

# 2012-2013 Inquiry Case Study Template



AESN

**School Name:** Nakusp Secondary School  
**District:** #10 Arrow Lakes  
**Inquiry Team Members:** Julia Flesaker, Sue Paterson

## **Question/Focus:**

Will the collection of native plants, and creating food from them, increase student appreciation for traditional knowledge and the challenges inherent in living off the land?

## **Scanning**

My students have not closely looked at plants before. They do not know the traditional uses or current uses of native plants.

## **Focus**

The key area of learning for my focus question was: indigenous uses of native plants and appreciation for our natural environment. I believe this focus area matters because, even though we live in a beautiful location with wilderness right on our doorstep, many students do not have the opportunity to explore it or gain an appreciation for it. The indigenous way of knowing the environment is a valuable concept and many traditional uses of plants are making a comeback socially due to the demand for more natural diets/health.

## **Hunch**

I believe there is a lack of opportunity for students. They are interested in making their own food and being outside. Given the resources and opportunity to work with indigenous people, students will gain an appreciation for their environment and the many foods it can provide.

## **New professional learning**

My professional learning has included the reading and use of numerous botany and plant guidebooks. I have used the Métis Cookbook in my past classes. I know there are local individuals who could assist me on field studies and in the classroom. There are also a number of teachers interested in the same topic that I could work with.

## **Taking action**

I will have students create a plant collection where they need to collect, preserve and identify local plants. We took a field trip with a local person of Métis heritage and created Rosehip syrup and tea. Students participated in an online information circle to share their thoughts regarding foraging in the past and present. We began research on the Internet to create a collection of recipes that use local plants. The plant collection, field trip and online information circles worked out very well and I plan to use or expand upon these same strategies again. The cookbook needed more development, so I hope to work on this more next year.

## **Checking**

My students completed an online fluid survey for Aboriginal understandings before and after the project. However, I never did see the results of this survey, as there were computer

glitches with the school that was handling the data. The verbal feedback from students was all positive. Many of the online foraging posts showed that students did not get outside often to harvest wild foods. Students enjoyed the process of harvesting food and then making something out of it. Their understanding of local plants and native uses of those plants increased.

***Reflections/Advice***

Next year I plan to expand upon this unit and involve the Foods 11/12 class. I would like to harvest a few different types of plants and fungi. Perhaps make jelly and dehydrate other foods. I would like to work with local indigenous people and provide the opportunity for students to learn more about traditional uses for other plants and their properties.

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