

NOII Symposium 2014

Stories of Change – Pictures of Possibility

Flash Chat Notes

1. EVERY learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options. What's working to ensure this is becoming a reality for every learner?

- Inquiry-based learning – community of inquirers
- Inquiry connected – digital
- Inquiry with aboriginal focus
- Be prepared to offer programming relevant to student choice and passions
- Be flexible
- Expose students to options and value those options.
- Start conversation about planning early (grade 7/8)
- Embed skills – life skills, know yourself as a learner
- Dual credit/flexible learning based on a plan
- Relationships – especially Teacher to Student – care, accountability, conversation.
- Know your community/students (what they need/ want)

2. ALL learners leaving our settings more curious than when they arrived. What strategies are you using to increase curiosity and intellectual engagement?

- Key is inquiry – students need to learn to question instead of relying on teacher “answer” (teacher as facilitator instead of source of info)
- Grouping/placemat strategies:
 - Know/learn/wondering
 - Passion projects/Genius hour
 - Getting students out in the environment (exploring space)
- Flexibility
 - Giving time for students to ask questions
 - Being flexible with daily schedule
 - Encouraging students to take risks (resiliency)
 - Teaching students to be flexible with their own learning
 - Encouraging kids to stick with inquiry questions but to learn how to develop them
- Genius hour: use website “wonderopolis” – provides a “wonder of the day” for users
- Process of Wonder: use a subject-based photo but zoom right in. Discuss “I wonder”. Students not allowed to answer any other students questions.
- Read the following books:
 - *Make Just One Change*
 - *Essential Questions*

3. Transitions – What is working to improve the transition of Aboriginal learners to secondary and to post secondary?

- “College for a day” – Grade 10 – 12 students go to local college campus for tour. General tour and field of study touch – NID Day so kids are committed. Freed lunch and grad transition credits (UNBC, NWCC)
- Grade 9s – During exam week, one day when no exams, kids get to do a tour with all elective teachers – hear what grade 10 courses are like and try activities.
- Parent meetings prior to course selection to help plan for kids’ following year “Uni 101 for Parents” – post secondary info night offered to parents – networking.
- Aboriginal youth care workers – work at both elementary and secondary schools so kids know them when they move to grade 8. Funding to support grade 7s visiting secondary schools and grade 8s in May to partner with mentors.
- Courses offered at Kwantlen University for high school kids – also buddy students with a Kwantlen student as mentor.
- Northern Vancouver Island Trades programs – grade 12s get as many certificates as possible for future employment and get into NVIT. Campbell River – building a traditional village to connect kids to Aboriginal Education community and bring in post secondary representatives as well.
- Working with village governments (educational coordinators)
- Post-secondary visits/tours
- Encouraging community college as a stepping stone (trades programs, trades and culinary arts)
- Establishing cohorts prior to entering high school
- Counseling program (AVID) to encourage post-secondary schooling
- Elders come in to mentor
- Aboriginal Health booth hosted by past grads at post-secondary day

5. Student level inquiry – How are you developing student led inquiries at a range of levels?

- Create broad questions for the class to work from based on course topic. Students then go on personal student inquiry from the broad question.
- Scaffold the process of inquiry – very important!
 - Explain the idea of sharing control of the learning with the students (gradual release of the teachers)
 - Identify the skills that the students and teacher will need
- Example of a step towards the questioning of process: We are going to have a quest speaker on topic A. To prepare, we are going to learn how to ask interesting questions of the speaker
- Teach the students how to ask questions.
- Making students ask more questions
- Set-up collaboration time to give teachers time to learn from colleagues
- Include parents/elders/volunteers in self assessment, improve writing through
- Jean Bowman – inquiry continuum, teacher led → messy
- Science – SmarterScience

