



Uplands Elementary School

145 Middle Bench Road South
Penticton, BC V2A 8S7

Principal: Susan Johnston

School Improvement Plan (2009-10)

“Uplands Students SOAR in a School with a VIEW to Excellence”

Uplands’ Context: Uplands Elementary is the school with the view, situated above Penticton city center and Okanagan Lake. Approximately 240 students are enrolled. The school provides a K-5 full education program for the Redlands, Uplands, and Naramata Road areas. Uplands Elementary proudly provides a sound start in the core areas of education; as well as programs that extend our youth, such as extracurricular sports, music, art and leadership opportunities for students, staff and parents. Our school is supported by our Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and community. This support helps to provide a meaningful connection to the surrounding environment and offers students the opportunity for involvement with and service to others.

Uplands’ Inquiry:



What questions, activities, teacher language and visuals can we use to develop metacognition in an age appropriate manner?

Will explicit teaching and school-wide reinforcing of social responsibility skills, improve students’ practice of these skills in social situations?

- empathy
- respect
- honesty
- leadership
- responsibility

Will using research based processes, strategies and tools improve students’ writing? (i.e. **SMARTLearning**, Differentiated Instruction)



Will having children use coaching cards to send and receive images, improve the way children write?

Will structured oral practice with eyes on text, and emphasis on conventions, help students to transfer use of conventions to their writing?



INQUIRY QUESTION

What questions, activities, teacher language and visuals can we use to develop metacognition in an age appropriate manner?

RATIONALE:

The overall question was developed as a result of the direction we see our staff and students working towards: ways to help students understand how they learn, “think about thinking,” and what tools/strategies they need to learn. We arrived at two of our “objective” questions (below) before the overall, “umbrella” inquiry. Research shows that “metacognition” is significant in learning and a team of teachers were exploring the process in depth.

The inquiry questions in our action plans were based on past evidence, students’ needs, staff discussions and a thoughtful process conducted by our staff members. Teachers, noon hour supervisors and certified educational assistants performed an activity in which they both wrote and orally expressed what “gift” they would give our students in three years time. Themes such as developing self-esteem, confidence, a joy of learning, empathy, overcoming challenges, bringing out students’ talents, becoming respectful, contributing members of society, as well as being globally aware were mentioned. Last school year (2008/09), our counselor worked with 25 families who had children experiencing anxiety. Teachers also expressed how they would like to see older students setting a positive example for younger students and increase student leadership.

Both a need and desire to improve students’ writing skills also evolved from discussions, staff/team meetings and results from past *BC Performance Standards* (see: *Writing Performance Results*, p. 6). Concerns were expressed about use of conventions and teachers wondered if structured oral practice, with eyes on text, will transfer into students’ writing. Research and practice indicate that oral expression and visuals help to improve writing skills. A group of primary teachers inquired if students’ writing skills will improve if they change the way coaching cards (a SMARTLearning tool) are used to send and receive images.

Both the social responsibility and writing questions link back to the “metacognition” umbrella – finding ways to help our students think about their thinking, actions and learning. Understanding how we learn is a key to success and collaborative teamwork helps to make it happen.

ACTION PLAN

OBJECTIVE:

Will explicit teaching and school-wide reinforcing of social responsibility themes/skills (empathy, respect, honesty leadership and responsibility) improve students’ practice of these skills in social situations?

STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES:

Uplands Students SOAR: Effective Behaviour Support program – reinforcing students for positive behaviour. Students receive SOAR tickets and draws are held each morning. SOAR stands for Safety, Organization, Achievement and Respect. SOAR is up on a bulletin board and tickets are displayed. The meaning is taught at assemblies and it is frequently referred to. *Student of the Week* trophies are also awarded at our assemblies and the whole school celebrates the success of SOAR.

Block X: Teach Social Responsibility themes to students in family, “cross-graded” groupings using the *Making Character Count* program by Premier. Teachers then do activities related to these themes, along with recognizing students for their positive actions.

Second Step: Theme-based social responsibility program.

Cross-curricular Social Responsibility: Integrate *Social Responsibility* into school-wide activities, class and all academic areas, using common language and expectations.

