



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: École Quarterway Elementary

District: #68 Nanaimo Ladysmith

Inquiry Team Members:

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Our focus for this year: Aboriginal ways of knowing /learning, Aboriginal awareness/appreciation in the school

Scanning: We were noticing that there was not a lot of Aboriginal culture in the school, no acknowledgement during assemblies or announcements. Teachers were still weary to incorporate Aboriginal ways of learning into curriculum as they are unsure/afraid. After this year, teachers are becoming more comfortable integrating Aboriginal ways of knowing and ways of learning into their teaching practice.

Focus: We brainstormed ways that we were already using Aboriginal ways in our classrooms and some ways that we could better incorporate values and traditions. We already have Cross Grade totem teams which will be highlighted more and many classes are doing novel studies with an Aboriginal focus.

Hunch: Not a lot of access to our Aboriginal Education Assistant (Ab Ed EA) in the past, changeover in staff has led to not a lot of continuity with understanding/awareness. Aboriginal ways are not being disrespected, they just aren't really being acknowledged at all.

New professional learning: Blanket exercise with staff, requested activities with our Aboriginal Education team, Book club for teachers, more open discussion.

Taking action: We visited Strong Nations as a staff, participated in professional development with the district Aboriginal Learning Services team, many classes read novels with an Aboriginal focus, our Ab Ed EA assisted with many art and traditional crafts, several classes organized and led a Salmon Life Cycle Appreciation event with Elders at Bowen Park for Earth Day, older students coloured Coast Salish drawings and wrote stories/legends for younger students.

Checking: Students and staff are more aware and values/traditions/ways of knowing/learning are being integrated into classrooms more often.

Reflections/Advice: We made some progress this year, but still have a way to go. We were successful at integrating some ways of knowing/learning into our existing practices, but we still need to make more effort to acknowledge traditional territory during assemblies and use traditional language in our morning announcements. We need to be more aware of what we are already doing in classrooms and acknowledge it with our students. Future Directions: Plans for more use of traditional language in assemblies and announcements, more explicit acknowledgement of traditions/ways of learning/learning in our classrooms, use of more resources from Strong Nations, continued open discussions of integration.