What Does Inquiry Look Like at Andersen Elementary?

At Andersen Elementary, inquiry is the foundation of our Primary Years Programme (PYP). We believe meaningful learning begins with **student curiosity**. Our units of inquiry are designed to be **authentic, relevant, and engaging**, allowing students to:

- Ask questions based on their interests and wonderings
- Make connections to prior knowledge and real-world issues
- Develop conceptual understanding and critical thinking skills
- Engage in problem-solving across disciplines
- Master state academic standards through purposeful exploration

We follow Kath Murdoch's inquiry cycle, which guides learners through a process of **tuning in, finding out, sorting out, going further, making conclusions, and taking action**. This structure helps students learn *how* to learn, not just *what* to learn.

Inquiry in Math: The 5E Model

In math instruction, we extend our inquiry-based approach through **5E inquiry math lessons**: **Engage, Explore, Explain, Elaborate, Evaluate**. These lessons promote active learning and ensure students:

- Construct their own understanding of math concepts
- Persevere through problem-solving
- Make real-world connections
- Communicate and justify their thinking

By combining **conceptual inquiry** with **explicit instruction**, students build a strong foundation in both math fluency and mathematical reasoning.

How Inquiry Supports Our District Vision

Inquiry-based learning at Andersen supports **Chandler Unified School District's (CUSD) vision** of a safe, engaging environment where students are active participants in meaningful learning. Through inquiry, our students develop the traits in the **Portrait of a Learner**—becoming critical thinkers, effective communicators, and global citizens. This approach nurtures a lifelong love of learning and helps students grow into the thoughtful, reflective individuals CUSD 80 values.

Why Combine Inquiry and Explicit Instruction?

We believe that **explicit instruction and inquiry are not opposites—they are powerful partners**:

- Literacy skills provide access to the inquiry process and deepen content understanding
- Targeted skill instruction is embedded within meaningful learning contexts
- Background knowledge developed through inquiry supports stronger reading comprehension
- Inquiry-based experiences build a flexible, transferable skill set across domains