

Abstract

That's A Good Idea - Effective Practices in First Nations and Métis Education

The Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research (GDI) developed this resource for the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association.

This document is a first step in gathering and disseminating effective practices, programs, activities and strategies that are effective in meeting the educational needs of First Nations and Métis students. The purpose of this endeavour is to provide teachers, administrators and others interested in the education process with an avenue to share experiences that effectively increased understanding and awareness of Aboriginal cultures, issues and perspectives and which support Aboriginal students in achieving greater success and improved satisfaction in school. In providing other educators with successful ideas, these initiatives may be broadly implemented in Saskatchewan's schools. This report also anticipates that, as programs are shared, developed and put into practice, educators will continue to communicate their experiences and suggestions with the SSTA. In this way, both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike will benefit.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first *good idea* was the decision by the SSTA to recognize the need for research in this area and to take the leadership role in ensuring it occurred. Many thanks are extended to Barry Bashutski of the SSTA for his support and guidance.

The second *good idea* was the decision by the staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute to work wholeheartedly on the project. We recognized the importance of the work and accepted the challenge of collecting and collating the replies that formed the basis of this report. Through their persistence and effort, a large number of responses were received. The Project Team included Leah Dorion, Todd Paquin, Darren Préfontaine and Karon Shmon. They were assisted by the GDI support staff, which included Lorraine Amiotte, Blanche Gehriger and Norma McKay.

The third *good idea* was the collective willingness of the respondents to share their work for the report. This important piece forms the body of the report. This project could not have been completed without the educators who submitted their good ideas, practices and strategies. Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research and the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association are grateful to those people who shared their experiences. The schools and organizations from which submissions were received include:

- Alexandra Elementary School, Moose Jaw
- Balcarres School, Balcarres
- Carlton Comprehensive High School, Prince Albert
- Carrot River High School, Carrot River
- Chief Mistawasis School, Leask
- City Park Collegiate, Saskatoon
- C.J. Houston School, Yorkton
- Cross Cultural Ad-Hoc Committee, Moose Jaw
- D'Arcy Elementary School, D'Arcy
- Dr. Brass School, Yorkton
- Dr. Isman Elementary School, Wolseley
- Early Childhood Education, University of Regina Faculty of Education
- Fairview Elementary, Yorkton
- Father Gamache Memorial School, Fond du Lac
- Father Porte Dene Memorial School, Black Lake
- Fishing Lake N/K Band School, Wadena
- Fort Livingston School, Pelly
- Fort Qu'Appelle Elementary, Fort Qu'Appelle
- Gordon Denny Community School, La Ronge
- Grenfell Elementary School, Grenfell
- Grenfell High School, Grenfell
- Gull Lake Elementary, Gull Lake
- Gull Lake School Division #76, Gull Lake
- Hanley Composite School, Hanley
- Hillside School, Estevan

- Humboldt Collegiate, Humboldt
- Indian Head School, Indian Head
- Jubilee School, Meadow Lake
- L.P. Miller Comprehensive School, Nipawin
- Lestock School, Lestock
- McCord School, McCord
- Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake
- North Valley High School, Lemberg
- Northern Lakes School Division #64, Spiritwood
- Northern Lights School Division #113, La Ronge
- Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon
- Prince Albert Grand Council, Prince Albert
- Prince Arthur School, Moose Jaw
- Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert
- Rockglen School, Rockglen
- St. Andrew School, Regina
- St. Angela School, Saskatoon
- St. George School, Saskatoon
- St. Joan of Arc School, Regina
- St. Mary's Community School, Saskatoon
- St. Michael School, Moose Jaw
- St. Michael's Community School, Prince Albert
- Stobart Elementary School, Duck Lake
- Tompkins School, Tompkins
- Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows
- Valley View School, Beauval
- Wesley M School, Muskowekwan Band No. 85, Lestock
- Whitecalf Collegiate, Lebret

Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the authors.

I. Effective Practices in First Nations and Métis Education - Introduction

A strong philosophy in many First Nations and Métis communities is the collective notion that *it takes a whole nation to educate a child*. With this philosophy in mind, the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research has formed a partnership with the Saskatchewan School Trustees Association in order to highlight some of the effective teaching practices in Aboriginal education occurring in Saskatchewan schools. Our mutual concern for the education of the provinces' Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students necessitated the creation of this resource guide.

1. CURRENT DEMOGRAPHICS

In Saskatchewan, current statistics and demographics indicate an increasing number of First Nations and Métis students in Saskatchewan schools. Today, our teachers, schools divisions, school boards and administrators are adapting to these recent demographic trends. Saskatchewan Education indicated that in 1996, 19 school divisions in the province had Education Equity programs. Education Equity was designed to increase the number of Aboriginal students who complete Grade 12. It is a comprehensive plan that emphasizes:

- hiring Aboriginal teachers;
- reviewing school policies and procedures;
- providing cross-cultural training;
- including Aboriginal content and perspectives in the curriculum; and
- increased involvement by Aboriginal parents¹

The percentage of Aboriginal students increased in 14 of these school divisions between 1989 and 1996, while the percentage of Aboriginal teachers increased in 12 of these school divisions.²

The Regina Roman Catholic School Division stated their commitment to hiring as many Aboriginal teachers as possible to ensure that the number of teachers would reflect the percentage of Aboriginal students in the school division. An equity report

¹ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission - 1997a. Broader scope suggested for education equity. *Equity Forum*, pp. 5-6.

stated that the Regina Roman Catholic School Division's long-term goal was to fill 8.2% of 509 teaching positions with qualified teachers of Aboriginal ancestry over the past ten years. As of June 1997, the actual percentage of teachers of Aboriginal ancestry was 4.5%.³

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND ORGANIZATION

The objective of this resource handbook was to identify effective practices in First Nations and Métis education in the K-12 system throughout Saskatchewan. This report identifies what educators, schools and communities are doing to incorporate these practices.

Many stakeholders in education were asked to share their perspectives on key issues. To this end, every Saskatchewan school division was faxed and/or e-mailed a short description of the project and forms on which they could share their good ideas. We contacted 796 provincially funded schools and 76 band-controlled schools in this manner. Phone calls were made to principals and administrators. To encourage people involved directly in Aboriginal education to share their experiences, we distributed forms at the AWASIS conference on April 2 & 3, 1998.

The following resource guide is divided into a number of sections based on the various strategies used by educators to incorporate First Nations and Métis content and perspectives in their schools, programs and activities. The major themes in the report include the following:

- Community Involvement
- Cross Cultural Experiences
- Curriculum Content, Resources and Development
- Critical Thinking Activities
- Language Instruction, Activities and Resources
- Literacy Activities and Programs
- School Trips and Extracurricular Activities
- Traditional Skills Activities
- Transition Programs, Partnerships and Student Services

² Saskatchewan Education - 1997b. *Saskatchewan Education Indicators: Kindergarten to Grade 12*, p. 29.

³ Regina Roman Catholic Separate School Division No.81 - 1997. *Education Equity Report, 1996-1997*, p. 3.

Participants were encouraged to share all effective practices, including both major and minor strategies. The nature of the responses indicates there is a broad continuum of ideas currently being implemented and that the schools and communities are as diverse as the ideas they have shared. It is our belief that growth and improvement can be achieved from each response.

3. ABOUT THE RESPONSES

Where did the responses come from? Most of the responses came from regions with a high number of Aboriginal students, while a minimal response was received from rural areas. However, GDI received responses from elementary schools, community schools, high schools, school divisions and band-controlled schools. The majority of responses came from elementary school teachers. Few high school teachers responded.

We discovered some very positive responses from the community schools. The original Community Schools Program was implemented in 1980 to provide a holistic, culturally affirming program to help Aboriginal children who face barriers to learning. Since that time, these schools have provided First Nations and Métis students with a learning environment and programming that respects and reflects their histories, experiences, and educational needs.

Community schools have provided innovative, caring and effective responses to the learning needs of inner city students in Regina, Saskatoon, and Prince Albert.⁴ The Won Ska Cultural School in Prince Albert has a great deal of success managing a culturally relevant school for First Nations and Métis students. It is a uniquely governed school that emphasizes Aboriginal culture. Additionally, the school specializes in delivering GED programs and the integration of educational services with employment and on the job training.⁵

⁴ Saskatchewan Education - 1996. *Building Communities of Hope: Best Practices for Meeting the Learning Needs of At-Risk and Indian and Métis Students*, p. 4.

⁵ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission - 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-97: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions*, p. 22.

4. EQUITY ISSUES

What is meant by equity? Equity is the fair and equal treatment of all members of our society who are entitled to participate in and enjoy the benefits of an education.⁶ Equity involves creating a productive environment and a shared vision conducive to fostering the development of an inclusive and collaborative education process that, in turn, defines and enriches resources. Equity also means proactive leadership that encourages all community members to engage in the education of the community's children.

Many positive changes are helping to achieve equity in the education system. Some of our schools are making substantial efforts to include Aboriginal students and the community. For instance, in the North Battleford Public School Division, the Comprehensive High School has an annual Pow-wow and Elders and community people regularly visit the classrooms. In addition, the school division employs a social worker to make regular home visits. Childcare services are provided in some schools to enable parents to attend school meetings and parent-teacher interviews.⁷

The Northern Lakes School Division created an educational sub-division for the Witchekan Lake First Nation to ensure that the First Nation had a representative on its board of education.⁸ Other school divisions, such as the Kamsack School Division, have a decentralized professional development fund for teachers to learn more about Aboriginal cultures. The Lands West School Division has joint in-servicing with the Chief Little Pine First Nation's School and a professional development fund is used to inform teachers about Aboriginal culture.⁹

However, of the 18 school divisions listed in a 1997 Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission Report, each had a low number of Aboriginal teachers *vis a vis* the number of Aboriginal students compared to the number of non-Aboriginal teachers relative to non-Aboriginal students. The Biggar School Division reported two Aboriginal teachers for 178 Aboriginal students (1:89 ratio). In the Saskatoon Public

⁶ Education Equity Working Committee - 1997. *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future: Equity in Education: A Policy Framework* p. 2.

⁷ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission - 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-1997: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions*, pp. 3-7.

⁸ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission - 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-1997: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions*, p. 4.

⁹ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission - 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-1997: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions*, p. 9.

School Division, there were 56 Aboriginal teachers for 2559 Aboriginal students (1:46 ratio). In the Northern Lights School Division, there are 78 Aboriginal teachers for 3980 Aboriginal students (a ratio of 1:51). However, 72.7% of non-teaching staff and 83.4% of support staff in Northern Lights School Division are of Aboriginal ancestry.¹⁰

Many in the province's Aboriginal communities are concerned that there are too few Aboriginal teachers in the schools. They feel those that are hired are often expected to design and deliver Aboriginal curricula for entire schools and school divisions. This concern is highlighted in numerous Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission documents. One solution would be to hire more qualified Aboriginal teachers and Aboriginal resource people. Our report shows that involvement from the Aboriginal communities can help alleviate the situation.

5. ELIMINATION OF RACISM

As a society we can make inroads to eliminate all forms of intolerance. Education and communication are the most effective means we have to break down the walls of racism. Non-racist education integrates the perspectives of Aboriginal and minority groups into an education system and its practices.¹¹ The Regina Catholic School Division has anti-racism seminars for its students, and the Education Equity Department offers staff development for its teachers.¹² This project shows a great commitment to cross-cultural training, non-racist education and staff in-service in some Saskatchewan schools. However, this report also indicates that in many parts of Saskatchewan, especially rural areas, there are no cross-cultural programs.