- Backwards – experiment – then talk about
- Professional Development isn't enough: ongoing is important – find time using alternative buddy time supervision
- Projects
 - Power of Wonder Week – school-wide project
 - K-3 SRL
 - 4-7 Power of Wonder Celebration
 - “Genius Hour” at Secondary School
 - Within context of course
 - Weekly (1/2 every week)
 - “Great Questions” lead to other questions (critical thinking). Need to connect questions to an expert in the field.
 - Year-long inquiry projects
 - Based on students' passions
 - Celebration dinners
 - Biology 12 – “Pick a disease to study”
 - “Choose a country”
 - Choice of topic & presentation style
 - LID Project – Choice of 3 topics
 - Project based learning – choose body system to study and connect to students' goals. *Gradual release of responsibility – teach the skills e.g. how to create a good question.
- As a delivery model for curriculum
 - Movement in some schools towards “beyond the project” (student inquiry as a model for curriculum delivery)
 - Inquiry as a way of delivering curriculum – grants to support

6. Learning principle #1 – Learners at the centre – How are you building metacognition and self-regulation for all your learners?

- Develop a common understanding and language for what it is in your classrooms and throughout your school.
 - Zones of regulation – colour code where you are when you approach learning.
 - Can include MIND UP strategies
 - Focus on strategies rather than program
- Develop strategies for transitions – especially for difficult, challenging learners.
 - Create strategies for what it looks like and incorporate AFL strategies to help support learners get there.
- DPA in gym with everyone
 - EAs offer quiet DPA elsewhere for students needing it e.g. yoga
 - Common language
 - 5 point scale with faces
 - Where are you at
 - What strategies to use to fix
 - Assess how it goes
- Deborah Butler's support to develop academic self regulation

- Physical environment – furniture, lighting, etc.
- More than self-assessment → how to go beyond; (giving) ownership to students – MINDUP; “Ten Mindful Minutes”
- Focus on learning environment → gradual release of responsibility → leading straight towards more independence in making ‘good choices’ to enhance learning (e.g. utilizing seating options for greater on-task time) – conscious, ongoing attention to classroom organization/configuration/physical spaces
- Deepening our understanding of what self-regulation is; what it looks like for individual students – e.g. “hall wanderers” are actually self-regulating; we need to provide appropriate structures/accommodations for all students
- Getting past the idea that ‘I’ve done the workshop’
 - The challenge of implementation overcome by ongoing support
 - Clear targets and ideas
- A need to bring parents along
 - Helping them to understand a new way of assessing
- The need to bring other colleagues along

7. Learning principle #2 – The social nature of learning – In what ways are your learners developing cooperative skills?

- Cooperative learning of teachers filters down to the students – but we forget that students need to be taught cooperative skills
- Cooperative skills must be taught
 - What is your role/contribution to the group?
 - Everyone gets a chance to speak
 - Being a responsible team member
 - If they know the skills, the “teaching” will be a reminder that will serve everyone
 - Use board games/card games to teach turn-taking, listening, etc.
- Reflection after the fact
 - What worked? What didn’t?
 - Leadership skills development
- Be intentional about building relationship skills
 - Never assume they know how to socialize!
 - Take advantage of learning/teaching opportunities, e.g. “hey teacher”...becomes a teachable moment in simple social graces

8. Learning principle #3 – Emotions are integral to learning – What are you doing to strengthen social emotional learning in your school? What impact are you seeing?

- Tools
 - Mind Up- Approach – Community of Learners “investing up front” pays off students and parents.
 - Aboriginal understanding – circle of courage
- Intentionally building social skills
- Active listening – hearing learner stories.
- Utilizing elders from community

- Strength based goal setting – future directions. Exploring who I am/ identity to culture.
- VIU – Drama education – new teacher candidates take a risk in drama
 - Hurdle of being comfortable risk taking, confidence levels.
 - Finding the relevance of relationships – shift perceptions that relationship is important no matter what you teach. Deliberately choose a game I don't know – why? So that we can unpack it.
- Secondary (Surrey-Princess Margaret) – Critical to have relationships with students – not about if they like you – they will work harder if they like you. Accident where three students were hurt – decided to be real/authentic with students, honesty for what the teacher felt. Step outside the role. Shared experience. Allowing yourself to be vulnerable while maintaining boundaries. Don't have to always be right and always perfect.
- Intermediate – School conversation on who are the two adults that students should feel connected to. Learning with students. Strategies that encourage community framework.
- Primary – common language – to build students

9. Learning principle #4 – Recognizing individual differences – How are you building on the prior knowledge of your learners? How are you moving from a one size fits all?

