



2013-2014 NOII Case Study

School: Walnut Park Elementary
#54

District: Bulkley Valley

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Question / focus area: In what ways will intentional teaching of self-regulation, focusing on learning environments, help students own and optimize their learning?

Scanning: What we noticed was that students needed to learn how and where they learned best rather than relying on external support to regulate. Lack of attention, focus and transitions seemed to be apparent and students were becoming “teacher dependent” rather than understanding for themselves how to be effective learners.

Focus: With learners and their emotions at the center, we felt that by providing choice within the environment coupled with engaging classroom learning, that students’ ownership of their learning will be positively influenced. We wanted students to learn what learning looks like, sounds like and feels like.

Hunch: What was working well was an offering of diverse learning strategies and tools in order for students to learn class concepts. What wasn’t working well was expecting students to sit in their seats for the majority of this time rather than moving around and/or collaborating to support each other in their learning (e.g., coaching each other).

New professional learning: We explored several self-regulation resources and found all them extremely helpful in guiding our inquiry. It was essential that while we focused on self-regulation in terms of learning environments, we coupled that with best teaching practice. Further, we ensured that the social-emotional needs of our students were being met, as we knew this was an essential driver of success.

Taking action: Our team dove into using new teaching strategies about self-regulation. We then explored various tools as supported by these experts with our students to help them learn for themselves what worked and what didn’t. We gave their moods/feelings terms and ideas that were concrete so that they knew when learning was going well and when it wasn’t. Once students understood what optimal learning looked, felt like and sounded like for them, we provided choice in how students acquired their knowledge and then choice in demonstrating their knowledge.

Checking: There was a clear ownership of student learning from both grades. After looking at the pre and post questionnaires, we noticed that at the end of the year

students were better able to identify how to optimize their learning (e.g., Yoga ball or mat, need more discussion or not, light or dark areas, need a walk or run). When we did the pre-test at the beginning of the year, students were unclear of what worked well for them. The focus of our questionnaire was to not have them score higher in each area, but to better identify what worked well for them.

Through class discussions, students were clear in this understanding. More evidence of success came through work completion, student engagement, student discussion and an increase in their own confidence as learners. It was exciting to see the smiles of success from their own thinking and determination. Overall, we were very satisfied with our inquiry. Some changes we may make are to not use items from the tool kits as they became distracting to students. We would also simplify our questionnaire, continue to keep the classrooms de-cluttered, and teach self-regulation in our classrooms.

Reflections/Advice:

- Continue to allow choice as students are more engaged when they are empowered to choose the where, when, and how they learn
- Transition letters to next years' teachers sharing how they learn best
- Explore using Vancouver Island University's *Engagement Continuum* as an assessment tool
- Continue to make self-regulation a focal point in the classroom