INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

June 10, 2016

Today's Learning for Tomorrow's World

SD 71 (Comox Valley)

Structure for Learning

Structure for Learning Links

The Thinking Classroom—a video by Doug David of the innovative work happening in Kjeryn Haughton's classroom.

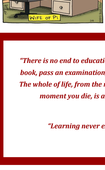
C21 Shifting Minds 3.0 (Redefining the Learning Landscape) argues that we need more urgency to meet changing needs.

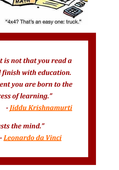
OECD The Nature of Learning– "rethinking what is taught, how it is taught, and how learning is assessed."

A great resource for much of our contemporary practice can be found by clicking here and here for Genius Hour information.

REDESIGNED CURRICULUM

It is about how we support learning NOT about changing content.



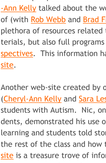


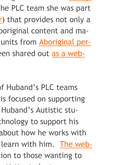
"There is no end to education. It is not that you read a book, pass an examination, and finish with education. The whole of life, from the moment you are born to the moment you die, is a process of learning."

- *Jiddu Krishnamurti*

"Learning never exhausts the mind."

- *Leonardo da Vinci*





Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

Huband Park School Review

Huband Park Elementary School had their School Review this week and there was a lot to take in. After our aboriginal welcome by their grade 6/7 class we heard about Kari Nye's grades 1/2 class and their gran-buddies from Casa Loma. It was interesting to hear the students talking about their connections with the seniors and how they bring joy to their lives. In doing this work, much like those students that go to Glacier View Lodge, Cumberland Lodge, and Berwick, the students are meeting many of their learning outcomes while engaged completely in authentic work.

There is also a lot happening at Huband to integrate First Nation's perspectives into the learning environment. Cheryl-Ann Kelly talked about the work the PLC team she was part of (with Rob Webb and Brad Fraser) that provides not only a plethora of resources related to Aboriginal content and materials, but also full programs and units from Aboriginal perspectives. This information has been shared out as a website.

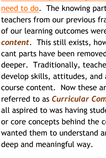
Another web-site created by one of Huband's PLC teams (Cheryl-Ann Kelly and Sara Leslie) is focused on supporting students with Autism. Nic, one of Huband's Autistic students, demonstrated his use of technology to support his learning and students told stories about how he works with the rest of the class and how they learn with him. The website is a treasure trove of information to those wanting to learn more about how to support autistic students.

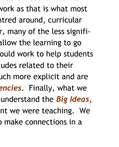
Inquiry seems to be a significant theme for the students and this is demonstrated in different ways. One student passionately talked about her explorations of time and clearly articulated how inquiry is about going deeper not just answering 'easy, superficial, questions.' Another student talked about his Design for Change project to help other children go to school that connected him with Free the Children. The students in his class believe that they are change makers and are excited by that prospect. Cheryl-Ann has created a great resource site for Inquiry as well.

Huband Park Elementary was also our only school to be selected in the first round of Innovation Grants given out by the Ministry of Education. Their driving question is "How can we engage our teachers and student learners to improve numeracy in our students?" This flowed from a question guided by the data they'd collected: "If the kids in my class are operating at all different levels and sometimes eight grades apart, why am I giving them all the same math worksheet?" To do this they worked with Curriculum Support Teachers Debbie Nelson and Kara Dawson, learned about Thinking Classrooms and put the core principles to work.

We saw this in action in Kjeryn Haughton's grade 4/5 class. Thinking Classrooms references the work of Mike Pruner and Peter Liljedahl. Essentially there are three key 'cogs' that drive this approach: vertical, non-permanent surfaces (this gets students out of their desks moving, it is public, it is easily sharable); visually random groupings (highly effective way to change the culture of the classroom as the groups constantly shuffle); and rich thinking tasks. In Kjeryn's class we saw students draw cards to define their groups. They were given a complex, but authentic, word problem that would take a series of calculations, some replicated, and some critical thinking. Each group was given a vertical space (laminated sheets of paper on walls and windows) to work out the problem. The engagement was very high, the reasoning and discussions rich, and the students explored many Mathematic concepts and skills in the process of their work.

Finally, we saw some work that Jacquie Anderson is doing with her kindergarten children that flows from the concept that when children create art they are thinking in poetic, expressive ways. The genus for this work was a book, *The Power of Pictures: Creating Pathways to Literacy through Art*. The students, with the help of retired Principal Pelka Wiltshire, have gone through a series of art related activities that flow into explanations by the students as they link their feelings, experiences, and language. The highlight was when she showed us a picture a boy had done that had a bunch of bright, colourful, sparkly bits in a group on his self-portrait. When asked what it was, he replied 'my brain.'





Structure of the Redesigned Curriculum

The redesigned curriculum we are working with has three basic organizing units for each curriculum: what students need to know, what they need to understand, and what they need to do. The knowing part is what is most familiar to teachers from our previous framework as that is what most of our learning outcomes were centred around, curricular *content*. This still exists, however, many of the less significant parts have been removed to allow the learning to go deeper. Traditionally, teachers would work to help students develop skills, attitudes, and aptitudes related to their course content. Now these are much more explicit and are referred to as *Curricular Competencies*. Finally, what we all aspired to was having students understand the *Big Ideas*, or core concepts behind the content we were teaching. We wanted them to understand and to make connections in a deep and meaningful way.

The curriculum brings together two features that are essential for contemporary learning: a *concept-based* approach to learning, and a focus on the *development of competencies*, to foster deeper, more transferable learning.

These approaches complement each other because of their common focus on active engagement of students. Deeper learning is better achieved through 'doing' than through passive listening and reading. Similarly, both concept-based learning and the development of competencies engage students in authentic tasks that connect learning to the real world.

Two other key features of the redesigned curriculum are the emphasis on personalized learning and flexible learning environments. Learning can take place anywhere and at any time and the redesigned curriculum is structured to reflect this.

Thank you for taking the time to read this and please direct any suggestions, questions, or inquiries to me directly: Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca