



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

School Name: Garibaldi Highlands Elementart

School District: SD#48 Sea to Sky

Inquiry Team Members: Kelly Pettingill

Inquiry Team Contact Email: kpettingill@sd48.bc.ca

Type of inquiry: NOII

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

Curricular area(s): Social Studies

Focus area(s): Aboriginal understandings (for example, Traditional Knowledge, oral history, reconciliation), First Peoples Principles of Learning

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

My focus was reconciliation.

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?

I began by asking my colleagues how they felt they were doing with teaching and learning about Aboriginal culture and reconciliation. I decided to approach my colleagues rather than the students because I believed that we as teachers need to understand the history and impact of residential school before teaching about it. We also needed to understand how we can weave Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing into our daily practice.

I used the three of the four key questions with staff (Where are you going with your learning? How are you doing? Where to next?). I used a SurveyMonkey survey to gather responses from my staff. I noticed that some teachers provided feedback such as: I feel like I don't know what to teach in terms of Aboriginal content; I don't know what is age-appropriate for teaching about residential schools; I wish I had an expert or more teacher guides to help with the content. I noticed that one of our strengths was that teachers were interested in learning more and using our library resources. The First



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

Peoples Principles of Learning were embedded in my scanning process as I recognized that learning requires patience and time.

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

I selected the area of reconciliation because we are in a time in age when it is absolutely imperative to inform ourselves and others about our shared Canadian history. I hoped to help my learners to become more aware of this history.

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.

My hunch was that I and some of my colleagues were feeling inadequate, uncomfortable, and uninformed with regard to reconciliation. I thought that these feelings were present because we were not aware of Canada's complete history. We had not received the education when we were in school. There are many resources available in our school library and online, however, we could use, we just needed to find out what was there. I also thought that some of us were perhaps feeling guilt-ridden because of biases we may have towards other cultural groups. I thought that in my role as my school's Shared Learnings Committee representative, I could help staff overcome those feelings and help them uncover available resources.

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 aboriginal elders into our school to teach us about culture and circle. We visited the Squamish Lil'wat Cultural Centre in Whistler. Collaboration with colleagues was a very useful approach to our learning. When we gathered in a group, we were able to share our feelings with each other. We learned about the resources in our school and online. We found the FNEESC website to be especially helpful.

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

1. I used a Survey Monkey survey to ask my colleagues about how they were feeling



Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

about teaching about Aboriginal culture and reconciliation.

2. Our school staff took part in Circles training with Peace of the Circle.
3. We collaborated as an entire school to create a Reconciliation Blanket.
4. I attended a 24 Hour Drum that was presented by the Aboriginal Youth Leadership team from our district.
5. Our staff gathered to review and discuss the books and multimedia in our school library.
6. Our staff unpacked one of the First People's Principles of Learning each month.

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

I did a follow up survey with my colleagues to gather evidence of any change. Some of my colleagues felt that:

- Our actions led to raised awareness about reconciliation in and outside of the classroom
- We became more conscious of how First Nations teaching is done
- Our lessons from a First Nations Cultural worker made a big difference
- The Aboriginal ways have become more embedded in our everyday teaching
- Circle training helped us become much more comfortable, as we now know the protocol, and the kids really like it
- Our reconciliation blanket pulled our whole school together

Are the differences enough? I think the differences we made were important, but we have not yet made enough progress to stop inquiring and learning. I think we are just beginning our journey towards learning about reconciliation.

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.

I learned that learning about reconciliation can be difficult because of the emotional aspect. I learned that the First Peoples Principles of Learning helps me to envision an Aboriginal lens through which I can view learning. Next I plan to include more Aboriginal content into my daily lesson planning using the resources I uncovered during the course of the inquiry.

I would advise other schools to invite Peace of the Circle into the staff development.