



# Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

## 2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

**School Name:** Southern Okanagan Secondary School

**School District:** SD#53 Okanagan Similkameen

**Inquiry Team Members:** Marcus Toneatto, Tracy Harrington, Ryan Baptiste, Rachelle Goncalves

**Inquiry Team Contact Email:** rgoncalv@sd53.bc.ca

**Type of inquiry:** AESN Transitions

**Grade levels:** Secondary (8 - 12)

**Curricular area(s):** Interdisciplinary Studies

**Focus area(s):** Aboriginal understandings (for example, Traditional Knowledge, oral history, reconciliation), Community-based learning, Core competencies (for example, critical thinking, communication, problem solving), Differentiated instruction, Experiential learning, First Peoples Principles of Learning, Inquiry-based learning, Land, Nature or Place-based learning

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

Increasing connections for our learners with the Aboriginal community, Osoyoos Indian Band, to increase engagement in their school experience.

**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?

In our second year of EPIC we were able to reflect on our first year and make some adjustments for our program and our learners. There was more of an emphasis on making connections with the community and to the First People's pedagogy in daily work. The place-based focus of our program was extended as there was more opportunity provided



## Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

### 2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

by the teacher to get outdoors in the community. It was evident in our scanning that there were better 'fits' for curriculum focus and those changes were put in place to help our students.

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

The biggest focus for our program and our learners this year was the connection to the community. With more confidence and extended connections to the community this year the students were able to interact with and learn from our local elders in a variety of ways.

**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 hunch that collaborative learning would help engage our students was proven true. What was an unexpected, but extremely welcome, was the increase in teacher collaboration and professional engagement among our staff. It has been very exciting to see the inclusion of Aboriginal content and focus as well as collaborative teaching grow in our school.

**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 have monthly inquiry meeting where our teachers and support staff engage in inquiry work. Our group had the focus of community connections this year and we spent this time collaborating to make the experiences for our students come to life.

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

The teacher and the teacher-librarian work together to make sure that we are feeling supported and willing to take the risks necessary to make change.



## Networks of Inquiry and Innovation Aboriginal Enhancement Schools Network

### 2016 - 2017 AESN / NOII Case Study

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

We are quite happy with the work we have done this year. There is always room to make changes and improvements and with this in mind we are changing the courses that we are offering in our program next year to include First People's English 10. We have not yet asked the students the four questions for the end of our program but we are excited for the feedback.

**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.

We are moving forward with providing more opportunity for our students. In addition to the EPIC program we are offering a yearlong interdisciplinary course in English First Peoples and First Peoples Art 10, an Biology and English course that includes interdisciplinary work at the grade 11 level and work with our Math teacher and the Art teacher to work on showing the connections between the two disciplines. It's all very exciting!