

PQT/Teacher Inquiry Project – 2006/09
Project Application by the Special Education Association

A) Focus~

Inclusion of all students is the philosophy of public education in British Columbia. There is a sizeable body of research and literature on successful practices to inclusion and an emphasis on the primacy of the role of the classroom teacher on supporting successful inclusion.

The trend of increasing diversity in BC's student population is fairly well documented. This trend necessitates an approach to instruction which is responsive to the reality of diversity in the classroom.

There is now a plethora of brain-based research that can inform practice and lead to the use of effective instructional strategies. Differentiated instruction and learning is recognized as an approach to supporting both the philosophy of inclusion and the diversity of students. Differentiated instruction is responsive instruction that allows each child to progress successfully from their current level of competency. It requires getting to know the learner and what he/she needs to be successful. The role of the non-enrolling teacher is to support successful inclusion. Therefore non-enrolling teachers need to support differentiated instruction practices within the classroom. Many of our PSA members are non-enrolling teachers who support classroom teachers in meeting the needs of all the learners in their classroom.

If chosen to participate in the PQT Inquiry, our guiding question would focus on:

How can we, as a PSA, promote and support differentiated instruction within the regular classroom?

Our PSA has already begun exploring this issue. We have produced an Inclusion paper. We have had rich conversations/sharing about the effectiveness of differentiated learning. We are beginning to explore our role in promoting differentiated learning and supporting enrolling and non-enrolling teachers in implementing differentiated instruction. We are in the process of launching an on-line book club on differentiated instruction.

Based on the described structure of the inquiry, some of the areas that could be explored by the group are:

- Locating user-friendly Learning Profile inventories (Group orientation, Cognitive style, Learning environment, Intelligence preferences) that can be modeled by the Learning Support teacher, incorporated into an IEP and ultimately be used by the classroom teacher. These profiles would need to be appropriate to the age of the students (elementary, middle, secondary)

- Exploring the components of differentiated learning as they pertain to non-enrolling teachers
- Researching UDL as it pertains to non-enrolling teachers
- Developing a lexicon of terms used in Differentiated Instruction, UDL, adapted/modified
- Making the connection between differentiated instruction, assessment for learning and the development of appropriate grading skills/rubrics
- Aligning differentiated instruction to the different levels (elementary, middle, secondary)
- ways of generating data that leads differentiated instructional strategies that become part of an Individual Educational Plan
- developing workshops to provide information/support to our members
- encouraging book clubs

Specific tasks will be chosen by the group when they meet with the facilitator. The method of exploration will also be determined at that time.

B) Criteria~

We will form a committee from our PSA membership who meet the eligibility criteria and are committed to fulfill the time commitment of 1 full day four half-day inquiry sessions and a public reporting session. The project will be headed by our executive member responsible for Professional Learning Support. Our PSA executive has made the financial commitment to match the 7500.00 in order to support members from the entire province.

C) Group information~

We discussed PQT Teacher Inquiry Project at our recent Chapter Presidents' Day and received expressions of interest from members of our executive and from Chapter Presidents. Our team will be made up of 6-8 PSA members and will include executive members and provincial chapter members. The following members wish to be part of our team:

- Leann Buteau – SEA president
- Janice Clary – SEA vice-president
- Laurie Cairns – SEA Member at Large-Professional Learning Support
- Kim Syer – SEA Member at Large -Conference Coordinator
- Miila Pullan – Chapter President, Victoria
- Brenda Jones – Chapter President, Surrey
- Carol McAndrew – Chapter President, North Okanagan Shuswap

D) Project Co-ordinator~

Laurie Cairns – SEA Professional Learning Support
Chapter Past President, Victoria
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E) Proposed Timeline for the Project~

January (full day orientation training) supplemented by 4 monthly four half-day inquiry sessions On-line conversations will occur between face-to-face meetings. Meeting dates to be confirmed at the initial meeting.

F) Any additional supporting information~

i) SEA goals and objectives that relate to our proposal

| <u>Goals</u> | <u>Objectives</u> |
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| 3. Communicate with other PSAs | 3.1 Liaise with PSAC and other PSAs on common issues, with a focus on LATA and ESL. |
| 4. Take informed action on special educational issues and changes. | 4.2 Communicate with BCTF regarding special education issues and service delivery. 4.3 Participate on and communicate with BCTF, ministry district, and other relevant committees 4.4 Provide input to the ministry, BCTF, and local teacher unions on special education and related issues 4.5 Continue to promote the importance and value of specialist teachers. 4.6 Provide input on skills & knowledge training for teachers supporting students with special learning needs |
| 5. Offer a variety of professional learning opportunities. | 5.6 Offer alternative professional development activities such as teacher inquiry, action research, book studies, teacher mentorship, etc. |

ii) Inclusion Paper (written by SEA executive 2006. Position paper on inclusion that underscores the crucial role that classroom teachers play in making inclusion successful) www.bctf.ca/sea/Inclusion.htm

- iii) Book club info (2 examples of current SEA activities that illustrate our commitment to facilitating conversations about differentiating instruction (attached))
- iv) PowerPoint by Saima Fewster (SEA past president) outlines the changes in student population and the current reality. Diversity is the new norm.

**Respectfully submitted to Nancy Hinds, PSID at nhinds@bctf.ca,
On Friday, December 3, 2008**