

Walking Tall in the Hall

**A Mapping Review of ArtsSmarts Projects in
Aboriginal Settings across Canada**



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Table of Contents

ABOUT ARTSSMARTS	2
ABOUT THE SAE	2
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	2
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	5
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	6
1. INTRODUCTION	8
1.1. <i>Project objective</i>	8
1.2. <i>Target audience</i>	8
2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	10
2.1. <i>Project scope</i>	10
2.2. <i>Research framework</i>	10
2.3. <i>Data collection</i>	11
3. OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS	12
4. PATTERNS	14
4.1. <i>Changes involving students and the school climate</i>	14
4.2. <i>Changes in teacher practice and pedagogy</i>	17
4.3. <i>Partnerships and relationships</i>	19
4.4. <i>Aboriginal culture</i>	23
4.5. <i>Adaptability and sustainability</i>	27
4.6. <i>Study limitations</i>	27
5. LESSONS LEARNED	28
5.1. <i>What works for schools?</i>	28
5.2. <i>What are the indicators of and contributing factors to success?</i>	29
5.3. <i>What are the components of successful classroom partnerships?</i>	29
5.4. <i>What can be done to transfer or expand success to other schools?</i>	30
6. CASE STUDIES	32
6.1. <i>Tsolum Elementary School</i>	32
6.2. <i>Caslan School</i>	33
6.3. <i>Sakewew High School</i>	36
6.4. <i>Prince Edward School</i>	37
7. PROJECT PROFILES	
7.1. <i>Cowichan Valley Open Learning School</i>	40
7.2. <i>Four Directions Storefront School</i>	41
7.3. <i>Stride Avenue Elementary</i>	41
7.4. <i>Signal Hill Elementary School</i>	42
7.5. <i>Cut Knife Elementary School</i>	43
7.6. <i>Joe Duquette High School</i>	44
7.7. <i>Keethanow Elementary School</i>	44
7.8. <i>St. Louis School</i>	45
7.9. <i>Good Spirit School Division Schools</i>	46
7.10. <i>Jack River School</i>	47
7.11. <i>Northern Lights Academy</i>	48
8. RESEARCH TOOLS	50

About ArtsSmarts

ArtsSmarts was founded in 1998 by The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, on the premise that engaging young people in artistic activity is critical to their evolution as creative thinkers. Since its inception, ArtsSmarts has been demonstrating the effectiveness of integrating the arts into the school curriculum as a way of making core curriculum more relevant and meaningful to students. The program invites professional artists to collaborate with classroom teachers, infusing art throughout the provincial curriculum, teaching, for example, history through drama, math through dance, and science through music.

ArtsSmarts inspires collaboration among arts, education and community agencies, and invests strategically in creative learning networks at the local, regional, provincial and national levels to build capacity for arts and education. Projects capture the imagination and build the confidence of disengaged young people and create an enthusiastic atmosphere of active learning among students, teachers, and artists.

This research study represents the first mapping and documentation of the impacts of ArtsSmarts initiatives in schools serving Aboriginal students.

About the SAEE

The Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education (SAEE) provides non-partisan education research and information to policy-makers, education partners and the public. Their mission is to develop new Canadian knowledge on school improvement and foster the understanding of its use. They support public schools and those who work with them to improve outcomes for all students.

About the Author

Blair Stevenson is an educator and consultant with experience in educational evaluation and research. He has contributed to numerous projects with a cultural theme such as the Nunavut Language Centre and Heritage Centre Feasibility Studies commissioned by the Nunavut Department of Culture, Language, Elders and Youth and the program evaluation for Canadian Heritage's Aboriginal Language Initiative. Most recently, he has worked as principal investigator on the evaluation of the Nunavut Teacher Education Program for the Nunavut Department of Education and an ongoing evaluation project for the Kitigan Zibi Education Council in Maniwaki, Québec. He is also currently conducting comparative research with Aboriginal teachers on culture in their classroom practice as part of a doctoral degree from the University of Oulu, Finland.









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The author would like to thank the administrators, teachers, artists, parents, community members, and students who participated in this study for their willingness to share their experiences and perspectives. Special thanks are extended to those individuals involved in the projects at the four case study schools.

Executive Summary

The objective of this mapping review is to provide a 'snapshot' of the impacts of a variety of ArtsSmarts projects on teachers, students, and communities in 15 off-reserve Aboriginal communities. Research was conducted between April 1 and August 30, 2006 using surveys, interviews, focus groups, document review and selected site visits.

The projects themselves were undertaken at both the elementary and secondary school levels and varied considerably in numbers of participants (8 – 185), length of project (1 day – 6 months), number of teachers involved (1 – 8), and art forms explored. All projects received ArtsSmarts funding, averaging \$4,405 (excluding one large grant of \$89,000).

Changes Involving Students and the School Climate

Educators, artists, students, and parents at all schools identified improved student behaviour, attitudes, and attendance, resulting in an improved atmosphere for learning. The projects provided opportunities for growth and improved self-esteem as students discovered hidden artistic talents and new leadership skills. Teachers noted that students with a history of non-involvement became engaged with their work, expressed pride in it, and experienced success at school, perhaps for the first time.

Educators and artists saw these projects as vehicles to motivate students, build school community, and foster collaborative efforts towards a common goal. The performance or presentation of finished products was a critical component of their success in meeting these objectives.

Changes in Teacher Practice and Pedagogy

There was consensus among educators that classrooms were being transformed by these projects. Teachers were experiencing arts integration in their classrooms in the form of project-based, student-centred activities, which accommodated different learning styles and multiple intelligences. A majority of teachers who participated in or observed an ArtsSmarts project in their schools indicated a willingness both to take more risks in their teaching practice in the future and to engage in other collaborative arts activities.

Teachers and administrators noted the critical importance of release time for planning with artists to ensure the project was fully integrated into classroom practice. Some teachers felt the need for additional support and professional development on incorporating art projects into the core curriculum.

Partnerships and Relationships

Respondents recognized the benefits of collaboration among teachers and artists as they developed projects with both an appropriate educational component and a strong artistic component. Teachers appreciated the fact that artists approach the classroom with a strong emphasis on spontaneity, often initiating changes as a result of the creative process, but they also stressed the value of artists with previous classroom experience and classroom management skills. Artists felt that they were emphasizing process more than is usual in a classroom setting.

Students reported that working with an artist in the classroom was a positive experience, with a majority eagerly anticipating more such opportunities. They also enjoyed seeing their teachers learn about an art form alongside the students.

Parents felt that school was a better and more inviting place as a result of these projects.

Aboriginal Culture

The projects encouraged students to celebrate their Aboriginal culture by focusing on Aboriginal cultural content and by providing an opportunity to work with Aboriginal artists. Teachers observed that Aboriginal students involved in the projects were connecting with and acknowledging their culture more openly. This was particularly true in those schools that served primarily Aboriginal students. In schools with mixed populations, educators and parents noted an improved level of tolerance as non-Aboriginal students learned more about and developed an appreciation of Aboriginal culture. Teachers also observed that Aboriginal students in these schools were more willing to self-identify and acknowledge their Aboriginal cultural roots.

All agreed that the participation of an Aboriginal artist was key to the success of the projects, as the artists generally possessed a deep understanding of local Aboriginal cultures, language, and protocols.

Adaptability and Sustainability

Respondents believed that teacher initiation and ownership of the ArtsSmarts projects was the single most important factor in determining whether or not the initiatives would be adapted and sustained beyond the life of the original projects. They also agreed that student-centred projects with an emphasis on Aboriginal culture were inherently more adaptable because they were designed to respond to students needs.

With respect to sustainability, all projects had multiple funding sources. The most common supplemental sources for ArtsSmarts grants were school/district annual budgets, parent committees, community agencies, and other non-profit or private donations. A majority of schools hoped to continue the projects initiated this year. It was evident from their reflections that these pilot projects had been successful in prompting the schools to explore ways to enhance both the delivery and outcomes of future initiatives.

Lessons Learned

These projects have taught a number of important lessons about ArtsSmarts as an intervention. They are centred around four broad questions:

1. What works for schools?
2. What are the indicators of and contributing factors to success?
3. What are the components of successful classroom partnerships?
4. What can be done to transfer or expand success to other schools?

Study Limitations

It must be noted that this study has a number of limitations. The research is primarily qualitative in nature, relying heavily on the perceptions of participants. The patterns and conclusions expressed in this study must be read with the relatively small samples for the surveys/reports (15), interviews (40), and focus groups (21) in mind.

1. Introduction

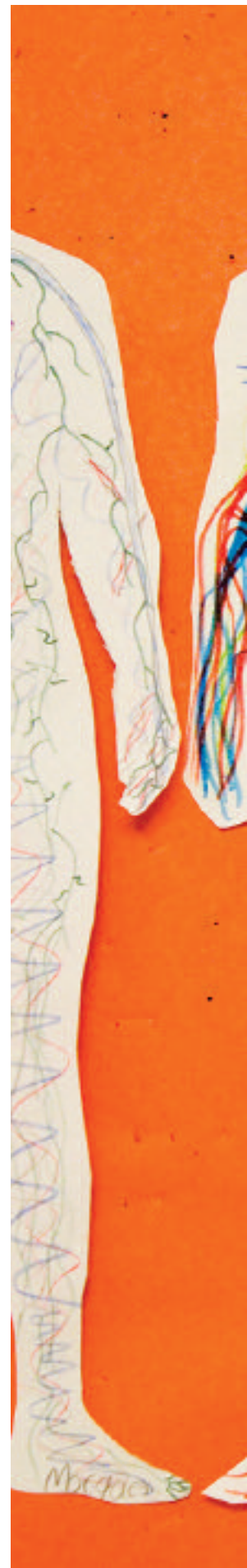
As part of its Canada-wide work, ArtsSmarts has established a number of projects in schools serving Aboriginal students. However, little research has been conducted to date to verify anecdotal evidence suggesting that these ArtsSmarts projects reflect locally-shaped themes that enhance the curriculum and allow Aboriginal students to understand who they are, connecting them to their culture and their community. This research study represents the first mapping and documentation of the impacts of ArtsSmarts initiatives in these settings.

1.1. PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this mapping review is to provide a current ‘snapshot’ of the impacts of ArtsSmarts projects on teachers, students, and communities in off-reserve Aboriginal communities to inform future program design.

1.2. TARGET AUDIENCES

The primary target audiences for this report are ArtsSmarts and its partners and supporters in Canada and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). Other potential audiences at both the local and broader system level who can be expected to have a strong interest in the findings of this report include teachers, artists, Ministries of Education, Ministries of Culture, provincial arts councils, educational decision-makers, and Aboriginal leaders.





2. Research Methodology

2.1. PROJECT SCOPE

Since its establishment, ArtsSmarts has funded projects across Canada in both on- and off-reserve Aboriginal school settings. It was difficult to estimate the total number of projects in schools with a sizable Aboriginal student population until 2005-2006 when ArtsSmarts formally began tracking projects situated in these settings.

Of the 383 projects funded by ArtsSmarts for 2005-2006, 18 were described by partners as being located in an Aboriginal school, with 15 off-reserve and three on-reserve. These schools were situated in both rural and urban communities in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. This study documents and analyzes the nature and early impacts of 15 projects that received funding in the 2005-2006 year and one from Newfoundland/Labrador that received funding in 1999-2000. Four of these projects were chosen as case studies by provincial ArtsSmarts partners for site visits.

