



# **HOLISTIC GROWTH THROUGH YOGA, PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

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## COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Smrita Singh <sup>1</sup>, Tanzeel Ahmed <sup>2</sup>, Ashutosh Singh Chauhan <sup>3</sup>

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### Abstract

Inquiry-based learning represents a transformative pedagogical approach that redefines the traditional model of education by placing students at the center of the learning process. Rather than being passive recipients of information, students actively engage with content through exploration, critical thinking, problem-solving, and collaborative inquiry. This method promotes not only cognitive development but also emotional, ethical, and social competencies. Inquiry-based learning fosters higher-order thinking skills, intellectual curiosity, emotional intelligence, ethical reasoning, and practical application of scientific knowledge to real-world issues. Furthermore, incorporating cultural contexts and an interdisciplinary framework enhances student engagement and personalizes the learning experience. Ultimately, inquiry-based education prepares students to navigate an increasingly complex world by empowering them with the skills needed for lifelong learning, responsible citizenship, and innovation.

**Key Words:** *Inquiry-based learning, cognitive development, higher-order thinking, critical thinking, cultural integration, real-world application.*

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## 1. Introduction

**I**nquiry-based learning is a progressive educational model that shifts the focus from passive knowledge absorption to active student participation. Instead of merely memorizing facts, students engage in questioning, exploration, and critical investigation, leading to a richer and more lasting understanding of the material. This process fosters autonomy and a deep connection to the learning journey, promoting both cognitive and emotional growth.

Through hands-on experimentation and problem-solving, students learn to formulate hypotheses, test ideas, gather and analyze evidence, and interpret results. Such experiences build resilience, adaptability, and the ability to tackle challenges creatively. Furthermore, inquiry-based learning fosters collaboration, communication, and openness to diverse viewpoints, enhancing both cognitive and social skills. It equips learners with the critical and innovative thinking capabilities required to thrive in a complex, rapidly evolving world.

## 2. Inquiry-Based Learning and Cognitive Development

### Cultivating Higher-Order Thinking

Inquiry-based learning emphasizes the development of higher-order thinking by requiring students to engage in deep research and active exploration. Students must apply analytical skills to gather information, interpret findings, and draw well-supported conclusions (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020). Rather than rote learning, the focus is on synthesis, evaluation, and creation of new knowledge.

### Emphasizing Active Learning

Students' direct involvement in inquiry activities leads to a more profound grasp of the material (Shanmugavelu et al., 2020). In this framework, teachers serve as facilitators rather than lecturers, supporting students' independent investigations and guiding their critical thinking processes (Nessipbayeva & Egger, 2015).

### Nurturing Intellectual Curiosity

Inquiry-based learning fosters an environment where students take joy in discovering answers and sharing knowledge, thus encouraging a