

Learning the Music of the Northern Tutchone Culture

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Background

Problem: Research has pointed to cultural oppression as a factor contributing to mental and social health problems in the First Nations communities (Kirmayer et al., 2003).

Solution?


Singing



The Program

- **Singing and Dancing**
- **Language/History/Culture**
- **Elder/Community participation**
- **Final Showcase**





E.V.B.S PRESENTS...

**Drumming, Dancing, Singing
Gala Event!**

WHEN: WEDNESDAY,
DECEMBER 5, AT 6:00PM

WHERE: E.V.B.S GYM

WHO: YOUTH OF THE
COMMUNITY

WHAT: TRADITIONAL MUSIC

“The drum is the heartbeat of
the people”

STEW AND BANNOCK WILL BE SERVED

Program Goals:

- Students will learn new skills and traditional knowledge.
 - Singing and dancing skills
 - Other traditions and cultural knowledge
 - Northern Tutchone language skills
- Students will improve confidence and self-esteem.
- Students will increase pride in their culture.
- Students will deepen their connection and cultural identity as a member of the Selkirk First Nation.
- Students will gain a greater sense of community and togetherness
 - Enhanced relationship between the school and the community
 - Greater sense of togetherness in the school
 - Greater sense of togetherness in the community

The Evaluation

- **Quantitative**
 - Surveys
 - Questionnaires
- **Qualitative**
 - Observations
 - Interviews (student and teacher)

What did we find?

- ✓ Students had fun

“I liked it because...you’re learning about the Selkirk Culture and that’s pretty fun”

-Elementary student

- ✓ Students were engaged

“There is a level of engagement that says this is right. These kids want to do this. The majority are 100% engaged for 55-minute block.”

– School Principal

Goal # 1 – Students learned new skills and traditional knowledge

- ***Musical skills, such as singing and dancing***

“I learned that I can dance. I didn’t used to know how to dance.”

-Elementary student

- ***Other traditions and cultural knowledge***

“Until now, I didn’t know anything [about my culture] and now I do”

- Elementary student

- ***Northern Tutchone Language skills***

“We learned...a little bit of language – words that I didn’t know”

– High school student

Goal # 2 – Students improved confidence/ self-esteem



“I’m not afraid to show people that I can dance my kinda way”

-Elementary student

“I was shy at the beginning, then I wasn’t like shy. For some reason I was shy for the entrance song, and then I got into it.”

-Elementary student

Goal # 3 – Students increased pride in their culture

“I felt proud, because I was representing my culture”

- High school student

“They felt and learned the respect for their culture. The feeling of the culture once they learned the songs and dances - they started becoming proud. And now they just shine.”

- Music teacher



Goal # 4 – Students deepened their connection to cultural identity

“I learned that I am more Indian now than I am...I am more Indian now because I didn’t dance or sing or anything, I feel more Indian now.”