Table 1: Listing of School Location, Size and Percent Aboriginal Student Population

School	Location	Grades	Student enrollment	Percent Aboriginal
Caslan School *	Caslan, AB	1 – 9	150	100%
Cowichan Valley Open Learning School	Duncan, BC	8 – 12	160	50%
Cut Knife Elementary School	Cut Knife, SK	K – 6	147	32%
Four Directions Storefront School	Kamloops, BC	8 – 12	60	100%
Good Spirit School Division Schools	Norquay, Pelly and Kamsack, SK	K – 12	567	25%
Jack River School	Norway House, MB	K – 8	267	100%
Joe Duquette High School	Saskatoon, SK	9 – 12	250	100%
Keethanow Elementary School	Stanley Mission, SK	1 – 6	300	98%
Northern Lights Academy	Rigolet, NL	K – 12	60	100%
Prince Edward School *	Winnipeg, MB	1 – 6	183	25%
Sakewew High School *	North Battleford, SK	9 – 12	250	100%
Signal Hill Elementary School	Pemberton, BC	1 – 7	380	43%
St. Louis School	Patuanak, SK	K – 8	160	100%
Stride Avenue Elementary School	Burnaby, BC	K – 7	386	4%
Tsolum Elementary School *	Courtenay, BC	K – 6	186	10%

*denotes those schools which were chosen as case studies.

Sources: Data provided by participating school staff and records.

Note: Percentages of Aboriginal students are estimates provided by school staff.

2.2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

A consultative workshop was hosted by ArtsSmarts in Ottawa on March 23 and 24, 2006 with various stakeholders from across Canada including ArtsSmarts coordinators and staff, Aboriginal educators and advisors, provincial and district education administrators, principals, artists, and researchers. A research framework was outlined at this meeting as the 'lens' through which this study was to be conducted.

First, a research principle was agreed to, stating that the research was to be conducted in ways that are culturally respectful and inclusive of the Aboriginal communities involved. Second, four broad research questions about ArtsSmarts as an intervention were posed for examination by this project. These questions were:

- What works for schools?
- What are the indicators of and contributing factors to success?
- What are the components of successful classroom partnerships?
- What can be done to transfer or expand success to other schools?

Based on these questions, areas of inquiry were identified by participants as those that should be included in a study framework. Analysis of the data followed this framework in order to explore local factors and issues at the school level as well as patterns across the spectrum of projects. The framework was originally designed with the following areas of inquiry:

1. Project profiles/community demographics
2. Changes involving students and school climate
3. Changes in teacher practice and pedagogy
4. Partnerships/relationships
5. Aboriginal culture
6. Adaptability and sustainability
7. Key indicators and contributing factors to success
8. Lessons learned

Findings relating to these areas of inquiry can be found in the following sections of this report.

2.3. DATA COLLECTION

Of the 15 schools agreeing to participate in this review, four were chosen as case studies. All data was collected between April 1 and August 30, 2006, with two-day visits arranged with case study schools between May 15 and June 14. Research involving the remaining schools was conducted by phone interview and mail.

Methods of data collection used included document reviews, surveys, face-to-face and phone interviews, classroom observations, and focus groups. Documents relevant to the school structure and the ArtsSmarts program delivery were collected through the designated key contact at each school. Examples of documentation collected included project annual reports, project evaluations, literature on school descriptions and programs, and copies of student work where possible. Data focusing on general project characteristics were also collected through a survey sent to each school covering topics such as project details and impact, success indicators, and lessons learned.

Interviews were conducted with key individuals associated with all projects. In total, 40 interviews were completed with school administrators, teachers, artists and parents, 20 of which were conducted by telephone. Twenty-one hour-long focus groups with teachers, students, and parents were also conducted during the four site visits. Focus groups with students were arranged before or after 10 classroom observations. (See interview guidelines and survey in section 8., *Research Tools*).

3. Overview of Projects

The following section summarizes the organization, scope, and delivery of the projects across the set of schools. This study found that:

- Over half of the schools involved in the study (53%) had only one project, while 26% of the schools engaged in two projects. Only three schools had more than two projects, with 15 projects being the most conducted by one school in one year. It must be noted, however, that the school with 15 projects was provided a grant more than eight times larger than the next closest school grant.
- The average number of students participating at each school was 98, with the lowest number being eight students working on one project at one school and the largest number being 250 students working on eight projects at one school.
- 47% of the projects were at the elementary level and 27% at the secondary level, while the remaining projects (26%) involved both levels.
- Many projects continued beyond the specific times artists were scheduled to work directly with students. Therefore, rather than quantify duration solely on the amount of artist contact time, this study views project duration as the time from start to finish. Viewed in this way, the average project took approximately four months to complete, with six schools (40%) having projects run longer than six months. The shortest project lasted one day.
- The average number of teachers involved in a project was five with 20% involving only one teacher. The largest number of teachers involved at any school was 14.
- The art forms taught during the projects were wide-ranging. They included visual arts, film and media arts, photography, sculpture, drumming, dance, writing and storytelling, music, clay, fibre arts, and traditional Aboriginal arts. The forms most often explored were the visual arts (27%), film and media arts (27%), and traditional Aboriginal arts (27%).
- All schools hired at least one Aboriginal artist, with eight schools (53%) hiring only Aboriginal artists.
- The amount of ArtsSmarts funding received varied considerably among schools. The lowest grant was \$1,000, while one school received \$89,000. Excluding this large grant provided to Caslan School, the average amount received by the remaining 14 projects was \$4,405.
- While 13 out of 15 schools provided release time for teachers to plan with artists, only two schools (13%) provided formal professional development sessions for its teachers.
- A slight majority of projects (60%) involved the community or an outside partner.
- All projects with the exception of one had finished products which were presented at the school or to the community in the form of a public event.



Table 2: Project Scope

School	Number of students involved	Number of teachers involved	Planning time for artists and teachers	Teacher professional development	Community/partner involvement in project	Presentation of finished work
Caslan School	150	9		•	•	•
Cowichan Valley Open Learning School	12	3	•		•	•
Cut Knife Elementary School	145	8	•			•
Four Directions Storefront School	20	1	•			•
Good Spirit School Division Schools	110	14	•			•
Jack River School	120	6	•			•
Joe Duquette High School	8	1			•	
Keethanow Elementary School	100	5			•	•
Northern Lights Academy	40	4	•	•	•	•
Prince Edward School	183	8	•	•	•	•
Sakewew High School	35	2	•			•
Signal Hill Elementary School	160	8	•		•	•
St. Louis School	10	1	•		•	•
Stride Avenue Elementary	110	2	•		•	•
Tsolum Elementary School	185	9	•		•	•



4. Patterns

Significant patterns regarding impacts of the ArtsSmarts projects surveyed are discussed in the following section. These patterns are organized under the following areas of inquiry outlined in the research framework:

- changes involving students and the school climate;
- changes in teacher practice and pedagogy;
- partnerships and relationships;
- Aboriginal culture;
- adaptability and sustainability.

4.1. CHANGES INVOLVING STUDENTS AND THE SCHOOL CLIMATE

“You now have all participating students walking tall because of our project.” (participating teacher)

Changes in the way students see themselves

As the title of this report suggests, ArtsSmarts projects had a strong influence on the self-esteem of participating students. “Walking tall in the hall”, “shining”, or “lighting up” were phrases commonly used by teachers and parents when describing the effects of the project on students’ sense of self. This increased self-esteem, observed by both teachers and parents, was viewed as being strongly related to the fact that students were producing and presenting art works that were relevant to them. Aboriginal students, in particular, experienced new-found pride in the validation and celebration of their culture through these activities.

Positive growth was also observed in more challenging students. Teachers at nine different schools mentioned ‘turn-around kids’, students whose behaviour and performance markedly improved as a result of participating in the ArtsSmarts project. In these cases, students were observed taking much more pride in what they did, coming to school excited, and building on new successes. “Am I painting today?” was the question regularly posed to one teacher by her elementary students at Caslan School during an art project.

“Students who might not shine or excel academically had an opportunity to become the experts. This is something they will be able to take with them wherever they go in life.” (participating teacher)

“Art projects build success in a holistic way that ultimately will keep the students in school” (participating teacher)

There was consensus among both artists and teachers that the students experienced important and unique growth as a result of participating in an art project. This belief was shared by a large majority (83%) of teachers surveyed, speaking to the relevance of these projects to the lives and learning of the students. “Children take the arts to heart”, stated a teacher from Northern Lights Academy. One artist working at Stride Avenue School observed that “students were working through a lot of emotional stuff by doing art. They needed an outlet.” This artist continued by stating that the project was “like art therapy for some students” and allowed them to speak about topics that were important in their lives.

Some students also discovered a hidden artistic talent. The film production project at St. Louis School and the carving project at Northern Lights Academy, in particular, saw those students move on to show their work and compete in regional and provincial Arts competitions. In the case of Cowichan Valley Open Learning Centre, a teacher observed that students who responded well to the

art activities in his class built on their success by later moving into trades training. “It wasn’t real school, it was art,” one participating student responded. Another teacher noted that the ArtsSmarts projects “could also be called ‘HandSmarts’ or ‘BrainSmarts’” because of the connections these projects made for the students between learning and hands-on activities.

Seven teachers remarked that various students were observed taking on leadership roles during the project, helping others in the group. Whether it was an elementary student leading his classmates at Signal Hill Elementary in a drumming song or a student at Joe Duquette High School sharing her knowledge of a specific art technique with others, more students were taking an active role in all aspects of their work. The artist and participating teachers involved in the Good Spirit Division project, for example, observed that cooperative learning was happening at every step of the project and that students were regularly seen to be teaching other students.

All students surveyed in focus groups agreed that they had positive memories of the activities and that they would like to work with artists again at school. When asked to show what they had done for their class mural, students at Tsolum Elementary would proudly display the portions they had completed. Many of these murals had photographs of the students pasted on them. Many students also suggested that they had learned artistic skills that they now use at home or in other school projects.

“I want to get into animation, I do many drawings and cartoons and I loved directing my video on the Karate fighting. I want to do this when I grow up.” (participating student)

There was also a consensus among students at all other schools visited that presenting their work “made them feel good”. Students at Tsolum Elementary who had been narrators during their community presentation stated: “It felt good to share stories about our mural with other students”, while another teacher noted that, “there was a lot of laughter and interest in doing a good job for the final presentation”. A sense of joy was also noted by a majority of students when describing the project. This emotional impact was summarized well by one teacher who mentioned that “there was lots of smiling at the end of the performance”.





Changes in school climate

Educators, artists, students, and parents at all schools in this study described how the ArtsSmarts projects had an immediate and significant positive effect on the school environment, creating an atmosphere more conducive to learning. This change was not only observed in the form of more artwork on the walls of the school as remarked by parents and students at Caslan School, but in the general climate of the school including the behaviour and attitudes of students.

Students themselves were noting that behaviour was better in the halls. In terms of in-class gains, 10 teachers also spoke of more confidence shown by their students, while all teachers remarked that management of disruptive behaviour became a non-issue. Students surveyed at Caslan School echoed many of the comments made by teachers regarding an improved school climate. One student stated that “the projects made them all want to come to school more”, while another student who was chronically absent remarked that now she “woke up early to come to school”.

A large majority of respondents (93%) at all sites noted improved attendance during the projects and that students were more motivated and engaged than usual. In the case of the St. Louis School film production project, students were demanding that teachers allow them to stay after school to continue work. At Stride Avenue Elementary, students came to school early because they were keen to work in the darkroom in the back of classroom. “They were very careful with the darkroom and treated the materials with respect”, the artist stated. The artist also noted that “the students felt ownership of the project”.

“[During the project], it seemed like kids started coming to school... When you do art, you learn about yourself and other things, not just art.” (participating student)

Another positive aspect of this new climate was the impact on those students who normally did not participate in school at all. Teachers at nine of the 15 schools in the study remarked that students often described as ‘at risk’ became engaged in the project work to a depth not seen previously in their other work. Inappropriate behaviour was reduced for many of these students, who were working well on their own and with others.

“These projects got students motivated to come to school and complete their work, when normally it was a challenge to even get them to come to school.” (participating teacher)

Overall, ArtsSmarts projects were student motivators; school community building was taking place in the spirit of collaboration, with students often working towards a common goal. An example of this motivating influence was observed at Signal Hill School where their ArtsSmarts funded drumming program took on a central place, with students drumming at school assemblies and performing at other sites in the community.

