

# LEARNING MATTERS

2017 MARCH EDITION

Divisional Magazine of the HSD Superintendent's Office  
Randy Dueck · Chris Gudziunas · Rick Ardies



## LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS



Hanover is a student-centred school division striving for excellence while developing skills and promoting values for a productive and wholesome life.

# LEARNING TOGETHER



In the summer of 2012 Chris Gudziunas, Rick Ardies and I hunkered down in a cottage in Northwest Ontario and began dreaming about the possibilities for learning in Hanover School Division. Over the last few years those dreams have grown into the comprehensive Deeper Learning Plan that is now being implemented in classrooms across the division. Chris, Rick and I were the first partners in the project and have truly enjoyed learning deeply together since that time. We are learning about Deeper Learning, we are learning about leading change, we are learning that we must always remember the basic needs of people during times of change, and we are learning about ourselves as leaders. Our learning never stops and it is never isolated. Learning has become a powerful adventure.

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of the adventure is the ever expanding experience of learning together. Over the years those partnerships have included so many more people who really care about student learning. Early on we invited hundreds of people to partner with us through the Our Kid project, and their comments have made significant contributions to the focus of Deeper Learning. We then included Student Services and principals in the general development of the Deeper Learning concept. We expanded the project beyond the borders of HSD and partnered with IBM and Michael Fullan's New Pedagogies for Deeper Learning to share their broader expertise with us.

We are now engaged in rich learning conversations with colleagues around the globe on developing meaningful learning opportunities for our kids. We developed the divisional Deeper Learning Team with principal, teacher, and learning coach representation to provide further direction. And we spent some good time with our Superintendent Student Advisory Council kids who made some very direct contributions to the Deeper Learning Plan. All of this is just the start! We are now partnering directly with teachers and students in classrooms to continue to make learning very relevant, very engaging and very successful for our students.

Every one of these partnerships makes a direct contribution to what we are learning. We are learning this together and that just may be the greatest strength of the entire Deeper Learning Plan. And to that end, I continue to invite your partnership to the shaping of Deeper Learning for Our Kids and am optimistic that this plan will continue to show results in our classrooms.

Let's keep learning together.

Randy Dueck, Superintendent, CEO  
Hanover School Division



## IN OUR SCHOOLS

# PARTNERING WITH THE COMMUNITY

## at Elmdale School

Fruit Share Steinbach is a local organization that offers fruit picking to volunteers. One third of the fruit goes to the homeowner, one third goes to the volunteers, and the other third goes to Helping Hands.

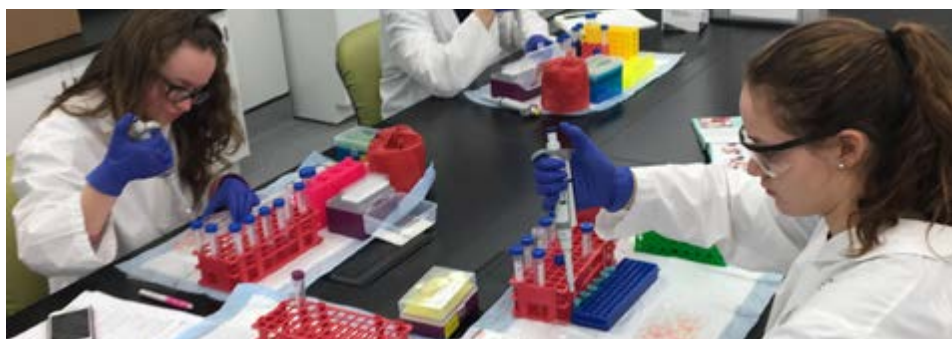
This year the students in 2F had an opportunity to volunteer their time by picking apples at a local house in Steinbach. After students participated in picking the apples, students brought their third of the pickings back to school to take part in various activities. One day students peeled the apples and turned them into apple crumble, and another day students turned more apples into applesauce. The students also wanted to find a way to use the entire apple. All of the cores and scraps were taken home by one of the teachers (Marge Thiessen) in our school. She has pigs and cows who had an absolute feast on the apple scraps. Marge Thiessen video-taped the feast and showed it to the students in 2F. The students talked about the life cycle of the apple, and also how our food can be composted or put back into the ecosystem in an environmentally friendly way. The students in 2F were excited each day they arrived at school wondering what they were going to turn these apples into next.

This was an excellent opportunity for our students to not only learn what they can make with apples, but they also learnt that there is an organization in our community that allows us to share their hard work with others.

- Melissa Fry (Grade 2 Teacher), Elmdale School

# LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS

## at Landmark Collegiate



### ST. BONIFACE RESEARCH LAB

Landmark Collegiate Biology students had the opportunity to partner with RBC Youth BIO Lab Jeunesse at the St. Boniface Hospital and work on experiments in a safe and authentic biomedical teaching laboratory. Our research question focused on the effects of caffeine because of its various forms in our daily lives.

We worked with the Director, Steve Jones, and Education Liaison, Meghan Kynoch, to develop an experiment with stem cells to learn how caffeine affects cell growth.

