

**ABORIGINAL ENHANCEMENT SCHOOLS NETWORK  
2011-2012**

**SKEENA JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL  
#82 Coast Mountains**

**Leadership Team**

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**Contacts**

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**School Context/Community Involvement**

Skeena Junior Secondary School (SJSS) is one of two junior high schools in Terrace in the northwest corner of British Columbia. The building is only eight years old although the original SJSS was built in the 1960s and the new building is indicative of our desire for natural light and open spaces. The school enrolls 496 grade 8 to 10 students from all cultural backgrounds and is located in the Tsimshian territory. A stunning totem pole greets you at the entrance to our school in honour of the local culture. The City of Terrace has about 30% First Nations citizens and the school is reflective of the total population. Students have an opportunity to be involved in activities such as leadership, yearbook club, a multitude of sports, Culture Club with First Nations leaders, cheerleading and our award winning bands.

**School Inquiry and Action**

READING FOR INFORMATION

**School Question**

To what extent will the direct teaching of literacy skills help First Nations students improve information retention as measured with the Reading for Information performance standards?

**Focus of Inquiry**

Both teachers are skilled with teaching Social Studies curriculum however there was a question as to how we might better reach our First Nations students that seemed disconnected from the material. We decided to utilize Adrienne Gear's non-fiction metacognitive methods and really focus on the "connect" to student and assessment of learning as opposed to marking as an end point.

**Strategies**

- A class-wide read was held at the beginning of the semester using a grade-appropriate selection. They were asked to write a summary without further reference to the material.
- The Adrienne Gear's literacy methods were taught in class using children's picture books to introduce to a concept which was then practiced using the Social Studies text *Horizons – Canada Moves West*. Students were encouraged to see the text book events through their own experiences in an attempt to connect to the text.
- When all the methods had been taught, then lessons regarding the use of performance standards were introduced and students became comfortable with assessing writes. At this point the original write was assessed using the performance standards. A student and class profile was developed.
- Periodic writes were held and after the assessment, students were asked to determine their next area of focus to improve their reading. The results were recorded on a "Learning Log" sheet that was attached to the collection of writes.
- Some students used a "bookmark" that detailed an aspect of the standards that they were to keep in mind as they read.
- A class-wide write took place at the end of semester one.

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- Progress was measured. The information around the areas of growth and ongoing need for each student was shared with students.

**School Findings**

	# or %	Not Yet	Min. Meets	Fully Meets	Exceeds
<b>Semester 1 (First Nations students in brackets)</b>					
Fall/1 <sup>st</sup> Read	#	21 (4)	16 (1)	7 (0)	0 (0)
	%	47.73%	36.36%	15.91%	0%
Jan./Final Read	#	2 (1)	11 (1)	27 (3)	4 (0)
	%	4.55%	25.00%	61.36%	9.09%
<b>Semester 2 (First Nations students in brackets)</b>					
Jan/1 <sup>st</sup> Read	#	16 (6)	9 (2)	0 (0)	0 (0)
	%	64%	36%	0%	0%
June/Final Read	#	0 (0)	7 (5)	15 (3)	2 (0)
	%	0%	39.13%	52.17%	8.7%

**Summary**

This has been a great year watching our students grow and learn. A favourite comment from a student was along the line of “I can do much better now that I know what is expected of me”. It is liberating to give up the position of the keeper of the knowledge. The group of First Nations students was small (3 and 6 in semester 1 and 2 respectively), however the shift out of ‘Not Yet Meeting’ was significant particularly for those students. Although we did not see a massive difference for our First Nations students in their output, generally it appeared they were more engaged in the lessons because they now saw the “me” in the “they” of the textbook.

An interesting aside, and probably not statistically significant, is that the students from 1<sup>st</sup> semester that had these direct teaching methods were able to make a 5% difference on their Science 10 provincial exam. Again, it is significant to those students who were able to get higher marks.