



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: Christine Morrison Elementary **District:** #75 Mission

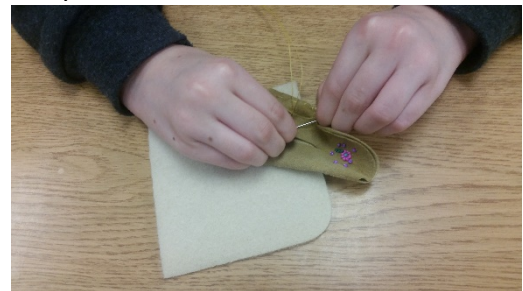
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Our focus for this year: Integration of the first two *First People's Principles of Learning*, the theme of courage, our district Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement and the document, *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom*. We also wanted to have a better understanding of how our Aboriginal students feel about themselves (self-identification), how non-Aboriginal students feel about learning about Aboriginal culture and how staff members are managing with the integration of Aboriginal content in the new curriculum.

Scanning: Our students experienced a variety of classroom and school-wide based authentic, hands-on Aboriginal activities, presentations and events. We focused on an organic integration approach of the First People's Principles of Learning. With each event, we followed up with our students by oral sharing, by written reflection as well as art expression.

The results from our Student Connectivity Survey indicates that overall Aboriginal students feel connected at our school. The results were somewhat surprising however, for Non-Aboriginal students, with some scores significantly lower (see results below). The results from the staff Aboriginal Learnings Progression guide demonstrated that overall, our teachers developed more confidence about integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing into their daily work.



Focus: By participating in a variety of Aboriginal events related to our first focus area, all of our students were exposed to Aboriginal ways of knowing through an experiential approach. Additionally, students not only learned Aboriginal teachings, but many were openly involved in planning, preparation and facilitation of specific events. We ensured that we covered all three Aboriginal groups (First Nations, Métis and Inuit). Through this, we were able to help support our second focus area of improving student connectivity and staff comfort levels.

Hunch: As teachers build more confidence with the idea of integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing into their classroom, our hope is that our students' knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of Canada's Aboriginal peoples will be positively impacted where over time, we will see a significant shift within this generation of children. This shift will hopefully promote cultural pride and increased self-identification of our Aboriginal students and acceptance and understanding from our non-Aboriginal students.

New professional learning: We created an AESN Committee and met regularly to discuss our progress. We shared this information with our teachers at staff meetings, so all staff members were informed. Staff members were given copies of the *First Peoples Principles of Learning*, and we were able to acquire several copies of the document, *Aboriginal Worldviews and Perspectives in the Classroom* to be kept in the Professional Resources section of our school library, to allow easy access for teachers. Vivian Searwar, who is also one of our district's Aboriginal Mentor Teachers, attended many First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC) workshops, UBC Aboriginal Symposiums and other Aboriginal Conferences and shared information at staff meetings. On behalf of Siwal Si'wes, our Aboriginal Department, she also formally presented to Intermediate teachers as part of our curriculum implementation days. Some teachers went on a tour of St. Mary's Residential School. Many teachers attended the Aboriginal Education Association Professional Development Day in October 2015. Liz Pallmann, our Teacher-Librarian purchased many new Aboriginal books for teacher and student use. Judy Cathers, our Liaison Worker organized many of the activities and events with the support of AESN Committee members. Ghislain Michaud, our Vice-Principal and French Coordinator researched and purchased Aboriginal French resources for our French Immersion teachers and students.