6. TEACHING METHODS AND PHILOSOPHY

Education means many things to different people. A balanced approach, involving the skills and support of teachers, Elders, community members and parents is congruent with traditional Aboriginal education. Utilizing the entire community to educate

¹⁰ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission – 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-1997: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions.*

¹¹ Education Equity Working Committee - 1997. *Our Children, Our Communities and Our Future: Equity in Education, A Policy Framework*, p. 27.

¹² Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission - 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-1997: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions*, p. 11.

children emerges as one of the most effective teaching practices revealed by this report.

The participation of Elders and other members of the Aboriginal communities within and beyond the classroom enriches Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal world-views and methods of learning. As a result, Elders programs are currently underway in some schools. The involvement of Aboriginal resource people in school programming has also enhanced many teachers' confidence in delivering Aboriginal content and perspectives to their students. In developing this report, it became clear that the community must be involved in the school to ensure that our children receive the best education possible.

Many Saskatchewan teachers have endeavoured to incorporate Indigenous heritage into the general curricula for the benefit of all students. Their labours are both interesting and innovative. The Grace Adam Metawewinihk archaeological project at St. Mary's Community School in Saskatoon is a case in point. This program provides an opportunity for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to work on an archaeological site containing both historic and pre-European contact artifacts. The project's success is directly linked to the involvement of Elders and community members with the students, teachers, archaeologists and volunteers.

In the Gull Lake School Division, Native Studies and Social Studies teachers instruct non-Aboriginal students about the contributions that Aboriginal people have made to Saskatchewan's and Canada's development and settlement. However, a disappointing trend was observed when we contacted schools that have few or no Aboriginal students. In many cases, there were no "special" teaching programs emphasizing Aboriginal culture. This was a trend observed in both urban and rural areas.

This observation leads us to believe that there is a general lack of understanding about the benefits such programs bring to Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students alike. The Province's First Nations and Métis Education Policy is meant to benefit all students, supporting the belief that an increase in knowledge, awareness and acceptance of First Nations and Métis peoples will help students accept and value diversity. In particular, non-Aboriginal students who have little or no interaction with Aboriginal people are at a greater risk of basing their opinions of Aboriginal people on popular and, in most cases, erroneous stereotypes.

7. CURRICULUM ISSUES

In the May, 1998 *STF Bulletin*, then-Education Minister Pat Atkinson indicated that Aboriginal people will comprise one-third of Saskatchewan's population in less than 50 years. They currently make up approximately one-eighth of the population. Atkinson stated that the education community must recognize this major demographic shift and do better to address the associated needs. She claimed that First Nations and Métis content could no longer be viewed as an add-on to the core curriculum; rather, it must be accepted as an integral part of the core curriculum.¹³

Saskatchewan Education research identified that slightly more than three-quarters of Grade 8 and 9 teachers incorporated First Nations and Métis perspectives and content as an aspect of Core Curriculum.¹⁴ The *Effective Practices* project supports this research. Numerous respondents were eager to share their practices that utilize positive and innovative methods to this end.

The Biggar School Division reported that, in Grade 9 Social Studies, about 20% of the content is Aboriginal. The teachers discuss Aboriginal history, languages, cultures and current issues. In the same school division, Native Studies 10 was implemented in Cando School to offer more First Nations and Métis content.¹⁵ The Prince Albert Comprehensive School Division ensures that 50% of its resource centre budget goes toward the purchase of Aboriginal materials.¹⁶

Awasis is a special subject council of the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation. Its primary focus is to support those working with First Nations and Métis students. The annual conference draws over 1,000 people and provides sessions in which educators share good ideas such as those included in this report.

The provincial core curriculum has been expanded and up-dated to include a considerable amount of Aboriginal content, which is to be integrated into the general curriculum. On August 1997, The Native Studies Teachers' Association put forward a proposal to develop a formal organization to support the discipline of Native Studies at the secondary school level. In addition to this group of enthusiastic teachers, many individuals and collectives are taking a proactive role to ensure that First Nations and

¹³ Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation - 1998. *STF Bulletin*.

¹⁴ Saskatchewan Education - 1997b. *Saskatchewan Education Indicators: Kindergarten to Grade 12*, p. 65.

¹⁵ Biggar School Division No. 50 - 1997. *Education Equity-Annual Report*, p. 7.

Métis education issues are addressed in today's schools. As a result of these steps, Saskatchewan schools saw an increase in the offerings of Native Studies 10, 20, and 30. As of April 1998, 60 Saskatchewan schools and 30 band-controlled schools offered Native Studies courses.¹⁷

Many of the responses received have indicated that communities and schools are acknowledging the importance of instruction in First Nations languages. Aboriginal peoples are concerned at the alarming rate at which children are losing their indigenous languages. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in urban areas.

Most young, urban First Nations students can no longer speak Cree, Dene, Saulteaux, Assiniboine, Dakota or Lakota. Similarly, the majority of Métis children are unable to speak Michif. Many Elders and academics believe that a culture cannot survive without its language; as a result, any loss of language is a threat to the culture. Some Saskatchewan schools are prioritizing the development of curricula and resources for Aboriginal language programs. For instance, the Northern Lights School Division and various First Nations schools have done much good work regarding Aboriginal language retention programs.

The Muskowekwan Band Education Council, the Cupar School Division and the Lestock School have implemented a cooperative "Elders in Residence Program". Grants from the Indian and Métis Education Development program (IMED) have helped in the continuance of this program, as well as the establishment of Saulteaux language instruction. In addition, Aboriginal curriculum development, cultural awareness programs, home-school and youth liaison programs and a safe-school project are contributing to the survival and development of language and culture.¹⁸

8. CONCLUSION

On behalf of the Gabriel Dumont Institute and Saskatchewan School Trustees Association, we want to extend an enormous thank-you to all who shared their ideas and special projects. In the future, the SSTA will place this material and other incoming submissions on their website located at www.ssta.sk.ca. In turn, the

¹⁶ Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission – 1997b. *Education Equity K-12, 1996-1997: A Summary of Activities Reported by School Divisions*, p. 10.

¹⁷ Saskatchewan Education - 1998. *Schools Teaching 10, 20, or 30 Native Studies Classes*.

¹⁸ Cupar School Division No.28 - 1997. *Education Equity Committee Program Monitoring Report*, p. 3.

Gabriel Dumont Institute will also place this report on its website located at www.gdins.org. This sharing experience may develop into an ongoing project to serve as a place for educators to communicate effective practices to those interested in First Nations and Métis education issues.

II. Educators' Responses

Teachers and administrators submitted numerous responses to the *Effective Practices in First Nations and Métis Education* project. The variety of responses suggests that educators are taking proactive and innovative steps to ensure that students, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal alike, are exposed to First Nations and Métis content and perspectives in their schools and classrooms. These submissions were solicited over a short period in early 1998 and reflect what we consider to be a small portion of the progressive ideas being implemented in Saskatchewan schools.

For the sake of space and simplicity, responses have been clustered into broad categories. Given the multifaceted nature of the responses, many fit into more than one category. We have attempted to place such responses into all appropriate categories. Readers looking for suggestions are encouraged to review each section, not as an isolated grouping of ideas but, rather, as part of an interrelated network of good ideas. The categories under which the responses have been grouped include:

- Community Involvement
- Cross Cultural Experiences
- Curriculum Content, Resources and Development
- Critical Thinking Activities
- Language Instruction, Activities and Resources
- Literacy Activities and Programs
- School Trips and Extracurricular Activities
- Traditional Skills Activities
- Transition Programs, Partnerships and Student Services

1. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Many schools across the province utilized the skills and knowledge of Elders and Aboriginal resource people, the input of parents, and the skills of people involved in cultural and heritage organizations. Their involvement has provided numerous

opportunities for students to gain a greater awareness of First Nations and Métis culture, skills and values. This section has been divided into three areas of involvement - that of Elders, parents and other community members.

a. Involvement of Elders

- Elders have been hired to work in the school. They meet with each classroom once a week for a sharing circle as well as doing counselling and home-visits. Parents and other community members come in to talk with Elders. In this way, Elders are helping students to understand their culture and history.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- Prince Arthur School brings in Betty McKenna, an Aboriginal resource person and Elder, to discuss family history and genealogy in the context of her First Nation background (e.g. naming practices). Children and teachers find this very enjoyable, informative, and interesting.
Darla Cornish (Prince Arthur School, Moose Jaw)
- Elders come into the room to speak to students on culture. We discuss the tipi and the significance of the poles, designs, etc. The students make and design their own miniature tipis and we set up a small tipi model in our room. The class focuses on the meanings of the poles and relate it to the 7 Saulteaux teachings.
Donna Reynolds (Wesley M School, Muskowekwan Band No. 85, Lestock)
- We interviewed Elders about the history and culture of the reserve. This included stories and history passed on from their parents and grandparents. We also included legends that the Elders know.
- This material was translated and edited to form Social Studies units for each grade from Grade 1 to 9. Elders were credited throughout the books and little other material was utilized - just the Elders talking.
Stephen Davidson (Chief Mistawasis School, Leask)
- The Grade 10 Native Studies class at Indian Head School takes part in a sweat lodge ceremony with local Elders. Before attending the ceremony the students learn about spirituality through in-depth classroom work and by inviting Elders to discuss the beliefs and values associated with the sweat lodge and their culture. The class also takes part in talking circles in the school as a way of better understanding Aboriginal practices.
Patty Lou Schmidt (Indian Head School, Indian Head)
- The Cross Cultural Ad Hoc Committee (Moose Jaw Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 22 and the educational community) has devised a comprehensive training program for educators, students and parents to address Saskatchewan's changing demographic situation. This program seeks to reach the wider educational community and provide more experiential cultural encounters. For 1997-98 this includes:
 - Providing educators from all participating organizations (Moose Jaw Separate School Division, SIAST, Hunger in Moose Jaw, etc), employees and parents of chosen students with an opportunity to meet with Elders over the course of three, half-day workshops.

- Providing students with a cross-cultural training program. First Nations perspectives will be more explicitly and intentionally integrated into certain curricula and Elders will have a teaching role.
- Providing educators and parents of involved students with an opportunity to participate in a two day conference at the Piapot Reserve. This will include participation in the pipe ceremony, sweat lodge ceremony, talking circles and traditional feast. Students will take part in a similar experience later in the year.
- This training program is based on a model that has proven its effectiveness in promoting positive understandings between the cultures.
Claude Morin, coordinator
Cross Cultural Ad-Hoc Committee, Moose Jaw
- In Industrial Arts class we invite an Elder to give a demonstration on traditional Native carvings.
Duane Janiskevich (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- The school hosted a special dinner for Elders of our community. Some students came to serve them and some staff came to ask their advice on how to deal with some problems they face. The staff and students had an opportunity to learn from the Elders. There were about 35 Elders who came to enjoy the great meal and to visit with each other. Community members, staff, and students contributed either goods or services to make this special occasion a big success.
Gordon Denny Community School, La Ronge
- Local residents were invited to speak and entertain the students - an Elder (a great grandmother) came to speak to the children, a grandmother demonstrated moccasin and mossbag construction, and two different drum bands and dancers performed.
Connie Senkiw and Beverly Smoke (Fishing Lake N/K Band School, Wadena)
- We have Elders at the school everyday of the week. Counselling is available for the students on the spot and the counsellor does home visits, which seems to build self-esteem for the student, parent, grandparent or guardian. Parenting sessions are available for teen parents plus any others who feel they can benefit from the sessions. Aboriginal activities, crafts and art are directly incorporated into regular schoolwork.
- With all of these initiatives, you can see the difference in attitude, behaviour and respect exhibited by the students. It seems to have brought out the best of every individual in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.
Caroline Roszel (Lestock School, Lestock)
- The value of respect is extremely important in First Nations cultures. Invite an Elder or community member into your room to speak on its importance. This is an excellent opportunity for storytelling on this topic. Ask around to find resource people from your neighbouring reserve who may want to volunteer to do this. Co-ordinating a visit and story several times a year would be ideal.
Shannon Leib (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- Elders are invited in to the school for sharing of legends, culture, and ceremonies.
Hanley Composite School, Hanley
- At City Park Collegiate, a liaison worker is utilized weekly while an SIFC (Saskatchewan Indian Federated College) social work student and an Elder provide

visits and counselling. The school provides access to cross-cultural training for staff, is involved with the IMED (Indian and Métis Education Development) committee and currently employs two SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program) graduates. Native studies is offered at the Grade 8 and 12 levels.

