

Mary Catherine Bateson's reflective inquiry is a unique educational approach. In Bateson's philosophy inquiry and learning are synonymous practices. She explains why and how inquiry is practiced. Unlike other inquisitors she places human behavior at the background of culture. She states "All views of the world are acquired, and learning a way of seeing the world offers both insight and blindness, usually at the same time." Through reflective writing she probes deep into experiences for understanding of cultural constructs dictating behavior. Realizing these external factors enables the removal of societal blind spots affecting her worldview. In turn peripheral vision develops and life is seen from new perspectives. Through this fresh perception individuals compose their lives into a meaningful purpose driven story. This personal narrative is continuously written throughout a lifetime. Essentially her thinking model provides a reason for learning along the way of life.

Bateson emphasizes reflective writing as a means of introspective discovery. A reason for this is writing allows self clarification. Through her imagery and metaphors she communicates her perspectives in meaningful ways. Furthermore by writing individuals discover what is truly important by recreating ideas on paper.

All her work is framed through the participant observation model. She focuses not on herself but on individual's experiences within a group. Importantly she is more interested in the circumstances causing behavior than human action. Many philosophers claim truth is obtained by removing oneself so one can observe elements alone or without bias. Bateson's still writes first hand accounts but in her own distinct way preserves the vantage points of others. All the while she makes personal experience meaningful and shows existing life lessons through interactions.

Bateson's meditative inquiry is most appropriate in helping solve education's three biggest problems. The first issue is a lack of students' motivation. School emphasizes what students do not know. Many pupils grow frustrated because much of the curriculum has no correlation in their lives. However Bateson's central theme is learning from all personal experiences. Unlike others in her field she does not care what, how, or where students learn. Her point of emphasis is students maturing as a result of their experiences. Thus regardless of the circumstances individuals can always grow. In any case if a student is not interested in Biology from attending the class productive interactions still occur. Therefore learning is not confined in school. School is only the beginning of the life long learning process. She takes knowledge from the crux of education and enters a student centered model. In this way of inquiry students apply information as well as the way they learn in a way that fits them. The result is intrinsic incentive for student's continual development into self actualization.

The second concern is student's lack of reasoning in cognitive processes. Bateson teaches students how to think and understand the interactions of their world. She ascertains students are largely formed through unscripted daily interaction. Many times students are unaware or unable to process these occurrences. Therefore students miss out on major life lessons because they cannot see the forest for the trees. By enlightening students of the effects around them students can make better educated decisions. As students understand how to think and know why information is useful performance in school should increase dramatically.

The third problem schools face is students lack emotional intelligence. All of the violence and discipline problems are caused by students not understanding self expression. Through reflective writing individuals lay out their feelings as well as their emotions. Ideally through this process individuals can learn better control of their emotions. Also having a better understanding of ones self students can then effectively communicate their feelings with others. As Bateson explains through learning about others problems we learn more about ourselves. Therefore hearing others inquiry inspires our own self inspection. Reconciling how one should act in contrast with how one wants to act is major accomplishment in the life learning journey.

Mary Catherine Bateson's inquiry is highly applicable for all stakeholders in education. The results of her inquiry are largely personal as well as professional. However in her mind no difference exists in the aforementioned areas. Implementing her form of inquiry will result in a much improved educational environment. Her method of discovery provides a new guide of living life. This guide provides rejuvenating therapy for facilitators who have forgotten how learning occurs. A primary theme she promotes is life long learning. This commitment is a trademark of successful educators. Bateson exclaims everyone should have an active eye for continual ways of improvement. One way of upgrading is using effective teaching strategies. Better training strategies result from a clearer understanding of the cause of student's behavior. These strategies are based on an anthropologist view of our students. This particular viewpoint is a byproduct of insightful inquiry. Another part of life long learning is comparing individual pedagogical strategies. Bateson proclaims "inquiry always means testing our ideas against what others think and our methods against others as well." In her ideology no concrete right or wrong exists. So through this comparison two possible outcomes result. Teachers find their philosophies are correct and affirm their execution. Alternatively teachers see needed alterations and make adjustments accordingly. In the end teachers comprehend themselves as well as others in better than ever before. Furthermore through understanding strengths and weaknesses appropriate goals of achievement are established. Teachers defining personal objectives further pushes educators into optimal performance at all stages of life.

In conclusion Bateson distinctive form of inquiry is best defined in her own words. "How it is that we can think and act in our work while we gain more knowledge of ourselves--and make what we have learned in both capacities known to others as compelling inquiry." In effect she has shown the need for inquiry about inquiry. Not only does she show how we learn but the manner in which this is best communicated for others. Most importantly she demonstrates not only who we are but who we can be if we open our eyes and learn along the way.