



## 2015-2016 NOII Case Study

**School:** Roosevelt Park Community School

**District:** #52 Prince Rupert

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**Our focus for this year:** To improve the literacy results of our students, especially primary.

**Scanning:** We used baseline data from our students' previous assessments. Our students were in Kindergarten to Grade 2; one of the two classes' was immersion. Most were not at grade level in terms of their literacy development.

We adapted the four key questions to ask our students; we recorded their anecdotal responses about what they were learning and its significance to them (specifically, we asked them about reading and learning to read). From our perspective, we found we could close the learning gap that existed for our at-risk students if we approached literacy systematically.

In terms of the OECD principles of learning and the First Peoples Principles of Learning, we were mindful that learning involves patience and time, that learning is embedded in story, that learning is reflective and should be experiential, and that learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

**Focus:** We selected this area because we knew most of our students were behind in literacy, and though our school already employed various literacy programs and strategies, we were not achieving the results we wanted. We wanted to close the gap for students who were considered behind.

**Hunch:** One research suggested that the majority of learners arrive ready to learn to read in kindergarten. Vulnerable children can learn to read in kindergarten regardless of low socioeconomic status, population density, little pre-existing knowledge, age/developmental levels, and previous literacy experience. She also kept reminding us that we need to drop our pre-conceived ideas about what individual learners can accomplish. Our hunch was that our learners could make the necessary progress with specifically targeted instruction.

**New professional learning:** We attended a literacy summit in the fall of 2015. Our instruction was based on "Joyful Literacy." Collaborating on our findings within our school and within our district was meaningful as we shared ideas, successes, and strategies.

**Taking action:** Our strategies were to focus on developing the alphabetic principle, phonetics, and high-frequency/sight words through daily literacy centres with all the adult supports we could find. We had several small groups running in our classes. *Jolly Phonics* materials were also added to our instruction. We used circle charts to assess progress regularly, and to prevent redundancy once a student had mastered a letter, word, sound, or skill.

**Checking:** The data we collected suggests that that we are making a difference and that this approach to literacy works in both language streams. For instance, all of the Grade 1 students in one class were meeting expectations, or very close to meeting expectations, in literacy at the

end of the year. In another class, the Grade 1 students commenced the year as pre-readers and all progressed to reading between Benchmark levels A and E. All of our students showed an enthusiasm for literacy centres and had positive things to say about their reading progress this year.

**Reflections/Advice:** Our advice would be to start such a program early in the year. Also, we would encourage people to harness as much support in the building as possible to support learners. Lastly, we believe we must always remember to maintain high expectations for our students.