- Parent involvement with the school includes parent-teacher assistance in the classes, pre-interview suppers, and phone calls and contacts made on a regular basis.
Wendy Gallagher (City Park Collegiate, Saskatoon)
- Archaeological programming has taken place in partnership with the University of Saskatchewan. Elementary students are exposed to classroom instruction regarding the terms and concepts of the archaeological discipline with some hands-on activities, an on-site archaeological excavation, and post excavation exercises including artifact cataloguing and modules on stratigraphy and context.
- The project provides aboriginal students with a direct link to their cultural past in a unique and interesting setting. The project involves an inner-city community school and a suburban school, providing a good cross-cultural experience for the students. Elders are involved by giving blessings at the beginning of each six-week session followed by some type of special activity. This provides Elders an opportunity to speak about the project and demonstrates to students the importance of listening to their Elders.
- The community schools have committed to providing a Cree environment in their classrooms by encouraging First Nations themes, Elders visits, and sharing circles.
St. Mary's Community School, Saskatoon
- St. George School has been involved with St. Mary's Community School and the Grace Adam Metawewinihk Archaeological Project. This project started 5 years ago and involved several schools working on an actual archaeological dig in the St. Mary's Park organized by University of Saskatchewan graduate students in archaeology.
- The programme opens annually with the participating schools gathering together and an Elder blessing the project. For the last 2 years, students from St. George and St. Mary's Community School have worked together on an Archaeological Day in the park. The students participated in precontact activities like fire starting, flint knapping, petroglyph making, pottery firing, and traditional cooking. This day helps make the excavation come alive.
Laura Foley, Principal (St. George School, Saskatoon)
- March is Indian/Métis /Inuit month at Tompkins School, a K-9 school. Students learn around a common theme, particularly focussed learning about First Nations in Art, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Phys. Ed. March 27 is a wrap-up activity day for students who host their community members and parents by displaying their work, performing, and hosting a legend telling session by a First Nations Elder.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76)

b. Involvement of Parents

- Pleasant Hill Community School in Saskatoon has the *Breakfast and Book Club* that involves getting students, parents, community members, and teachers together once a week to have breakfast and read and discuss books. Over 20 students are involved with this club.
- The school also runs the *Astam Read With Me* program during school days and in the evenings, bringing in guest readers and having community members, parents, and staff read with the children. This program operates on an individual class and school-wide basis. We have contests to see which classrooms can get the most parents/caregivers/community members to come out for a set number of evenings to participate in the *Astam Read With Me* program.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- I teach a group of Grade Two students who are experiencing difficulties in reading and who are predominantly First Nations. I arranged for a meeting at the Band Hall on the reserve. Students, as part of their language arts class, wrote a letter to their parents, inviting them to the workshop.
- The students were also invited to attend. At the workshop, I did a demonstration lesson to show the parents how I was teaching reading. Then, while the students did an activity on their own, I talked with the parents about strategies they could use at home to help their children read.
- Then, the students came back and the parents and children spent time reading together.
Laura Marzoff (Dr. Isman Elementary School, Wolseley)
- SUNTEP (Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program) students assisted with the reading methods class at Imperial School. This program utilizes an immersion approach. The students worked with the children on reading and language skills. This model is activity-based and focused on the needs of individual learner. This, in addition to having SUNTEP students assist with the activities, worked particularly well for Aboriginal students.
Kathryn McNaughton, Early Childhood Education (University of Regina Faculty of Education)
- To increase attendance and make parents feel more comfortable, Parent-Teacher interviews are held at the band office rather than at the school.
Mary Lou Rupcich (Grenfell High School, Grenfell)
- We have a parent-student potluck or stew lunch. I usually try to get to know the parents on a personal basis so that I can see the family background that each child is coming from. I ask for parent volunteers and tutors, hold sharing-sessions on a regular basis, encourage a cultural awareness day so that the students gain an understanding of each other's background, and study Aboriginal role models from the community that the students know.
Leda Corrigan, (Valley View School, Beauval)
- We put on a special lunch with a 'Friendship Soup' at the end of a First Nations culture unit. Everyone brings an ingredient for a vegetable soup, which can include hamburger or rabbit. We invite a family member in to the classroom to make

fried bread or bannock to go along with the soup. The family member can say a blessing in Cree (or any local language), or we bring in an Elder who is willing to do so. This is a very enjoyable activity!

Shannon Leib (Balcarres School, Balcarres)

- We have excellent parent involvement in the school, including Aboriginal parents, with a high percentage of parents coming for parent-teacher interviews, as well as dropping into classroom or spending time with us as classroom volunteers.
Maryanne Reavie, Vice Principal (Jubilee School, Meadow Lake)
- The *First Nations' Culture Program* operating at Balcarres School on Friday mornings brings in resource people from the surrounding First Nations of Little Black Bear, Starblanket, Okanese and Peepeekisis. These people share their knowledge with the students in the areas of traditional values and customs, storytelling, arts and crafts, music and dance, history and healthy lifestyles. The program is coordinated in consultation with the education staff and interested parents from the First Nations.
- One parent has organized a singing group that practices on Friday mornings. This group, along with the File Hills dancers, will perform at St. Henry's School in Melville for the school's KIDS CONVENTION, and at Balcarres School during one of the cultural days in March.
Rose Alma Bellegarde (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- I invited a parent to talk to my class on Native culture. She brought in her jingle dress. She told us about the significance of Powwows and some of the dances. She did a wonderful job of speaking to the children, and we all learned a great deal.
Trina Templeton (Alexandra Elementary School, Moose Jaw)
- To culminate our month of studying First Nations people and culture we will be having a supper (consisting of buffalo stew, bannock, corn, tea, and juice) and a short program to demonstrate and explain our new knowledge. These festivities will include parents and community members.
- We have also invited a First Nations speaker to tell legends to our students.
Terry Kelln (Tompkins School, Tompkins)
- We get our parents involved by having them come to class and make soup and bannock with the students to sell for school fundraisers.
Kathleen Raabel, (Fort Livingston School, Pelly)

c. Involvement of Other Community Members

- Staff visited five reserves to build bridges between the city school and the reserves that contribute many children to the school. Members of reserve schools are coming to visit Pleasant Hill School. This is a good sharing opportunity.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- We are using the Cree/Michif language in the classroom and involving Aboriginal role models and community members in the school. We attend cultural events throughout the year and are involved in outdoor education activities. The school is involved in the NORTEP (Northern Teacher Education Program) student placement program and staff members take part in professional development with focus on Aboriginal issues.

Valley View School, Beauval

- We invited an Indian author to school to read to our class and discuss their story and/or legend.
K.Piller and G. Tamblyn (Dr. Brass School, Yorkton)
- First Nations and Métis resource people and members from the heritage community that have been visitors to classrooms include: Gayle Weenie, Saskatoon Catholic Schools Resource Teacher, Rev. Danny Umpherville, SUNTEP students, St. Mary's OSKIYAK Song and Dance Troupe for public performance of pow-wow dancing, hoop dancing, and singing. Interested students could learn hoop dancing from the performers. Joe Gallagher, Métis singer; Grace Despina, beading and University of Saskatchewan graduate students in Archaeology
Laura Foley, Principal (St. George School)
- A group of First Nations students at Joe Duquette School are reviving an ancient art. They're painting clay pots. This may not sound remarkable unless you realize that the construction and design of the pots, paints, and the motif embellishments are all faithful to the way the Great Plains Indians made their pots more than a thousand years ago. The pottery project, which is being spearheaded by local archaeologist Muriel Carlson, is the continuation of a program she started at Wanuskewin in which 'We took 12 students for eight weeks and taught them to make pottery the way their ancestors did'. Carlson says "[t]he project at Joe Duquette is a continuing program to reintroduce Native pottery-making to young Native people." She is encouraged by the interest that's coming from various quarters, including the Saskatchewan Craft Council. The hope is that eventually the students will be able to produce pots for sale. "[I]f interest is high enough, this could be a semi-economic venture for the students of Joe Duquette School".
Darlene Polachic (Saskatoon Sun, March 8, 1998)
- *Queen Mary Mediation Program* - A restorative justice collaborative pilot project between Justice, Social Services, the Aboriginal women's group and Queen Mary School. The objective is to provide a mediation alternative for students in conflict with the law or within the school environment. The program helps young offenders avoid the courts and encourages responsibility. The objectives are to keep children out of involvement with the law by promoting empowerment, self-determination, and responsibility for ones' own wellbeing.
- The mediation process involves an adapted sentencing circle approach where all members of the circle play a role in the mediation process. The project has been operational since September 1997 and very successful to date.
Faylene Stupnikoff (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)
- *The Hunger and Community Kitchen Breakfast Club* program grew out of the life-skills training program into a valuable volunteer and employee program. Individuals who received their training at the community kitchen run *The Breakfast Club*. The community volunteers are in the school almost daily to help with the snack and lunch programs and to do food preparation for special events. This community kitchen program has provided the volunteers with great leadership skills and personal empowerment.
Faylene Stupnikoff (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)
- Queen Mary Community School works closely with the West Flat Community Centre organized by the West Flat Citizens Group. Some of the current and past after-school programs include nature trails trips, native handicrafts, bannock

making, beading, house-wise, Red Cross babysitting, young artists club, cooking, adopt a grandparent, let's learn to speak Cree, hide painting, square dancing, share and learn, and sign language.

