

**SPREADING AND SUSTAINING INNOVATIVE LEARNING
THROUGH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND NETWORKS OF INQUIRY**

**Monitoring Note from the Centre for Innovative Educational Leadership,
Vancouver Island University,
Province of British Columbia, Canada**

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Context

Being part of the Innovative Learning Environment initiative offers the province of British Columbia a unique opportunity to reflect on the progress being made to develop a more equitable, responsive and flexible learning system. Our involvement in this study provides us with rich connections to innovative system leaders and practitioners from around the globe. We are committed to building on what we are learning from other learning environments to strengthen and enrich local initiatives – and ultimately to change the learning lives of the young people we serve.

British Columbia schools serve 620,000 students in 1600 public and 350 publicly funded private schools across diverse geographic regions. There are 60 school districts with locally elected boards of education. These districts range in size from 72,000 students K-12 in Surrey, a suburb close to the city of Vancouver to 286 students K-12 in Stikine, a remote northern district. Among the total group of learners, 61,400 are identified as Aboriginal¹ and 62,080 are English Language Learners with one in four BC students speaking a language other than English at home. The number of students learning primarily in an on-line environment is steadily increasing with 24,000 students enrolled full time in distance learning. The learners in BC are served by 30,407 FTE (full time equivalent) teachers of whom 28% are male and 72% are female.

By most measures, both nationally and internationally, BC is a high performing system with a six-year completion rate of 81%. Nevertheless, significant issues of equity and quality persist. The intellectual disengagement of a large proportion of intermediate and secondary students is a serious challenge. The disparity in outcomes between groups of students is cause for significant concern. Although there are some encouraging signs of improvement in the achievement of Aboriginal students, there is still a lot of work to be done to achieve equity. Currently the six-year completion rate stands at 54% for Aboriginal students with significant differences across districts. The political context presents a number of unique challenges as well. Relationships between the formal teachers association and the government have been characterized by mistrust for several decades. This culture makes top-down strategies of any kind problematic. Again, while there is recent progress on this front, the relationships remain tenuous.

¹ In British Columbia, the term Aboriginal is used to recognize students of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis heritage.

It is within this context that the authors of this paper have been working for several years. Our goal as co-directors of the Centre for Innovative Educational Leadership at Vancouver Island University (VIU) and as founders of the Networks of Inquiry and Innovation (NOII) is to be part of a system transformation in the province of British Columbia that will result in three specific outcomes:

1. Every learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options.
2. All learners leaving our settings MORE curious than when they arrive.
3. Every learner with an understanding and respect for Aboriginal culture, history and ways of knowing.

We recognize that these are ambitious goals, indeed they are HARD (Murphy, 2011) goals: heartfelt, animated, required and difficult. Educators in BC have responded positively to these three goals and they are now referenced in a number of district plans as well as the provincial education plan.

There is a specific contextual rationale for each of these goals. The first goal, *Every learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options*, is, we believe a matter of social justice, quality and equity. It has been well documented in Canada and elsewhere that young people who complete secondary school and go on to some form of post-secondary training for two years have considerably improved long term outcomes. The conference Board of Canada states:

There is a growing consensus that high-school completion is the prerequisite stepping stone to post-secondary education, now deemed essential to success in the labour market. Governments have plenty of evidence that well-educated citizens are more actively engaged in society: they tend to make better choices about factors that affect their quality of life (e.g., diet, smoking, exercise); and they earn higher incomes than those who are less educated. Less prominent in the mind of the public, but equally well-known among decision-makers, is the fact that well-educated and skilled people make important contributions to business innovation, productivity, and national economic performance. In an interconnected global economy, countries with more highly skilled workers have a distinct competitive advantage. (2013, <http://www.conferenceboard.ca/hcp/details/education/high-school-graduation-rate.aspx>)

We have argued elsewhere (Halbert & Kaser 2012) that this goal signals the need for system transformation – from a focus on sorting and high levels of success for some to a focus deep learning with high levels of quality and equity for all. Achieving this ambitious goal will require new forms of teamwork, new approaches to pedagogy, new conceptions of leadership, and an intense focus on moral purpose.

