



Some years ago I was challenged by a highly regarded educational speaker to identify my educational dream. It had to be a dream more than a goal because it had to be big enough to stretch the imagination of the possible. That day I wrote down that my dream was that every student in Hanover School Division would love learning.



# Student Engagement at Niverville Elementary

Our Grade 4 Social Justice group, Team NOVA, was tasked with picking a charity for the school to be involved in at Christmas. We talked about several charities that were within Manitoba and Haiti. The students decided to choose the project from Haiti, Boxes 2 Beads, which involved sending recycled light-weight cardboard boxes to Haiti, waiting while the Haitian families transformed the cardboard into beaded necklaces or bracelets, and then selling the jewelry at our school as a donation back to Haiti. The students chose this project for

I recently heard an Australian principal brag about the staff culture in his large high school. He said the school staff was characterized by a recognition that they were a very good school and by a desire to see what they could do to get even better. When I think about Hanover School Division, my thoughts are similar. We have very good schools with very good teachers. Are there ways we can go about getting even better? How do we get from good to great? Can a focus on student engagement be a significant part of this process? I suspect the answer is “yes” to all three of these questions.

Last year, there was a popular challenge for teachers and administrators that spread on social media, in which educators accepted the task of shadowing a student for one

whole school day, from arrival to departure. The teachers would sit in student desks beside their shadow student and participate in whatever lesson the classroom teacher presented. Invariably, by the end of the day, participant teachers and principals had the same response – “I am exhausted. That was way too hard.” They wrote about how difficult it was to remain focused throughout the day and how surprised they were by the amount of time they had to sit and listen to other teachers talk. Most said that there was no way they could remain engaged throughout the day. The majority of them vowed to make sure that their own classes would become more engaging for their students. They agreed (along with many Canadian students), that some changes would need to be made in order for school to be more interesting and

motivating for their students.

The introduction to this issue of Learning Matters talks about the four types of engagement and their importance to our Deeper Learning plan. For the most part, we assert that when students are engaged in their work, they increase the amount of effort they put into that work, and thereby learn more than they otherwise would have. Phil Schlechty, in *Engaging Students* (2011), writes that when students are engaged, they are attentive and focused, they are committed, they are persistent even when the task becomes difficult, and they find meaning and value in the tasks that make up the work (p. 14). This is similar to the concept of flow that Csikszentmihaly popularized a few years ago (Flow, 1990). He describes a state of mind that he calls “flow”, in which

## in HSD



we are aiming at for our students to foster learning. That is flow.

The four types of engagement described below work together interdependently, with much overlap between them. Together, they help describe what engagement can look like for many students.

**Socially Engaged** – students who are actively involved in the life of their schools are socially engaged. They have friends at school, they are involved in extra-curriculars, they have a sense of belonging and they enjoy positive relationships. According to some research, this often increases academic motivation (Doug Wilms, What Did You Do in School Today, 2009). Are there things we can do to help develop a culture in which more of our students can develop these connections?

**Intellectually Engaged** – students who are emotionally and cognitively invested in learning, who are using complex skills to increase understanding and solve problems, and who construct new knowledge are said to be intellectually engaged. These students are interested and motivated in their work, and make significant effort towards achievement. Are there ways that we can design student learning so that this work will motivate and inspire more of our students?

**Academically Engaged** – students who value the outcomes of school, and feel that what they learn is important and related to long-term success are academically engaged. Their learning behaviors and effort reflects these values. How do we plan in a way that

ensures that student work focuses on the understandings, skills and ideas that are the most important?

**Emotionally Engaged** – students who are connected to peers and to an adult that knows them and cares for them, who value the work that they are doing for the sake of the work because it matters and is important to them can become emotionally engaged. They enjoy the work they do and get satisfaction from completing worthwhile tasks. Can we ensure our kids are known and cared for? How often can we provide work that students can get excited about?

In any classroom, at any point in time, there will be students who are engaged in any of the above ways, students who are disengaged to various extents, and students who are compliantly going along with whatever they are told to do. The challenge to all of us as educators is, therefore, what can we do to set the conditions so that more of our students can be more engaged, more deeply, more of the time. The following list includes several suggestions, all of which can be observed in any of our HSD schools:

1. Develop a Culture of Inquiry: learning that begins with a provocation engages student curiosity.
2. Develop Learning Partnerships: collaborative work draws in many students. Partnerships with experts from within and without the school can extend the learning.
3. Take advantage of digital resources to extend and accelerate learning.

