

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK
2011-2012**

**BAYVIEW ELEMENTARY
#68 Nanaimo Ladysmith**

Leadership Team

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Connie MacArthur	cmacarthur@sd68.bc.ca – District Aboriginal Education Teacher Leader who provided support to our school team

School Context/Community Involvement

Bayview is a small inner city K to Grade 7 school with a population of 164 students. Approximately 68% of our population is Aboriginal living both on and off reserve. The majority of our students are from Snuneymuxw First Nation. We are fortunate to have an Aboriginal teacher on staff part time as well as a full time Aboriginal Education Assistant. Our population is in a high poverty, highly vulnerable area of Nanaimo. About 80% of our entire school population meets Ministry criteria for vulnerability and face social and economic challenges. The need for support is great and this is recognized with Community LINK funding from our district. Some of these monies go towards providing breakfast, snack and lunch daily for our students. The rest goes towards staffing (teacher and Education Assistant) to support the learning of our students. We have many struggling learners at our school and many of our students are working two or more years below expectations. Our school goals and decisions are based on building resiliency and providing the best possible support for our students in all areas. Parents appreciate the approach of staff that ‘each student’ is ‘everyone’s student’.

School Inquiry and Action Language Arts – Oral Language Development

School Question

Will using Talking Tables Kindergarten Oral Language program increase kindergarten and at risk grade one students’ Phonological Awareness in segmenting sounds, rhyme, blending of sounds, and auditory perception?

Focus of our Inquiry

“The Talking Tables Kindergarten Program is rooted in the recognition that talk is central to learning and that through talking and listening, the capacity to gain literacy skills is enhanced. With this in mind, the program attempts to take the best from ‘home-style’ language learning – that which might occur around the kitchen table – and blend it with the best of Kindergarten language learning. This type of bridging is necessary for many students as they shift from the casual, conversational style of home communication into the more formal and abstract communication that characterizes school. A focus on oral language is also beneficial for students who come to Kindergarten speaking a language other than Standard English, or for student who have not had the amount of exposure to literature that schools anticipate.” Proficiency in oral language skills are linked to becoming proficient readers and writers. Literacy skills in these core areas are key to success in other academic areas. Where possible, we included a cultural component in our presentation of the Talking Tables program. For example, we integrated Hul’q’umi’num language into the two groups run by our Aboriginal EA and Aboriginal teacher.

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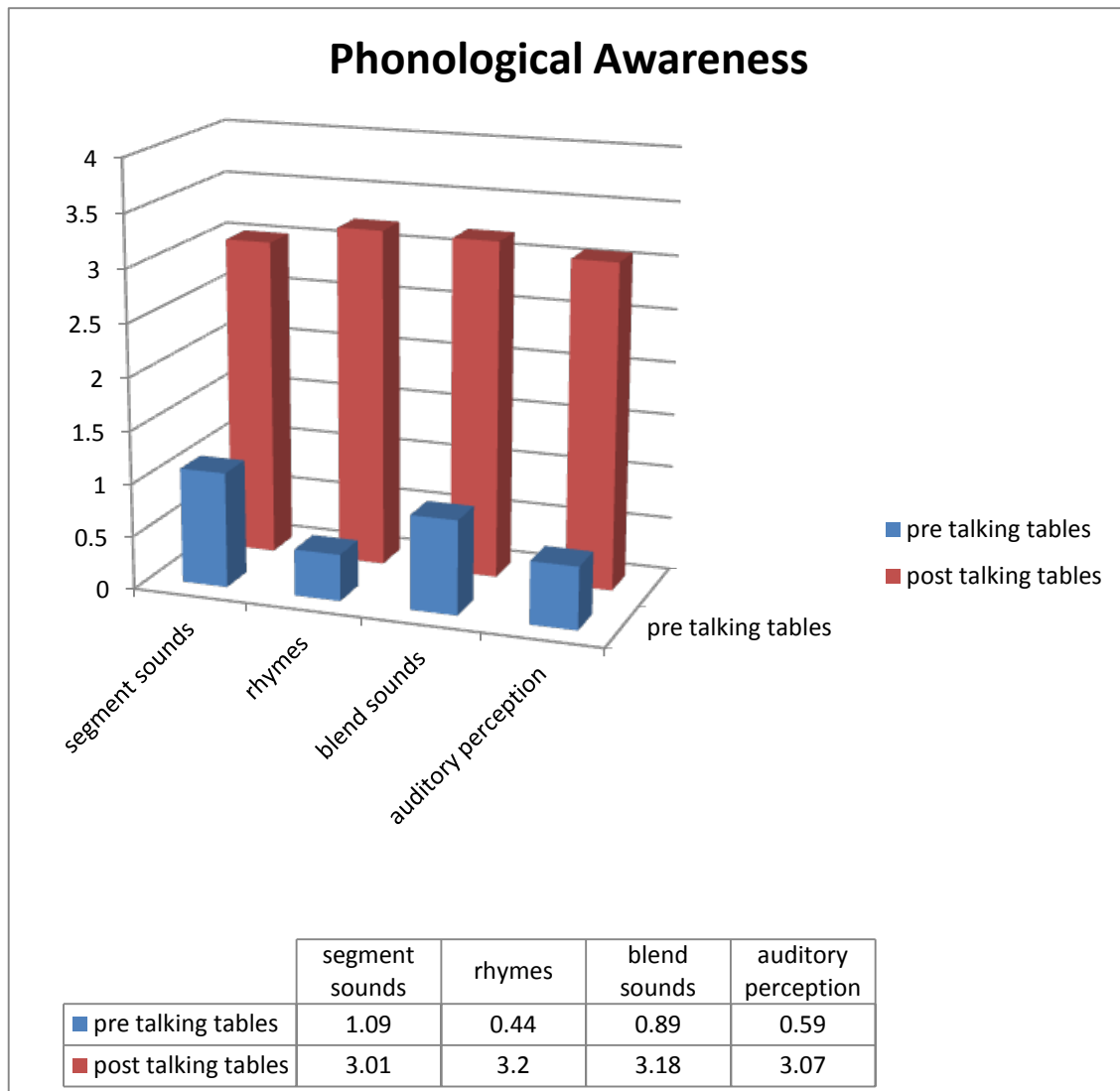
Links with District Enhancement Agreement