We extracted stem cells from the bones of a rat leg and grew them in a cell culture. The cells were then injected with various levels of caffeine over different lengths of time. At the time of this writing we had not yet been able to see the results of our experiment. Through

the experience we learned how to use proper lab procedures, different lab equipment such as the clean vent hood and a hemocytometer and we grew in our understanding of inquiry projects and project based learning. This partnership with the Youth BIO Lab allowed us to have a hands-on experience with deciding on what and how to research while working alongside scientists.

We appreciated the opportunity to work and learn at the BIO Lab. For Steve “it’s all about the kids’ curiosity and health literacy. Science education shouldn’t just be a teacher telling the kids what they need to know. It’s better when it’s experiential and when the students can see what real science is like.”

*- Nolan Plett, Kaitlyn Warkentine, and Brittney Huszar (Grade 12 Biology Students), Landmark Collegiate*



### U OF M GEOLOGY OUTREACH PROGRAM

In Grade 7, we learn about earth science and all the different parts that make up our physical earth. We learn about rocks and minerals, earthquakes, volcanoes, and how our earth has changed over time. We discuss many natural resources we depend on, such as iron for building materials, petroleum gas for driving vehicles, and geothermal energy for heating homes. We

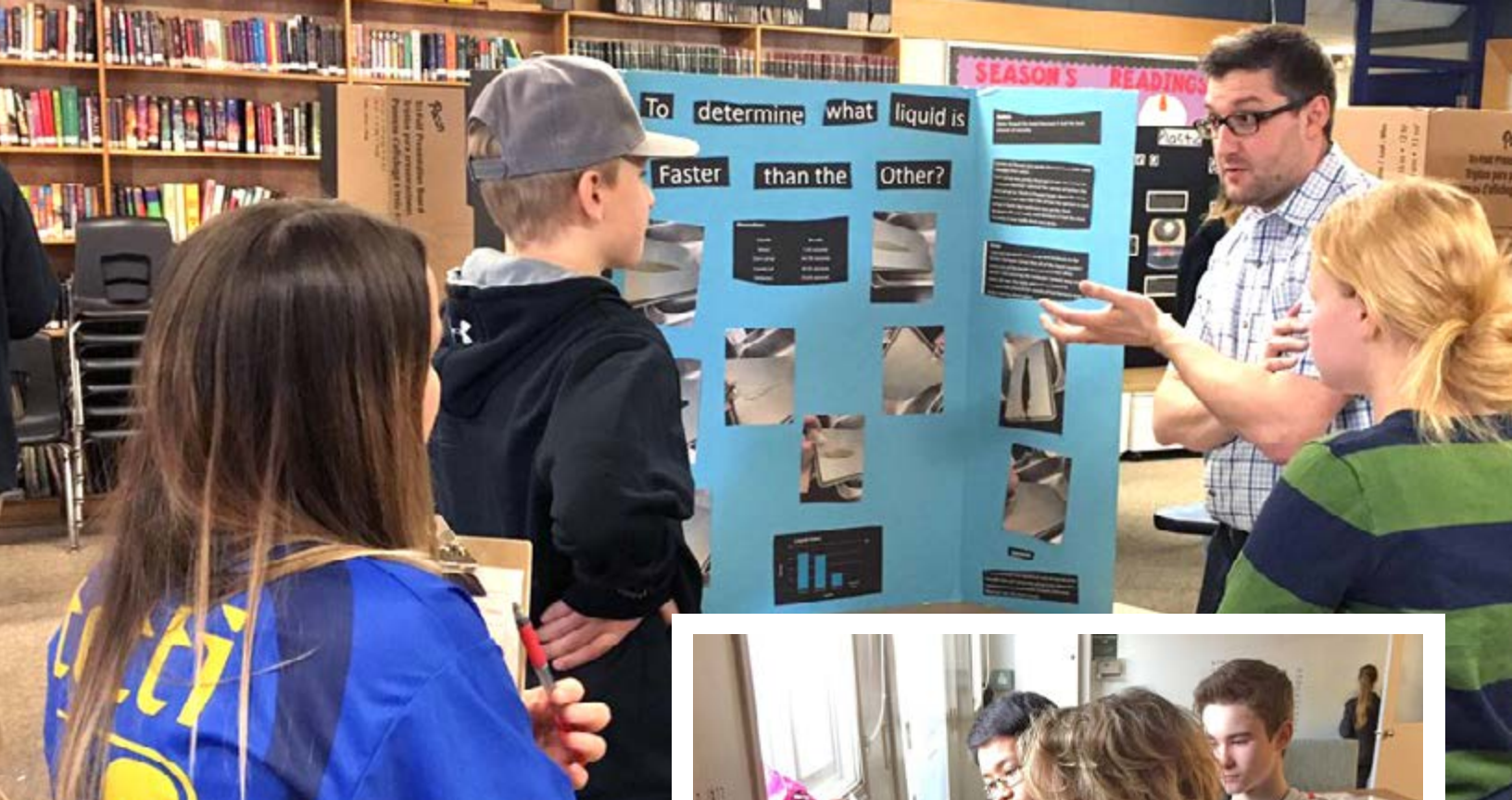
also study environmental concerns around the production and usage of our natural resources and discuss responsible ways to use these resources.