“ArtsSmarts has created a culture that allows for great work and extensions into other areas of the school and community.” (participating teacher)

There was broad consensus that performances or public displays of the artwork were a critical component of projects and seen by 100% of respondents to be an important motivator for the students. All projects except one resulted in finished products for presentation to other students, the school as a whole, or the community. The principal of Tsolum Elementary, for example, noted that the mural project was one of the most successful initiatives during his tenure at the school, while the airing of St. Louis School students’ films on television was seen by the participating teacher as “a proud moment” for them.

This teacher also noted that this showcase of student work was in marked contrast to their school’s history with past projects:

“Before ArtsSmarts, we had the first three chapters of a hundred books, but no finished book. (participating teacher)

After seeing all students complete and present their ArtsSmarts projects, the teacher observed, “Students now have something to show off.”

4.2. CHANGES IN TEACHER PRACTICE AND PEDAGOGY

Transformations in classroom practice

There was a broad consensus among teaching staff and administrators associated with the projects that classrooms were being transformed as a result of these initiatives. This transformation was believed to be the result of arts integration in the classroom and the project-based and student-centred nature of the learning.

Each project first relied on a small number of teachers or administrators as project proponents, but as other teachers became involved, arts integration became more central to the pedagogical philosophy of the school. Teachers at seven of the sites described how they were becoming better educators as a result of being more willing to take risks in their teaching practice after having participated in a project. These teachers stated that this ability to take more risks was strongly linked to the fact that they were quickly and tangibly seeing the gains that teaching through the arts was giving them.

The most common response from teaching staff about why the projects produced such visible gains was that different learning styles and multiple intelligences were being accommodated through the ArtsSmarts projects. Having students work on art projects had them learning in ways that were different than their regular classroom techniques. The use of developmentally appropriate art work and student ownership of ideas and content were important to the project’s success. As a result, student attention was seen to be more focused; students displayed a greater acceptance of ideas shared by others in the class. Teachers agreed that the projects had created an environment in the school where an understanding of art and artists was expanding.

All teachers at Prince Edward School, for example, agreed that instructional practices and approaches had changed during the two years of ArtsSmarts programming at their school. Fundamental to this change was that the inquiry-based planning model embraced by the staff lent itself to arts integration, and teachers began to recognize the value of the work occurring in each others' classrooms. "Teaching through a creative process was freeing," one teacher remarked. Another teacher at Prince Edward School noted that, "with each successful class project involving the arts, teachers gained confidence and built support for future planning".

Overall, 80% of responding teachers affirmed that they would collaborate more with artists and do more art in their classrooms in the future as a result of having participated in the ArtsSmarts project or having observed it in their school. A majority of respondents who mentioned the theme of collaboration believed that the project coordinator had a critical role in building the confidence among teachers who may have initially been reluctant.

Changes to planning

Teachers and administrators discussed the critical importance of release time for planning with artists to ensure projects were fully integrated into classroom practice. Overall, 13 of the 15 schools provided time for teachers and artists to meet and plan. Due in part to this planning time, a large number of teachers quickly became advocates of the project. In the case of school-wide projects, those teachers with initial reluctance became more comfortable as the project took shape.

A majority of teachers surveyed who had engaged in professional development related to the project said that making curricular connections was relatively straightforward and occurred regularly, as long as time was provided to meet with the artist. They noted that, by virtue of having an artist in the classroom, they were forced to let go some of the control of their classrooms and trust the creative process and abilities of the artist. In most cases, this trust-building occurred quickly as a large majority of artists were observed to work well with the students.

In all schools surveyed there were some teachers who admitted to reluctance to participate. It was suggested that many teachers lack the skills needed to fully integrate cultural programs and ArtsSmarts projects into core subjects taught in the classroom. Six teachers stated that there is a strong need for support to participating teachers during a project, especially from school administration. Eight teachers noted that there should be more professional development in terms of incorporating art projects into the core curriculum: some teachers continue to believe that they can not remain "true to the provincial curriculum" while working on "other initiatives". These views were supported by the fact that only two schools provided any form of professional development for teachers associated with the projects.

All teachers interviewed said that artists work differently, with a strong emphasis on process. It was suggested that this difference may result from artists using an Aboriginal philosophy of teaching which emphasizes process and storytelling in contrast to traditional classroom teaching practices. One Aboriginal artist emphasized the importance of "doing things right" as a way of learning. In the case of the wigwam building at Good Spirit School Division, this process involved trial and error and having students taking down portions of the structure they had already constructed in order for them to be rebuilt properly.

*"Artists taught me a lot about how to teach by displaying new ways of working with the students."
(participating teacher)*





Artists were viewed by teachers as working more spontaneously, often initiating changes as a result of the creative process. This process was viewed positively by most teachers, with one remarking that she is now “thinking differently about teaching”. Another stated, “Some things are easier to learn and remember when you incorporate storytelling and drawing”. However, four teachers indicated that this way of working made it difficult for some teachers to plan, a finding that points to the need for teachers to be adaptable.

*“The artist demonstrated ways to encourage students to dance and perform that I began to use in my classroom.”
(participating teacher)*

4.3. PARTNERSHIPS AND RELATIONSHIPS

The role of partnerships and relationships was another aspect of the projects that respondents deemed important.

Changes in the way teachers and artists see their own work

Both teachers and artists agreed that it was beneficial to create opportunities for teachers and artists to collaborate in order to develop a project that was seen to be both educationally appropriate and possessing a strong artistic component. A majority of teachers felt they learned from the artist’s perspective while all responding teachers noted that it was important for the artist to have had previous experience in classrooms since they brought an understanding of effective classroom planning to their activities. For example, respondents at Keethanow School stated that the projects would have been much less successful if the artists had not had previous experience both in the school and with classroom planning. The Good Spirit School Division project was successful, in large part, because of the highly respectful relationship between the artist and students. This was attributed to the fact that the Aboriginal artist was from the community and had worked in the schools before.

“The arts should be the priority, and then the academics will follow.” (participating elder)

Three artists, on the other hand, stated that they learned about the importance of creating developmentally appropriate activities for the various student levels they were working with. It was stated by one artist, who was a well-known local Aboriginal artist, that it was significant for artists to be in schools as “a non-teacher educator” since they brought expertise that moved students beyond the teaching they usually received.



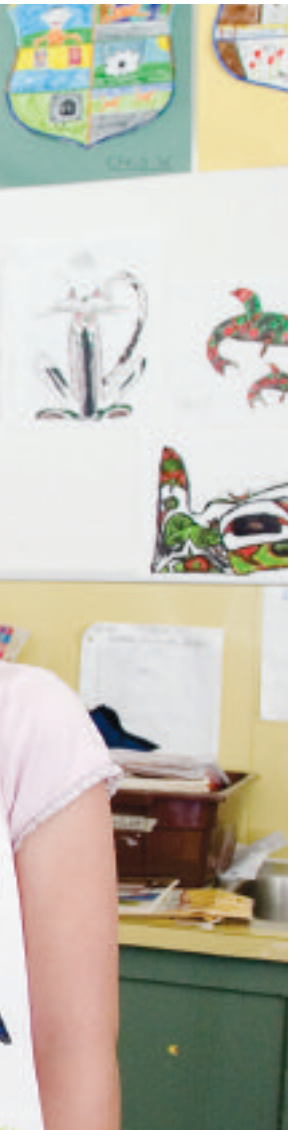
Changes in the way students see teachers and artists

Students surveyed for their opinions regarding work with an artist in the classroom all found it to be a positive experience, with a majority mentioning that they were eagerly anticipating the next artist visit to the school. When asked how artists are different from their teachers, one student noted that, “artists demand that ‘you do it right,’” while three students suggested that they usually behave better when working on a project. Approximately one third of students remarked that they were doing their own artwork at home.

Having a local Aboriginal artist was a critical factor in the success of the project. A large majority of teachers and administrators (83%) observed that Aboriginal students related well to the Aboriginal artists who came to work in the schools and suggested that positive role modeling was an important part of the students’ exploration of the arts.

“The artist became a trusted teacher and mentor and was a positive role model to reinforce [the Aboriginal students’] sense of identity and belonging in a good way.” (participating teacher)

After spending time with the artist, it was observed by teachers that students began to see the arts as a viable career choice, and that doing art demands just as much commitment as any other ‘job’ or ‘work’. It was noted by teachers at four different schools that students were gaining specific skills in the arts. For example, the students involved in the St. Louis School media arts project mastered all the techniques necessary for designing and editing their own videos. At Northern Lights Academy, students in the carving program gained enough experience to be brought back to the school as resource people for the same carving project.



Students were perceptive to the differences in the learning environment they experienced while working with artists. Student comments in this area focused on the fact that the artist took a lead role in the activities with, for the most part, teachers “backing off”. One student observed that artists were “more creative”. Students had the opportunity to see and relate to their teachers differently, since many teachers learned an art form alongside the students. For example, teachers of classes in the drumming group at Signal Hill Elementary sat next to their students learning how to drum and sing. One teacher at that school suggested that in the eyes of the students, teachers were valuing Aboriginal culture by showing that they wanted to learn along with the students.

Climbing a Tree to Read a Book

Song lyrics written by Grade 6S class at Keethanow Elementary School

It's so noisy in my home
I need a place to be alone
Away from the games and the music and the phone
Where I can find some peace.
There's babies, bingo, laundry too
They don't know what they put me through
I don't know what I'm going to do
And I can't call the police.

(Chorus) So I'm gonna go and climb
The tallest tree that I can find
One hundred meters high
Reaching to the sky.
If you wonder where I am
All you have to do is take a look
I'm climbing a tree to read a book
That's where you'll find me
I'm climbing a tree to read a book.

Playing drums on pots and pans
Someone's kicking old tin cans
It always seems to wreck my plans
For doing something quiet.
I like to paint I like to draw
Everything that I ever saw
I think we need a “Quiet Law”
'Cuz I never get to try it.

(Chorus)

Changes in community

The change of climate remarked upon by teachers and students was observed by the community in general. All parents surveyed felt that the school was a better and more inviting place to visit as a result of the projects. In the case of Caslan School, both the parent and student focus groups agreed that the appearance of the school was more welcoming for the community with more art on the walls, less graffiti, and more visible symbols of Métis culture such as the Métis flag flying at the school. One parent suggested that more parents were becoming involved in the school in general, and were increasingly attending performances and presentations by students. Teachers at Signal Hill Elementary School remarked that their drumming program could be heard throughout the community and brought community members into the school to state their support for the teaching of traditional songs.

“Due to the loud nature of 30 hand drums, we played outside in the school yard. This had some unexpected benefits such as being loud enough so the entire town could hear the drummers. People walking by were heard remarking that they didn't know that Signal Hill School taught ‘their’ First Nations traditional songs to students. Several community members volunteered to join the students while they were in the drumming circle in a show of support. Playing in the rain, the snow, and the sun was a very natural experience that fit in well with the surroundings.” (participating staff member)

The mural project at Tsolum Elementary made strong connections between the community and the school by relying on stories from community members for project content. Parents of students at Tsolum agreed that there had been positive connections made with the community as a result of the project. Two parents noted the value of the project in light of the fact that students “needed to process a lot of emotions as a result of the school closing” and it allowed them to reflect on the school’s history and the positive contributions the school had made to the community. All parents surveyed at Tsolum believed that the presentation of the students’ work was the “crowning glory” of the project. Teachers observed many students proudly taking their work home at the end of the project to display to their families. This project, in particular, illustrated how parent and community support could be drawn into the school, not just for a final presentation, but during the project as well.

Another aspect of community involvement in the projects related to funding. Eight of the 15 schools had community members or partners from outside the school contributing to the funding of the project. Examples of contributing groups included parent committees, private foundations, school districts, Aboriginal communities, and local arts organizations.





4.4. ABORIGINAL CULTURE

A significant feature of the ArtsSmarts projects was their celebration of Aboriginal culture. All schools surveyed developed at least one project focusing on Aboriginal cultural content, with three projects specifically coinciding with National Aboriginal Day. All schools hired at least one Aboriginal artist, in most cases drawn from the local community. Eight schools worked only with Aboriginal artists. By doing so, schools were seen to validate Aboriginal culture and provide exposure for the culture of Aboriginal students and artists within the school and community in general.

