



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Ladysmith Primary School

School District: SD#68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members: Janelle Mould, Pam Puska, Leanne Sanford, Linnaea Wiseman

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Type of inquiry: NOII

Grade levels: Primary (K - 3)

Curricular area(s): Applied Design, Skills & Technology, Language Arts - Literacy

Focus area(s): Differentiated instruction, Experiential learning

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

Early Literacy-specifically, using technology to increase success and engagement with students learning the Jolly Phonics letter sounds.

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 vulnerable learners are disengaged and are falling behind in literacy. We feel that targeted interventions using technology may help with engagement and support learning. We need to provide more time showing the most vulnerable kids that they matter and that they are capable of learning. Some of these children have given up on themselves and we believe that by giving them some extra time and access to technology their learning and self-esteem will increase.

NLPS is showing that these children are falling behind in basic literacy skills. Focused interventions are necessary with Phonemic Awareness, Reading, Organizing Information and Writing. Ladysmith Primary focused on letter sound identification for this study. We feel that we need to target vulnerable learners at the earliest time possible (Kindergarten). Students are more likely to improve literacy skills when they are more engaged and feel like they have support.



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

Ladysmith Primary has been focusing on improving literacy skills. Over the past two years our district has created a literacy assessment that is used throughout the district. Using the Data from the NLPS assessment we saw that we needed to focus on letter sounds recognition in our youngest learners. Today's learners are very comfortable with technology and we felt that using technology to support learning would be a natural fit.

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.

Students that are falling behind and in this case are needing more rapid feedback than is possible in a whole class setting. With the use of technology and instant feedback these students will be more engaged which will further learning. We believe that these vulnerable learners will respond positively as they will see that they are receiving extra attention and individual, "cool" strategies. We believe that with increased self-esteem learning will improve.

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?

With support of the Ladysmith Primary PAC, LPS created a three year plan (2015-2017) to acquire iPads and other forms of technology to support learning in the classrooms for the whole school. In the fall of 2016 Ladysmith Primary had achieved the desired number of iPads and staff set forth in using technology to support our student learning. During PLC meetings staff took time to review various Literacy apps available on iPads. During the PLC meetings our staff discussed which Apps were being used and which Apps the students were connecting to in order to support literacy growth.

Our teacher-Librarian oversaw App purchases and iPad sign out systems. She was valuable in creating suggestions of available Apps.

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



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With feedback from staff we began to focus on various apps that seemed to most support student learning while also being user friendly. After a period of using “Free” Apps our staff made decisions on which Apps were to be purchased. The Case Study focused on using the App Pocket Phonics which focuses on supporting learning letter sounds alongside the program Jolly Phonics which is being implemented in all Kindergarten classrooms. All Kindergarten classes also supplemented their Jolly Phonics program with the computer program Teach Your Monster to Read. We used the computer version as it is free as opposed to iPad App version which is not free. All students received this form of technology support for Jolly Phonics learning and reinforcement.

During the Fall Kindergarten teachers administered the NLPS Literacy assessments. All three Kindergarten teachers identified learners who were unable to identify many letter names or sounds and seemed disengaged from learning literacy skills. In January 2017 Identified Kindergarten Students began working with the lead Inquiry and Innovation teacher on Wednesday mornings. Students were shown how to use the iPads (most had basic knowledge) and were introduced to the App Pocket Phonics. With support the students became independent in working through the activities. In March 2017, the full program was purchased and students gained access to a greater number of letter sound practice opportunities.

During these sessions students would review Jolly Phonics letters covered up to that time. Following an oral review each student would work on an iPad using the Pocket Phonics App.

As students gained independence with the iPads and the teacher began to see improvement in letter sound recognition other students were introduced to the iPads by the students to support their literacy.

Kindergarten teachers had their identified students practice on the iPads in the classroom during Free Choice play. At the start of play the students would go through the Pocket Phonics before continuing with playtime. Although this was not consistent the desire was to try to have students get at least three extra literacy reinforcement sessions using the iPads during playtime per week.

Along with the iPad sessions, Identified students worked with their class learning Jolly Phonics sounds. Jolly Phonics program teaches letter sounds through story, song, actions and print practice.



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

NLPS assessments were administered October/November.

Students that were focused on for the study had an average of under three letter sounds known in the Fall of 2016. With classroom learning time, class computer work on Teach Your Monster to Read and Small group and Individual work with iPads the Inquiry group average grew to 19 letter sounds known. As compared to the classroom averages the learning increased slightly more with the group involved in the Inquiry (Students who worked in a learning assistance three times a week were excluded from the average). The gap between the vulnerable or struggling learners (Inquiry Group) and the non-inquiry group decreased throughout the case study.

For the assessment students were shown the 26 letters as opposed to the 42 letter sounds in the Jolly Phonics Program. In addition to the 26 letter sounds students working with Jolly Phonics are introduced to digraphs and blends making 42 sounds in total.

Student	Fall Sound Accuracy	Spring Sound Accuracy
C.A	3	21
J.S	2	21
D.S	3	23
V.S	7	21
R.S	3	14
A.H	3	14
R.M-G	1	18
J.P	1	20

	Fall	%	Spring	%
Inquiry Group	2.85/26	11%	19/26	73%
Non-Inquiry Group	8.58/26	33%	22.83/26	88%

In addition to academic growth the students were asked about how they felt about using the iPads to support their Jolly Phonics learning. Overall it was a positive experience for the students assessed.

Interviews with students:

“What do you think of learning/practicing you letter work using the iPads and the Pocket Phonics App?”

C.A “I like it very much and when I think about it I should get this App at home.”



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J.S "It's good."

What do you like about the App?

"Drawing the letters. It's easier than a pencil. I like the noises and pictures too"

All students happily joined groups to practice letters using the iPads. Students were more than willing to "give up some free choice play" to work with the iPads as well. Teachers noticed high engagement levels with all students when using the App.

Our vulnerable students grew in confidence and were more engaged in learning. Each of the students involved in the inquiry know that they are cared about. Students now know that they are on their way to learning to read and for the first time that is exciting to them as opposed to not caring or feeling like they will never learn. Although the increase in letter sound identification with the inquiry group is small the overall benefit in self-esteem makes technology support a positive learning support.

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.

Growth in letter sound recognition is expected over the course of a school year. The slight increase in improvement with the Inquiry group should not act as a deterrent to using technology (specifically Apps to reinforce letter sound recognition). The iPads simply act as another way to reach the various types of learners that we have. The sound relationship is a key aspect in children learning to read and it is important to continue to find ways to reach those students that may come into Kindergarten knowing very few sounds. In the following year LPS will look to arrange a better model for iPad sign out. Until the time comes that all students have access to technology this will continue to be a struggle. For the most part Students enjoy having the opportunity to work with technology. Engagement levels were high with the Inquiry group. The Kindergarten team has plans to continue using both Teach Your Monster to Read and Pocket Phonics apps as they follow the same letter introduction order. In the following school year iPads will play an important role in supporting literacy growth at Ladysmith Primary.