



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Eke Me-Xi Learning Centre

School District: SD#85 Vancouver Island North

Inquiry Team Members: Leah Hubbard, Melanie Demoe, Sherri Williams

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Type of inquiry: AESN Transitions

Grade levels: Secondary (8 - 12)

Curricular area(s): Cross-curricular planning

Focus area(s): Aboriginal understandings (for example, Traditional Knowledge, oral history, reconciliation), Experiential learning, Land, Nature or Place-based learning, Transitions

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

The focus for the year was to deliberately plan activities in the classroom, on the land and in the community that would influence students' metacognition of their transferable skills and strengths.

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?

Our school's 2016/17 inquiry work noted that students had difficulty identifying their strengths and understanding that skills are transferable. In Spring 2017, a student survey was created that focussed on 3 school-wide activities: Clams, Goal Setting and Student Self-Assessment.

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



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Based on the student survey responses and our previous year's work we have identified the following areas of focus:

1. Create a revised Student Learning Plan. This was an item that came up last year during our project and during the recent Ministry Compliance audit. The ideal SLP would be more personalized and reflective of each learner at Eke Me-Xi instead of formulaic and generic.
2. Teacher Collaboration and Cross-Curricular Planning. This planning time is essential because it will allow teachers to cooperatively examine content, identify and align learning intentions and co-construct criteria and assessment tools.
3. Creation of Capstone Projects. Capstone projects would enable students to demonstrate their learning and meet a number of learning objectives in a variety of classes

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.

Staff feel that operating in silos has led to the creation of a view that compartmentalizes teaching and learning. The creation of POD learning blocks and the horizontal connectedness of learners in this setting as well as on field trips and during traditional food harvesting activities are seen as positive indications that this is the direction to move towards.

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?

The integration of Kwak'wala words, terms and common phrases associated with school routines and into the Science courses (clam digging unit) were areas that staff were willing to learn and incorporate.

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



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This year's project saw the deliberate creation of lessons/units that focussed on 3 specific areas

- 1) traditional food gathering on the land and the integration of clam digging in Kwak'wala language, Science and Food Studies classes

- 2) Goal Setting during POD (targeted instruction classes in the area of Literacy, Numeracy and Kwak'wala) and PE classes.

- 3) Self-Assessment in ELA/EFP, Art, PE, and Food Studies.

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

Upon reviewing student responses to the survey, staff noted that:

- 1) Students see Kwak'wala language as a separate subject-- this would mean that when staff are co-planning cross-curricular units the incorporation/integration needs to be clearly articulated to students. Staff have a hunch that operating in silos is leading to this-- staff will need to help students break down the idea of silos. Staff see the need to incorporate traditional ways of knowing and learning-- this is an area of professional learning in order to scaffold that knowledge for staff and students.

A positive school implementation since our team presented at NOII has been the creation and incorporation of Kwak'wala words and phrases in our school setting. This has placed all members of our school community as learners of the language- staff is modelling taking "a healthy risk" to learn, speak and integrate everyday words and phrases.

- 2) The percentage of students that monitor their goals, identify the importance of goal setting and who see goal-setting as relevant to all aspects of life was significantly higher than we anticipated. Staff assert that changes to the SLP's short and long term goals are needed in order to provide more focus on the steps of ones' action plan. Embedding a chance for students to reflect on the actions that were taken to meet goals would provide an opportunity of discovery-- where to next? what modifications to the actions or the goal would you make?

- 3) Students were able to identify a positive connection between self-assessment in school and its application in their personal lives and communities. Staff have identified a need to



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clarify what students are asking themselves when they self-assess and what do they do with the information. Staff are curious to know more from our learners in this area.

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.

The action plan is for staff to co-plan in August in order to create a Capstone Project that integrates cross-curricular objectives. Co-plan at the end of semester 1 as well.

- Staff will also create a revised SLP—network with other schools to find out what others are doing.
- During the Fall NOII conference call with Debbie Leighton-Stephens staff will do a check-in and reflect on work to date with collaborative planning and project progress.
- Staff will also create a student survey next Spring in order to have students reflect on Capstone projects and integration of cross-curricular learning. Staff survey to check-in about co-planning and the Inquiry project will be developed as well.