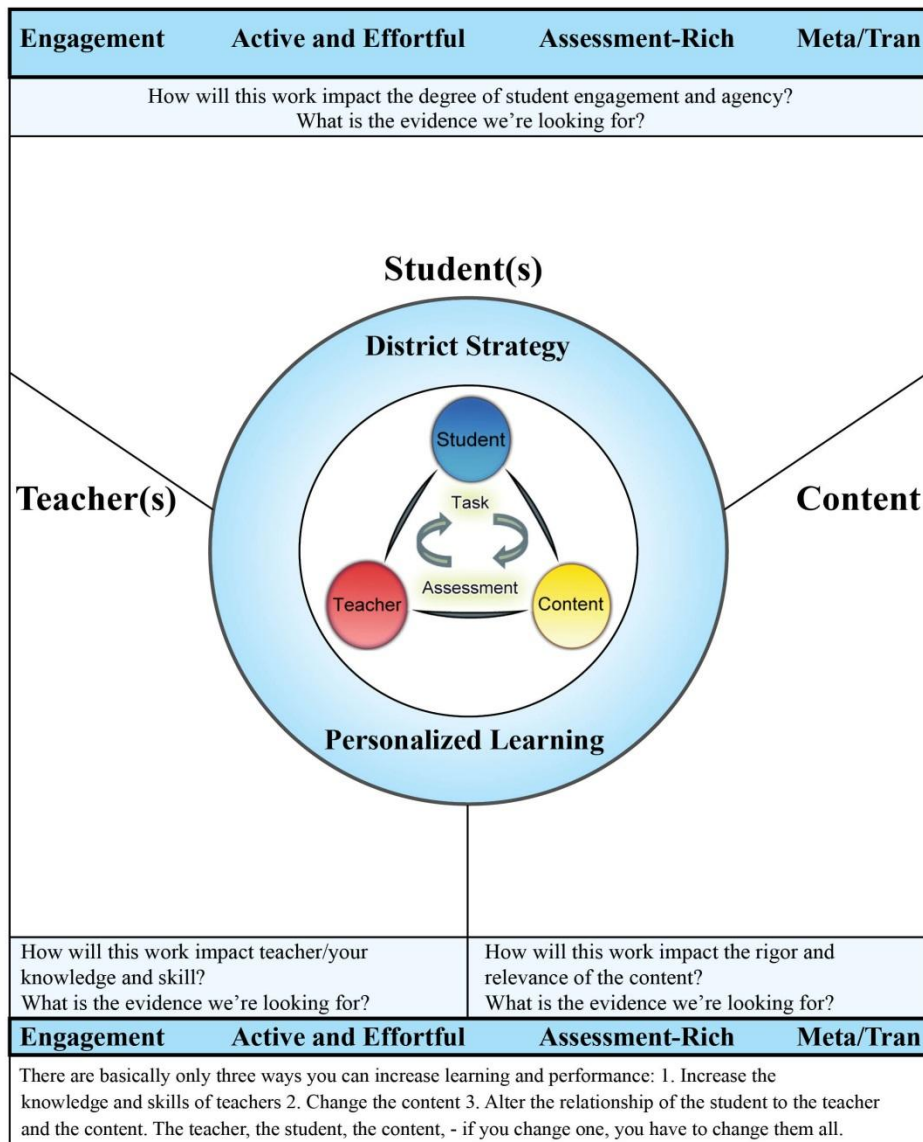


Outdoor School and the Instructional Core

A pilot initiative of the Calgary Board of Education

The Calgary Board of Education identifies the instructional core framework as a vehicle to personalize learning for students. This model, designed by Richard Elmore, recognizes that students, teachers, and content form the core of quality, relevant learning for students. It is believed that use of the Instructional Core Framework leads to increased student attainment of the CBE Educational Ends and the Alberta Program of Studies.

Instructional Core Response Framework



Background information

Calgary Board of Education grade 5 and 6 students from many CBE schools have been participating in a residential outdoor school experience since the program was first piloted in the 1960's. Both YMCA Camp Chief Hector and Kamp Kiwanis have provided these services to CBE students for many of those years. The program design and delivery model offered to CBE schools has typically been driven by the logistical realities of the outdoor school service providers. The program has typically been a pick and choose from a menu of options offered by the site, or a set program with little flexibility or input from teachers and students. For these reasons, the connection to a school's learning program might not be as strong as it could be. It is important to note however that the Outdoor School program has been very successful and well attended by CBE schools. There are many positive aspects to the current Outdoor School experience for CBE students.