Impacts on Aboriginal Students

All teachers involved in the study observed that Aboriginal students were connecting and acknowledging their culture more as a result of projects involving Aboriginal artists. As one teacher remarked, "Aboriginal students' confidence and self-esteem increased and they brought it home". The growth in awareness of Aboriginal culture was strongly evident in those schools that served primarily Aboriginal students. Many of the projects in these schools worked to develop students' knowledge of their own culture. The project at Signal Hill Elementary, for example, focused on "the teachings of the drum [which] revolve around respect for self and respect for Aboriginal culture", while the project at Cowichan Valley Open Learning exposed Aboriginal students to the hoop drum, which many of them had never made or used.

Aboriginal artists working at schools with mixed populations observed that the Aboriginal students in those schools gained confidence as a result of artists sharing their knowledge and pride of Aboriginal heritage. It was observed that, in general, Aboriginal students were self-identifying more openly as an Aboriginal person in those schools.

"Our elders tell us that artists are going to be our next leaders". (Aboriginal artist)







It was strongly agreed upon by all respondents that having an Aboriginal artist was key to the success of the project, since they generally possessed a deep understanding of the local Aboriginal cultures, language, and protocols. In this way, local Aboriginal artists were seen not only as artists, but as valuable resources and role models in the schools.

The navigation of Aboriginal cultural protocols was one aspect of projects that spoke to the importance of having an informed and knowledgeable Aboriginal artist. Protocols associated with many Aboriginal cultural activities are important and must be adhered to. This often involves taking time away from regular classes or investing time after school to complete cultural activities. One example where protocols were successfully followed was during the Hoop Drum project at Cowichan Valley Open Learning. This activity was infused with cultural meaning and specific cultural protocols to be followed before the activity could be completed successfully. As a result, all Aboriginal students at the school expressed interest in having their own hoop drums. The participating teacher suggested that this project was a good example of getting people more involved in their culture and that it had everyone in the school behind it because it was “so obviously having a positive impact on the school and the students.”

The following quotation from an Aboriginal parent provides strong evidence of the positive impact of the ArtsSmarts projects:

“My son comes home sharing all about different cultures... At first he was very shy, now he is much prouder to be Native. He is now performing in school events like theatre. It's good to have Aboriginal culture in schools because it's good for my son, and helps make others more tolerant.” (parent of student participating in projects)

All Aboriginal parents surveyed stated that they were encouraged to see more Aboriginal culture in the classroom and wanted to see the students working with Native artists and content at their school.

“The school needs to teach more traditional Native craft like beading and woodwork... and there should not only be more Aboriginal culture in the school, but all cultures. There should be acceptance for who you are. Students should be proud of who they are.” (parent of participating student)

Impacts on non-Aboriginal Students

All teachers, administrators, and parents at schools with a mixed Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal student population agreed that the projects were developing greater tolerance among students as a result of increasing the general knowledge and appreciation of Aboriginal culture in non-Aboriginal students. A majority of both teachers and parents at each of the seven schools with mixed populations believed that tolerance between the groups was significantly increased and the emphasis on Aboriginal culture in projects at these schools allowed for a ‘bridging’ to take place. For example, one non-Aboriginal teacher at Tsolum Elementary School (with 10% Aboriginal students) stated that, “having an Aboriginal artist was a great change. It was important to help non-Aboriginal students learn about Aboriginal culture”. Another teacher at Tsolum recognized that “our project was bringing cultures together” while non-Aboriginal parents participating in the Tsolum focus groups all agreed that it was beneficial to have positive Aboriginal role models in the school and to increase Aboriginal awareness in their community.

While it was recognized that building tolerance within a school made up of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students is important, one Aboriginal administrator remarked that a similar need exists in an all-Aboriginal school made up of students from various Aboriginal communities. The administrator remarked: “Tension is down in the school [between different Aboriginal groups] as a result of bringing students together in projects.”

Artists at four schools remarked that another important aspect of the project was having the students exposed to Aboriginal artists; for some non-Aboriginal students, this was the first time they had met an Aboriginal person other than their Aboriginal classmates. This was evident at Stride Avenue Elementary where students who were recent immigrants were getting “a first glimpse into the lives and cultures of their Aboriginal classmates”. A majority of non-Aboriginal teachers stated that they want to learn more about Aboriginal perspectives.

“The Aboriginal students were really proud to have an Aboriginal artist come to the school. It validated their culture, especially to the non-Aboriginal students.” (participating teacher)

When asked what they had learned about Aboriginal culture, non-Aboriginal students most readily spoke of the Aboriginal art forms that they had experienced and the stories shared by the artists. The act of building a wigwam at Good Spirit School Division schools, for example, had a strong storytelling component, with students asking many questions. Staff and artists involved in this project suggested that it was important for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students to hear the stories. As a result of this, it was observed that there was a greater awareness of the diversity in the school and stereotypes and myths about Aboriginal culture were being corrected.

“When we first began the project, we had a discussion about ‘Who were the First Nations?’ Some students came up with terms [such as] ‘Indian’, ‘teepee’, and ‘canoe’. Most of the class had a vision of the First Nations as all being like [the character] Littlefoot from the movie ‘Spirit’—a Lakota First Nations who lived on the Prairies with wild horses. By the end of the project, the students had a bigger picture of the First Nations in this area. They could identify the people as Coast Salish. They could describe what the tribe [traditionally] ate, their homes, and how they traveled. The students could draw simple pictures using the shapes of ovoid, split ‘U’, ‘S’ shape and eyelid. Finally, as a result of reading a number of First Nations legends together, the students composed their own legend titled ‘How Rain Came to the Coast.’” (participating teacher)



4.5. ADAPTABILITY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The flexibility of ArtsSmarts initiatives to adapt to emerging challenges and their potential to sustain themselves beyond the life of the original project were explored. Respondents believed the major aspect influencing project adaptability was the degree of teacher-initiation and ownership. It was argued that teachers who felt an ownership of the project were far more likely to adapt to change and make the project work. It is not surprising that 67% of projects had teaching staff involved in the proposal process. Caslan School's project design process is illustrative of the need for teacher buy-in, evolving over time from being administration-initiated to a teacher-initiated proposal process facilitated by the coordinator. As a result, all teacher and administrative respondents at this school noted that projects were now far more likely to be successful and have teachers involved in all of its aspects.

All participants in the four teacher focus groups agreed that another facet of success was "having students making decisions during the project and having projects evolve from classroom work." It was agreed that student-centred projects with an emphasis on Aboriginal culture were inherently more adaptable and designed to respond to students' needs.

With respect to sustainability, all projects had multiple sources of funding. While ArtsSmarts grants formed the major contribution, in some cases the grant provided the 'seed' to motivate other sources to contribute. Examples of the most common sources of additional funding for the projects were the school/district annual budgets, parent committees, community agencies, and other non-profit or private donations. A majority of schools stated that they hope to continue the projects initiated this year. For example, Prince Edward School has already been awarded an ArtsSmarts grant for the 2006-2007 year and hopes to use these funds to further develop their movement towards school-wide arts integration.

For 11 of 15 schools, this was the first funding they had received through ArtsSmarts. As a result, respondents stated that considerable learning took place in this first year, which would assist them in improving certain aspects of the implementation process if given the opportunity for further funding. Five respondents remarked that one change they would make is the provision of more professional development for teachers. This training would increase the amount and depth of arts integration in the curriculum. Four other respondents at separate schools stated that they would seek more community involvement in aspects of the project while it was taking place. A respondent at one of these schools suggested that if provided additional funds in following years, they would attempt to bring other staff members into the project, since their project in particular had been sustained through the efforts of only one teacher.

It was evident from such reflections that these pilot projects had been successful in prompting the schools to explore ways to enhance both the delivery and outcomes of future initiatives. In the case of those schools which had been provided with multi-year funding, the ability to learn from previous years and refine their efforts so that they could develop highly successful projects was demonstrated.

4.6. STUDY LIMITATIONS

It must be noted that this study has a number of limitations. The research is primarily qualitative in nature, relying heavily on the perceptions of participants. The patterns and conclusions expressed in this study must be read with the relatively small samples for the surveys/reports (15), interviews (40), and focus groups (21) in mind.

5. Lessons Learned

The following section captures the major lessons learned from the projects involved in the study. These lessons are structured around the four broad questions about ArtsSmarts as an intervention found in the research framework and formed at the Ottawa consultation workshop. The four questions are:

- What works for schools?
- What are the indicators of and contributing factors to success?
- What are the components of successful classroom partnerships?
- What can be done to transfer or expand success in other schools?

5.1. WHAT WORKS FOR SCHOOLS?

Even though respondents were not specifically asked about what worked for their projects, the following themes were commonly stated by respondents when discussing how their project had been a success.

- Student-centred projects worked because it was believed that they laid the foundation for students' motivation to work on the project. Students felt ownership because they were making project decisions and were creating their own work.
- Aboriginal culture-centred projects worked because Aboriginal students found the content and processes more relevant to their lives. As a result, projects in Aboriginal schools that reflected the cultural contexts of their students were far more likely to succeed than those projects that did not. Overall, art forms and project content must be relevant to the local context of the students. These projects acted as bridges between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in mixed population schools.
- Hands-on projects worked because they were often very different from the text-based assignments of conventional classroom work. This type of project gave 'at-risk' students opportunities to succeed by addressing different learning styles and modalities.
- Employing the expertise of Aboriginal artists worked because the artists possessed a strong knowledge of the local cultural and community contexts. These artists acted as positive role models to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.
- Involving project coordinators worked because they managed the day-to-day aspects of the project and facilitated the process of arts integration with teachers.
- Projects corresponding to a long-term vision of the school worked because teachers could see how the ArtsSmarts project fit into the overall direction of the school. As a result, teachers better understood the need for their participation and commitment to the project goals.
- Development of finished products and their presentation worked because these culminating events were the greatest builders of the students' self-esteem and confidence.
- Professional development for teachers worked because it improved teaching skills relating to arts integration and the likelihood that projects will connect with the curriculum.
- Projects of a longer duration worked because stronger relationships between specific artists and schools could be fostered.

5.2. WHAT ARE THE INDICATORS OF AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS TO SUCCESS?

Respondents were asked to rank what they felt were the most critical indicators of, and contributing factors to, success for their projects. The major success indicators as noted by respondents in descending order of responses per indicator were:

- increased motivation and engagement among all students;
- increased attendance;
- increased motivation of ‘at-risk students’;
- increased awareness of and pride in Aboriginal culture by Aboriginal students;
- increased awareness of and exposure to Aboriginal culture among non-Aboriginal students and a corresponding bridging between these two school communities;
- decreased disruptions in the classroom from negative behaviours;
- further development of an environment conducive to learning;
- increased valuing of local Aboriginal artists;
- increased opportunities for students to express themselves through art and developing their arts skills and arts awareness;
- increased number of finished products by students;
- increased contacts between the school and community;
- increased arts integration by teachers, reflecting project-based and student-centred learning; and
- increased opportunities for students to collaborate and teach each other.

The major contributing factors responsible for generating these successes, as noted by respondents, were:

- working with artists who are familiar with working in schools;
- engaging a committed project coordinator;
- providing release time for teachers and artists to meet and plan;
- ensuring teacher buy-in so that teachers are encouraged to take risks, work with artists, and understand the value of arts integration;
- providing strong leadership at the school to support arts integration;
- working within a supportive community; and
- creating a culture of collaboration among teachers and artists.

5.3. WHAT ARE THE COMPONENTS OF SUCCESSFUL CLASSROOM PARTNERSHIPS?

The following broad lessons were drawn from respondents’ answers to the question of what they have learned about developing and implementing an ArtsSmarts project.

- the first step to success is ensuring teacher buy-in;
- artists must be screened to ensure that they will work well in the school within the local context;
- a committed staff person is needed to coordinate the project;
- some teachers need more direction and training on arts integration;
- ways to include parents, other than as participants in a final performance or presentation, should be found.

5.4. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO TRANSFER OR EXPAND SUCCESS TO OTHER SCHOOLS?

