own ceremony to commemorate the Great War. You can decide whether this is a modern ceremony, or one intended to take place at the inauguration of the memorial just after the War.

Specify the people who are take part, music and words, actions, timing, clothing and objects, how to start and finish the ceremony. Your work should explain the meaning of the different elements of the ceremony.

You can display your work as an enactment of the ceremony with explanatory notes or commentary, a film or set of photographs of the ceremony taking place, with explanatory notes, or in another form that you think communicates your ceremony design clearly.

## **Summary of the process for creating enquiry learning activities:**

1. Choose the right records
2. Look for a narrative
3. How are the records relevant and interesting to students ?
4. Identify the connections to a wider context, and the curriculum
5. Identify what prior information students may need and where it can be obtained
6. Define potential directions for further research
7. Create enquiry questions
8. Create further research questions
9. Define relevant and achievable methods of reporting research

### **The enquiry process for students:**

- Ask relevant questions
- Investigate
- Create connections between findings
- Discuss, collaborate, share ideas
- Reflect and report



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