



## 2014-2015 AESN Case Study

**School:** EBUS Academy    **District:** #91 Nechako Lakes

**Area of Focus:** Enhancement Agreement

**Inquiry Team Members:** Nicole Arnold, Kirsten Froese,  
Michelle Miller-Gauthier

**Scanning:** Our Aboriginal Education worker has more than 90 Aboriginal students “under her wing” from K through 12 and she wants to be able to organize support services and present cultural opportunities to them. The participation rate in these events has been low.

### **Focus:**

Principles of Learning

- Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge
- Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place)
- Learning is social – well organized cooperative learning matters as does personal research

Connections to the Enhancement Agreement:

- Increase awareness of Aboriginal languages and cultures for all.
- Improve relationships between School District No. 91, schools, local Aboriginal communities and parents;

### **Our Question:**

How will a continued and deepened focus on providing cultural opportunities for Aboriginal learners as well as Non-Aboriginal learners in our online school (EBUS) improve their participation rates and connectedness to their learning/school?

- To increase awareness of Aboriginal cultures for all
- To improve relationships between EBUS Academy, Aboriginal communities and parents

We have created an online classroom for our Aboriginal Education worker to interact with her students and families. This will allow her families to access information about upcoming events as well as view past events at any time of day or night. In addition, her students will be able to message her through Moodle rather than depending on email. In addition, more opportunities for both face to face and virtual classes will be available and accessed through Nikki’s ABED classroom.

**Hunch:** Although there were a number of opportunities for our Aboriginal students to attend workshops and other cultural activities, the participation rate was low. Allowing our students and families to take a look at past workshops (through posted pictures and testimonials) as well as being given the option to take the time to explore the online classroom, we believe more students and families will take part in what is being offered. In addition, our goal is to make more connections with the Aboriginal communities throughout BC so that students that do not live in our catchment can take part in activities where they live.

It seems like when we do these activities we aren't engaging our Aboriginal students. Why do we get 80 learners at the zoo but only 8 at the Hoop Dancing workshop? The invitations for cultural events only go to Aboriginal students first and then in the last few weeks it goes to all learners. Then the seats start filling up.

The location of the events is also a problem. We need to map out where our learners are living. Many don't have transportation, making attending workshops impossible. More online opportunities may be the most effective way of reaching them.

Our V-class attendance is stronger. We suspect that when activities like a novel study with *Stoney Creek Woman* are embedded into a course for credit, more learners will participate.

**New professional learning:** Our Aboriginal Education Worker learned how to use MOODLE to create an interactive online community for her students. All teachers at EBUS Academy were invited to participate in the face to face and virtual opportunities to become a much more inclusive school.

### **Taking action:**

#### Building Awareness of Indigenous Culture - *Events & Opportunities*

- Shirley Babcock from the Two Rivers Gallery in Prince George designed an Aboriginal Education Department EBUS logo. The school sponsored the design to be put on t-shirts which are given to students who attend the cultural workshops.
- Hands on cultural activities with Marion Hunt Doig, a local Indigenous elder, presenter and singer:
  - 15 learners plus parents (Prince George Friendship Centre)
- Hoop Dancing & Drumming Workshop (Van-Dusen Botanical Gardens)
  - 8 learners and 5 Moms came to the hoop dancer performance.
  - Nelson Leon did the drumming portion and taught some cultural information and the kids got to drum and learn from him.
  - Alex Wells did hoop dancing demonstrations and taught learners how to do some of it.
  - We will do this again but in Abbotsford because more learners are there than in downtown Vancouver. We will map this out in early October to decide which locations will be more accessible to learners and their families.
- Online Storytelling
  - Nikki read *Cloud Walker*; *Raven Brings the Light* by Roy Henry Vickers online in a v-class.
  - 10 learners attended. None were of Aboriginal ancestry.

- Heritage Days at Nakalbun No EBUS learners attended. (Tough in February with the icy roads and transportation issues)
- Ness Lake Camp (kids are there for 2 nights)
  - Alex Wells did a hoop dancing workshop one evening.
  - 52 learners registered.
  - Nelson Leon is interested in doing drum making workshop online. (V-Class)