Faylene Stupnikoff (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)

- The Grade 5 students and special education classes went to our local art gallery for a showing of Brian Marion's paintings. While there, they were told of Creation by Brian according to Saulteaux legend and given insight into the roles of people, animals, and nature in Saulteaux history. Brian then came to our school and gave an art workshop to the students based on the Creation legend.
T. Hall (Fairview Elementary, Yorkton)
- Aboriginal people come in to the school to provide presentations during student workshops that include careers and Native arts and crafts. A mentorship program runs in conjunction with the local Friendship Centre.
Mr. L. Wentland, principal (C.J. Houston School, Yorkton)
- A cultural camp is offered to students from Grade 1 to 12 every year in late winter. Students are selected at random to go on one of four camps each year. It is the goal of the program to offer every student the opportunity to go to at least one of the camps while they are a student at Twin Lakes School.
- Community volunteers and teachers lead students through activities. They engage in activities such as traditional food preparation, hunting, fishing with nets, trapping, and oral history through legends. The response from the students and the community has been very favourable.
Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows
- We invited a storyteller to our class. This enhanced the Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum and gave the students an Aboriginal perspective. Having a First Nations parent or volunteer come in to teach an art activity, such as beadwork or making dream catchers, is also very enjoyable. Displaying the artwork made by the students gives them a sense of pride.
- We incorporated Aboriginal content into the curriculum and increased cultural awareness by having the students make research posters on the various First Nations people of Canada, read literature by Aboriginal authors, and going to reserves to observe fellow students taking part in their extracurricular activities.
Shannon Pal and Janis Dougherty (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- Indian Head School benefits from the work of an Aboriginal liaison worker who has been helpful in making the Aboriginal students feel comfortable in and proud of their schools, increasing attendance by Aboriginal children, and making visits to the homes of Aboriginal families with students in the division's schools.
Patty Lou Schmidt (Indian Head School, Indian Head)
- Last year, through the Indian and Métis Education Development program (IMED) grant, we secured funds to hold a one-day conference for students to help them develop an awareness of native culture. It was also designed to have teachers become more aware of the excellent resources in the community that would help them to incorporate Indian/Métis content into their curriculum. The day was a tremendous success thanks to Joe Pelletier and Melinda Redman, our special consultants who coordinated many of our great speakers. Students and parents had many positive comments about the day.

- This year our teachers have been inviting Indian/Métis resource speakers into class throughout the year, rather than just on a one-day basis.
Doug Exner (St. Joan of Arc School, Regina)

2. CROSS CULTURAL EXPERIENCES

Teaching staff and students have participated in events or activities that have helped provide a deeper understanding of First Nations and Métis culture, beliefs, practices and contemporary issues. These activities also provide members of the Aboriginal communities with opportunities to learn more about what is happening in the school systems in an open and sharing environment. These cross-cultural experiences include both classroom activities and participation based activities, and were found to benefit students, staff and community members alike.

a. Participation-based Experiences

- Ms. Schmidt involves her Grade 10 Native Studies class in a sweat lodge ceremony that is put on by local Elders. Before attending the ceremony the students learn about spirituality through in-depth classroom work and by inviting Elders to discuss the beliefs and values associated with the sweat lodge and their culture. The class also takes part in talking circles in the school as a way of better understanding Aboriginal practices.
Patty Lou Schmidt (Indian Head School, Indian Head)
- A cultural camp is offered to students in Grade 1 to 12 every year in late winter. Students are selected at random to go on one of four camps each year. It is the goal of the program to offer every student the opportunity to go to at least one of the camps while they are a student at Twin Lakes School.
- Community volunteers and teachers lead students through numerous traditional activities. They engage in activities such as food preparation, hunting, fishing with nets, trapping, and oral history through legends. The response from the students and the community has been very favourable.
Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows
- Gull Lake Elementary School and Hazlet School are focused on First Nations learning and awareness and have student activities throughout a one to two week period. These two schools will participate in a Tipi raising ceremony and dance demonstration hosted at Hazlet School. Gull Lake and Tompkins students will be bussed to Hazlet to attend.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76)
- *The First Nations' Culture Program* operating at Balcarres School on Friday mornings brings in resource people from the surrounding First Nations of Little Black Bear, Starblanket, Okanese and Peepeekisis. These people share their knowledge with the students in the areas of traditional values and customs, storytelling, arts and crafts, music and dance, history and healthy lifestyles. The

program is coordinated in consultation with the education staff and interested parents from the First Nations.

- One parent has organized a singing group that practices on Friday mornings. This group, along with the File Hills dancers, will perform at St. Henry's School in Melville for the school's KIDS CONVENTION, and at Balcarres School during one of the cultural days in March.

Rose Alma Bellegarde (Balcarres School, Balcarres)

- The Cross Cultural Ad Hoc Committee (Moose Jaw Roman Catholic Separate School Division No. 22 and the educational community) has devised a comprehensive training program for educators, students and parents to address Saskatchewan's changing demographic situation. This program seeks to reach the wider educational community and provide more experiential cultural encounters. For 1997-98 this includes:

- ▶ Providing educators from all participating organizations (Moose Jaw Separate School Division, SIAST, Hunger in Moose Jaw, etc), employees and parents of chosen students with an opportunity to meet with Elders over the course of three, half-day workshops.
- ▶ Providing students with a cross-cultural training program. First Nations perspectives will be more explicitly and intentionally integrated into certain curricula and Elders will have a teaching role.
- ▶ Providing educators and parents of involved students with an opportunity to participate in a two-day conference at the Piapot Reserve. This will include participation in the pipe ceremony, sweat lodge ceremony, talking circles and traditional feast. Students will take part in a similar experience later in the year.

- This training program is based on a model that has proven its effectiveness in promoting positive understandings between the cultures.

Claude Morin, Coordinator (Cross Cultural Ad-Hoc Committee, Moose Jaw)

- Various art education and social studies teachers coordinated a First Nations Cultural Experience that involved a daylong field trip to Piapot First Nation. The trip involves meeting First Nations people, including Elders and participating in ceremonies like the sweat lodge. We have also included activities from the *Métis Dance kit* and *Let's Dance: Indian Social and Cultural Dances* from Saskatchewan Education.

Renee Kammer (St. Michael School, Moose Jaw)

- In Grade 5 or 6, classroom teachers do a unit either on Aboriginal Legends and Stories or on Contemporary First Nations Life. This unit is done in the winter out of respect for the tradition of telling stories only when the snow is on the ground. This unit has involved a day trip to Wanuskewin and/or participation in the cross-cultural outdoor education experience at Blackstrap Outdoor Education Centre called *Respect the Earth*.

Laura Foley, Principal (St. George School, Saskatoon)

- St. George School has been involved with the St. Mary's Community School with the Grace Adam Metawewinihk Archaeological Project. This project started 5 years ago and involved several schools working together on an archaeological dig in the St. Mary's Park. It has allowed Grade 7 and 8 students to learn more about

archaeology with University of Saskatchewan archaeology graduate students. Two mini-sessions of six weeks each fall and spring have been run for students. Students have explored basic archaeological principles in the classroom and then implemented their knowledge in the actual excavation at the park.

- The programme opens annually with the participating schools gathering together and an Elder blessing the project. For the last 2 years, students from St. George School and St. Mary's Community School have worked together on an Archaeological Day in the park. The students participated in precontact activities like fire starting, flint knapping, petroglyph making, pottery firing, and traditional cooking. This day helps make the excavation come alive. In addition, the involvement of Elders, parents and other community members has provided cross-cultural awareness for the non-Aboriginal students and volunteers.

Laura Foley, Principal (St. George School, Saskatoon)

- Archaeological programming in conjunction with University of Saskatchewan archaeology graduate students has exposed Grade 7 and 8 students to classroom instruction regarding the terms and concepts of the archaeological discipline with some hands on activities, an on-site archaeological excavation, and post excavation exercises including artifact cataloguing and modules on stratigraphy and context. The project provides aboriginal students with a direct link to their cultural past in a unique and interesting setting. The project involves two inner city schools (Pleasant Hill Community School and St. Mary's Community School) and a suburban school (St. George School), providing a good cross-cultural experience for the students. Elders are involved by giving blessings at the beginning of each six-week session followed by some type of special activity. This provides Elders an opportunity to speak about the project and demonstrates to students the importance of listening to their Elders.

St. Mary's Community School, Saskatoon

b. Classroom or Fieldtrip Experiences

- Betty McKenna, an Aboriginal resource person and Elder, is invited to the school to discuss family history and genealogy in the context of her First Nation background (e.g. naming practices). Children and teachers find this very enjoyable, informative, and interesting.

Darla Cornish (Prince Arthur School, Moose Jaw)

- The value of respect is extremely important in First Nations cultures. Invite an Elder or community member into your room to speak on its importance. This is an excellent opportunity for storytelling on this topic. Ask around to find resource people from your neighbouring reserve who may want to volunteer to do this. Co-ordinating a visit and story several times a year would be ideal.

- Carry the theme of respect through the year. This is an excellent classroom management theme (respect for others and their property, respect for teachers) and it works well with other themes (Environment – respect for Mother Earth).

Shannon Leib (Balcarres School, Balcarres)

- Indian and Métis Kids Conference

- Last year, through the Indian and Métis Education Development program (IMED) grant, we secured funds to hold a one-day conference for students to help them develop an awareness of native culture. It was also designed to have teachers become more aware of the excellent resources in the community that would help them to incorporate Indian/Métis content into their curriculum. The day was a tremendous success thanks to Joe Pelletier and Melinda Redman, our special consultants who coordinated many of our great speakers. Students and parents had many positive comments about the day.
Doug Exner (St. Joan of Arc School, Regina)
- The Grade 4 and 10 class visited Okanese First Nation in 1997. We enjoyed a warm welcoming reception, including speeches from the chief and other band executive members. Elders came and shared the history of the reserve and its people with us, and then we shared in a hearty lunch. Some residents of the reserve were on hand to explain the significance of the drum then showed us a sweat lodge and took us around the community, a buffalo ranch and a cattle station.
- I had many positive comments from the students that went on this field trip. It gave them a better understanding of how many of their classmates live.
Cindy Phillips and Karen Arnason (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- The Grade 9 class attended a feast and round dance at Kakisheway School, while the Grade 10 class attended Treaty Four days in Fort Qu'Appelle.
- We have a Native teacher, assistant and liaison worker who works with students from the Sakimay Reserve on English and Mathematics.
Judy Somoleski and Jamie Gorchynski (Grenfell High School, Grenfell)
- Staff visited five reserves to build bridges between the city school and the reserves that contribute many children to the school. Members of reserve schools are coming to visit Pleasant Hill School. This is a good sharing opportunity for staff members and the reserve community.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- I have a First Nations unit which I use in a 'Mosaic study', where students choose a culture they want to learn more about. I do this in groups or on an individual basis. I also do international studies in Social Studies that the First Nations unit would fit into. I attempt to provide cross-cultural experiences for all students of all backgrounds. My focus is not centred on First Nations but, rather, all cultures and the problems they face. If we celebrate Cultural Week, it must be a mosaic celebration.
Roxanne Stynsky (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- Most new curriculum contains material on sensitivity and teachers are encouraged to make sure these sections are taught.
Robert Wheeler (Rockglen School, Rockglen)

3. CURRICULUM CONTENT, RESOURCES AND DEVELOPMENT

Educators and resource developers have increased Aboriginal content and perspectives in curricula and materials to provide greater insight into the contributions Aboriginal peoples have made to Canada's history and development, and to teach students about the various cultures. Positive steps are also being taken to directly involve First Nations and Métis people in curriculum and resource development. Not only does this more accurately reflect the history and heritage of Saskatchewan and Canada, it has the effect of motivating and bolstering the self-esteem of Aboriginal students.

