

- How might we support students in building resilience/perseverance/courage, especially when they are “at risk” students?
- How might we build another school wide event like the “Most Magnificent Thing”?
- How might we, in a classroom setting, give students choices to explore their identity and make their learning visible?
- How might we monitor our progress as a staff on this goal?
- How might we create real opportunities for analytical thinking?

We committed to using those questions as a focus for growth and learning in the 2017/18 school year. When the opportunity to participate in Ron Ritchhart’s Visible Thinking conference presented itself, we enlisted 3 teachers and myself to participate. The key question that emerged out of our time with Ron was, **“Who are our students becoming as thinkers and learners as a result of their time with us?”**

As the four of us engaged in the learning we discussed how the concepts could be integrated into our own learning culture at Pacific Way. What became clear is that including thinking routine strategies in our day to day instruction would be a way to increase the amount of time and learning opportunities for our students, as well as propel greater engagement from all of our learners, pushing their thinking forward collectively and individually. In short, we were inspired to share our learning with our colleagues and start integrating thinking routines into our teaching.

When we met as a Pro-D committee in January to plan for our February pro-d day, we as a team proposed to plan and implement a full day workshop for the entire teaching staff on the topic of Culture of Thinking. The end result was a full day workshop led by a team of teachers, combining with the teaching staff at Aberdeen Elementary for the purpose of learning about thinking routines, the 8 cultural forces that define our classrooms, the language of the classroom, and working collectively on lesson plans with built in thinking routines. It was a successful day, and acted as a springboard for a commitment by all teachers to choose at least one or two of the routines and begin using them in their classrooms. More importantly, a **collective commitment to regularly press our students to think, and to push their thinking to new levels.**

Engaging our students and parents as stakeholders in this process has been paramount as well. For the students, it is their participation in the thinking routines that teachers are implementing in the their classrooms which is the most vital form of engagement. An integral piece to that has been the opportunity for students to self-reflect on their learning. For parents, it has been seeing the end result of many of the project based learning initiatives which came in the form of presentations of learning, where the real engagement has taken place. Each class has had at least one presentation of learning over the course of the year where parents have been invited to take part. I have also kept parents informed about our goal initiatives through newsletters and PAC meetings.

Goal #1 - Creating a Culture of Thinking

Successes

When reflecting upon using the thinking routines in classrooms this year, some of the successes that teachers noted were things like:

- The routine promoted greater inclusivity - more students participating
- Huge, focused conversations
- More questions generated
- Inspired creativity
- Increased written output
- Authentic reflection

Other successes include:

- Project outlines - higher order thinking strategies will be reflected in teachers' PBL project plans and curriculum overviews
- Discussions among grade groups - Collaborative planning time between teachers will continue to take place at least twice a month, with focus on building core competencies in the area of critical and creative thinking.
- Self reflection for both teachers and students. Higher order thinking skills identified in student self-evaluations. Some quotes from students with regards to their own reflections include:

- "some things might not work for you"
- "don't compare yourself to others."
- "painting requires lots of patience"

- Capacity is being built through co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessing
- Each class will complete at least one Project Based Learning project and one Presentation of Learning (examples include):
 - Salmonid project (Gr. 3/4), Festival of lanterns (Gr.1), Puppet shows (K), Canada 150 (5/6), Ancient Rome (6/7), Entrepreneurs (4/5), marble towers (Gr.2), Spheros (all intermediates)
- Each class will incorporate some format for allowing students to explore their own interests (e.g. Genius Hour) on a regular basis (MyEdBC student project page)
- **Alignment with Social Responsibility goal**

Language of the classroom - language of noticing and naming

- "As the more knowledgeable adult, teachers have the power to name and notice the thinking that students are doing, providing them with more sophisticated language for their thinking. "That's an interesting connection...You've really generated some new ideas"
- This has become a regular part of our classroom culture, including staff members giving students "golden gotchas" (personal, authentic, and descriptive)

Schoolwide assemblies which incorporate thinking and social responsibility (seven times this year)

- Example: January assembly on confidence - student interviews - videos (rubiks cube, shooting hoops, fashion design) - den group activity based on "The Dot"

- During these assemblies, teachers get together to collaborate in grade groups on school goal oriented projects and lessons

Challenges

Four areas have been identified as areas of challenge for us moving forward in the goal of creating a culture of thinking at Pacific Way. They include:

- Assessment of critical and creative thinking
 - How can we improve in the area of developing effective assessment tools that actually help us to evaluate student learning? This will be one of our foci in the upcoming school year.
- Is our transformation into a culture of thinking translating into improved foundational skills?
 - The results of FSA tests, Non Fiction Reading assessment, and Primary Reading assessments are strong overall. However, there are some areas of notable weaknesses, including
 - NFRA - 22% of our Grade 4 students fully meeting (FM) or exceeding (E) expectations in critical analysis (fall 2017); Grade 5 = (19% FM or E), Grade 6 = (36% FM or E), Grade 7 = (50% FM or E)
 - FSA Language - 92% of our Grade 4 students fully meeting or exceeding in reading and writing; 83% Grade 7 FM or E
 - FSA Numeracy - 87% of our Grade 4 students fully meeting or exceeding in numeracy; 89% Grade 7 FM or E
 - Primary Reading (June 2017) - 81% of Grade 1 students fully meeting or exceeding; Grade 2 = 94% FM or E; Grade 3 = 90% FM or E
- Growing in comfort and skill level with employment of thinking routines
 - When we had our recent reflections of experiences with thinking routines, some of the areas of growth documented were:
 - Getting students to a place where they are not just giving expected answers
 - Becoming more skilled in using the routines so that more focus on how students think, less on explaining the task
 - Providing verbal scaffolding for student who are introverts, providing more entry points for them to gain confidence in sharing their thinking
 - Continuing to create opportunities for students to learn to justify their thinking
- Time to co-create and develop effective feedback between teachers