Ministry Social Responsibility Standards (adapted): Use as both a learning/assessment tool and to provide an opportunity for student self-evaluation.

Several Social Responsibility Opportunities: *i.e.* Student Leadership Conference (November) with presenters from Princess Margaret Secondary School, Buddy Classes, Action Schools Outdoor Student Leadership *Action Schools* Workshop (April) sports' teams, fine arts (music, concerts, performances, art) assemblies (set up, participation, public speaking etc.), SMARTLearning procedures, cooperative learning
(see: Appendix A)

Code of Conduct/Restorative Practices: Integrated into interactions with students and office referrals, Updated Code of Conduct procedures.

Counseling Services: Anxiety counseling for students and parents

Friends Program: Used with grade 4 students

ASSESSMENT PROCESS & TOOLS:

- Report Cards: % of students "meeting or exceeding expectations" in Social Responsibility (March 2010)
- Percentage of K-5 students who know the meaning of SOAR (June 2010)
- Student self-evaluation using student-friendly Ministry Social Responsibility Standards (June 2010)
- Grade 4 student and parent provincial Satisfaction Surveys (March 2010)
- Staff, parent and student discussions/interviews
- Incidents/Events exemplifying Social Responsibility
- SOAR tickets earned throughout the year

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

- Collaborative planning time and session about *Making Character Count* program, SOAR program, School's Code of Conduct
- Increase opportunities to actively demonstrate Social Responsibility and recognition of it
- Restorative Practices Workgroup/Literature (with helping teacher, Judith King) and staff discussions about the practices
- Anxiety counseling (with Dave Kroschinsky – District Counselor)

RESOURCES:

- SOAR, *Making Character Count*, *Restorative Practices* programs/materials
- Opportunities and equipment for sports and fine arts

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

- Parents are encouraged to actively engage in all facets of our school community
- Parents attend school events regularly and are informed about student recognition through assemblies, website and newsletters

EVIDENCE:

Grades K – 5 Students' Social Responsibility %

Mar. 2010	NYWI	A	FME	EE
K	0	34%	56%	3%
Grade 1	0	3%	97%	0
Grade 2	0	11%	73%	16%
Grade 3	0	10%	59%	27%
Grade 4	5%	11%	66%	18%
Grade 5	2%	14%	59%	25%

NYWI – *Not Yet Within Expectations*, A – *Approaching*
FME – *Fully Meeting*, EE – *Exceeding Expectations*

Grade 4 Satisfaction Survey

Questions	Uplands District				
	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	09/10
Do you like school?	47	66	77	93	70
Do adults in your school treat students fairly?	78	78	83	91	78
Do you know how your school expects students to behave?	98	98	94	100	87
Are individual differences respected?	94	98	94	100	95
Do you feel safe at school?	82	90	97	98	84
Would you like to go to a different school?	4	8	6	0	7

**** Percentages above based on Many Times or All the Time****

The grades K-5 social responsibility table above is from the students' March report cards and based on the learning outcomes in social responsibility expected for each grade. The satisfaction survey is from the Ministry's grade 4 Satisfaction Survey data. Great to see that 100% of the grade 4 group know how our school expects them to behave and respects individual differences.

Other:

- SOAR Tickets earned (on bulletin boards and in the gym) and “hearts” given out during “Acts of Kindness” week
- Empathy demonstrated through community and global awareness/participation: *Help for Haiti* fundraiser (over \$1,000. raised), singing/activities at senior citizens’ residences
- Leadership regularly demonstrated in how students work with and set a positive example for others (i.e grade 5 students leading playground activities for younger students, students volunteering to help around the school)
- Cross-graded (family) grouping activities (i.e. on Friday afternoons and special events such as Uplands’ Olympic Day) with older students helping and encouraging younger students
- Teamwork on sports’ teams, during buddy classes and through musicals, concerts and art activities
- Several successful events/activities and opportunities for students throughout the school year
- Daily interactions between staff/students and use of “Restorative Practices” (using the procedure regularly has been very helpful with two students previously requiring BIS)
- Number of students demonstrating anxiety is decreasing

