

The Scoop

...CONNECTING PEOPLE, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Preparing for Inquiry

Through the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS), school authorities across the province have embarked upon a process of inquiry—that is, a process of identifying and exploring an important question about “what works for students”. School authorities have engaged with students, parents, staff and their broader communities to identify needed improvements in students’ engagement, learning or performance. They have selected innovative instructional approaches that research suggests will help students make these improvements and they are now developing and implementing these approaches in their schools and classrooms. Similar approaches may have been effective in other parts of the province, country or the world, but how effective will they be in the unique context of each school authority? Careful collection and analysis of data by teachers and project teams will be essential for school authorities to answer this question. As well, how can the discoveries made about effective new approaches be described and shared so that other school authorities may also adopt them? The three priorities for AIS Cycle 5 (2012-2015) identified by the Education Partners (see the last page of this issue for the list of partners) are

guiding school authorities in this process of inquiry and Alberta Education is supporting the work with new resources and networks.

With this in mind, *Preparing for Inquiry* was chosen as the theme for this issue. The articles from project teams describe the early work school authorities have done to identify areas of improvement and to find out if new instructional approaches will be successful in helping students achieve those improvements. All the articles have a very practical perspective, enriched by the insightful reflections of those who have waded deeply into the processes at the heart of successful inquiry.

Schools and school authorities across the province have articulated research questions that are shaping their inquiries into “what works for students”. The *Research Map* on page 6 presents a selection of these questions—there was not room for all of them—showing the range and diversity of inquiry being pursued in AIS Cycle 5.

Deb Nelson and Gerald Knox describe, in *Empowering a Community for Learning*, how Elk Island Catholic Schools collected and analyzed the data from school community focus groups and



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

EMPOWERING A COMMUNITY FOR LEARNING { 2

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY { 4

AISI RESEARCH MAP { 6

HOW CAN RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE BE MOBILIZED EFFECTIVELY? { 7

STUDENT NEEDS DRIVE ACTION RESEARCH { 9

SPOTLIGHT ON... LEADERSHIP { 10

AISI CONFERENCE 2013 { 11

surveys to pull together the ideas and insights on which their cycle 5 project has been developed.

In *Meeting the Challenges of Data Collection and Analysis*, Jeney Gordon, principal of the Centre of Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE) Charter school, also presents her second article for *The Scoop* with a candid look at the practicalities of rolling out a workable research methodology.

Dr. Kelly Shaw, of the Community-University Partnership at the University of Alberta, returns to *The Scoop* with a second article. In *How Can Research Knowledge be Mobilized Effectively*, Kelly lays out in practical terms what an effective approach to knowledge mobilization can look like. Knowledge mobilization is the term given to the process of not just hearing about new instructional approaches that really work, but actually putting them into practice. Kelly will also be presenting on this topic at the AISI Conference, February 11-12.

The Greater North Francophone School Authority project team describes in *Student Needs Drive Action Research* how the action research process is enabling teachers to identify and respond to their students' learning needs. This article is a first for *The Scoop* and *Quoi de neuf?*, having been written in French and then translated into English.

The observant reader may have noticed that *The Scoop* byline is continuing to evolve. In the January 2012 issue, the founding phrase "Information about AISI and School Improvement" made way for "...conversations about AISI and School Research and Improvement". This byline better described the multi-directional exchanges of ideas about effective educational practices that are a big part of the AISI experience. However, we cannot stop there, for research and

conversation are only helpful when they impact our practice. Therefore, the evolution continues—from information, to conversation, to the new byline: "connecting people, research and practice".

This issue of *The Scoop* also launches the fourth publication in the *Spotlight on...* series, now available on the AISI website. This time, the spotlight focuses on leadership in AISI projects. A review of selected projects from cycles 3 and 4 shows that distributed leadership, both formal and informal, has been a key component of successful AISI projects.

The spring issue of *The Scoop* will look at "making the most of the data". Project teams with ideas and experiences to share on this topic are invited to contact the editor, David Harvey, at david.harvey@gov.ab.ca.

