



Success Story:

Introduction to ELA Performance Tasks

March 4, 2022

On Friday, March 4, 2022, 16 Instructional Coaches who serve 22,000 Puyallup School District students joined their Executive Director of Equity and Instructional Leadership, Amanda Kraft, Director of Instructional Leadership, Math-Science, Dr. Heather McMullen, and their Director of Instructional Leadership, Nancy Strobel, for an English Language Arts Performance Task workshop. What made this experience unique was two-fold - it was the first in-person workshop for this group since COVID began two years ago, and it took place in the district's own Karshner Museum.

The Karshner Museum, created from an endowment of 1,500 artifacts in 1933 by Dr. Warner Karshner, typically hosts 190 field trips a year and holds both long-term and temporary exhibits. While COVID has heavily impacted in-person field trips for students, our visit allowed the coaches to explore the exhibits, including a temporary exhibit, "We're Still Here." The Survival of Washington Indians that is also available digitally.



Just after the turn of the 20th century in Ilwaco, Chinook families come together and fish (source:

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/werestillhere/fish.aspx>

East Sound South FieldSTEM Coordinator, Cindy Haverkamp, wove the museum’s exhibits into her presentation, using a panel from the temporary exhibit for her land acknowledgement, and guiding the coaches through a field investigation that demonstrated how the museum’s exhibits could be used to help students develop background knowledge for PEI’s 7th grade ELA performance task entitled, “Water Quality Monitoring,” which asks the essential question: Why is clean water important to our communities?



Director of Instructional Leadership for Math and Science, Dr. Heather McMullen, leads instructional coaches in a reflection about their professional learning.

Using a data sheet based on a lesson from Project WILD’s K-12 Curriculum and Activity Guide called “Museum Search”, coaches searched the exhibits for examples of how water was represented in photos and art. Next, they reflected on what these examples suggested about the available resources and cultural values of the Indigenous peoples represented in the exhibits. Some key examples they found included references to a major food source: salmon, and their need for clean water, as well as the way that villages and buildings were oriented to face bodies of water such as rivers or the Puget Sound.

Cindy then led the coaches through the steps of the ELA Performance Task, encouraging them to “think like a student” and consider how the field investigation in the museum might increase their confidence and connection to place, building their basic knowledge about the importance of clean water to the Indigenous community and to their own.

Amanda Kraft thanked Cindy for taking the extra time to get to know the museum and to use it as the background for this professional learning. Coaches mentioned that while they had been in the building in the past for other professional development experiences, they had not taken the time to understand the resources the museum had to offer. Many coaches were excited to share what they learned about the museum, the virtual exhibit, and PEI’s performance tasks with their mentees. One attendee shared, “I appreciated...the way Cindy used the resources in our room to further our understanding of water and its presence in our culture and world.”



At Celilio Falls, skilled tribal fishermen balance on rickety wooden platforms to spear their fish. The construction of the Dalles Dam buried the ancestral fishing grounds under water in the 1950s (source:

<https://www.sos.wa.gov/legacy/werestillhere/fish.aspx>).