



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation

Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

Deepening learning through inquiry, innovation and teamwork

[www.noii.ca](http://www.noii.ca)

[networksofinquiry.blogspot.ca](http://networksofinquiry.blogspot.ca)

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## BC NETWORKS

### CONNECTING, EXPANDING, INQUIRING, TRANSFORMING

Fall 2015

Dear Network colleagues,

We hope that you have all had a terrific start to the year – and an especially Happy Thanksgiving weekend. There is much to celebrate about our collective efforts to transform the life chances for all our learners through inquiry and teamwork. In this newsletter you will learn more about how the BC approach to inquiry is transforming not only schools and districts in BC, but also schools in other places around the world. We will also make sure you have everything that you need to embark on another year of inquiry.

#### Update from Network Leaders' Meeting

On October 2 we had a great meeting with close to 50 network leaders from across the province. We really appreciated having Jo-Anne Chrona provide a great overview of the new resources available from FNEC as well as some sage advice about their use. All the resources are freely available to download and share at <http://www.fnesc.ca/learningfirstpeoples/indian-residential-schools-and-reconciliation/>

Jo-Anne suggested that some AESN schools might want to submit a proposal to present at the FNEC annual conference in November 2016. We are really grateful to Jo-Anne for helping to strengthen the links between AESN and FNEC and we encourage all of you to give this some thought.

Sarah Cormode also shared a new resource from the Ministry of Education. This document, Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom is available on the NOII website at <http://noii.ca/resources-2/> Kaleb Child from Vancouver Island North and Scott Benwell, both great friends to AESN were instrumental in this process. It contains some excellent suggestions for incorporating Aboriginal worldview into the classroom. We encourage everyone to take a close look - and to use this as a prompt for discussions in your local areas.

There are a number of opportunities available through the Healthy Schools Network. Please make sure to check them out at <http://healthyschoolsbc.ca/healthy-schools-bc-resources/healthy-living-grants/>

We appreciated that Dr. Paige Fisher arranged to bring members of the rural literacy team to the meeting and it is great to see the various ways that we are building coherence across associations, districts, universities and initiatives.

Linda explained that as a result of the OECD study on Innovative Learning Environments, there is an increased interest internationally in the role of the meso level. This term refers to that in-between space that is neither exclusively top down (e.g. Government) nor bottom up (schools). The networks in BC are an excellent example of the ways in which the meso level can influence and encourage innovation.

We have been invited to write a chapter in a forthcoming book on professional learning at the teacher leadership level. We are hoping that we can draw on some of you for comments regarding the ways in which being part of the networks has influenced your own thinking and enriched your own learning. We will be developing a very short set of questions that we will send out to you and we would be grateful if you were able to take a few minutes simply to share some of your thoughts and experiences with us. Thanks - in advance!

## International Links

**Whole Education Network.** For the past year, the Whole Education Network ( <http://www.wholeeducation.org>) in England has been supporting a pilot network of schools using the spiral of inquiry as a disciplined approach to “Narrowing the gap.” Professor Louise Stoll from the University of London has been researching the impact of the inquiry approach in the participating schools and a final report upon the conclusion of this pilot will be available soon. Here’s one quote from the report (we had a peek at the first draft):

The spiral of inquiry energizes those who engage seriously, stay with it and ‘trust’ the process – it’s a tool for professionalizing teachers and leaders who are curious. As people understand the value of starting with pupils’ learning experiences and the profound insights these give them, they find it freeing and often exhilarating. It motivates them to want to find out more about how to deal with the issues they have uncovered.

We are very much looking forward to learning more from these English schools when we participate in the fall conference in early November. The theme, *Seizing the Agenda: From Raising the Floor to Raising the Ceiling*, is a bold statement about the vision for Whole Education.

**New Zealand.** Last spring we spent three weeks working with a wide range of groups across New Zealand. The spiral of inquiry is taking hold there in a variety of ways, including forming the basis for a new national approach to teacher professional learning. Rebecca Sweeney is a consultant and facilitator with CORE education who has written an article about “Leading in the Use of the Spiral of Inquiry” that will be coming out in this month’s edition of BCPVPA’s *Adminfo*. Rebecca is active on twitter and you can follow her @BeccaSweeney.