EMPOWERING A COMMUNITY FOR LEARNING

Thematic analysis used to capture the voice of core stakeholders
by Deb Nelson and Gerald Knox,
Elk Island Catholic Schools.

The *Alberta Initiative for School Improvement* (AISI) encourages school districts to gather feedback from various stakeholder groups to determine the effectiveness of an active project and to inform the direction that the next project should pursue. Over the last few AISI cycles, Elk Island Catholic Schools has used various methods to gather input from stakeholders, including a steering

.....
“ AISI encourages school districts to gather feedback from various stakeholder groups. ”

committee, surveys and focus groups. More recently, we added a process called thematic analysis, a method of qualitative analysis that attempts to "tease out" the common themes from data collected through surveys and focus groups. This article describes the process we developed, drawing

Thematic Analysis

1. Identify the big idea (Themes)
2. Code data under themes
3. Create a description for each theme
4. Re-frame and re-state themes based on key phrases and quotes
5. Report the identified theme

upon the literature (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006; Guest, MacQueen & Namey, 2012) and the expertise of Jason Daniels, Associate Director of Evaluation and Research Services at the University of Alberta.

We began by developing questions to ask three of our stakeholder groups: the students, the teachers, and the parents. Our questions, we believed, aligned with the direction of AISI Cycle 5 and were phrased in a way that was positive, open-ended, and could be understood by the various stakeholders. These questions were created to gather data about how our students learn best from the perspective of each of the selected stakeholder groups.

Students

Grades 4 to 12 focus groups of students were asked:

What makes the school such a good place for learning?

What has engaged you the most in class this week?

What makes learning fun?

Students' responses were recorded and, from the transcripts, we created a list of phrases and quotes recorded in point form.

Teachers

We asked teachers to respond to similar questions through online surveys:

What types of learners/learning needs do you have in your classroom/s?

What should the focus of professional learning be to support the learners/learning needs that you identified?

Describe a professional learning opportunity that you have participated in that provided a rich learning environment.

Parents

We also asked parents two questions through online surveys:

What type of learner is your child?

How does your child learn best?

Theme Two: Doing the work

Collaborating to build knowledge, understanding and skills through hands on, personalized opportunities that provide dialogue, challenge, experimentation, practice, and feedback for learning.

Representative Words: targets, experimentation, group work, practice, feedback, dialogue, challenge, respectful, formative, personalize

Representative Student Comments:

“even when I get the right answer my teacher sometimes asks me to find a different way to do it”

“I love to do things hands on, so if I get to do a diorama ... it allows me to showcase what I know”

“I become better in a subject when a person gives you a project and it goes a little bit past your level and it pushes you to go up”

“writing on Google Docs – we wrote an essay together (as a class). It was really effective.”

Survey and anecdotal data were combined with field notes gathered during the student focus group conversations, permitting us to triangulate the data and identify emerging themes.

“ Ideas such as *relationships*, *group work*, *choice*, *active* and *hands-on* stood out in the focus group transcripts. ”

Two reviewers – both division AISI consultants – working independently from one another, reviewed the focus group transcripts and identified broad themes that represented the “big ideas” contained in this raw data. Words and ideas such as *relationships*, *group work*, *choice*, *active* and *hands-on* stood out. When the reviewers met to compare and discuss their respective findings, three themes emerged:

- 1) creating and sustaining a learning community
- 2) doing the work (“hands-on”)
- 3) providing choice

Now a second pass over the raw data was conducted. The reviewers, again working independently of each other, colour-coded the three themes and reviewed the raw data, once more. Each string of raw data, was coded by colour, based on one of the three themes. The reviewers also flagged key words, phrases and quotes.

The reviewers met a second time to compare their findings and, through negotiation, they aligned and aggregated the data and massaged the theme titles. For instance, following coding and some negotiation, the theme “providing choice” was replaced with “designing and providing respectful tasks”. Descriptions for each theme were wordsmithed and the theme was supported with examples of key words and quotes from the data.

