



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Brooke Elementary School

School District: SD#37 Delta

Inquiry Team Members: Virginia Chi, Shannon McLachlan, Lorraine Harrison

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Type of inquiry: NOII

Grade levels: Primary (K - 3), Intermediate (4 - 7)

Curricular area(s): Applied Design, Skills & Technology, Arts Education, Language Arts - Literacy, Language Arts - Oral Language, Physical & Health Education, Science, Social Studies

Focus area(s): Aboriginal understandings (for example, Traditional Knowledge, oral history, reconciliation), First Peoples Principles of Learning, Land, Nature or Place-based learning

In one sentence, what was your focus for the year?

Will incorporating Aboriginal place-based learning centered on a relationship to nature, and the embedding of the importance of story and indigenous history lead to a deepened understanding and appreciation of the First Nation's cultures in our students?

Scanning: Briefly summarize your scanning process. How did you use the four key questions as part of the scanning process? What did you notice about the experiences of your learners that were most important to your team?

We surveyed our school staff, who identified Aboriginal education as the greatest area of concern. The concern was how to embed the new Aboriginal education into the curriculum and to their teaching. Also, we surveyed a sample of students from all grades to assess their prior knowledge. We discovered that many students needed more education on the Aboriginal culture.

Focus: In a few sentences, explain why you selected this area. What changes were you hoping to obtain for your learners?



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With such a broad topic, we wanted to narrow it down. We presented the staff with the First Peoples Principles of Learning and the Place-based Thinking Concepts. After discussing them, the staff chose two areas. We decided to focus on Learning is embedded in memory, history and story and on the concept that Aboriginal people have a relationship with nature. We were hoping teachers would become more competent in incorporating indigenous material into their teaching, and that students would be more knowledgeable about First Nation's ways of being.

Hunch: Describe your hunches about the ways in which practices at the school may have been contributing to the experiences of your learners that were of concern to you.

We felt, as a staff, that we did not have enough background knowledge or experience to teach indigenous material respectfully and authentically.

New professional learning: What new areas of professional learning did you explore? What resources were most helpful? What specific designs did you use to support the learning of your colleagues?

We invited our district Aboriginal Education coordinators in to speak to our staff, and to suggest resources, ideas and lessons. We found and/or provided some websites, books and other materials that were relevant.

Taking action: Describe strategies you and your team decided on and how your actions worked out.

We decided to use a community grouping format. We organized the students into 10 groupings which included students from kindergarten to grade 7. These multi age groups met once a week as a clan group. Each week for Aboriginal Afternoon, they rotated to a different activity led by two teachers. The clan groups were named after animals important to our local Aboriginal people. We based our activities on suggestions from one of our Aboriginal Success Coordinators, who gave us suggestions for respectful and authentic activities. Some teachers also came up with their own ideas.

Checking: Summarize the differences you made. Were they enough? Were you satisfied?

The staff felt more comfortable embedding Aboriginal content. When we surveyed them in June, all staff felt it was a very positive experience. Overall, the students showed a greater and deeper understanding. In particular, the primary students we surveyed both before



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and after the activities displayed a huge leap forward in identifying and understanding of Aboriginal culture. Students were excited to participate each week. When we celebrated National Aboriginal Day with an assembly, students were respectful and engaged.

Reflections/Advice: Finish by sharing what you learned from this inquiry, where you plan to go next, and what advice you would offer other schools with a similar interest.

The teachers felt more supported working with other teachers as they planned the activities and fine tuned them throughout the weeks. As a school, we are making more connections to the Aboriginal ways of being. We are more aware of the cultural influences and implications. Some of the staff are beginning to use an Aboriginal tie in to the curricular competencies developed by one of our teachers. We will continue to embed Aboriginal content throughout the curricular areas. We encourage other schools to choose one or two principles of learning to focus on. This was a spectacular way for the whole school to dip our paddles into Aboriginal water.