



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Nakusp Secondary School

School District: SD#10 Arrow Lakes

Inquiry Team Members: Julia Flesaker and Tori Reid

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Type of inquiry: NOII

Grade levels: Secondary (8 - 12)

Curricular area(s): Language Arts - Literacy, Science, Social Studies

Focus area(s): Core competencies (for example, critical thinking, communication, problem solving), Formative assessment

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

Formative assessment and critical thinking based around current science in the media.

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?

Students are increasingly turning to technology as their source of information. We have seen that many students are indiscriminant about their sources of information. We are wondering how students are internalizing information that they find and transforming it into an individual belief system? Once students leave school they will need critical thinking and healthy skepticism to understand science in media (twitter, social networks, news).

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

While examining the revised curriculum, we noticed that critical thinking is a core competency. Critical thinking is easily integrated into all science topics especially ethical issues. We were hoping to see more independent thought and critical use of media amongst our students.



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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.

Technology is integrated into learning environments. We want to create a framework for critical thinking that can be used in any class or subject. Students generally take information they are presented with at face value, questioning it little.

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?

We integrated core competencies throughout the Geography 12 course, rather than focusing on anything in isolation. In general, we developed a rubric and critical analysis framework to assess for student learning based on resources from Project Look Sharp (<https://www.projectlooksharp.org/>). We took part in a "Collaboration to engage all learners" teacher study group.

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

One of our main purposes was to connect learning to social media and literacy. We created a set of questions and a BIG IDEA placemat for students to use when assessing a piece of media. We offered many different forms of media for analysis, including: podcasts, political cartoons, facebook posts, documentaries, online news articles, and photographs. We worked with another teacher from an elementary school and brought our classes together for learning activities.

In classes students were presented with multiple view points and media sources to work on ascertaining hidden messages and purpose behind media. Topics included Canadian Food Security in the North, Climate Change, Energy Sources, and Refugee Migration.

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

Students learned to look deeper and realized that they have the tools to assess media and use their previous knowledge to determine media validity. Students generally improved their ability to assess media, but more importantly they gained the confidence to discuss their opinions openly with others. Students felt supported and validated in class by their peers and teachers. Students were able to identify areas of challenge and areas of



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personal growth.

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.

Collaboration between different grades was engaging and challenged students to support their ideas and identify accurate and inaccurate information. Embedding the inquiry project throughout the entire course offered opportunity to revisit ideas and practice literacy skills, after all literacy is embedded in all subjects. An important consideration is that not all students know how to find good media.