“ The process acted as the catalyst for many ongoing conversations with the core stakeholders. ”

Ultimately, the identified themes indicated a need to continue to focus on creating responsive learning environments that meet the needs of a diverse student population. The process acted as the catalyst for many ongoing conversations with the core stakeholders, particularly central leadership, school-based leadership, teachers, ATA representatives, and trustees. These conversations were extremely empowering, and revealed that we are all critical partners within this community for learning. Upon reflection, however, we believe it is important to extend the process to include the other stakeholders in the community. This, of course, depends on available human and financial resources.

The collaborative process we followed at Elk Island Catholic Schools has culminated in our Cycle 5 project entitled *Empowering a Community for Learning*. The project is researching the extent to which student engagement and performance are impacted when differentiated instructional strategies are integrated into classroom instruction and assessment. Forty-seven excited teacher researchers have volunteered in the first year of the cycle to participate in this action research project. Each will focus on one of the three sets of strategies, providing student choice in tools, tasks, and assessment, collaborative and dialogical learning, and vocabulary in context.

References

- Fereday, J. and Muir-Cochrane, E. (2006). Demonstrating rigor using thematic analysis: A hybrid approach of inductive and deductive coding and theme development. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*. 5(1), 1-11.
- Guest, G., MacQueen, K.M. and Namey, E.E. (2012). *Applied Thematic Analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Teachers build data collection skills to increase the power of their research

by Jeney Gordon, Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence

At the Centre for Academic and Personal Excellence (CAPE), we devised a checklist system to collect data about student behaviours throughout the year. We felt that the system was going to work well. The checklist was well-designed and we had developed instructions for its use. During the year, there may have been some clues that the system had flaws, but the extent of the problem did not come fully to light until the end of the 2009-10 school year when we started to collate and analyze the data submitted by teachers.

As the data started coming in, it became apparent that the collection methodology was riddled with inconsistencies. In some cases, data had been collected for five weeks, and others for three, two or only one week. Some checklists were complete and others were partially filled. The method of recording data for a similar event varied. Some scores were whole numbers, some were in tenths, and some were to two decimal places. Some scores were averaged and some were added.

Discussion ensued in the hope of identifying the issue that caused the project to buckle that year. Was it the tool—the checklist we had developed? This had been a discussion piece before and we felt that the tool was adequate. In previous AISI cycles, we had learned how to identify our goals, select or develop tools that would measure accordingly, and set targets. We had become more aware of the pitfalls of selecting tools with limited scope that would not properly show

results, as in the case of the CCAT and gifted programming, and we had corrected for this limitation.

Was it the hands-on support that was lacking? Were the supports insufficient, ill-timed, or possibly overwhelming? Did the teachers feel that they did not have enough decision-making power? Was it the timeframe? Did the teachers not have adequate time within their schedules to adequately collect the data? Should the checklist have been streamlined? Was there a lack of awareness of the value of this data collection and what it would tell us about our students? Did teachers understand what this tool could tell them about their classroom teaching? Was the literature support not sufficient? Did teachers understand the research? Was it too little or too much? Was it a lack of research methodology and, in particular, data collection that was at the root of the problem?

Teachers' research capacity had certainly been increasing through the cycles of AISI. At the beginning of AISI cycles 1 and 2, our school had only one individual responsible for researching, developing the plan, collecting data, conducting analysis, drawing conclusions, and reporting. We moved to a team approach in Cycle 3. Teachers with knowledge, interest, and skills in this area were identified and invited to participate. This team approach brought a richness to the research, and to the development and delivery of the plan, because it was collaborative and embraced multiple perspectives. The end result was a melding of ideas and evidence. The research process also expanded in Cycle 3 to include some teachers as data collectors. However, still only a very limited number of teachers were involved in data collection, and still none in the

analysis and reporting. Because our Cycle 4 project was school-wide, there was the need for each teacher to become a collector and analyst. The research gathered by two individuals was streamlined and shared with staff. The collection tool was provided with instructions, examples, and hands-on support. Where could it go wrong? And yet it did.

