



Cinnabar Valley Elementary School Plan 2017 2018



School Community Context

Cinnabar Valley Elementary is nestled in the heart of Cinnabar Valley. Visitors to the school find a vibrant community of learners, with students actively engaged in their learning both in AND out of the classrooms.

Cinnabar Valley Elementary has experienced significant growth in the 2017-2018 school year, growing from 272 students in 2016 to 293 students in 2017. We now have 13 divisions requiring all existing portables to be fully in use. After a year of change in staff in 2016, the 2017-2018 staff has remained stable.

Our school began the year with a school-wide focus on “treating others the way you want to be treated”. We continue to focus on the core competency of Personal and Social Responsibility, adding the Virtues project as a means of teaching positive behaviour (part of the PBIS system of supports).

The creation of the school goals for 2017-2018 were a collaborative process, with the work tied directly to our Professional Learning Community sessions.

Our School Goal Story



Response to Intervention (RTI) is a framework that focuses on collaborative problem solving to improve all students learning and to close achievement gaps for struggling learners. Utilizing the cycle of inquiry, the RTI method combines extensive effective schools research that identifies teacher collaboration, sharing of effective instructional practices, and problem solving critical factors for improving student learning.



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Scanning:

In order to determine instructional needs of students, staff used the NLPS Reading Assessment from K-7. We analyzed the raw data as part of a scanning process, and then looked for trends school wide. The following graph indicates the findings.

Grade	Areas of Strength	Areas of Focus	Areas of Concern
K	Syllable Blending, Sound Deletion,	Rhyme Recognition, Initial Sound Isolation,	Rhyme Production, Letter Sound Correspondence, upper and lower case
1	Initial and final sound isolation, Segmenting phonemes, Blending Phonemes	Letter/Sound correspondence;	Decoding Blends
2	Phonological awareness, Decoding	Site Words Grade 1 and 2 list	Long Vowel Sounds, Complex Vowels
3	Decoding, reading fluency	Complex Vowels, Making Connections	
4	Literal Comprehension	Prediction/Use of text features, Main Idea, Supporting Details	Making Connections, Inferencing
5		Inferencing, Literal Comprehension	Prediction/Use of Text Features, Main idea/supporting details, Making Connections, Inferencing
6	Literal Comprehension	Prediction/Use of text features	Main idea/supporting details, Making Connections, Inferencing
7	Literal Comprehension	Prediction/Use of text features, Main Idea, Supporting Details	Making Connections, Inferencing

(Colours show like concepts)

It became obvious that our students are very good at literal comprehension yet other more complex skills are not as fully developed. While the early primary (grade K-2) reading assessment focus more on the development of phonemic awareness than assessing comprehension, the building blocks for reading with comprehension begin in these early grades.

Question/Focus:

Would the focus on direct teaching of “making connections” improve student ability think more deeply in multiple curricular areas? Would students be able to “make connections” to self, others, text (and media) in meaningful ways?



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The Plan

1. Review existing teaching strategies for making connections
2. Utilize Adrienne Gear's *Reading Power* (fiction or non-fiction). Teach specific lessons, from the resource, to develop common language K-7.



3. Introduce visual K-7 to reinforce concept of "making connections".
4. Develop Assessment Rubric, Primary and Intermediate, to monitor growth (teacher and student self-assessment).
5. Use assessment rubric to assess areas needing further development (assessment for learning).

Implementation Cycle

November 2017 – Scanning

December/January – Plan – review of teaching strategies, introduction of Adrienne Gear lessons

February/March – Develop rubric (continue to actively teach "making connections" across all curricular areas – reinforce common language and common visual/action)

April – Student and Staff assessment – how are we doing?

May – Re-evaluate most effective teaching strategies – what have been most impactful for student growth?

School Plan Review – June 2018

The "Plan" and "Implementation Cycle" were followed with some fidelity.

1. Full implementation of steps 1-4. Step one involved grade-group discussions of existing teaching strategies during PLC time. We then moved to full-group sharing. What became evident was there were limited examples of overt teaching of strategies related to "Making Connections". There was evidence of students being asked to "make connections" yet little in the way of strategies to build this skill.
2. Step two – teachers agreed on one specific lesson from Adrienne Gear's *Reading Power* and had two weeks in which to teach the lesson to their students.
3. Step three – We introduced a common visual for all classes, as shown above. The visual became *the* symbol for both students and adults to use to heighten the awareness of "making connections" in all curricular areas and in all ways.



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4. Step four- Staff created three assessment rubrics using common language K-7. The success of the rubrics as assessment for learning tools varied. Anecdotal data confirmed students were getting better at “making connections”. The creation of the rubrics themselves provided teachers the opportunity to discuss what it looks like and sounds like for students to make connections across the curriculum. This, in and of itself, was as important as the teachers using the rubrics to assess student efforts.
5. While we did not collect hard data to determine which areas of the action plan were most effective in developing student abilities for making connections, staff agreed that their efforts *did* improve student success across curricular areas.
 - Adrienne Gear lessons worked well - provided structure
 - A staff member new to the school noted that not as much direct teaching was needed - Students appeared to be at a higher level than in a class that had not had this previous experience with instruction on making connections.
 - Natural fit for K/1 level - naturally wanted to share in their own lives, so they would make the connections fit. Day to day fit (oral) more than a worksheet. They were able to connect well to their lives
 - Felt that we were beating the concept over the head ... however, using the rubric language orally helped to build the language - helped to move the connections along
 - 6/7's - those who were making connections improved on making stronger connections, deeper thinking; however, those who were struggling at the beginning still did not appear to make connections (even orally) - could do basic connections, but needed step by step guidance to go deeper. Couldn't ask themselves a question and then expand on it; some have realized that they can give more and will
 - Making connections vocabulary became part of the classroom vocabulary - the conversations became more sophisticated; three inquiry projects - huge part was making a connection between the inquiry project and the learning, and their ability certainly developed as an offshoot of this work
 - The rubric was useful in practice
 - The symbol made quite a difference, particularly for younger classes
 - The students responded to the symbol - and to whole school lessons
 - With the younger students, oral sharing was far better than written sharing
 - Was similar in older grades as well
 - Some who don't like to share orally do it better in writing
 - Overall, staff feel the work was impactful for student learning
6. Moving forward to next year:
 - Similar approach with a guided inquiry around a particular area of focus – could be math for next year.
 - Common visuals, teaching methods, definitions were most effective
 - May consider a primary/intermediate focus or grade groups, depending upon student needs.