

2014-2015 NOII Inquiry Case Study



School: Port Edward School **District:** #52 Prince Rupert 52

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Our focus area: Social Emotional Learning

Scanning: Our inquiry of 2012-13 was all about self-regulation. We taught our students using the work of Stuart Shanker (Calm, Alert and Learning), we taught Zones of Regulation the following year (2013-14), and continued to notice that our students could parrot back strategies to self-regulate (green zone) but could not apply this when needed. It seemed not to be integrated into action. From the first meeting in Smithers this year, where we had a session with Stuart Shanker, we were once again intrigued by his words about deeply changing student behaviour and anxiety; just how important that is. We decided to build on all of our work and continue to work with our students in a more integrated way, using Mindfulness instruction. We know that students who experience attention difficulties and anxiety have struggles with their learning, so we know that changing that dimension could affect and improve student learning.

Focus: Our focus was to help students “feel” calmness in their bodies, to experience that state that allows their brain to clear and their bodies to relax. Our focus was to teach students the “how to” of self-regulation; the practical strategies that actually will affect their ability to cope with anxiety and stress.

Hunch: Our hunch was that we would be unable to improve our students’ learning until they were better able to attend to the tasks that we demanded of them. We needed them to be able to focus in to listening and engaging fully in their learning. Our reading and study of “mindfulness” and our experiences with Yoga training suggested that this could be a successful direction to take.

New professional learning: Using our own experience with Yoga practice (particularly with one teacher), gathering resources about Mindful practice, reading research related articles and books about mindfulness instruction and moving forward with the intent of learning mindfulness together (paying attention to our own mindfulness), were key elements of our professional learning.

Taking action:

1. Reviewed where we were at in terms of student knowledge (Shanker work, Restitution, Zones of Regulation).

2. Determined that we needed to go deeper and researched strategies and programs that might be helpful to us.
3. Settled on two resource books, "Sitting Still Like a Frog" and "Mindful Movements".
4. We ordered the resources and each teacher had their own copy. It was hoped that they would use the CD's and practice with their classes daily. This did not always happen in a regular way. We ordered "Singing Bowls" for each classroom as well. We also ordered a school wide set of Yoga Mats.
5. Decided to continue with Yoga instruction school wide. Our intermediate class had a few sessions with their teacher the previous years. We started to teach Yoga about once a week, starting after Christmas.
6. Sent surveys home to parents to explain our purpose and to ask questions about their child's levels of anxiety, their sleep patterns, and their ability to cope with anger.
7. Chose a group of eight students as a target group. We observed their ability to come into class and settle on a task (reading a book). We wanted to have them do this independently without reminders. We observed for a week.
8. We began our instruction using CD from "Sitting Still Like a Frog" to help students understand the concept of being mindful. These lessons were very small group, so that focus could be maintained. We grouped the more challenging students with students who already had developed some listening and focus skills.
9. Each Yoga session we would include a "Mindful Movement". The resource we used had ten movements with a focus on breathing. We increased this until all ten movements were learned.
10. The focus on breathing was a huge part of our practice.
11. Teachers talked about mindful actions, what it looked like, what it meant in all situations that were relevant.
12. We used mindfulness language in disciplinary action.
13. We completed a student survey of our intermediate students to determine if they felt our work was effective.
14. We completed a second follow up survey with parents to determine if they felt there was improvement in their child's ability to cope.
15. We observed our target group to determine if there was improvement in focus and attending to tasks at hand.



Checking: Our baseline date of our target group showed that many of those students could not independently settle down to tasks after transitions without reminders. We chose two minutes as a target time to settle into the task. After our work, we noticed that our group could settle within two minutes without reminders and often could settle within a minute.

Student	% times observed		
	Not Yet Meeting	Meeting	Improvements
A	44%	56%	60% Meeting 10% Exceeding 10% NYM
B	65%	35%	83% Meeting 17% Exceeding 17% NYM
C	36%	64%	67% Meeting 17% Exceeding 17% NYM
D	29%	71%	50% Meeting 50% NYM
E	43%	57%	33% Meeting 50% Exceeding 17% NYM
F	54%	46%	40% Meeting 40% Exceeding 20% NYM
G	13%	87%	75% Meeting 25% Exceeding

NYM: Does not settle in under 2 minutes.

Meeting: Settles in under 2 minutes with one reminder.

Exceeding: Settles in under one minute. No reminders.

Our second survey from parents was poorly designed and we believe that the results may not indicate what we wanted. Parents were to note if the child improved using Yes or No. We think that most parents answered Yes or No to questions such as: My child is anxious, thinking I meant, “Yes they are” or “No they aren’t” instead of “Yes they have improved” or “No they have not improved”. The data is flawed and cannot be interpreted.

We asked students to answer a survey regarding mindfulness. We made a survey using the social responsibility scoring guide as the foundation to determine if students felt they had improved in mindfulness. This survey indicated that most students felt that our mindfulness instruction was effective.

	Improvement	Improvement	Comment
	Yes	No	
I am friendly, welcoming helpful and kind	15	2	
I love to join in all activities that we do in our classroom	17		
I can work with other students in my class	15	2	
My friends and I use friendly ways to solve	14	3	

our differences when we don't agree			
I see what my part in difficulties are	14	3	
I keep small problems small	16	1	
I have helpful strategies to use when someone is mean to me	15	11	
I know when it is important to get adult help	16	1	
I play well with others	14	1	Sometimes 2
I am respectful of others	15	1	Sometimes 1
I "stick up" for others when they aren't being treated fairly	14		Sometimes 3
I am respectful of the environment	16	1	
I am engaged n the learning activities in my class and can stay focused. If my mind wanders, I can bring myself back to focus.	15		Sometimes 2
I am engaged, interested and participating in the learning	15		Sometimes 2

*In checking with students who completed the form, it seemed that those who we targeted with observation were quite honest about their improvements.

Our last bit of data, to indicate improvement were our reading benchmarks.

Improvement 2012-13		Improvement 2013-14		Improvement 2014-15	
Increased levels of reading benchmark					
1 @ six levels	1@ 1 level	1 @ 8 levels	3@ 4 levels	3 @ six	2@ 2 levels
1@ 4 levels	2@ 0 level	1@ 7 levels	4@ 3 level	6@ 5 levels	
8 @ 3 levels	2@ -1 level	5 @ 5 levels	2@ 2 level	7 @ 3 levels	

We used data from students that we could track over the three years. This was really exciting data as it looks like our work is making a difference to learning. In the last two years, we do not have students that do not show improvement in their reading skill. The same person completed all the Benchmarking.

Reflections/Advice: In conclusion, we believe that our work in Mindfulness is making a difference to learning. We intend to continue to go deeper into our own learning about mindfulness, as well as to help students learn to go deeper into their own skill. Next year, we are going to use the MIND UP program to build on skills that we already have.

