

Improved literacy and numeracy outcomes for First Nations students at Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview: Targeted literacy and numeracy intervention programs

Purpose

To improve literacy and numeracy outcomes of First Nations students at Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview, through targeted intervention programs delivered by specialist teachers and further supported by external educational psychologists. These programs were intended to provide student-specific support for achieving academic outcomes, and remedying gaps in student knowledge.

Target group

All transitioning First Nations students in Years 7 to 9 (n=16), including five Year 7, six Year 8, and five Year 9 students.

Activities

The implementation of targeted programs included:

- Student participation in the MacqLit literacy program three times a week, and the QuickSmart numeracy program twice a week, during class time.
- Weekly developmental session for each student with a Speech and Language therapist.
- Guidance and support from a First Nations Tutor, in the boarding house for two hours, three nights a week.
- Student literacy assessment every two weeks with the Wheldall Assessment of Reading Passages and annually with the York Assessment of Reading Comprehension.
- Frequent reassessment of student numeracy through the rubrics within the QuickSmart program.
- Implementation of student and staff surveys to qualitatively track student outcomes.

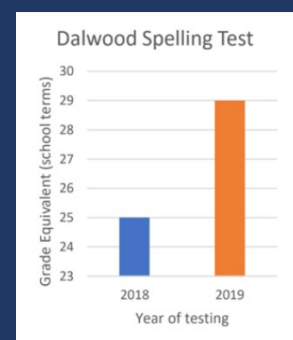
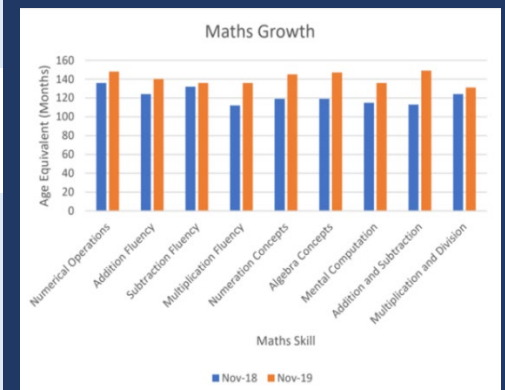
Outcomes

Targeted intervention programs have improved First Nations students' literacy and numeracy outcomes across the board and allowed students to engage with the curriculum more confidently. Evidence from reassessment methods demonstrated significant growth in reading comprehension, fluency, and rate, as well as numerical operations, concepts, and computation. Surveys showed student agreement with improved skills and confidence in reading, writing and maths.

Learnings

We have learned that building on foundational skills in literacy and numeracy is imperative to ensuring students experience learning success, which leads to improved self-esteem and independence as learners. Staff consistency supports the development of authentic and trusting relationships with students, contributing to learning growth. The frequency of support must also be maintained to ensure that literacy and numeracy skills are practiced and repeated, and improvements are consolidated.

An example of literacy and numeracy outcomes in a First Nations student, with results measured in 2018, and again upon Year 7 completion in 2019:



This student was also reassessed by a Speech and Language therapist in June 2020, and demonstrated “a level of generalised improvement in listening and understanding skills,” as well as growth in areas such as “listening to passages of information and taking key-notes” since November 2019 (Project report, Saint Ignatius' College, Riverview).