The second goal speaks directly to student engagement and intellectual curiosity. In BC educators share an almost universal perspective: young children enter our schools in kindergarten filled with questions and the desire to learn. Somewhere along the way to adolescence, this enthusiasm is replaced for many learners by ‘doing school’ rather than by loving learning. Indeed 50% of Canadian 15 year olds report that they do not find school intellectually engaging. We do not blame teachers for this. The pressures of multiple curriculum outcomes and the perceived demands from parents and post-secondary institutions often lead

teachers to a diminished sense of efficacy that translates into focusing on coverage rather than depth.

In BC there has been substantial work over the past few years to address the challenges of an overly complex curriculum and recently the Ministry released a draft curriculum and assessment framework.² The stated goals of this revision are to:

- Reduce the volume and prescriptiveness of the current curricula while still ensuring a consistent focus on the essential elements of learning.
- Allow teachers and students the flexibility to personalize their learning experience to better meet each learner's individual strengths and needs.
- Focus less on imparting facts and the information-based details of what needs to be learned and focus more on the "big ideas" or concepts that students need to master to succeed in their education and their lives.

We are optimistic that these revisions are encouraging teachers to explore new ways to engage learner passion and curiosity. In addition to the curriculum revisions, the work led by Kieran Egan at Simon Fraser University on imaginative education³ and learning in depth is capturing the attention of increasing numbers of BC educators. A number of school and district leaders are actively seeking ways to determine – and then increase – the levels of learner engagement. One of the instruments that educators are finding useful is the survey tool, *Tell Them From Me*⁴. Developed by researcher Douglas Willms, this survey provides useful insights into learner academic, social and intellectual engagement.

The third goal of ensuring that all learners develop and understanding and respect for Aboriginal perspectives is one that is gaining increasing momentum and importance not just in Canada but also in New Zealand, Australia and other nations. This, too, is a matter of social justice and goes to the heart of the equity challenge.

The work on system transformation in BC is multi-faceted. Increasingly we are seeing stronger connections across initiatives and growing teamwork across institutions. This monitoring note will focus on three specific areas:

1. The disciplined approach to inquiry that is informing and shaping the transformative work in schools and districts across the province
2. The design and focus of a leadership program (Certificate in Innovative Educational Leadership) at Vancouver Island University.
3. The ways in which interconnected networks and initiatives are accelerating the transformative work across the province.

² <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/rethinking-curriculum>

³ www.iereg.net

⁴ <http://www.thelearningbar.com/surveys/effective-schools-student-survey/>

Incorporated in each of these sections is the theory of change that underpins the approach we are taking in British Columbia. We will include observations about impact to date and end this note with a road map for the ways in which this work will continue.

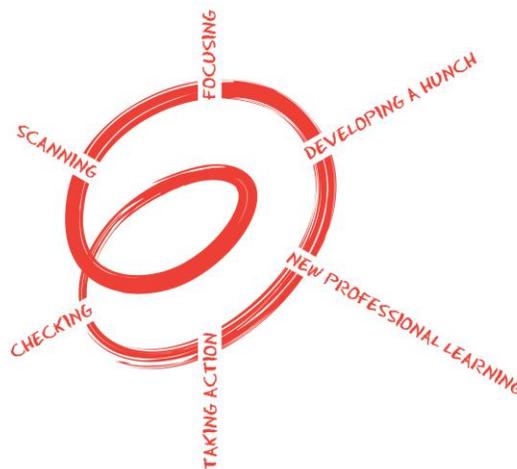
1. SPIRALS OF INQUIRY

A key aspect to the work in both the networks of inquiry and innovation and the leadership development work at Vancouver Island University is the application of a disciplined approach to inquiry that has developed through experience with networks of schools and leadership development programs in British Columbia as well as through joint work with Dr. Helen Timperley from New Zealand. In both contexts, we have observed that educators are more motivated by powerful questions of practice than they are by goals that may seem to be driven by bureaucratic requirements. An inquiry stance requires that one ask questions of practice rather than looking for packaged solutions. An inquiry-orientation builds educator curiosity and can lead to far more innovative approaches.

