



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Erma Stephenson Elementary

School District: SD#36 Surrey

Inquiry Team Members: Anne Smith; smith_anne@surreyschools.ca
Nancy Chalmers; chalmers_n@surreyschools.ca
Tamara Fransen: Fransen_t@surreyschools.ca
Patricia Watson; Watson_p@surreyschools.ca
Kirsti Sundset; sundset_k@surreyschools.ca
Adele Northrup; Northrup_a@surreyschools.ca
Amelia Chia; Chia_a@surreyschools.ca
Mike Thederahn; thederahn_m@surreyschools.ca

Inquiry Team Contact Email: Anne Smith; smith_anne@surreyschools.ca
Nancy Chalmers; chalmers_n@surreyschools.ca

Type of inquiry: AESN

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

Curricular area(s): Science

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

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

Native Plants of BC and Aboriginal uses of those plants

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 began incorporating the four questions into our regular Monday announcements as a whole school self-reflection. Also, teachers asked students the four questions and we learned that most children are very connected to our school and can name adults that believe in them, however children aren't always able to articulate where they are going with



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

their learning. They struggle to connect their learning to life outside of school. Our students are eager to share how well they are doing with their learning

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

As we seek to learn more about what is going on with our learners we discovered how little many of them spend time outside of a building setting. We know there is ample research to indicate the positive impact on children's learning and social and emotional development when they have out door learning experiences.

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.

Our school has many children whose parents' primary goal for their children is to do well in school. Many have moved to Canada, for that sole purpose. Unfortunately, they believe that letter grades are the indicator of how well a child is learning. We know we have to work towards molding the goal from letter grades to a love of learning, and developing a culture of curiosity and allow the students to have fun while learning outside! We may have been inadvertently contributing to a need for a change by also focusing our learning predominately indoors also.

Our plan is to model our learning and development with support from other schools that are farther along the continuum of outdoor education than we are. We plan to initially start with identifying natural plants in our school gardens and plant native plants. With each plant we intend to have a "tag" made that identifies the plant and tells about the properties of each plant, as well as the First Nations traditional uses of each plant.

Our hunch is that our learners will be able to take their learning outside of the school environment and compare it to their own culture's uses of plants with support from their teachers.

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?

Our professional learning will include collaboration with other colleagues who have outdoor learning environments, collaboration with our Aboriginal Department to help us with understanding native plants and their uses.



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

*We plan to host speakers about Native plants and Aboriginal traditional uses

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

We have partnered up with the Surrey School District Aboriginal Department to have an Aboriginal Helping Teacher and cultural facilitators to co-teach our Grade 7 Science curriculum in class

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

The student learning through story to understand the importance of land, place and plants was instrumental. Students created Shared Knowledge Science Celebrations that were shared with the entire school and District Science Fair.

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.

This takes time. We are in the first of a multiple year journey and have only just started to touch on the 4 questions as a part of our regular practice as well as incorporating a better understanding of place and connections to land.