



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: Caledonia Senior Secondary

District: #82 Coast Mountains

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Our focus for this year: Our focus for this year was on the direct teaching of Indigenous Culture.

Scanning: We started with a questionnaire on how important students' culture was in their identity and growth. This was done at the start of the year. Students were asked to think of examples of cultural activities that they did with their families.

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors. As the connection to culture was our focus this was an important statement from the First Peoples Principles of Learning. Students who have a connection to their culture are more successful in our school than students lacking the connection. We used the four questions to ensure that each student had at least two people who believed they would be a success. If a student did not have two, we made sure to connect them with a support worker or teacher.

Focus: We noticed: Students who have a deep connection to their culture are more successful in both an academic setting and life. We were hoping that students would define a clearer identity and link to culture. This transforms students and seemed to foster a pride in self and their individual cultures.

Hunch: Caledonia offers a Connections Room that has lunch time activities. These activities include: cedar weaving (grad caps), moccasins, and button blankets, weaving a sash, glass etching, beading and dream catchers. Some students are painting their crests around the school. We cook soup, fish sandwiches and fried bread.

New professional learning: We used activities such as the blanket exercise to help other teachers understand the significance of the loss of culture, land and language that our First Nations families have suffered. We attended workshops on reconciliation and worked with Lorna Williams.

Taking action: We decided to focus on Project Based Learning and hands on activities. We used field trips and Back to the land programs to engage our students.

Checking: The differences we noticed: Students' confidence and pride increased. The course First Nations 12 began to gain credibility by word of mouth. Field trips included the Nisga'a Museum; it included videos which featured my students' families. The projects on residential schools were met with sympathy and understanding. The results of the provincial exam were 10% higher than the provincial average. The four questions at the end of the term contained more people that students felt cared about their success. This now included teachers, Educational Assistants as well as First Nations support workers.

Reflections/Advice: I think the inclusion of Aboriginal content is essential to the success of all learners. If we wish to understand each other we must know all of the facts! I have watched my students thrive in an environment that celebrates their culture.