



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: Myrtle Philip Elementary

District: #48 Sea to Sky

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Our focus for this year: How can we as a school make our Aboriginal learning more visible?

Scanning: Through scanning I noticed that the intermediate teachers at my school are already weaving Aboriginal learning into their day to day. The Primary teachers wanted more support to do this work. There was no recognition of territory visible in our school. I noticed in my school, for many of the students and teachers that they didn't value the learning or felt overwhelmed with all the learning they were responsible for.

Focus: I want to recognize territory visibly and audibly daily. We have started incorporating circle into our classrooms and staff meetings to give everyone a voice. We are working with an Aboriginal support worker to support both teacher and student learning. I feel the desire to share what I have learned at Shared Learning meetings with my staff to raise our collective moral imperative. If they value the learning, they will weave it into their day to day learning for their students. To make our learning visible each class contributed an image to represent an aspect of their learning of Aboriginal ways. We are going to collage these 13 images together on a blanket to hang at the entrance to our school to showcase our learning. Each class will also write the story behind their image to add story to increase the power of the art.

Hunch: My hunch is that by making our learning visible through our collective blanket and informing my colleagues with the stories of First Nations history will raise the moral imperative for learning about the First People of Whistler/Canada and continue to weave it into the learning experiences for our students. It is also important for my colleagues to understand that much of what they are already doing is supporting Aboriginal ways of learning, doing and being; they don't need to add more, rather recognize what they are already doing.

New professional learning: I have shared videos and circle activities with my staff to share our learning. Next year I would also like to create collaboration time to meet and plan with the staff members that are asking for extra support when planning Aboriginal learning experiences. I also would like to find time for myself and the Aboriginal support worker in our school to collaborate. I hope that this time spent planning will help create more powerful learning experiences for our students.

Taking action:

- Recognize territory in class circle and staff meetings.
- Provide circle discussions in class and staff meetings.
- Invited staff to share an image to represent their Aboriginal learning in their classroom.
- Images are being enlarged and woven together on a blanket that will provide a mural of our learning. Students will be invited to help choose fabrics and colours and to cut and

embellish the images on the blanket in a collective art project to showcase our learning. Each class will write the story behind their learning to be posted beside our blanket.

- Invited my class on a study trip to Big House in Squamish to experience what life was once like for historical First Nations Villages to help my students realize the beauty of this culture that our government tried to eradicate.
- Embarked on an inquiry with my students on Human Rights and applied the lens of residential schools to further our understanding of the rights that were disregarded for 150 years and the effects on Aboriginal families for eight generations.
- Discussed and read novels that provided stories of human rights not being met for people around the world.
- Shared in a circle “shoe activity” that heightened the moral imperative in regards to the importance of our learning.
- Visited the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre to view the Residential School exhibit and asked students to reflect on who should learn about what happened in our history and why it is important?
- Explored the Audain Museum to question how story can deepen the power of one’s experience with art.
- Produced a picture book to represent our learning. Each student contributed their words for “I used to think...Now I know...” and created an image to represent their learning.

Checking: This is just the start of our journey together. I am proud of the learning that occurred for the students in my classroom. I feel that many of my colleagues will continue to need support and collective projects to guide our learning with an Aboriginal focus. All classes will work in September on completing our blanket project and set intentions for our learning for the coming year.

Reflections/Advice: I am so grateful for the time I get to learn, share and plan with our district Shared Learning Committee. This time provides me with discovery and inspiration that I am able to bring back to my school. It is important that we make time for this important learning. For next year I want to make more time for supporting my colleagues on their learning journeys and building that moral imperative. Until my colleagues feel in their hearts the importance of Aboriginal learning change will be slow. Our district hosted a District Implementation Day in which all members of our district were invited to share in the presentation from a panel of local people and their moving experiences of residential schools. This shared emotional response was a powerful experience for all. I need to continue on this journey with my school and continue to share the powerful moments and make our learning visible for our community.