a. Increasing First Nations and Métis Content and Perspectives

- The Cree language and cultural program at Hartley Clark Elementary School is backed with the core French offering. This program includes both language instruction and cultural programming.
Denis Tetu, Director of Education (Northern Lakes School Division #64, Spiritwood)
- Dene language classes are taught in Grades 1 to 5 and Grade 9. In class we use Native legends to teach English language arts concepts. The school drama classes use First Nations plays, and school clubs and classes make traditional crafts such as beadwork and dream catchers.
Father Gamache Memorial School, Fond du Lac
- We used Aboriginal content curriculum materials such as books by B. Wheeler, T. Poririer, F. Plain, C.J. Taylor, J. Ratt and Vera Trembach. As a result of using these books, several activities were devised for the children such as a cooking activity where we made fried bannock that we ate with chokecherry jelly. We thought of making rabbit soup but settled on hamburger soup.
- The indoor gym was made into a teepee using a tarp and 4 short poles - this was used as a Reading Teepee.
Connie Senkiw and Beverly Smoke (Fishing Lake N/K Band School, Wadena)
- Legend Writing – almost every location in Saskatchewan has an unusual or unique site or attraction (e.g. rock paintings, a deep gully, a strangely shaped rock). Have the students go through the writing process and tell a story similar to an Indian legend about how that thing came to be. It's fun! My class and I worked on a story called "The Thunderbirds of Pinehouse Lake".
Thomas R. Flath (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- Grades 4 to 6 performed a play after studying the history of the Métis people and their leader, Louis Riel. The students made red sashes, danced a Métis jig (with a caller and fiddle player) and made their various props (snow shoes, surveying equipment, maps, trial box, etc.) Telling this story through "play" brought the students to a different level of thinking, Each student was able to answer the question in the play 'Did Louis Riel deserve to die?' with reasons to support their answer.
Janet Tetreau (McCord School, McCord)

- An excellent teacher resource is Rupert Ross' *Dancing with a Ghost*. He explains roles of Elders and their changing roles.
- For the 'heroes' unit, talk about community heroes and have students talk to or interview local heroes. Use the short story *Heroes in Our Own Communities* by Peter Cole to facilitate discussion.
Paula Demenciuk (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- Whenever possible, the Métis /northern culture is integrated into the provincial curriculum.
Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows
- We attempt to use local people, history and resources in our classes. Resources written by Métis people are particularly relevant, and there are many commercially available resources that are useful.
Ron Skage (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- We invited a storyteller to our class. This enhanced the Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum and gave the students an Aboriginal perspective. Having a First Nations parent or volunteer come in to teach an art activity, such as beadwork or making dream catchers, is also very enjoyable. Displaying the artwork made by the students gives them a sense of pride.
- We incorporated Aboriginal content into the curriculum and increased cultural awareness by having the students make research posters on the various First Nations people of Canada, read literature by Aboriginal authors, and going to reserves to observe fellow students taking part in their extracurricular activities.
Shannon Pal and Janis Dougherty (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- We discuss the tipi and the significance of the poles, designs, etc. The students make and design their own miniature tipis and we set up a small tipi model in our room. The class focuses on the pole meanings and relate it to the 7 Sauleaux teachings.
- We carry the theme of First Nations culture into all subject areas:
 - ▶ Art - Star blanket and tipi design
 - ▶ Dance - Pow Wow and round dance movement
 - ▶ Music- Beat and rhythm
 - ▶ Social Studies - Compare the government structures of Province and Reserve
 - ▶ Science - Endangered animals; the eagle and its significance
 - ▶ Health - Indigenous food groups and traditional ways of healing
 - ▶ Language Arts - Elders tell stories and legends
 - ▶ Math - Geometry of the circle*Donna Reynolds (Wesley M School, Muskowekwan Band No. 85, Lestock)*
- March is Indian/Métis /Inuit month at Tompkins School, a K-9 school. Students learn around a common theme, particularly focussed learning about First Nations in Art, Language Arts, Social Studies, and Phys. Ed. March 27 is a wrap up activity day for students who host their community members and parents by displaying their work, performing, and hosting a legend telling session by a First Nations Elder.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76)

- The Southwest Shared Services, Resource based Learning consultant has provided a resource kit focused on First Nations. The kit includes such materials as a CD-ROM that does storytelling in four languages, Web site connections, picture books, art activities such as totem pole carving and leather painting, legends, etc. This kit will be shared among the schools within the Gull Lake School Division, Maple Creek SD, Leader SD, Shaunavon SD, Eastend SD, and Christ the King School in Shaunavon.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76)
- Our Grade 4 class, as part of our unit on the culture of Plains Indians, did a study of Indian legends. We have several legends on video as well as a good selection of books. We compare and contrast the legends in regard to characters, settings, problems and solutions. As well, we discuss the moral or lesson of the legend. Then we compare them to Aesop's Fables and how they both teach lessons about values and lifestyles.
Bev Haugen (Grenfell Elementary School, Grenfell)
- We incorporate Indian legends and the trickster character into our Language Arts curriculum. The students write their own trickster storybooks. Traditional dance and art and crafts from various Indian groups across Canada are used in the Arts curriculum.
Collen Robinson (Fort Livingston School, Pelly)
- I use the book *Retold Native American Myths* by Robert Franklin Gish from Mind Resources Inc. It comes with a teachers guide and reproducible contents, and has good content regarding legends and spirituality.
Mary Lou Rupcich (Grenfell High School, Grenfell)
- *The Flower Beadwork People* book provides an excellent vehicle for arts education activities. This includes incorporating the themes of the book into dance, drama and visual art.
Jacki Scott (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- We always relate to or refer to the Circle of Life/Sacred Hoop/Medicine Wheel and all its teachings. We use these relationships in each of the subjects whenever they are suitable and appropriate.
Lorraine Woynarski (Lestock School, Lestock)
- I use the Talking Circle often because it gives everyone a chance to share and it teaches respectful listening. I use it in a variety of situations, but especially like it at the end of the day to consolidate and recall learning and to end the day on a pleasant note.
- We sit in a circle on the floor. We have a special piece of driftwood that we pass around. Whoever is holding the stick is the only child who may talk. The teacher may talk at anytime because the children often need hints or further questions before they are ready to respond.
Sue Speller (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- I have used *ABC's of Our Spiritual Connection* (Kim Soo Goodtrack) as an effective resource for kindergarten children. We discuss being connected to everything of the earth. We get connected to each other sitting cross-legged in a circle and holding hands while praying or singing. The kids love it!
Sharon Pulvermacher (St. Andrew School, Regina)

- I read the students excerpts from an article on picture writing (cave drawings, hieroglyphics, Native picture writing). I then reviewed an overhead containing many symbols that Native people used with the students. I put a few short notes on the overhead using these symbols and we decoded these together. Afterwards, the children made up their own notes or stories.
Trina Templeton (Alexandra Elementary School, Moose Jaw)
- In Grade 12, a major emphasis is placed on the concept of 'land' and what it means in relation to Canada's development. This is studied from the viewpoints of Europeans and the Iroquois Confederacy, and its impact on First Nations cultures.
- The beliefs, religions, customs, traditions, ways of life and family lives of Saskatchewan Native groups were studied by the students.
- Students also had to give themselves a new, Aboriginal name and devise a symbol explaining the name.
Calvin Ulmer (North Valley High School, Lemberg)
- One idea that I have, but not yet attempted, is to modify the Biology 20 Agricultural Botany unit to make it more relevant to the lives of northern students. Some of my ideas are to include wild rice operations, medicinal plants and logging operations. I believe that the wild rice and logging operations would also help to identify career opportunities for the students.
Connie Wirachowsky (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- In Social Studies I do a culture unit for each grade level. I concentrate on Canada's heritage that includes Métis and Indian culture. In Social 30, the students do a resource-based unit on the Northwest and settlement that covers such topic as the Red River Resistance, Northwest Resistance, Treaties of the Northwest and the Métis and Louis Riel.
Vic Stynsky (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- Teachers are encouraged to incorporate Aboriginal content into each unit. Introducing and using Aboriginal content is very easy to do and can be done in a variety of ways. I am listing a few that can be done at the Grade 3 level:
 - ▶ Using simple Cree words like counting to ten in Cree, or using the Cree words for Grandmother and Grandfather (usually one of the children can teach the words to go along with the unit)
 - ▶ Science: chemical change could be shown by baking bannock
 - ▶ North American legends often tell stories about the constellations, and can be incorporated into the unit on the Solar System.
 - ▶ Endangered animals and animal research: the book called *Keepers of the Earth* has many concepts and understandings that can be used during the unit.
 - ▶ Language Arts: North American Native Legends are introduced.
- The Saskatchewan Education documents *Language Arts for Indian and Métis Students: Adapting the Elementary Level Curriculum* and *Indian and Métis Mathematics Unit for the Elementary Level* offer excellent suggestions to classroom teachers. In our school, we are promoting incorporation of Aboriginal content into each unit of study that teachers prepare.
Maryanne Reavie, Vice Principal (Jubilee School, Meadow Lake)

- For elementary grades and ESL students, the use of chants, poems and songs pertaining to the theme increases vocabulary and sight-word reading. Daily reading and singing (lots of repetition) is a great teaching tool. I use chant/poem books that I put together for the students from each unit that I do.
Alice Hansen (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- We use songs before a very structured reading lesson or just to start the day. The songs are typed out in large print and the children are asked to track them as they listen to the tape. I use songs from Red Grammer's tape *Teaching Peace*. Songs like "I Think You're Wonderful" and "See Me Beautiful" build self esteem while others teach acceptance of all races. We use a new song every week and on Fridays we choose favourites.
Arlen Natomagag (Minahik Waskahigan School, Pinehouse Lake)
- The division jointly operates a 'Store Front' school operation (Up-Town school). This is a tri-party agreement operation with the Witchehan Lake Band, Northwest Regional College and the Northern Lakes School Division. Each party agrees to collaborate in the delivery of educational programming in a single site that provides students with access to programming that best suites their specific needs.
- The curriculum is aimed at assisting students to re-enter and/or remain in the education system in a non-threatening environment, at providing students with positive personal and communication skills and enhancing self-esteem. The self-paced curriculum includes correspondence programs, computer programs, work experience/transition to work programs and culturally based programs. All students have access to computer training and the work-experience module. Indian Studies programming will be aimed at instilling cultural identity and Cree Language fluency.
Denis Tetu, Director of Education (Northern Lakes School Division #64, Spiritwood)
- We have incorporated Aboriginal content into many areas of our curriculum:
 - ▶ Films are viewed for aboriginal themes and stereotyping;
 - ▶ Our Aboriginal Liaison Teacher teaches Native Studies and does counselling in addition to teaching jigging and traditional crafts;
 - ▶ Teacher aides with Aboriginal backgrounds are good role models and work with students in-group settings during the week and in the evenings;
 - ▶ A Native mural was developed by our Aboriginal children; and
 - ▶ Grade 12 English class studied poetry and short stories by Aboriginal writers on culture, spirituality, nostalgia, etc.
L.P. Miller Comprehensive School, Nipawin
- In the Language Arts curriculum we study Indian legends and we have been trying to accumulate newer printed material in our Resource Centre. We have a number of small single legend books plus the *Keeper* series that we try to purchase as they are printed. Students really enjoy legends, and in particular the *Keeper* series.
- Projects involving legends that I have tried recently:
 - ▶ Students read legends and try to discover what the legend was used to teach, and what can be learned about early people's lifestyles;
 - ▶ Students learn a legend to be told orally as a story telling assignment (to emphasize that legends were passed on orally);