4. Take advantage of student interests and aspirations for topics to learn about, designs of how to learn, and deciding how to demonstrate that learning.
5. Provide voice and choice to students. As students develop agency, they can take more ownership of the learning process.
6. Ensure students focus on becoming creators and producers rather than just consumers.
7. Help students find the applications for their learning so that they know what they are doing is important.
8. Help students focus on developing the skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, etc. that are required for success throughout life.
9. Encourage creativity, a sense of adventure and fun in learning. Once students are engaged they will often be more willing to accept the hard work that is a vital part of the learning process.
10. Utilize a broad repertoire of teaching and learning practices and activities. Active learning, direct teaching, inquiry, problem-solving, etc. are all appropriate at different times for different purposes.

This list, of course, is not exhaustive (or all that new) but rather represents practices that our (ctivTx-1oT)Tj-1.8 E O.0

## at Clearspring Middle School

Rushing for coveted table spots. Black and white pieces hastily arranged. Strategies brewing before the game begins. It's time for chess. Every day at CMS, students from all grades spend their breaks and noon hours hunched over chess boards trying to outwit an opponent. What started as one of many activities available in the library, chess mania has swept the school and drawn in both experienced players and first timers brand new to the game.

CMS Librarian, Arlene Baldwin, oversees the daily flurry of chess activity, and observing so many engaged students inspired her to take it one step further. This year, she organized the first annual CMS chess tournament comprised of a whopping sixty-four contestants. Each student signed a detailed contract ensuring sportsmanlike conduct and non-interference in other matches. With forms signed and competitors ready, a single-elimination style tournament bracket was posted.

The tournament spanned several weeks over lunchtime, and though tension ran high during some matches, all participants demonstrated great comradery and honest conduct. Eventually, the contestants whittled down to four, representing each grade by chance, and live matches were projected for an enthusiastic crowd of observers gathered on the grandstand. After weeks of vigorous

concentration, Grade 7 student Josh Chen came out on top, showcasing great patience and cool logic. The level of engagement evident in the developing chess culture of our school raises many questions and possibilities, particularly with the growing disconnection between boys and school. "I've really enjoyed watching these students problem solve, strategize, grow and learn from each other," said Arlene after the championship match. These are the desirable skills and mindsets we want to see embedded into classroom learning, extracurricular activities, and throughout the school. Chess is one of the many valuable tools that could lead us down that path, so let's take a closer look and engage the possibility.

- Chloe Tate (Gr. 8 Teacher) with Arlene Baldwin (Library Support Specialist), Clearspring Middle School

During March, Southwood's K-4 music students collaborated to create a large music and art installation piece which we enjoyed calling "The Perfect Storm." We were inspired by the composer Vivaldi and his music, "The Four Seasons." We listened, played, acted out and discussed Vivaldi's music. During one music class we listened to the piece "Summer - Presto" and I read the following poetry which the composer paired with his music:

"Alas, his fears are real,  
The furious thunderstorm lights up the heavens  
Bowing down the trees and flattening the crops."  
(Paraphrased)

The music and this poetry lit the creative spark and my students' ideas of creating "The Perfect Storm" was born. The students all wanted to be involved. Every student listened to Vivaldi's "Summer" and created an individual mini-masterpiece of how they imagined Vivaldi's storm would look as a drawing. We decided that we would mount these miniature drawings on three colored backgrounds: yellow for lightning,

blue for rainclouds, and black for a dark stormy sky. As students began to hang their pieces close together on the music room wall creating a large mural, they saw their storm developing, and this fueled their excitement for the project. Students made these comments:

"We should make sparkling raindrops that hang down from the clouds."

## at Southwood School





## IN OUR SCHOOLS

### at Mitchell Middle School

Henry Ford once said "Whether you think you can, or you think you can't - you're right." At MMS we feel it is important to talk about what we want to see, rather than what we don't want to see. Recently, we began talking to our students and community about what it takes to become 'The Ultimate Warrior'. These are grade level core values that we want to, and expect to see, in each of our grades at MMS.

