



2015-2016 AESN Case Study

School: Spring Creek Community School

District: #48 Sea to Sky

Inquiry Team Members: Andrea Franklin

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Our focus for this year: My focus was to initiate an awareness of the historical presence of First Nations peoples (Squamish and Lil'wat) by exploring the land in Whistler.

Scanning: I wanted the students to understand why what they were learning is important as my main focus - my idea was to connect them to the land and place that they live by introducing them to some of the stories of the First Peoples and their interaction with the land. I continuously thought about how the project was going and what to try next as I was not able to complete my project as I had intended this year. I will be revisiting this project next year.

Focus: I selected this area of inquiry because my school is situated on shared territory. I began teaching at this school last year and realized that the territories and First peoples weren't visibly acknowledged, so I wanted to initiate a sense of wonder and curiosity about the Lil'wat and Squamish people by sharing some of their history and connections to the place of Whistler. It was my hope that this first step will spark more curiosity and need to learn about current Lil'wat and Squamish communities, culture and history.

Hunch: Students may need provocation to begin asking or wondering on a deeper level – especially as they are quite young. Information at school may differ from information offered at home.

If we invite elders in and start to hear their stories, it will spark curiosity to learn more about local First Nations culture, practices and landmarks. We can begin to learn about the territory we should be acknowledging and begin to build connections between our school (students and staff) and local First Nations communities.

New professional learning: Through this process, I have further explored the resources available at the Squamish-Lil'wat Cultural Centre and gained a copy of a historical territory map. I have also begun to expand my network of resources within the Sea to Sky corridor and am working on how to gather information and make stronger connections with elders and communities.

Taking action: As a class, we spent a lot of time talking about neighborhoods in Whistler, places of importance to us, places we would like to share with others, learning about the history of settlers in Whistler and the stories of people who helped build the resort and community. I then sought out various elders and other people who might be willing to share some of their stories. This was my stumbling block as I have not yet found an elder or story teller from either community who would be willing to come in and visit my class.

Checking: I have not yet made the differences I originally sought to make, however I do feel that I have made my students more aware of the uniqueness of the place that they live and all of the wonderful features of it. I now need to push my students to gain a deeper understanding of some of the history (as is developmentally appropriate at their age) as a way to create awareness of all of the people who are invested in the place that is Whistler.

Reflections/Advice: I made the mistake of doing all of the 1940's onward history first and finishing up to the present day BEFORE I began to try and make contacts with people who might be willing to come in and talk about Squamish and Lil'wat history. I had not anticipated having such difficulty finding guest speakers. I would suggest establishing the contacts right from the start so that when you are ready for the guests to visit, you can quickly contact them and hopefully set a date. Next year I am going to also try and encourage more interest in places in Whistler by actually taking the students on field studies to various locations around Whistler. I am hoping that some of the stories can be delivered at the key places.