

Curriculum News



Kenora Catholic District School Board

Special points of interest:

- The project is trying to build collaboration for teachers
- The goals include building capacity in assessment for learning
- The work involved getting to see and hear and feel what the theories look like in practice in a real classroom with real kids.
- Teachers were able to work together to plan and really analyze what the work they were doing was accomplishing with kids!

Timetable for the two days of CIL-L

Planning: Analyzing the data	Day 1
Planning: Co-creating a lesson	Day 1
Teaching the lesson	Day 1
Analyzing the Work	Day 1
Planning the next lesson to move students forward	Day 1
Fine tuning the lesson	Day 2
Teaching the second lesson	Day 2
Analyzing the work	Day 2
Planning next steps for the students and teacher	Day 2

“Testing, Testing, 1,2,3”: The Pilot of CIL-L

This week in KCDSB, we were able to launch a test on a new way of delivering job-embedded professional development. A group of teachers met and co-planned a set of lessons that they were able to teach immediately using up-to-the-minute feedback to direct the lesson and to guide them in future planning. We are calling this **Collaborative Inquiry Learning—Literacy (CIL-L)** since it is based on a current project being run by the Literacy Numeracy Secretariat (LNS) called CIL-M (Collaborative Inquiry Learning—Math).

The goal of our test was to see if we could find a way to do job-embedded professional learning that would **allow teachers to work together** and to take the

theory out of the workshop setting and place it directly **in the classroom**, while still providing **support and assistance** to the teacher taking the risk to make changes in their daily practice.

The project involves having teachers work together to co-plan a lesson (based on data) and then to teach it, analyze what the student work tells them, and then plan a follow-up lesson. Over **two full days** the teachers work to build collaborative lessons, they look at current, active information about what students can tell them about their learning and then they collaboratively build a follow-up second lesson to help students to move forward in their learning.

The two day time period was

divided up with the planning of the first day’s lesson, the teaching of that lesson in a real classroom and then the analysis of the work.

From there, the teachers were able to create a lesson based on what students could and could not do, that moved students closer to their goal.

The final follow up happened on the second day after the second lesson was taught and the group analyzed the student (and teacher) learning and planned further next steps in order to “bump up” the work of the students involved.

Ultimately the host teacher will see how the students do when they try the same task independently at a later date.

Getting down to the details....

How did it work?

First we needed a volunteer teacher and a host school. We got both of these from our Schools in the Middle System Improvement Team.

The next phase was to study the **data** for that class and school.

The committee met and looked at the EQAO results over time and specifically at last year’s Individual Item Response data as well as at the information gathered from the current school improvement plan and the school effectiveness framework directions from the prior

year. This started to give the team a picture of what was needed at that school and for that classroom. Based on this information, the group looked at the EQAO test questions that posed the most difficulty and analyzed what was being asked

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Sometimes we need to look at our own learning as well as at our students'!

Detectives and Lawyers—Framing the roles

During the lesson created for the test of this learning method, the lead teacher used the idea that her students would be like detectives: looking for the evidence in the text. The next day she elaborated on this by having the students now be lawyers who had to defend and prove their ideas being using the evidence that they had found the day before. It was a great analogy and helped the students to see what was expected of them.

In terms of the project, we were asking teachers to be both detectives and lawyers and then they had to be researchers and

planners and observers and reflective practitioners as well.

The project allows for the teachers involved to take one of three roles: lead teacher, co-teacher, or observer. The lead teacher taught the lesson, talked to the students directly and did the usual role of presenting material to the students. The co-teacher acted as an assistant and helped when needed to aid with materials or to help clarify a point or to present ideas.

The observers said nothing to the students and were watching

and listening to what the students were doing and noting the thinking that was occurring. This is a tough role. Not talking to students in a classroom is a very difficult assignment!

All of the teachers worked together to create the lesson, to analyze what they saw and heard and to make adjustments to the work as it progressed.

The collaboration provided some of the greatest learning opportunities as the teachers were able to discuss the merits of the various ideas and decide what might work best.

Out of the Mouths of Babes (some lessons I learned)

I figured that the teams in the class needed a mini lesson on collaborative work. I wonder if I do as well?

I watched one pair of students look for a pencil for 6 minutes while in another pair one child placed his book in such a way that the other student would not see his work, even though they were working together on this task.

I thought to myself, how different are we from this? How often do we as teachers spend an enormous amount of time looking for our tools, resources, texts? Sometimes, it would be

time better spent to be focusing on the learning needs. But, just as the students needed that pencil to write, we need good resources.

Then I thought about the book blocking the way. I wondered about our own metaphorical books. Do we close our door and block the learning from our colleagues? Do we work in isolation even when we know that we can learn from each other and that the job might be easier

once we figured out how to work together?

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The KCDSB pilot showed us that **COLLABORATION** was the single biggest factor in the success of the work done and was the greatest of importance to the teachers involved. Sharing resources, time, and expertise is worth the time!

Details, details, details ...

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and what information was needed to answer the questions well. With this in mind, the team went back to the curriculum guide and chose the **expectations** that they felt would be best for the lessons they wanted to create. (For this trial run, the lesson was focused on making connections and specifically on how to use evidence

from the text to support an answer.)

Once this information was gathered the team looked at **resources** that might lend themselves to the task at hand. The team discussed using a theme but felt that since the trial was only for two days (two language arts periods), it would not be feasible to do that in this case. (The team chose to use Eve

Bunting's *Fly Away Home* as their mentor text.)

Next the team created a **lesson** that would allow them to see how much students knew and what they needed to know about the chosen expectations (in this case, gathering evidence to prove what the big ideas in the story were).

Once this was done, they went in to the class and taught the

lesson. Teachers were able to listen to the student thinking and report back what was actually being done during the lesson. This valuable feedback helped the group prepare the next steps.

Finally, they planned for day two (and subsequent days) based on the **assessment for learning** that they did in the classroom.