

LEARNING MATTERS

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Randy Dueck • Chris Gudziunas • Rick Ardies



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“OUR KIDS” AND OUR LETTER “C”



In July of this past summer Chris Gudziunas, Rick Ardies and I took our annual couple of days away to reflect on our mission and priorities. During our lively conversation regarding our purposes we kept on referring to “our kids”, these being the students that enter our HSD schools to become educated. We frequently found ourselves asking how this or that priority would ultimately impact our kids and their learning. For some time we had been giving serious consideration to initiating a conversation on the topic of what our kids really need to learn, and engaging a broad base of stakeholders in that powerful question. That conversation needed a focus, and the “Our Kid” project became that focus. Since that time we have conducted “Our Kid” workshops separately with students, principals, teachers, and the HSD Board. Future workshops with parents and community leaders are also being planned, culminating in a grand conversation that brings representatives from all groups together to discuss what our kids should be learning in school. We trust that when all is said and done we will have gained a deeper understanding of the breadth and depth of our responsibilities as educators, and as a community, in the development and growth of our young people.

Speaking of community, our third divisional priority, our letter “C”, is “to partner with communities so that all students will learn”. In this edition of Learning Matters you will experience a range of stories that describe precisely this kind of learning partnership with communities. I trust you will find them both interesting and inspirational.

Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council Featured at the Safe Schools Conference

Council members, Bea, Natalie, Samantha, and Edtie along with Superintendent Randy Dueck participated in a group panel discussion at the Manitoba Safe Schools Conference held February 9, 2015 in Winnipeg. The Superintendent’s Student Advisory Council was showcased as an example of engaging senior years “student voices” in the development of safe and caring schools. SSAC is comprised of 12 students (from grades 10, 11, 12) representing 4 senior years schools within HSD. As an advisory group they meet with the Superintendents 6 times per year.

OUR KID PROJECT

When we think of the students that sit in our classrooms each day, what are our hopes for them as they graduate from our schools? If you think of one child that is special to you – maybe your own child, or a niece or nephew, or a particular student that comes to mind – what is your hope for that child as they go through their years in our schools? The HSD “Our Kid” project grew out of an attempt to articulate answers to these questions in order to develop a shared vision of the knowledge, skills, values and dispositions that describe a Hanover school graduate. Most importantly, the “Our Kid” project is a constant reminder that the work we do is always centered on doing the very best that we can for every single one of the kids that enter into our schools and classrooms each day.

The Hanover School Division Divisional Priorities for 2014-2018 state our divisional goals in the form of our ABC’s: three goals that focus our ongoing work. The first priority, our “All students will learn the skills, knowledge, values and dispositions essential for a good, productive and wholesome life” states that, “All students will learn the skills, knowledge, values and dispositions essential for a good, productive and wholesome life” through a series of workshops that began in August and continues until the end of April. The “Our Kid” project asks participants from various stakeholder groups to dig down into each of these categories and describe what they represent essential areas of growth for each of

IN OUR SCHOOLS

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Through Community Service



IN OUR SCHOOLS

FRENCH LIT LAB

At Clearspring Middle School

French teachers Elaine Kalyta and Sara Hocke being studied, make the system easy to transport among classrooms. Elaine and Sara saw the realization of a long-held dream to have a French Lit Lab in a dedicated space set aside one week each month for an in-depth study of a particular set of books that relate to the current theme being studied in their French classes. In this way, students can see that the skills and strategies they learned through Guided Reading in their ELA classes, transfer easily to their French classes as well.

Using their training in the Audacity recording program, they created audio versions of many of the levelled French readers they had been using in their classrooms for years, storing the audio files on multiple flash drives. Bookshelves and baskets labelled with the various themes in Grades 5-6 French keep the levelled readers organized and easy to find. Rolling carts to hold the listening centres and the

IN OUR SCHOOLS

THERE'S AN APP FOR THAT!

Authentic audience: people who have a genuine and invested interest in the topic at hand. When paired with three other classes from around the world. Once the quad is created, each class takes turns being the focus class for one week, while the other classes visit and comment. A class can go through multiple cycles with the same quad, or can sign up to join a new quad every four weeks.

- Anne Reimer, CST SY
Math/Science/Digital Learning



Our division is embracing and making possible more and more opportunities for learning to extend beyond the walls of the classroom or the school. Teachers are being encouraged to start class blogs, incorporate social media, and look for collaborative possibilities. While this has exciting potential, it also runs the risk of falling flat if no-one beyond the local school community reads the blogs or responds to the tweets.

- Blogging to improve quality writing
- Transforming the writing process
- Writing with a purpose
- Authentic feedback and conversation
- Global awareness and perspectives
- Communication skills
- Student engagement
- Creative expression
- Practice platform
- Digital citizenship

Making a deliberate connection with another class is a powerful way of establishing an authentic audience and a meaningful purpose for writing and critical thinking. Enter QUADBLOGGING, an online program that has connected hundreds of thousands of students globally since 2011. The process is quite straightforward: you register your class online and are

To check it out or register your class visit:
<http://quadblogging.com>



IN OUR SCHOOLS

BUILDING COMMUNITY RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHY At SRSS

Each December, since 2009, the Advanced Photography class has volunteered their services to two important local communities, Steinbach Family Resource Centre and the Mennonite Village Heritage Museum.

