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Borrowing Avid Inquiry: Getting to the Essential Question in the English Classroom

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by

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AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Kaidi Stroud grew up Mattapoisett, Massachusetts and graduated valedictorian of the class of 1999 from Old Rochester Regional High School. She attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill where she received a Bachelor of Arts in English Literature and a minor in Creative Writing in 2003. While there, she also studied abroad at the University of Wollongong in Australia.

Kaidi comes from a family of educators and worked in a variety of educational settings before she decided to attend Boise State University in order to obtain a Masters in English, Education as well as a teaching certificate for English at the secondary level. After teaching grade levels from preschool to college, she is still uncertain which level of teaching she will pursue after graduation, but she knows teaching and learning will continue to humble her.

ABSTRACT

There is a danger as new teachers struggle with how to implement their educational theories in the classroom to fall back into teaching how they have been taught, regardless of whether or not that method is appropriate to their beliefs or considered best-practice. In order to combat that tendency, this teacher-research project was designed to problem-solve the often-times conflicting relationship between curriculum and theory that all too often results in fall-back teaching. But also, this project aimed to collect and analyze student work in order to better inform instruction in a way that was both reflective and active.

Specifically, the context of this project was a student-internship in a ninth grade English classroom in Boise, Idaho where intern, Kaidi Stroud, and mentor, Sarah Veigel explored the instructional benefits of teaching students how to *question* texts, rather than simply respond to texts. This specific instructional intervention evolved from an exploration of a new district-wide program, AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination), and utilized Costa's levels of questioning and Bloom's hierarchy of cognitive skills (AVID Center, 2008). The findings indicate that providing direct and explicit instruction on this questioning framework promotes critical literacy, debate, responsibility, and higher-level thinking in students.

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