

CHILOQUIN ELEMENTARY REPORT SUMMARY - 6TH GRADE SPRING 2015

The focus of this program was to help teachers recognize local culture and community and incorporate it into their curriculum. Our process involved exploring life challenges, personal strengths, social justice, cultural identity, bullying and more. Students then created stories in third person narrative with themselves as the protagonists.

Our main objective with this program was to provide a creative container for students to engage with one another in a positive, cooperative way that raised self-esteem and bridged racial and economic divides. According to our post-course survey, when students were asked to rate their relationships with other students and their teachers, the median was "9" on a scale of 1-10 (where 1 was *negative* and 10 was *positive*). In the words of Catherine Grace Stroup, 6th grade teacher, Chiloquin Elementary, "I really think mountains were moved in the sixth grade class. Thank you!"

Other objectives included approaching deeper underlying issues of self-worth and belonging. I think one of our students said it best: "I enjoyed that when you came you let us be ourselves and just [have] a sense of really being together as one." One way that we built trust within the school community was by reinvigorating the oral tradition of storytelling. When students were asked what they enjoyed most about the class, one student wrote, "I enjoyed learning things from other people." Another student simply wrote, "Sharing." And, when asked what she found challenging, she answered honestly again, "Sharing." 80% of student stories were about bullying or some form of abuse perpetrated on them. The Native American population at Chiloquin Elementary is just over 60%, and this speaks directly to their experience. One native student writes that the most challenging thing for her was, "being honest about her life."

When asked if students think they *grew as a person* over the course of the class, one student writes, "Yes, because I am [now] respecting others and listening to my teacher." Another writes that she *grew*, "by her positivity and feelings!" One student addressed me personally in his survey saying, "I really liked the way you are, and how you were letting people feel good about themselves." This was our main class objective, and we were very pleased to meet and exceed our goals in several areas. Many students were extremely reluctant to write and/or share anything personal, and by the end of the course, we all took an 'anti-bullying pledge' and proceeded to have students and elders from the community engage in a powerful showcase that led several participants to tears. "You had a very positive influence on our kids and we appreciate that." – Travis Fast, Principle, Chiloquin Elementary.

Abram R. Katz, Lead Teacher, SOU Teaching Consultant