On January 27th, the Grade 7 students from Landmark Collegiate had the opportunity to take their study of Geology beyond the classroom when they visited the University of Manitoba to participate in the U of M Geology Outreach program. Students were able to learn from Geologists in an environment full of earth science resources. They learned about the different criteria Geologists use to classify rocks and minerals, and performed some basic tests used to identify rocks and minerals. Students explored the three main types of rocks, Igneous, Metamorphic and Sedimentary, and learned how these rock types are formed and what shapes can be seen in these rocks that can help with identification. Students had the opportunity to explore petrography, which is using specialized microscopes to see different shapes and colors within the three main rock

types. During our tour of the seismic vault at the U of M, students got to see firsthand how earthquakes from around the world are detected. Students also had the chance to get their earthquake related questions answered by a Geophysicist (doing an undergrad degree in Seismology). Students then got to explore some of the state of the art lab facilities right on campus that are instrumental to research in the field of Geology. Students also had the chance to learn about different career paths, if they chose to further their study of earth sciences in the future.

The Grade 7’s trip to the Department of Geological Sciences at the U of M gave students the opportunity to explore Geology in a way they never could have in the classroom. This learning partnership was an awesome way to learn about Geology in a meaningful way that hopefully sparked some interest in the earth sciences.

*- Melissa Robinson (Grade 7 Teacher), Landmark Collegiate*



FEATURE ARTICLE

# LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS IN HSD



Not too long ago, I had the opportunity to observe a class of Grade 8 students and their teachers working through the familiar science project in which students were required to build the strongest bridge possible using only popsicle sticks and glue. This particular iteration of the project stood out to me as rather special.

The teachers began the project by introducing the topic and teaching lessons on structural design. Students then began the process of learning about the design characteristics of great bridges. In small groups, they chose a bridge located anywhere in the world and researched the design features that made it function. Some students were then able to contact the architects who designed the bridge, and interviewed them about the design process. A field trip was organized to visit various local bridges, and students were joined by an engineer from a design firm, who explained how the bridges were constructed. Students then used this new learning to help

them design a first draft of their own popsicle stick bridge. As the students worked on their bridge design, their teacher provided instruction, guidance and feedback throughout the process. When they completed the first draft of their project, each group of students made contact with a university architectural student who they then partnered with to gain expert guidance on structural design, engaging in several Skype meetings as design teams. When the popsicle stick bridges were complete, the students, teachers and university mentors all joined together for students to present their learning and to measure the actual weight that the bridges could withstand. There are so many aspects of this learning experience that stand out; the various learning partnerships that were at play certainly contributed to the opportunity for deep learning:

**Teacher/Student:** Teachers and students functioned as learning partners in a variety of ways. At times the teachers provided

direct instruction. At other times they needed to choose other instructional strategies, dependent on the learning task at hand. They helped students to formulate learning goals, they provided descriptive feedback, they facilitated the students progress, they assessed the extent to which students met target outcomes. At other times, the teachers learned new knowledge alongside their students, modelling what it meant to be master learners.

**Student/Student:** Students worked collaboratively. Throughout the project, students learned from each other and they contributed to each other's learning. They developed plans together and revised them together as they constructed new knowledge.

**Teacher/Teacher:** The inter-disciplinary nature of the assignment required various teachers to also collaborate, drawing in learning outcomes from various subjects.

**Teacher/Student/Community:** Through a strategic leveraging of digital resources, the students and teachers were able to learn from industry experts, professors and graduate students who were located both locally and around the world. This partnership provided important learning opportunities for students and teachers alike, and solidified the real-world application of the learning that was undertaken.

**Teacher/Student/Home:** At different points of the project, students worked through their plans at home with input from parents. At the conclusion, all parents were invited to the final exhibition of learning as students presented their learning.

Along with pedagogical practices, learning environments and leveraging digital, the strategic development and learning partnerships make up the design elements of our HSD Deeper Learning Plan. It is one of the four main variables we can manipulate to impact student learning.

Are there ways in which we, as teachers, can further develop our learning partnerships with our students? Michael Fullan (*A Rich Seam, January, 2014*) writes that in effective teacher/student partnerships we first must develop trusting relationships, then we must provide students with meaningful descriptive feedback on their progress towards learning goals, we must help students progress towards their own aspirations and we need to help them develop a meta-cognitive understanding of how to learn. And all this while choosing the best pedagogical approach for each learning task. Is there a pathway here that will help our students become more engaged and passionate learners?

Finally, what are the other partnerships that we can leverage for learning? How can we best take advantage of community resources? What professional partnerships, such as with learning coaches, PLN's, PLC's, etc. can we network with? How can parents be learning partners? Where are other experts on the various subjects that we teach?

When we talk of deep learning, we refer to the knowledge, skills, dispositions and values needed for a productive life. We are referring not only to the accumulation and construction of knowledge, but also to the development of the skills needed to apply that knowledge to meaningful contexts. With these as our learning goals, we can have a strong impact on student learning through the development of a variety of strategic learning partnerships.