- Alternate for all
- Distance learning in schools home students make changes to brick and mortar
- Elementary special education ½ time pull out, ½ time in class

10. Learning principle #5 – Stretching all students – What are you finding most helpful in creating challenging learning experiences for all learners?

- Big question! How to reach the reluctant students? (7+10 pin bowling – go for the outside pins)
 - 'project based' learning approach
 - introduce – provide choice – mapped out expectations for all then differentiate (learner profile)
 - personal connection
- Student engagement – staff engagement
 - 'non' attenders – students without motivation
 - provide learning opportunities they look forward to – personal connection – www.kidshealth.org, www.pbs.org
 - themes – big ideas – scientific method inclusive across curriculum
 - math/English/socials
 - shop/gym
 - invite children into the conversation
- Student led/collaborative – less teacher directed
 - Buddy reading and/or teachers teach reading groups (K-6 reading groups)
 - Group work
 - Personalize inquiry (set them free)

- Partners
- Teacher-led specialization
- ELL/Aboriginal learners attend when they have something to contribute – know cultural context
- ORGANIC school vision
- Expand to all learners/global view of moving all. Efficacy is key – modeling/scaffolding dependency develops.
- Giving choice/voice. Straight ahead, uphill, mountainous – process oriented not outcome. Understanding the expectations. Understanding criteria/real life samples helped students understand/connect.
- Context and connection. Making thinking transparent. Investing in learning conversations.
- AFL/Metacognitive
- Self-reflective, setting the goal
- Accessibility in multiple ways/multiple ways to access learning

11. Learning principle #6 – Assessment for learning – How are you maintaining of deepening the focus on assessment for learning and the six key strategies? How are you developing a culture of critique?

- Pre-assess (open ended)
- Three key questions (keep asking them) – staff meetings instead of info items → find the key person in the school and support them
 - Scan
 - Focus
 - Hunch
- Formal leadership modeling conversation; encourage sharing; collection tools/strategies
- AFL empowers learners to take risks in a non-threatening environment and own their learning.
- AFL strategies build a community of learners that supports and directs all learning.
- AFL needs to be embedded naturally into all learning for all students and teachers.
- AFL creates a community of safe learning .
- A culture of critique needs to be kind, helpful and specific with a focus on the work with reference to the criteria.
- Student ownership of learning is the end result of AFL.

12. Learning principle #7 – Building horizontal connections – How are you developing connections across subject areas? How are you building connections with your community?

- Building close connections with community is essential to supporting students living in poverty
 - Pediatricians

- Outside agencies
- Breakfast/lunch programs
 - Supplying groceries for weekends
- [Port Alberni] Instead of calling MCFD if kids are hungry
 - Building a relationship with families
 - Prioritizing basic needs
- TLC room – a safe place for students to go/be for food, support, safety.
- Parents and, increasingly elders, are being brought in to support learning.
- [Central Okanagan] UBCO leases an acre plot (for \$1/year) of land to school district for a natural learning space – eco centre – outdoor learning lab. Working with parks and rec. Environmental sustainability and S.E.L.
- [NISGA’A] English/PE/Science/Tradition in a team teaching approach using shared strategies and Nisga’a community participation.
- [Yukon] Working towards going on a traditional hunt through cross-curricular teaching. Bringing in the community to support.
- [Burnaby] Challenges around getting people out of their subject areas
- [Surrey] Collaboration and consistency are key. E.g. grade 8 English/Science team teaching which will carry over to grade 9 (they keep the students)

13. Vulnerable learners – How are you focusing attention specifically on the needs of your most vulnerable learners? What’s working well?

