

NETWORK OF PERFORMANCE BASED SCHOOLS
2008-2009

RIDGEVIEW ELEMENTARY
#45 West Vancouver

School Question

Will student self-assessment and peer coaching in our cross-grade reading program improve both the older and younger readers' comprehension as measured by the BC reading performance standards?

Leadership Team

Natalie Mendes, Scott Slater, Lynne Tomlinson

Contacts

nmendes@sd45.bc.ca, sslater@sd45.bc.ca, ltomlinson@sd45.bc.ca

School Context/Community

Ridgeview School is located in West Vancouver and has 400 students (K-7) from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and with many different learning needs. Teachers work in grade group teams and collaborative teams: Primary, Intermediate and Senior. Parents consult, collaborate and participate in making decisions that promote a positive, supportive, challenging school environment. Our work with other members of the Network of Performance Based Schools (NPBS) has resulted in steady growth and improvement in student achievement in literacy over the past nine years.

School Inquiry and Action

READING

Focus of Inquiry

Over the past four years, we have focused on non-fiction reading and writing and through our NPBS inquiries, have been pleased to record steady improvement in student learning. The use of student self assessment strategies and peer learning appealed to teachers as an excellent way to engage learners and help them to internalize criteria. We feel confident in using the writing performance standards at all grades, but after frank discussion, recognized that we do not feel as proficient in the use of the reading performance standards and want our students to be able to use them as a valuable learning tool throughout the year. Using the Glenview Elementary model for peer coaching, we redesigned the ten suggested lessons to suit our students' needs this year.

Strategies

September 2008:

Staff meeting – timetabled our two District Assessment of Reading Team (DART) reading assessments and reviewed last year's student literacy portfolios in grade group teams to discuss student learning

October 2008:

Ridgeview Parent Advisory Council (RPAC) meeting - Principal reviewed reading performance standards quick scales and student self assessment strategies with parents

November 2008:

Professional Development Day - Teachers reviewed baseline data collected for student reading (performance standards), planned instructional strategies and chose resources to augment student learning

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January 2009:

Professional Development Day – Cross Grade teams met to plan specific lessons for peer coaching in reading. Timetables were organized to facilitate lessons and parent education was planned for the following month.

Throughout the year:

- Students actively used the BC reading performance standards quick scales for self-assessment at school and home
- Principal and Vice Principal provided a full morning of release time after each Cold Write for teachers to meet in grade teams to assess student writing samples and plan strategies for instructional improvement
- The Professional Development Committee, with feedback from staff, developed workshops, collaborative planning, discussion and sharing times to support our school literacy goals
- Principal and Vice Principal provided 30 – 60 minutes at staff meetings to facilitate staff collaborative planning and discussion pertaining to our school goals
- Principal reviewed strategies for formative assessment to assist teachers in monitoring student progress regularly to inform instruction
- Teachers continued to use the reading performance standards quick scales to assess student work and teach students how to self-assess their literacy skills
- “Freebee Friday” time was used by cross grade team teachers to assess student writing and reading using the performance standards and to plan instruction based on student results
- English as a Second Language (ESL), Learning Assistance(LA) and Severe Learning Disorder (SLD) data were tracked and analyzed

Focus on Formative Assessment Strategies

This year, we have worked to build on our skills in the use of formative assessment.

During staff meetings and professional development sessions, we worked in grade group teams to develop lessons and create resources to enhance our use of these strategies. We know that our students are generally well aware of the learning intentions and criteria for success in their learning as this has been a goal for several years. However, opportunities for peer coaching and self assessment are still developing as teachers become more comfortable planning lessons to facilitate student independence and self motivation. Our new inquiry for peer coaching in reading has stimulated discussion and reflection in the use of formative assessment.

School Findings

	NY		A		M		E	
	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#
Fall 2007	6	23	25	90	62	229	7	26
Spring 2008	5	19	23	84	60	220	12	45
Fall 2008	4	16	19	51	66	175	11	25
Spring 2009	1	4	16	42	60	159	23	57

School Plans for 2009-2010

We will continue to develop our instructional strategies with a focus on self assessment and peer coaching next year. Our individual student portfolios are a valuable tracking tool for teachers and regular discussion about student learning should be based on these individual sources of evidence. With

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improved skills in self-assessment and peer coaching, we hope both our primary and intermediate students will continue to develop their reading skills. We are also planning to connect with secondary students next year and will be working with other NPBS schools in the district that have generated inquiries about student literacy skills.

Reflections, Advice

It's always a challenge to start something new when you feel you have established a solid, high achieving environment for student learning but there is a danger in becoming too comfortable with success. Over nine years of work as a member of the NPBS has enabled us to develop a culture of inquiry mindedness at Ridgeview and we strive to improve our instructional strategies each year to better meet the needs of our students. We have had a changing student population over the past decade and work with many more ESL and special needs students. New challenges arise throughout the year and it is important that we monitor student needs closely to provide them with appropriate learning opportunities. We are proud of our work as a member of the NPBS and will continue to work together to help every student achieve his or her personal best.