We have conceptualized inquiry as a spiral with six key stages: scanning, focusing, developing a hunch, new professional learning, taking action and checking that a big enough difference has been made. At each stage in the spiral, three key questions are asked: *What is going on for our learners? How do we know? and How does this matter?*

Spirals of Inquiry: for equity and quality (Halbert & Kaser 2013) includes specific inquiry tools, research evidence and examples from practice in BC schools. What follows is a brief description of the six stages of the inquiry spiral.

**What's going on for our learners?
How do we know?
Why does this matter?**



Scanning: What's going on for our learners?

The first phase of inquiry requires educators to focus on the experiences of their learners. Scanning takes a wide perspective on learning and not simply on those aspects of academic learning that are easily measured. Drawing on the seven transversal principles from *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice*, teams are asked to seek evidence about learners' experiences connected to each of these principles. For instance: Do learners receive high quality

focused feedback that provides clear direction for improvement? Are all learners stretched through demanding, engaging and challenging work? Do learners see and understand the connections across content areas? Are learners becoming increasingly meta-cognitive? Key in this phase is that scanning is about what is happening for learners from *their* perspectives and not just the opinions of the professionals.

Focusing: where are we going to place our attention?

Thorough scanning provides inquiry teams with the big picture of what is going on for learners. In the focusing phase teams ask themselves: *Where are we going to concentrate our professional energies so that we can change the experience and results for our learners?* Gaining greater clarity about the situation to be addressed is at the heart of the focus phase.

Sometimes, the scanning process results in a confusing picture that requires deeper investigation. For example, an initial scan may identify that some learners are deeply engaged in their learning while others are not. Some learners express a great deal of interest in particular content areas; others say they are bored. Some learners are making good progress in developing key competencies; others are stalled. Knowing this much is helpful but more information is required.

The inquiry team explores *why* learners are not engaged and seeks to discover under what conditions this is the case. As well, the team explores what is working for those learners who are engaged. Identifying strengths, as well as problems and challenges, is important for a fuller picture of what's going on for learners.

A clear focus can be energizing and morale boosting, leading to both short term wins and longer term understandings. Once the team has a sense of where the focus should be, then other potentially interesting and competing possibilities need to be delayed or judiciously combined. This is a key challenge for caring educators who want to do everything all at once and requires judgments based on a thorough understanding of the context and culture of the school. The result of a fragmented or scattered focus is educator overload and little or no positive impact for learners.

Inquiry teams have found that it is critically important that they avoid premature decisions about what to do. Generally they have found that they need to have the courage to slow down at this stage and develop a deeper understanding of what is going on in one or two areas under consideration before moving to hasty action.

Developing a hunch: what's leading to this situation and how are we contributing to it?

The phases in this spiral of inquiry framework often overlap. At each stage, as inquiry teams ask themselves 'how do we know?' and 'why does this matter?' new insights will emerge. Evidence from one stage informs the next.

Surprises are inevitable and are welcomed by teams with an inquiry mindset. Surprises can open up the opportunity for reflection and new understandings. The hunch stage asks educators to probe ‘what’s leading to this situation?’ and, every bit as important, ‘how are we contributing to it?’

Everyone has hunches about why things are the way they are. Some of these views are passionately held. Getting these views onto the table in a way that they can be discussed and tested is fundamental to moving forward together. Trust is built through respectful listening to diverse points of view and this requires honesty and courage. If there is no commitment to genuine listening to varied perspectives, then commitment to action will be seriously undermined. Serious and informed conversations must take place in staff rooms and staff meetings - not just in the parking lot.

