



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Island ConnectEd

School District: SD#68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members: Kim Pepler, Michelle Kennedy, Leah Kos, Louise Massey

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Type of inquiry: NOII

Grade levels: Secondary (8 - 12)

Curricular area(s): We were looking at meaningful engagement, in general, not specific curricular area.

Focus area(s): Formative assessment, STEM / STEAM, Universal design for learning

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

How and which online tools can we use in K -12 to engage our students in meaningful and relevant self-evaluation and critical thinking. How do these solutions comply with the four cornerstones of ongoing summative assessment: student voice, learning outcomes, attachment of authentic evidence and teacher feedback?

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?

The new curriculum for K-9 and the proposed changes to the 10-12 curriculum are driving changes in how we assess and evaluate students' progress towards meeting the learning standards. Island Connect Ed is in a unique position in the district in that our courses are self-paced and flexible, but a drawback to online courses is the lack of face-to-face interactions, which are an essential aspect of the assessment process. Online course delivery has implications for summative and formative assessment practices and as our school is a primarily online learning environment, there is a need to find assessment tools that support the learning needs of our students and these tools must also be electronic.

The results of our primary research found that in the DL environment, student voice is



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limited and there seems to be a lack of student-centred learning opportunities. Our focus for this case study was to find transformative assessment solutions to connect with our students' sense of purpose and to enhance engagement with learning.

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

To reconcile with new curriculum and the best practices for assessing student learning, our PLC team identified the need for effective formative and summative assessment practices

in the DL Assessment and pedagogy are changing. Beginning with the end in mind is a key tenet of strong pedagogical practice. Reconciling the need for number based formal end of course summative assessment with the needs of the learner for strong and effective summative feedback that empowers a growth mindset is not easy. To do it, we have to live it.

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.

Our hunch was that many of our courses used the same varieties of assessment tools, which could lead to learner burnout, and a drop in motivation. We were concerned that the courses may appear to be too rigid and accountability focused, rather than learner focused.

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?

Our team surveyed our students about assessment preferences, what works for their learning needs and what doesn't. We attended conferences in Texas and Vancouver, and explored a variety of tools and technologies that were recommended to provide a variety of assessment and collaboration opportunities for students.

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

We started by researching what tools other schools and countries used for portfolios, assessment and online collaboration. At the same time we initiated surveys to use student



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perspectives on what they like and don't like about current assessment practices. From that data, we decided that we needed to find more tools in a practical environment. Some of our members attended the TCEA conference in Texas in February, while others attended the DL conference in Vancouver. We returned with several tools and technologies to assess, and began running trials to see how they worked.

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

We are still at a beginning stage, however, we have started to implement student voice in our assessment inside our current learning management tools. We are working with other teachers in the school to develop best practices for future assessment strategies.

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 want to continue to work towards integrating tools into a single location that will allow students to collaborate, self-assess, and eventually develop portfolios. We have been working with our current learning management system host to incorporate student voice in the assessment process. We are continuing to develop shared practices, and concern about learner exhaustion for our full time students if too many classes have the same assessment types. We are working towards variety, rigor and student satisfaction.