The core value for all Grade 5 students is to '**BE READY TO LEARN**'. We will talk with Grade 5's about this in the coming weeks to determine what this exactly means at MMS. To me it means to come to school with an open mind, to try new things, have supplies, listen, and question and so much more. When talking with Grade 5's we will focus the conversation on what it means to be ready to learn.

The core value of all Grade 6 students is to '**BE READY TO HELP**'. Since our Grade 6's have been at MMS for a year they know the school expectations, rules, and the people. We will expect our Grade 6's to help themselves,

their classmates, their teachers and the environment in and around MMS. The Grade 6 circle also includes the Grade 5 core value, so this means our Grade 6's will also be expected to be ready to learn. Again, we will speak with our Grade 6's to come up with what this will look like at MMS.

The core value for our Grade 7 students is to '**BE READY TO PARTICIPATE**'. When our kids reach Grade 7 a number of new opportunities open up. Grade 7's have more choice in their classes, athletics, arts and we will have a higher expectation for students to be active citizens in classrooms, school and community. Grade 7's will also be expected to be ready to help and be ready to learn. Grade 7's will also be given the opportunity to help us define what this means at MMS.

Our last, and greatest responsibility lies with our Grade 8 students. Their value is '**TO BE READY TO SERVE**'. We will get our Grade 8's feedback to what this will look like as well. The expectation will be for our Grade 8's to serve our

school, and community both locally and globally. Expectations for Grade 8's will also include being ready to participate, being ready to help, and being ready to learn.

A positive and safe school culture is of utmost importance. The goal of the Ultimate Warrior to is to positively enhance an already great school culture. By using common language and focusing on positive behaviour we will make sure that everyone associated with MMS has the best chance to be learners and to thrive every day. We want our entire school talking about what we should be doing and what we want to see, rather on what we shouldn't be doing.

- Andrew Mead (Principal),  
Mitchell Elementary School





## at Landmark Collegiate



“Just give me a book that will tell me how to do this deeper learning,” was my inner cry for over a year. When I was approached to be part of our division’s New Pedagogies for Deeper Learning (NPDL) team, I was excited as I felt it would provide me with the resources that I needed as a teacher. I was going to finally figure out how to do this the right way: who wants to fail and do it wrong?

**“ As a new ELA teacher, I wanted to help my students as much as possible - so much so that the harder I worked for them correcting, editing, and revising, the less they were engaged in the process.”**

As a new ELA teacher, I wanted to help my students as much as possible - so much so that the harder I worked for them correcting, editing, and revising, the less they were engaged in the process. And why should they be more engaged? It became my work and not theirs. I was failing.

If student engagement can be defined as “a state of being connected; a heightened state of attention or involvement” (NPDL), then my students were not engaged. That is not to say that my students are never engaged but I knew they didn’t own their learning.

While attending the 2017 NPDL conference in Toronto, I attended a breakout session entitled, “Learning Partnerships and Pedagogy: Feedback that Moves Students Toward Autonomy” presented by Max Drummy, a member of the NPDL global team. Early on in the session, he posed the question: “What kind of feedback have you given that has helped and what has not helped?” That last point struck a nerve.

Drummy went on to explain that feedback was tailored to the needs and instructional level of the students. I was tailoring the feedback to my needs and my instructional level. My mistake. Feedback includes four target levels: task or product, process, self-regulation, and self.

In task level feedback, the student receives feedback that distinguishes correct from incorrect answers, and is specific and not generalizable. The focus is to build more or different information. It asks students, “Is your answer correct or incorrect? How can you elaborate on the answer? What did you do

well?” When students are learning something new, they need a lot of feedback.

In process level feedback, the focus relates to the relationship between the ideas, and where students are cued to different strategies and errors. It asks students, “What is wrong and why? What is the explanation for the correct answer? What strategies did you use?”

In self-regulation feedback, the focus relates to the ability to create feedback and the willingness to invest effort into seeking and dealing with feedback information. It is being able to review work to decide if an answer is correct. It asks students, “How can you evaluate the information provided? What did you do to...? What might you do differently next time?”

