



2012-2013 AESN Inquiry Case Study

School Name: Lillooet Secondary School

District: Gold Trail #74

Inquiry Team Members: Lisa Oike, Paul Beland, Stella Ostrander and Jen McEwen

AEEA Goal Area: "The *Cultural Goal* is to continue to increase participation and success in Indigenous Language programs and cultural activities, and all students' awareness of Indigenous cultural and traditional knowledge." and..

"The *Belonging Goal* is to improve a sense of belonging for Indigenous students throughout the school environment."

Question/Focus:

Scanning: Our school demographic has shifted over the past 20 years from about 35% First Nations students to approximately 60%. The learning process offered in many textbooks and resources are not compatible with prior knowledge that our students have. How can a student in Lillooet relate to a math question about a building in downtown Vancouver?

Focus: Learning professionals are acutely sensitive to the individual differences among learners, including their prior knowledge and learning professionals need to be tuned into learner emotions and motivation, and understand the key role that emotion plays in learning. We want math questions to be about local knowledge and history while having a distinct First Nations flavour.

Hunch: We feel that by having questions that are close to home, geographically as well as culturally, the majority of our students will be more engaged and see the value of math in everyday situations.

New professional learning: This is a continuation of a prior inquiry. The original questions were designed by two math teachers and then vetted by our First Nations Language teacher. This year all students designed their own questions based on local First Nations' prior knowledge and cultural background. We have kept many of these questions and plan to add them to our database for next year.

Taking action: At the end of the school year we had the students develop their own questions and it was gratifying that all students took part in this activity with a positive attitude.

Checking: We did have an assessment tool developed which consisted of 15 questions checking their learning throughout the year. The results are not indicative of what we feel were the beneficial results achieved. Because of time constraints at the end of the year less than half of the students were able to do the post evaluation. For this reason we feel that the results are not valid. We also included an opportunity for them to submit a comment about their likes and recommendations for the program.

Overwhelmingly, students mentioned that they enjoyed the fact that the math questions were quick and easy and verified their understanding of the concepts and also exposed them to the opportunity to learn about the local Aboriginal culture. In terms of changes, the majority said not to change anything. A few comments were made about having only local culture. For example we did have a few questions about other First Nations groups outside of the Lillooet area.

Reflections/Advice: We feel that this inquiry was very successful and plan to continue it next year with the next group of Grade 8 students. The one enhancement is to have students start to bring in pictures of their community and add these to our repository of pictures. In this era of technology, this should be an easy thing to do. The only other item would be to better promote and expose the program to more people in our community and school district. We feel this activity showcases the Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement and it would benefit from more support.

EVERY learner crossing the stage with dignity, purpose and options.