As a result of the analysis of the above data, the following points have been outlined as areas for stakeholders to consider if the successes and lessons uncovered through this study are to be transferred, replicated, or expanded.

Increase communication and sharing between schools and projects

Many schools asked about the results from other projects. This report provides a snapshot of schools currently involved; however, more dialogue is necessary. Participating schools would benefit from sharing their expertise with each other.

Conduct further research

Further research is needed to provide longitudinal statistics on indicators of success. A study of best practices and effective strategies would be a helpful extension of this mapping review.

Expand and extend funding

Those schools provided with multi-year funding demonstrated the ability to learn from previous years and refine their efforts so that they could develop highly successful projects. An expansion of funding would allow for more schools and artists to participate in the program, while long-term funding would provide the stability many schools called for in order to build on this year's successes.

Develop a teacher and artist professional development program

Teachers and artists must feel ready to take on arts-integrated projects. Therefore, a systematic program focusing on training for teachers and artists and standards for practice in the area of arts integration is proposed in partnership with local, provincial, and/or national agencies. This type of program would be of great value since many projects were limited by the reluctance of teachers who were not yet comfortable with implementing arts integration into their classrooms. The development of such a program is supported by the fact that schools which provided teacher development in arts integration and skills were more likely to encourage and foster teacher participation in projects.

Develop community partnership incentives

Many schools were unable to draw the local community into the implementation phase of projects beyond the provision of additional funds. As a result, projects had a limited number of connections to the community other than having a local Aboriginal artist working in the school or presenting finished work during a community event. Incentives should therefore be developed to increase overall community participation.





6. Case Studies



6.1. TSOLUM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL 2505 Smith Road, Courtenay BC V9J 1T6

School and Community Profile

Established in 1927, Tsolum Elementary School is a K to 6 school located on the rural outskirts of Courtenay BC, a city of about 18,000 on the east coast of Vancouver Island. In 2005-2006, the school enrolled 186 students taught by nine teachers and 12 teaching support staff. On average, there were 23 students in each of eight classes between Kindergarten and Grade 6, with approximately 10% of the student population being Aboriginal. At the end of the 2005-2006 year, the school was officially closed by the district school board.

Project Summary

Tsolum Elementary's project in the 2005-06 school year was developed in partnership with the local Aboriginal Education Council, using an ArtsSmarts grant of \$2,000 with contributions from the Aboriginal Education Council and the school budget. Building on the school's existing fine arts emphasis, a school-wide mural project was planned across the curriculum to help students, staff, and parents celebrate the school and achieve the following goals:

- help each student connect with the school's rich history;
- help students appreciate Tsolum from an Aboriginal perspective;
- integrate the fine arts with other areas of the curriculum—language arts, social studies, science; and
- provide a catalyst for writing.

Over the course of eight weeks, two Aboriginal artists spent every Wednesday at the school in what was to be called the Artful Writing Project. Each artist was responsible for one-hour sessions with four classes each day, working with each class to create a mural which would be meaningful to the students. Thursdays were devoted to field trips to various museums (Nanaimo, Campbell River) with First Nations exhibits and to presentations by member of the Aboriginal community.

Initial planning for the project was completed by the principal with support from the liaison from the Aboriginal Education Council. The council provided guidance on which artists to invite to participate in the project and various cultural protocols. Release time was budgeted for teachers and artists to plan and reflect together at various stages of the project.



At the conclusion of the project, the school hosted a gallery walk, where each class mural was prominently displayed in the classroom and several students from each class were selected to speak about their mural and their part in the school's project. As classes moved from one room to the next, every student learned about what every other student had done. The class murals were exhibited at the school, at various district functions (eg. the Aboriginal Recognition Ceremony), and displayed at the ArtStarts Gallery in Vancouver as part of an ArtsSmarts National Exhibition.

Key Findings

During the site visit to Tsolum Elementary, the following interviews and focus groups were conducted: two interviews with administrators; interviews with two artists; four focus groups with students as part of classroom observations; one focus group with parents; and two focus groups with teachers. Key findings included:

- non-Aboriginal students learned about local Aboriginal culture, and Aboriginal students became more confident as a result of having their culture validated;
- Aboriginal artists provided positive role models;
- students were very proud of the class projects they designed together and presented to the community;
- a majority of teachers recognized the critical importance of release time for planning with artists to ensure the project was fully integrated into their classroom practice; and,
- parents noted the positive connections made with the community as a result of the project.



6.2. CASLAN SCHOOL

Box 8, Caslan AB TOA ORO

School and Community Profile

Caslan School offers instruction from Early Childhood Studies to Grade 9 for approximately 150 Métis students in combined grade classrooms. The school's programs are supported by nine teachers and 12 support staff. Part of the Northern Lights School Division of Alberta, the school is located in the small rural hamlet of Caslan situated in the northeastern portion of the province between the towns of Lac La Biche and Boyle. All students are bused to the school from the nearby Métis settlement of Buffalo Lake.

Project Summary

Caslan School has been working with ArtsSmarts since 2003 through a three-year funding agreement between ArtsSmarts and the Northern Lights School Division. Under this agreement, Caslan School has received the following amounts:

- 2003-2004 \$105,000 (\$75,000 for projects)
- 2004-2005 \$89,000 (\$65,000 for projects)
- 2005-2006 \$89,000 (\$65,000 for projects)

Various advisory committees direct the program design, implementation, communications, and evaluation aspects of the project. These committees are made up of local and national artists, a fine arts consultant, community advisory members, local and provincial arts organizations, students and staff at Caslan School, and the Northern Lights School Division.

The Society for the Advancement of Excellence in Education is responsible for conducting a three-year case study at Caslan School to evaluate the impact of the ArtsSmarts Program. The final results from this research will be available in the fall of 2006.

The long-term nature of the funding has allowed Caslan School to involve dozens of artists both locally and from outside of the community to work in the school and to create a fully-integrated arts program. In the first year, 30 artists worked with the school on 24 projects; in the second year, 13 worked with the school on 29 projects; in the third year, 11 artists worked with the school on 15 projects. The overall ArtsSmarts program at the school has been designed to emphasize Métis and Aboriginal cultural content with 11 (38%) of the projects in the 2005-2006 year being related to Aboriginal themes. These projects have been developed in tandem with an Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AIS) grant through the Northern Lights School Division which funds a full-time traditional Métis dance and music (fiddling and guitar) program at the school.

Projects at the school have been facilitated by a half-time coordinator. In the 2005-2006 school year, projects were designed and developed by classroom teachers; in the previous two years, projects had been directed by school administration. The ArtsSmarts Coordinator has developed a step-by-step package accessible to all staff, outlining how to apply for and plan an ArtsSmarts project. During this proposal process, teachers discuss planning issues and opportunities for integration and collaboration



with the coordinator, who then liaises with artists. Changes to the arrangement of classrooms and other spaces in the school have also supported the performing and visual arts. Rooms have been designated for jiggling and dance as well as for a full-time art workshop.

The following list provides a brief summary of the 15 projects that took place at Caslan School during the 2005-2006 year.

Table 3: Summary of projects at Caslan School

Project title and description	Grades Involved
Library/Literacy Mural: mural with the theme of colour and literacy	ECS and Grade 1
Past/Present/Future Play: drama presentation	ECS and Grade 1
3 Communities Collaborative Quilt	Grades 2 and 3
Puppet Show	Grades 2 and 3
Soap Stone Carving with a Science Theme	Grades 3 and 4
Acrylic Painting with a Science Theme	Grades 3 and 4
Pencil Crayon Animals	Grades 3 and 4
Paper Mache Planets	Grades 5 and 6
Paper Mache Dolls with Moral Intelligence Theme	Grades 5 and 6
Picnic Tables with Math Theme	Grades 5 and 6
Christmas Video	Grades 6 and 7
Gym Mural of Canada	Grades 6 and 7
Fossils Project	Grades 6 and 7
Empathy Tile Mural with Moral Intelligence Theme	School wide
Christmas Musical	School wide

Source: Caslan School ArtsSmarts Annual Report, 2005-2006

Key Findings

During the two-day visit to Caslan School, the following interviews and focus groups were conducted: two interviews with administrators; four interviews with teachers; three focus groups with students as part of classroom observations; one focus group with parents; and one focus group with teachers. Key findings included:

- all teachers surveyed agreed that students were enthusiastic about the program and found that there were immediate improvements to student behaviour and engagement;
- administrators and teachers commonly expressed the opinion that the projects were building stronger relationships between the school, artists, students, and the community;
- the most common benefit identified by all interviewees was an improvement in school climate;
- early challenges to the projects existed in the form of some reluctance on the part of staff to support the program as a result of initial projects being imposed and involving artists who lacked skills to work in a classroom effectively; all agreed that poor communication between artists and teachers was an ongoing problem;
- three teachers noted that there should be more professional development on incorporating projects into the core curriculum;
- there was consensus on the importance of providing time for teachers to collaborate with guest artists to ensure a well-planned project and the necessity of a coordinator position;
- teachers suggested that the most successful projects were ones which were student-centred and had a general emphasis on Aboriginal culture; and
- parents surveyed believed that the projects were very positive for the school.



6.3. SAKEWEW HIGH SCHOOL
Box 846 North Battleford, SK S9A 2Z3

School and Community Profile

Located in North Battleford, Saskatchewan and established in 2003, Sakewew High School is an Aboriginal school providing instruction for Grades 9 to 12. Approximately half of the school's 250 Aboriginal students reside in the town of North Battleford situated in the central region of the province with approximately 14,000 residents, while the other half are bused from nearby First Nations of the Battlefords Tribal Council: Sweet Grass, Mosquito, Little Pine, Saulteaux, Pound Maker, Red Pheasant, and Moosomin.

A unique holistic education and support system has been developed for the school's students based on an inter-agency approach. The school is staffed by 19 full-time teachers, a principal, a half time vice-principal, and 15 teaching and support staff. Other on-site personnel include a cultural spiritual advisor, elders, community liaison worker, social workers and health workers, and an RCMP officer. The education program at Sakewew is subject-based and individualized to students, while being drawn from the provincial curriculum and based on the Quad system of four terms. The school also offers a GED and adult education program.

Sakewew is governed by the Battlefords First Nations Joint Board of Education which is a unique joint board and stand-alone school division responsible for its operations. It consists of one representative from the North West Catholic School Division, one representative from the Living Sky School Division, and two members who are appointed by the chiefs of the First Nations who belong to Battlefords Tribal Council (BTC). School funding is shared by the province (Saskatchewan Learning) and the federal government (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada).

Project Summary

Sakewew received ArtsSmarts funding for the first time in 2005-2006. Based on a proposal drawn up by the principal and Aboriginal culture coordinator, the school received a grant of \$7,000 towards a project involving a local Aboriginal writer. Administered by the Aboriginal culture coordinator, the project took place one day a week for six months with students from a Grade 9 Cree language class and a Grade 12 English language class. Planning time was provided for the teacher and artist to meet.

The Cree language class worked on a writing and video project with students creating a 'daily life scenario' in English then translating it into the Cree language. Their final products were video-taped then edited onto DVD. The English class group designed a filmmaking project based on a story written by one of the students, which resulted in the production of a three-minute video. At the end of the school year, the video pieces were presented to the school. Playwriting camps were also scheduled throughout the course of the project. Apart from these projects, the artist worked briefly with a group of 10 students from Grades 10 to 12 on a visual and performance art project which was presented during a community peace march held at the school.





Key Findings

During the two-day visit to Sakewew School, the following interviews and focus groups were conducted: three interviews with administrators; three interviews with teachers; two focus groups with students as part of classroom observations; one interview with an elder; and one focus group with teachers. Key findings included:

- teachers and administrators agreed that the projects had a positive impact on the school, based on their great potential for learning and being complimentary to existing cultural and arts programs;
- three teachers stated that students' pride in themselves and their work increased during the project; students developed a strong relationship with the artist and responded well to the art forms chosen for the project;
- all agreed that projects need to be flexible in their design;
- one participant indicated that problems arose because many teachers were not familiar with the concept of arts integration;
- teachers indicated that the arts encourage a sharing of different cultures and building of tolerance;
- students noted that they enjoyed working on the project and were highly motivated; and
- teachers and administrators stressed the importance of the coordinator position in facilitating the process.