- Rick Ardies, Assistant Superintendent

## BOOK REVIEW

# BOOKSHELF

 SUPER'S PICK

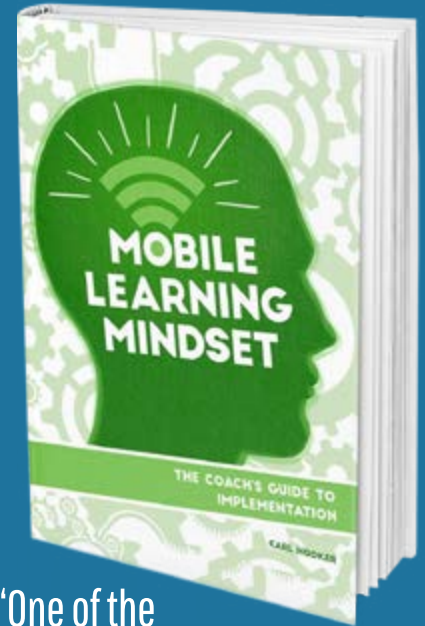
Hindsight is a great thing and if I had read the book, *Mobile Learning Mindset: The Teacher's guide to Implementation* by Carl Hooker earlier in the Deeper Learning Plan process I might have been able to reduce the anxiety of many of our teachers by providing some direction in terms of how to: increase student-driven learning opportunities; manage access to the Internet in the classroom along with multiple apps; use the SAMR model to help plan engaging lessons; and, help make formative assessment more manageable through the use of mobile devices.

Author Carl Hooker who is the Director of Innovation & Digital Learning at the Eanes Independent School District in Austin, TX started a small pilot program in 2010 that was designed to personalize learning and increase student and teacher access to mobile learning devices. By the spring of 2013, every student and staff member had an iPad and been using social and Google Apps for Education in the classroom.

The *Mobile Learning Mindset* is a series of six books that chronicles the journey of the school division. The fourth book and the focus of this book review, provides the "why" and "how" mobile devices affect the classroom and what teachers can do to create a successful student-led learning environment.

Of the ten chapters, Chapter Two (Top 10 Things Not to Do), Chapter Six (Small Changes and the SAMR Model), Chapter Seven (Formative Assessment), and Chapter Ten (Reflect and Share) will provide a teacher with a great foundation of ideas and knowledge to help with our transition to Deeper Learning. The remaining chapters are also very helpful and will provide teachers with a variety of new things to try in their classroom with mobile devices.

One of the design elements of Deeper Learning is leveraging digital technology to help our students think critically, deal



“One of the design elements of Deeper Learning is leveraging digital technology to help our students think critically, deal with real-world problems, find creative solutions, while working collaboratively with others.”

with real-world problems, find creative solutions, while working collaboratively with others. This book is chocked full of practical examples of how a teacher can create a student-centered learning environment, effectively use formative assessment to monitor and plan for student learning, as well as, help communicate with parents and develop a learning partnership with them around using mobile learning devices at home. This book is an excellent resource for teachers and will make implementing Deeper Learning manageable.

- Chris Gudziunas,  
Assistant Superintendent

# LEARNING PARTNERSHIP VIA SKYPE at Southwood School



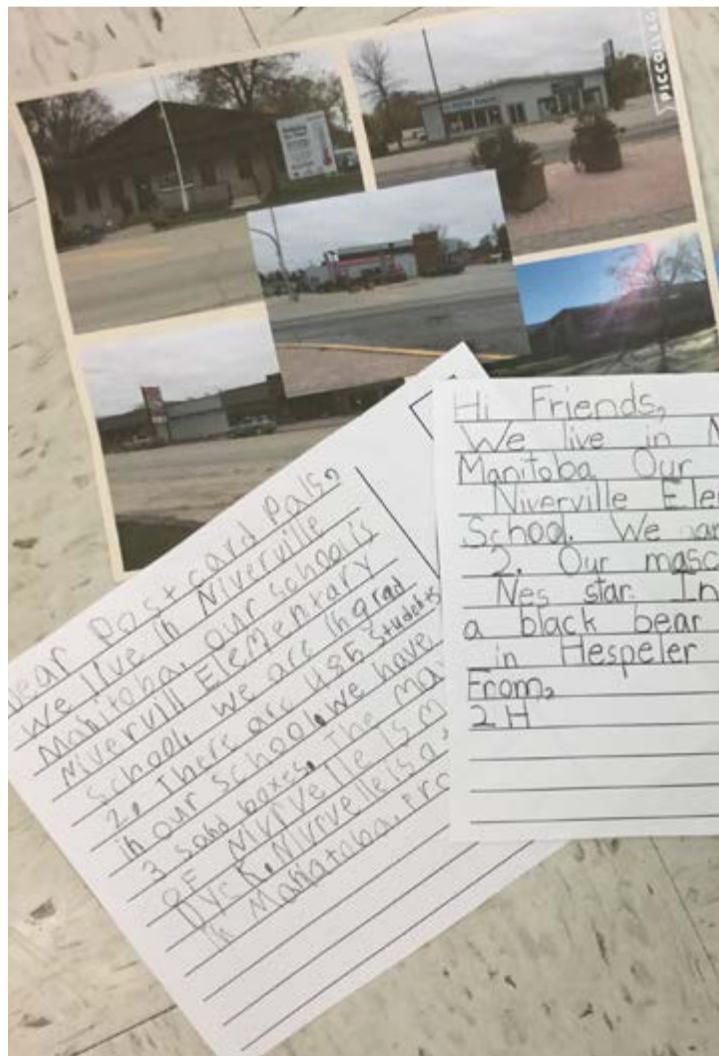
For the last two years my class has been participating in a Canada-wide postcard exchange. This exchange has allowed my students to learn about different communities through the eyes of other students. I often found my students would have questions about these communities that I was unable to answer having never been to these places myself. I thought, "How could I make this a better experience for my students? How could I really

take advantage of these learning partnerships?" The answer was simple, leveraging digital!

