



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Randerson Ridge Elementary

School District: SD#68 Nanaimo-Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members: Deana Uhlmann, Currin Windecker, Adam Rattray, Val Martineau

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Type of inquiry: NOII

Grade levels: Primary (K - 3)

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

Focus area(s): Differentiated instruction, Inclusion and inclusive instructional strategies, Self-regulation

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

Improve student learning of reading and writing.

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 adults involved in our students' education represent a diverse group from parents to outside professionals; however, for this project those adults most involved included the grade one/two classroom teacher, Deana Uhlmann, the teacher librarian, Currin Windecker, the principal, Darren Brick, and a selection of visiting experts and education assistants. Our hope was to use iPads and selected apps to address challenges with writing fluency, vocabulary acquisition, gaps in math skills, and work avoidance. While our app selection was influenced by key students with identified needs, we believed that tools, which will benefit some will benefit many.

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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We selected reading, writing, and math fluency to limit work avoidance and lack of engagement. Our goal was to support skill development in these areas. For those students that struggled with the act of writing, we hoped that the addition of technology to a writing project would help expand what they could accomplish, increasing fluency of ideas and output in these areas.

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.

The tools that we use to hook students, and draw them in to their learning are changing, and it is important to alter our teaching strategies accordingly. For example, we are introducing technology in the school.

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?

- Resources used: iPads, ;principal, SETBC, librarian, district staff.
- Prior to planning and teaching, Deana Uhlmann and Val Martineau identified target students who they felt would most benefit from this project.
- A Set BC representative visited Deana's classroom on several occasions, and met with her via telephone chats to help with lesson planning, and eventually, implementation.
- Currin WIndecker, the teacher librarian, provided a Pro-D workshop to introduce and teach a variety of different iPad apps for primary teachers. It was at this session that Book Creator was first introduced and explored by teaching staff.
- Currin also team taught with Deana throughout the project, as per the slow release model for learning.
- Deana and Currin together reflected on their practice while teaching the two projects: "Our Randerson Community" with Book Creator, and "Our Shapes Book" with MyStory. They adapted their planning based on students needs throughout the project.
- We found the following teaching tools most useful: class made criteria, exemplars, and modeling.

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

- Team teaching and increasing adult to student ratios was important.



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- Expand iPad App understanding and usage (what can benefit one will benefit many).
- Identify target students and provide one-to-one instruction where needed.
- Create class made criteria.
- Create exemplars and model appropriate behavior as needed.

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

The base line we used was observation, and reading and writing data completed prior to beginning the project.

What we noticed:

- Increased student enthusiasm.
- Students picked up technology skills very quickly: touch technique, photo taking, photo uploading, voice recording, and file organization among many other skills and techniques.
- Students were willing to experiment and start their projects independently. Some students discovered functions and features that teachers were unaware of, and were able to share/teach the class their discoveries.
- Messy handwriting is not a problem when typing.
- All students published their writing.
- Provided a multimedia way to assess student understanding of material. For example, in their shapes books, Mrs. Uhlmann's class not only reinforced their understanding of shapes and math vocabulary, but practiced writing, and reading as well.

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.

- Build in more time to teach iPad specific skills prior to starting a project: iPads and their apps represent powerful tools to support struggling learners; however, students must first understand how to navigate and manipulate these tools. For example, dictation has the potential to help a reluctant writer, but it must be taught directly. They need to understand how and when to use this function. My observation was that dictation was best used for individual words rather than complete sentences, and that such use promoted writing fluency. Conversely, dictating entire sentences is challenging for students, because they must first understand sentence structure and punctuation. For most, this is trickier when speaking than when writing.
- Set clear criteria and boundaries prior to beginning: we quickly discovered that without concrete and simple boundaries and criteria, students would produce emoji filled scribbles. This quality is both positive and negative. Students demonstrated initiative and



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fearlessness with the apps, often experimenting with features that we had not yet taught. While these qualities did not always achieve literacy or numeracy goals, students were still learning skills that would help in future lessons.

-While students showed initiative, enthusiasm, and initial independence, they needed one-on-one support to stay on task and stick to criteria. We found that students were more likely to play than work.