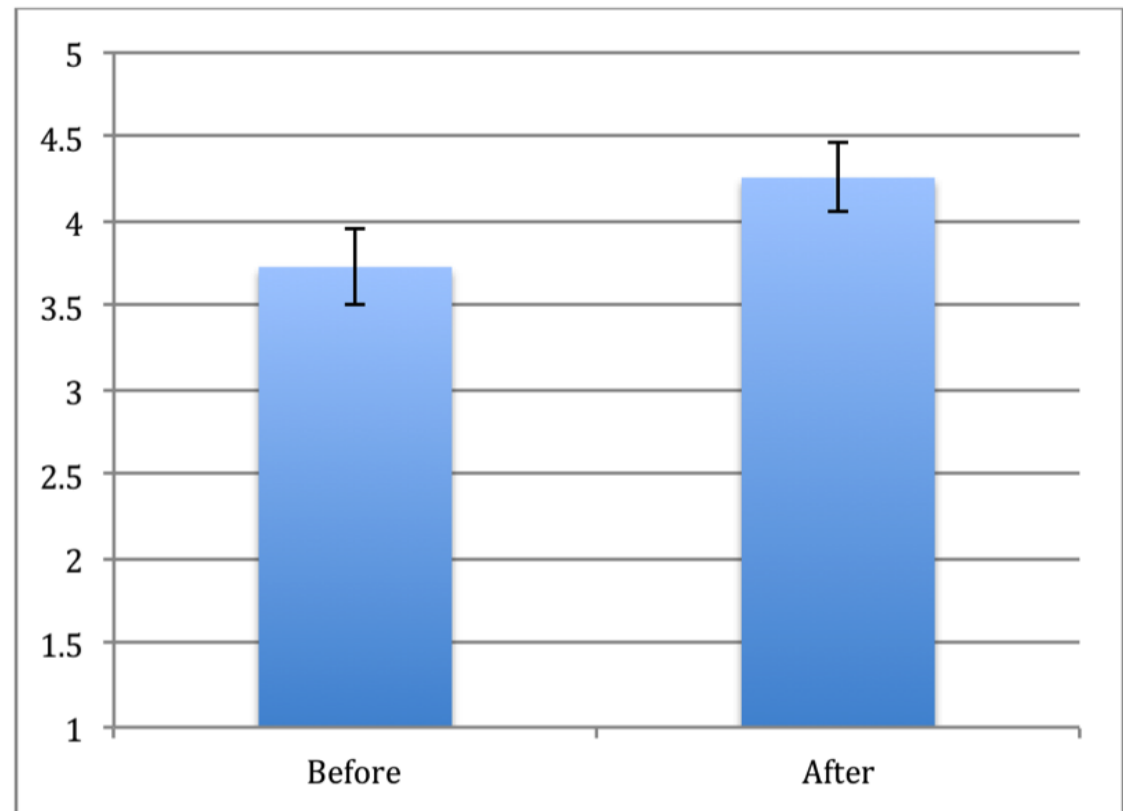
-Elementary student



Goal # 5 – Greater sense of community and togetherness

- **Elder participation**
- **Regalia**
- **Stew and Bannock**
- **Gala event attendance**

**Survey item: "I feel like I'm part of a community"*



New Partnership between school and community

“There was a bridge built between the school and the first nation tonight”

-Music teacher

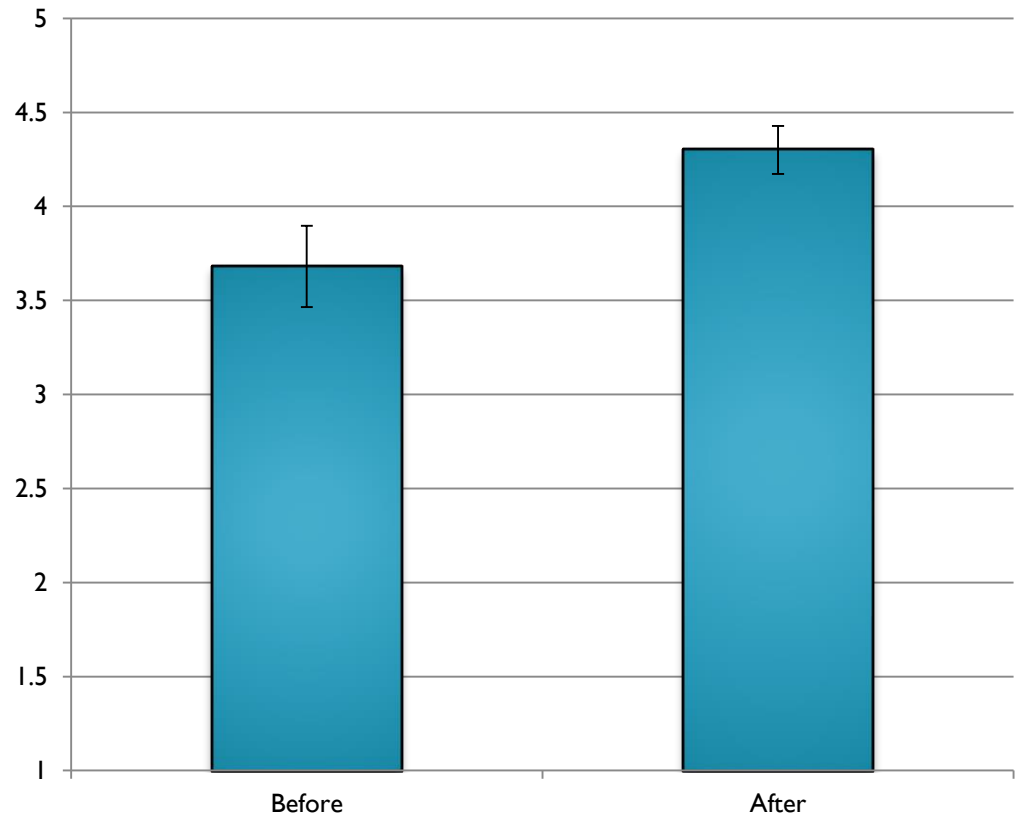


Education perspective

“I liked having the program in my school because I got to learn not just math and stuff, but I got to learn Northern Tutchone culture”

-Elementary student

*Survey item: “I like what I learn about in school”



What did the community say?

This performance made me feel:

- *“Very proud of everyone”*
- *“Like getting up and dancing!”*
- *“Proud!”*
- *“Happy! Excited! Want more!”*
- *“Connected”*
- *“Emotional – full of tears!”*
- *“Beyond happy – tears of joy flowed!”*
- *“I cried – I am happy”*

What now?

Long-term impacts may include:

- Students deepen their identity as Selkirk First Nation individuals
- School continues to develop an identity unique to the Selkirk First Nation
- Increased community involvement in the school
- Cultural knowledge and traditions passed down to future generations
- Development of a thriving youth culture that will continue to grow

Summary

- Learning the traditional song and dance helped the students increase:
 - Cultural skills and tradition knowledge
 - Confidence and self-esteem
 - Pride in culture
 - Cultural identity
 - Sense of community/togetherness