Purpose of Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot

The goal of the Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot is to support teachers in incorporating the instructional core framework in their outdoor school planning and implementation.

Frames of reference of Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot

To support the goal of incorporating the instructional core framework in outdoor school planning and implementation a number of frames of reference have been identified.

1. A triad leadership model will be used as part of the pilot (Lead Teacher from participating school, Site staff from service provider, CBE Consultant – Environmental Education).
2. Substitute coverage will be provided by CBE EcoTeam to enable teachers to participate in a planning session to be held at outdoor school site in September 2011.
3. Outdoor School program will be designed to align with the Instructional Core Framework and meet the learning needs for participating teachers and students. Notwithstanding logistical, technical, and capacity based realities present at outdoor school sites, the process will begin with identifying the learning needs of students and teachers that align with each school's priorities/inquiry questions.
4. Alignment with CBE Educational Ends and CBE Strategic Plan to Advance Environmental Stewardship. Using the natural environment as the lens for learning leads naturally to enhanced citizenship, character development, and personal development opportunities and opportunities to change personal behaviours to enhance the health of natural environments.

Roles

Participating Schools

- Lead Teacher or team of teachers attend the planning and information day at Outdoor School site in Sept 2011. Substitute coverage provided.
- Collaborate on creating a personalized learning program as the outdoor school program that is embedded in year long inquiry – including schedule, student materials
- Share priorities of outdoor school program with outdoor school program staff at the site
- Complete an evaluation on Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot initiative near the end of the school year.
- Engage in the process as outlined in this document

CBE Consultant – Environmental Education

- Engage schools to participate in the initiative
- Facilitate the process of being involved with the Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot
- Create, distribute the evaluation and report on the initiative
- Act as a resource person to schools and outdoor school sites
- Support the Instructional Core
- Engage in the process as outlined in this document

Outdoor School Sites

- Be responsive to Teacher-Student learning needs
- Support the Instructional Core
- Engage in the process as outlined in this document
- Collaborate with CBE

Process

1. Expression of interest to participate in Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot –initiated by CBE Consultant – Environmental Education – June 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. Schools indicate interest in participating
2. Site visit to Outdoor School site - Information sharing and planning session – a lead teacher or teaching team from participating schools attend a full day workshop at outdoor school site - Sept 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. Instructional Core pd session held – facilitated by CBE Consultant
 - ii. Identification of learning possibilities – facilitated by Outdoor School site
 - iii. Identification of learning needs – undertaken by participating CBE schools

3. Student Agency – Students are engaged to identify learning interest – September/October 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. Teachers engage students in learning possibilities at site and explore the big ideas and inquiry questions that can best be addressed through using the natural environment as a lens for learning – outdoor school embedded in year long inquiry
 - ii. Teachers as designers of curriculum create a first draft of a possible learning priorities
 - iii. Teacher forwards learning needs to CBE Consultant and Outdoor School site
4. First draft of Outdoor School schedule – Outdoor School site creates a first draft of the Outdoor School program – October 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. Outdoor School site uses the learning priorities as created by the participating school’s teachers and students to create a first draft of the schedule considering the logistical, technical, and capacity based considerations of the site
5. Outdoor School schedule confirmed - October 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. Teachers review the outdoor school schedule with CBE Consultant and Outdoor School site to confirm the final version of the program schedule
6. Outdoor School parent meeting – October 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. Outdoor school site staff collaborate with teachers to present the program aligning with CBE protocols for overnight student excursions
7. Outdoor School experience – November 2011
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. School visits the outdoor school site and participates in the outdoor school program
8. CBE Consultant – Environmental Education supports participating schools as a resource – December – May 2012
 - a. Outcomes:
 - i. CBE Consultant shares resources that support action based learning aligned with the participating school’s inquiry learning – learning resources, funding possibilities, recognition strategies, capacity building, response work with teachers



Calgary Board of Education



9. Year end evaluation – May 2012

a. Outcomes:

- i. Teachers complete a year end evaluation assessing the success of the initiative.

Conclusion

The Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot is an initiative of the Energy & Environmental Services Dept of the Calgary Board of Education. Energy & Environmental Services is the home of the CBE EcoTeam, whose aim it is to advance environmental literacy in CBE schools and help make the CBE a model of local and global environmental stewardship. The Outdoor School-Instructional Core pilot aims to enhance student learning through use of the natural environment as a lens for learning and action aligned with key CBE priorities – Educational Ends and the CBE Framework to Advance Environmental Stewardship.