The epiphany came through professional discussion and an informal poll of our teaching and administrative staff. At the root of the problem, it emerged that teachers were generally not trained in research methodology, data collection, or analysis. A mere 7% had the training in or exposure to the skills that our AISI project seemed to require. It became clear that the biggest issue was the lack of experience with research methodology and data collection. We expanded our discussion to the larger charter school community where others shared similar experiences and conclusions with us. We invited other charter schools and jurisdictions to become involved with work on data collection and research methodology, and to work with us on comparative data. However, there seemed to be a permeating feeling that people were not comfortable working with a true data collection project and there were no takers. Those who responded tended to cite the amount of time needed and teacher overload as issues.

Heading into Cycle 5 of AISI, we had a clear focus on action research and we knew we needed to address the issues of methodology. With another school-wide project affecting 15 classrooms, we knew we could not lay the responsibility of the entire research process on one or two individuals and we determined to address the need

of developing a data collection and analysis skillset among the teachers so there would be at least a minimal level of comfort.

The first step took place in the spring of 2012, when a presenter from the University of Lethbridge provided a seminar on action research for our instructional staff. One of the key elements of the presentation was identifying that intuition is a key aspect of action research. The staff was challenged to look at data and ask questions. What do the numbers say about student engagement? What evidence is there of student performance? What does this tell

us about student learning? These questions have driven the analysis of data from Cycle 4, which has been compiled and analyzed as an instructional staff.

We recognized in the spring that there had to be active, direct mentorship for teachers to build skills with data collection for Cycle 5, and so we started planning to provide 1-1 support for teachers in the classroom; helping them learn to accurately use checklists, compile data, analyze it, and use it to affect student learning. Part of this mentorship includes PD opportunities that are meaningful and impacting for each individual teacher. The active

mentorship will continue throughout all three years of AISI Cycle 5. This framework is supported by policy and Board motions for consistency and longevity.

For research to be successful within particular school sites, a wider set of supports need to be in place. They must include mandatory research methodology courses at the undergraduate level, purposeful genuine system-wide support for research as an ongoing part of education, and active mentorship at the school level.