## Network Inquiry 2015-2016

### How to get started

We welcome any school in BC and the Yukon that is willing to work together to change outcomes for their learners. The spiral of inquiry provides the framework for school teams to be curious about what is going on for their learners, to develop a focus for their team inquiry, to explore hunches about what is leading to this situation (good and bad) for learners, to identify areas for new learning, to take action, and to check how much difference these new actions are making to learners.

We have learned from our experience with network schools – and from some very productive conversations with Helen Timperley – that sometimes our obsession with getting the ‘right’ question can actually limit our thinking. So now we are more interested in identifying a clear area of focus that has developed from a strong understanding of the experiences of the learners we serve.

At the Network leaders meeting, we agreed that the template separating the different forms of NOII and AESN was cumbersome last year so we have simplified the submission process. An updated template with some simple guidelines will be sent out shortly and it will also be posted on the blog and website. Please send all submissions to NOII or AESN to Donna Weaving ([dweaving@dccnet.com](mailto:dweaving@dccnet.com)) by November 27. All school submissions will be posted on the website by early January and will be organized by focus areas. We think this will make it a lot easier for schools to learn from each other.

### Impact study

This year we have committed to our funders to take a look specifically at the impact of AESN and the focus on transitions in secondary schools. Dr. Catherine McGregor (with assistance from Debbie Leighton Stephens and Lynne Tomlinson) has agreed to lead this study. Once again we are very grateful to Catherine for her friendship, her scholarship and her interest in this work.

We have tentatively identified ten secondary schools from across the province and will be contacting those schools directly to see whether they are interested in participating. These schools will get a small start up grant, some coaching support during the year, a travel grant to support their attendance at the spring symposium as well as a visit to another participating school. They will be asked to present their work at the symposium and to provide Catherine with access to

data and stories. This is an exciting opportunity to capture in a fresh way the difference that schools are making both for their Aboriginal learners - and for deepening understanding and respect amongst all learners.

### **Grants for 2014-2015 Schools**

We have finished editing the case studies from last year and very soon they will be posted on the website. We are deeply impressed with the quality of the work that is captured in the NOII and AESN case studies and we encourage you to read them carefully. Given the start we had to last year, the work of AESN and NOII schools is truly outstanding. By the end of October, we will send out certificates of appreciation along with the recognition grants to all schools who completed their case study for 2014-2015. Again, a huge thanks to the Ministry of Education, the Irving K Barber Learning Centre at UBC for helping to fund the network - and to everyone who has purchased a copy of *Spirals of Inquiry* which is now in its eighth printing!

### **Spring Symposium May 13-14 Richmond**

The theme for the 2016 Symposium will build on the success of last year with the title ***Purpose, Passion and Persistence: Making It Real***. We are looking forward to sharing stories of impact from schools across BC and the Yukon and to welcome a number of international guests, including Dr. Helen Timperley, the leading expert on teacher professional learning.

### **Video Clips**

Thanks to Angela Stott for interviewing quite a number of participants at the symposium last May. The videos have now been edited into short clips and you can find them at <http://noii.ca/resources/noii-symposium/>. We think you will find the comments extremely interesting - and potentially very useful in a variety of settings.

### **Meetings**

Regions are approaching the need for face-to-face meetings and on-line connections in a variety of ways. As we are informed about the various meeting times and venues, we will post them on the website.

Extended Lower Mainland Schools will be meeting:

- October 20 4:00 – 6:00 at Sea Island School, 1891 Wellington Crescent, Richmond
- January 28 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the Surrey School District Learning Centre 14033 92 Avenue, Surrey
- May 17 4:00 – 6:00 pm at the Delta School District office – 4585 Harvest Drive, Ladner

### **Stay Connected**

Please visit and share our website ([www.noii.ca](http://www.noii.ca)), blog ([www.networksofinquiry.blogspot.ca](http://www.networksofinquiry.blogspot.ca)) and follow us on twitter (@noiiAESN). We're always looking for contributions from network members. Please contact Sarah Lockman to share your ideas: [noii.aesn@gmail.com](mailto:noii.aesn@gmail.com).

Our thanks to all of you for your commitment to the three big goals of the networks:

*EVERY learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options.  
ALL learners leaving our settings more curious than when they arrive.  
ALL learners gaining an understanding of and respect for Aboriginal knowledge and culture.*

Your inquiry spirit, focused professional learning, persistent efforts, teamwork and generosity in sharing your learning are having a profound impact on the lives of learners across BC and the Yukon.

**Have a great year!!**

*Judy Halbert & Linda Kaser*

