



2015-2016 AESN / NOII Case Study

School: Pleasant Valley Elementary

District: #68 Nanaimo Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members: Christine Angelucci, Teri Hooper, Wendy Phillips

Our focus for this year: The focus of our inquiry was early literacy, with a focus on phonemic awareness. We provided guided reading to our students and incorporated a phonemic awareness piece into our guided reading time.

Scanning: We administered the NLPS (Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools Assessment) and the PM Benchmarks to all primary students in our school. We also discussed anecdotal observations with teachers and spoke to students about their reading. We noticed that students were struggling in reading but we wanted to delve deeper and find out what specifically, they were struggling with. We interviewed five students (one from each class). After asking students where they felt they needed to go next to become better learners, they responded that they needed more time to read and they needed an adult available when they got 'stuck' or didn't understand something.

Focus: After compiling our NLPS data and PM Benchmarks data we entered our information onto spreadsheets that break the literacy skills into specific elements. We discovered that many students were struggling with phonemic awareness. Due to this, we decided to embed phonemic awareness into a guided reading program.

Hunch: We noticed that with many students at different reading levels in a classroom, teachers were having a difficult time reading with students on a one on one basis and it was difficult to figure out what specific part of reading students were struggling with. It was also noted that after grade one, the teaching of phonemic awareness dropped off significantly.

New Professional Learning: Our staff, including classroom teachers, librarian, principal and school support, learned how to facilitate guided reading groups. We followed the guidelines in 'Strong Readers Educator Resource Guide' from Strong Nations. We also used the book 'Skills They Need to Help Them Succeed' to guide us in the implementation of teaching specific phonemic awareness skills.

Taking action: We set up our guided reading groups based on our test results. All adults involved in guided reading were trained and given materials needed. We chose to provide guided reading to all grade one and two students for three 30 minute blocks per week. We scheduled a portion of each guided reading session to teaching specific phonemic awareness skills from the book 'Skills They Need to Help Them Succeed.'

Checking: We tested our students in September and re tested them again in February and May. We used PM Benchmarks and portions of the NLPS. Staff met during these times to look at and discuss our results.

Reflections/Advice: Our student's scores improved over the course of the year. In interviewing the same five students one last time, they all stated that they enjoyed the phonemic awareness

piece and that they felt like they had become more confident readers. The staff noticed that our students became more aware of how to identify and manipulate the sounds in words. This result lead to the students being better able to use strategies that they were taught for figuring out unknown words. This has made our staff more aware of how important it is to incorporate word play into our daily activities.

Future directions: We will continue to use 'Skills They Need to Help Them Succeed' in our guided reading sessions. The kindergarten and grade three teachers have been using this resource in their classrooms and plan on continuing to do so next year. Many other teachers have expressed interest in incorporating components into their classroom time as well.