- A sample challenge from Ritchhart's book, Creating Cultures of Thinking is for teachers to become more aware of the language moves they are currently making. They might do this by audiotaping a lesson or two and then listening to it for specific language moves. "Are you using a language of thinking? Do you use conditional language to facilitate discussion?" And so on. These are the types of challenges we are addressing in our teaching. Each month we move a little further along the line of learning and practice and feedback, with a new focus to push us forward.

Next Steps

We want to continue to grow as a culture of thinking. In saying that, this is going to be our focus for our school professional development plan going forward. We are going to keep reflecting and asking questions of our own practice (For instance, how might we become more skilled in selecting the appropriate routines for a variety of learning outcomes?)

- Monthly rather than a yearly challenge or focus. For instance, the focus for staff last month was to examine the question, "What thinking lives in my classroom?" In that, each teacher would identify the kind of thinking they are trying to promote in their classrooms, then share evidence to support the growth.
- When we reflected on the routines we have been using thus far, some of the ideas included were:
 - We need to fine tune thinking routines
 - Try some new routines to match outcomes
 - Use thinking routines more to kickstart units
 - Generate more complex questions
- We would also like to look more specifically at cultural and language forces in our classrooms. Developing a repertoire of key routines that work for each teacher is a big part of this.
- Instructional rounds focus for 2018/19. Our focus could be on one of the cultural forces, like using the language of feedback and praise.

Connection to School District #73 Strategic Plan:

- Ensure students obtain foundational skills and core competencies
- Connect students to interests and passions

Connection to Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement:

- Learning is holistic, reflective, reflexive, experiential and relational - focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place
- Learning requires exploration of one's identity

Strengthening the core competencies of creative and critical thinking is paramount to this plan.

In so doing, we will:

- Explore ways and design tasks that will require and encourage students to become more creative thinkers, to develop new ideas, to think more deeply about what they are learning
- Allow students to work on projects that they are interested in or passionate about
- Support students in building their skills and confidence so that they will develop perseverance, the resilience to overcome setbacks, and the courage to take risks in their learning
- Provide students with the skills and opportunities to develop their analytical thinking
- Teach students to reflect on and evaluate their thinking
- Give students choices in how they make their learning visible, and the freedom to experiment with different ways of doing so

Strategies / Resources / Initiatives:

- Allowing for students to ask more questions - culture of inquiry
- Project Based Learning projects
- Creation of tasks and assessments that require students to think critically and creatively
- Continue to schedule collaborative time for teachers to plan and create learning events (this takes place two to three times a month)
- Structure lessons to allow for student collaboration
- Build tasks that require students to interpret and understand information (analyzing, questioning, developing)
- Creating opportunities for learners to generate and develop ideas
- Plan school wide events that incorporate critical and creative thinking (e.g. “Most Magnificent Thing”)
- Pose questions in response to literature and informational texts that require critical thinking; have students create their own questions that challenge or extend the ideas they read
- Opportunities for self-reflection
- Opportunities for students to explore their own interests

How will we know we are successful?

- Project outlines - higher order thinking strategies will be reflected in teachers’ PBL project plans and curriculum overviews
- Discussions among grade groups - Collaborative planning time between teachers will continue to take place at least twice a month, with focus on building core competencies in the area of critical and creative thinking.

- Self reflection for both teachers and students. Higher order thinking skills identified in student self-evaluations
- Capacity is being built through co-planning, co-teaching, and co-assessing
- Each class will complete at least one Project Based Learning project and one Presentation of Learning
- Each class will incorporate some format for allowing students to explore their own interests (e.g. Genius Hour) on a regular basis

Evidence

Incorporating thinking routines into our instruction was our #1 learning focus this year. The following routines were used by teachers:

- "Give one - get one"
- "I used to think, but now I think"
- "Connect - Extend - Challenge"
- "Colour - Symbol - Image"
- "Chalk Talk"
- "What makes you say that?"
- "Zoom in"
- "See - Think - Wonder"
- "Step Inside"
- "Digging Deeper"
- "Word-Phrase-Sentence"
- "Generate-Sort-Connect-Elaborate"
- "Headlines"

Project Based Learning continued to be a major learning focus this school year. The following is a list of some of the projects that were undertaken, with corresponding presentations of learning:

- Biomimicry
- Canada 150
- Ancient Rome
- Festival of Lanterns
- Puppet theaters
- Legends - drama
- Power Play Entrepreneurs
- Metamorphic life cycles
- Genius hour projects
- Rube Goldberg machines
- Marble towers
- Global warming
- Book trailers
- Spheros chariots
- Rocket balloon cars
- Salmonid project
- Cornmeal hill erosion

- Polar animals
- Recycling
- Simple machines

Goal #2 - Social Responsibility

Our vision of a learner at Pacific Way is one who embodies a Positive attitude (“I find the best in every situation”), is Accountable (“I am responsible for my behaviour”), is Cooperative (“I work well with others toward a common goal”) and is Kind (“I treat others the way I like to be treated.”). In other words, these are our school’s “PACK” qualities, stated in our school matrix, guiding our daily learning and interactions.