Self-feedback is the personal evaluation of the learner that is welcomed and expected by students, but Drummy believes it rarely enhances outcomes.

It is through the first three target levels that students move from surface learning to deep(er) learning. Thus they begin to own their learning. Something I want for each student.

- Linda Suderman (Gr. 8 Teacher),  
Landmark Collegiate





at Elmdale School

## at Steinbach Regional Secondary School

This school year two SRSS students embarked on a Human Rights journey with students from across the Province called the "MASS Student Leadership Cohort." This journey culminated in the creation of a Proclamation that was presented to all participants of the "Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey" put on by Manitoba Teachers' Society (MTS) and Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) on April 21, 2017. The two students from SRSS (and the cohort) were joined by other students (including four from HSD) for the final two day conference. The final group was 135 students for the Educating for ACTION conference.

The initial cohort met for a total of five days. Those five days were a whirlwind of learning and experiencing new things. The students and teachers were challenged to think about injustices, inequities and current realities within our Province and country in new ways. We had opportunity to hear amazing speakers including Buffy Sainte-Marie (social-activist and a singer-songwriter), Theodore Fontaine (residential school survivor and author), Raheel Rafa (author, anti-racist activist and interfaith discussion leader), John Ralston Saul (author), and many more amazing speakers. We were also honoured with two evenings of entertainment including dancers, musicians, slam poets and impactful videos.

I had the privilege of being with the students for all five days - sometimes as a participant in the activities and sometimes as an observer and advisor. Each day we learnt something new and worked our brains to the point of hurting. We examined The Truth and Reconciliation's 94 Calls to Action. We discussed how they can be taught in schools and implemented. We learnt how to have "hard conversations" about these difficult topics while acknowledging people's feelings, understandings and rights while still standing up for truth and each person's human rights.

Students also participated in drama activities in response to Kent Monkman's painting The Scream, wrote found poems using the "TRC Calls to Action," and responded through discussion to a number of song lyrics, poems and art work. Students in the cohort, and those part of the human rights conference, also spent time at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights both in the classrooms and in different areas of the museum.

The final two days of the cohort, students participated in the human rights conference and were able to hear each of the keynotes as well

as choose a morning breakout session each day. Thursday afternoon the students travelled to the CMHR and participated in the Blanket Activity and also in a learning session centred around "The Secret Path" book and videos. During that session students made a paper canoe. In their paper canoe, each student wrote down the next step in their human rights journey. They then launched their canoes in the lake at the Garden of Contemplation at the museum. The evening concluded with an amazing concert and the chance to explore two floors of the museum.

Friday, the students final "students only" session was the writing of a proclamation. In under an hour, 135 students created and recorded a proclamation that was presented to the 1,000 participants at the conference. It was a memorable and inspirational moment - watching what the students had accomplished and what these 135 student leaders (including six student leaders from HSD) promised to do in Canada! (continued pg.11)

**"If they admit we are humans, they admit we have human rights." - Wilton Littlechild**



## BOOK REVIEW

Anika Neufeld (Grade 11 student from Landmark Collegiate) commented,

"I am so thankful I got the opportunity to attend this conference. I feel as though I walked out having a deeper understanding of current issues affecting our country and world, including the rights of Indigenous people, human trafficking, and LGBTQ rights just to name a couple. My favourite parts of the whole conference were the sessions that we got to choose individually to attend. My favourite session was Freedom Road - The Birth of an Activist. The speaker of this session was Steve Bell. Steve spoke about the issues surrounding Shoal Lake. I think I enjoyed this part the most because he spoke about this issue in a different perspective I hadn't heard. Listening and seeing how passionate he feels for the locals there, was truly inspiring.

**"We are the future, and in order for us to see a better world tomorrow, we need to work together today for the rights of everyone."**

Just thinking about how much I learned in those two days of being there, I feel excited for what all of us students can bring to our schools and communities. We are the future, and in order for us to see a better world tomorrow, we need to work together today for the rights of everyone."

What an amazing journey. Now we need to help these students to continue their journey here at home and around the world. I am looking forward to being inspired and amazed.