Through Twitter I have created many connections with teachers from all over the world. I decided to put out a general tweet to other teachers to see if anyone would be interested in doing a mystery skype with our class (a mystery skype is when you take turns answering questions to try to figure out where the other class is located). The response I received was unprecedented! I was soon booking mystery skypes almost a month in advance. So far we have been able to connect and talk to students in Texas, Kansas, South Dakota, Alabama, and Manitoba. Other skypes I have scheduled for February and March are Saskatchewan, British Columbia, Connecticut, and even two in different countries, Belgium and the Dominican Republic!

Once the students from each class figure out where the other is located and the loud cheers erupt, this is where these learning partnerships really start to allow for deeper learning to occur. We get to learn first-hand from these students by asking questions directly to the students about their climate, community, school, activities they do for fun, etc. My students have loved being able to learn directly from other students as well as teach other students about their own school and community. One of our favourite things to do with the other classes, especially our friends from the Southern United States, is to show them all the snow out our classroom window! The other class always becomes very excited over all the snow as most have not seen it before! The other great thing about these mystery skypes is that it allows us to connect with students of all ages. We have skyped with students in Grade 2, 3, 5, 10 and even kindergarten. So no matter what grade you teach I strongly encourage you to take advantage of Skype and twitter to create your own amazing learning partnerships. Send out a tweet with #mysteryskype or if you would like me to connect you to classes I have already skyped, you can shoot me a message on twitter @NicoleSharpeHSD anytime! I know that both you and your students will absolutely love these learning partnerships!

- Nicole Sharpe (Grade 2 Teacher), Southwood School



## IN OUR SCHOOLS

# LEARNING PARTNERSHIP VIA POSTCARDS

## at Niverville Elementary School

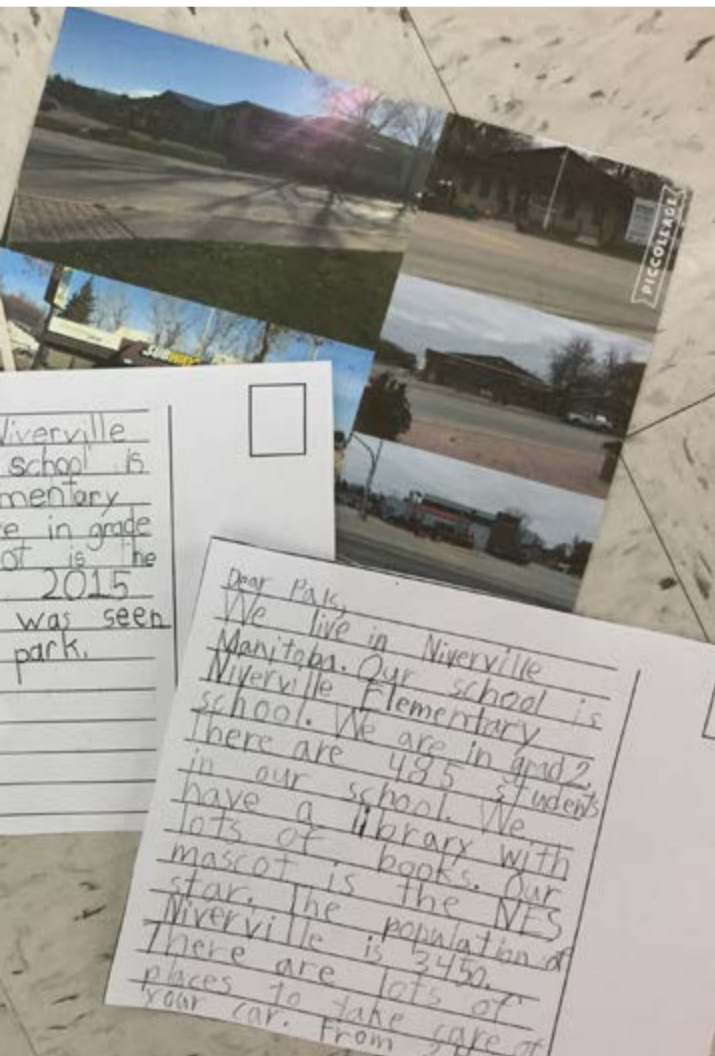


One August evening last summer, I was looking through the Learning Matters magazine when I stumbled across an article written by Nicole Sharpe about a postcard exchange among classrooms across Canada. I immediately knew this was something I wanted to become involved with, and I contacted the coordinator that evening. I am so happy I did!