We have a PBIS team (Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports) which meets on a regular basis. This team is comprised of a core group of three staff members but incorporates and invites participation from all staff, and takes a regular spot on the agenda in our staff meetings. Our school strongly identifies itself as a PBIS school, and we are committed as a staff to create initiatives that will make our school community a safe, strong and dynamic culture and build strength and capacity in our students to grow in character as individuals.

Connection to SD 73 Strategic Plan

- Uphold inclusive, adaptable, and accountable district culture
- Strengthen partnerships to lead, learn and work

Connection to Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement:

- Learning is holistic, reflective, reflexive, experiential and relational - focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place
- Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one’s actions

Some of the initiatives this school year include:

- Six den group activities (den groups are multi-age groups K-7) which focus on our PACK qualities
 - School-wide behaviour expectations
 - Painting rocks with positive messages
 - Gingerbread houses
 - Winter carnival
 - Fun Day

- Bi-weekly virtue focus, including daily morning announcements and virtue lessons
- Weekly class awards, based on school wide behaviour expectations (winning class hosts “Rocky” the coyote)
- Assemblies focussing on a virtue and with student leadership involvement. Students are assembled in their den groups at these assemblies. Teachers meet in collaborative teams during these assemblies
- Grade 6/7 student leadership program, organizing school spirit events and supporting local and global issues
- “Gotcha” slips, focussing on featured virtues
- “Students of the Week” recognition
- Significant Adult initiative

Our focus on social responsibility essentially sets the table for a safe, caring and orderly environment in which both students and staff feel supported and inspired to grow in their learning. As such, we will continue to be a school with a strong PBIS focus. We will continue to:

- Meet regularly as a PBIS team to plan initiatives
- Include PBIS on our staff meeting agendas, sharing and analyzing behaviour data
- Plan den group activities that will support our school vision statement
- Teach the virtues systematically, through morning announcements, in class, and in monthly assemblies
- Build on the success of our student leadership program, and provide our upper intermediate students with opportunities to serve and lead in impactful ways
- Provide opportunities for students to learn more about Secwepmc culture, both in classrooms and during noon hours

Student Support Plan

A full time Learning Assistance/Resource Teacher (LART) provides varied support services to students, teachers and parents. In-class supports with academic adaptations and recommendations, as well as out of classroom small and individual group supports help to meet the needs of our 25 ministry category students.

- Our LART teacher maintains 25 Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and work with teachers and parents to meet as necessary to review and update the plans throughout the year
- School based team meetings are scheduled regularly to address student academic and behavioural concerns as they arise so that they can be addressed in a prompt, proactive manner.
- Our LART also helps to facilitate meetings with external district personnel, including school psychologist, school and family consultant, occupational therapist, physical therapist, speech and language pathologist and others as needed to ensure students have all of the supports they need to be successful
- Designated IEP students are supported as per their individual requirements by Certified Education Assistants (CEAs).
- Our LART also conducts Level A and B assessments as needed
- English Language Learners (ELLs) are served by our district's ELL teacher who makes recommendations for English learning activities that are carried out by the LART teacher and by classroom teachers where appropriate.

Aboriginal - Academic and Cultural Support

- Aboriginal learners (approx. 10% of our population) are supported by an Aboriginal Education Worker who provides in class support, cultural activities and projects outside of the classroom as well as collaboratively teaches with classroom teachers, focused on Aboriginal content
- Classrooms include Aboriginal content wherever possible and classroom teachers are versed in the First People's principles of learning
- Celebrations such as Day of Suwewtwew and Aboriginal luncheon include parents and community members to help celebrate and honour sense of self and partnership

Professional Learning Plan

The staff at Pacific Way Elementary is committed to learning, working collaboratively to develop our skills and knowledge of best practice and implementing the new BC curriculum. As we plan for the upcoming 2018/19 school year, we will:

- Continue to meet regularly as a Professional Development committee, establishing plans based on the priorities identified here
- Work with the other learning communities in our Sahali Family of Schools, planning and participating in joint professional development
- Collaboratively plan lessons and units in smaller grade groups and larger multi-grade groups. Continuing to build a culture of professional development whereby teachers are learning from each other
- Hold each other accountable for these priorities, documenting our plans, sharing our learning and successes

- Utilize the Plan-Act-Observe-Reflect for Impact professional learning cycle (this is embedded in our “Successes - Challenges - What’s Next” section of Goal #1