At this stage in the spiral, it is important to invite students and community members to offer their views. They have unique insights and perspectives that need to be considered. Their answers to the questions about what is leading to the current situation are often different from the professionals.

As hunches are generated inquiry teams work hard to keep the focus on areas over which educators in the school have influence. There is no point in blaming parents, the community, the elementary school or the absence of a pre-school program. The guiding question has to be: *how are we contributing to this situation?*

New professional learning: how and where and how will we learn more about what to do?

All phases of the inquiry spiral involve learning, but at this stage teams engage with the serious task of carefully designing professional learning. At this point, inquiry leadership teams help teachers identify *how and where can they learn more about what to do?* The professional learning focus develops from testing out the hunches about what is leading to the situation for learners.

The key issue is to decide what to learn and how to access new learning to change the experiences of the learners. Educators have access to evidence about the kinds of practices that are more likely to be effective than others and this is the time to put that knowledge into practice. We know from the work of Helen Timperley (2008, 2011) and others that the key issue is not whether participation in professional learning is voluntary or mandatory. What is required is that the learning be of the highest possible quality and that it be deeply engaging.

Taking action: what will we do differently?

This is the stage in the inquiry spiral where new learning leads to new practices. Once teams have the evidence and the knowledge about the practices that will help learners, it’s time to take action by jumping across the knowing-doing gap.

At this stage, the inquiry team makes sure that all those involved are supported to try out new practices. Taking action in isolation from one’s colleagues is rarely effective. Seldom do things go smoothly the first time. It is all too easy to give up and go back to old ways of operating if teachers are working on their own.

Teams need to make sure there is plenty of opportunity for dialogue, observation, reflection, and second, third and fourth tries without fear of judgment or failure. Taking action within a set time frame, generally within three to four weeks, and then reporting back on what has happened helps sustain momentum. Inquiry teams need to establish a process for support and reflection that will work within the individual school context. Deciding when, where, and how teams will reflect on their actions will create a sense of shared responsibility and support. Peer observations focused specifically on the new strategy being adopted and the perceived impact on learners are helpful. The use of video clips to capture classroom practice is also helpful, especially when the focus is on what is happening for the learners.

An inquiry disposition and the right degree of support to face and stay with the challenges are both important. Changing practice can feel risky for a lot of teachers and inquiry teams need to find ways to make the risk-taking less risky.

Checking: have we made a big enough difference?

The purpose of the inquiry spiral is to make a difference to valued outcomes for learners. Changes in practice do not always lead to substantive improvement and it is this part of the spiral that inquiry teams ask whether they are making **enough** of a difference.

Agreeing ahead of time on the evidence sources that will be used to determine the degree of change is essential. The evidence that was surfaced in the scanning and focusing phases will provide the basis for checking. It is also possible that as teams work through the various stages of the spiral they identify additional important sources of evidence. For instance, inquiry teams may have identified increasing intellectual engagement of learners as the focus for their inquiry through observations and reflections on learner responses to the three key questions. As they sharpened their focus, they learn more about self-regulation and decide to adapt some resources to determine the changes that learners were experiencing.

There are many ways to check how much difference is being made. The key is to agree on what evidence to look for and what constitutes enough of a difference.

Impact

In addition to the spiral of inquiry being a key aspect of the theory of change for the CIEL program and the networks of inquiry and innovation in BC, this approach to disciplined inquiry is having province-wide impact. Many school districts are shifting their planning models to a focus on inquiry and are using the spiral of inquiry as the basis for individual school action plans. Several districts have contracted with the authors to provide in-service for parents, trustees, school leaders and teachers on the spirals of inquiry. A large-scale provincial initiative focused on early reading, Creating Results for Young Readers⁵ is using the same inquiry approach with the 300 schools involved. All undergraduate teacher candidates at the University of British Columbia and Vancouver Island University are studying and applying the spiral of inquiry. Graduate programs at the University of Victoria, the University of British Columbia and the

⁵ <http://youngreaders.ca>

University of Northern British Columbia are also using the spiral of inquiry as part of their curricula.

