NOII 2012-2013 Case Study

School: Woodbank Elementary School

SD 68 Nanaimo - Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members:

Scanning

K-3 students at Woodbank Elementary School will be given a focussed, value added assessment based on an essential learning outcome(s) for their grade both leading into and exiting the project. During the project students will be given tasks to support and monitor student progression for the outcome. (Math Work Stations: Diller 2011)

Focus

Will focusing on identified K-3 essential learning outcomes, through the use of differentiated workstations improve student performance as measured by assessment for and of learning?

Hunch

There are too many PLO's for each grade that often leading to superficial learning of numeracy concepts. In order to improve and deepen a student's understanding of a numeracy concept, spend a greater amount of time on a key essential outcome(s).

New professional learning

Professional staff had the opportunity to discuss in depth the PLO for their grade in math. Develop work stations to provide differentiation and independent practice. Through discussions, teachers evaluated the impact of narrowing the focus of an essential outcome on the numeracy learning of students.

Taking action

Initial steps were:

1. Identify the numeracy skills that each teacher believes are essential prerequisites for children to understand coming into their grade.
2. Analyze existing K-3 math curriculum to determine essential learning outcome(s) for each grade.
3. Develop a value added assessment to match each outcome. The Performance Standards applied to evaluate the assessment.

Checking

Through the process of finding essential learning outcomes, teachers became more aware of the language of math and focused on curricular expectations. Students benefitted by having more constructivist experiences in math. It was determined that more time needs to be spent on developing student's concrete understanding of a concept before moving on to the abstract. For

example, teachers discovered that students had a very superficial understanding of what the equals sign means and its role in balancing an equation.

Next fall Woodbank staff will be looking to create a baseline for math. When the staff gathers for a review of data from this school year, math may be an area that will be pursued. However, this will be determined at this time as there will be a 50% turn over in teaching staff.

Reflection/Advice:

As our time for finishing this project ran out, a checklist was suggested to see if student's performance improved. Globally it was determined that students benefitted from this process.

If a similar process is used in the fall, it needs to begin in Oct. /early Nov.