



## 2015-2016 AESN Case Study

**School:** Lax Kxeen Elementary

**District:** #52 Prince Rupert

**Inquiry Team Members:** Marie Cox-Rogers, Kathy Dann

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**Our focus for this year:** Our focus this year was Early Literacy. We attended a vulnerable readers summit in Vancouver. From this summit, we became interested in trying out the reading strategies show cased at this event.

**Scanning:** We became concerned about how so many students were leaving Grade 1 and subsequent primary grades not yet meeting the widely held expectations for reading. We did notice that many of the vulnerable students were making progress by the end of their Kindergarten year, but then continued to struggle in the next grade. There did not seem to be a point where they cracked the code and started to soar. We questioned our own practice and whether a change in our instruction would make a positive difference. As our students were very young, we did not interview them at the start of the inquiry.

**Focus:** We selected this area of inquiry as a result of attending a reading summit in the fall of 2015. We attended this summit with colleagues from other schools in the same district. We were all curious about and wanting to make change in how we viewed and taught reading in our classes. This project became a district wide inquiry where all of the elementary schools worked together to learn together and improve the instruction for all of our children.

**Hunch:** We had a hunch that our students were already receiving effective literacy instruction but we wanted to improve and make our instruction exemplary. Could a focus on making our reading program more cohesive, engaging and targeted make a difference for our learners? We were curious and wondered what would happen if we implemented literacy intervention strategies in our class. Would that translate into more successful readers?

**New professional learning:** As a team we all used the information in the book, Joyful Literacy Interventions: Early Learning Classroom Essentials. We found the assessment and tracking tools useful to help us track student learning. This included the use of circle charts. We also implemented literacy centers as a way for students to have hands on practice with the literacy concepts being taught. Thus, students played games, worked together and read together in fun and engaging ways throughout the school day.

As a team of learners, the school teams met on a regular basis with other school teams to share center ideas, our successes and our questions. It was a positive way to learn from each other and to problem solve.

### **Taking action:**

Guided Reading Groups

- Grouped the students in the class according to reading level
- Organized like ability Guided Reading Groups

- There were seven adults working for half an hour with the groups three to five days a week
- Each guided reading teacher was responsible for assessment and reporting on each student's progress
- Groups were flexible and students could move to a different group based on their individual need - up and down

#### Assessment Strategies

- Running Records
- Circle Charts: The Alphabetic Principle: Letter-Sound Recognition (Upper Case, Lower Case Vowels) and Dolch High Frequency Words
- Anecdotal notes
- Literacy Centers
- Play based centers
- Adult led
- Literacy focused
- Small group

**Checking:** As a team we were very satisfied with the literacy growth of many of our students. We were able to differentiate our instruction to meet the needs of all of our learners. Students were able to work in groups that were focused on what they needed to become better readers. The literacy centers were engaging and enhanced the learning that was taking place in the guided reading groups. We found that we were more interactive as teachers, sharing our successes and problem solving with each other to make our practice more responsive to our learners.

**Reflections/Advice:** We learned that target practice that is responsive to the varied needs of each student created an engaging and fun reading environment for our learners. It was a very big project, which resulted in a dynamic change to our teaching practice.

As we reflect, our focus for next year will be:

- Wrap around more Aboriginal content in our literacy program
- Introduce more Aboriginal culture
- More use of Moe the Mouse to help students work on making sounds
- Continue to use the Strong Nations Readers
- Introduce the Strong Nations Alphabet
- Involve role models when going on field trips such as berry picking, bringing the berries back to the class to make jam and read books about berry picking, using the Seasonal Round Posters
- Adding more of a cultural/language component to the games such as The Popcorn Game