

**NETWORKS OF INQUIRY AND INNOVATION
2011-2012**

**HUBAND PARK ELEMENTARY
#71 Comox Valley**

Leadership Team

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Contact

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School Context/Community Involvement

Huband Park has a student population of 324 students and is located just north of Courtenay. Our school goals revolve around engaging all learners and motivating students to be self-directed. At the school level two grade seven classes, 52 students, were involved in this inquiry project. The teachers of both classes felt that these students needed something to specifically engage them, involve them in their learning, and foster their self regulation and self direction.

District wide there were 5 schools involved in this project (Huband Park, Lake Trail, Puntledge Park, Queneesh, and Denman Island). The students involved in this project all in the catchment for Vanier Sr. Secondary.

The 'I Can' theme evolved out of the collegial conversations our team of 8 teachers had and suited the needs at all 5 schools. This inquiry gave the students choice but also focused their inquiry on something to help a community.

School Inquiry and Action

Social Responsibility and engagement

School Question

Would implementing regularly scheduled 'inquiry' afternoons, culminating in a cross-school celebration, increase student engagement and foster students who are more motivated to be self-directed learners?

Strategies

Personalized pathways are difficult to implement without structural change. Given the freedom to 'implement change' we wondered if setting aside time for inquiry would increase student engagement and better prepare students to be self-directed learners.

We assessed self-regulation and engagement both before and after our inquiry with:

- The social responsibility performance standard rubric
- A pre and post- inquiry 'engagement' survey.

This project was introduced to the students over the month of January by asking them to think about 'What bugs them'. Each student was asked to make a popsicle stick model of something that could solve their problem. At the same time teachers guided students with information (videos, guest speakers, news items) that demonstrated how young people helped communities in various ways.

The students were then given the Learning Intention: I can engage in a self-designed project that makes a positive impact in our community. They were asked to use their spark and ask themselves what they would like to change in their community. They each had to develop an inquiry question that drove their project and focused their learning. Each student presented their learning at a District Showcase and to their parents and peers, and they each reflected on their learning in a journal and a blog. The video that documents our journey can be seen at <http://vimeo.com/41652366>.

Some student reflections:

The I Can project is the best most wonderful project I have ever done and I love it with a passion. I would do this project again, hands down.

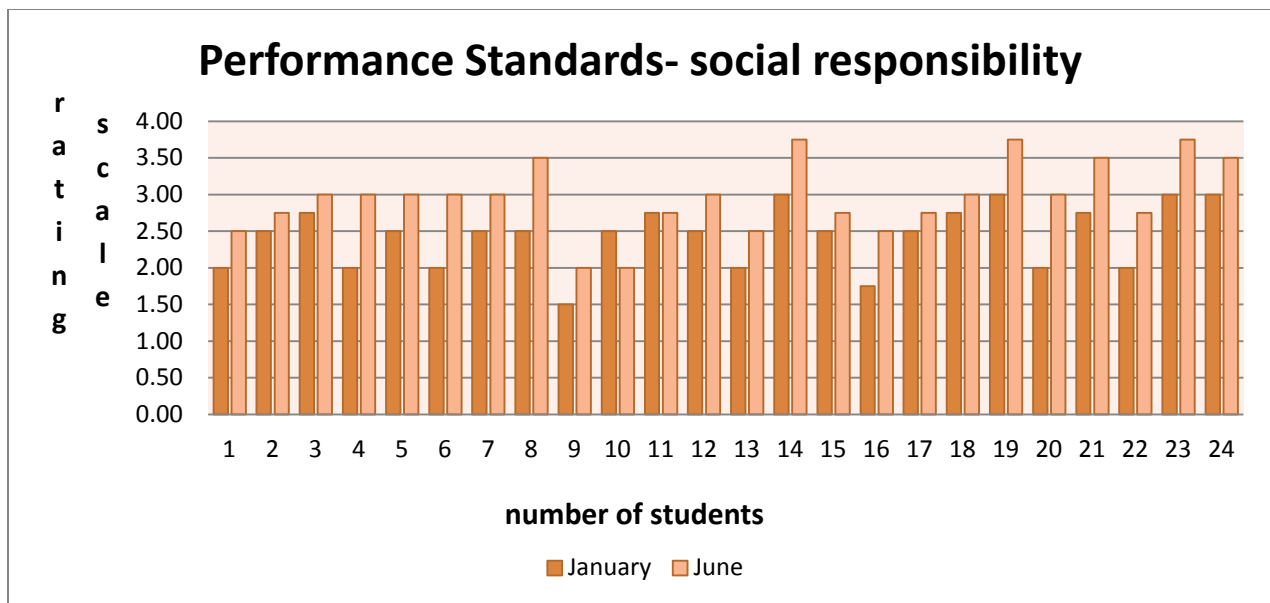
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I watched myself on the video and I was kind of embarrassed by then proud at the same time... I enjoyed the I Can project because it was different from what we usually do in school and it was fun. My spark is the visual piece and what really happens. If there is a problem and research it so deeply that I can clearly see the weak spot and solve it quickly. This project has become a lot more interesting because I am self-directed learner. I kind of felt like a dog on a leash on most assignments, (and that isn't supposed to be fun). But on the I Can project, in a way, we were let off the leash. This inquiry project is kind of like a beacon of light in a dark cave.

Partner School: Queneesh Elementary School, SD71 Comox Valley

School Findings

	NY		A		M		E	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
January 2012	1	4%	15	63%	8	33%		
June 2012			5	21%	16	67%	3	12%



Pre and Post Survey Results:

We asked the students 16 questions on a pre and a post goggle apps survey. Although there was not marked improvement on the responses to all questions, there were several areas that stood out. The student's responses indicate that they believe they had more choice in what they were learning, that they were able to reflect on their learning and that they didn't need the teacher as much to keep them working. These areas indicate that these students are thoughtfully constructing an inquiry around their own choices and are interested enough to keep working without the teacher hanging over them. This was confirmed by teacher's anecdotal observations.

School Plans for 2012-2013

Our team has applied for a Collaborative Action Research Grant with the hopes that we can use it to extend and continue to pursue 'Inquiry Afternoons' and collaboration. We are also embedding collaborative time at the school level to support more of our teaching staff being involved in collaborative inquiry projects.

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Reflections, Advice

Our results were positive on many levels. This project allowed us to really get to know our student's strengths and sparks, and to really deepen the trust in our classroom community. It also allowed the students to engage in something meaningful to them and in a real way. They had to push themselves to develop their inquiry, dig deeply, pursue community members, ask questions and prepare a powerful presentation.

This kind of open ended inquiry, although very engaging, takes time to set up properly. We had to let some outcomes go and really focus on guiding the students. Younger students may have difficulty with the 'open-endedness' of this form of inquiry. Picking an appropriate inquiry question for each group of students must be given thoughtful consideration.