

Framework for Enhancing Student Learning YEAR 1

School: Bowen Island Community School



School Context

Bowen Island Community School has just over 330 students, spread evenly throughout Kindergarten to Grade 7. The school has a strong history of environmental education, a result of committed educators, an idyllic location to learn about the natural world, and a community that strongly values this approach to learning. The school also has focused on social and emotional learning and most students and their families are well-versed in the language of self-regulation. Over the last three years, teachers have worked very diligently in transitioning to the new curriculum.

Inquiry (What do you think is driving your plan for student success?)

Our Framework is designed to support BICS students, teachers, and families as they transition to the new curriculum. The Core Competencies have been identified by the Ministry of Education as being essential for student success. To become exceptionally competent, one must not just *do*, but *do well*, which requires learning character. The learning character traits that we have identified as being critical for success for students to be exceptional communicators and thinkers as well as have a highly developed sense of personal and social responsibility are Responsibility, Openness, Ambition and Resilience (ROAR).

Our school goal is for students to strengthen their learning character including becoming more responsible, open, ambitious and resilient.

Scanning: (What do you know about your students – their successes and challenges - what's going on for them?)

Successes (with the understanding that we strive for continued growth and improvement)

- Social and Emotional Learning – students and families are well-versed in the language of self-regulation.
- School Culture – student behaviour has improved greatly over the last five years so that more students have the capacity to self-regulate and be engaged in their learning.
- Critical Thinking – many students are familiar with a critical thinking approach to learning including open-mindedness and being critically minded with respect to considering information and perspectives. Teachers have been utilizing resources from the Critical Thinking Consortium and received professional learning support from this organization,
- Reading and Writing at the Intermediate Level – by the time students reach intermediate grades, the vast majority of students are fully meeting or exceeding expectations in reading and writing.

Challenges

- EDI points to increasing vulnerability in the “Social” and “Communication” areas.
- While most students are engaged in learning, task perseverance is often low. The ability to complete difficult tasks and to give one’s full effort prior to requesting help is an area of weakness.
- Students at the Grade 7 Level are achieving satisfactory math results but on the lower

end of meeting expectations with few students exceeding expectations. Teachers in most grade levels note the challenges with teaching mathematics and the need to spend a significant portion of class time learning or reinforcing concepts from previous years at the cost of time for learning outcomes from the current grade level.

Focusing: (Identify the most important work you can do to improve the success of your student? On which key areas of learning will you focus?)

Evidence/Data to support:

- Last six years of report data (records from Report Central) in Reading and Writing suggest that most students are fully meeting or exceeding expectations when they reach intermediate grades.
- The Grades 4 and 7 FSAs for the last several years indicate that most students are meeting or exceeding expectations in all areas tested – reading, writing and math. Note, math results by grade 7 are often on the lower-end of fully meeting.
- EDI data over the last several years suggest more and more students entering Kindergarten with vulnerabilities in Social and Communication areas, particularly social.
- School Satisfaction Surveys over the last several years suggest a high level of interest in learning from students and connection to BICS.

Key Learnings:

- While improvements in Math, Reading and Literacy are important, no area stands out as an area of weakness requiring specific focus. Mathematics has been identified as an area of concern but almost all students are “meeting expectations” according to school and provincial assessments. Students are therefore in a position of meeting expectations in all foundational areas of the curriculum. Without a particular area of weakness, a school goal that supports learning in all areas including the Core Competencies is possible. While interest in school has been identified as high, *engagement* in learning broadly and deeply can be improved; specifically, for students to set their ambitions to go from “good to great” and engage themselves in learning persistently, resiliently, and with great curiosity to excel.
- With transition to the new curriculum occurring over the last several years, and the curriculum’s focus on Core Competencies, a school goal that addresses students engaging in their work and doing their very best, encourages task perseverance, and managing difficulties, is needed.

Developing a Hunch: What is leading to this situation?

- While students develop self-regulation strategies at BICS, EDI data suggests that many students are entering school with vulnerabilities in their Social and Communication areas. This may have an impact on the acquisition of fundamental skills that are acquired early in school and reliant in the following years.
- In spending significant efforts developing foundational literacy and numeracy skills throughout the years so that almost all students meet expectations, there may be less time to work on advanced skills for students to exceed expectations.

