

Reflection on Community Action Project

How do you feel now that your project has been planned and implemented?

Reflective Guidelines: Includes – but is not limited to - thoughts about project success, frustrations, breakthroughs, challenges, reference to success indicators (page 10), and advice for future collective action projects. Write your notes in whatever form you choose and include visuals if applicable.

This project was inspired by the work and art of one of our pod members, Kacey Gladstone. After interviewing elders of the Halalt nation, she was able to come up with a visual image of the Big Dance House that used to be at the center of the Halalt village. With no photographs of the dance house available, Kacey's art was a tool to reclaim a part of the Halalt history. We wanted to create something that would allow for this recreated memory to be shared in the local community while using the same process to invite students to reclaim some of their own memories.

Our original idea was to create a few lessons and teach them in a school close to the Halalt traditional territory. However, we were pressed in time and this didn't appear feasible to most members of the pod and we even considered rejecting the idea and starting over from the beginning. There were some tensions and frustrations, but we managed to hear everyone's opinion and problem-solve. After considering everybody's wishes and concerns about this project idea, we were able to consider a different option: create a unit plan with comprehensive lesson plans to share with the SD79 Resource District. Without having to teach the lessons, we could focus our energies on the development of a resource that would be useful to our community. This option brought everybody together around a common focus and we were able to move forward.

Getting to know each other and learning to work together while trying to write a unit plan with multiple lessons was a great challenge. There were multiple decisions to be made and we had to agree on a common direction to take. Eventually, all members of the pod seemed to find a comfortable role that built on their strengths. This was an interesting experience for me because I am used to taking on a leadership role in groups and to be the person who holds it all together. In this group, there were other strong natural leaders and organizers and it took me a while to figure out what my role was. I had to learn to sit back and really listen to everybody, trying not to impose my views on the group. I realized that the way I was helpful to this particular group was in getting us out of impasses. A few times, when we were blocked and frustrated, I was able to take a step back, look at the big picture and find a different route. I learned that, with my capacity to make connections and think outside the box, I could take on a supportive role focused on problem-solving.

Co-creating a unit with 6 people is bound to be challenging, but we also benefited from this process greatly as we learned from each other how we structure and write our lesson plans. We shared ideas, perfected each other's lessons and we learned a lot from the collaboration. It made me realize that collaborating with other teachers to co-create and co-teach is a great way to grow as a teacher and I will make sure to include this in my practice.

One of the main issues that we faced with the implementation of this project was obtaining permission from the Hul'qumi'num Treaty Group to share the concept art as a resource for SD79. We were originally told orally that there wouldn't be any problem but the protocol was to ask in writing. We sent a request in writing and we kept working on the project. In the meantime, we were able to communicate with the Principal of Aboriginal Education in SD79, and she told us how to make our unit plan into a resource for the district. We are still awaiting the permission and, therefore, are unable to publicly share our resource for the moment. Even though this was an unexpected turn of events, we still learned a lot about the importance of following protocol and being respectful of another culture's ways of doing things.

Even if we haven't been able to share the resource yet, the personal and collective benefits of working together on this project were absolutely worthwhile. I consider that our project was successful as I realize that the journey is more important than the destination.