"Today's students will enter a job market that values skills and abilities far different from the traditional workplace talents that so ably served their parents and grandparents. They must be able to crisply collect, synthesize, and analyze information, then conduct targeted research and work with others to employ that newfound knowledge. In essence, students must learn how to learn, while responding to endlessly changing technologies and social, economic, and global conditions. But what types of teaching and learning will develop these skills? And, just as important, do studies exist that support their use?"

Research shows student-driven teaching practices are "not so much about seeking the right answer but about developing inquiring minds" and these practices consistently "yield significant benefits." In fact, "these practices were found to have a more significant impact on student performance than any other variable, including student background and prior achievement."

"Similarly, studies also show the widespread benefits of cooperative learning, in which small teams of students use a variety of activities to more deeply understand a subject. Each member is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping his or her teammates learn, so the group becomes a supportive learning environment."

Authors: Brigid Barron & Linda Darling-Hammond (2008)
Retrieved from http://www.edutopia.org/inquiry-project-learning-research

Instructional Priorities

Our goal is to foster greater student ownership and engagement in their learning. To do this we need structures in the classroom that teach independence, allow for student voice, and support collaborative learning, as well as productive individual, pair and group work.

- Math: incremental implementation of CMP and the Launch, Explore, Summarize lesson structure
- Humanities, Science, PE, and Health: implementation of workshop model

Professional Development Plan

	Focus	Goal(s)
Cycle 1 August 26	Building a Community of Learners	1. Establish classroom norms that foster a community of learners 2. Develop relationships that foster community 3. Establish routines and rituals that allow for a productive community of learners 4. Facilitate meaningful group or partner work that results in collaboration and meaning making.
Cycle 2 October 1	Collaborative Learning	1. Frequent opportunities for students to partner and problem solve 2. Engaging in exploration of authentic problems and ideas 3. Teach and establish and monitoring procedures for student interdependence. 4. Fostering a critical eye for the quality of work to be produced
Cycle 3 January 30	Autonomous Thinkers and Doers	1. Regular opportunities for students to self assess their habits of learning 2. Providing strategies and tools to help students persevere in challenging tasks 3. Fostering a sense of pride in the final product 4. Opportunities for students to find and apply resources appropriately

Developed by Afya Public Charter School