

Scaredy School Teacher has a contingency plan in case of emergency:

EXIT PLAN “top secret”

Exit 1 Note to self: Watch out for instructional designs that focus on “soft skills”. Students need more back to the basics. Get out your tried & true lessons from your old plan book.

Exit 2 Note to self: Do not agree to performance based assessments. If unavoidable, follow up with your old paper & pencils tests you have always used.

Exit 3 Note to self: Look out for people who want you to redo your old unit plans. You do not have time for that. Don't pick up the phone when they call and if you see them, throw pencils at them.

Exit 4 Note to self: Keep in mind that parents will question what you are doing in class; remember that is what call display is for!

With his emergency kit in hand, Scaredy School Teacher watches and waits. Day after day he watches until one day ... Thursday 3:45 pm:

His colleague, Mr. Innovation appears and corners him in his classroom. Mr. Innovation is so excited that he has to share how well his inquiry based learning project is going in his own classroom! Scaredy School Teacher is cautious but and asks Mr. Innovation more about it.

Forgetting about his emergency kit, Mr. Scaredy

School Teacher follows him back to his class to see some of the student's work in progress.

This was NOT part of the Plan.

Scaredy School Teacher is amazed by the quality of learning evident in the student work. The students are highly motivated and their level of understanding is much deeper than that of his own students.

Something incredible happens ...

He starts to wonder.

Can he get his students to be more engaged in the learning? Can he give students more opportunity to think critically, solve problems and work collaboratively? Is this inquiry stuff better teaching practice?

He's starting to think he is a Progressive Teacher!

He feels overjoyed! Adventurous! Carefree! Alive!

Scaredy School Teacher forgets all about his old plan book, not to mention all his old unit tests. He asks Mr. Innovation to collaborate with him on an inquiry unit they will roll out together next term.

Until he gets into day 1 of planning ...

And it is challenging to think about teaching in this new way. ■

Fontichiaro, K. (2009). Nudging toward Inquiry: Re-Envisioning Existing Research Projects. *School Library Monthly*, 26(1), 17-19.

Watt, M. (2006). *Scaredy squirrel*. Kids Can Press Ltd.