My Grade 2 class started receiving postcards in September. After reading the postcards we found the communities on our map of Canada. In October we received a postcard, hand written by a student in another province. My Grade 2 students decided right then and there they wanted to send their own hand written postcards to our postcard pals! But what should our postcards say? We looked through the postcards we received from the other schools and co-constructed some criteria. Then we had to find our facts. What is the population of our school, of Niverville? What does the word population even mean? We learned a variety of facts about our school and our community. We went on two community walks in order to take pictures of everything the students wanted to include. Each student picked the pictures to use on the back of his or her own postcard to send to our postcard pals. We are excited for the arrival of April when it will be our turn to send out our postcards.

This winter we are taking our new found learning partnerships one step further. In small groups, my students will pick from the postcards we received to select the community they want to learn more about. We plan on contacting students from the postcards and asking them questions about their communities. The learning partnerships forged through the postcard program will give my students an opportunity to develop authentic knowledge of communities across Canada as well as their own. If you would like to learn more about the program, contact Betty Welch at [bwelch@cesd73.ca](mailto:bwelch@cesd73.ca).

- Kate Hawgood (Grade 2 Teacher), Niverville Elementary School



# LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATION

Collaboration is not intuitive, often it appears easier to figure things out on our own. However, when we do collaborate we are reminded again of the multiple mutual benefits of learning with others. As a learning coach most of my work with teachers is face to face, either in a group or one on one. Now by using Google Docs and Slides I can learn and plan collaboratively in the moment with teachers who are 30 kilometers away.

After I took a course on learning to use and build Hyperdocs (simply a Google Doc with links) I started looking for opportunities to try them out in classrooms. Many teachers have been gracious in allowing me to use their students to try out the Hyperdocs I've created. Then I had the opportunity to create one with a teacher. We met once face to face

then went back to our own communities and both started designing. By leaving comments in the Google Doc we could "talk" to each other, work on the Hyperdoc simultaneously and ended up creating something that was far better than either could have accomplished on our own. I wanted to collaborate around the question - What are the benefits of leveraging digital to deepen the learning of students doing a novel study?

I wondered if using a Hyperdoc could build background knowledge, vocabulary and understanding of complex themes in a way that low tech could not? Working alongside a skilled and caring teacher allowed me to find out that yes, a Hyperdoc is a powerful tool in the classroom. I was also reminded how powerful collaboration can be. My teacher



partner was creative in ways I wasn't, knew of resources I didn't and had perspectives and ideas that made our product much richer.

Using the Hyperdoc with students expanded the learning partnership. Students could give us feedback on what worked, what didn't work and how to make our Hyperdoc better. By including students in the collaboration they had the opportunity to teach us more about designing rich learning experiences. When we collaborate, either face to face or digitally, we build learning partnerships that make the learning richer for all. Special thanks to Jennifer Armstrong, Grade 6 Teacher at LES.

- Barb Galessiere, Learning Coach

## IN OUR SCHOOLS

# LEARNING THROUGH WHAT WE LIVE at Niverville Collegiate Institute



Learning partnerships have come a long way in recent years. The philosophy of opening our doors to the community, and embracing the many contributions that it has to offer, has become much more prevalent in what we consider to be part of our students' education.

In my little corner of the education world, Turning Point Learning Program at Niverville Collegiate Institute, we thrive based on the building of relationships; first within our classroom and then extending out into the

community. Our relationship building creates the foundation of all our learning, and creates our comfort level as a learning community within our classroom. I often refer to our classroom as our "School Family", and we work to build that culture and allegiance to one another within our class all year long. What does that have to do with deepening our learning you might ask? EVERYTHING! By creating an environment where the students feel trusted and safe, it opens a great many more learning opportunities; specifically in

regards to risk taking. Students will take on tasks that they would never have considered in the past, they challenge each other in their thinking in respectful ways, and they speak out when they are struggling with a concept, idea or method because they know they can be safe within our "family".

Second to that, we have a great partnership with the parents of the students and have frequent verbal or electronic interactions, and a solid relationship between the home and school which allows for us to help moving students forward on their learning path, and redirecting when necessary in a unified plan. The students are aware of this triangulated process and are held accountable to their process of learning and their ownership for their choices. Finally, we could not create the deep, rich, real world learning without the many partnerships within and beyond our community. Our students are placed in

*Continued on bottom of page 9*



# CREATING LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA at Woodlawn School

Shared reading, math number stories, art presentations, journal writing, etc. are all things that take place on a daily basis in an early year's classroom. But how many of those events and projects do parents get to see actually happen? Often in early years classrooms there are parent volunteers who may get to see their child present the odd project or read a story aloud to the class, but for the most part parents are not in the classroom to see the events and activities that occur on a day-to-day basis.

Parental involvement is important in a classroom to help maintain a strong, positive environment inside and outside of the classroom. Creating positive relationships and a learning partnership with parents from the beginning of the year will assist with setting up a positive classroom environment.