6.4. PRINCE EDWARD SCHOOL 649 Brazier St., Winnipeg, MB R2K 2N4

School and Community Profile

Prince Edward School is an elementary school in the River East Transcona School Division of urban Winnipeg, Manitoba. The school has approximately 183 students from K to 6 and twelve teachers. It is supported by an active Parent Advisory Council which encouraged 90 parent volunteers to work in the school in 2004-2005. Approximately 25% of students at Prince Edward School are Aboriginal. The neighbourhood surrounding the school has many visible minority families with a mean family income lower than the Winnipeg average.



Project Summary

Prince Edward School has received ArtsSmarts funding for two years, with another grant provided for the 2006-2007 school year. The 2004-2005 grant totaled \$8,000, while the 2005-2006 grant was \$7,500.

Other funding sources complement the arts program: Manitoba Government grants of \$1,500 per year towards Aboriginal programming; and School Division Early Learning grants to support classroom collaboration. Other partnerships have been developed with groups such as the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, PCL Construction (which provided wood for murals), the Prince Edward School Parent Advisory Council, the Peter D. Curry Foundation (which subsidizes tickets to the Manitoba Theatre for Young Children), and Prairie Public Performances.

A half-time coordinator facilitates ArtsSmarts activities. Teachers provide a wish list of artists to be brought in, and are involved in monthly staff meetings and professional development days reviewing the ArtsSmarts projects. Teachers are responsible for calling the artists to plan and book time.

Eight artists were invited into the school to develop projects with every grade. Each activity resulted in a finished product. The following list outlines the individual activities associated with each arts project completed during the 2005-2006 year.

Grades 1 and 2

- investigating the human body through the construction of three-dimensional child-sized sculptures (science and health);
- learning about the importance of fruits and vegetables (nutrition and observation);
- understanding how six of the sacred animals in Ojibway culture and teachings need to survive winter (science);
- identifying healthy foods from the four food groups (nutrition);
- researching and recreating the structure of the home (social studies);
- creating three-dimensional bodies and scribble action figure drawings (health and language arts).

Grade 3

- exploring the writing process (language arts);
- creating a collaborative poem with an environmental theme (language arts, science, and social studies).

MAP (multi-age primary) class

- quilting with the assistance of a parent and an artist.

Grade 4

- creating a physical education / health video (health);
- investigating music and sound with a focus on the environment (design, science);
- learning the process of weaving (language arts and science).

Grades 4 and 5

- writing stories which incorporated the concept of weather conditions, personal concerns, and prairie life (language arts and social studies);
- sound and science project.

Grades 5 and 6

- writing legends (moral intelligences);
- creating shoes of clay on the theme of 'walk a mile in our shoes' (empathy).

MAUE (multi-age upper elementary) class

- creating patterned clay tiles (math);
- quilting in collaboration with MAP class (social studies and math);
- creating music out of recyclables to explore sound, pitch, and volume (science).

Grade 6

- story telling and story writing with a focus on solving conflicts (social issues and science);
- creating patterned clay tiles (math).

Key Findings

During the visit to Prince Edward School, the following interviews and focus groups were conducted: two interviews with administrators; four interviews with teachers; three focus groups with students as part of classroom observations; one interview with an artist, one focus group with parents; and two focus groups with all teachers in the school. Key findings included:

- a general consensus among teachers and administrators that changes have occurred in the school, with more arts planning and connections to the theme of inquiry in their classrooms;
- all teachers agreed that reflection and planning time is essential for making the projects a success;
- a consensus among respondents that artists and teachers generally worked well together;
- a majority of teachers and artists suggested that the projects have increased student motivation and cooperative learning;
- three teachers observed that Aboriginal students were connecting and acknowledging their culture more as a result of the projects;
- the confidence-building aspect of the projects was seen by teachers as allowing students to shine in different ways, especially those students who lack opportunities to excel in the regular classroom;
- a large majority of teachers stated that public presentation of their work was important, whether it be in their own classrooms or to the community; and,
- all students agreed that they wanted more artists in the class and were looking forward to the next project.

7. Project Profiles

7.1. COWICHAN VALLEY OPEN LEARNING SCHOOL

2557 Beverly St, Duncan, BC V9L 2X3

School and Community Profile

Cowichan Valley Open Learning School is an alternative school of the Cowichan Valley School Board. The school is located in Duncan, British Columbia, a community of approximately 70,000 residents on the southeast coast of Vancouver Island. The school provides instruction to 160 students in Grades 8 to 12, most of whom are upgrading to obtain a Grade 10 equivalent certificate. Approximately 50% of the students at the school are Aboriginal. One teacher describes the school as a place “where youth come when they don’t fit in at any other school”.

The Literacy Skills class which participated in the project is made up of roughly 15 regularly attending students aged 16 to 19 who are learning basic literacy skills.

Project Summary

Based on an attempt to identify non-traditional ways of learning that take into account all the learning intelligences, one of the teachers at Cowichan Valley Open Learning School submitted a proposal to ArtsSmarts. Upon subsequent acceptance of the proposal and the granting of \$1,400, four artists were brought in to work with students in the Literacy Skills class.

There were two components to the project. The first involved hand drumming, taught by a professional drummer who led a group of 10 students through three hour-long instructional sessions. Other drummers were brought in to provide hand drumming workshops with the community. Over 40 students and community members participated in these sessions. As a result of the interest generated, the school has purchased a set of Jimbaye drums.

In the second component of the project, a Coast Salish drum maker conducted a workshop with five students in making hoop drums. Another local Aboriginal artist was later brought to the school to lead five classroom sessions with these students to design and paint their drums. The project has inspired a group of staff and students to seek additional funds for similar projects as part of their literacy program.

Key Findings

Phone interviews were conducted with one teacher and one artist involved in the project. Key findings included:

- the project’s impact introduced to students to the concept that there are diverse ways of learning and affirmed that diversity should be accepted in the school;
- the project tapped into the kind of arts that are inherent in Aboriginal culture;
- the hoop drum activity was infused with cultural meaning and specific cultural protocols which had to be navigated before the project could be completed successfully; and,
- the teacher stated that ArtsSmarts funding ultimately provided the school with the opportunity to stretch the parameters of effective teaching and take into account a more holistic vision of learning.

7.2. FOUR DIRECTIONS STOREFRONT SCHOOL **193 Royal Avenue, Kamloops, BC V2B 6J7**

School and Community Profile

Located in Kamloops, British Columbia, the Four Directions Storefront School is an alternative high school administered by the Interior Indian Friendship Centre, enrolling approximately 60 Aboriginal students in 2005 -2006. The school has two teachers and two support staff. The Mission Statement of the Four Directions Storefront School is to provide a culturally relevant, First Nations education setting for at-risk learners.

Instruction at the school—available to both youth and adult learners—is structured around an academic program in the morning, followed by project-based work in the afternoon. The school provides students the opportunity to learn about their culture, build confidence and pride, and focus on academic success and general life skills. In this way, the school acts as a transition program for students wanting to either return to regular school, attain graduation status, upgrade specific skills, or obtain prerequisites for entry into post-secondary institutions or employment.

Project Summary

The ArtsSmarts project at Four Directions ran from October 2005 to March 2006 and involved five artists coming to work in one classroom. Approximately 25 to 30 students were involved in the project which spanned 14 separate days, with artists teaching various art forms such as basket weaving, pottery, jewelry, sculpture, and traditional First Nations art. A \$2,000 grant provided by ArtsSmarts was complemented by \$1,335 obtained from other sources such as the regular school budget, the school's parent committee, and community contributions. The projects involved one teacher and one support staff who worked in a coordinating capacity.

Key Findings

Two participating staff from the school were interviewed. Key findings included:

- an eagerness among participating youth to work on the projects;
- one teacher described the need for projects to start small and for teachers to find out what the students want to do; projects should be based on student-centred learning, with lessons not overly structured; and,
- one respondent stated that the work of the coordinator; it was essential that the coordinator be familiar with the artist and have confidence that s/he is able to work in the unique environment of the school.

7.3. STRIDE AVENUE ELEMENTARY **7014 Stride Avenue, Burnaby, BC**

School and Community Profile

Stride Avenue Elementary is an urban elementary school located in the Burnaby School District. Burnaby is a city of approximately 200,000 residents located just east of the city of Vancouver, British Columbia. Established in 1929, Stride Elementary School has 25 teaching staff and 30 support workers. It has been a community school for the past 25 years and currently serves 386 students in Grades K to 7, 16 of whom are Aboriginal.

The multi-cultural neighbourhood surrounding the school is experiencing rapid growth; a number of new multi-family housing units are currently under construction. 70% of the students speak a language other than English at home; it is estimated that 32 different languages are represented in the schools. All students with special learning needs are integrated into classrooms of age-appropriate peers, some with the support of Educational Assistants. 60% of the students receive resource support (LA, ESL, behaviour support).

Project Summary

Stride Avenue Elementary has received ArtsSmarts funding since 2004, beginning with a project which involved 120 students and incorporated dance, theatre, storytelling, and 'healing arts'.

The 2005-2006 projects lasted for three months. Two artists worked with four classrooms and two teachers. Thirty-four students were involved in the project (23 from grades 6 and 7, and 11 First Nations students from other upper elementary grades). ArtsSmarts provided \$2,000 towards the project budget, with the difference being made up from the school's budget and private donations.

This year's project was designed as a complement to the school's social responsibility goal through participation in a photography and writing activity. Students were encouraged to think about what they value in life and the people and places of importance to them to create individual works of related text and images. Curriculum connections were made as a result of the participating teacher having the students develop their project topics through a classroom study of virtues and values presented in fables, fairy tales, morals, and quotations from different cultures. The project integrated language arts, social responsibility, science, personal planning, and information technology.

In order to facilitate the photography component, a darkroom was set up by the students at the back of the classroom. Final projects were displayed at the school as well as at Vancouver Roundhouse Gallery and were also profiled in television documentaries and local newspapers.

Key Findings

Phone interviews were conducted with one artist and one teacher associated with the project. Key findings included:

- successful integration between photography project and curriculum occurred;
- the artist stated that many students chose topics relevant to issues that were important to them personally;
- student pride grew as a result of having the opportunity to display their work;
- sharing between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures regularly took place; and,
- there was a need for support for participating teachers during a project, especially from school administration.

7.4. SIGNAL HILL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Box 38, Pemberton, BC V0N 2L0

School and Community Profile

There are 380 students attending K to 7 at Signal Hill Elementary School, located in Pemberton, British Columbia, a small rural village of about 2,000 people. The town of Mount Currie is approximately six km north of the village and has a population of about 2,000. Approximately half of the students are from a number of reserves located up to an hour's bus ride from the school. The school has 18 teachers and 10 support staff, three of whom are from First Nations.

Project Summary

The 2005-2006 school year was the first time the school received ArtsSmarts funding. ArtsSmarts provided a grant of \$1,000, with the Mount Currie First Nation and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District providing additional funds. Project Drum involved bringing a local traditional Aboriginal drummer and singer to the school. Twice weekly for 20-minute sessions between January and June 2006, the artist taught students how to drum and sing local songs through the formation of hand drumming groups which would practice outside. Approximately 160 students from Grades 1 to 7 and eight teachers participated in the project, which was managed by the school's First Nations Literacy and Cultural Support Worker.

All classes that signed up for the project had 100% participation. Teachers joined in the drumming and learned along with everyone else. Curricular connections were made in some history and social studies classes by learning about related First Nations cultural practices from a local Elder. A culmination event for the project saw students performing at a community gathering involving drumming, traditional Bone games, dancing, and storytelling.

