

INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

February 19, 2016



Aboriginal Learning

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Cultural Learning Links

[500 years in 2 minutes](#) is a great video to introduce many of the deep issues we have in Canada.

One school experimented with bridging Indigenous and Western Science in a theatrical, visual approach to [build bridges with Aboriginal Learners](#).

The [First Nations Education Steering Committee](#) has a lot of great information and links on their web-site.

The [First Peoples' Cultural Council](#) has a lot of information and resources around language and culture including this [map of languages in BC](#).

Quotes

“To be hurt, yet forgive. To do wrong, but forgive yourself. To depart from this world leaving only love, this is the reason you walk.” - Wab Kinew

“Education is simply the soul of a society as it passes from one generation to another.” - G. K. Chesterton

“Let us put our minds together to see what we can build for our children.” - Chief Sitting Bull



Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

Miracle Beach Elementary School

This week I got to participate in the school review at “the beach.” The review began with a wonderful welcome and song by the [Seventh Generation Club](#) with the guidance and support of [Natalie Force](#). Signs of rich and vibrant aboriginal culture are throughout the school. At one point, on a break, we went and saw a carver working with grade two students whose hands are nice and small for sanding those really tight spots on what looks to be an excellent celebration pole.

Another interesting thing happening at Miracle Beach Elementary is that [VIU](#) has placed five student teachers, under the guidance of Dirk den Otter, in the school creating an embedded cohort. Several of these student teachers are former students in our Valley.

Their PLC teams seem to be very active with student engagement being one of the themes (engagement through media and engagement through self-assessment using “I can” statements). One team is working to encourage struggling readers through high-interest books and another is looking at developing a ‘learning trail’ for place-based learning opportunities. And, I might be wrong, but I think Miracle Beach is the only school with a PLC team trying to figure out how a school-based therapy dog can contribute to a positive school culture.

PAC Chair Jennie Graham certainly echoed, as did the students and teachers, that there is a positive, community minded, culture in the school.

There were many examples of student engagement on display in many ways. Students in two Kindergarten classes ([Doreen Stride's](#) and [Kim Veloso's](#)) each have portfolios of their learning; the pride and knowledge about learning that these children showed was awesome. They were able to identify the learning intention, the strengths of their performance, and what they need to do in order to improve. [Warren Biegler's](#) class was very excited, they were shooting rockets into the field (actually, the one [Trustee Hargreaves](#) launched hit the stratosphere to clear the forest at the far end of the field—home field advantage?). It was validating to see that one of the boys who obviously had abundant energy actually missed his recess time as he was working to improve his rocket—the parachute didn't open—not because he had to but because he wanted to. Finally, [Sheila Fairbank](#) talked about the work her PLC Team and students are doing to create a ‘learning trail’ behind their school and when I went out there at recess, there was an abundance of energy and learning happening.

Currently the school is also working on a starfish project. Kind of like the fish we see on fences throughout the district, Miracle Beach is preparing starfish as they are a key part of the school's culture. All members of the school community will be painting a starfish. Each of those starfish were created by grade 7 students under the guidance of [Randy Grey](#) in the [Vanier](#) Shops.



Huband's Mural

More than 30 students from [Huband Park Elementary](#) were involved with painting a Salish design mural for Huband's gym. The design was created by [Emily Carr University](#) graduate, [James Harry](#) (Nexw kalus), from the [Squamish Nation](#).

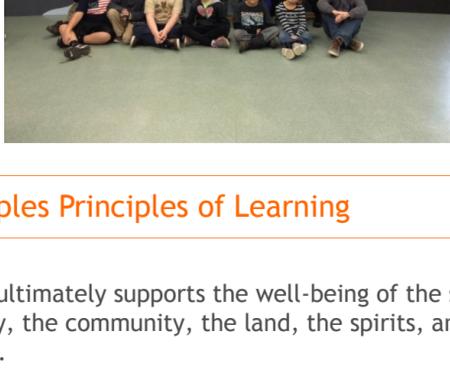
Over the last few years, James has worked with schools and communities in the Lower Mainland and in the United Kingdom to produce art projects reflecting Aboriginal heritage, culture, and ideologies. [Joni Danielson](#), also a graduate of Emily Carr University, worked with Harry to guide the students in painting this mural. In the past, Danielson has worked with elementary and secondary students on environmental art projects as well as collaborative projects with the David Suzuki Foundation.

Three of the goals for the project were student engagement, cultural awareness, and student leadership. The four teams of grade 7 student leaders worked closely with James and Joni over a period of two days. These grade 7 students assisted Kindergarten to grade 6 students with painting the four sections of the mural.

“What an awesome project! It was a lot of fun and I enjoyed meeting James,” remarked grade 7 Aboriginal student, Jayden.

Another [Seventh Generation Club](#) grade 7 student, Kenisha, also commented, “I had so much fun painting this mural. I was so inspired to be part of this project!”

Parents, teachers, and elders were invited to view the process. The final goal of this project is to share the completed mural with the Huband students, parents and members of the community. The celebration and blessing of the mural was on Feb 18th at Huband Elementary.



First Peoples Principles of Learning

Learning ultimately supports the well-being of the self, the family, the community, the land, the spirits, and the ancestors.

Learning is holistic, reflexive, reflective, experiential, and relational (focused on connectedness, on reciprocal relationships, and a sense of place).

Learning involves recognizing the consequences of one's actions.

Learning involves generational roles and responsibilities.

Learning recognizes the role of indigenous knowledge.

Learning is embedded in memory, history, and story.

Learning involves patience and time.

Learning requires exploration of one's identity.

Learning involves recognizing that some knowledge is sacred and only shared with permission and/or in certain situations.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please direct any suggestions, questions, or inquiries to me directly: Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca