

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

**W L MCLEOD ELEMENTARY
#91Nechako Lakes**

Leadership Team

Denise Dowswell, Bill Gridley, Libby Hart, Michelle Miller-Gauthier, Wanda Nemethy
(many others participated, but we are reporting mainly on three classrooms for this inquiry)

School Context/Community Involvement

WL McLeod Elementary is a dual track school with approximately 250 students. The school is located in north central B.C. in the town of Vanderhoof which is on the traditional territory of the Saik'uz First Nation.

- 29% of the students have Aboriginal Ancestry and many live in Saik'uz
- 45% of the students are enrolled in the English program
- 55% are enrolled in French Immersion
- 11.8% of the students are considered 'vulnerable' using a Ministry of Children and Families index

WL McLeod Elementary typically performs below the average on provincial assessments, but this year was named one of the fastest 20 improving schools in the province. The collaborative culture amongst staff has continued to improve over the past few years and teachers are becoming more willing to open up their practice to each other in order to help more students learn at expected rates.

School Inquiry and Action

School Question

To what degree will a 'push in' learning assistance teaching model strengthen teaching practices of all involved and in turn improve reading skills as measured by the B.C. reading performance standards?

The team teaching will attempt to help teachers incorporate formative assessment strategies to help more students develop their literacy skills and independence (self regulation & metacognition).

**Push-in definition: learning assistance teachers team-teaching in classrooms as opposed to the traditional 'pull-out' model.*

Strategies

- Provide an extra teacher (Learning Assistance & Special Education teacher) as well as at least one education assistant during literacy instruction time **in** a classroom
- Teachers support each other to improve their use of learning intentions, criteria for success and descriptive feedback with regards to student literacy skills
- Meet weekly to discuss successes and challenges and plan for adjustments
- Monitor student reading progress informally on a day to day/week to week basis
- Allow flexibility between classes for students when necessary
- Pause interventions/support every three months to formally assess student learning and adjust the support across the school

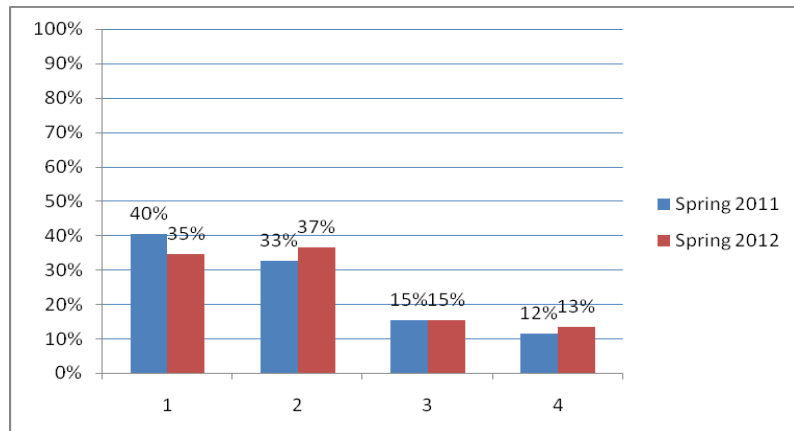
NETWORKS OF INQUIRY AND INNOVATION 2011-2012

School Findings

B.C. Performance Standards for Reading Literature & Reading Information

Total Number of Learners: 52 (3 classes: Grade 1/2, Grade 3/4, Grade 4/5)

	NY	A	M	E	Total
Spring 2011	21	17	8	6	52
	40%	33%	15%	12%	
Spring 2012	18	19	8	7	52
	35%	37%	15%	13%	



Reflections, Advice

Even though the data does not show significant student progress, all students moved forward with their reading skills. For many students who are not yet meeting expectations, grade level reading assessment standards are still not within reach, but alternate tools for students reading below grade level did show improvements for all!

Numbers can't reflect the observations of teachers:

“For the classroom teacher it was a good learning opportunity...to watch a colleague and talk about strategies before and afterward was really beneficial. Our learning and our teaching practices moved forward faster.”

“Sharing the load helped us meet more needs. There was less opportunity for off task behavior. The self monitoring strategies helped some students gain more independence.”

“Being in the class rather than pulled out helped kids feel more motivated. The stigmatizing effect of pull out was eliminated.”

“Having anchor charts posted and sticking to the path is really important so support teachers could use the same resources and be more supportive of effective classroom practices.”

“We were able to tag team and share the load to zoom in on students who needed it.”

“Because it was easier to manage small groups with two teachers in the classroom, students were getting instruction at a more appropriate level instead of either getting left behind in the learning or waiting for others to catch up.”

We teachers also know our students better this year. We have begun to work even better as a respectful, collaborative team with regards to adjusting our instruction and becoming more effective users of formative assessment strategies. Team teaching was instrumental in helping some of us change our old habits! The adults were learning as much as the students during this inquiry!

NETWORKS OF INQUIRY AND INNOVATION 2011-2012

School Plans for 2012-2013

We believe it is too early to see significant results and we are going to stay the course and go deeper in the coming school year. We are at a new starting place and our observations and assessments are indicating that student knowledge and use of language is likely at the root of many of the literacy challenges they are facing. Incidentally, psychoeducational testing for a few students indicated that regardless of socioeconomic status or gender or race, (vocabulary) understanding and use of language was a weakness for them.

WL McLeod Elementary will be involved in two projects to help us continue to improve student learning:

- 1) *Increasing Literacy Outcomes and Learner Confidence in Remote Rural Schools in British Columbia* in partnership with Vancouver Island University
- 2) *Changing Results for Young Readers* in partnership with the Ministry of Education

