



2012-2013 AESN Inquiry Case Study

School Name: Caledonia Secondary School

District: #82 Coast Mountains School District

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Question/Focus:

Scanning: In talking with teachers, engagement of First Nations youths is low. The teachers who currently use First Nations resources in their classes have noticed that the attention of the First Nations' students increases when culturally relevant topics are discussed and/or resources created by First Nations people are used. Some teachers noted that, when given a choice to work on First Nations topics or with writing by First Nations authors, many First Nations students do not choose that work. However, when talking to First Nations students, they express appreciation for having culturally relevant topics and/or resources used in classes. This matters because 30% of our school population is First Nations and many, especially in Grade 10, did not pass their courses in first semester.

Question: Will increasing First Nations resources and topics within English 10 – 12 courses increase engagement of First Nations students, therefore, increasing their attendance and performance?

Hunch: Because First Nations students have difficulty relating to a world and worldview presented in most non-Aboriginal writing, videos and/or presentations, they have little interest in the assignments given. When topics are given that are relevant to their lives, First Nations students will be more engaged and, therefore, produce more work. When

given a choice to choose First Nations topics and/or resources, students may not yet be confident enough to choose a culturally relevant option. Some teachers are presenting FN content in their courses but many are sticking with curriculum with which they are most familiar.

New Professional Learning and Taking Action:

- 6 out of 9 of the English teachers familiarized themselves with new FN literature and integrated some of this content into their lessons
- Purchased new FN resources and teachers guides this year for English
- Created new FN assignments and projects in both English and Social Studies (our question broadened to include all of Humanities)
- All Social Studies teachers added FN topics to research assignments
- All Social Studies teachers familiarized themselves with and integrate FN content into their curriculum
- Although the inquiry into First Nations role models was made several times to district staff, no information was given
- One SS teacher did access Virginia Mason in Hazelton and took her students to the "Back to the Land" program

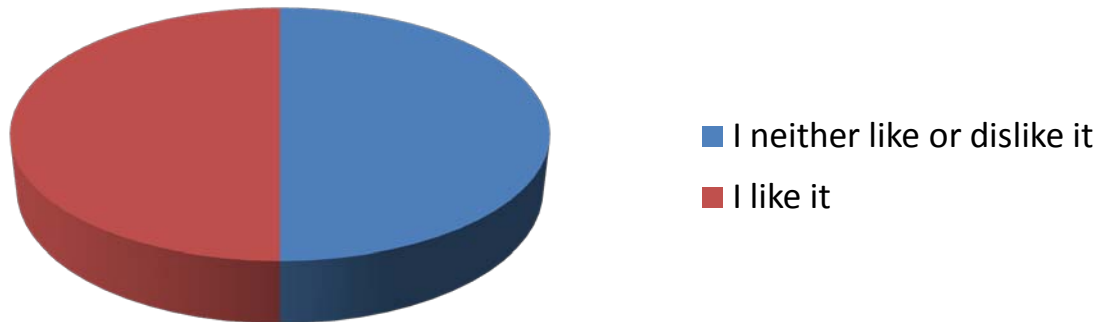
Checking:

Both First Nations student and teachers who had integrated FN content and/or topics into their lessons were surveyed. The survey centred around four questions:

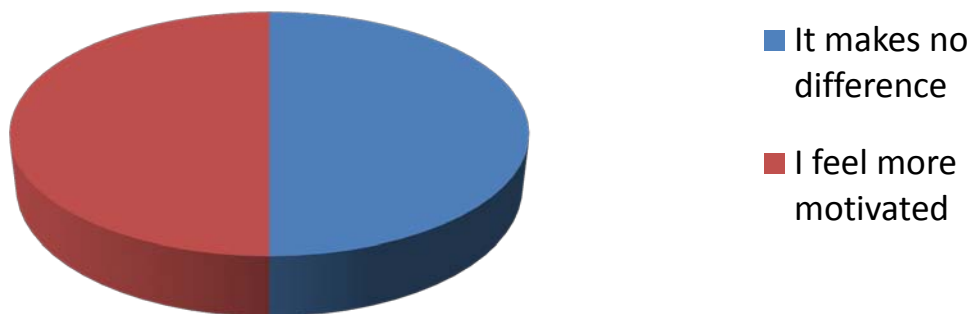
1. Did FN students like the FN content?
2. Did FN content increase motivation and enthusiasm in FN students?
3. Did FN content improve achievement of FN students?
4. Did FN content increase attendance of FN students?

Here are the results from the students.

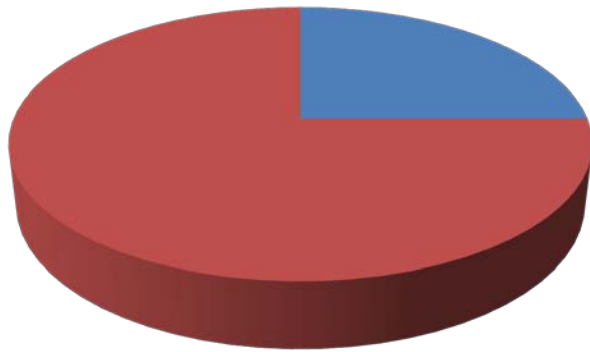
Q #1. I like it when First Nations content and/or options are presented in class.



Q #2 I feel more motivated to complete work when FN content and/or options are presented

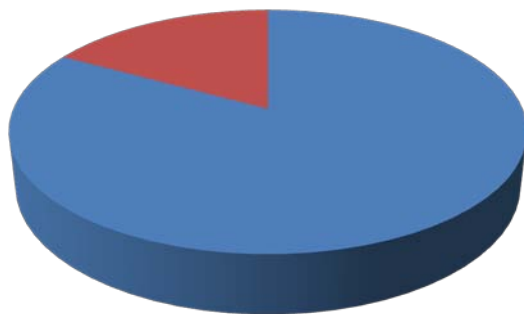


Q #3 I believe that I achieve higher grades on assignments which have FN content or options



- I don't think it makes a difference
- I believe I earn higher grades

Q #4 I am more likely to attend a class that is using FN content and/or options.



- It won't change my attendance
- I will attend more often

Here are the results from the teachers.

When FN content is used in the class, FN students

1. are more engaged,
2. complete more of the assignments,
3. increase the quantity and quality of work,
4. and generally do not attend more, but in BC First Nations Studies 12, attendance is higher for FN students than in Social Studies 11 or Civic Studies 11.

Reflection/Advice:

Our school's inquiry question has broadened and will continue into next year—Will increasing First Nations resources and topics within English and Social Studies courses, as well as having culturally relevant course such as English FP 10, 11 and 12 and BC FNS 12, increase engagement of First Nations students, therefore increasing their attendance and performance?

I am interested to look at the difference in attendance in English FP and BC FNS 12 in comparison to regular English and Social Studies classes. Although students and teachers say FN content does not affect their attendance, I would like to examine data on attendance next year.

We have several goals regarding professional learning next year:

- Will continue to try to connect with role models in the areas that FN students come from
- Increase connections between the teaching staff and FN support workers with the goal of increasing the sharing of knowledge and ideas
- Will continue to become familiar with and create teaching resources for new FN resources
- Increase sharing of FN content ideas amongst teachers in Caledonia and from other communities
- Arrange several workshops next year which are facilitated by FN role models

We have several plans to further the action begun this year:

- Continue to increase and integrate FN content in both English and Social Studies classes
- Continue offering BCFNS 12 and FN Art
- Begin teaching English FP 10, 11 and 12
- Invite FN role models into our school to work with both staff and students
- Where possible, involve students in planning which FN topics/themes to study