Although I love having my parent volunteers in our classroom, having 19 parents in my classroom on a daily basis is not a realistic situation. I am sure many parents would love to see their child read a book aloud to their classmates, or to hear them talk about their art, but again with work and family responsibility it is not a true likelihood. With the ever-growing social media, I have found a way to connect and include parents with our class and keep them up to date on daily activities by the use of Instagram. Near the beginning of the year I created an account and sent home the address for parents to follow me at. Some parents were familiar with Instagram whereas others downloaded the app to be more connected with our classroom! It was a slow process at the beginning to have parents begin to follow us on Instagram, but as the weeks went on and

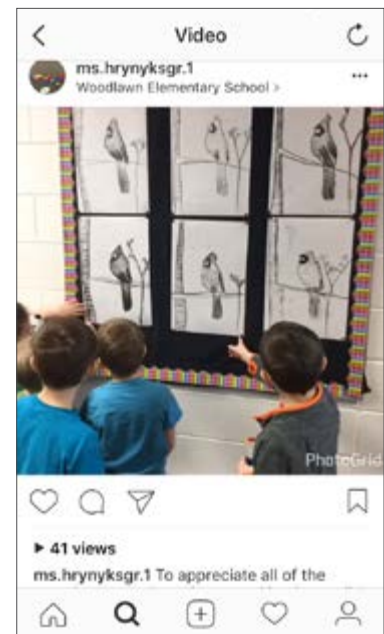
we notified parents through agendas to check out our art, or presentations, or explorations on Instagram - more parents began to follow us.

As a teacher I find it beneficial to use Instagram to connect with parents and to let them know what we are learning about in class. It allows them to feel connected to their child's learning. When we begin a new Science unit I can post the students reading books which link to that, or post pictures of our introductory lessons, and when it is time to present their design project I can record it and post the video to Instagram to share with parents! This way parents can see what is going on and what their children may be talking about, or parents can be a step ahead and prompt discussion on the way home from school, at dinner, before bedtime, and/or on the weekend.

I have had positive feedback from parents which included comments on their children's posts, notes in their child's agendas about how they enjoy seeing the things we post as a class, as well as direct comments from parents to myself. "I like being able to see what the kids are up to, it makes me feel included in the class. When kids come home they are very vague about their day, so this is a way I can see what is going on." E. Penner

I look forward to continuing with our class Instagram account and encourage educators to create learning partnerships with parents so that they can also be included in the class. Check out what is going on in Grade 1 at [@Ms.Hrynyksgr.1](#)

*- Kara Hrynyk (Grade 1 Teacher), Woodlawn School*



*Continued from page 8*

work placements in various fields and gain learning opportunities, knowledge, and transferability of what they are studying in school to their future career choices. They are able to see the bigger picture of their learning

and its application, as well as contributing to classroom learning with practical applications and experiences which they use to add depth to the collective learning; including my own! In the words of Margaret Mead, "Children must be taught how to think, not what to think",

and the larger our community of support, the greater the success we have in this process.

*- Susanne Kwiatkowski (Turning Point Teacher), Niverville Collegiate Institute*

# LIVING OUTSIDE OF THESE FOUR WALLS

What does it mean to help our students live and think outside of the four walls of our classroom? Is citizenship merely an ideal that we talk about, or is it something we can actually do and work towards becoming? Can Grade 6 students help change the world?

When Rachel Naylor, a Grade 6 teacher at Green Valley School, started a Genius Hour project with her students, she couldn't have imagined the project would take her students far beyond the walls of her classroom. To provide some context, Genius Hour is a student guided inquiry project that is loosely based on Google's version of 20 time, where their employees get to spend 20% of their time developing and researching things that they are passionate about. Gmail and google news are examples of products realized through 20 time. So in Ms. Naylor's classroom students still spend time working on other lessons, projects and units but a portion of their English Language Arts time is dedicated to developing their Genius Hour project.

Through this rich task, students have partnered with each other, members of their school community, and members of the greater community to give meaning and depth to self-driven questions like how to eradicate bullying in their school, or how

**“Perhaps the most powerful part of this story is the fact that when these students were asked to share their incredible work with teachers in Hanover School Division, they enthusiastically accepted the challenge!”**

to help the homeless. Students have gone above-and-beyond in terms of what they can actually do as a result of this project. Allegra Penner and Milena Spiertz have created a series of lessons that teachers can use with their students to help teach about bullying and how to stop it. They have also planned and executed a Kindness Assembly to kick off Kindness Week for the Grade 5 and 6 students at GVS. Shaylee Schellenberg has taken an interest in conflict resolution, and will teach her class and others about it in a lesson she's prepared. Gaby Bergen has taken it upon herself to raise awareness and money for the homeless at Siloam Mission. She has also created an impactful video to share with others that demystifies the realities of being homeless.

Perhaps the most powerful part of this story is the fact that when these students were asked to share their incredible work with teachers in Hanover School Division, they enthusiastically accepted the challenge! On February 3rd,

along with Ms. Naylor, their teacher, and Ms. Anderson (Learning Coach), these incredible kids led a session on Genius Hour and leveraging digital in the classroom. In preparation for this day, along with fine-tuning their Genius Hour projects, they also created tutorial videos for teachers to help them utilize technology in their classrooms, and provided one-on-one tech support for teachers in their session. These students provided teachers with a real-life example of the potential and possibilities for Deeper Learning in the classroom. So, can Grade 6 students help change the world? Ask them that question, because now they know they can! For even the smallest pebble makes waves when cast into the ocean...

