



2015-2016 NOII Case Study

School: Lucerne Elementary- Secondary **District:** #10 Arrow Lakes

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Our focus for this year: Our focus this year was on incorporating social justice themes, literacy, community connectedness and place-conscious learning into English Language Arts; and the power of having students create, plan, write, design, and publish storybooks.

Scanning: My scanning process began two years ago, when I first met this group of graduating students. Each had their own unique interests that guided their learning and passions. We used the four key questions in a one-to-one conference setting, allowing us to see what drove these students and how they felt about their own, personal learning. The experiences of our learners most important to us was that although they expressed a high level of feeling supported in their learning, they had very little self-motivation to go above and beyond. In addition, there was a sense of disconnect with this group and the rest of their school and local community.

Focus: We selected this area of focus because we were hoping to instill a sense of unified passion in the students for their school and local community. As well, we wanted to see what happened if they were given the opportunity and support to go above and beyond the expectations simply for their own lifelong learning and curiosity.

Hunch: We are a small school and so while it is difficult for students to 'hide in the crowd,' it is easy for them to scrape by and complete the bare minimum. Our hunch is that self-motivated passion and curiosity was not fostered.

New professional learning: We explored new technologies (for storybook publication), social justice resources, and collaborative inquiry into guiding student inquiry.

Taking action: Here is where we need to be honest – this project is NOT, in any way, complete. One year was simply TOO short for such an undertaking. In addition, students were not motivated to take on extra challenges in their graduating year. Despite using several varied plans of action, we could not support our students past the initial story writing phase. Certainly, we managed to write a rough draft of a children's storybook on a social justice theme (diversity and inclusion) but felt that instead of firing up passions and inquiry in our students, we were dragging them through the mud on this project that they themselves had little to no interest in. In addition, while our reason for selecting a Grade 12 class to work with was so that these students could leave something behind, it ended up being that this class was experiencing extra amounts of stress related to this project, and not able to do any of the legwork with passion or excitement. Ultimately, we put the project on the back burner for the latter half of the year, and thus it is not complete.

Checking: (See Above). A few small positives were the deep, meaningful discussions that my students had with each other and with me regarding social justice. New ideas and opinions

were articulated, perspectives were acknowledged, and students expanded their worldviews. This we did see clearly, and believe made an impact on our learners as they go out into the 'real world' after graduation.

Reflections/Advice: We learned from this inquiry that some projects are too large for a one-year time frame and that it is certainly okay to re-write and re-vamp the project as it matures. Next year, we are collaborating with the Social Studies teacher to rework this project and see it in its new development (and hopefully to completion!). We plan to work with the junior grades (7/8/9) so that if the project is not able to be completed after another year, there are further years with this group. In addition, we are altering the focus, as we are working with a different group of students, towards a more place-conscious learning inquiry. We would still like to see storybooks created and published, and ultimately shared with the school and local community. One thing I learned, personally, is that you really cannot do it alone...that is why I am pleased to have another colleague on board for next year!