

# INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

March 18, 2016



## Applied Learning

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## Applied Learning Links

The [Skills Canada BC](#) site has a lot of information about their programs and initiatives.

[Maker Day Workshop](#), based on [Stanford's D-School](#) in SD71 on the February Pro-D day was a huge hit. Now making 17 maker carts for the district.

Here is [an article](#) that summarizes 5 steps to create progressive, student-centred classrooms.

Here is a great [blog post](#) about learning from our kids who are productive creators.



“Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.” - Benjamin Franklin

“Wow! This is hard: this is fun. I like learning.” - students at hands-on learning events everywhere.

## Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

### Skills Canada Regional Finals

This past Friday, [GP Vanier](#) hosted the Regional Finals for [Skills Canada](#). More than 140 participants from Port Alberni to Campbell River competed in a diverse array of tasks related to trades and technology oriented careers. These students were supported by 5 work experience coordinators ([Kim Tyne](#), [Joanne Steven](#), Dawn Stevens, [Anna McElwain](#), [Randy James](#)), 15 volunteers from the community, and 15 local teachers including [Steve Claassen](#) who also had to organize the facilities which is a huge job in and of itself. [Randy Grey](#), our [Career Programs](#) Coordinator, has been the architect that has seen this program grow year over year, engaging hundreds of our students every year, in meaningful, hand-on learning.

Since 1994 Skills Canada British Columbia has operated as a provincial not for profit/charitable organization, working with industry, educators, government and labour to promote rewarding and in-demand skilled trade and technology careers to BC's youth. It is widely recognized for its annual Olympic style competitions hosted in communities throughout BC. There are 13 regions and the top competitor from each competition will represent their region at the Provincial Tournament (April 13 at the [Tradex](#) in Abbotsford) where the winners will go on to represent our Province at the National Championships (June 5-8 at the [Moncton Coliseum](#) in Moncton, New Brunswick) and/or WorldSkills competitions.

The competitions serve two main purposes. The first is to celebrate and reward students for excellence in their mastery of skilled trade and technology skills in a manner that directly involves industry in evaluating student performance and that keeps training [relevant](#) to employers' needs. The second is to create an [interactive and engaging environment](#) for the thousands of young people who attend the competitions as spectators. Vanier was an excellent host site and there certainly was a lot of interest for these events.

Valley students will be representing our region in the following categories: 2D Computer Animation, Automotive Service, Cabinet Making, Carpentry, Electronics, Graphic Design, Mechanical CAD, Website Design, and Welding. There were also two competitions for younger students. Both competitions required students to design and build vehicles. In the Junior Skills area, students battled their [Sumo Robots](#) in a tournament structure while elementary aged students built gravity cars and raced them head-to-head in a tournament.

In all of these competitions our students have to apply the many technical skills they have learned as well as the ability to handle pressure, tight deadlines, safety, and quality production. And, despite the fact that it is a competition, there was an abundance of smiles and professional respect.

### Student Art Exhibit

Tonight, students from [Navigate's Fine Arts eCademy](#) and [ENTER](#) programs will be launching their concurrent exhibit [Make/Repeat/Alter](#) with artists [Eric LeSage](#) and [Janet Wang](#) at the [Comox Valley Art Gallery](#) at 6:00. The exhibit will be on display from today to April 16th.

Beginning in the New Year, the K-8 Fine Arts eCademy students had a unique opportunity to [collaborate](#) on a project with the Comox Valley Art Gallery. The students used the Make/Repeat/Alter theme as well as these artists' work as a place for [inspiration](#).

FAe students began exploring printmaking techniques in a workshop format in December as the first step in their [exploration](#) of this theme. Their January and February spark elective times were also dedicated to this project with [choices](#) connected to visual art, music, drama or digital art, and now their work will be on display for all.

### École Puntledge Park Elementary

This week I was fortunate to participate in the school review for [École Puntledge Park Elementary](#). The focus of the review was about how the school supported success for all learners and two themes emerged: the different initiatives are based on solid research by the teachers and each example demonstrated the importance of making the learning [applicable](#). The teachers demonstrated that they are [lifelong learners](#) that passionately put student success at the forefront of their work.

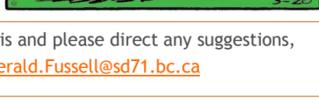
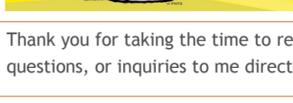
The first presentation we had was by [Jennifer Hedican](#) and [Tanya Greentree](#). They have been working on using a [right-brain approach to teaching reading](#). In essence, it reverses the traditional way we teach reading (sound → syllables → small words → simple sentences) to starting with high-interest words in a students' existing oral vocabulary and having them memorize and internalize them so that they can create the meaning and patterns from those beginnings. This circumvents the traditional pathway through the left side of the brain and directly accesses our [meaning](#) construction regions. The primary students at Puntledge Park Elementary using this technique have improved from a minimum of 2 levels (in grade one) to one student who has moved up 12 levels this year (in grade three).

[Danna Caudwell](#) and [Adrienne Glover](#) showed a number of things being done to support and [engage](#) aboriginal learners. In their presentation it became clear that all students are benefiting from this rich, cultural work as well. One of the PAC members in attendance commented about the [Aboriginal Kindergarten](#), which has students from diverse aboriginal backgrounds and non-aboriginal students, “[acknowledges, values, and celebrates aboriginal culture](#)” and this transcends the school. They have an [AEC](#) (Aboriginal Education Council) Grant to work with [Curtis Wilson](#) and he is working with all 21 divisions at Puntledge. Students will be hosting a Art Show on April 28th and 29th to show their work.

Next we got to see two students (Laekyn and Ryland) from [Shannon Williams'](#) grade 4/5 class demonstrate the work they had been doing in Math...they showed us their programming of [Lego Mindstorms](#) Robots. They showed us trial and error; calculation skills including angles, decimals, and fractions; persistence; and excellent [collaborative problem solving](#). Through this project they have also developed their tally counting, measurement, and many other math-related skills. The students admitted that it is frustrating, but also admitted that they often work through break times and cannot get enough time with the robots.

[Sue Bannister](#) presented how the school works with the Successful Learner Traits (listed in my [February 12 Newsletter](#)) to empower students to develop the skills that will make them successful learners. These traits stemmed from research in the early 1990s by Dr. Terry Johnson and Dr. Alison Preece who completed extensive surveys to help define what characteristics the [educated citizen](#) possessed. Sue has taken that research and, with colleagues, developed the Successful Learner Traits. It is not coincidental that they align very well with the aims of our [redesigned curriculum](#) including the [Core Competencies](#).

The final presentation was from [Martin Hartig](#) who started by talking about how the grade 7 students in Immersion (Early French Immersion and Late French Immersion) get together on Wednesdays for Mercredi au Monde (Worldly Wednesday). Every Wednesday they go out into the [natural environment](#) and [experience nature](#) on many levels, deepening their learning and understanding. He also talked about the work he and others are doing with Learning in Depth, a program initiated by internationally acclaimed educator Kieran Egan at SFU, that has students receive a topic at the beginning of the year and study it deeply. As one grade 7 student said “...it's good for our learning because we don't write down exactly what the teacher tells us to—[our research, our projects, our brain, our words](#).”



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](mailto:Gerald.Fussell@sd71.bc.ca)