



## **Networks of Inquiry and Innovation** **Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network**

### **2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study**

**School Name: Cedar Community Secondary**

**School District: SD#68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith**

**Inquiry Team Members: Don Rinald, Carey Mark, Darcy Hoff, Rick Becker, Rachel Cooper**

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**Type of inquiry: NOII**

**Grade levels: Secondary (8 - 12)**

**Curricular area(s): Language Arts - Literacy, Language Arts - Oral Language, Language Arts - Writing, Physical & Health Education, Science, Social Studies**

**Focus area(s): Community-based learning, Core competencies (for example, critical thinking, communication, problem solving), Flexible learning, Growth mindset, Inclusion and inclusive instructional strategies, Inquiry-based learning, Land, Nature or Place-based learning**

**In one sentence, what was your focus for the year?**

**Cross curricular and personalized learning through the creation of a project-based learning that will see all grade 8-10's participate and an option for 11 to 12's.**

**Scanning: Briefly summarize your scanning process. How did you use the four key questions as part of the scanning process? What did you notice about the experiences of your learners that were most important to your team?**

**We found that students were struggling to find relevance in their learning (what are you learning and why is it important?) and thus were lacking engagement. By implementing high quality project based learning our hope was to address this.**

**Focus: In a few sentences, explain why you selected this area. What changes were you hoping to obtain for your learners?**

**Project Based Learning has been shown by research to cause significant increase in student**



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engagement. Our hope was to excite students about this project, and that this would carry over into their core courses.

**Hunch:** Describe your hunches about the ways in which practices at the school may have been contributing to the experiences of your learners that were of concern to you.

Though we had hoped to implement PBL at the beginning of the school year, we struggled with this with all the upheaval of opening a new school. This grant allowed us to bring the policy in partway through the year instead of waiting until next year.

**New professional learning:** What new areas of professional learning did you explore? What resources were most helpful? What specific designs did you use to support the learning of your colleagues?

Project Based Learning has been shown by research to cause significant increase in student engagement. Our hope was to excite students about this project, and that this would carry over into their core courses.

**Taking action:** Describe strategies you and your team decided on and how your actions worked out.

We implemented the Community Project, which was a ten week multi-disciplinary project. Teacher supported students both in and out of class time to move their projects forward.

**Checking:** Summarize the differences you made. Were they enough? Were you satisfied?

In this project, we were able to engage and get students enthused about their learning, which is a great start. Unfortunately we (probably) spent too much time on it, which led to the enthusiasm draining over time. So, while we did create the conditions we desired initially, we failed to maintain the momentum we had built through to the finale of the project.

**Reflections/Advice:** Finish by sharing what you learned from this inquiry, where you plan to go next, and what advice you would offer other schools with a similar interest.

In making PBL a school focus, it needs to be done right at the beginning of the school year, and preferably with a heavily scaffolded project which will allow students to gain the skills to be successful in future projects. Students were definitely engaged and saw value in the



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project, which is a huge benefit of PBL and it is absolutely worth committing the required time and effort to.