- Relationships
- Work from a “Can Do” perspective.
- Working with a team (including community groups)
- Teachers ‘sponsor’ (note: let the students pick the teacher) vulnerable alternate school students – Kim Lewis, Kitimat; One-to-one aboriginal success advisors (SD48)
- Joy! Low stimulus rooms for intensive behaviour; places where they can find joy in learning – elementary school
 - Re-defining inclusion – not just space and place
 - SEL first
 - Flexibility with programming for students
- SEL – Shelly Hymel; student-centred; focus on ‘grey’ area students → what’s their area of success – celebrated!
- Vulnerable kids definition has changed – not just income level/poverty level emotional support
 - More counselor role instead of teaching; not a shortage of money, it is a shortage of attention
- Personal connections with parents – understanding their negative experiences.
 - Alternate programs for kids – get kids through – pride in parents
- Making connections outside of school. Building connections, showing an interest.
- Changing Results 4 Adolescent Readers – Best professional development meetings 6x year.
 - Colleague letter
 - Inquiry focus

- Qualicum – School District Staff – Group:
 - Self-esteem, healthy boundaries
 - Drug/alcohol
 - Stories are heard
 - Counselors/teachers identify to help them transition to high school

14. Learning across countries – What are you learning from other places? From innovative learning environments across the world? How are you connecting your classroom and your school to learners in other places?

- Reciprocal learning
 - Connecting up with learning environments and learning professionals in other parts of the world is not only about how we do things but also learning from others.
 - To open-up my world as learner/educator to other and learning from their cultures, languages etc. and learn more about my own culture.
- Potential of technology
 - Technology provides unique learning opportunities
 - The world becomes smaller and more relevant to the learner
 - Face to face contact cannot be completely replaced with technology
- PLC – International
 - Building international professional learning communities circle back to number 1. Learning from each other.

15. Aboriginal Enhancement Agreements – How are you making the goals of your Enhancement Agreements come alive? What differences are you seeing for your learners?

- Collective ownership – we need to have full effort for everyone.
- Aboriginal Education is for everyone - Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people.
- A sense of belonging can and will lead to academic success.
- Infuse/weave Aboriginal principals/culture/language through everything, everywhere.
- A focus on aboriginal family and parent engagement would help grow the work.
- Visible reminders of agreements in every school – the logo and the artist description and a map of the territories. Student/district/aboriginal communities (artists) create ‘paddles’ (carved) [Saanich] that represent the goals. A prominent display of these in each school. Now a canoe carving project [videotaping and experiential].
- Leadership is key – having someone who has the passion/vision and use inclusionary strategies. And partnerships with community. Discussion re: invitation of Elders in different ways [digital ceremonial messages and immersion experience for teachers]
 - Parent teacher nights on band/Nation reserves or educational sites
- Creating a calendar that isn’t ‘add in’ – ‘aligning your resources with your vision/mission’ is key. Embedded in organizational structures and processes.

- Walking in two worlds – Recognizing that there are teachers who will need to be brought along; also to recognize many Indigenous communities are vulnerable and our expectations may overwhelm. Struggling to let go of control and accept an emergent design.

16. Spiral of Inquiry – How are you applying the spiral of inquiry in your setting? What are you learning from taking a disciplined and research-informed approach to inquiry?

- Time to work on inquiry – collaboration
- Support from school and district administration (TOC release)
- Appreciative inquiry and soft start (inviting) – encouraging
- Clear – structure & direction at the district level is key to success
- Teams are important even if individual questions are being followed
- Time set aside is key with support (with knowledgeable people that know how to use the SPIRAL)

17. Teacher preparation programs – What’s working for teacher candidates? How could we strengthen connections with teacher education programs?

