INQUIRY NOTEBOOK

1. Where did my questions come from? What type of thinking caused those questions to emerge?

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2. How did I know what resources to go to for information?

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3. How did the clues that I gathered from my resources come together to answer my questions? How did I need to think about the clues to piece together a pattern?

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4. Which graphic organizers did I use? Why?

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5. How did I form the larger ideas that developed from my study?

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6. When was I building big ideas from their component parts, i.e., thinking inductively?

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7. When was I testing big ideas by applying them to specific examples, i.e., thinking deductively?

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8. How would I characterize my reasoning and my feeling about the subject of my inquiry?

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In describing the inductive qualities of my thinking during my search, I might reflect on those times when I encountered anomalies, as, for instance, when I found a disconnect between the prevailing paradigms that deny that animals think abstractly without language and Ready’s demonstration of problem-solving abilities. I could certainly speak to the role of visual thinking in my inquiry as I interpreted photographs of Ready’s stride, formed three dimensional mental images of her skeleton, read x-rays and the fiberoptic images of her bones that appeared on the video monitor, and organized her pedigree and workout data into charts to search for hypotheses. To understand the nature versus nurture issue as it pertains to race-horse development caused me to see Ready’s development from genetic, nutritional, psychological, and sports medicine perspectives. These cognitive aspects of my search allowed me to formulate a new question, more substantive than many of its predecessors, for further exploration,

If equine intelligence is capable of development and if it contributes to racing performance, then what can be done to optimize the development of a horse’s intelligence?

Accomplishing this deepening of one’s questions is the hallmark of good inquiry.

I can also reflect on the feeling dimensions of the search: the risk taking that allowed me to approach, without restraints, these sometimes high-strung and very large and powerful animals; the intuition that guided my interpretation of their nonverbal communications; and the appreciations and passions that are kindled by an inquiry that takes on a life of its own. These, too, cried out for acknowledgement as I reflected on my experiences with this Thoroughbred. Ready has helped me to understand her species in many more ways than I could have anticipated at the start of this inquiry. And she has given me a precious something more. Ready has caused me to once again experience the joy of falling in love.

Authentic inquiry is as much an act of love as an exercise in logic.