- Holly Anderson, Learning Coach



*View Student-Created  
Tutorial Videos*



# CROSS-CULTURAL LEARNING PARTNERSHIP at Blumenort School



It was October 18, 2016. My students were arriving and making their way across the school yard. They shaded their eyes with their hands and pressed their faces close to the window, peering into our classroom, hoping to catch a glimpse of someone, whose visit they had been anticipating for several weeks already. Inside the classroom we could hear muffled squeals of excitement through the layers of glass as they spotted him: Mr. Delos Reyes had come to Blumenort School all the way from Bangkok, Thailand! And this was the day we would kick off our pen pal relationship with another Grade 3 class (P3/1) halfway across the world, which had been my class two years ago in grade one.

That day my students asked Mr. Delos Reyes to tell them all about Thailand. We had been learning the practice of “wai-ing” someone when you say ‘hello’ (“sa-was-dee-kah” or “sa-was-dee-kahp”) and wanted to impress our visitor with some of the knowledge we had already gained before his arrival. We wrote our introductory letters to our “Thai buddies” and saw videos of what Thai culture is like. We learned how to write our names in Thai and made videos to send back to Bangkok with Mr. Delos Reyes to allow his class a peek into our lives and our school days.

Throughout the past five months we have exchanged various digital messages, letters, crafts, and gifts as we have gotten to know

one another. At Christmas time we shared videos with one another about how we celebrate the holidays in our respective countries and what this time of year means to us - presents being a prevailing theme in both parts of the world! Towards the end of January, as both of our classes were doing studies of various countries around the world, we decided to have an exchange of learning. P3/1 shared what they had learned about South Africa in a video sent to our Dropbox by Mr. Delos Reyes and we shared our research on China with his class via the SeeSaw app with videos my students had made themselves here in Blumenort.

**“Through this learning partnership, we found so many similarities, but also a great deal of differences between us.”**

Through this learning partnership, we found so many similarities, but also a great deal of differences between us. I remember a student asking why their Thai buddies did not wear shoes in the classroom. It seemed so foreign to my class to see the students walking around dressed in identical uniforms and wearing only socks. This seemingly minor

observation led us to a discussion on cultural sensitivity and how, often, our first reaction to a new situation is to judge or to proclaim it as weird, however once I explained to my class that “different” and “weird” are two very different lenses through which to consider other cultures, we began to think about how we view others around us. And when I explained that the P3/1 class in turn had the same thoughts about how we come to school dressed casually, without uniforms, and wearing shoes in our classrooms, my students began to understand that they could be seen as “different” by others, as well. Every time we glance at the picture of our class with Mr. Delos Reyes that is framed in our classroom; every time we take out those hand-crafted ornaments sent from the tropics of South-East Asia; every time we reread those cards and letters...there will be a moment where we remember those connections. And maybe whisper a quick “kap-khun-kah” (thank you) to the other side of the world.

- *Julia Hiebert (Grade 2/3 Teacher), Blumenort School*



# LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS - ART & BEYOND at Landmark Elementary



The Grade 3/4 class at Landmark Elementary School has been taking their art to the next level this year! With the assistance of Russ Dirks, HSD Learning Coach, Mr. Loepky, Art Teacher from the SRSS and his student, Cheyenne Evans, the group has been collaborating on art projects since October. First meeting via Google Hangouts back in the fall, Ms. Blahut's students were eager to begin formulating questions to ask Cheyenne (five white boards full to be exact!). The group chatted with their virtual guests about shape, line and adding details to their art work. Cheyenne shared some of her art work with our class and to say they were impressed was an understatement! As this learning partnership grew over the next few months, both teachers realized just how special this bond was.

In January, Mr. Loepky and Cheyenne visited Landmark Elementary and spent the afternoon creating artwork together in the form of alternative landscapes. Students were encouraged to think outside the box and see landscapes in many forms. We are so grateful for the opportunity to meet, create and explore with both artists and take our art to the next level. Since this initial partnership, our class has extended beyond our four walls to connect with classrooms through various mystery Skype sessions and Twitter conversations. We are looking forward to seeing where our partnerships will take us next!

*- Karlie Blahut (Grade 3/4 Teacher),  
Landmark Elementary School*

## Are you a teacher that would love to find inspiring learning partnerships to drive inquiry into the arts?

Whether it is visual art, musical art, dramatic art, or creative movement, ARTSpiration is all about inspiring one another in the arts. If you would like to get connected to other teachers and their students, contact me at [rdirks@hsd.ca](mailto:rdirks@hsd.ca). I will connect you with some inspiring partners through Google Hangouts.

*- Russ Dirks, Learning Coach*

# CALENDAR

Spring Break (No Classes)  
March 27-31

Public Board Meeting  
April 4

Admin/PD Day (No Classes)  
April 7

Good Friday (No Classes)  
April 14

School Bus Evacuation Drills  
April 17-21

Public Board Meeting  
May 2

Victoria Day (No Classes)  
May 22



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