



2012-2013 AESN Inquiry Case Study

School Name: Glenview Elementary School

School District: NO. 57 (Prince George)

Inquiry Team Members: Anita Gray, Janice Elsenhiemer, Colleen Gurney, Shay Jones, Michelle Labonte, Sophia Raby, Claire Samyciawood, Kent Scheck, Sandra Stewart, Tracy Wiebe, Denise Wilson, Tim Yule, Kirsten Zogas

AESN Inquiry Question: *How will a continued emphasis on cross-grade learning and a teaching emphasis on metacognitive skills, AFL practices, and Indigenous learning help move our students into inquiry based learning?*

Scanning: During the scanning process, teachers realized and discussed the important processes and scaffolding needed for their learners to progress in inquiry based learning across the grades. They believed that the next step for their learners was to develop the oral language skills needed to present their inquiries and projects to an audience. Based on informal evidence collected, teachers confirmed at a final Learning Team Grant meeting held in 2012, that student oral language skills were lacking when they presented to an audience. Teachers also wanted to include younger primary students in inquiry based learning and believed that by focusing on oral language, this was an opportunity to include all learners in the inquiry learning process.

Focus: Teachers determined to explore and focus on the oral language skills needed when presenting an inquiry/inquiry project to an audience. They knew that their students needed to improve on their ability to clearly present and articulate their inquiry questions/projects using a variety of modalities (e.g. Smart Board or Power Point, poster, model, interview, report, and chart).

Hunch: In 2012, teachers collaborated to create age-appropriate rubrics which not only defined but helped to highlight the skills and attitudes involved in oral presentation across the grades. This tool helped teachers to understand and focus on the skills needed to help develop lessons, model, and scaffold these skills for their learners. The rubrics also helped teachers to develop a set of buddy coaching lessons that were implemented in 2012-2013 with partnering classes.

New Professional Learning: As teachers and students proceeded with their inquiry questions and projects, they were excited to learn how the rubrics helped to develop or co-develop criteria and provide specific language for feedback, self, and peer assessments. The rubrics also provided a foundation to help develop the buddy coaching lessons. Teachers commented that new learning became evident when big buddy coaches began to internalize the buddy coaching lessons they were modelling for their younger learners when they presented their own inquiries/inquiry projects.

Taking Action: Many teachers and students involved in cross-grade partnerships began to implement buddy coaching lessons in January-March 2013. Prior to that, intermediate teachers explored and 'tweaked' the lessons with their students and colleagues. Primary teachers introduced a collection of

age appropriate nursery rhymes or poems for their students to ‘practice’ the skills either modelled by their big buddy coach or their teacher. Intermediate students also practiced new skills that were either introduced through ‘teaching’ their younger buddy or through expected criteria or feedback provided by their classroom teacher or peer as they presented their inquiry/inquiry project.

Checking: A checklist was created to help teachers collect baseline and final data as it related to the criteria on the rubrics that were created for each grade level. Some teachers were able to collect both baseline and final data while others collected final data after skills were learned and students were more able and prepared to present their inquiry/inquiry projects. Teachers believed that all data was relevant: they agreed that explicit instruction of the skills needed to orally present either by the classroom teacher or a big buddy coach led to improvement for most students. Two intermediate teachers reported that students who were ‘teaching and modelling’ the skills for their younger buddies ‘internalized’ the criteria needed to present and were more able to meet expectations when they presented their own inquiry. Big Buddy coaches provided ongoing feedback based on regular assessments of their younger buddies in the form of “Two Stars and a Step” collection and reflection sheet.

Fall/ Winter Data (2012)	Not Meeting	Minimally Meeting	Meeting	Exceeding
Grade 1	10	8	2	0
Grade 1/2	11	8	3	0
Grade 2	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grade 3	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Grade 4/5	9	11	7	1

Spring Data (2013)	Not Meeting	Minimally Meeting	Meeting	Exceeding
Grade 1	0	6	13	1
Grade 1/2	2	5	12	3
Grade 2	1	4	15	3
Grade 3	4	4	12	4
Grade 4/5	3	3	18	4

Reflections/Advice: We learned that our buddy coaching lessons required big buddy coaches to be competent readers and that for some, the lessons were difficult to present to their younger learners. We agreed that it was possible to simplify the lessons, or to create a set of adapted lessons. Primary teachers agreed that having their students practice oral language skills learned by reciting a series of poems was effective. Through the creation of the rubrics, checklists, and buddy coaching lessons, teachers realized the complexities of inquiry learning and presenting to an audience for their students, especially across the grades. We would advise that our colleagues consider these complexities and processes and break them down into age-appropriate, manageable steps that may take more than one school year to accomplish.