



2015-2016 NOII Case Study

School: Mountain View Elementary

District: #68 Nanaimo Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members: Tricia Anton, Sue Gueulette

Contact Information: Sue Gueulette

Our focus for this year: Would iPad writing apps engage struggling writers to complete writing activities more often compared to traditional pen and paper?

Scanning: We as a team were very happy and satisfied with our learners this year and learning intentions. At baseline we had a dozen at risk students who were reluctant writers. We introduced iPad usage as a tool that would hopefully engage our reluctant learners. Students became more engaged with the iPads primarily due to the fact that the iPad is a tool that can offer flexibility and it allows mistakes to be corrected easily. One feature that our reluctant writers found useful was being able to choose words in the spelling function. Other helpful features that made writing fun was the recording portion of My Story app. We observed over the year students became more engaged in their learning, they had a larger desire to share, and wanted others to view their work. We knew our learners were making strong progress as they became more reflective of their work. We found some students wanting to return to their projects because they had continued their thinking and wanted better results. We also noticed students taking more risks by sharing their work with others or by asking for help.

Focus: We decided to concentrate our efforts by using iPads as a tool to engage students. This will work on improving task behavior as well as enhancing their writing skills.

Hunch: Our hunch is that we believe struggling students who have difficulty with pen and paper writing activities will be more engaged in using writing apps to complete their written work. Parents will also be able to have quick access to their child's writing by using the Seesaw app. We can find out if our hunch is true by observing how many times students ask for assistance from either me or a classmate. If students are asking task related questions and are seeking help to finish their assignment, we know we have accomplished our goal in keeping our students engaged in their work.

New professional learning: This year we were learning how to implement three new apps in our classroom: My Story, Explain Everything, and Book Creator. The most helpful resource was one of our staff members attending an Ed Tech workshop in Vancouver followed a few days later with an in-service for our iPad team on how to introduce it to the classroom. We met every Monday and learned how to use the apps. We practiced making the projects and discussed helpful hints and strategies. The design that we used most was modeling, discussions, and trial and error as this was all new information. It is key that in order for this model to work you need a staff member with a clear vision on how it's being implemented and how the app works.

Taking action: The strategies we decided as a team were: modeling and sequencing. We modeled a lot of the things we did with the students as it is easy to upload and discuss things on the projector. We used sequencing as it was important to accomplish the tasks in the right

order. First, open up my story app; second, go to the author icon and register yourself as an author; third, choose a layout for your story; and fourth, label your story.

The way we implemented these strategies was by creating more opportunities and time to use iPads for writing activities: story writing (BME), poetry, and labeling. We found that sharing and letting others help and teach each other were also useful strategies.

Checking: We learned that students were more engaged in their learning and motivated to view and read other students' posts and projects. Using MY Story and Seesaw app made viewing finished projects easier as the projects can be easily accessed through the computer and onto the screen for everyone to view and read. The parents loved the Seesaw app as the app signals the parents that their child has produced something in their e-folder and they can view and respond to their work. It is a great tool as it keeps the school and family connected with their learning. We also completed a reflective piece as we wanted to know what the children felt about iPads. The questions and data are presented below. Students especially students who struggled with writing enjoyed using iPads as a tool to engage them in writing.

Reflections/Advice: We as team feel we must create more opportunities and time to use iPads for writing activities: story writing (BME), poetry, labeling. Sharing and letting others help and teach each other to complete the task.

Reflective thinking/Data collection

- 1) Do you like working on an iPad? *Most children like working on iPads.*
Yes=64/76 (84%) No= 12/76 (16 %)
- 2) Did you get help from someone in the classroom while you were using the iPad? *Getting help was equal.*
Yes=38/76 (50%) No= 38/76 (50%)
- 3) Do you like making a story using the iPad? *Most children like creating stories on iPads.*
Yes=59/76 equals (77%) No= 17/76 (22%)
- 4) Did you learn something new while working on the iPad? *Almost three quarters of students learned something new.*
Yes=52/76 (68%) No=24/76 (31%)
- 5) Do you like making a story using paper and pencil? *Over half the children like creating stories using paper and pencil as their tool.*
Yes=44/76 (57%) No=32/76 (42%)
- 6) The last question asked the students if they preferred iPads or paper and pencil as their tool of preference and reasons for choosing that tool.
 - All identified 12-15 struggling writers preferred the iPad as their choice. Here are several of their reasons in point form why they like the iPad...
 - Easier and fun, only one material to work with, easier to type, learn cool stuff, easier to fix mistakes, able to take pictures with a camera, typing instead of printing, fun to change backgrounds.
 - Teacher's perceptive in point form...
 - Children are more engaged and we observed less off task behavior, i.e. pencil breaking, day dreaming, bathroom excuses. The iPad environment created situations where kids asked each other for help, it helps develop independence. iPads are a good tool to help complete writing projects that could be daunting for struggling writers or readers, they like sharing their work, and were willing to take risks to learn.