



2018 – 2019 Victor H. L. Wyatt School Report to the Community

Wyatt Team Committed to Improving Literacy

Over the course of the last three school years, our Middle Years teachers, alongside members of the Itinerant Instructional Support team, have embarked on a collaborative literacy journey that has led to engaging, impactful, and lasting learning experiences for both teachers and students.

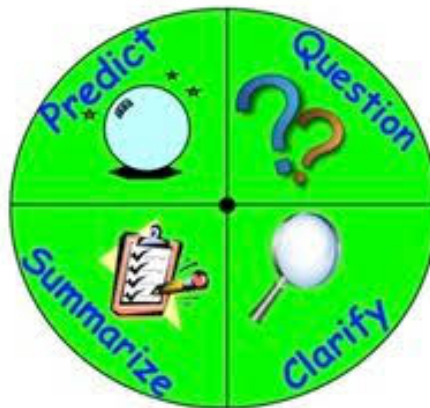
Teachers began this journey with the goal of building collective capacity in the area of reading instruction. They worked together to deepen their understanding of effective reading instruction to support improved reading achievement for students. They focused on developing opportunities for students to be able to strengthen their understanding and use of various comprehension strategies.

Reciprocal Teaching

The team selected Lori Oczkus' Reciprocal Teaching approach as a framework for their plan based on research that indicated the positive impact that reciprocal teaching has on student comprehension skills. One research study noted an immediate improvement of students' comprehension skills as a result of using the reciprocal teaching strategies. The study also found that when the same students were assessed a year later, they maintained the increased levels of improvement.

Oczkus' Reciprocal Teaching approach focuses on four reading strategies that are called the "Fab Four".

- Predicting
- Questioning
- Clarifying
- Summarizing



Hand gestures, visuals and prompts were used as supports to help students articulate their thinking and share their understandings of the texts they were engaged with.

Common Literacy Blocks

Teachers utilized a common literacy block, where cross-grade, mixed groupings of students allowed for focused, small group instruction. The goal was to leverage student learning during these concentrated periods of time. Cycles typically lasted for an eight week period using a one hour block of time. In order to ensure small group size, classroom teachers, support staff, teacher librarian, student services teachers, and the admin team, contributed to the success of the literacy experience. In addition, teachers also selected rich literature that would be engaging to our students. Although the texts varied from group to group, common themes like Residential Schools and resilience, existed within the selections.



Literacy Launch

To introduce each strategy, teachers held a launch, which was designed to be an exciting and motivating way for students to learn a new strategy. Careful and engaging frontloading helped to develop the concept of the comprehension strategy. The visual representations associated to each strategy helped students to easily recognize and recall the strategies. Teachers used the co-teaching model to effectively support the launch.

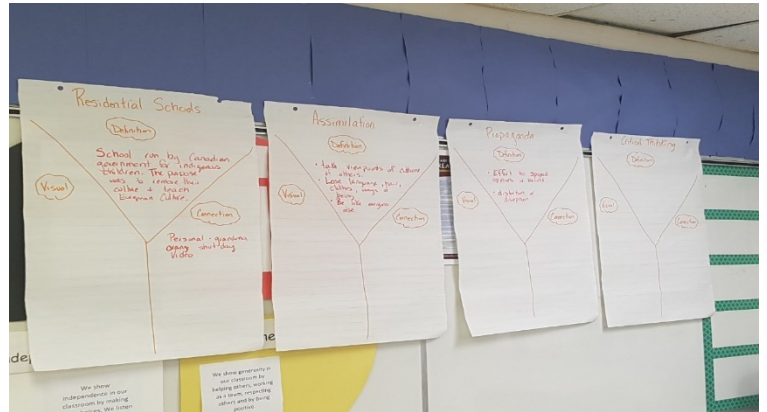
Guided Practice

Following each launch, teachers went back to their classrooms and did further guided practice in applying the language and skills needed to help students learn the strategy at a more in-depth level. They did this using quality literature to engage students in thinking about, responding to text, and using the comprehension strategies. Students and teachers focused on each strategy for a period of time to enable students to reach a level of mastery with that strategy before going on to introduce the next one.

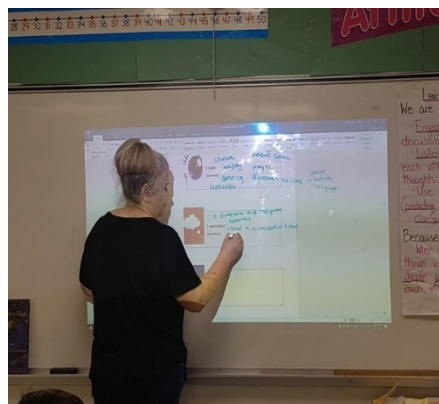


Four Instructional Foundations

The purposeful planning that teachers invested into the process led to high success rates of student understanding and use of the strategies. The team's literacy work incorporated several key instructional approaches from Gradual Release of Responsibility/OLM models, Assessment for Learning, and developing Learning Destinations. In addition, teachers committed to four instructional foundations as key components to supporting student learning.




- **Scaffolding**
 - Modeling strategies
 - Student participation
 - Teacher support
 - Reflection
- **Cooperative Learning**
 - Social interactions
 - Students talking about strategies
 - Engaged in text
- **Think Alouds**
 - Think Alouds were used by teachers to make the processes (thinking and problem solving) "visible" for the learners and demonstrate how they are integral in deriving meaning from texts.
- **Metacognition**
 - Students consciously thinking about their strategy use
 - Students reflecting on their thinking



Data to Support Our Practice

Teachers engaged with data using a collaborative inquiry cycle, which served as an important part of the literacy journey process. Several data sources were used as evidence of learning and to show areas of growth. The data sources included:

- **Our School Survey data** – an open-ended question was created to enable students to articulate reading strategies that they use to support reading comprehension. ***“What reading strategies do you use to help you understand what you are reading?”*** Comparisons were made from responses that students made to this same question in 2015 and 2019. ***The findings:*** There was a significant increase in the number of student responses that referenced the four reading comprehension strategies and student were able to articulate how they use these strategies to support their learning.
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- **Provincial Report Card data** – the indicators of student progress for this cohort of students was tracked back to their Grade 2/3 levels of achievement in reading in comparison to their Grade 5/6 levels of achievement. ***The findings:*** The data indicated an improvement, particularly for students who had previously achieved 1s and 2s in reading.
 - **Reading Assessment data** – overall comparisons of instructional reading levels of all Grade 5 – 8 students in June 2016 and June 2019. ***The findings:*** The June 2019 data sets indicated that there were more students achieving at, above, and approaching grade level than in June 2016.
 - **Annotated Text Samples** – baseline student samples were collected in the fall and compared with a sample in the spring. ***The findings:*** Students were able to engage with the text in a more detailed, in-depth way which was reflected through their personal annotations.

These data sources allowed teachers to engage in meaningful dialogue that led to data informed decision-making connected to student learning and teacher practice.

Next Steps

The team has been able to see the impact of their teaching on student learning related to the “Fab Four” reading comprehension strategies. The team maintains their enthusiasm and momentum as they work collaboratively in continual efforts to support students’ engagement with text and overall love of reading! They will continue to triangulate evidence of learning and complete ongoing assessment to further inform their practice. They will continue to forge forward on the path of improving literacy at Victor H. L. Wyatt School!