- ▶ We also discuss why legends are often listed as "told to__by__" instead of having a one-person author like the printed matter students utilize.
Carol C. Clarke (D'Arcy Elementary School, D'Arcy)
- We often forget the value of sharing, free play, and discovery beyond Kindergarten but students can learn and enjoy learning through these strategies. For example - cultural games and dance. Set up stations around the gym with various Aboriginal games and activities. Allow students to choose their stations and explore through first-hand experience rather than being lectured/hearing about it.
Lisa Lenkart (Wesley M School, Muskowekwan Band, Lestock)
- My initial unit for K-6 is on the early history of dance. Inclusive in this study are the First Nations people. I have choreographed a dance that is completed by the students to the song *Colors of the Wind*. The dance suggests the growth lines of the tree, the running of the animals free, the unity of people and the dancers' oneness with the earth.
- In studying First Nations people, I begin with the movie *Pocahontas* and discuss stereotyping and the need to be concerned with what the media presents as being accurate. We continue to study the song *Colors of the Wind* and learn that all that comes from 'Mother Earth' is again only borrowed for our short time on earth and then is returned. I am clear to maintain that our religious thinking varies from family to family; however, with the current concern with our environment this line of thinking certainly goes hand in hand with our recycling.
- Further, I discuss the representation of colour in the first Nations community. We explore the meaning of various colours and further explore various symbols. I complete various activities to include the following:
 - ▶ Coloured symbols on burlap
 - ▶ Footprints using the six basic colours applied to paper
 - ▶ The building of a small-scale tipi and discussion of the various parts of a tipi
 - ▶ Métis dances - Duck Dance, Rabbit Dance, Quadrille
- I have also included in other classes the various uses of sign language, making of food, bead work and stitching. I have studied prejudice and the changing demographics of Saskatchewan and how this will apply to the future in education.
Cheryl Mantei (Hillside School, Estevan)
- The students made false-face masks out of plaster of paris and then painted them. I find a great way to introduce the activity was to tell the students about the legend behind the false-face masks. Once the masks are complete, the students can wear them in a retelling of the legends. In this way, they can take part in drama without their faces being seen.
Jennifer Mahlberg (St. Michael's Community School, Prince Albert)
- We wrote our own legends modeled after some "how" and "why" legends of Wesakechuck (some Aboriginal groups advised us to do so, some did not). We also made single strand beaded necklaces with clasps and learned the daisy stitch. We'll try to make moccasins out of felt and create our own patterns.
Anesia Boutin (Tompkins School, Tompkins)

- I teach Grade 1. To teach Indian/Métis education, I use a lot of legends and Vera Trembach big and little books. The book I particularly liked was *Mittens with Quills*. It was an easy book to read and the class read along with me. After we read it we made mittens out of paper and decorated them with toothpicks dyed with food colouring to represent the porcupine quills. Each child designed their own diamond shape with which to decorate the mittens. It was effective and easy for the Grade 1 students.
Paulette Bradley (Gull Lake Elementary, Gull Lake)
- English Language A30 Course - abundant Aboriginal literature used, and both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are encouraged to explore culture and traditions in their writing.
Hanley Composite School, Hanley
- SaskEd has pulled together some excellent resource materials in the *Indian and Métis Education Development* binder. A good video resource is *For Angela* (NFB). A good book resource is *Returning to the Teachings* by Rupert Ross - something all teachers should read.
Debra Hurton (Humboldt Collegiate, Humboldt)
- Staff at St. Angela's School has incorporated classroom activity ideas from the *Indian and Métis Awareness Week Guide*. This includes utilizing the recommended curriculum resources as well as studying legends, story telling, Indian world view, Aboriginal issues and current events, taking part in field trips to Wanuskewin, crafts and art, music, dance and drama, and food.
Marion Harder (St. Angela School, Saskatoon)
- The school has drama presentations on Native folklore, such as *Coyotes Cry*.
Mr. L. Wentland, Principal (C.J. Houston School, Yorkton)

b. Participation in Curriculum and Resource Development

- To date our students have published several books. Some are stories in Cree. One is on the Traditional Code of Ethics. The students have done all the artwork as well. We are in the process of completing a book on our Elders Program. The book talks about the program in our school and what it means to the students, staff and community.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- We interviewed Elders about the history and culture of the reserve, as well as the legends the Elders knew. This included stories and history passed on from their parents and grandparents. This material was translated and edited to form Social Studies units for each grade from Grades 1 to 9. Elders were credited throughout the books and little other material was utilized - just the Elders talking.
Stephen Davidson (Chief Mistawasis School, Leask)
- One component of the Grade 7, 8, and 9 Social Studies maintenance plan, as it relates to curriculum, has been a commitment to develop a resource-based and resource supported unit of study on First Nations at each grade level.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76)
- Students become the teachers program'. The students (Grade 4's) are provided with a number of resources on the Plains Indians. They are broken into four groups with guiding questions for each group. Each group has a particular area

to deal with (i.e. transportation, housing, traditions, etc.). Upon completion of their reports, the groups report to the rest of the classroom. In addition to their reports, the groups must choose a legend to memorize and retell to the class. They also are responsible for coming up with an activity for the entire class that will reinforce the content of their reports. They also develop a board game (trivia) for future use and spare time activity.

Lori Poitras (Fort Qu'Appelle Elementary, Fort Qu'Appelle)

- We are doing curriculum and book publishing to save the Dene language. The school practices Dene instruction and promotion of Dene beliefs and values in the classrooms. Teachers are adapting regular curriculum to incorporate Dene perspectives.

Eileen McDonald, Director of Education (Northern Lights School Division, La Ronge)

- The Northern Lights School Division has developed books and curriculum resources for Indian languages in Northern Saskatchewan.

Josie Searson (Northern Lights School Division, La Ronge)

- The Northern Lights School Division No. 113 continues to be involved in the promotion and support of Aboriginal languages - Dene and Cree. This is a very high priority for the Division. The Aboriginal Language Team has been focussed in the area of Aboriginal language materials development and field support for teachers and schools offering language programming in both languages.

Josie Searson and Rita Lowenberg (Northern Lights School Division No. 113, La Ronge)

- We had our Grade 10 Native Studies class and Grade 4 class make a video together, based on a legend. The students got together and re-told the legend in their own words and then made a scene to match their part. We videotaped the still-picture scene and the students reading their parts. We culminated the project with a juice and popcorn-screening day.

- *Karen Arnason and Cindy Phillips (Balcarres School, Balcarres)*

4. CRITICAL THINKING ACTIVITIES

The utilization of critical thinking activities is an effective instructional strategy when incorporating First Nations and Métis content and perspectives in curriculum. This helps both the student and teacher examine their biases, their worldview, and critically examine resources and gain perspective on the context in which information was gathered and recorded. Critical thinking skills can be honed in discussions and through participating in Aboriginal cultural events.

- Schools should subscribe to Native publications, provincial newspapers and *MacLean's* magazine. Students need to learn about objectivity, subjectivity and bias in writing. We have students select articles regarding First Nations people and make comparative critiques from publication to publication. The students, then, present their critiques to their classmates.

Stan Dirkson, (Whitecalf Collegiate, Lebret)

- Because we do not have easy access to personnel of Indian/Métis heritage and because this heritage is an important aspect of our curriculum, we travel to sites where we can get the correct information.
- For instance, we do a unit on Fort Carlton, Batoche and the St. Laurent Mission. Background lessons are taught and a learning centre is used prior to the trip. Highlights of this unit include:
 - ▶ The fur trade and the changes it caused
 - ▶ The NWMP
 - ▶ The Rebellion [Resistance] of 1885
 - ▶ The historic and religious importance of the St. Laurent site mission
- Material is taught/learned from the point of view of the major groups involved (e.g. 1885 Resistance – viewpoints of the church, Métis, Indians, settlers, government, NWMP, army personnel, etc.) We then take a convoy with several parents and tent out at Fort Carlton and take in guided tours, hikes, assignments, etc., at each site. This last time I was able to find a guide of Métis heritage to take us through St. Laurent, too. I have done this trip every three years for the last 15 years.

Carol C. Clarke (D'Arcy Elementary School, D'Arcy)

- Ms. Schmidt involves her Grade 10 Native Studies class in a sweat lodge ceremony that is put on by local Elders. Before attending the ceremony the students learn about spirituality through in-depth classroom work and by inviting Elders to discuss the beliefs and values associated with the sweat lodge and their culture. The class also takes part in talking circles in the school as a way of better understanding Aboriginal practices.

Patty Lou Schmidt (Indian Head School, Indian Head)

- Last year, through the Indian and Métis Education Development program (IMED) grant, we secured funds to hold a one-day conference for students to help them develop an awareness of native culture. It was also designed to have teachers become more aware of the excellent resources in the community that would help them to incorporate Indian/Métis content into their curriculum. The day was a tremendous success thanks to Joe Pelletier and Melinda Redman, our special consultants who coordinated many of our great speakers. Students and parents had many positive comments about the day.

Doug Exner (St. Joan of Arc School, Regina)

- In studying First Nations people, I begin with the movie *Pocahontas* and discuss stereotyping and the need to be concerned with what the media presents as being accurate. I am clear to maintain that our religious thinking varies from family to family.

Cheryl Mantei (Hillside School, Estevan)

- Films are viewed for aboriginal themes and stereotyping.

L.P. Miller Comprehensive School, Nipawin

5. Language Instruction, Activities and Resources

Schools and teachers are taking initiatives to incorporate resource materials written in Aboriginal languages in their curriculum, develop their own Aboriginal language resources and programs, or invite resource people to introduce and teach Aboriginal languages. In this way students have the opportunity to maintain or learn their Aboriginal languages, or be introduced to the languages spoken by Saskatchewan's Aboriginal groups. This fosters an awareness of the linguistic diversity in the province and how important language is to the preservation of culture. Responses dealing with Aboriginal languages have been broken into three sections – language activities, language instruction and language resources.

a. Language Activities

- The Prince Albert Grand Council organized language festivals to elevate the profile of Indigenous languages in the Grand Council district. In Prince Albert on December 12, 1997, they hosted the First Nations Christmas Language Festival. Students from all the band schools under the umbrella of the Grand Council participated in this event. The event enhanced Indian language programs in all Indigenous languages in the district, such as Dene, Cree, and Dakota. The students and the teachers develop partnership skills and networking. There is a speech competition for every grade level in the student's indigenous language on the topic of "Why language and culture are important". This helps to build self-esteem and cultural awareness.

Delores Sand, Language Consultant (Prince Albert Grand Council, Prince Albert)

b. Language Instruction

- Cree language/cultural program at Hartley Clark Elementary School is backed with the core French offering. This program includes both language instruction and cultural programming.

Denis Tetu, Director of Education (Northern Lakes School Division #64, Spiritwood)

- The Dene Immersion program at Black Lake has children entering the school speaking 100% Dene in K-5. The students experience a gradual shift to English with the help of teacher associates who translate English to Dene for students to the Grade 5 level. The English-Dene balance is 50-50 at the Grade 3 level. This program, in conjunction with the Dene language program from Grade 3 to 9, helps the students maintain their Dene language as well as experience success in English.

Stan Johnson (Father Porte Dene Memorial School, Black Lake)

- Dene language classes are taught in Grades 1 to 5 and in Grade 9. In class we use Native legends to teach English language arts concepts. The school drama classes use First Nations plays.

Father Gamache Memorial School, Fond du Lac

- Every morning during announcements the students are given a Cree word of the day.