Key Findings

One school staff member and one artist involved in the project were interviewed by phone. Key findings included:

- participants observed that the most important aspect of the project was allowing drumming and singing to become an integral part of the school for all students;
- one respondent noted that Aboriginal students were demonstrating increased pride and self-esteem, which was attributed to a greater awareness of local Aboriginal culture on the part of students and teachers;
- the school was viewed by an increasing number of students and parents as a more welcoming environment for Aboriginal students;
- having a local Aboriginal artist was a critical factor in the success of the project; and,
- the community began to recognize more of what the school is doing, in large part because the project has made Aboriginal culture so visible in the school.

7.5. CUT KNIFE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

300 Otter Street, Box 370, Cut Knife, SK SOM 0N0

School and Community Profile

Cut Knife is a small rural village located in central Saskatchewan approximately 30 km west of the city of North Battleford. The school provides instruction to 147 students from K to 6. Approximately 32% of the student body is Aboriginal, primarily from three reserves of the Battlefords Tribal Council located north of the community. The school's staff includes 13 teachers and seven support staff.

Project Summary

This past year represented the first time the school had applied for ArtsSmarts funding. The school received a grant of \$1,000 which was bolstered by other financial and in-kind contributions from the school. The project was a whole school effort, involving all 147 students enrolled. An Aboriginal artist was brought in for one week to produce leather work with an Aboriginal theme. Older students designed and produced shields and dreamcatchers, while younger students worked on simple leather key chains. Two classes at a time came to work in the school library, which had been set up as an art studio. The project was scheduled around National Aboriginal Day and culminated in a presentation of the students' work. The project was proposed and managed by one of the participating classroom teachers; no planning or professional development time was provided during the project.

Key Findings

One administrator and one teacher at Cut Knife Elementary School were interviewed for the study. Key findings included:

- students had a greater appreciation of Aboriginal culture as a result of participating in the activities;
- the hands-on nature of the project made the experience more memorable for the students; and,
- the artist exposed students to experiences that they normally did not have access to.

7.6. JOE DUQUETTE HIGH SCHOOL

919 Broadway Ave. Saskatoon SK S7N 1B8

School and Community Profile

Located in downtown Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Joe Duquette High School provides instruction to Aboriginal students in Grades 9 to 12. Originally established in 1980 as the Saskatoon Native Survival School, the school is administered under the Saskatoon Catholic School Board. Approximately 250 students are served by a teaching staff of 16, half of whom are Aboriginal.

Project Summary

Joe Duquette High School received an ArtsSmarts grant of \$6,000 for the 2005-2006 school year to develop a stand-alone video project for eight students in Grades 11 and 12 in partnership with the Indigenous Peoples Program of the University of Saskatchewan and Art + New Media, a Saskatoon art co-operative. The project took place at the paved Art + New Media site between January and May, 2006. Students were required to travel to the co-op site from the school.

The project had students working on every aspect of the production process to develop their own 10 to 15 minute videos. They learned specific skills associated with all aspects of video production from scriptwriting to editing. Content of these videos focused around 'a day in the life of an Aboriginal youth'. Many students researched Aboriginal culture and language in order to incorporate language and symbols into their work. No teachers were associated with the delivery of this project and there was no professional development for teachers. In the end, only three of eight students completed their video. Even though the footage has been saved, there was no final presentation of the students' efforts.

Key Findings

Phone interviews were conducted with one artist associated with the project. Key findings included:

- students became empowered by the project;
- students learned specific skills associated with all aspects of designing a video from scriptwriting to editing; and
- skills development and the ability of the students to take responsibility for their work built the confidence and self-esteem of those involved.

7.7. KEETHANOW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Box 130 Stanley Mission, SK S0J 2P0

School and Community Profile

Keethanow Elementary School was established in 1997 and is located in Stanley Mission, Saskatchewan, which is divided into the Hamlet of Stanley Mission and the Stanley Mission Reserve, part of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band. There are approximately 1,200 residents in the community. The school provides instruction to approximately 300 students in two classes per grade from 1 to 6, plus a Kindergarten class. Approximately 98% of the students are Aboriginal from the local Cree-speaking Stanley Mission reserve.

Project Summary

As a result of a proposal submitted by the school principal, Keethanow School received a grant from ArtsSmarts for \$2,960. Supplemented by funds from Stanley Mission Health and the school budget, the grant led to the development of two projects, with week-long visits by two artists at different times in 2006. Both artists had previous experience working in the school. The first project involved half-day sessions with a Métis singer/songwriter who worked with about 100 students from two Grade 5, two Grade 6, and one Grade 4 class. A group of community members in a residential healing program also worked with the songwriter.

Students wrote lyrics in both English and Cree and composed a song as a group activity. Topics for all songs were chosen by the students with titles such as ‘the trapline,’ ‘climbing a tree to read a book’—a song about the challenges of doing homework on the reserve, life in Stanley Mission, and ‘canoeing.’ One song was composed entirely in the Cree language. Sessions culminated in a performance for the community in which students performed their songs. No preparation time was provided for teachers and artists to meet before the artist’s visit.

The second project involved a local artist coming into the school to work with Grade 5 and 6 classes to create birch bark photo albums. At the end of this session, students presented their completed albums to the school.

Key Findings

One phone interview was conducted with a school administrator. Key findings included:

- students were highly motivated and fully involved in the projects, which was not always the case in their regular classes;
- projects were highly relevant for the students, since songs composed during the songwriting sessions, for example, were based on themes they themselves created;
- the process was facilitated by the fact that the artists had been in the school before; and
- pride was fostered through the act of displaying students’ final work.

7.8. ST. LOUIS SCHOOL

Patuanak, SK S0M 2H0

School and Community Profile

St. Louis School is a K to 8 First Nations School located in Patuanak, Saskatchewan, a remote Dene community of approximately 1,000 residents located on the Churchill River in the northern region of the province. The school has approximately 160 students.

Project Summary

For the 2005-2006 year, ArtsSmarts provided a \$7,500 grant to a partnership between Y’utthe Askiy’s Oski Achimowin Honi Gothe el el Daholni Inc. (YAO-HGED Inc.), an Aboriginal media arts non-profit organization, and the school. For one week, Aboriginal media artists associated with YAO-HGED delivered a basic video arts workshop to ten Grade 7 and 8 students. The activity provided hands-on experience with media arts among participating students through the teaching of basic scripting, storyboarding, videotaping, and editing. During the course of the project, six films were created in the school library which was turned into a film studio; technical support was provided by YAO-HGED, as well as by the school’s computer teacher.

After the students completed their video shorts, a community/school screening was held in the school and was attended by an audience of about 200. The event was promoted by the local radio station; two of the films were showcased on the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network and all six were broadcast on the Missinipi Broadcasting Corporation, a regional television station.

Key Findings

Interviews were conducted with one teacher and one artist associated with the project. Key findings included:

- students found the project relevant because of its student-centred focus and because the creative process led to a concrete product;
- students taught each other many of the technical aspects of the production process;
- students communicated well with each other and were proud of what they accomplished together;
- the community became very supportive of the process as a result of the television broadcasts and community presentation; and,
- some teachers needed support and professional development to give them the skills that would allow them to integrate this kind of project successfully.

7.9. GOOD SPIRIT SCHOOL DIVISION SCHOOLS

Box 869 Canora, SK S0A 0L0

School and Community Profile

Good Spirit School Division has 28 schools in 19 communities and is located on the eastern edge of the province of Saskatchewan. Three schools in the Division were involved in this project: Norquay School, Fort Livingstone School, and Victoria School. Norquay School can be found in the small community of Norquay and has 214 students in classes from K to 12. Fort Livingstone School is a K to 12 school with 137 students located in the adjacent community of Pelly. Victoria School is an elementary school serving 216 students in Grades K to 4, situated in the town of Kamsack. The student populations of these schools are drawn from families located in the surrounding rural farming communities and First Nations reserves. Approximately 25% of the students at the three schools are Aboriginal.

Project Summary

The Good Spirit School Division has received ArtsSmarts funding for two years. The 2004-2005 projects focused on Aboriginal dancing. The 2005-2006 project involved the building of traditional wigwams at three schools and was supported by a \$7,260 ArtsSmarts grant with other school board and local school level contributions. The project theme originated from the artist, with specific teachers at each of the schools targeted to work on the project because of their arts integration background and planning skills. Through this project, a local Aboriginal artist was brought in to each school to work with Grade 7/8 classes at Norquay and Fort Livingstone Schools and with the Grade 1 class at Victoria.

Sessions at each school saw the artist working with one classroom for one hour per day for a week. On the first day of each session, the artist would be accompanied by an elder to share stories relating to the traditions of the local Aboriginal peoples. During the week, each class constructed, covered, and decorated their wigwams. Teacher participation was voluntary during these self-contained sessions. Completed wigwams were displayed during celebration meals open to the community at each of the schools. Constructed wigwams still stand outside each of the participating schools.

Key Findings

Phone interviews were conducted with one administrator and one artist associated with the project. Key findings included:

- respondents stated that the project was highly successful as a result of it being culturally-orientated, hands-on, and small scale;
- the importance of “doing things right” was emphasized during the project as a way of learning;
- students learned strong cooperation and communication skills by working together;
- there was increased awareness of the potential of arts integration among teachers in the participating schools;
- participating teachers accommodated the artist’s teaching process and showed interest in having other ways of learning modeled for them;
- there was a greater awareness of the diversity in the school and stereotypes and myths about Aboriginal culture were corrected; and,
- students exhibited pride as a result of showing their completed work.

7.10. JACK RIVER SCHOOL

Norway House, MB ROB 1B0

School and Community Profile

Jack River School is a K to 8 school enrolling 267 students in Norway House, Manitoba, a small town located centrally in the province and adjacent to the Norway House Cree Nation, which has a population of about 5000.

Project Summary

The 2005-2006 year was the first year that Jack River School submitted a proposal to ArtsSmarts. The school was awarded a \$6,362 grant towards the development of their project, which involved bringing in two artists from outside the community. One artist presented clay activities, while the other offered dance instruction culminating in a performance for the community. The learning content of this project was music and drama around the theme of the caribou, a theme selected by the artist. All classes in Grades 1 to 4 worked with the artists, while only the Grade 3 and 4 classes participated in the caribou-themed dance performance. In total, six classroom teachers were involved with the performance.

Key Findings

Two phone interviews were conducted with respondents at the school. Key findings included:

- students were enthusiastic about attending school to participate in the project; this enthusiasm spilled over into other subjects;
- cooperative learning took place between staff; the nature of the project led to collaborative teaching strategies and arts integration, which built confidence;
- a positive and open artist/teacher relationship developed;
- artists were viewed by teachers as being spontaneous in their work;
- increased self-confidence was observed in students; and,
- the drama and dance performance represented a successful culminating event.

7.11. NORTHERN LIGHTS ACADEMY

Box 89, Rigolet NF AOP 1P0

School and Community Profile

Northern Lights Academy is a K to 12 school of the Labrador School Board. Located in Rigolet, Newfoundland and Labrador, the school was built in 1997. Rigolet is a remote Inuit community of 314 residents on the northern coast of Labrador. The school currently has 60 students.

Project Summary

The project documented for this study took place at Northern Lights Academy during the 1999-2000 school year. It involved two components: a carving session and the development of a drama presentation. These two activities were sustained by a \$7,700 grant from ArtsSmarts and a \$6,615 grant from the Labrador Inuit Association. The carving portion of the project took place as a three-day workshop held three times throughout the year. An Inuit carver from the neighbouring community of Nain was flown in to work with 14 students from Grades 5 to 9. Students attended day sessions in a workshop space created outside, while adults attended evening sessions for the community. Inuktitut was used where possible during the sessions, while the artist shared stories about Inuit culture and customs. At the conclusion, students presented their work at the school and many were eager to bring their work home.

The drama portion of the project involved bringing two artists in to develop drama skills. One artist provided professional development to teachers on integrating drama into the classroom and teaching junior and senior high school students to do script writing. The second artist worked with students on set design and production for a play performed at the school by a student drama group. The play was eventually performed at the Creative Arts Festival in Labrador City by a group of students in Grades 7 to 12 and won several awards. There was strong community support and consistent media attention throughout the project. About 40 students participated in both projects.