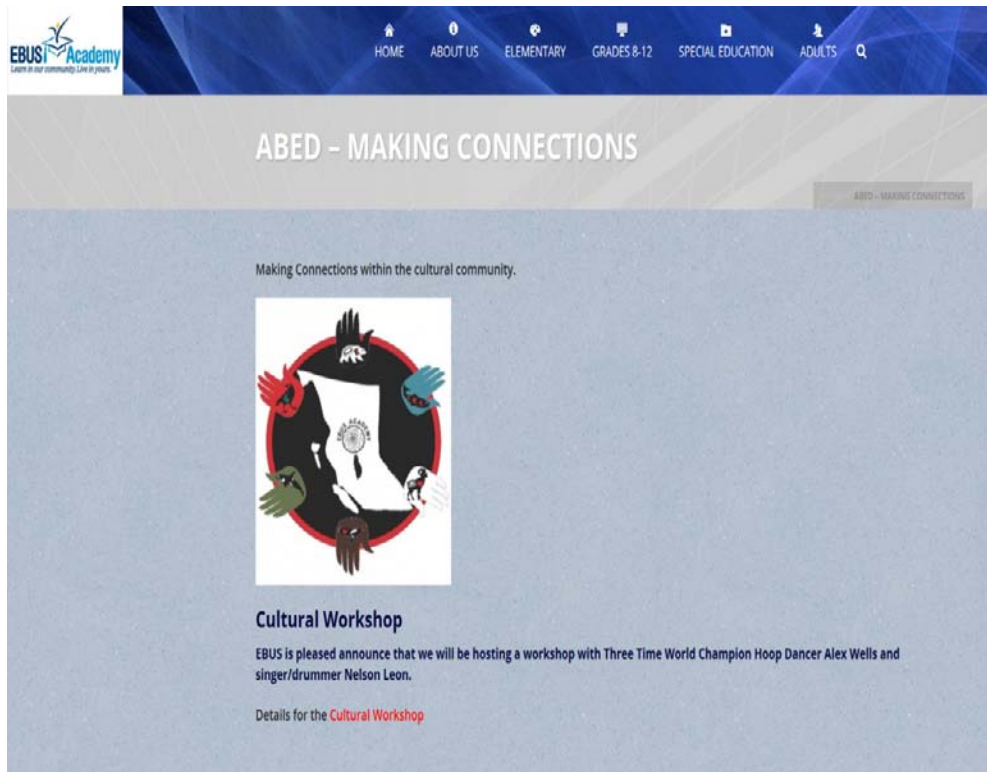
**Checking:**

V-Classes	10	12
Drum Workshop	18	--
Marion Hunt-Doig	--	15
Hoop Dancer	8 (Lower Mainland)	8 Lower Mainland (30 Ness Lake)
Access to ABED classroom	--	76%

**Reflections about next year and building the foundation for the future**

1. This year the smokehouse is almost finished and will be available to bricks and mortar schools in the district (NVSS, McLeod) and take them fishing and video-taping the start to finish for the EBUS learners. Inviting the learners.  
Providing a bus to meet them in Prince George and transporting them to Fort St. James for the fishing event. We would be happy with even 3 learners. It would be a partnership between EBUS and brick and mortar schools.
2. Strong Nations readers being distributed to primary learners
3. Nakalbun Heritage Days sessions were videotaped by a visual arts class from Nechako Valley Secondary School. EBUS will upload the videos to the elementary online classroom for students to view. Teachers are being asked to design scavenger hunts in each grade level online classroom to get families to use the elementary online classroom where many resources are posted for them to use in their instruction with their children.
  - Grade 6&7 are getting into more course based support. Socials, Science, Health and Careers. Elementary teachers are saying that if they have more directed courses they have more direct interaction with students. We could create an interactive unit that would be in the teacher’s homeroom where there might be more interaction.
  - At the intermediate end we’d like a focus in each teacher’s online homeroom for the month of February with the interactive unit being focused on the Heritage Days in Nakalbun.
  - The video resources will also be made available to all SD# 91 schools through the online resource classroom.

4. Nikki Arnold along with the EBUS First Nations 12 teacher will conduct an online novel Study using Stoney Creek Woman next year. Her hope is to also collaborate with the family of Mary John.
5. EBUS is interested in building a network between itself and other online schools as well as other school districts. Ideas being considered involve creating an online sharing environment. At the NOII symposium the EBUS team made a connection with Susan Leslie in the Sea to Sky School District.



The image is a screenshot of the EBUS Academy website. At the top left is the EBUS Academy logo with the tagline "Learn in our community. Live by yours." To the right is a navigation menu with icons and labels for HOME, ABOUT US, ELEMENTARY, GRADES 8-12, SPECIAL EDUCATION, and ADULTS, along with a search icon. The main content area has a header "ABED - MAKING CONNECTIONS" and a sub-header "ABED - MAKING CONNECTIONS". Below this is the text "Making Connections within the cultural community." followed by a circular graphic featuring a central figure surrounded by hands in various colors (red, blue, green, black) and a central emblem. Below the graphic is the section "Cultural Workshop" with the text: "EBUS is pleased announce that we will be hosting a workshop with Three Time World Champion Hoop Dancer Alex Wells and singer/drummer Nelson Leon." and a link "Details for the Cultural Workshop".