

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

**STANLEY HUMPHRIES SECONDARY
#20 Kootenay Columbia**

Leadership Team

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School Context/Community Involvement

Castlegar is situated in the confluence of the Kootenay and Columbia Rivers. Small in nature, Stanley Humphries Secondary School (SHSS) boasts a large contribution to our community. Castlegar is a mixed socio-economic region. As the only high school in Castlegar, SHSS is the home to approximately 700 students in grades 8 to 12. Our district, Kootenay-Columbia serves six municipalities and numerous small communities. Within the district there are three high schools, eight elementary and two alternate schools. Our district enhancement agreement focuses on enhancing the achievement of all Aboriginal learners. To do this there is an Aboriginal Support Worker associated with each school in our district. The Support Worker is responsible for organizing cultural activities and supporting Aboriginal learners in the classroom. Our district has several First Nations groups represented in our communities, however there is no Reserve in close proximity. For this inquiry we invited several First Nation community members into the classroom to share their traditional knowledge, culture, and experiences.

School Inquiry and Action

School Questions

How do relationships with ABED students effect their engagement in the school setting and translate into success?

Using each PLO and a variety of different assessment strategies (tests, field trips, research projects and hands-on) will ABED students be more successful with different ways to show their learning?

Focus of Inquiry

Key Learning Principles:

- Learning must be social and the learning environment must encourage well-organized cooperative learning. (guest speakers, field trips)
- Learning professionals need to be tuned into learner emotions and motivation, and understand the key role that emotion plays in learning.
- Learning professionals are acutely sensitive to the individual differences among learners, including their prior knowledge.

Links with District Enhancement Agreement

Performance Goals: Area: Academic excellence

Goal #1: To enhance the achievement of all Aboriginal learners.

The academic success for our Aboriginal students (goal 1) continued to be a focus for the district this school year. To this end, the Achievement Review Committee, a new structure in our district with representatives from all stakeholder groups, analyzed provincial and district achievement data for Aboriginal students. A broad, summative statement of their findings would be that although district Aboriginal students perform at or above provincial averages on most if not all achievement indicators, the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student performance in

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the district is wide, with Aboriginal students performing lower than non-Aboriginal students. (For more detailed summaries of the ARC, please see Appendix A of the District Achievement Contract.)”

Links to Aboriginal Communities

- Part of district inquiry group for Aboriginal Education
- Had guest speakers from local Aboriginal community

Strategies

Relationships process:

- Focused effort in class and outside of class to build a positive relationship by taking time to acknowledge the student, check in with the student, and connect (asked questions and showed an interest in other courses, studies and extra-curricular).
- Kept a journal about interactions with the student
- Conversed with colleagues (teachers and support staff) that shared common student to get a more well-rounded view of student progress and success

Assessment process:

- Assessed students in the four major areas of the curriculum with both standard and alternative assessments (i.e. Inquiry research project, drum making, guest speakers, field trips, novel study)
- Alternative assessments were based on student created criteria and rubrics
- Reporting out process was communicated by using a form that specified student achievement for each prescribed learning outcome and assessment method (standard and non-standard) [Figure 1]
- Standard assessments were developed using past provincial finals which were broken down into each prescribed learning outcome for every curriculum organizer.

									Cultural Expressions	
	Incomplete	Deficient (1)	Insufficient (2)	Minimal (3)	Adequate (4)	Proficient (5)	Excellent (6)		It is expected that students will:	
T							x	D1	Explain the function and significance of the oral tradition, including storytelling, drama, song, and dance	
T							x	D2	Explain the significance of First Nations creation, origin, and trickster/transformer stories	
T N						x x		D3	Interpret literature by Aboriginal authors	
T D							x x	D4	Explain the significance of traditional and contemporary Aboriginal art objects	
T						x		D5	Evaluate the importance for Aboriginal peoples to determine the use of their artistic traditions and historical artefacts	
T							x		<i>Written essay encompassing D1, D2, D3, D4, D5</i>	

T = Test, D = Drum, N = Novel Study

Figure 1: Report card template used to communicate student performance.

Partner School

J.L. Webster Elementary, SD20 Kootenay Columbia (Ms. Myla Marks)

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School Findings

Relationships Findings:

	Student Provided Information	Teacher Findings About Student
Academic Success	Math 10 - student perception of relationship with teacher was not good and struggled with course content.	<p>Work ethic: Demonstrated a strong commitment to their learning and understanding of concepts</p> <p>Academic achievement: Term 1: 77% Term 2: 95% Term 3: 77%</p> <p>Correlation: Possible correlation between strong relationship and academic achievement.</p> <p>Term 1: was setting the foundation for the relationship,</p> <p>Term 2: relationship was established and progressing,</p> <p>Term 3: subject related frustrations resulting in relationship conflict.</p> <p>Student did not demonstrate resilience.</p>
Personal success	<p>Student has shared that she has struggled with peer relationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - that she doesn't like to have anyone sit behind or beside her - doesn't like to interact with male students 	<p>Term 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student borrowed pen from teacher, next day teacher had to ask for their pen to be returned; student was reluctant to return the pen and commented that they would likely have stolen it because they really liked it. <p>Term 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher purchases and gives student their own pen. A few days later student gifts the teacher with a pen they made in wood shop class. • Student took item off teacher's desk without permission; teacher discussed personal boundaries with respect to items with student. Student responded with "People take my stuff all the time without asking." Student then responds the next day with homemade cookies as a gift to the teacher. (Act of reconciliation) • Student participated in math games day. Student led the playing of a game that others were not familiar with; to do this, student had to interact closely and be understanding and patient with peers (males and females). • Student started sitting in a position in the class that was not at the back of the room and that was close to acquaintances. <p>Term 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to absences from class, student became quite frustrated with current math topic. Student became so frustrated that in the middle of class, student packed up belongings and left the room without communication. • External conflicts continued to influence students' relationships. Teacher/student relationship is still under strain because of external conflicts.

