

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2008-2009**

**DR. D. A. PERLEY ELEMENTARY
51 Boundary**

Leadership Team

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School Context/Community Involvement

Dr. D. A. Perley Elementary is situated in the downtown area of Grand Forks, British Columbia. Our school enrolls 275 students from kindergarten to grade 7 with 50 students self-claiming Aboriginal ancestry. Our students come from families across the economic spectrum, however, many of which are living in low-income situations.

Our Parent Advisory Council is enthusiastic and supportive, and from our school community comes a large volunteer base for a wide variety of school activities. Our School Growth Plan continues to focus upon the improvement of student achievement in: reading, writing and numeracy. The staff of our school enthusiastically participates in the Perley Learning Community. Our school supports and values all learning for all children focusing on the arts, academics, athletics and citizenship.

We pride ourselves in every child having a successful school experience no matter how great the challenges.

School Inquiry and Action

READING

School Question

Will the involvement in a radio podcast improve the grade 6 and 7 Aboriginal students oral language skills as measured on the district reading assessments and the grade 6 and 7 oral language quick scales?

Rationale:

Our ultimate goal is to establish a Podcasting and Internet Youth Radio Project available to children attending any of the schools within the Boundary region. This was initially based on the success of a three month pilot project with a grade 6/7 class at Dr. D.A. Perley School in Grand Forks during the later months of the 2007-2008 school year. Through implementation of a Radio Show/Podcast we were hoping to see an improvement in all aspects of literacy – reading, writing and oral language. Media literacy is such an important factor in the “literacy” lives of our young people today. The influence that the media has as a means of expression and communication for our children can be overwhelming. Our hope is that by capturing this technologically savvy generation with a purposeful literacy objective that their overall literacy skills will improve.

After our initial trial period, we decided to develop an after school radio club, welcoming students from grade 6 and 7. Technical training was provided, parents were trained and we broadcasted our first podcast in January of 2009. Students were given the opportunity to showcase aspects of their curriculum, projects in their community and to take pride in showcasing the accomplishments of their own school community. The teaching and learning of reading, writing, speaking and listening are integrated into each radio podcast. Students wrote scripts for newscasts, school service announcements, weather reports and movie/play reviews while at the same time improving their diction and oral language skills. Students rotated through the positions of broadcasters, technicians, interviewers, DJ producers and editors. Radio Club members met each Wednesday after school from 3:30 until 5:00 until the end of April. To culminate our year, we highlighted our District Track Meet, which took place on May 22, 2009 and we showcased the work of our upper intermediate classrooms by podcasting an “anti-bullying” campaign.

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Links with District Enhancement Agreement

Performance Goal #1

Our first goal for our Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement is to improve the literacy skills of our Aboriginal students in School District 51.

Focus on Formative Assessment Strategies

- Provide learners with clarity about and understanding of the **learning intentions** of the learning with which they are engaged.
*Each after school radio session began with a **briefing** session. Here members brainstormed topics of interest, shared responses to previous podcasts, delegated responsibilities and shared the “musts” for the current weeks show.*
- Provide to and co-develop with learners **the criteria for success**.
This came in the discussions that ensued during our initial briefing sessions. Students discussed podcasting rubric to identify which criteria they were successful in accomplishing and which criteria they should have applied and tried again.
- Provide regular, **thoughtful feedback** that moves learning forward for the individual learner.
Students in a grade 6/7 class regularly listened to posted podcasts and submitted their ideas and feedback for continued success. Parents and adults in the school community did the same. This was submitted in the form of emails. During our regular briefing sessions, we shared feedback and discussed ways of implementing suggestions. Students again reflected on podcasting rubric and matched met criteria with feedback given.
- Put learners to work as **learning/teaching resources for each other**.
*Students rotated through positions of broadcaster, DJ, technician and interviewer enabling each to develop a large repertoire of skills as well as giving them opportunities to teach each other. In addition, members brainstormed topics of interest and teamed up according to this interest. This enabled all members to work cooperatively with each other in a variety of different roles. Students reflected on the **Group/partner work** component of the Podcasting Rubric.*
- Do everything you can think of to make sure that **learners are the owners** of their own learning.
Radio Club members took great pride in participating in this project. We witnessed tremendous gains in self-confidence and ease in podcast productions. Students were acknowledged for their efforts by regular feedback from their peers and recognition at a school assembly.

Parent and Community Involvement:

We had several parents involved on a weekly basis with the recording and broadcasting of the programs. The community was involved for special events to do interview with the students. For special performances other students, teachers, coaches and out of town guests were also interviewed.

School Findings

73% of our Aboriginal Education students are Meeting Expectations at a Minimal Level or Satisfactorily Meeting Expectations. While 13% are not meeting expectations, 0% of our Aboriginal Education students are exceeding expectations. Our school goal is to see 80% of our grade 6/7 students fully meet expectations on our district wide reading assessments.

2007/2008 25% of our Grade 6/7 students are of Aboriginal Descent

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Of those 24%:

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	NY		A		M		E	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Fall 2007	17	3	61	11	22	4	--	--
Spring 2008	17	3	55	10	28	5	--	--
Fall 2008	13	2	40	6	33	5	--	--
Spring 2009	--	--	62	8	38	5	--	--

We are encouraged by the willingness of these traditionally non-verbal students to participate in such a program. We are confident that with a school wide emphasis, that we can provide more consistent feedback and support to our Aboriginal student population.

AESN Plans for 2009-2010

To broaden the concept of a regular school based podcasting program into our school fabric. The goal would be to produce one podcast/month incorporating all students at least once through the school year. Classes could produce their own “show” or team with another.

Reflections, Advice

Although the after school group itself was small, they were an extremely motivated and keen group and were very excited to produce a show each week. Adults/kid ratio was large, making implementation in a classroom a more effective use of resources available. The challenge would be to have school staff buy into the idea as it involves use of class time. The advantages though are incorporating the idea into things that we currently do in our classrooms. Our three upper intermediate classes are currently doing a project on “anti bullying” and will showcase their efforts through a school podcast to be aired in mid June.