- Rachel Thiessen (Guidance Counsellor),  
Steinbach Regional Secondary School

### 40 Simple Ways to Inspire Learning with Mobile Devices

"Sam provides concrete tips and suggestions - and step-by-step instructions - that will help even digitally-inexperienced teachers be successful with their classroom technology integration efforts. The wide variety of projects in this book ensures that every educator can find multiple ideas to latch onto."

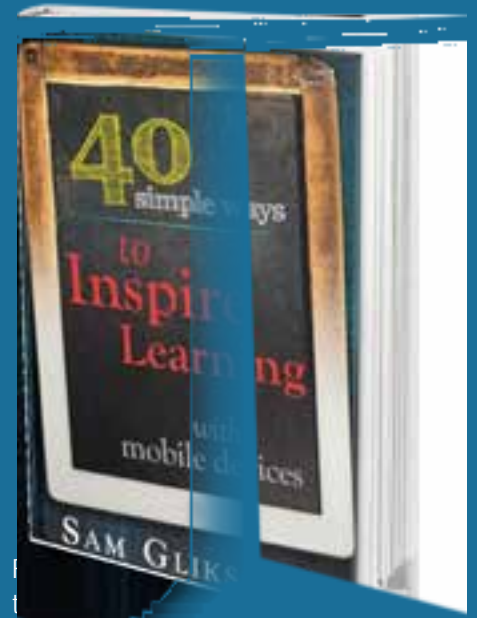
- Scott McLeod, J.D, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Colorado Denver

Alan November is an international leader in education technology who believes that "a teacher demonstrating how they learn is much more powerful than a teacher showing what they already know to their students." Alan would love Sam Glikman's book 40 Ways to Inspire Learning with Mobile Devices. Not only for the content and the focus on learning projects (that are designed so students will explore, create, collaborate and communicate with technology), but also because the projects are designed in such a way that the teacher facilitates the project and doesn't have to be the expert in the room. By design, the lessons are organized so students are learning with any mobile technology that they have available to them.

If you don't have a Kindle account, I am going to encourage you to download the app and purchase the book for ten dollars and it will be worth every penny, as Glikman shows how leveraging digital technology can help create a culture of inquiry at any grade level.

Each of the projects shared by Glikman include: the why, when and how to use the project; how-to-steps; tips for teaching the lesson; best apps to use; and links to other examples and references on the Internet. Embedded in the eBook are many helpful tutorial videos that teachers will find helpful in terms of how to carry out the projects presented in the book.

## SUPER'S PICK



my five favorite projects would be: 1) Tell a Story in Another Language using the Adobe Spark Video app or website, iMovie or Puppet Pals (IOS); 2) Explain a Concept in Math or Science using the "Explain Everything" app; 3) Creating Talking Characters using Chatterpix, Morfo, or Face Changer IOS/Android apps; 4) Creating an Interactive Classroom Museum using the Aurasma app or Aurasma Studio Website; 5) Start Learning How to Code using the Hopscotch IOS app, IOS and Android apps, or Scratch from Chromebook.

One final comment, leveraging digital is the one dimension that is common to each of the six deep learning progressions. Glikman's book will help support that work as teachers design lessons that move beyond the substitution level of the SMAR model, increase student engagement, and continue to develop a culture of inquiry within our schools – for ten bucks – money well spent.

- Chris Gudziunas,  
Assistant Superintendent



The following long-term employees have recently left HSD (since Sept. 2016), or will be officially leaving at the end of this school year. We recognize their dedicated work, and their years of service to the students and staff of Hanover School Division.

John Banman	Mechanic Journeyman	Transportation
George Schellenberg	Swing Person	Maintenance
Judy Hiebert	Principal	Niverville Elementary
Judith Schellenberg	Head Secretary	Mitchell Middle

Mark Reimer	Teacher	Steinbach Regional
Waldemar Ens	Teacher	Steinbach Regional
Dale Sawatzky	Teacher	Clearspring
Marlene McBean	EA	Stonybrook
Eldon Dueck	Principal	Stonybrook
Anne Reimer	Learning Coach	PLC
Cathy Barkman	Head Secretary	Southwood
Marcie Rempel	School Secretary	Steinbach Regional
Myra Kehler	Teacher	Stonybrook
Allen Martens	Teacher	Green Valley