Taking action:

Action taken this year:

- Ensure that “Aboriginal” was placed on staff meeting agenda so information could be shared on a regular basis
- Continued to offer weekly instruction of the Halq’emeylem language
- Celebrated Orange Shirt Day in October 2015
- Celebrated “Roc your Mocs” Day in November 2015
- Intermediate classrooms invited Sierra Club BC to present on Aboriginal plant uses
- Aboriginal-based field trips to Grouse Mountain (híwus feasthouse) and to Coqualeetza Longhouse in Chilliwack
- Stó:lõ Government Presentation (Johnny Williams) and Métis Government Presentation (Phil Gladue)
- Oral storytelling presentations to primary classes (Johnny Williams – Cultural Worker MPSD#75)
- Métis Beading & Jigging (Lisa Shepherd)
- School-wide art activity – Seven Sacred/Grandfather Teachings – Courage (Bear)
- Visit from Tipi Tony for primary students
- Salmon release program
- First Salmon Ceremony (facilitated by Johnny Williams)
- Author Visit from Michael Kusugak (Inuit storyteller) & Inuit culture presentation (Geraldine Kusugak)
- School-wide Aboriginal Running Club through SportsMed BC
- Storytelling combined with Elder visit (local Elders)
- Celebrated National Aboriginal Day – June 2016
- Integration of new Aboriginal literature in all classes

Although the focus on these activities was “doing”, students also learned Aboriginal teachings that correlated to each activity. All students and staff members were given equal opportunity to participate and learn.

Checking:

The following are the results from the Student Connectivity Survey (this is the percentage of students that answered “always” to the following questions:

Questions	Aboriginal 66 students 2015-2016	Non-Aboriginal 403 students 2015-2016
1. I feel I belong in this school.	86%	67%
2. I get support from school staff.	70%	61%
3. I am happy to be at this school.	91%	69%
4. I have friends in this school.	92%	82%
5. I am on time for school.	67%	59%
6. I do well in school.	53%	44%*
7. I participate in extra-curricular at school.	23%	57%
8. The staff at this school treat the students fairly.	80%	69%
9. I feel safe in my school.	92%	74%
10. I feel good about myself.	80%	68%
11. I try my best during class time.	85%	68%
12. I am proud to be First Nations, Métis or Inuit.	95%	N/A
13. I am learning about Aboriginal Peoples of Canada.	61%	68%
14. I do good things for others.	70%	69%

TRENDS: For 2015-2016, Aboriginal students at Christine Morrison Elementary scored themselves higher than Non-Aboriginal students in almost every category except for “I participate in extra-curricular activities” (which was significant – a 34 point discrepancy) and for “I am learning about Aboriginal Peoples of Canada” (which was fairly insignificant – a 7 point discrepancy).

The following are the results from the Aboriginal Understandings Learning Progression (Laura Tait, SD68 Aboriginal Education, 2011) completed by teachers:

Total number received:

FALL: 17/28 – 60% staff response

SPRING: 16/28 – 57% staff response

Understanding	Time of Year	Awareness	Developing	Acquiring	Action/ Advocacy
Beliefs & Attitudes towards Aboriginal Peoples	FALL	1	6	9	1
	SPRING	1	0	13	2
Knowledge of Aboriginal Peoples & History on local, regional and national levels	FALL	1	10	5	0
	SPRING	2	5	8	2

TRENDS: The greatest change is with the decrease in the “Developing” stage and an increase in the “Acquiring” stage. This indicates a positive shift in Aboriginal understandings overall, which in turn indicates that staff are becoming more familiar with integrating Aboriginal content into their teaching.

Reflections/Advice: We feel that involvement and collaboration from a variety of teachers and staff members (our AESN committee) created a larger whole-school impact than if only a few individuals had been involved. Formally sharing our progress during regular staff meetings also encouraged awareness and participation among all. We

consulted local Aboriginal community members, elders and knowledge keepers to ensure that we respected traditional protocols and invited them into our school to honour their place. Involving students (particularly Aboriginal students) directly in the planning processes encouraged cultural pride. Because of these positive influences, we feel that all of our learners (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) were able to fully participate in learning about the Aboriginal culture. Since there are some significant discrepancies when comparing the student connectivity data received from the Aboriginal students compared to Non-Aboriginal students, this would be an area which should be considered for next year.

