



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Cilaire Elementary

School District: SD#68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members: Lorraine Carlson, Tracy White, Darren Dickie, Alana Lavery

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Type of inquiry: NOII

Grade levels: Intermediate (4 - 7)

Curricular area(s): Applied Design, Skills & Technology, Arts Education, Language Arts - Literacy, Language Arts - Reading, Language Arts - Writing, Mathematics / Numeracy, Science, Social Studies

Focus area(s): Implementing Technology

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

To determine if the use of technology, in a an intermediate classroom, would improve student ownership, engagement and fluency in their learning.

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?

Intermediate students often seem disengaged with their learning, and do not spend time reviewing or editing. Many students attend to lessons as task completion, not to demonstrate full understanding. During writing activities, students do not spend time on the editing process, as it is cumbersome with pen and paper. As a result, written work often has simple errors in basic spelling, punctuation and grammar, as well as limited detail included.

Students with learning obstacles, often have difficulty with written out and comprehension. It is difficult to provide the one on one supports needed to help these children. Also, many of these students would like to have more independence, specifically the intermediate students.



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Staff's initial observations: students are often disengaged with assigned topics; students with dexterity problems find it hard to get ideas down when using a pen/ pencil and paper and get discouraged easily; students are eager to use technology and appear to find tasks more enjoyable and easier to complete.

- Students verbally state that they prefer to word process writing activities.
- When given the choice to complete an activity, using a Chromebook or on paper, the vast majority of students want to use a Chromebook.
- Students are more willing to do technology based reinforcements and extensions, such as Mathletics or SumDog, during and outside of school time.

Cilaire purchased a small number of Chromebooks last year. Students were excited and engaged to use the Chromebooks. When given a choice, students will ask to use technology to complete written tasks rather than traditional paper and pen. Also, technology allowed for the use of apps and websites to reinforce concepts. Students were engaged and enthusiastic with this type of learning.

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

Cilaire will be concentrating their efforts with the intermediate classes, as these students have a background in the use of technology and will require little instruction on how to use and implement. Our SST will be concentrating on helping students use Read and Write, and Lexia for literacy support. Class room teachers will be using Google apps, as the school has 2 Chromebook carts. Also, the Learn68 accounts allow for easy access for students to use the Google Suites for Education and their personal drives from any location, plus the ability to share and complete group projects. With the introduction of Chromebooks, there has been much excitement and curiosity that we hope will be brought into student learning and engagement. We hope that students will delve deeper into their thought process, and think creative and critically. Also, we hope that students will be able to present their understanding in a confident, clear, and productive manner.

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.

Children have moved forward with the advanced technological experiences in the world today. It has been difficult for educators to keep up with these advances in the school setting due to costs prohibiting the implementation of technology in a meaningful way.



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Schools have also found it difficult to provide access for all students to integrate technology use throughout each student's school day. Typically it is an educational enhancement, not a tool used to facilitate aspects of mainstream scholastic work. As educators, keeping up with technology and its uses takes time and practice. Finding the right technology based courses to support students has been a hurdle for educators at times. As well as keeping up with the latest technological advances, as things change very quickly.

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?

Professional Learning Completed:

CUEBC Professional Development Day - October 21, 2016

GAFE Conference Victoria – November 18-19, 2016

Scratch Educators Professional Development – December, 2016

The CUEBC Professional Development Day allowed us quick insight into a different avenues of implementing technology within the classroom, such a coding and google, and technological assessment practices such as Freshgrade. These introductory seminars gave teachers an overview into what areas we need to dig deeper with the GAFE conference.

Through attending the GAFE Conference in Victoria, we were able to gain a deeper understanding of Google Classroom and Google Apps for Education to implement within the classroom setting. As we are implementing the use of Chromebooks and student google accounts within the District, this conference was very valuable on showing teachers the variety of different ways to use technology beyond documents and spreadsheets. Many of the different tools we were given we were able implement within the classroom right away.