This inquiry question is connected to our Aboriginal Enhancement Agreement for 2011-2016, which is written in an inquiry-based approach. Our goal connects to the inquiry question related to the mind. How do we improve the academic achievement for all Aboriginal learners?

Strategies

We started using the Talking Tables program in December. Students deemed at risk by the Kindergarten and K/Grade One teacher were assessed with the Kindergarten Survey from School District 62. Students were then divided into four small groups with five students in each group. They were pulled out for three thirty minute sessions per week. One group worked with our Aboriginal EA, one group with our Aboriginal Teacher and the Principal, one group with an EA, and one group with our School Support/ ESD teacher. Pre and post assessments were done for each unit of the Talking Tables program as well throughout the inquiry and the Kindergarten Survey from School District 62 was used as a post assessment tool at the conclusion of the project as well.

School Findings



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*Data from the Kindergarten Survey from School District 62 as performance standards are not available for Oral Language

We are reasonably confident from these results that using the Talking Tables program helped expand phonological awareness in segmenting sounds, rhyme, blending of sounds, and auditory perception for our at risk Kindergarten and Grade One students. Staff working with the groups also noticed increases in oral fluency. More of the students were able to initiate conversation and answer questions in full sentences.

School Plans for 2012-2013

- continue using the Talking Tables Kindergarten Oral Language Development Program with our at risk Kindergarten and Grade One students
- use the assessment tools included with the program for our pre and post assessment rather than the Kindergarten Survey from School District 62 as this survey did not match all of the oral language components covered in the Talking Tables Program
- continue to include a cultural component with as many groups as possible – involve our language teacher and learn some of the chants in Hul'q'umi'num if possible
- use the chant activity from each unit with the whole class – this would connect activities from the Talking Tables groups within the classroom for the students and give them an opportunity to shine
- continue to foster connections with SFN Education Department and Qwam Qwum School – share the program with them

Reflections, Advice

- would recommend using this program – it is user friendly, fun for the students and staff, and has results in a short period of time
- adjust some of the assessment pieces to reflect the changing times – for example, in the body parts unit, students are asked to identify a body part that men can shave – the 'correct' answer given is chin but one of our students said 'head' – lots of men are shaving their heads these days!
- Talking Tables provided a safe environment for shy or quiet students to speak and is designed to ensure that all students in the group have equal 'talk time'
- use the pre/post testing in talking tables instead of the Kindergarten Survey to ensure that assessment is of all of the components of the Talking Tables