



2013-2014 AESN Case Study

School: ABOUT Program of Learning Alternatives/NDSS

District: SD68 Nanaimo Ladysmith

Area of focus: Transitions

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Inquiry Question/Focus Area: Will students having the ability to explore a number of possible occupations in outdoor education and sustainable living, generate a stronger interest in pursuing post-secondary education and/or immediate employment?

Scanning: One thing that most staff and students noticed was that this was a chance to do something more innovative. We all agreed that it was important that this inquiry was able to engage our learners (staff and students). It was important to regularly reflect and share how we felt our work was going.

Focus: Our main focus was to explore and promote employment and post-secondary options. We were hoping to assist each of our students with developing more pride and purpose through goal setting and exploring employment options.

Hunch: The success that we had when we were able to leave the classroom, illustrates that we need to move to a more inventive, 21st Century approach to our instruction. Students shared regularly that many of the mainstream classrooms did not feel inclusive and they were often disengaged.

New Professional Learning: This year we were able to form a PLC (Professional Learning Community) that allowed other school staff and students to get involved with our inquiry question. During our PLC time, we identified occupations that would better engage some of our struggling learners and looked out to the community to offer some job shadowing opportunities for our students. This was probably the most effective

decision we made! It allowed students to develop employability skills and learn from a variety of people, listening to and sharing stories of their journey.

Taking Action: Once we started to receive support from the community, we then started to receive a great deal of positive media attention (please see links below). Having the opportunity to be celebrated in the newspaper, on the radio, in magazines and on television, the student's engagement levels into our inquiry blossomed and the spark that we had started in September of 2013 began to grow into a fire of passion!

Community Garden: <http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/224298431.html>

Culture Article: <http://www.nanaimobulletin.com/news/232131081.html>

TV Special: <http://youtu.be/zvehvuiXw2M>

Checking: At the beginning of the school year there were 30 students enrolled in the ABOUT Program (grades 9-12) and none had employment and none of our grade 12's wanted to pursue post-secondary education for 2014-2015. By the end of the year we had 45 students in the program! At our June Awards, we celebrated that 12 students were currently employed and 5 students were enrolled to attend Vancouver Island University in September of 2014! We celebrated the success of our students and hope to use our success to motivate others in our school building to engage in an inquiry question.

Reflections/Advice: Celebrate success as much as possible and always track your progress. These two things helped promote student engagement/involvement more than anything else. We hope to share the success that we have had and encourage and help more teachers to learn about inquiry work that they can do with their students. The PLC's allowed for brilliant collaboration and it is our hope that other schools will follow.