



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: Lax Kxeen Elementary

District: #52 Prince Rupert

Inquiry Team Members:

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Our focus for this year: Our focus is on interconnecting our students with Science (new curriculum), with other areas of learning and our community to increase their knowledge of how they impact their environment and how their environment impacts them through non-traditional pedagogical approaches (problem-based learning, experiential learning, and project-based learning) in a critically thinking classroom.

Scanning: We used the four key questions to open the lines of communication, and in turn help answer the question, “How can we help students understand their learning, as opposed to recall it?”

Our learners are diverse, they differ not only socio-culturally and linguistically, but also in their zone of proximal development and learning inclinations. We look to maximize each student’s growth with purpose using the First Peoples Principles of Learning.

Focus: The First Peoples Principles of Learning aligned with our goals and the big ideas within our curriculum. By tying the two together, to be able to broaden students’ understanding of traditional ways of life to the community and how things have evolved over time, and how that change over time and traditional ways continue to be vital. Having this knowledge can impact their future involvement in the community.

- Make learning more experiential, hands-on and meaningful for our students.
- Focus looking at the interconnectedness to the environment.

Hunch: Experiential learning can create dynamic and effective learning that will transform our students’ view of themselves and how they can impact the community and its future. Providing quality connections with community members will enable learners to build connections with the community, environment and each other.

New professional learning:

- Explored meaningful experiential learning opportunities to support students (pedagogies, educational tools)
- Increased familiarity with the traditional territory (impacts, perspectives, approaches)
- Gained more insight in creating thinking classrooms, project-based and place-based learning
- “Creating Thinking Classroom” is one resource we found helpful

Taking action: Collaborative and shared learning helped us form clearly identified goals to use as a guide. We drew upon each of our past experiences, expertise and knowledge. After exposing learners to traditional instruction, project-based and place-based learning, we

followed their success. It needs to be a progression of how learners went from traditional instruction to project-based and place-based learning to increase critical thinking skills. We focused more on essential ideas and eliminated ancillary tasks.

Do learners get to experience a sense of connection to the land?

- Yes

Is learning from the environment part of their experience?

- Yes

Checking: Learners were able to work cooperatively and collaboratively between two classrooms. However, we believe that there is always room to grow as this is part of our life-long learning journey. We started with traditional approaches (paper-pencil approach, fact-based assessment), which did not show promising evidences of deep learning. As we progressed to non-traditional approaches (project-based learning, problem-based learning, experiential learning), our learners began to have a deeper understanding of their learning. Our learners' answers to the four questions were now deeper and more thoughtful.

Reflections/Advice:

- Time and planning was intensive to go from traditional approaches to non-traditional approaches of ways of teaching.
- The collaboration process was more enriching to work as a team to share ideas and resources.
- Progression is key. Start small and build on it.

Where we plan to go next.

- The teaching philosophies of creating a space for learners to critically thinking coupled with place-based learning is something that holds great value and is worth sharing.

Advice:

- Research place-based learning, STEAM fields and creating a thinking learning classroom before embarking on this journey
- Adjust process, product, and content to meet learner needs