Assessment Findings:

For all four curriculum organizers, students performed better on non-standard assessments. Higher achievement occurred when students took ownership and were involved in creating rubrics to assess learning (Curriculum Organizers C and D). [See Figure 2 and Figure 3]

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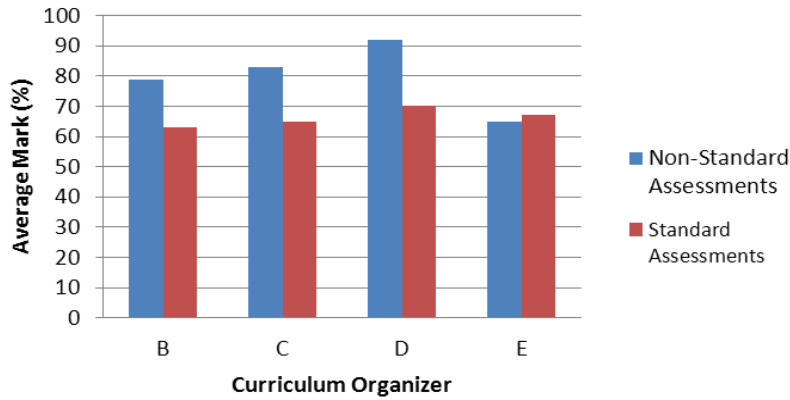


Figure 2: The above graph compares the average marks on the two different assessment approaches that were investigated in this inquiry, organized for each main curriculum area.

DRUMS

Name: _____

Assessment: _____

Criteria	1-2 Deficient/ Insufficient	3 Minimal	4 Adequate	5 Proficient	6 Excellent
Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not helping • Effort: scribbles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only helps when needed • Focuses on self • Effort: ½ time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help either set up or take down • Helps when asked or told 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps set up & take down (self) • Help others most of the time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps set up & take down (group) • Willing to help others without being told or asked or suggested • Effort: time
Drum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-2 elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 elements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hide is straight • Tight (hides) • Sound (raised pitch) • Strings (centre – circle) • Excess is not long & hanging
Painting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing • Just a picture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image – copied • Description: “I liked it” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Image – copied • Short description (3 sentences) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research image • Short description • Brief explanation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research image • Report meaning • Share connection to self or recipient

Feedback: _____

Figure 3: Student created rubric used to assess non-standard activity (drum making for Cultural Expressions curriculum organizer – D).

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For both standard and non-standard assessments, Aboriginal students performed better than non-Aboriginal students. The largest difference in achievement between the two comparison groups occurred when the prescribed learning outcomes were presented in traditional teaching methods; which included: guest speakers that shared personal experiences and oral traditions, activities that saw students gaining traditional skills that are being lost in newer generations. The single largest difference in achievement occurred in Curriculum Organizer D which involved students completing the process of assembling and painting a drum. Aboriginal students who had past experience or knowledge on drum making were able to guide the other learners through the cultural process. This could be a possible explanation as to why Aboriginal students did substantially better in the Cultural Expressions curriculum organizer (D).

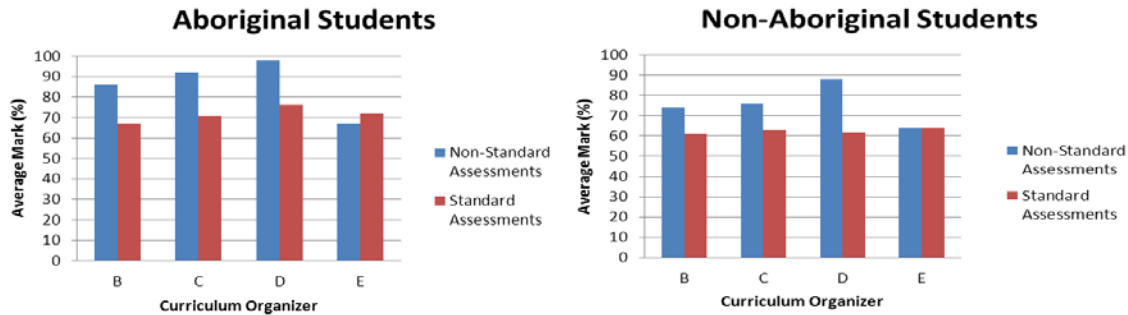


Figure 4: The above graphs compare the average marks on the two different assessment approaches for Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal students.

Conclusion:

Our philosophy throughout this inquiry has revolved around the idea of educating the whole child and deepening learning using a holistic approach. Historically, Aboriginal students in our district have not been successful in our mainstream classrooms and as a result, have lower graduation rates. We found that building relationships with Aboriginal students helped them connect to the school, classroom and teacher. As our relationships developed with these students it translated into academic and personal success. In addition, we incorporated our District Enhancement Agreement into our inquiry by having Aboriginal community members participate and teach in the BC First Nations classroom which strengthens the cultural learning and ultimately works on building relationships beyond the school community. Our project also found that students were more engaged in Aboriginal traditional tasks (drum making, basket weaving, nature walks, guest speakers) which lead to higher achievement in those areas. Finally, Aboriginal students had higher academic success on all assessment methods and curriculum areas.

AESN Plans for 2012-2013

Extension:

Our questions for further inquiry include the following:

- How deep can Aboriginal learning truly be when it is being primarily facilitated by a Non-Aboriginal?
- How do we check the accuracy of non-standard assessments?
- How can we employ strategies for building strong and meaningful relationships with all students under the constraints of time and class size?