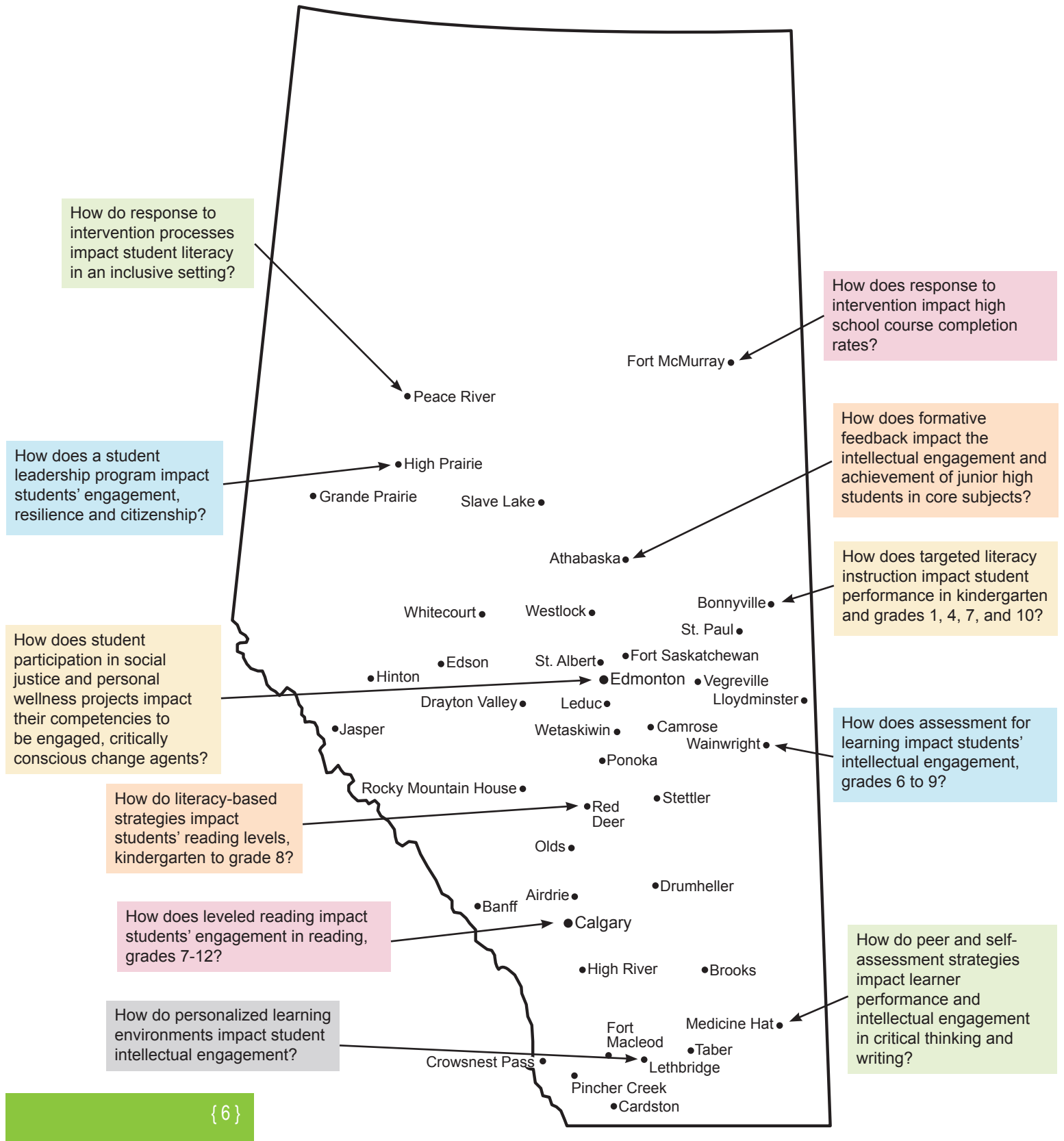


©Photos.com

AISI RESEARCH MAP

Connecting Research and Practice

During AISI Cycle 5, teachers and project teams are inquiring into the effectiveness of new instructional approaches. At the heart of their inquiry is a research question: How does a certain instructional approach impact students' engagement, learning or performance? The sample of research questions presented in shortened form on this map illustrates the diversity of innovation and inquiry underway in AISI Cycle 5. Summaries of all AISI Cycle 5 projects, including their research questions, will soon be available on the AISI website.



HOW CAN RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE BE MOBILIZED EFFECTIVELY?

by Kelly Shaw and Sherry Ann Chapman, CUP¹, and Suzanne Tough, Alberta Centre for Child, Family and Community Research.

Optimizing the development and well-being of children, youth, and families is an important goal in Canadian society. Researchers, community agencies, and policy makers are becoming increasingly concerned about mobilizing research-based knowledge for the purpose of improving programs and policies that enhance the lives of children and families. In a recent project, we studied how to move research information into action and compared various strategies and tools for mobilizing knowledge within the context of our community-university partnership. How might these comparisons apply in your work contexts?

- Strategies and tools vary in their effectiveness at mobilizing knowledge. A knowledge mobilization (KM) tool may work better in some contexts than in others.
- Tools that get people talking about the use of the information (e.g., conferences, workshops) seem to be more effective than conventional, written methods (e.g., a newsletter) for putting research information into action.
- Mixed interactive and didactic educational meetings (e.g., conferences, workshops, symposia) are more effective at mobilizing knowledge than didactic strategies alone [suggested change in word order] (e.g., lectures, presentations).



