



2017-2018 Yukon Education Learning Networks: Empowering and Engaging Others in an Inquiry-Based Professional Learning Network Celebration of Learning Discussion Template

Yukon Education

School: **Porter Creek Secondary School**

Inquiry Team Members: **Nicole Cross and Camille Luks**

Your focus for this year: How can we connect a myriad of support strategies and services to ensure that PCCS students experience success within our school?

Scanning: When scanning this year, we were very much informed by our reflections at the conclusion of our Spiral last year. When checking our Inquiry last year, we confronted our own bias and fixed mindset. We had reflected that in moving forward, we sought to continue to foster inclusion through developing resources, 'going with the go-ers' and fostering curiosity and mindset at our school. This meant that as we began the 2017/18 school year we somewhat skipped through the scan phase and launched into a focus.

Focus: Our focus was two-fold;

- *Putting our students at the center and ensuring they feel their voice is heard.*
This involved us learning and teaching more about a Growth Mindset
- *Connecting resources within our school and community that work to support students.*
We focused on how we could help others utilize the Spiral of Inquiry as a Professional Development tool.

Hunch: Our hunch was that last year we approached our school with a notion of us being information-wielding conductors. Our approach was that we had answers, tools and strategies that others would be crazy to not embrace. Perhaps, we wondered, this year we could shift that mindset to a more collaborative approach that had us *connecting* resources instead? Perhaps, we wondered, if we connected some of the fabulous resources that surround us, we would have more time to focus in on our students and figure out what was going on with their learning. If we shift our focus to fostering a Growth Mindset within the student body instead of our staff, perhaps we would increase our influence?

New professional learning:

Academic

- The Growth Mindset Coach, Annie Brock and Heather Hundley.
- One Without The Other; Stories of unity through diversity and inclusion, Shelley Moore.
- The Seven Principles of Learning, The Nature of Learning.

Experiential

- Received feedback from EA's and fellow LAT's about their concerns.
- Joined the Department of Education IEP working group.
- Attended a workshop with Shelley Moore looking at developing Inclusive Education Plans.
- Attended the 2017 Inquiry and Innovation Summer Institute.
- Toured other Whitehorse secondary schools and community support services.

Taking action:

Seven Principles of Learning in an Innovative Learning Environment		
What works for learners?	What this means for LEADERS	My evidence ...
Put learners at the centre	Leaders must be relentlessly curious about what's going on for students in the system. Student learning is the driving force, but students aren't the only learners. In an innovative learning environment, everyone is a learner, including teachers, support staff, formal leaders, parents and others.	<p>Created monthly Growth Mindset lessons for the LA classroom and then acted as Guest Teachers for other classes/teachers interested in the lessons. Had students complete survey regarding fixed vs growth mindset statements.</p> <p>Modelled our own Growth Mindset by accepting student issued learning challenge. Though we deemed the ideas crazy and out of our comfort zones, (Camille was to learn how to play a computer game, Nicole was to learn how to do a hockey stop on ice skates), we accepted and documented our learning toward this goal.</p> <p>We have begun the move to a more student driven IEP where the student voice is at the center as opposed to the observations and directions of the LAT. This included a trial and error process of gathering student learning plan and profile data.</p> <p>As PCSS has an influx of new students each year, many with diverse learning profiles, we used time at the very first staff meeting to front load teachers with information about these students. This allowed teachers to gain a quick insight into students whose profiles may not otherwise become more detailed until the full IEP had been written and read.</p> <p>We have begun the use of a Strength and Stretch Class Profile that is developed by the LAT in conjunction with a mainstream subject teacher and provides an overview of student need in the class.</p>
Emphasize the social nature of learning	Leaders collaborate, cooperate, and support networked learning.	Our EA's had told us of frustration during PD sessions where they felt content was irrelevant to their needs. With more autonomy over our PD this year, we worked with two EA's to develop their own session when Porter Creek Secondary hosted the tri-high schools.

