



## 2012-2013 Inquiry Case Study

AESN

**School Name:** Ucluelet Elementary School  
**District:** #70 Alberni  
**Inquiry Team Members:** Jen Adamson, Christine Brice,  
Claire Champaigne, Marc Garand  
**AEEA Goal Area:** Intermediate Literacy

### Scanning

We wanted to provide learners in our school more opportunity for hands on and project based learning. We noticed our learners in the intermediate grades (4-7) were not meeting writing learning outcomes as we wished they would. We know this from our school wide writes and FSA writing results in the past.

### Focus

How can we increase student engagement in writing/representing by focusing on meaningful relevant experiences? We believe if students are more engaged in what they are doing (enjoying themselves) we will have better writing results.

### Hunch

When we did school wide surveys for teachers, parents and students on what we needed to improve in our school all sectors said things that were more project based and hands on activities.

### New professional learning

#### *Participants:*

- Whole school staff at the beginning of the year with several in-service days including summer institute (5 staff attending VIU), whole school on CI day
- Primary and Intermediate teachers gradually and naturally divided up into grade level teams for collaboration and implementation with the second half of the year being dedicated mostly to intermediate Professional Development and implementation

- Students involved in the intermediate project/reading/writing programs offered involved 56 students.

How our Inquiry time was structured:

*Teacher time* –

CI day dedicated to discussing inquiry (day with our coaches)

Collaboration time for teachers to create lessons together, watch each other then debrief not only the lesson but how lesson was taught

Professional Day with our Coaches on Literature Circles Choose a universal theme of books (survival, in wild, in residential schools, in bullying)

Review of data together at Staff Meetings and evening dinners

Book Club started – Grand Conversations, Faye Brownlie

*Student time* - Dedicated time (4 x per week @ 45 min)

Dedicated staff breaking down three classrooms into small groups (allocation of 8 staff, three classroom teachers, two itinerant teachers, three EAs) groups of 8-9 students

Providing Themes/activities that incorporate choice; #1 Turning Student Written

Poetry in song (incorporate literacy and music time), #2 Historica Projects -

Grade 3/4 First Nations Topic, Grade 5/6 Canadian Topic, Grade 6/7 Ancient

Civilization Topic, #3 Literacy circles on Survival Theme with

“What we are already doing” but adding Writing, Reading and Oral Language goals

### **Taking action**

What was learned:

- Everyone enjoyed the process. We want to continue and feel like we only just got started. Plans have been made to continue this format for next year.
- Student writing has improved in most cases. Student quality (i.e. voice) has hugely improved.
- Student connections is a goal area for next year. Giving students more opportunities to explore their personal connections to text and experiences and write about it will be one area we focus on throughout the year.
- Feedback from students and staff have included comments like “this student would normally not be engaged in their language arts but now is having so much fun and looking forward to this every day”.

## **Checking**

Teachers, marked year end writes as compared to beginning of year writes in a collaborative manner. Teachers used the Rainbow Continuum to document their findings.

## **Reflections/Advice**

*Plans for next year include:*

- September – 4ps and personal writing (use of articles, social stories, Friends/FunFriends) End with whole school write on:
  - Primary – What do the 4P's mean to you?
  - Intermediate – Based on your experiences what works well with the 4P's and what needs to be improved on in our school?
- October/November – Poetry Anthology in Lit Circle format. Showcase will be Oral presentations at Remembrance Day assembly
- December – Media Literacy/Advertising (use HACE resources)
- January/February – Literature Circles – theme Holocaust/Japanese Internment. Focus on Oral Language/connections
- March/April – Historica/Research Projects
- May/June – Passion Based Learning Videos (what will my life be like in 20 years – based on [www.digitales.com](http://www.digitales.com))

***EVERY learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options.***