As we move ahead as a learning laboratory in the third phase of the ILE initiative, it will be particularly interesting to track the impact that this common understanding and approach to professional inquiry is having in our province.

2. LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT FOR INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMATION – CIEL PROGRAM

School leaders play a very significant - if not the key role - in creating and sustaining the kinds of learning environments required by contemporary learners. Formal leaders in BC are required to have a Masters degree. Two common approaches are cohort programs offered in single districts with limited diversity of perspectives or on-campus programs that consist of a series of courses that are not necessarily connected conceptually. With CIEL, Vancouver Island University wanted to create the kind of experience that demands teamwork and inter-dependence and provides for greater diversity in participant experience and perspectives through a blended approach. It was also important to the design team to ensure that a strong emphasis on quality and equity be pervasive throughout the program.

What distinguishes the CIEL program from other graduate programs in leadership is the strong emphasis on leaders – both formal and informal – developing an action-orientation based on a strong knowledge base about innovative learning that is informed by practices from across the globe.

CIEL was designed as a stand-alone program that would be attractive to educators who had already completed a Masters degree as well as to those seeking to attain an M.Ed in Educational Leadership. It represents a key component in our efforts to create a more innovative, responsive and connected learning system in BC. The key goal of the CIEL program is to help prepare and equip school and system leaders to design innovative learning settings informed by new conceptions of learning and motivated by a deep commitment to quality and equity. The faculty strives to provide all participants with a deep understanding of the learning sciences research as a basis for designing more innovative practices appropriate in local contexts. Educators need to understand the *why* of changes as well as the *how* – and the teaching team works hard to ensure the knowledge of CIEL participants goes beyond a shallow or superficial set of understandings.

CIEL has its roots in a previous program (Certificate for School Management and Leadership) supported by the Ministry of Education that was offered at the University of Victoria from 2005-2010. With the support of Dean Harry Janzen at VIU, the CIEL program started in the summer of 2011 with a third cohort of 25 currently underway. There are four features of the CIEL program that differ somewhat from the original program at the University of Victoria. The first is the application of the disciplined approach to inquiry described above. The second is the focused attention to the international cases from the Innovative Learning Environment study. Third, is the growing understanding of the importance of seven concluding principles from *The Nature of Learning* to inform and shape new approaches to learning in the wide range of contexts represented by the CIEL participants. The fourth is the context of the participants themselves. Students come from a range of districts within British Columbia but also from places as diverse

as Korea and Quebec. Developing an appreciation and respect for the unique cultures and contexts reflected within the cohort adds richness to their experience.

The target groups for the CIEL program are educators working in a range of learning settings – as teachers, principals, vice principals or para-professionals. Many educators in our context are reluctant to sign on for a program designed specifically ‘to train’ aspiring principals. By providing CIEL participants with the opportunity to take on leadership roles regardless of their position, we have seen graduates overcome their apprehension about formal leadership and move into positions of authority. Others exercise growing influence as powerful teacher leaders.

One component of the program is the exploration and application of ideas from the ILE case studies. Students are asked to identify cases that are of particular interest to their own context, do additional research on the case and then demonstrate how they will apply ideas from those cases to their own setting. Influenced by the case study of Birdwood High School in South Australia, a BC middle school is making radical changes to the ways in which programs are offered to their learners. From examining the work at Birdwood, it became clear that incremental change would not suffice:

