

Assessment as an Instructional Practice Capstone Project

Any town Composite School

ELPA Prep Program

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5/23/2012

## **Our School:**

Anytown Composite School is a rural school located in Anytown, New Brunswick. Our school is made up of approximately 175 students from kindergarten to grade twelve, 2 administrators, 17 teachers, and 4 educational assistants. Students come from varied socio-economic backgrounds. The school catchment includes Anytown, Back Woods, Somewhere, Nowhere Special, Salt Water Cove and Waterfalls. Many of our students travel at least one hour to and from school every day.

Having all three levels in our school (elementary, middle and high) we have the advantage of very easy student transition between levels. Teams meet frequently to discuss student behavioural and academic concerns. A main concern for our high school team is the lack of educational assistants to help our struggling readers and writers. Currently, there are no programs in place to give extra help to these students, especially those who will be writing the English Language Proficiency Assessment in January. Our high school English teacher has explained that it is nearly impossible to have enough time to help all the students in her grade nine/ten combined English class.

Currently, our high school students have a daily schedule that consists of five, sixty minutes classes. For the past three years, we have had a block of time built into the daily schedule where students work on literacy, enrichment and daily homework/studying for thirty minutes. We call this period of time “pods” because the students have been placed in multi-age groups from grades nine to twelve.

## **Goal:**

For my capstone assignment, I want to work with the grade nine students and some grade eleven and twelve students at Anytown Composite School to prepare them to successfully write or rewrite the English Language Proficiency Assessment. I will work with the school administration, the high school team of teachers, and district staff to create and implement an ELPA Prep Program.

As a high school team, along with our administration, we have decided to put more emphasis on literacy during pod time. The main focus needs to be on grade nine students who will be writing the English Language Proficiency Assessment as well as any students in grades eleven and twelve who need to rewrite the assessment. After lengthy discussions, the high school team is in agreement that more focused work needs to be done with these students to better prepare them for the assessment. All involved parties including the English teacher, the administration, the district learning specialist, the district literacy mentor, and me (Avril Lavigne), have agreed to work together to plan and implement an ELPA prep program.

**Population:**

The following groups will be included:

- All grade nine students (10 students)
- Grade eleven students who need to rewrite the ELPA (5 students)
- Grade twelve students (2 students) who need to rewrite the ELPA
- High school English teacher Alanis Morrisette
- Pod organizer Avril Lavigne
- High school team which consists of all teachers who teach high school courses (approximately 6 teachers depending on staffing)
- Principal Celine Dion
- Vice Principal (to be determined)
- District literacy mentor Mike Buble
- Literacy learning specialist Shania Twain

**Timeline**

<b>When</b>	<b>What</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Facilitator</b>
June 2012	High school team will create the literacy pre-assessment using old copies of ELPA	All high school teachers	Shania Twain/Michael Buble
August 2012	PD on creating a writing rubric as well as training question-reading strategies.	All high school teachers	Shania Twain / Michael Buble
September 2012	Students complete pre-assessment.	All grade nine students and any students who need to rewrite the ELPA	Myself and English teacher, Alanis Morisette
September 2012	Students will work with English teacher to “unwrap” outcomes that essential for ELPA	All grade nine students	Alanis Morisette
September 2012	High school teachers will team mark pre-assessments	All high school teachers	Shania Twain / Michael Buble
September 28, 2012 (1/2 day PD)	Create group listings according to difficulties. Also receive training and resources for preparing students for ELPA	High school teachers	Shania Twain / Michael Buble
October 1, 2012	Students begin working in their assigned groups during pod time	All grade nine students and some grade 11 and 12 students (rewrites)	Avril Lavigne