New Professional Learning: (Summarize the new areas for professional learning and how you will go about designing new learning for yourself and your staff that will impact your learners.)

- Engagement – use the Engagement Profile and other strategies as frameworks for students to understand how to engage themselves in their learning and to do so.
- Reflection – develop and refine various self-reflection tools that provide opportunities for students to reflect on the ongoing process of learning, not just the product. This ties into using the new Communicating Student Learning written documents effectively as there is a greater focus on the process of learning rather than a summative result. Student reflection is challenging: people have a tendency to weight the most recent events more heavily when reflecting on experience and be focused solely on results rather than the process that occurred to achieve the results. At staff meetings, sharing via Google Docs and professional learning days, teachers will improve the tools we use to assist students in self-reflecting on their learning.
- Praise – to facilitate a growth mindset, praise must be examined and a common language of praise must be developed.
- Self-regulation has become a fundamental part of teachers’ approach to learning at BICS. There is an opportunity to develop greater alignment between self-regulation strategies.
- The Applied Design, Skills and Technology was recently released and will provide a great avenue to support the Creative Thinking Competency as well as provide opportunities for students to demonstrate openness and resilience. Hands on learning such as engaging in the design process, and technology, such as coding, will be areas of professional learning.

Taking Action: What will we do differently?

Our school goal is for students to strengthen their learning character including becoming more responsible, open, ambitious and resilient.

- **Responsibility**
 - Responsibility in the traditional sense has meant social responsibility but the definition as part of our school goal also entails personal responsibility of work habits, doing ones best and being self-disciplined.
 - Responsibility at BICS for primary students means, “the things a person takes care of and how well they take care of them,” and for intermediate students, “being dependable, organized and accountable for ones words and actions.” A focus of professional learning includes providing students a framework to take responsibility in engaging themselves in learning so that they want to be self-disciplined and want to do their best. Engagement is therefore a key part of professional learning. In times when students are participating in less-preferred tasks, grit is particularly necessary to accomplish the task well.
- **Openness**
 - A group of educators and parents is participating in a Diversity Group to learn more about racial diversity and ensure that BICS is an environment where all students feel connected to the school. Some sessions of this group will be professionally facilitated. Our Aboriginal Education Committee includes several parents/guardians who will assist the school in incorporating the First Peoples Principles of Learning in our approach to learning.
 - A second aspect of openness is being open to new experiences and new learning. BICS educators recently developed an Engagement Profile that has

been shared with teachers and will continue to be shared and used in the coming years.

- A focus of professional learning is also on the Creative Thinking Competency - “the generation of new ideas and concepts that have value to the individual or others, and the development of these ideas and concepts from thought to reality.”

- **Ambition**

- Reflecting on learning is not an easy task. The focus of reflection is on process over product: a student gauging how successfully they stuck with their process to achieve a goal rather than on whether the goal was achieved or not. It is reflecting on the process of learning that focuses on responsibility (determination, self-discipline) and resilience more so than the goal itself.
- BICS has scheduled self-reflection days to ensure that time is carved out of very busy school schedules to reflect on learning and impress upon students the value the school places on reflection.

- **Resilience**

- For several years, BICS has focused on self-regulation. The school’s definition of resilience, “To calculate the size of the problem and deal with it” provides language for students to identify challenges and actively make a decision about whether it is something they can handle on their own or whether it is something they need to seek support with. The goal is for greater task perseverance as well as developing a mature perspective on the size of difficulties.
- A continued focus is on self-regulation, so that a student understands that learning involves patience and time and requires emotional regulation.
- BICS will also focus on cultivating a growth mindset; this will include a discussion with staff and possibly parents to create a shared language for helpful praise.

Communication Strategies: (How will you communicate your inquiry and your results to the school community?)

- Staff Meetings (Staff)
- Professional Learning Days (Staff)
- Opening Day (Students, Families)
- Curriculum Night (Families)
- Blog Posts (Staff, Families)
- PAC Meetings (Families)
- Three-Times a Month Assemblies (Students, Staff)
- Weekly Bulletin Learning Highlight (Staff, Families)
- Communicating Student Learning reports; opening comments (Students, Families)

Parental/Community Involvement: (How will you work together as a school community to do this work?)