©Photos.com

We have learned that when selecting and tailoring a KM tool for a particular context of knowledge users, we need to consider the following strategies:

- *Collaborate and build relationships* to create, share, and apply knowledge from the beginning to the end of research and evaluation projects.
- *Employ a combination of KM tools that provide content, interactivity, and materials* (e.g., champions, presentations, podcasts, handbooks).
- *Ensure the research content is relevant*, useful, and clearly communicated in a language that is familiar to participants. Include examples such as stories, real-life examples, and case studies that illustrate the evidence for practice and/or policy recommendations.
- *Include interaction opportunities* (e.g., question/answer sessions, group discussions, networking) during an event and facilitate continued interaction after the event. Interaction opportunities are critical because they (a) anchor new information, (b) provide alternative perspectives, (c) allow for the co-creation of ways to change practice and policy (d) provide motivation from peers to use the information, and (e) help develop and strengthen relationships. Give priority to face-to-face opportunities for interaction. The use of on-line resources (e.g., podcasts, networking tools) is also helpful.
- *Identify facilitators* (i.e., presenters) who are viewed as credible and trustworthy, engaging, respectful, easily understandable, and who encourage participants to reflect on the content.
- *Involve participants* who have the skills to appraise research critically, have decision-making authority, have adequate resources, value the use of research in decisions, and engage in communities of practice.
- *Target organizations* that have effective leadership, responsive administrations, involve staff in decisions, have a culture where research is used to inform decisions, and provide adequate resources and feedback to staff.
- *Repeat the message* multiple times using different KM tools.
- *Encourage participants* [could we add “or project leaders”? this is a term used in AISI that will be familiar to readers] to monitor research influence and impact after the event.
- *Promote the building of networks and communities of practice* that value using research to inform decisions and that can help build collectives of shared knowledge, skills, and experience.

.....
“ Mixed interactive and didactic educational meetings, such as conferences, workshops and symposia may be some of the most effective ways to mobilize knowledge. ”

1 Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth and Families (CUP), Faculty of Extension, University of Alberta.

Examples of Knowledge Mobilization Tools

<p><i>Role-Based Approaches</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knowledge broker • opinion leader • champion • consultant 	<p><i>Technological Tools</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • email • listservs • websites (e.g., reports, podcasts) • CDs/DVDs • social media (e.g., facebook) • webcasts • radio • television
<p><i>Face-to-Face Methods</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • workshops • seminars • presentations • informal networking • discussion groups • network groups • conferences 	<p><i>Written Materials</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reports • manuals • briefs • newsletters • publications • newspapers • magazines

Example of an Effective Knowledge Mobilization Strategy

Many of the strategies discussed above are illustrated in this example of knowledge mobilization.

While attending a teachers' convention, Judy, teacher and parent in a local elementary school, learned of an effective, evidence-based program to facilitate healthy eating habits in youth. Judy discussed the value of the program with her principal who had also heard about the positive influence of the program. Together, with other teachers at the school, they planned to invite the same researcher to facilitate a session about the program for staff and administrators at their school. Other elementary school principals and a consultant from the central office of the school district were also invited as key stakeholders. The researcher opened the session with information about the program's effectiveness in high schools. Then, discussion began about how to implement the program in an elementary school. Small groups brainstormed the possibilities while the researcher circulated, clarifying the outcomes of the program and offering suggestions based on past experience. A pamphlet about how to implement the program and what to expect was provided to everyone so that they could think further about the idea and share it with others. In addition, the session was developed into a podcast which was made available on the school's public website. A second session was offered and held at the school to encourage parents to offer their perspectives on the program and to determine their interests and needs.

After both sessions took place, an existing leadership committee took on the responsibility of considering ways to adapt the program for the elementary school. The network of elementary school principals also planned to put the idea on the agenda for their next meeting and to stay in touch with the school's leadership committee as it proceeded to put the research information to use.

