



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: Fraser Lake Elementary Secondary **District:** Nechako Lakes #91

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Our focus for this year: To infuse more First Nations content and culture into the content areas and become more aware of local First Nations values in order to incorporate them into the school.

Scanning: We noticed that students were more engaged and more successful on their assignments. Time off task was reduced.

Self-esteem was increased when they saw that it was not just a “one shot” lesson. As time continued, First Nations students were more likely to share personal knowledge and experiences as well as show a sense of pride. Students also shared what they were learning at school with their families

Focus: We selected this area because a large percentage of our student body is First Nations, approximately 40%. Our community still struggles with the legacy of the residential school system, as many of our students’ parents and grandparents attended Lejac Residential School in Fraser Lake. Many of our students and their families do not buy into the current school system. By infusing more First Nations content and principles into our daily lessons, we hoped to make education more relevant.

Hunch: Students were not connecting to both the content and the method of delivery in the majority of classrooms. Many of the resources found in our school did not contain First Nations stories, people, or history. Lessons involving First Nations content were often done in isolation and often only lasted one or two days. Lecture style teaching and written output book work were commonly used.

New professional learning: Teachers attended several different conferences and workshops: Inspire, First Nations Education Steering Committee (FNESC), Residential Schools and Reconciliation Resource Workshop, Indigenous Math Workshop, NOII Symposium.

The school purchased resources from the Strong Nations Bookstore and are trying to arrange a time for the owner to come to our school to put on a workshop for our staff.

Taking action: We have created a district wide committee of people who attended First Nations Conferences. The purpose was to get together and share the knowledge we gained.

We tried to bring in members of the Aboriginal community to share their traditional knowledge and ways of teaching, as well as have our students take their learning outside the building. Our intention of meeting with the Chiefs and Council of both reserves was to develop connections with the knowledge keepers who could guide us on our inquiry. Unfortunately, due to a

number of problems this meeting did not happen. We are optimistic that the meeting will take place in the upcoming school year.

Checking: It is difficult to say how much of a difference we made, as we did not have a measurement tool. After several discussions we did not come up with a solution, but for next year we are considering a beginning and ending survey or reflection. Perhaps we can assess student achievement differences when we use the First Peoples Principles and/or content and when we do not. Based on our observations on lessons using First Peoples Principles and /or content, students appeared more engaged and many of our First Nations students were more successful.

It was unfortunate that we did not manage to have a meeting with the Chief and Councils. We hoped that the meeting would help us connect with more knowledge keepers who could not only help us in the classroom, but also get us out onto the land.

Reflections/Advice: We have learned that in order to see results, we need to meet regularly. We plan to meet with our Aboriginal Educational Coordinator and our District Aboriginal Principal early in the year to set up a meeting with our bands.

Observations of students' performance and family comments have indicated that this inquiry is important and worth continuing next year. This has given us encouragement to continue finding ways to embed First Nations content and principles into all lessons where it is an appropriate fit.

Our advice to other schools would be to start small and to find local resource people