- Two parents participated in the creation of this Framework.
- The Parent Advisory Council is helpful in sharing learning priorities.

Connection to the District Pillars: (How does this plan connect to our 3 district pillars?)

Inquiry

Our focus on openness includes formulating thought-provoking, inquiry-guiding questions. In addition to being open-minded to new ideas and curious, students are also encouraged to consider multiple perspectives which align with the idea of critical inquiry.

Digital Literacy

Digital Literacy makes deep inquiry possible. Digital access facilitates exposure to multiple perspectives and detailed information on a vast variety of subjects which is an essential part of our goal for students to be open-minded inquirers.

Self-Regulation

Our focus on “resilience” includes “calculating the size of a problem and overcoming it.” Doing so both relies upon and develops self-regulation. In addition, our focus on responsibility includes the students responsibility to be prepared for learning and to do ones best; self-regulation is required for that. We will continue to develop a shared language for emotional literacy and self-regulation.

Connection to the 7 Principles of Learning: (Which of the principles align with your plan?)

1. Learners at the Centre

- a. Our focus on *ambition* is about the process of learning, not the product. Product too often standardizes expectations for people of vastly different abilities. While our hope is that all students meet or exceed expectations, for many students, a more modest set of goals is needed to reach that standard . As a result, our focus for ambition is the “space between,” maximizing the space between where one starts and where one finishes and in this way, a struggling student who improves vastly has more to celebrate than a coasting student who with little effort or improvement continues to meet expectations.

2. Social nature of learning

- a. Our focus on *openness* includes engaging students with the curriculum and content, engaging them with the physical environment, and engaging them with the social environment. Our focus, specifically is that students:
 - i. Connect with a variety of people;
 - ii. Share ideas and seek feedback;
 - iii. Make decisions with others;
 - iv. Build upon the ideas of others;
 - v. Seek out people who have knowledge, wisdom or expertise;
 - vi. Recognize and consider a variety of perspectives.

3. Emotions are integral to learning

- a. Our focus on *resilience* is for students to “recognize the size of a problem or challenge and overcome it.” Part of this goal involves students increasing their task perseverance when working on challenging problems alone. Another aspect of resilience, though, is to develop the self-awareness of when to ask for help when challenges are too difficult to overcome alone. For emotional support in the face of difficulty, seeking assistance from others, and providing assistance for others, is often needed.

4. Recognizing individual differences

- a. This Principle is similar to “Learners at the Centre.” While the school has expectations that all students meet or exceed expectations, goals are individualized for students.

5. Stretching all students

- a. Our school focuses on ambition: students setting high expectations for themselves and committing to a process to meet those expectations. Our hope is for students to go from “good to great.”

6. Assessment for learning

- a. Student reflection is an important part of the new Communicating Student Learning documents. For students to reflect effectively, reflection must occur throughout the term and can therefore be used formatively. Even in CSL documents, the emphasis is forward looking: students reflecting on the effectiveness of their process in achieving goals and making revisions as necessary.

7. Building horizontal connections

- a. Similar to the core competencies, learning character is something demonstrated and developed in every subject.

Signing Off Page

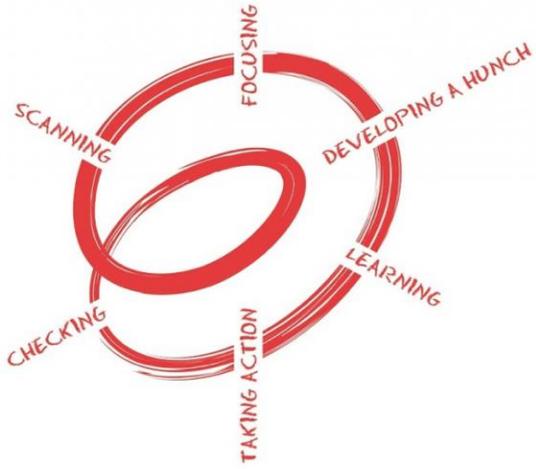
	Name	Signature
Principal:		
Parent:		
Student:		
WVTA Representative		
WVMEA Representative		

Date: _____

Approval of the Board and Superintendent:

Board Chair: _____
Signature

Superintendent: _____
Signature



Spirals of Inquiry
Judy Halbert and Linda Kaser