		Organized a PD workshop where the family of schools Grade 7 teachers were invited to meet with Grade 8 teachers to dialogue about curriculum and student strength and need. The goal is to change the conversation, instead of LAT's solely front-loading teachers, they were provided a forum where they could direct the discussion.
Understand that emotions are central to learning	Leaders understand and apply the dynamics of social and emotional learning. They are attuned to their own emotions and motivations, and to the emotions and motivations of others—including the positives, like satisfaction and self-efficacy; and the negatives, like helplessness and anxiety. They understand how emotions affect performance.	<p>Attempted to create a Learning Network for LAT's as we heard shared concerns and frustrations when dialoguing with them at other PD sessions.</p> <p>Moving into this school year we strove to celebrate the work of PC staff instead of critiquing. We introduced a regular session to the staff meetings entitled, 'It's A Good Idea!' Teachers have a chance to share some of the new, interesting or fun ideas they have observed or experienced in their classes.</p>
Recognize individual differences	Leaders understand the dynamics of their team members, including their strengths, interests, experiences, and gaps in learning.	Instead of working with targeted staff we invited any <i>interested</i> staff to join a PCSS Learning Network. This enabled us to work with staff who had the capacity and openness to attempt a collaboration. Not everyone, we learned last year, is in a place where this is possible.
Stretch all learners	Leaders stretch themselves and others, but they avoid overload or stress that diminishes performance.	Introduced regular Grade meetings where teachers could meet at lunch and quickly review students of concerns within that grade. This gave us specific information about where students may be experiencing challenge. It also allowed teachers to share strategies.
Use assessment for learning	Leaders set clear expectations while being open to new possibilities. They continually assess what is working and where the gaps are. They always consider qualitative data as well as quantitative data. They seek and give	<p>Reporting on our LA students involves anecdotal reports. This year we changed the way we assessed and chose to conference and collaborate with students on their written report.</p> <p>As our EA's are the front line in supporting our Special Education students, we had them work with us to develop <i>On The Fly</i> kits that they could take with them to each</p>

	meaningful feedback to promote learning.	class. These kits included tools to help them differentiate activities within classes as they worked with students. Tools included, small dry erase whiteboards, post-it notes and coloured plastic reading strips and sleeves.
Build horizontal connections	Leaders are connectors. They connect activities, ideas and people, in and out of school. Their connections include partnerships in the community, with other schools, and with organizations at a distance.	Developed a Community Round Table where Whitehorse-based Secondary Special Education teachers joined a variety of community service representatives at a one hour meet and greet.

Checking: With some contrition but a commitment to honesty, we acknowledge that we have not been as thorough in our checking as we have been in the past. Time proved a constraint on us as we were pulled in many pressing directions. We are committed to having our decisions being driven by data and would like to be able to have gathered more by this point in the year.

However, when we reflect on our inquiry this year, we know that we will again turn to seeking the input of PCSS teachers. Before the year concludes we intend to poll staff as to how they most appreciate information about Special Education students being disseminated. We also hope to finish the year with another round on Mindset lessons for students and some form of concluding check in survey to evaluate where their mindset is currently.

Reflections/Advice: Moving into the new school year we intend to keep our students at the center of our work and strive to focus on how we can enhance their voice within our school. We have taken on roles within the YTA Special Education Teachers Sub Association (SETSA) and hope to use this platform as a way of connecting with other LAT's in the Yukon. As the territory moves into a new Inclusive Education Plan, we hope to collaborate with our colleagues on the development of these student driven documents.

Looking ahead we would also like to try again at developing a PCSS-based Learning Network where we could act as facilitators to our colleagues who may be keen on diving into the Spiral of Inquiry themselves.

We'd also like to try and not interrupt each other so much.

Submission to Paula.Thompson@gov.yk.ca is requested by **April 11** for consideration for the **May Network of Inquiry and Innovation Symposium** or the **July UBC Summer Institute: Inquiry and Innovation for School and System Leaders**. Completed templates will also be submitted to the <http://noii.ca/case-studies/> and shared with colleagues.

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ALL learners leaving our settings more curious than when they arrive.

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