HI, my name is Cindy Batman and I am the liaison to the Library and Information Sciences Department at UNT. I have worked at UNT Dallas and Denton as a librarian for several years. I have found the opportunity to help students learn to do research is the most exciting and gratifying part of my job. It is such fun to lead others to the treasure chest full of rich resources, where they can find the answers for their assignments.

I had the opportunity to go to a conference in New Jersey last year and met my hero, Dr. Carol Kuhlthau. She was a school librarian and developed the Information Search Process (ISP) model as a result of watching her students get completely frustrated while trying to do research in her library. The students couldn't decide on a topic, and then when they did begin to narrow their focus, they were happy, momentarily. Then they realized they didn't know where to start searching for information. They would be overwhelmed if the librarian gave them too many choices, and would likely be just as concerned and want to switch topics again if given too few resources.

Kuhlthau and her daughters, both educators, developed the Guided Inquiry model which makes the ISP model more easily applicable in grades K-12. During the conference I had the opportunity to hear experiences of librarians and teachers from all over the world who are using this method to get their students engaged in learning. They give the Guided Inquiry method rave reviews. Guided Inquiry puts ownership and responsibility for learning in the hands of the students. The students feel empowered.

Do you remember your own aaaha! moments in school?

Guided Inquiry is pretty straight forward:

1. Partner with a teacher and their students and work together as a Team

2. Show a video, take a field trip, or read a book together

3. Talk about the experience with your Team

4. Ask questions; don’t tell...What they found most interesting? Why?

5. Wonder out loud...How you could find out more on this topic?

6. Wonder out loud...Where could you find more information?

7. Wonder out loud...How could you display the results?

A poster? A rap song? Video? 3-D model or even a paper? A skit? Role play?

8. What else would you like to learn on this topic?

9. Let the students dig around in the treasures of the library

10. You and your classroom teacher can stroll through the group, offer your insight, but keep moving

11. Coach, mentor, encourage and direct, and then get out of the way!

12. Young people are naturally curious. They are explorers, so let them explore.

I am trying to learn to apply this method in my instruction too. It is a change, but I believe it will be worth the effort to learn this new approach. After one semester, I believe your students will promote it for you! Cindy Batman, UNT Librarian