ACTION PLAN:

QUESTIONS : Will using research based processes, strategies and tools improve students’ writing? (i.e. SMARTLearning, Differentiated Instruction) **a) Will structured oral practice with eyes on text, and emphasis on conventions, help students to transfer use of conventions to their writing? b) Will having children use “coaching cards” to send and receive images help the way students write?**

STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES:

- Regularly use *SMARTLearning* processes and embed effective tools into the sequence
- Regularly use *SMARTLearning* tools: i.e. *Radio Read, Coaching Cards*
- Integrate structured oral practice into daily learning activities
- Classroom and Learning Assistance Teacher Teamwork (using *Word Work, 6 Minute Solution, Dragonspeak*)
- Practice 1:1 reading with guidelines integrating oral practice and eyes on text
- Implement technological programs/tools such as *SMARTBoard, BookFlix, SMARTCamera, Kidspiration*
- Provide opportunities for professional development to learn how to use tools/programs and technology
- Provide parents with student reading/writing guidelines and invite them into classrooms
- Track students’ writing and “assessment for learning” using the *BC Performance Standards for Writing* and adapted *Student-Friendly Performance Standards*
- Differentiated Instruction strategies
- Literacy in Action, Literature Circles and Reading Power* (intermediate)
- Write Traits* strategies using “Trait Crates”.
- Literacy team meets to discuss strategies, assessments, procedures
- Teacher collaboration groups

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

- Collaborative planning time and meetings
- Professional Development in the area of SMARTBoard (staff sessions with SMART technologist and inservice provided by one of our teachers), SMARTCamera instruction and utilizing computer programs (i.e. BookFlix, Kidspiration)
- SMARTLearning Rounds (October and April) : Nine teachers involved with this
- SMARTLearning Leadership: Five teachers presented locally, two teachers presented provincially and one of those teachers will be meeting provincially in June
- Inquiry Leadership: Two of our teachers presented at a District OSTU Inquiry Presentation
- Differentiated Instruction Workshop: Four teachers and principal attended

RESOURCES:

- Increased technological equipment and programs (two SMARTBoard, SMARTCamera, two LCD projectors, two laptops, BookFlix, and Kidspiration). Presented information about these items to PAC and they generously purchased them for our school ☺
- Leveled book and books for literature circles
- “Write Traits” kits

PARENT INVOLVEMENT:

- One to One Reading Program (both parent and community involvement)
- Home Reading Program
- Opportunities to read/write with children in the classroom
- Regular communication with parents and assistance with helping at home

EVIDENCE**KEY FINDINGS: WRITING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS**

Grade	Mo./Year	NYME	MME/A	FME	EE	FME & EE	Exempt	#
1	March/10	0%	3%	90%	7%	97%	1	29
	June/09	11%	45%	30%	14%	44%	0	44
2	March/10	0%	24%	60%	19%	79%	2	44
	June/09	3%	19%	46%	24%	70%	3	37
3	March/10	3%	26%	37%	34%	71%	3	41
	June/09	1%	37%	34%	21%	55%	2	38
4	March/10	0%	19%	57%	24%	81%	2	44
	June/09	5%	55%	25%	11%	36%	2	44
5	March/10	3%	26%	54%	18%	72%	3	42

NYME – Not Yet Meeting Expectations, MME/A – Minimally Meeting/Approaching, FME – Fully Meeting Expectations, EE – Exceeding Expectations (Based on BC Performance Standards)

There is a significant increase of students who are fully meeting/exceeding expectations in writing between June of last year (2009) and March of this year (2010).

Other: Utilization of SMARTLearning processes and tools is expanding. Three teachers are a part of the district inquiry team and two have also presented locally and provincially. Four teachers presented at a SMARTLearning round and nine teachers have participated in SMARTLearning rounds. Inservice sessions have been provided for teachers on using SMARTBoard with one of our teachers and a SMARTBoard technologist from Vancouver. Usage of the SMARTBoard is increasing amongst the staff. Opportunities to learn how to use Kidspiration and BookFlix were further professional development opportunities. Teachers using SMARTLearning procedures are finding a significant difference in the quality of their students' writing.