Even though ArtsSmarts funding did not continue after this year, carving and theatre have been sustained, in part, as a result of continued funding from the Labrador Inuit Association Pathways Funding Program. It must be noted that higher costs are usually associated with projects in such isolated and remote communities, with a large proportion of the budget needed to cover flight costs.

Key Findings

Two phone interviews were conducted with staff who participated in the project. Key findings included:

- both the carving and drama components of the project were highly successful as a result of arts integration and made a long-term and positive impact on the way teaching is done at the school;
- students' hidden artistic talents were uncovered during the arts projects;
- the ability of the artist to work in the school was seen as critical to a positive experience for the students;
- involving teachers with expertise and skills in arts and arts integration were a critical condition for success; and,
- parents were supportive of the project after seeing the pride the students took in their work and their eagerness to share it.





8. Research Tools

8.1. PRINCIPAL INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

1. Why did you originally apply for funding?
2. What did you hope to accomplish through the project? Was it achieved?

Changes in practice and pedagogy with teachers and artists

3. Have there been changes in the way teachers are teaching and / or planning as a result of the project? How?
4. Were teachers given an orientation to arts-integration prior to the project? Have there been more professional development opportunities for teachers relating to the arts and arts integration? Provide examples.
5. Did you observe teachers working with teachers differently during this project? Is there a change as a result of the project? How?
6. Is arts integration seen as a potential and viable teaching strategy in other subject areas?
7. How have the ways artists work in your school changed?

Impacts on students and the learning environment

8. How did the project affect student engagement in school? For example, did student attendance (including students at-risk) change during the project?
9. Were there opportunities for students to display leadership?
10. What did the celebration / performance achieve with the students, teachers, school and community? Provide examples.
11. What changes to student behaviour did you observe during the project? Explain.
12. Do you see changes in students' sense of pride and self-esteem as a result of the project? Provide examples.
13. Do you see changes in students' acceptance of diversity as a result of this project?
14. Have you seen changes in awareness and appreciation of the arts in the students? Provide examples.

Partnerships and Relationships

15. Has the school partnered with external organizations/artists to teach curriculum before?
16. What types of partnerships were established in the project both in the school and community?
17. Which partnerships, if any, have continued after the project finished?
18. Do you feel teachers and artists see each other in new ways as a result of the project? How?
19. Do you feel that teachers and students see each other in new ways as a result of the project? How?
20. Do you feel that students and artists see each other in new ways as a result of the project? How?
21. How has the community/school relationship changed as a result of the project? Provide examples.
22. Is your school now linked or connected more with your local arts scene as a result of this project?

Aboriginal Culture

23. How has the project integrated local Aboriginal culture?
24. How have students' knowledge of and exposure to Aboriginal culture (local and other) changed as a result of the project?
25. Has the project worked with/hired local Aboriginal artists? How does this change the project?
26. What differences do you see between projects that have had Aboriginal artists and non-Aboriginal artists?

Adaptability and Sustainability

27. Has the project had to adapt to local circumstances over its course? How so?
28. Was ArtsSmarts the only funding source for this project? If not, please list other funding partners?
29. Have other funding sources been found to continue the project after ArtsSmarts funding ended?
30. How has community involvement in the project changed?
31. Has the project had an influence in teacher retention? How?
32. Has the school developed long-term arts related assets as a result of the project (ex., drama clubs and dance groups)?

Success Factors and Essential Conditions

33. What were the most critical factors, in order of priority, which positively impacted the success of the project?
34. Were there particular conditions that needed to be in place in the school and community before the project could get off the ground?

Lessons Learned

35. What were the key successes of the ArtsSmarts project?
36. What key strategies would improve the impact of an ArtsSmarts project for aboriginal learners?
37. What other comments or recommendations do you have?

8.2. TEACHER INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Changes in practice and pedagogy with teachers and artists

1. Have you changed the way you teach in the classroom as a result of the project? How?
2. Were you able to make connections to education theories and strategies such as cooperative learning, character education, multiple intelligences etc. with this project?
3. Have you changed the way you plan because of the project? How?
4. Did you have experience in arts-integration before the project? How did you learn how to do this type of teaching?
5. Have there been more professional development opportunities for teachers relating to the arts and arts integration? Provide examples.
6. Did you/Are you collaborating with other teachers more during/as a result of the project? How?
7. Do you see arts-integration as a viable teaching strategy as a result of the project?
8. Are you using methods you learned through this project now in other areas?
9. Do you feel more comfortable taking risks in your practice and planning as a result of the project/professional development? What has supported you to do this?
10. How have the ways artists work with you changed?

Impacts on students and the learning environment

11. Can you describe how students were engaged during this project? For example, did student attendance (including students at-risk) change during the project? How?
12. Were there opportunities for students to provide leadership to others? Were there students that displayed these qualities that were not evident in this student before?
13. Did this project provide an opportunity to celebrate/show others their achievement? What did you learn from this?
14. What changes to student behaviour did you observe during the project? Explain.
15. Do you see changes in students' sense of pride and self-esteem as a result of the project? Provide examples.
16. What changes in students' acceptance of diversity did you observe during and as a result of this project?
17. Have you seen changes in students' awareness and appreciation of how working through a creative process helps students to learn?
18. Have students expressed an interest in more arts activities or going to arts venues?
19. What types of curriculum connections were made during the project?

Partnerships and Relationships

20. What types of partnerships were developed during the project both in the school and community?
21. Which partnerships, if any, have continued after the project finished?
22. Is this your first time partnering with an artist?
23. What did you learn from collaborating with an artist in your classroom? Do you see and collaborate with artists in new ways as a result of the project? How?
24. Do you feel that teachers and students see each other in new ways as a result of the project? How?
25. How has the community/school relationship changed as a result of the project? Provide examples.

Aboriginal Culture

26. How has the project integrated local Aboriginal culture?
27. How have students' knowledge of and exposure to Aboriginal culture (their own local and other) changed as a result of the project?
28. Has the project worked with/hired local Aboriginal artists? How does this change the project?
29. What differences do you see between projects that have had Aboriginal artists and non-Aboriginal artists?

Adaptability and Sustainability

30. How has the project adapted to local circumstances over its course?
31. How has community involvement in the project changed?
32. Has the project had an influence on teacher retention? How?

Success Factors and Essential Conditions

33. What were the most critical factors, in order of priority, which positively impacted the success of the project?
34. Were there particular conditions that needed to be in place in the school and community before the project could get off the ground?

Lessons Learned

35. What were the key successes of the ArtsSmarts project?
36. What key strategies would improve the impact of an ArtsSmarts project for aboriginal learners?
37. What other comments or recommendations do you have?

8.3. ARTIST INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Changes in practice and pedagogy with teachers and artists

1. What changes to planning a teaching project do you think you brought as an artist to this project?
2. Have you been asked to work with teachers on professional development related to arts-integration in the same school since this project?
3. How have the ways you approach your work in the schools changed as a result of working in ArtsSmarts projects?

Impacts on students and the learning environment

4. How did the project affect student engagement in school?
5. Did you find that you worked with the full class during the project?
6. Were there opportunities for student leadership? Provide examples.
7. Did this project provide an opportunity to celebrate/show others the student's achievement?
8. What changes to student behaviour did you observe during the project? Explain.
9. Do you see changes in students' sense of pride and self-esteem as a result of the project? Provide examples.
10. Do you see changes in students' acceptance of diversity as a result of this project?
11. Have you seen changes in how you are now perceived as an artist by the students? Provide examples.
12. Have students asked for more information about the arts? - how to become artists, etc..

Partnerships and Relationships

13. In general terms, what did you learn from this experience?
14. Do you see and collaborate with teachers in new ways as a result of the project? How?
15. Do you see students in new ways as a result of the project? How?
16. How has the community/school relationship changed as a result of the project? Provide examples.

Aboriginal Culture

17. How has the project integrated local Aboriginal culture?
18. How have students' knowledge of and exposure to Aboriginal culture (local and other) changed as a result of the project?
19. Has the project worked with/hired local Aboriginal artists? How does this change the project?
20. What differences do you see between projects that have had Aboriginal artists and non-Aboriginal artists?

Success Factors and Essential Conditions

21. What were the most critical factors, in order of priority, which positively impacted the success of the project?
22. Were there particular conditions that needed to be in place in the school and community before the project could get off the ground?

Lessons Learned

23. What were the key successes of the ArtsSmarts project?
24. What key strategies would improve the impact of an ArtsSmarts project for aboriginal learners?
25. What other comments or recommendations do you have?

8.4. STUDENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Changes in practice and pedagogy with teachers and artists

1. Are classes in the project any different from regular classes? How?
2. Are you now doing more arts in your regular lessons now? Give examples.

Impacts on student learning and learning environment

3. Did you attend all the classes during the project? Do you think more students were at school during the project? Why?
4. Did you have an opportunity to celebrate/present what you did?
5. Did this project help kids to be leaders?
6. How did you feel when you got an opportunity to perform/show your work to others?
7. What did you notice about your classmates during the project? Was there any change in students' behaviours during and after the project?
8. Do you think that the project affects students' sense of pride and self-esteem? How?
9. How do you think that the project has helped students understand others better or be more tolerant?
10. How does an artist help you to learn things?
11. What else have you learned about the arts as a result of this project?
12. How did the project help you learn about your other school subjects?

Partnerships and Relationships

13. What was different about your teacher when she/he worked with the artist during this project?
14. Do you see artists in a new way as a result of the project? How?

Aboriginal Culture

15. What did you learn about Aboriginal culture through your project?
16. Did you learn more about your own culture or that of your classmates during this project?
17. Did the artist seem to have a good knowledge of Aboriginal culture?

Lessons Learned

18. What was the best thing about the project?
19. What could have made the project better?
20. Do you have any other comments about the project?

8.5. COMMUNITY/PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDELINES

Impacts on students and the learning environment

1. What have you heard about the project via your child/school?
2. Did you see a difference in your child's attendance during the project?
3. Were there opportunities for student leadership?
4. Were you invited to a celebration/performance? What did you observe at the performance?
Provide examples.
5. Did you notice any changes in your child's behaviour during the project?
6. Do you see changes in students' sense of pride and self-esteem as a result of the project?
Provide examples.
7. Has your son/daughter asked to go to any arts activities, etc. as a result of the project?

Partnerships and Relationships

8. Were you involved in this project? Have you been involved in partnerships with the school before? How was this project different?
9. What types of partnerships were established in the project both in the school and community?
10. Which partnerships, if any, have continued after the project finished?
11. How has the community/school relationship changed as a result of the project? Provide examples.

Aboriginal Culture

12. Were community elders/grandparents, etc. asked to participate in the project?

Adaptability and Sustainability

13. How has community involvement in the project changed?

Success Factors

14. What were the most critical factors, in order of priority, which positively impacted the success of the project?

8.6. SCHOOL SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Please briefly describe your school including information such as the total number of students, grades taught, number of teachers, etc.?
2. Please briefly describe the community setting around your school and the Aboriginal demographics?
3. What is the origin and history of your school's relationship with ArtsSmarts including the number of years involved with ArtsSmarts?
4. How are ArtsSmarts programs managed, designed and delivered in your school?
5. Were there partners involved in the project from outside the school? If yes, please describe.
6. What were the main funding sources for the project(s)?
7. What was the student participation rate for the project(s)?
8. Was there professional development training for teachers associated with the project? If yes, please describe.
9. What types of curriculum connections were made?
10. What types of partnerships were created between the school and the community as a result of the project(s).
11. What were the project outcomes observed for the students, school and community?
12. Were there ArtsSmarts project reports or evaluations completed since the projects inception? If yes, please provide copies to the principal investigator.
13. Other comments?
14. If you have not already provided the following information, please fill out the table on the next page.

ArtsSmarts Project(s) at your school

	Project 1	Project 2	Project 3	Project 4
Project title				
Project coordinator name and title				
Name(s) and grade level(s) of teachers involved in project				
Name(s) and genres of artist(s) involved in the project				
Project dates and duration				
Project type and description				
Examples of Products				
Number of Students in the project				
Grades involved				
Subjects integrated				



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