Gordon Denny Community School, La Ronge

- We are using the Cree/Michif language in the classroom and involve Aboriginal role models and community members in the school.
Valley View School, Beauval
- One of the ways we incorporate Aboriginal language into lessons at the Grade 3 level is by using simple Cree words like counting to ten in Cree, or using the Cree words for Grandmother and Grandfather (usually one of the children can teach the words to go along with the unit).
Maryanne Reavie, Vice Principal (Jubilee School, Meadow Lake)
- Queen Mary School works closely with the West Flat Community Centre organized by the West Flat Citizens Group. Some of the current and past after-school programs include nature trails trips, native handicrafts, bannock making, beading, house-wise, Red Cross babysitting, young artists club, cooking, adopt a grandparent, let's learn to speak Cree, hide painting, square dancing, share and learn, and sign language.
Faylene Stupnikoff (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)
- Beverly Smoke, our Teaching Associate, taught Saulteaux words and expressions to the kindergarten children related to our Indian Life and Culture theme.
Connie Senkiw and Beverly Smoke (Fishing Lake N/K Band School, Wadena)
- We learn the pronunciations of Saulteaux numbers and incorporate them into daily calendar activities. We also label the classroom in English, French, and Saulteaux. This could be extended to learning basic greetings, days of the week, months, and colours.
Kathleen Raabel (Fort Livingston School, Pelly)
- The 'Store Front' school operation (Up-Town school) is a tri-party agreement operation with the Witchehan Lake Band, Northwest Regional College and the Northern Lakes School Division. Each party agrees to collaborate in the delivery of educational programming that provides students with access to programming that best suites their specific needs.
- The curriculum is aimed at assisting students to re-enter and/or remain in the education system, at providing students with positive personal and communication skills, and enhancing self-esteem. The self-paced curriculum includes correspondence programs, computer programs, work experience/transition to work programs and culturally based programs. All students have access to computer training and the work-experience module. Indian Studies programming will be aimed at instilling cultural identity and Cree Language fluency.
Denis Tetu, Director of Education (Northern Lakes School Division #64, Spiritwood)

c. Language Resources

- Black Lake School Dene Language Resources: We are doing curriculum and book publishing to save the Dene language. The school practices Dene instruction and promotion of Dene beliefs and values in the classrooms. Teachers are adapting regular curriculum to incorporate Dene perspectives.
Eileen McDonald, Director of Education (Northern Lights School Division, La Ronge)

- The Northern Lights School Division has developed books and curriculum resources for Indian languages in Northern Saskatchewan.
Josie Searson (Northern Lights School Division, La Ronge)
- The Northern Lights School Division No. 113 continues to be involved in the promotion and support of Aboriginal languages - Dene and Cree. This is a very high priority for the Division. The Aboriginal Language Team has been focussed in the area of Aboriginal language materials development and field support for teachers and schools offering language programming in both languages.
Josie Searson and Rita Lowenberg (Northern Lights School division No. 113, La Ronge)
- Students interviewed Elders about the history and culture of the reserve. This included stories and history passed on from their parents and grandparents. We also included legends that the Elders know. This material was translated and edited to form Social Studies units for each grade from Grades 1 to 9. Elders were credited throughout the books and little other material was utilized - just the Elders talking.
Stephen Davidson (Chief Mistawasis School, Leask)
- To date our students have published several books. Some are stories in Cree. One is on the Traditional Code of Ethics. The students have done all the artwork as well. We are in the process of completing a book on our Elders Program. The book talks about the program in our school and what it means to the students, staff and community.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- The Southwest Shared Services, Resource based Learning consultant has provided a resource kit focused on First Nations. The kit includes such materials as a CD-ROM that does storytelling in four languages, Web site connections, picture books, art activities such as totem pole carving and leather painting, legends, etc. This kit will be shared among the schools within the Gull Lake School Division, Maple Creek SD, Leader SD, Shaunavon SD, Eastend SD, and Christ the King School in Shaunavon.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76, Gull Lake)

6. LITERACY ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMS

Educators are endeavouring to provide students and community members with opportunities to make reading more fun and interesting as a means to increase overall literacy. This includes involving students, parents and other community members in the development of materials, participating in classroom activities and creating increased interest in reading.

- To date our students have published several books. Some are stories in Cree. One is on the Traditional Code of Ethics. The students have done all the artwork as well. We are in the process of completing a book on our Elders Program. The book talks about the program in our school and what it means to the students, staff and community.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- We interviewed Elders about the history and culture of the reserve. This included stories and history passed on from their parents and grandparents.

We also included legends that the Elders know. This material was translated and edited to form Social Studies units for each grade from Grade 1 to 9. Elders were credited throughout the books and little other material was utilized - just the Elders talking.

Stephen Davidson (Chief Mistawasis School, Leask)

- Pleasant Hill has a *Breakfast and Book Club* that involves getting students, parents, community members, and teachers together once a week to have breakfast and read and discuss books. This club involves over 20 students.
 - The school also runs the *Astam Read With Me* program during school day and in evenings, bringing in guest readers and having community members, parents, and staff read with the children. This operates on an individual class and school wide basis. We have contests to see which classrooms can get the most parents/caregivers/community members to come out for a set number of evenings to participate in the *Astam Read With Me* program.
- Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Sasatoon)*
- We used Aboriginal content curriculum materials such as books by B. Wheeler, T. Poririer, F. Plain, C.J. Taylor, J. Ratt, and Vera Trembach. The indoor gym was made into a teepee using a tarp and 4 short poles - this was used as a Reading Teepee.
- Connie Senkiw and Beverly Smoke (Fishing Lake N/K Band School, Wadena)*
- I teach a group of Grade Two students who are experiencing difficulties in reading and who are predominantly First Nations. I arranged for a meeting at the Band Hall on the reserve. Students, as part of their language arts class, wrote a letter to their parents, inviting them to the workshop.
 - The students were also invited to attend. At the workshop, I did a demonstration lesson to show the parents how I was teaching reading. Then, while the students did an activity on their own, I talked with the parents about strategies they could use at home to help their children read.
 - Then, the students came back and the parents and children spent time reading together.

Laura Marzoff (Dr Isman Elementary School, Wolseley)

7. School Trips and Extracurricular Activities

School trips and extracurricular activities are effective means of supplementing course work and providing deeper insight into cultures and lifestyles. As well, the active and experiential learning often entailed through these programs is part of traditional Aboriginal education. These responses have been divided into two sections – activities and trips.

a. Activities

- A cultural camp is offered to students from Grade 1 to 12 every year in late winter. Students are selected at random to go on one of four camps each year. It is the goal of the program to offer every student the opportunity to go to at least one of the camps while they are a student at Twin Lakes School.
- Community volunteers and teachers lead students through numerous traditional activities. They engage in activities such as food preparation, hunting, fishing with nets, trapping, and oral history through legends. The response from the students and the community has been very favourable.
Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows
- Students can take part in the Awasis Dancers through the school and learn traditional First Nations dance. They get the opportunity to perform, helping to build pride and self-esteem in their culture.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)
- Queen Mary School works closely with the West Flat Community Centre organized by the West Flat Citizens Group to provide the *Queen Mary After School Programs*. Some of the current and past after school programs include nature trails trips, native handicrafts, bannock making, beading, house-wise, Red Cross babysitting, young artists club, cooking, adopt a grandparent, let's learn to speak Cree, hide painting, square dancing, share and learn, and sign language.
Faylene Stupnikoff, (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)
- To culminate our month of studying First Nations people and culture we will be having a supper (consisting of buffalo stew, bannock, corn, tea, and juice) and a short program to demonstrate and explain our new knowledge. These festivities will include parents and community members. We have invited a First Nations speaker to tell legends to our students.
Terry Kelln (Tompkins School, Tompkins)
- A group of First Nations students at Joe Duquette School are reviving an ancient art. They're painting clay pots. This may not sound remarkable unless you realize that the construction and design of the pots, paints, and the motif embellishments are all faithful to the way the Great Plains Indians made their pots more than a thousand years ago. The pottery project, which is being spearheaded by local archaeologist Muriel Carlson, is the continuation of a program she started at Wanuskewin in which "[w]e took 12 students for eight weeks and taught them to

make pottery the way their ancestors did". Carlson says "[t]he project at Joe Duquette School is a continuing program to reintroduce Native pottery-making to young Native people". She 's encouraged by the interest that's coming from various quarters, including the Saskatchewan Craft Council. The hope is that eventually the students will be able to produce pots for sale. "[I]f interest is high enough, this could be a semi-economic venture for the students of Joe Duquette School".

Darlene Polachic (Saskatoon Sun, March 8, 1998)

- The *First Nations' Culture Program* operating at Balcarres School on Friday mornings brings in resource people from the surrounding First Nations of Little Black Bear, Starblanket, Okanese and Peepeekisis. These people share their knowledge with the students in the areas of traditional values and customs, storytelling, arts and crafts, music and dance, history and healthy lifestyles. The program is coordinated in consultation with the education staff and interested parents from the First Nations.
- One parent has organized a singing group that practices on Friday mornings. This group, along with the File Hills dancers, will perform at St. Henry's School in Melville for the school's KIDS CONVENTION, and at Balcarres School during one of the cultural days in March.
Rose Alma Bellegarde (Balcarres School, Balcarres)

b. Trips

- Various art education and social studies teachers coordinated a First Nations Cultural Experience that involved a daylong field trip to Piapot First Nation. The trip involves meeting First Nations people, including Elders, and participating in ceremonies like the sweat lodge.
Renee Kammer (St. Michael School, Moose Jaw)
- Because we do not have easy access to personnel of Indian/Métis heritage and because this heritage is an important aspect of our curriculum, we travel to sites where we can get the correct information.
- For instance, we do a unit on Fort Carlton, Batoche and the St. Laurent Mission. Background lessons are taught and a learning centre is used prior to the trip. Highlights of this unit include:
 - ▶ The fur trade and the changes it caused
 - ▶ The NWMP
 - ▶ The Rebellion [Resistance] of 1885
 - ▶ The historic and religious importance of the St. Laurent site mission
- Material is taught/learned from the point of view of the major groups involved (e.g. 1885 Resistance – viewpoints of the church, Métis, Indians, settlers, government, NWMP, army personnel, etc.) We then take a convoy with several parents and tent out at Fort Carlton and take in guided tours, hikes, assignments, etc., at each site. This last time I was able to find a guide of Métis heritage to take us through St. Laurent, too. I have done this trip every three years for the last 15 years.
- We have a friend with a number of tipi rings in a pasture that we visited during an archaeological dig, and we have visited Wanuskewin twice.