REFLECTION AND SUMMARY**REFLECTIONS (will be completed with the whole school in June)****FUTURE PLANNING:**

Teachers who focused on the “coaching cards” inquiry will teach/train other teachers how to use them. We will also gather more specific evidence (i.e. gather the “conventions” component of the Performance Standards for question “a” and “style” component for question “b” on p. 5) and work on developing continuity between the grades. Teachers are also going to form a SMARTLearning/SMARTBoard professional learning community and meet on a regular basis along with teachers from another elementary school. We will continue with our whole-school social responsibility programs, activities, opportunities and will work towards expanding restorative practices.” Developing “metacognition” will continue to be a focus in our collaborative discussions and strategies we explore.

Appendix A: Social Responsibility Opportunities

Category	Name of Activity	Grade	
School Events/ Activities	Powerpoint Presentations (students teaching students; open house)	4-5	
	Student Family Grouping Activities/Events	K-5	
	Terry Fox run/Assembly; UNICEF	1-5	
	Family Dance and Open House	K-5	
	Regular Assemblies and Student of the Week presentations	K-5	
	Vee's vs. Uplands Floor Hockey Game and Vee's "Read to Succeed" visit	1-5	
	Special Assemblies (i.e. Earth Day, Olympic, Remembrance Day)	K-5	
	Christmas Concert and Talent Show	K-5	
	Uplands Olympic Day	K-5	
	Spellathon	K-5	
	Spelling Bee	4, 5	
	Playground Stations/Games (Block X activities)	1-5	
	Block X – "Making Character Count" (Social Responsibility activities)	1-5	
	Kite Day	1-5	
	Fun Day	K-5	
	Random Acts of Kindness week	K-5	
	Cross Country and Action Schools	3, 4, 5	
	Sports	Soccer Teams	3, 4, 5
		Cross Country Running Participants and Meets (gr. 1-5 practice)	3, 4, 5
		Track and Field	4, 5
Swimming		3	
Skating		1-5	
X-Country Skiing		K - 5	
Tennis		2, 4	
Basketball Teams and Volleyball/Newcomb intramurals		4, 5	
Open Gym and Playground Activities		K-5	
Gymnastics		K-5	
Student Leadership		Student Leadership Conference (presentations by High Schools)	5
		Playground Leaders	4, 5
	Action Schools Leadership	4, 5	
	Family Grouping Leadership	4, 5	
	Patrollers/Office Monitors/Announcements/Set Up Crews/Audio Visual	5	
	Destination Conservation and Recycling	5	
	Student Announcements at Assemblies	1-5	
	Leading Assemblies (i.e. Remembrance Day, Olympic Assembly, Terry Fox)	4,5	
	Speaking Parts at Concerts	1-5	
	Various Presentations (i.e. Powerpoint)	4, 5	
	Random Acts of Kindness recognition	5	
	Community Events	Grades 2/3 Musical Performance – Kiwanis & Senior Citizens' Residences	2,3
		Grade 4/5 regular Senior Citizens' Visit	4, 5
Children's Festival		K-5	
Volunteer Tea		Parents	
Open Houses and Family Dance		K-5	
Help for Haiti fundraiser		K-5	
Attending Princess Margaret, & McNicoll School Plays		4, 5	
Owl visit and presentation through SORCO		1-5	
Performing Arts and Pen High safety presentations		K-5	
Inspirational Speakers/Presenters/Events (i.e. Torch Relay, Sp. Olympics)		varies	
Ready, Set, Learn (3/4 year olds, parents, school/community partners)		3,4, yr. olds	
High School student leaders presentations and assistance with basketball		Gr. 10 - 12	
Vees vs Uplands Floor Hockey game		K-5	
Mini-Basketball sessions with coach Doug Scotchburn (Pen High coach)		2, 3	
Health Fair with community partners (Hearts@School) & McNicoll student leaders		3-5	
Winter Concert and performances during assemblies		K-5	
Santa's Workshop Event and Fundraiser		K-5	
1:1 Reading Program	1-5		