The Scratch seminar was very valuable and applicable to today's new curriculum. As the majority of educators within our school had very limited background of coding and needed guidance on how to implement coding within the class easily and efficiently. The Scratch program for students was excellent. Teachers did not have to become experts. Intermediate students learned the basic of coding first, then were able to help teach younger students.

Educators who have acquired the knowledge of how to use a variety of technologies in



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class have provided in-service to other staff members about the uses of technology within the classroom during PLC time, and after school where support was needed.

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

As a group, we decided our SST would guide students through the use of Google Read and Write. This Google App has been impactful to our students with learning difficulties. It has allowed them to have text read to them, to use speak to text for creating documents and creating notes. The notes features has been used in other classrooms also. Read and Write has given students with learning difficulties greater independence, which has led to greater confidence in their abilities.

Web based programs used to support student learning have been used in a variety of intermediate classrooms. Mathletics has been used to help support and reinforce the Math curriculum. Students who need support for reading have been using Lexia to support decoding, vocabulary, comprehension and fluency. To aid in fluent, efficient use of technology students have been completing typing activities weekly.

In the classroom environment, students have been using Google Docs to complete written assignments. This has allowed the students and teachers to share and edit work. Also, students have taken more time with the writing process, as editing is easier and less cumbersome. The writing process has been become more fluid and efficient. Students are more confident with the writing process, evident by the growth in written work.

The use of the Google apps has given students greater creativity and choice. The ability to share has allowed for easier group work to be completed, as well as partner accountability. Students have had great choice on how to present their knowledge through the use of a variety of web-based programs: Lucidpress, Google Slides, Google Docs, Stop Motion, Scratch, Movie Maker, and Website creators. It has been evident students have enjoyed the creation process. They have shown pride in their work and curiosity about the products of other students.

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

Yes. Students are engaged and excited to learn with technology. The majority have shown



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greater independence, engagement, pride and ownership in their work. There are issues with self-regulation on the proper use of technology, but as these are new skills this has to be taught and reinforced just like another skill or concept.

Writing responses have gotten stronger as the year has progressed. Student progress is monitored and checked through Lexia and Mathletics. Students have given feedback on the new apps, etc we have used within the classroom.

Student Reflection on Technology:

Using a Chromebook is really useful for finding and accessing information. It is an awesome learning tool and is fun to use.

With Freshgrade, it's easier to complete work faster. If you are on vacation with your family or you are sick at home all you have to do is go on to your computer to Freshgrade to see what you've missed and what you can complete without being at school.

I really like working with google slides. It is super fun to make, and create slides, upload pictures and also learn how to present with more enthusiasm and structure because with google slides I can learn with more pictures than words. Google slides are some of my favourite kind of projects to do and I love doing them.

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.

We have learned that today's student has a higher level of engagement and ownership when using technology to support or present their learning. The vast array of multiple ways to present their thinking through technology has the majority of students excited to engage in the learning process. Also, technology has allowed students to creatively present their understanding in the style that best suits their needs and learning style. Through various classroom assessments, it is evident that student comprehension has improved overall.

As we moved forward, we would like to spend time investigating how to implement technology to support and engage primary learners, as we have concentrated our inquiry on intermediate this year. To do so, we would participate in workshops that are primary centered. If the school receives an ipad cart next year this would be the tool we use. We would also continue to develop the use of technology in the intermediate classroom



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through further professional development courses and continued implementation of technology in the intermediate classroom. Also, we need to establish clear guidelines on the use of technology within the classroom. Teach students how to self-regulate when using technology will be important.

Advice to colleagues interested in investigating the use of technology to further student ownership, engagement and fluency is to try not to do too much. Have a specific teacher concentrate on one technological skill at a time. This will allow the educator and students the time needed to implement the technological skill properly. Do not be afraid to try new things, as there are so many different technological based educational tools to use. Understand that it is ok for the educator not to be a technological expert before implementing. There are many online tutorials and the students are very good at troubleshooting themselves. Also, have guidelines for the use of technology within the classroom to help student's self-regulate proper use. Finally, have fun and find enjoyment with the process.