At ‘BC Middle School’⁶, we have been trying to develop and enact a model such as Birdwood High School’s, and have made incremental changes to our various structures to this end. As at Birdwood, we had become frustrated by those traditional structures that limited or curtailed the learning experience for our learners. To address the problems, this year we made timetable changes that created large blocks of time for inquiry-based learning as well as blocks of time designated to support literacy and numeracy needs at our school. The idea was that by making significant but gradual changes every year, the teachers would be able to feel more comfortable in changing their practice. While this has worked somewhat, when reviewing and reflecting on the Birdwood experience, what becomes clear is that this type of incremental change is limiting in its scope and ultimately curtails the most significant benefits of 21st century practice. (KT Cohort 2 CIEL)

In addition to articulating how the ideas from the ILE case study could be applied in their own setting, the CIEL participants also identify which of the seven transversal conclusions on learning from *The Nature of Learning: Using Research to Inspire Practice* is most evident in the case. A teacher leader at a small rural school in northern BC was intrigued by the environmental work at Neta’im Environmental School in Israel and is moving to implement a similar focus in her community:

The horizontal connectedness of this project was readily apparent. Learning first started in classrooms where students examined controlled consumption of school resources (paper, water, electricity) and participated in numerous recycling activities. From there students took their learning out into the community weekly to examine issues they studied beforehand in class. On top of this the school promoted activities within the community where the students acted as “green” ambassadors by attending festivals, marches, and visits to other schools and clubs.....Neta’im is a school our school could model itself after. (JD, Cohort 2 CIEL)

⁶ Name of BC school has been changed.

Other specific features of CIEL include the opportunity to exercise leadership during a year-long context-specific inquiry. The spiral of inquiry described earlier provides the framework for leadership action focused on an important area of learner need. Each learner works with an experienced and trusted colleague who serves as a learning partner and coach throughout the progress of their inquiry. The program begins with an intensive eight-day summer residency in mid August. During the school year, learning takes place on-line and the program concludes with a three-day residency on campus the following July.

During the planning stages, an advisory committee of school district leaders, school principals, university faculty and Ministry of Education representatives provided invaluable input into program design and content. Now that the program is underway, partnerships with school districts, professional associations and the Ministry continue to be important. For example, an urban school district provides a learning space to the program at no cost. Provincial curriculum leaders meet with the participants during the program and CIEL participants are actively involved in curriculum review initiatives and provincial writing teams.

Although reformers may like to argue the relative merits of improvement, innovation and accountability, these distinctions are not particularly helpful for practitioners struggling to make learning more engaging and relevant in this moment in their particular context. The stance underlying the CIEL program is that new approaches to learning *are* necessary and new designs for learning *are* required. Educators in the CIEL program engage in a disciplined approach to collaborative inquiry designed to assist them in gaining the confidence, the insights, and the mindsets required to design new and powerful learning environments – indeed to transform their schools and their systems.

In summary, the theory of change underlying the CIEL program is:

1. Networks of inquiry reduce isolation and create the conditions for innovative practices to move more quickly.
2. Leaders of learning systems need to be highly knowledgeable about learning in order to develop more innovative - and learner-centered - approaches.
3. A disciplined approach to inquiry builds educator curiosity and creates a framework for informed and substantive change.

Impact

As of October 2013, 350 graduate students have completed one of the two programs (CSML and CIEL) as well as the on-campus program for Educational Leadership at VIU. Many of the graduates of these programs are now in formal roles from department heads to principals to district superintendents. In 2010 the Ministry of Education contracted a research study on the impact of educator participation in the CSML program. The study, led by Dr. Paul Shaw culminated in a report *Leadership and Learning: A Research Study* CSML was compared with five international leadership development programs identified by outside experts as exemplary. The final conclusion was that the BC program compared favorably in all aspects. The researcher observed:

Perhaps the most compelling finding put simply was that each CSML participant that we interviewed and/or surveyed, as well as their colleague survey results, demonstrated time and time again that the participants were working hard to improve their own practice and the practice of others. They were focused on improving their teaching and the teaching of colleagues. There was a strong relationship between what the CSML program espoused and the values and behaviours demonstrated by the program participants in their workplace. This speaks persuasively to the quality of the program. (p. 249)

Although, there has not yet been a formal research study examining the impact of participation in the CIEL leadership development program, there is considerable evidence that graduates are being actively recruited for formal leadership roles and that their informed action orientation is creating positive momentum in schools of all types.

