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Talk Less, Ask More to Improve Learning

Experience Inquiry provides teachers with the strategies and exercises to drive student engagement and critical thinking

Seattle, WA (September 6, 2018) – One of the top-rated professors at the University of Washington in Seattle, Kimberly L. Mitchell, just published her first book, *Experience Inquiry*. Mitchell teaches popular undergraduate courses, such as *Teaching as a Profession*, *Adult Learning and Development*, and *Comparative International Education*.

Yet it's her teaching style, not just the content, that draws effusive praise from her students. University of Washington sophomore, Kaitlyn Lee, says "Professor Mitchell's magic is in *how* she designs her lessons. I've never talked so much or thought so deeply in a university class before." Her secret? "I avoid lectures like the plague," says Mitchell.

Mitchell started teaching 25 years ago and has spent the bulk of her career observing and working with teachers in K-12 schools around the world. "The teachers who lead engaging and cognitively demanding classrooms are skilled at stepping back. It's their students who start generating questions and leading discussions," Mitchell reflects. Her book outlines the strategies she uses to get students to engage in these activities.

While this style of 'inquiry-based' teaching is not necessarily new, it is not regularly implemented in most classrooms. Inquiry involves asking challenging questions and then stepping back, so students can engage in a "productive struggle" to find answers. "Think of Socrates in dialogue with his students under an olive tree," adds Mitchell. "He doesn't give answers; his students draw conclusions on their own."

With the many curricular demands placed on teachers, inquiry can feel time-consuming and inefficient. This method, however, is more effective at improving student understanding, retention and building investigative skills.

Many educators have praised Mitchell for promoting inquiry-based teaching, especially at a time when students can easily access information and lectures online. "We need to rethink the purpose of bringing students physically together in a classroom when they can Google just about anything," says Mitchell. The role of the teacher is even more critical, Mitchell asserts. "Students today need a lot of guidance on how to locate, evaluate, and use the information they find online."

Respected educators agree. "She gets it," writes Deborah Meier, celebrated educator, author and MacArthur Fellow. Dr. Pedro Noguera, distinguished professor of education at UCLA, calls Mitchell's book "the 'must have' reflective journal and resource for inquiry-based teachers."

“Teaching can be isolating. More than writing a book, I want to bring teachers together in a meaningful and focused way,” explained Mitchell. *Experience Inquiry* provides concrete agendas to help shape teacher meetings and guide professional learning time. Mitchell has outlined 50 exercises (called ‘experiences’) teachers can try on their own or, ideally, with other teachers in their school.

In addition to teaching at the University of Washington, Mitchell leads the [College of Education’s Ambassador Board](#). She is the founder of [Inquiry Partners](#), an organization that helps teachers implement inquiry moves. She has held leadership positions at [Teach for All](#), the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#), and several schools around the world. *Experience Inquiry* will be released just in time for the start of school, in early September 2018, by Corwin Press.

To order copies of *Experience Inquiry*, please contact Corwin Press <https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/experience-inquiry/book259906>.

For more information about Kimberly L. Mitchell and Inquiry Partners, please visit www.inquirypartners.com and Twitter #ExperienceInquiry.

To schedule an author visit, please email Kimberly L. Mitchell directly at klasher@mac.com.

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