

PDIG Report 2017-2018

Revisiting Response

Project Description

Overall, the project was carried out as planned. The initial two-day face-to-face workshop was split into two sessions, due to travel concerns. One session was held in New Carlisle, on October 10th and 11th with four teachers. The second session was held on October 26th and 27th, in Sept-Iles, with three teachers in attendance. Of the original seven teachers who were part of the PDIG application, four had teaching assignment changes and were unable to participate in the project. Therefore, four "new" teachers agreed to take part in the project.

In both cases, the initial two-day session went very well. All teachers were able to attend and feedback was positive. Arranging for release time for the other two days was problematic, this being a challenge with many of our schools in our board. I was able to meet and plan a lesson with six of the seven teachers. The seventh teacher was unavailable because of a medical leave of absence. Therefore, not all of the release time budget was used.

Project Goals

The integration of the MEES tools for teaching of response was somewhat successful. At the beginning, the teachers saw the *Reader Response Learning Continuum* as a rubric, with each stage as grade levels. But, as we discussed the continuum and looked at samples of student responses, teachers started to shift their thinking. The shift from thinking of response as a "process" and not a "product" became evident for most of the teachers. In general, the *Teaching Ideas* tools were well received by the teachers. But, this is where we had our greatest challenge. Many of the teaching ideas were unfamiliar to the teachers. Therefore, it was decided that on the day when the teacher and I met to plan a lesson, we would just focus on *Big Ideas* and choose a teaching idea that best fit the whole class at that time. More time was needed for the development of tools, but I think that the shift in thinking about response was a big hurdle to try to overcome and the development of resources became a secondary goal.

This year ESSB had two PDIGs on response writing, one for Cycle 2 teachers and one for Cycle 3 teachers. On one of the release days, a teacher from the Cycle 3 project joined two teachers from this project and worked collaboratively. So not only was there collaboration between Cycle 2 and Cycle 3 teachers, but also between teachers from two different schools.

Project Outcomes

Gains in teachers' expertise were self-assessed using the Learning Continuum for the Teaching of Response. At the initial workshop, teachers were asked to place themselves on the learning continuum. Near the end of the project, teachers were again asked to place themselves on the continuum. Most teachers reported that they had moved along the continuum, especially in terms of teacher talk, student talk and text selection.

Gains in student growth were informally noted. Given the short time frame for the project, I plan to informally discuss the end-of-year evaluation with each of the teachers and note further student growth.

Reinvestment

At the June meeting of the Language Network, the shared folder of created resources will be made available to consultants from other school boards. I would recommend that this project be carried out by other teams, but with changes. It would be important not to restrict this to teachers of only one cycle or grade level. It would be a more powerful professional development opportunity if the project team was made up of teachers of several grade levels. At ESSB, because of our small schools, working collaboratively with an ELA teacher from the same cycle is only possible at two of our schools. Therefore, when this project was created, the initial thinking was to provide opportunities for teachers to collaborate with teachers of the same cycle. But, I think it would be even more meaningful for teams of teachers from different schools and different grades to work together on a project such as this.

More time is needed to go further with the *Teaching Ideas* tool and developing resources around these.