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## Student-Powered Inquiry-Based Learning

The author and entrepreneur Seth Godin said, "Educators are stealing the dreams of young people." By this, he means that schools place an overwhelming emphasis on delivering a standardized curriculum while the individual talents and aspirations of the learner are being ignored. But now, modern technology and novel approaches to learning are opening the door for change. An example of this is what students are doing at the Inquiry Hub, a small, award-winning public secondary school located in the Coquitlam School District in BC. The school's motto is Dream, Create, Learn, which was conceived by students when it first opened in 2012.

This is a school of choice. Students who attend this school work on the provincial curriculum, but they are also given time and support to do group projects, self-directed work, and inquiries (less at lower grades and progressively more at every grade). Many of the current and former student projects are featured on the school website ([inquiryhub.org](http://inquiryhub.org)). They range from small business start-ups and community service to invention, choreography, horticulture, literature and book publishing, fashion design, and performing arts production.

I had the opportunity to see what students were doing when I toured the school with the principal, David Truss. I watched a team of students working on a coding project, creating a computer game that simulates business practice. Maiya was mixing and producing her own music, which can be found on Spotify. Ben, who loves rock climbing, was creating an app to help other enthusiasts find local climbing spots. The app includes visuals that map out climbing routes. What struck me about these students—as well as their creativity—was the enthusiasm they had for what they were working on.

*It's all about the process.*  
Thia, Grade 10

When students are emotionally invested in the learning process, commitment and performance will typically go up. Scott Barry Kaufman, a psychologist who studies learning and creativity, said, "If we want to see what young people are capable of achieving intellectually and creatively, we have to engage them in activities that matter to them." By linking students to their personal interests and their own creativity, they can explore questions like: What do I love? What am I good at? What problems can we solve? What do we want to create? Why is this important? How will we figure this out? What might we contribute to the world? It's within this productive struggle and its inherent ambiguity that students can build a self-inventory of creative and adaptive capabilities. These life-building skills will transfer beyond the project and the classroom. Students can discover what's possible for themselves and what they're capable of.

**Passion → Purpose → Process → Possibility**

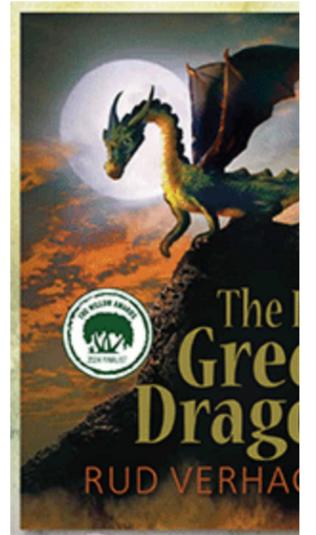
We live in a rapidly changing world. Creativity and innovation have increasing cultural and economic value. These capacities can also become pathways for discovery and personal development. Schools like the Inquiry Hub are quietly leading education in a new direction—one that is more aligned with the world we currently live in and the individuality of the learner. Teachers there are stepping away from the paradigm of standardization and micromanagement. Instead, they are fostering real-world inquiry-driven learning. This learner-centred approach encourages young people to pursue their dreams and realize their own unique potential for the benefit of the planet.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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