



2015-2016 NOII Case Study

School: Sinkut View Elementary

District: #91 Nechako Lakes

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Our focus for this year: We focused on strengthening learner skills in reading for information through determining the main idea and providing supporting details.

Scanning: We scanned students' writing responses to informational texts using performance standards and learned that even though we thought they had strong skills, students were not showing us that on formal assessments.

The problems indicated that when working in class, students could read and understand well, but when given an independent task, they did not show this and we wondered why? It was like a basketball team being able to execute the skills during drills and scrimmage in practices, but when it came to game time, they were not yet or minimally able to pull it all together. There was a missing piece.

Focus: We were hoping to empower our learners to stretch themselves, to own their learning through looking closely at their work, and to reach their potential in interpreting text information. Assessment for learning strategies fed our work this year as we took learners from where they were, provided descriptive feedback, and used a myriad of ways to help them move forward.

Hunch: At first we thought that students did not understand the difference between the 'topic and the main idea' and therefore were unable to provide supporting details. Their focus was on finding the quick answer.

What we learned was that students weren't transferring their skills. We also discovered that we might have been handing the information to them instead of letting them struggle a bit and dig deep to read and understand. We had taught the main idea and we assumed they learned it. Students didn't give it their all and some were intimidated by the assessment.

New professional learning: Professional conversations during collaboration time, staff meetings.

- Student questions and student learning behaviour informed our thinking more than any particular resources. We brought samples of student work from many areas of the curriculum, analyzed it, supported each other to determine next steps and started the cycle all over again.
- An AFL session contributed to our initial beginning.
- Universal Design for Learning (UDL) – gave everybody help at the beginning
- Scoring Guides: Watch, Try, Practice, Teach to have students find themselves on a table...turned the guide on its side to remove the judgmental aspect and focus on the continuum of skills and learning.

Taking action: We approached learning about how to distill main ideas and supporting details in every subject area. Some didn't do this in Math as much (did focus on the main idea) and if they did it was focused on the problem solving area.

We brought evidence of student learning again and again to our meetings and celebrated and noticed what our next steps would be. Evidence of learning took many forms.

We transformed our teaching and assessment practices so dramatically that we did not have enough marks in the first term to consider offering any honour roll awards. We decided that traditional honor roll assemblies didn't fit with how we are learning.

We changed how we administered the assessment...we chunked it just like we broke down our practice. We took 3-4 sessions to administer the RAD (reading assessment) so it slowed the students down and allowed them to focus and spend more time thinking deeply.

Checking: Chunking the assessment took all the pressure off for students and for teachers. It slowed us down.

We have significantly more students fully meeting expectations in grades 4-6 now than in the fall. We also have significantly more students in grade three who can actually attempt the task, whereas in the fall, very few were ready for this type of an assessment.

School	Gr.3		Gr.4		Gr.5		Gr.6	
	Fall, 2015	Spring, 2016	Fall, 2015	Spring, 2016	Fall, 2015	Spring, 2016	Fall, 2015	Spring, 2016
Below Grade	-	-	-	<u>1</u>	-	-	<u>1</u>	-
1 - Not Meeting	<u>1</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	-	<u>4</u>	-	<u>5</u>	-
2 - Minimally Meeting	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>12</u>
3 - Fully Meeting	<u>1</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	-	<u>4</u>	-	<u>10</u>
4 - Exceeding	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>21</u>	<u>22</u>
% Fully Meeting or Exceeding	75	72	46	90	42	100	71	100

Reflections/Advice: We will continue this process next year even if we don't formalize this inquiry. This process grounded us and took the pressure off at all levels because we supported each other and our learners more effectively. The focus is on student learning and it takes the pressure off teachers and the school leader...it's not so personal.

Our students taught us what we needed to know.

One teacher felt she focused so much on nonfiction that fiction reading was neglected and will adjust next year. The focus was needed so we could all learn this well.

Our assembly was not traditional. We celebrated each learner. We brought up every learner...a teacher talked about the class strengths and celebrated and then each student got a certificate that had their name. The big message was "All of you are wiser now than you were in the fall."

The collaboration is critical in providing connections between teachers so we don't work in isolation anymore. We have more to talk about now even on a casual basis. The number of impromptu conversations about student learning are happening all the time.

This learning was....

Nonlinear

- Never moved forward in a straight line, there was a series of chats, clarification, retracing steps

About Practice

- To own the skill until it becomes second nature
- Learning Intentions and Topic/ Main Idea serve similar roles
 - Learning Intention: makes the learning explicit for students
 - Topic + Main Idea: helps students make sense out of confusing experiences and seemingly isolated facts

About Choices (The social nature of learning)

- Where to work
- When to work
- How to work
- Who to work with

About Reaching All Students

We sometimes assume they understood the task or instructions, only to find out that we needed to clarify points and expectations

- individuals
- small groups
- class as a whole

Thoughts for Next Year:

- We struggled to make this particularly relevant to the primary years. It was happening but it was difficult to flush it out and articulate it. Our two groups meet separately on a biweekly basis. We will continue the recent practice of all meeting together to talk about our work during staff meetings.
- We are looking at the ideas behind the new ways of reporting and know they will support the learning we have already done this year.
- Looking towards possibly focusing on student self-assessment. We saw that peer support was sometimes the most helpful as students shared and taught each other. They discuss what they find confusing and what they understand at a 'kid level' and it sometimes makes more sense in their language.