The Steinbach Family Resource Centre is a family resource organization dedicated to serving expectant parents and all families with children. What our photography students do, is attend the Santa Christmas Party in order to take portraits of the children and their mothers (sometimes dads, too) with Santa. We photograph over 100 portraits and then edit and print them, and burn a DVD. Parents thankfully accept copies of our photos, as these treasures of their little ones gazing fearfully into Santa's eyes, or maybe playfully tugging on his beard, will grace the walls and tables of homes for many years.

Our Advance class has also had the opportunity to become involved in an ongoing display at the Mennonite Village Heritage Museum. Twice a year, we design and photograph a theme display that hangs in the large common

Our photography students at the SRSS are being exposed to opportunities where their technical skills and people skills are developed.

When I think back over my 30 years of teaching in the public school system, I am overwhelmed by the opportunity to serve the community in a way that gives my students a legitimate experience of service and connection to their roots and their neighbours, through a class like photography. I am so fortunate to teach at this time and in this place.

Paul Reimer, Teacher SRSS

IS PHYSICAL LITERACY ESSENTIAL?

For more information check out this video: <http://piseworld.com/physical-literacy/>

The "Big Idea" of the K-12 Physical Education and Health curriculum is that students have the knowledge, skills and attitudes to lead a physically active life and to make health-enhancing decisions. For this to be possible, one needs to become "physically literate". What is physical literacy? Is this really "literacy"? Does it include essential knowledge and skills that our students need to enhance their quality of life?

The term "physical literacy" has been around for nearly a century, although more recently Canada has become the leader in exploring and explaining it. It is more than "edu-jargon"; it is a literacy that cannot be overlooked in education when we strive to develop "the whole child". Physical Literacy is the mastering of fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills that permit a child to read their environment and make appropriate decisions, allowing them to move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity situations. It supports long-term participation and performance to the best of one's ability (Paci Institute for Sport Excellence – www.piseworld.com).

Physical Literacy begins with movement vocabulary, which is the foundation for creating movement sequences and tasks.

Dr. Dean Kriellaars of the University of Manitoba compares literacy, numeracy, music and physical literacy by analyzing the basics. He explains that when considering literacy, one first focuses on the ABC's and proceeds to formulating words and sentences. Numbers are the basics in numeracy, which lead to patterns and equations. In music literacy, one studies Solfege (Do Re-Mi) which progresses to creating scales and scores. Similarly, physical literacy begins with movement vocabulary, which is the foundation for creating movement sequences and tasks. Children and youth need to be taught movement vocabulary and skills in order to move competently and confidently in a variety of physical activities. Physical Literacy does not just happen by playing and going to school. When movement vocabulary is intentionally used to teach fundamental movement skills, and when a wide variety of physical activities are provided to the children, they are given the opportunity to develop their competence and confidence in moving. Why is moving competently and confidently important? There is motivation to live an active, healthy life. Physical literacy goes beyond knowing how to run, jump, throw and kick in early years and it becomes the confidence to sign up to play in a community Ultimate Frisbee league in your first year of University because you need to fit some physical activity into a sedentary lifestyle.

If our goal is to provide students with the knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to lead a physically active life and to make health-enhancing decisions, physical literacy is essential.

- Corinne Thiessen
CST Physical Education, Health

IN OUR SCHOOL

During their unit in Social Studies on Quality of Life, grade 7 MMS students learned that Canadians enjoy some of the highest quality of life in the world. As we learned more about this global inequality, the grade 7 classes decided to fund-raise money to help correct the problem.

This money was put on the KIVA website and students chose which people around the world they wanted to lend money to. KIVA is an exciting opportunity for teachers wanting to show students that they can help those around us who are less fortunate. KIVA does not donate money to people in need, but instead lends it out. Loan amounts are as low as \$25 (USD) and you get to choose who to help (by

name, gender, education, sustainability projects, etc). Loans are repaid over and over. Micro financing is seen as

one of the most effective ways to help those global citizens that have less; it empowers people who are otherwise unable to secure loans from banks. KIVA provides a profile of the person asking for the loan, demographic information about the country, and you can track the progress of the loan through their online account. We are very proud of our MMS students for caring about those global citizens who have less, and are excited to do this again next school year!

Carlton Reimer and Arlen Penner
Teachers, Mitchell Middle School



IN OUR SCHOOL

For the first time in our school, we sent a team of four students to the Skills Canada Cardboard Boat Race Competition. Teams had to arrive with a blueprint of their design, and a team name (ours was the Floating Farmers since most of the other competitors were urban schools), and then build their boat given the same set of materials that every other team was provided. The Cardboard Boat Races challenge students to use teamwork, numeracy, literacy and problem solving skills to create their own floating race vessels.

UPCOMING EVENTS

HTA Professional Development
February 27, 2015

Hanover Teachers' Association Professional
Development Day

HSD Professional Development
March 13, 2015

Administration / Professional Development Day

April 10, 2015

Administration / Professional Development Day

MTS Seminars

March 9, 2015

Aiming for Classroom Management

April 13-14, 2015