October 26, 2012	High school team of teachers will mark first set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
November 23, 2012	High school team of teachers will mark second set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
December 18, 2012	High school team of teachers will mark third set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne /H Alanis Morissette
January 21-25, 2013	Students will write the provincial ELPA	All grade nine students and some grade 11 and 12 students	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
January 30-31, 2013	Students participate in individual conferencing to determine new groups	All grade nine students and some grade 11 and 12 students	Alanis Morissette
February 4, 2013	Students will begin working in new groups	All grade nine students and some grade 11 and 12 students	Avril Lavigne
February 22, 2013	High school team of teachers will mark fourth set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne / Michael Buble
February 2013 (PD day)	High school team will create the literacy post assessment using old copies of ELPA	High school team	Shania Twain / Michael Buble
March 22, 2013	High school team of teachers will mark fifth set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
April 26, 2013	High school team of teachers will mark sixth set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne /Alanis Morissette
May 24. 2013	High school team of teachers will mark seventh set of student work	High school team	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
June 2013	Students will complete post assessment	All grade nine students and any students who need to rewrite the ELPA	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
June 2013	High school team of teachers will mark post assessment	High school team	Avril Lavigne / Alanis Morissette
June 2013	Final report created and shared with high school team and others	High school team, school administration, district literacy mentor, learning specialist	Avril Lavigne

## **Necessary Resources**

- Samples of past ELP assessments
- Literacy learning specialist and literacy mentor from district 17 for training purposes for teachers as well as periodic work with students
- Allotted PD time for teachers to work together to create pre-assessments, post-assessments and writing rubric.
- Allotted PD time for literacy mentor and learning specialist to work with the team to ensure inter-rater reliability (everyone marking the same way, looking for the same criteria)
- Allotted PD time for teachers to team mark student work throughout the year

## **What is the project going to look like?**

Throughout the year, teachers will be given PD allotted time to work with the district literacy mentor and literacy learning specialist to receive training in the creation of pre and post assessments that would be similar to the provincially provided ELPA. Teachers will receive training in teaching students how to read and answer multiple choice questions and open response questions. Also, teachers will also receive training on creating rubrics.

Early in September, the English teacher will work with the grade nine class and the rewriting students to “unwrap” the outcomes that will be covered on the ELPA so that students are aware of what will be expected. Students will also work in collaboration with the teacher to co-construct a rubric that follows the six writing traits which are used for evaluation of the ELPA.

Starting at the first of October, during pod time (already established in daily schedule, 30 minutes each day), all students in grade nine and any students from grade eleven and twelve who need to rewrite the ELPA will complete a pre-assessment in September that is similar in style to the ELPA. These assessments will be graded by the high school team of teachers with assistance from the literacy mentor and learning specialist.

The results from the pre assessment will place students into common groups for “practice” sessions. Every Monday, during pod time (30 minutes), these students will work in their groups with a teacher on exercises that will reinforce their skills for reading and writing. Students will be taught how to peer assess (meta learning) in order to edit their work. Embedded formative assessment will be key to ensuring students are on the right track. Once a month, students will select one piece of their work to be assessed by the high school team of teachers. This marking will be done on the fourth Friday afternoon (PD afternoons) of each month. Our administration has agreed to allot these afternoons (2 hours each month) to this initiative. Throughout the sessions, students will be given instruction on how to read and answer multiple choice and

open response questions. At the end of each month, after the grading has been completed, students may be put into the same groups or regrouped according to difficulties noted on formative assessments. Groups will be formed in the following areas: reading comprehension, writing skills according to the six writing traits. According to noted difficulties, students will be taught strategies to use in their reading and writing. This will be done during pod time and English class.

At the end of January, all students in grade nine and some students in grade eleven and twelve will write the ELPA, according to provincial requirements.

From February to June, students will once again be put into common groups for more remediation. These groups may or may not be the same as during first semester, depending on student need. For this block of time, students will conference with their English teacher to decide which type of group is best for them individually, according to their own difficulties at this time.

At the first of June, students will complete a post assessment. The high school team of teachers will team mark these assessments. The results will be compared to the pre-assessment that was done in September. The English teacher and I will organize the results from the pre and post assessments into a final report and present the report to the high school team, the school administration, the district literacy mentor and the literacy learning specialist. It is hopeful that the results will show the value of such a project and will encourage the continuation of the project in future year.

## **Conclusion**

Students will be tracked using their scores from the pre-assessment, the post assessment and the ELPA. I am hoping to see an increase in scores from the pre to the post assessment. Ultimately, I hope that more students are successful on the English Language Proficiency Assessment.