- Transitions/mentorship/funding for shared learning/taking risks is supported
- New teachers on TOC list // teacher shock → diversity
- Reflexive – not generalists, not specialists
- Bridging theory and practice “spaces” Strategies:
 - Flip the model so that instead of living/working at university then going to rural communities for short periods of time...instead – live/work in rural community and plug into university learning periodically and on-going via internet.
 - Partners between various districts (professional learning and faculties of education)
 - Faculty of Education – seminar course in professional inquiry and inquiry learning, that are explored across contexts (eg. Coursework, practica, school-based situational contexts).
 - District and Faculties of Education learning partnerships around teacher preparation – doing it differently.
 - Long observation period prior to practica. District professional learning takes place physically within faculty of education (exposure to teacher candidates and their work/learning).
 - Situational/contextual– as many as possible as possible experiences...in whatever forms that looks. (time of teacher candidates)
 - Home-based schools (certain amount of time per week – above and beyond practicum) Student (pre-service they become part of the school culture/contribute).
 - Teachers and faculty of education (professors) working/learning together.

18. Four key questions for learner engagement and connection (Where are you going with your learning? How is it going? Where to next? And can, you name two

adults in this setting who believe you will be a success in life?) How are you using these questions to get feedback from your learners?

- Adult in life – 2 min and 10 days
 - Kids reluctant to trust especially when teachers only stay in district for one year
- Furniture and fidget toys to allow students to find what works for them
- Connection = better learners
 - When the teacher knows the students' backgrounds, they can understand when, for example, a student is late.
- Teacher Advisory model to focus on the connections
- Alternative Education program – meet for 15 minute every morning to touch base
- Beginning of each semester, dedicate time to create trust/connections
- Without connections to adults in school, vulnerable students struggle. Wonder: When does urgency to meet educational expectations (literacy and numeracy, for example) become a focus?
- Important these things are visible in schools
 - Teacher language
 - Student self-assessment
 - Posters on walls
 - Referred to in newsletter/on-line, etc.
- Take time to listen to kids. This might be paying close attention to words and behaviours. Also, within this, create boundaries/islands that build a sense of structure, security and safety

19. Healthy living and healthy schools – How are you incorporating healthy living into the experiences of your learners? What is working for you? For them?

- Nature-based learning – using our spaces and environments in new and innovative ways. Strong links to mental/emotional
- Connections in community
 - Elders and traditional ways of knowing – teaching mindfulness.
 - Role models – teacher candidates leading DPA and building healthy connections in schools.
 - Meals with community groups
 - Linking with seniors in the community.
- Self directed – Possibilities with technology to assist in taking ownership of healthy decisions.
- Students choosing (self-directed learning) what topics will help them in their own healthy living.
- Creating physical spaces and programming to promote health
 - Cafeterias – food cooked by alternative education students.
 - Access to food – in classroom
 - Removing unhealthy options
- Building a culture of health for school
 - Student leadership

- Whole school events e.g. learn to run, yoga, zumba
- Agriculture of the classroom
 - Trying new things
 - Healthy eating (salad bar 2x/week in Osoyoos; need more healthy options)
 - New choices
- Embedding social emotional learning into daily life as a big piece of healthy living
 - Using Mind-up
 - Self-regulation
- Embedding movement breaks, walk n' chats into daily routines (connects to self-regulation, healthy living, healthy minds)
- Peer mentors in gym classes to help build skills → high school w/ elementary

20. Building leadership capacity and adaptive expertise – How are you working with your colleagues to build capacity? What strategies and structures are you finding most helpful for collaboration and teacher professional learning?

- Structures – craft & create – what are the musts?
- Collaboration – understanding – define
- Celebrate and invite and share – use expertise within
- Build trust first and then agree upon structure (to align worries and unknowns for staff)
- Collaboration time (of some type) that is structured and purposeful and links back to the vision/direction/destination
- Teaching partnerships in a flattened structure (Teacher, VP, Principal, District Staff all teaching in side-by-side structure.