



The need to knows that initiated inquiry at the beginning of the project are central to students' learning as they follow the project path. Need to knows are revisited throughout the project in order to track learning and support sustained inquiry.

WHY IS IT USEFUL?

Any robust project initially generates a long thoughtful list of need to knows. As a result it follows that it will take rigorous and sustained inquiry to answer them. In this process, revisiting the need to knows maintains students' buy-in by reminding them that they are engaged in answering their own questions, creates a sense of accomplishment as students gain the understanding to answer them, and provides an opportunity for students' voice as they pose new questions that arise.



WHAT DO I DO?

Some general steps to revisiting need to knows are as follows:

STEPS	INSIGHTS/ SUGGESTIONS
<p>BEFORE A LESSON: As you're planning, refer to the need to knows in order to determine the most appropriate sequence of lessons and activities that will support the students' inquiry process. For a particular lesson or activity, identify the need to knows that will be addressed.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include your students in the planning process by working with them to prioritize the need to knows both in importance and order to be addressed.
<p>DURING A LESSON: Ground a lesson or activity by starting off revisiting the need to know list and explaining how the activity supports acquisition of knowledge or skills needed to answer the questions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the shared need to know list, highlight the specific questions that will be addressed in the activity. • If there will be multiple steps in knowledge or skill acquisition and in answering the need to know, make those connections explicit and the inquiry path clear and transparent. • When supporting students engaged in online research, lead students in a discussion to generate possible keywords for web searches related to each need to know.

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<p>AFTER A LESSON: End the lesson or activity by referring to the need to know list in order to gauge whether the questions have been answered and see if new questions have emerged.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A structured, yet informal process like Think-Pair-Share, or an exit ticket provides students the time and space to do this thoroughly. • By having students justify their responses, you can use this step to assess students' understanding of concepts related to the resolved need to knows. • Don't forget to add new questions to the need to know list!
<p>AT THE END OF THE PROJECT: After project presentation, need to knows can be used to initiate students' reflection on their learning in the project.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubrics offer a framework for students to consider how the need to knows are connected to their depth of content understanding. • Since need to knows were student generated in the first place, they should be used for both self-assessment of content knowledge and reflection on their own learning process. By reflecting on the role of need to knows in their own learning, students reinforce the value of questioning and inquiry. • A great way to close out students' project journals is with a final entry reflecting on the need to knows and the inquiry process. • In order to demonstrate that most inquiry processes lead to more questions than answers, use both the answered and unanswered need to knows to generate new questions that future inquiry could tackle. If these questions align with other standards to be taught, you might have your next project in the making!

TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS



There's a lesson that students need but they have not listed it as a need to know.

Since the need to knows were generated by students at the beginning of the project, it's likely that the need to knows won't include questions that guide the inquiry or learning in some of the lessons during a project. If the lesson has a clear connection to the project, preview the lesson with your students and help them to see how the upcoming lesson connects or generates new need to knows.



GOT TECH?

Consider collecting need to knows in Google Docs as well as on an anchor chart in the room. In a digital format, students can take charge of the need to knows throughout the project by answering them, tracking progress, and adding new questions and resources.