

**NETWORK OF PERFORMANCE BASED SCHOOLS  
2011-2012**

**HAZELTON SECONDARY  
#82 Coast Mountains**

**Leadership Team**

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**School Context/Community Involvement**

Hazelton Secondary School is a trilingual school in the Hazeltons. The Hazeltons are comprised of four small townships and seven reserves, coming from two separate nations: the Gitksan and Wet'su'wet'en. The student population of Hazelton Secondary is approximately 340 students from grades 8 to 12. Of that population, 85% are of First Nations ancestry. The school has approximately 50 ministry identified students and close to 100 'struggling' students. Of all of our population demographics the most concerning is the students that are 'at risk' or 'in risk'. We lose roughly 20-30 of these students a year due to various social, behavioural, and academic issues. We are home to many programs that help to strengthen our students: Back to the Land Culture Program, the Breakfast Program, in house MCFD worker three days a week and a multitude of extracurricular programs for various student interests. However, there is still a disconnect with our risky kids. We need that will engage students, help them develop an independent identity and resilience, help them find their 'voice', set goals, gain self esteem, provide a safe and nurturing space and peer group, and move towards academic skill proficiency. So, here is layer one of a multilayer plan.

**School Question**

Will using Aboriginal content media in humanities classes improve reading comprehension, student engagement and oral language skills particularly in the areas of connecting, questioning, visualizing, inferring, and transformative thinking?

**Strategies**

- Direct instruction of Adrienne Gear strategies with grade 8 and 11
- Assessment of skills using performance standards throughout the process – grade 11
- Use of Aboriginal age/skill appropriate novels, poetry, short stories – grade 8 and 11
- Use of spiral of inquiry with senior level students – grade 11
- Use of oral strategies to promote oral discussions in various group structures – grade 8 and 11

**School Findings and Reflection**

Anecdotal:

Inquiry question anecdotal – grade 8 and grade 11

Spiral of inquiry beginning and end – grade 11

We have found through anecdotal insight from both grades that using Aboriginal content media has a positive engagement effect on ALL students in the class regardless of cultural background. First Nations students see a piece of media that reflects them and bridges the gap in their 'cultural schizophrenia'. Whether the portrayal is positive or negative, it gives the students a starting point for deep conversations about identity and perception.

In grade 8 Social Studies, the family tree project further connected the engagement and oral pieces with the community at large through the intergenerational conversations taking place. This brought more of the home into the school furthering our goal of engagement and reducing, again, the cultural separation of home and school.

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Using Adrienne Gear’s direct instruction of strategies as a vehicle seems to deepen their understanding and interior monologue in critical thinking. Through the spiral of inquiry essays, the impact of these five skills was evident. In return, it also strengthened their ability to speak orally with confidence with something meaningful to say.

Performance Standards for Reading Literature – grade 11

	Not Yet Meeting	Minimally Meeting	Fully Meeting	Exceeding
<b>Grade 9 - 41</b>				
Strategies	26	9	6	0
Comprehension	13	12	16	0
Response/Analysis	25	9	6	1
<b>Grade 10 - 42</b>				
Strategies	15	18	8	1
Comprehension	10	17	13	2
Response/Analysis	22	11	7	2
<b>Grade 11 - 45</b>				
Strategies	10	5	23	7
Comprehension	5	8	25	7
Response/Analysis	4	7	27	7

**School Plans for 2012-2013**

- Promotion and use of Aboriginal content media in all humanities classes
- Promotion of English First Peoples 10, 11, and 12
- More collaboration with staff in other departments to build capacity for the basic understandings of engagement, direct instruction of skills and deepening critical thinking and oral language.
- A further question stemming from Nicole Davey’s work with mentorship in Smithers Secondary with a cultural engagement and retention and drug and alcohol reduction elements. (Request for funding submitted to the Board office through Hazelton Secondary School Administration from the LIF [Learner Improvement Fund] funding)
- A further deepening of this question across the department, adding the use of the oral performance standards as another means of documentation.
- Promotion and further use of performance standards, Adrienne Gear’s work, and the Spiral of Inquiry for students