



West Bench Elementary School

1604 West Bench Drive
Penticton, BC V2A 8Z3
Phone: (250) 770-7698
Principal: Chris Philpotts

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (2009-10)

West Bench Context

West Bench Elementary hosts 138 students - Kindergarten to grade 5 in six classrooms/divisions. The West Bench School Community includes students and their families from the West Bench Regional District and the Penticton Indian Band.

We focus heavily on making West Bench a welcoming, safe, and healthy learning environment. Our 21 staff (teaching, non-enrolling, itinerant and support) are dedicated to making West Bench a high quality school with respect to classroom and school activities. We provide a wide array of learning and growing opportunities for our students.

West Bench is privileged to have a very supportive Parent Advisory Council and School Planning Council.

West Bench Elementary:

- values collaborative focus on individual student academic and personal needs
- values the cultural heritage of our students and their families
- values parental and family support and inclusion
- strives to help all students experience success

INQUIRY QUESTION

What impact will a school wide focus on visualization have on student writing?

Rational:

| Spring 2006 | Spring 2006 | Spring 2007 | Spring 2007 | Spring 2008 | Spring 2008 | Spring 2009 | Spring 2009 |
|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|
| % of Students Grades 1 to 5 Not Yet Meeting Or Minimally Meeting for Writing | % of students Not Yet or Minimally Meeting for Writing who are Aboriginal | % of Students Grades 1 to 5 Not Yet Meeting Or Minimally Meeting for Writing | % of students Not Yet or Minimally Meeting for Writing who are Aboriginal | % of Students Grades 1 to 5 Not Yet Meeting Or Minimally Meeting for Writing | % of students Not Yet or Minimally Meeting for Writing who are Aboriginal | % of Students Grades 1 to 4 Not Yet Meeting Or Minimally Meeting for Writing | % of students Not Yet or Minimally Meeting for Writing who are Aboriginal |
| 33% | 68% | 32% | 95% | 43% | 63% | 29% | 60% |

Writing is fundamental to academic success and life long learning. Our Writing results have indicated the need to increase the number of students meeting and exceeding expectations. We are particularly aware that our Aboriginal students have had difficulty meeting in Writing. Consequently, staff wanted to focus on Writing school wide. Visualization is an important skill in Reading and Writing. It was determined through discussion that a school wide focus on the skill of visualization would help to improve students' Writing. From that discussion this inquiry question was generated, "What impact will a school wide focus on visualization have on student writing?"

OBJECTIVES:

- established Term Expectations for cohort data focus
- established SmartLearning and Reading Power as references for visualization strategies
- used collaborative marking of School Wide Writes to set assessment baseline
- established Aboriginal school wide Literacy theme as basis for Spring Write
- use teacher meetings and staff meetings to discuss Visualization and Writing

STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES:

1. Students will learn visualization strategies through:
 - SmartLearning
 - Reading Power
 - 6 Traits of Writing
2. Staff will use collaborative planning and marking for Writing.
3. Increase the use of resources that support visualization with and without an Aboriginal focus.
4. Establish common Language Arts school wide Literacy theme with focus on Aboriginal content.
5. Students will demonstrate independent use of metacognitive strategies with focus on visualization through:
 - Classroom Reading Workshop
 - Classroom Writing Workshop
 - Fall and Spring School Wide Write comparison

6. We will focus on 6 essential elements of assessment:

- Setting and using criteria
- Self Assessment
- Feedback for Learning
- Setting Goals
- Collecting Evidence
- Communicating using evidence for learning

ASSESSMENT PROCESS & TOOLS:

- Classroom Assessment tools based on Performance Standards
- School Wide Write Assessment using Writing 5 Point Scale in the Fall and Spring

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING:

- Flex Funds are made available each term for collaborative planning and marking
- Flex Funds are made available for teachers to attend Smart Learning Rounds
- Administration takes classes to allow teachers to meet for planning and marking
- Informal and formal teacher meetings are prepared in order to plan and reflect

RESOURCES:

- Reading Power
- SmartLearning Resources
- Writing Trait Kits
- Aboriginal Literacy Resources

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT:

- School Plan will be discussed with School Planning Council and Parent Advisory Council
- School Plan will be made available on the West Bench website
- Copies of the School Improvement Plan will be sent home at the beginning of the year
- Parents will be invited to future Professional Development on Writing
- Annual School Report will be sent home in October

EVIDENCE

KEY FINDINGS: What did we find?

Grade 1:

Having students visualize before writing, and then talking about it before writing, really gets students thinking and therefore writing about things they typically wouldn't. It improves their confidence - their own writing ability when they have a multitude of things about which to write.

Grade2/3:

In regards to the effect of visualization on my students' writing, I found that they tend to write more and add more details to their writing. Putting their thoughts on paper helped them to organize their thoughts easier, increased their written output and improved their use of detail. A negative aspect for some is that seeing their thoughts in front of them makes them forget the task and their writing then becomes just a description of their sketch. An interesting thing I discovered during this process was that my students' came up with better written ideas when they were allowed to free write. When they weren't concerned about capitals, punctuation and spelling, their writing became more detailed, interesting and longer in length.

Grade 3:

We spent a lot of time focusing on visualization with Andrea's Fiddle and their writes were amazing. I believe that it *made* a difference.

Grade 4/5 Aboriginal Students

| Compiled by: Mrs. Kay Mrs. Balfour and Mrs. Donovan | NYM | | Min Meeting | | Meeting | | Fully | | Exceeding | | No Data | | IEP Students | |
|--|-----|---|-------------|---|---------|---|-------|---|-----------|---|---------|---|-----------------|---|
| | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # | % | # |
| Fall 2009 | 69 | 9 | 23 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 15 | 2 | 38 | 5 |
| Winter 2010 | 23 | 3 | 38 | 5 | 23 | 3 | 15 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 38 | 5 |

NARRATIVES: What successes and or challenges are not reflected in the data?

This is the first year of the Inquiry process for our school. That probably was the greatest challenge. Exactly what the question was and how we arrived at our resulting data were problems. Staff found that confusing at times, but through discussion and support from other staff members we were able to come to an understanding of what was needed. One overriding success resulted from the inquiry was staff collaboration around the question. Staff with greater expertise in the use of visualization were approached to help with the visualization strategy.

The result was a sequence based on the aboriginal resource *Andrea's Fiddle* by Blaine Klippenstein. This allowed teachers to use SmartLearning with a focus on visualization in collaborative school wide unit. Teachers were encouraged to use it across curriculum and to the comfort of their own expertise. This was a real help and was a teacher led process.

REFLECTION AND SUMMARY

REFLECTIONS: What did we learn? How did make it difference?

By focusing on visualization, teachers felt that it made a difference to student writing. It improved their word use, detail, organization and writing confidence. All teachers found that their students' writing improved.

FUTURE PLANNING : Where do we go from here?

This summer staff will be working to establish a professional learning community at West Bench. They will discuss the tools involved in SmartLearning to improve student achievement in reading, writing and/or math. This will probably reflected in the school plan and that the plan's question may possibly remain the same.