- We have visited the Herschel Interpretive Centre to take in the Herschel archaeological petroglyphs, tipi rings, and displays on the early native ways of life. Jo Cooper, an artist of Métis heritage from Quebec, was an artist in residence in Herschel this year and last year. She discussed the buffalo, showed old skills (e.g. fire lighting), and had the children make a bracelet depicting the races on earth and the elements. This trip is close to D'Arcy and is fabulous.
Carol C. Clarke (D'Arcy Elementary School, D'Arcy)
- Regular classroom traditions include an annual unit in Grade 4 on the Northwest Rebellion and Louis Riel culminating in a daylong visit to Batoche. In Grade 5 or 6, classroom teachers do a unit either on Aboriginal Legends and Stories or on Contemporary First Nations Life. This unit is done in the winter out of respect for the tradition of telling stories only when the snow is on the ground. This unit has involved a day trip to Wanuskewin and/or participation in the cross-cultural outdoor education experience at Blackstrap Outdoor Education Centre called "Respect the Earth".
Laura Foley, Principal (St. George School, Saskatoon)
- At the beginning of the year the Grade 3 students visit the Treaty IV gathering in the Qu'Appelle Valley. We learn about the treaties and what they mean.
Donna Reynolds (Wesley M School, Muskowekwan Band No. 85, Lestock)
- The Grade 9 class attended a feast and round dance at Kakisheway School, while the Grade 10 class attended Treaty IV days in Fort Qu'Appelle.
Judy Somoleski and Jamie Gorchynski (Grenfell High School, Grenfell)
- In a kindergarten class, we began a theme of Indian life and culture. This began with a visit to the Band Office where the staff described what they did and what machines they used. We also visited a band run and operated convenience store. We then converted our Creative Writing Centre into the play Band Office furnished with electric typewriter, two computers, briefcases, letterhead paper and envelopes, pens, pencils, etc. The Imaginative Play Centre was converted into the Kylemore Convenience Store furnished with solar operated cash register and Canadian play money, shopping baskets, canned and boxed store goods, etc.
Connie Senkiw and Beverly Smoke (Fishing Lake N/K Band School, Wadena)
- The Grade 5 students and special education classes went to our local art gallery for a showing of Brian Marion's paintings. While there, they were told of Creation by Brian according to Saulteaux legend and given insight into the roles of people, animals, and nature in Saulteaux history. Brian then came to our school and gave an art workshop to the students based on the Creation legend.
T. Hall (Fairview Elementary, Yorkton)
- In some years, the Grade 12 Canadian Studies classes have gone to Wanuskewin and Batoche.

8. TRADITIONAL SKILLS ACTIVITIES

Some schools and teachers have been implementing activities that have successfully stimulated interest and pride in traditional Aboriginal knowledge and skills. In many cases, they combine interesting or unique curriculum activities with community

involvement and/or cross-cultural experiences. They succeed in meeting the educational and cultural needs of the students while providing a fun learning environment and utilizing local resource people.

- Students can take part in the Awasis Dancers through the school and learn traditional First Nations dance. They get the opportunity to perform, helping to build pride and self-esteem in their culture.

Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)

- Queen Mary Community School works closely with the West Flat Community Centre organized by the West Flat Citizens Group. Some of the current and past after-school programs include nature trails trips, native handicrafts, bannock making, beading, house-wise, Red Cross babysitting, young artists club, cooking, adopt a grandparent, let's learn to speak Cree, hide painting, square dancing, share and learn, and sign language.

Faylene Stupnikoff (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)

- The school offers students from Grade 1 to 12 the opportunity to participate in a cultural camp every year late in the winter. Students are selected at random to go on one of four camps each year. It is the goal of the program to offer every student the opportunity to go to at least one of the camps while they are a student at Twin Lakes School.

- Community volunteers and teachers lead students through activities. They engage in activities such as traditional food preparation, hunting, fishing with nets, trapping, and oral history through legends. The response from the students and the community has been very favourable.

Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows

- St. George School has been involved with St. Mary's Community School and the Grace Adam Metawewinihk Archaeological Project. This project started 5 years ago and involved several schools working on an actual archaeological dig in the St. Mary's Park organized by University of Saskatchewan archaeology graduate students. The programme opens annually with the participating schools gathering together and an Elder blessing the project. For the last 2 years, students from St. George and St. Mary's Community School have worked together on an Archaeological Day in the park. The students participated in precontact activities like fire starting, flint knapping, petroglyph making, pottery firing, and traditional cooking. This day helps make the excavation come alive.

Laura Foley, Principal (St. George School, Saskatoon)

- A group of First Nations students at Joe Duquette School are reviving an ancient art. They're painting clay pots. This may not sound remarkable unless you realize that the construction and design of the pots, paints, and the motif embellishments are all faithful to the way the Great Plains Indians made their pots more than a thousand years ago. The pottery project, which is being spearheaded by local archaeologist Muriel Carlson, is the continuation of a program she started at Wanuskewin in which "[w]e took 12 students for eight weeks and taught them to make pottery the way their ancestors did". Carlson says "[t]he project at Joe Duquette is a continuing program to reintroduce Native pottery-making to young Native people". She 's encouraged by the

interest that's coming from various quarters, including the Saskatchewan Craft Council. The hope is that eventually the students will be able to produce pots for sale. “[I]f interest is high enough, this could be a semi-economic venture for the students of Joe Duquette School”.

Darlene Polachic Saskatoon Sun, March 8, 1998

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- One parent has organized a singing group that practices on Friday mornings. This group, along with the File Hills dancers, will perform at St. Henry's School in Melville for the school's KIDS CONVENTION, and at Balcarres School during one of the cultural days in March.
Rose Alma Bellegarde (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- My initial unit for K-6 is on the early history of dance. Inclusive in this study are the First Nations people. I have choreographed a dance that is completed by the students. We also try Métis dances such as the Duck Dance, Rabbit Dance, and Quadrille.
- I have also included the various uses of sign language, making of food, beadwork and stitching in other classes.
Cheryl Mantei (Hillside School, Estevan)
- We invited a storyteller to our class. This enhanced the Grade 5 Social Studies curriculum and gave the students an Aboriginal perspective. Having a First Nations parent or volunteer come in to teach an art activity, such as beadwork or making dream catchers, is also very enjoyable. Displaying the artwork made by the students gives them a sense of pride.
Shannon Pal and Janis Dougherty (Balcarres School, Balcarres)
- Gull Lake Elementary School and Hazlet School are focused on First Nations learning and awareness and have student activities throughout a one to two week period. These two schools will participate in a Tipi raising ceremony and dance demonstration hosted at Hazlet School. Gull Lake and Tompkins students will be bussed to Hazlet to attend.
Lee Cummins, Director of Education (Gull Lake School Division #76)
- We have Elders at the school every day of the week. Counselling is available for the students on the spot, and the counsellor does home visits that seems to build self-esteem for the student, parent, grandparent or guardian. Parenting sessions are available for teen parents plus any others who feel they can benefit from the sessions. Aboriginal activities, crafts and art are directly incorporated into regular schoolwork.
- With all of these initiatives, you can see the difference in attitude, behaviour and respect exhibited by the students. It seems to have brought out the best of every individual in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.
Caroline Roszel (Lestock School, Lestock)

- Elders come into the room to speak to students on culture. We discuss the tipi and the significance of the poles, designs, etc. The students make and design their own miniature tipis and we set up a small tipi model in our room. The class focuses on the meanings of the poles and relate it to the 7 Saulteaux teachings.

Donna Reynolds (Wesley M School, Muskowekwan Band No. 85, Lestock)

9. TRANSITION PROGRAMS, PARTNERSHIPS AND STUDENT SERVICES

Educators and community members have identified the need to design and implement programs that meet the needs of Aboriginal students who are having difficulty with conventional programs. These programs and services are oriented, primarily, for students who are at risk of leaving school or who are attempting to re-enter the education system. They deal with the need for culturally relevant programming that is bolstered by involvement of family and community members to provide opportunities for students to complete their education and gain relevant life skills. The programs often address the emotional, physical and spiritual development of the students, not just intellectual development.

a. Transition Programs

- The 'Store Front' school operation (Up-Town school) is a tri-party agreement operation with the Witchehan Lake Band, Northwest Regional College and the Northern Lakes School Division. Each party agrees to collaborate in the delivery of educational programming in a single site that provides students with access to programming that best suites their specific needs.
- Students undergo an assessment to assist in determining their goals, abilities, and barriers in order to design a specific program for the individual as well as for future reference and planning. The curriculum is aimed at assisting students to re-enter and/or remain in the education system in a non-threatening environment, at providing students with positive personal and communication skills, and enhancing self-esteem. The self-paced curriculum includes correspondence programs, computer programs, work experience/transition to work programs, and culturally based programs. Students set their own pace in accordance with their ability and instructional staff provides guidance and assistance as required. All students have access to computer training and the work-experience module. Indian Studies programming will be aimed at instilling cultural identity and Cree Language fluency.
- The specific target groups of the Store Front School are Indian, Non-status Indian, and Métis Social Assistance recipients.
Denis Tetu, Director of Education (Northern Lakes School Division #64, Spiritwood)
- A Transitions Program has been designed around the concept of the Medicine Wheel that includes addressing the mental, emotional, physical and spiritual needs of the student. We attempt to do this by:
 - ▶ Mental = academics
 - ▶ Emotional = life management and support services

- ▶ Physical = physical education and information on health, etc.
- ▶ Spiritual = weekly smudging, First Nations philosophy and values, bi-weekly sweat lodges
- The Transitions program runs on a 10-week semester system with close attention to attendance patterns of students. We have two teachers, one teaching Social Studies and English and another Math and Science, and life management skills to their classes. The criteria for being successful are regular attendance, participation, attitude, and academics. A student can stay for an entire year rotating between teachers until they meet the criteria and can be promoted to regular Grade 10.
- The students are placed in Transitions for many reasons but mostly because they have been unsuccessful in Grade 9 and are too old for the elementary system.
Irene LaPierre (Carlton Comprehensive High School, Prince Albert)
- City Park Collegiate implemented the VISIONS re-entry transitions program that helps ease youth back into mainstream education. This program is individualized to the needs of the students enrolled. The self-paced, open door program has proved successful and inviting to all youth involved. This non-threatening environment has been very well attended by our native youth. We also utilize a liaison worker weekly while an SIFC social work student and an Elder provide visits and counselling.
Wendy Gallagher (City Park Collegiate, Saskatoon)
- *Peers Supporting Peers* program in the schools - a transition program
L.P. Miller Comprehensive School, Nipawin

b. Partnerships and Student Services

- The *Hunger and Community Kitchen Breakfast Club* program grew out of the life-skills training program into a valuable volunteer and employee program. Individuals who have received their training at the community kitchen run *The Breakfast Club*. The volunteers are in the school almost daily to help with the snack and lunch programs and do food preparation for special events. This community kitchen program has provided the volunteers with great leadership skills and personal empowerment.
Faylene Stupnikoff (Queen Mary Community School, Prince Albert)
- The school offers an infant day care centre for teen parents who wish to attend school. It is open for all teen parents with children under the age of two. Funding for the centre is done through government grants, fundraising, and donation.
Twin Lakes School, Buffalo Narrows
- We find that many of our families lack parenting skills. As a response to this we offered a starting point for our students. Our I.M.E.D. Coordinator delivered a Babysitting Course from Grade 4 to Grade 8. Ms. Clara Klein used a Red Cross program as the basis for this course. It was very well received with 23 students out of 23 receiving Red Cross Cards. We were very pleased with the results.
Mr. Tom Barrie, Principal (Stobart Elementary School, Duck Lake)

- We have Elders at the school every day of the week. Counselling is available for the students on the spot, and the counsellor does home visits that seems to build self-esteem for the student, parent, grandparent or guardian. Parenting sessions are available for teen parents plus any others who feel they can benefit from the sessions. Aboriginal activities, crafts and art are directly incorporated into regular schoolwork.
- With all of these initiatives, you can see the difference in attitude, behaviour and respect exhibited by the students. It seems to have brought out the best of every individual in both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures.
Caroline Roszel (Lestock School, Lestock)
- Elders have been hired to work in the school. They meet with each classroom once a week for a sharing circle as well as doing counselling and home-visits. Parents and other community members come in to talk with Elders. In this way, Elders are helping students to understand their culture and history.
Toni Carlson and Joinia Male (Pleasant Hill Community School, Saskatoon)

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