References

- Belkhdja, O., Amara, N., Landry, R., and Quimet, M. (2007). The extent and organizational determinants of research utilization in Canadian health services organizations. *Science Communication, 28*(3), 377-417.
- Cummings, G. G., Estabrooks, C. A., Midodzi, W. K., Wallin, L., and Hayduk, L. (2007). Influence of organizational characteristics and context on research utilization. *Nursing Research, 56*(4S), S24-S39.
- Davis, D., and Davis, N. (2010). Selecting educational interventions for knowledge translation. *Canadian Medical Association Journal, 182*(2), E89-E93.
- Dobbins, M., DeCorby, K., and Tweedy, T. (2004). A knowledge transfer strategy for public health decision-makers. *Worldviews on Evidence-Based Nursing, Second Quarter, 1*(2), 120-128.
- Dobbins, M., Rosenbaum, P., Plews, N., Law, M., and Fysh, A. (2007). Information transfer: What do decision makers want and need from researchers? *Implementation Science, 2*, 20-32.
- Estabrooks, C. A., Kenny, D. J., Adewale, A. J., Cummings, G. G., and Mallidou, A. A. (2007). A comparison of research utilization among nurses working in Canadian civilian and United States army healthcare settings. *Research in Nursing & Health, 30*, 282-296.
- Marinopoulos, S. S., et al. (2007). *Effectiveness of continuing medical education*. Evidence Report/Technology Assessment. Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University.
- O'Brien, M. A., Fremantle, N., Oxman, A. D., Wolf, F., Davis, D. A., and Herrin, J. (2001). Continuing education meetings and workshops: Effects on professional practice and health care outcomes (Review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, 1*, 1-33.
- Squires, J. E., Estabrooks, C. A., Newburn-Cook, C. V., and Gierl, M. (2011). Validation of the conceptual research utilization scale: An application for the standards for educational and psychological testing in health care. *BioMed Central Health Services Research, 11*, 107-121.

STUDENT NEEDS DRIVE ACTION RESEARCH

by the Cycle 5 Planning Committee
Greater North Central Francophone
Authority No. 2

In any large project, it is essential to develop a process that will help all participants come together, ask questions, reflect, discuss ideas, organize thoughts, engage in action, and evaluate results to move together toward a common goal. This article presents the thinking so far of the Greater North Central Francophone Authority No. 2 on this process. We would like to share this thinking as a member of AISI's professional learning community.

Reinvesting while maintaining continuity

Our school authority has addressed the following priorities during the first twelve years and four cycles of AISI: reading, differentiation, assessment for learning, oral communication, and Francophone identity. Building on the success of the four previous projects, our cycle 5 project is focused on reinvesting and examining in more detail teaching strategies acquired over the years, while continuing to build on new knowledge and winning practices for the 21st century learner.

Continuity is leading the way to change

In order to ensure improvement for all students, our cycle 5 project is supporting a new strategic approach focused on mobilizing school teams around goals that are specific to the needs of students in each school. During the last school year, two complementary approaches emerged in our schools, and they are an essential tool in our implementation of Cycle 5.

First, we introduced a model to support pedagogy and learning by assigning learning coaches in each school. Second, each school team became involved in an unprecedented consultation process focusing on the needs of its students. The teams first developed a profile of strengths, challenges and needs of their school community. Subsequently, each school team identified, by consensus, a priority that focused on the needs of its students. This priority became the school's AISI goal for Cycle 5.



From school goals to action research

By focusing on the impact of teaching strategies on student skills, our cycle 5 project became the springboard to transform daily teaching practices. It is with this perspective that our schools have transformed their school goal into an action research question, such as *What are the effects of reading comprehension strategies on students' learning?*

In light of the goal and action research question of each school, our Board developed a more general question to identify successful inclusive practices: *What are the effects of inclusive teaching strategies on students' skills?*

How will we know if we have made a difference?

For us, the action research approach is consistent with the process of mobilizing school teams around a goal focused on student needs. Our planning committee is consulting with a researcher to help us better understand the key elements of action research and to take ownership of this approach.

Although our thinking is constantly evolving, it is clear that student needs must be at the heart of any initiative. The important work will take place in the classroom. Our challenge will be finding the essential time for reflection and dialogue to adjust and enhance our teaching practices.

Our Cycle 5 AISI project process, in a few words, is this:

1. *Identify* the needs
2. *Mobilize* the school team
3. *Plan* actions
4. *Integrate* strategies
5. *Document* learning
6. *Reflect* and *dialogue* on the data
7. *Share* the knowledge
8. *Adjust* practices

What action research highlights is that, in all stages of the process, it is essential to document what we do and to take note of its effects on students. By giving ourselves the means to properly document student learning, we will be able to examine our teaching strategies critically and constructively.

One of our next steps will be to reflect on the roles to be played by the various members of each school team in this action research approach. This will be undertaken by each school team, since everyone has the potential to be an instructional leader in the journey toward the achievement of a common goal.

SPOTLIGHT ON... LEADERSHIP

The fourth publication in the *Spotlight on...* series looks at what we have learned from AISI about leadership.

The *Spotlight on...* series of articles sheds light on how prevalent themes of AISI have been successfully pursued in projects across the province. Each article in the series is the result of a close analysis of numerous project reports, provincial reports and research studies. Links take the reader directly to further information about each of the

projects highlighted in the article, as well as to other reading related to the theme.

The *Spotlight on...* series is a useful resource for the whole school community, providing people with the benefit of both a broad and a detailed analysis of lessons learned from AISI. The series could be helpful for professional development and general communication with the school community.

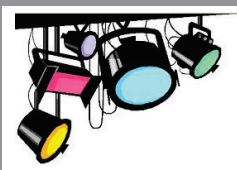
Already published in the *Spotlight on...* series:

- *Spotlight on... Professional Development*
- *Spotlight on... Parent Engagement*
- *Spotlight on... Assessment*
- *Spotlight on... Leadership*

Upcoming in the *Spotlight on...* series:

- *Spotlight on... Instructional Strategies*

Spotlight on ... Leadership



*What we've learned from
AIS I*

*The interplay of formal and informal leadership
empowers school improvement.*

What we have learned about leadership

AISI projects show that leadership is critical to school improvement and attest to the power of a distributive and dynamic blend of formal and informal leadership. The following findings acquired through AISI projects are supported by the literature on effective leadership:

- ✓ Educational leadership models are becoming less centralized and more distributive.
- ✓ Formal leadership is critical to the successful implementation of change and innovation.
- ✓ Distributed leadership among formal and informal leaders contributes to capacity building.
- ✓ Strong AISI teams play a key leadership role in successful projects.
- ✓ Providing leadership in the integration, cohesion and alignment of school improvement initiatives is a complex process of change and innovation.



©Photos.com

Click [here](#) for
**Spotlight on...
Leadership**
or go to
[http://education.
alberta.ca/teachers/
aisi/leaders/
lessonslearned.aspx](http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/aisi/leaders/lessonslearned.aspx)

The Scoop is the official newsletter of the Alberta Initiative for School Improvement and is produced by the School Research and Improvement Branch of Alberta Education.

Share your AISI stories! *The Scoop* is an excellent forum for sharing your AISI project experiences, discoveries and achievements.

The spring issue of *The Scoop* will focus on “making the most of the data.” Articles may be submitted until March 8, 2013.

Please contact David Harvey at any time with your ideas for future articles.

David Harvey, Editor
david.harvey@gov.ab.ca

Anna DiNatale, Producer
anna.dinatale@gov.ab.ca

AISI CONFERENCE 2013

February 11-12, 2013

Research in Action: Transforming the Learning

Keynote Speakers:

Dr. Andy Hargreaves

Dr. Nat Kendall-Taylor

Further information is available on the AISI Website
<http://education.alberta.ca/teachers/aisi/leaders/conferences-and-events/aisi-conference-2013.aspx>



The Scoop

ISSN 1916-2898

For information or submissions
contact the
School Research and
Improvement Branch
Alberta Education

12th Floor, 44 Capital Boulevard
10044 – 108 Street
Edmonton, AB T5J 5E6

Tel.: 780-427-3160
Fax: 780-415-2481

<http://education.alberta.ca/aisi>

