

INNOVATIVE INKLINGS

Comox Valley School District Newsletter for Innovation

November 6, 2015



Core Competencies

- Communication
- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Positive Personal & Cultural Identity
- Personal Awareness & Responsibility
- Social Responsibility

Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is the ability to apply reasoning and logic to new or unfamiliar ideas, opinions, and situations. Thinking critically involves seeing things in an open-minded way and examining an idea or concept from as many angles as possible. This important skill allows people to look past their

“Every child is an artist, the problem is staying an artist when you grow up.”

- Pablo Picasso

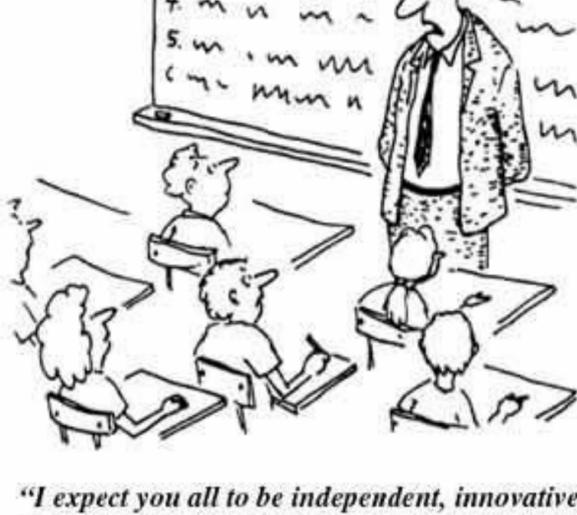
“Without change there is no innovation, creativity, or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.”

Key Questions

What are we preparing our students for?

What skills, attitudes, and aptitudes will they need to be successful in THEIR world?

What can we do to support their journeys?



“I expect you all to be independent, innovative, critical thinkers who will do exactly as I say!”

Around the District

Innovative events and efforts from around our district

What is Destination Imagination?

Destination Imagination (DI) is an international program (150,000 participants and 38,000 volunteers annually, 1,500,000 alumni, 31 countries) designed to develop skills, attitudes, and aptitudes necessary for success in our contemporary society.

Strategic partners and sponsors include NASA, 3M, Disney, Oracle, IBM, National Geographic, and Motorola.

The Destination Imagination (DI) program is a fun, hands-on system of learning that fosters students’ creativity, courage and curiosity through open-ended academic Challenges in the fields of STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), fine arts and service learning. Participants learn patience, flexibility, persistence, ethics, respect for others and their ideas, resilience, project management, and the collaborative problem solving process.

In our district we have more than 1,000 students who participate in some element of the DI program from Pre-Kindergarten through grade 12. Two of our graduates last year received provincial scholarships for their involvement in DI.

There are a number of programs from DI that we use to develop core competencies in our students. The Pathways program for early learners provides students aged 3-5 with hands on, age appropriate, activities that engage children while developing basic oral language development, literacy, mathematical, scientific, technology and engineering skills in meaningful ways. It is available to all of our strong start and kindergarten programs.

The Rising Stars! program is for children 4-7 years old and encourages creative discovery and teamwork in a fun environment. It teaches basic story development and script writing, as well as simple building and construction skills. Participants also work on their presentation skills.

The next level after Rising Stars! Is the Challenge Program. Teams of up to seven students spend the year working to solve one of six challenges (Science, Technology, Structural, Fine Arts, Improvisation, or Service oriented). Students around the world get the same challenge in September and then present their solution at various tournaments culminating in the best ones at each level being showcased at the Global Finals in Knoxville, Tennessee every May. These teams are also challenged to solve a challenge they cannot see in advance that tests their collaboration skills, communication skills, critical and creative thinking skills, power of innovation, and efficiency of performance. Our school district will have approximately 25 teams participating in this program this year and over the past 5 years we have done very well having 12 top 20 finishes Internationally.

We also have many classes and groups accessing the DI classroom edition which is a collection of team and instant challenges along with assessment rubrics for many of our Core Competencies. The teachers and schools that are us-

DI Ambassadors

This past weekend three of our students joined one from Carihi Secondary School in Campbell River to present creative and critical thinking workshops for students in Port McNeill, Sointula, and Alert Bay. These students are part of our DI Ambassadors Program which features 15 of our students, from three schools, who have had a variety of experiences with DI. Between them they have sixteen trips to Global Finals with eight top ten finishes. This is a very accomplished group. This group has one thing in common: they all recognized the life-changing value of DI in developing skills necessary for success in a constantly changing world.

The comments from teachers and the Superintendent were very complimentary to our students, however, it was the hand-written feedback from the Alert Bay students that really underscored the value that the mentors bring.

“I am shy but they helped me to perform and that was amazing.”

“DI made me feel good because it gave me really challenging obstacles.”

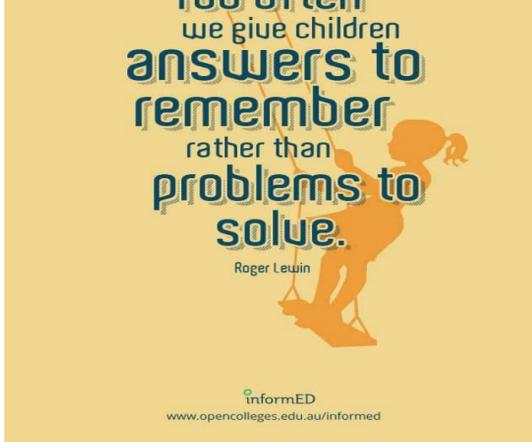
“The challenge that happened is when I found out we had 6 people. Another challenge was getting people to remember. I also had to find a part for everyone.”

“Good cause now I know that adults use their imagination a lot to [sic].”

The group first met in September and began to lay out what the key elements of DI are, then tried to figure out how to create workshops to develop and to demonstrate those elements. Before they felt comfortable, they offered to help others who are interested in DI. They are all volunteering their time and expertise to help others. Several are coaching teams in their respective schools. Others are leading their own teams and all of them are offering workshops of varying lengths to all ages of students.

Last year this group worked with students in Shanghai, China, to co-create similar workshops for Chinese students. In December our students travelled to China and were hosted by the Maple Leaf School of Shanghai. The students, who had planned the workshops over the ocean, got together and delivered their workshops for students from five schools from the surrounding area. The attending teachers commented effusively that our students were excellent teachers, role models, and ambassadors.

After this, the students participated in the Beijing Invitational Tournament as part of a 40 team International contingent at their National Championships for Destination Imagination. The two teams from the Comox Valley finished third and fourth in the competition which was spon-



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