3. NETWORKS OF INQUIRY AND INNOVATION TO ACCELERATE TRANSFORMATION

Creating more innovative systems requires the thoughtful and consistent development of educators with a positive disposition or mindset towards innovative practices. It also requires connecting these educators in an on-going way through networks.

The research on social network theory indicates that networks require both strong and weak ties. The ties need to be strong enough so participants can learn rapidly from one another and yet diverse enough that participating educators can be stimulated by thinking and knowledge from well beyond the boundaries of the network itself. Strong ties are necessary for supporting the mobilization of tacit, non-routine and complex knowledge. Strong ties also support joint problem solving and the development of coherent approaches. Weak ties provide the space for diversity and curiosity about new and potentially radically different approaches.

The authors of this paper have consciously developed inquiry-oriented networks in British Columbia where the resources of educators across a large number of roles can be “accessed, borrowed, and leveraged.” (Daly, 2010.p. 268) The original network focused primarily on improving teacher learning and student outcomes through formative assessment. This focus has since expanded to include a focus on social-emotional health and healthy living, Aboriginal education and increasingly on creativity and innovation. The basic structure and format of the various networks provide coherence and allow for participants to learn quickly from one another. The strong ties within the BC networks are reflected in a common focus on team inquiry, a commitment to formative assessment as a means to develop learner engagement and ownership, and a shared moral purpose around Aboriginal education. Diversity across the networks is encouraged through the range of questions that educators choose to pursue and through increased emphasis on international linkages. Schools in Chile, Australia, Wales, China, Korea as well as the Yukon Territory are connected to BC network schools and districts.

The international links to the BC networks have grown over the past decade and have their roots in professional connections and friendships nurtured initially through involvement in the International Congress of School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI). ICSEI has provided an important venue for BC educators to share their work, to be part of an international conversation, and to learn from and with colleagues with a genuine interest in transforming

systems. Classroom teachers from BC made important contributions to the ICSEI 2009 Congress in Vancouver and that since then BC teachers have been key congress participants in Malaysia, Cyprus, Sweden and Chile. With the growing international understanding of the approach to leadership development and networked inquiry communities in BC, we have been invited to work directly with school teams and leadership groups in Australia, Wales, and England. These invitations have led to on-going relationships leading to collaborative work across jurisdictions.

Impact

The federal government through the Ministry of Aboriginal and Northern Development Canada commissioned a research study on the impact of school involvement in the Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network. This study, entitled, *Aboriginal inquiry: Lifting All Learners* was released in May 2013. Both the executive summary and full report are available at <http://inquiry.noii.ca>. This study emphasized the importance of providing a space for educators to inquire, to probe each other's thinking and to challenge the status quo. As one participant reported:

If we are going to be professional and thoughtful teachers, then we have to ask, challenge and question: How do we do this better? How do we make it better for kids? In our discussions we also came to understand that what is good for Aboriginal students is good for everyone....but it took all of us challenging the status quo to finally figure it out.

Another stated:

Being part of the Network helped me to understand that in order to change the way we think and act, we need the support of others; a network as it were, where collaboration and change are part of the learning cycle.

And a final excerpt:

Now that I have experienced the power of inquiry in working with my colleagues, I can never go back to my old ways.

The networks of Inquiry and innovation and the CIEL program started as the efforts of the co-directors to shift the BC system. We are now seeing the impact of educators who have 'grown up' in the networks or have experienced formal inquiry-oriented leadership programs moving into greater roles of responsibility. There are a number of provincial initiatives that are increasingly becoming interconnected and we are optimistic that as these linkages become more clearly articulated through BC's involvement as a Learning Laboratory, the momentum for significant change will increase and we will move closer to achieving our three key goals.

The following represent some of the ways in which these initiatives are connected:

1. Networks of Inquiry and Innovation - Many CIEL educators are involved in sustained networks of inquiry before, during and after their formal course of studies. Several graduates take on leadership roles with the networks.

2. Rural initiatives - The Province has funded two separate initiatives focused on rural education and literacy. In both cases, CIEL graduates and graduates from the previous CSML program play key roles. The rural literacy program, centered at Vancouver Island University, is building strong connections with Aboriginal communities and is relying on instructional coaches who are well-versed in networked forms of inquiry.
3. Provincial curriculum redesign - Graduate students are well represented in the writing teams involved in this work.
4. ILE/ OECD initiative – CIEL students research case studies from the ILE website, contact schools directly and apply what they have learned from the international cases to their own settings. As BC becomes directly involved in the third phase of the ILE project, we foresee an enhanced role for CIEL graduates and participants in implementing and sustaining innovation.
5. Teacher education – CIEL / CSML graduates are directly involved in reshaping teacher education through teaching positions in the teacher preparation programs at five of the nine BC universities. The Spiral of Inquiry is a required text in several of the programs.
6. School districts have an important role in setting local directions and creating the conditions for innovation and inquiry. There are an increasing number of CIEL / CSML graduates assuming formal leadership roles both at the school and district levels. We are certain that their leadership is making a substantive contribution to system transformation.
7. Creating Results for Young Readers is a significant provincial initiative that involves external facilitators / coaches working with each of the 57 districts involved. More than half of these facilitators are network leaders and CIEL/CSML graduates.

Sustaining and Strengthening the Momentum

We believe that creating, sustaining and strengthening the links amongst educators who have experienced a rigorous, demanding and action-oriented program that values innovative practices will contribute directly to transforming the BC school system. The more coherence we can create across initiatives through a common ground of knowledge and the more space we can design for innovation to flourish through networks of inquiry, the stronger our system will become.

We are grateful to the OECD for its leadership in system transformation and we welcome the opportunities for new learning in the next phase of this vital global work.

Road map

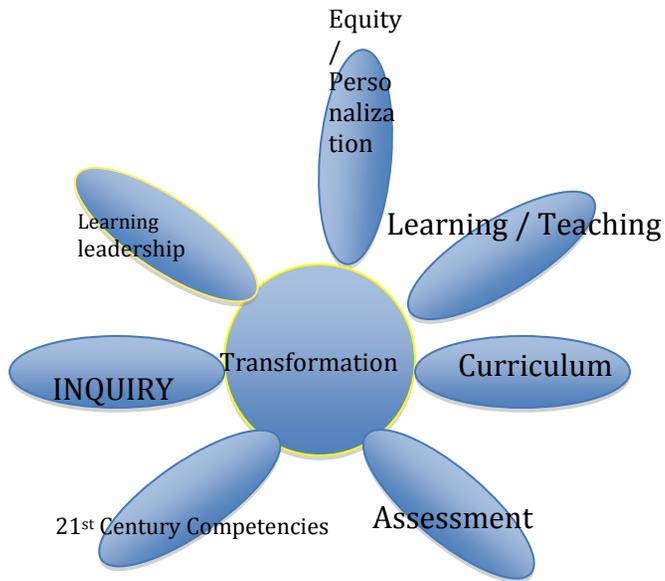
The accompanying graphic represents the current BC theory of change as was presented at the July 2013 meeting.

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Annex

Create System Conditions



Apply Innovation Methods and Diffusion Strategy

Theory of Change

The more coherence we can create across initiatives through a common ground of knowledge and the more space we can design for innovation to flourish through networks of inquiry, the stronger our system transform will become.

Outcomes

“Every learner leaving our system more curious than when they arrive

Learner / Teacher Engagement & Curiosity

Sustainability

Family / community confidence

Building a Social Movement

- Influenced by the 7 Principles of Learning
- With a disciplined approach to inquiry
- Focused on system transformation

