



2016 OCTOBER EDITION

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

When I want to learn about something that is quite new to me and somewhat academic in nature I prefer a quiet place free from distraction where

That can mean help support their learning.

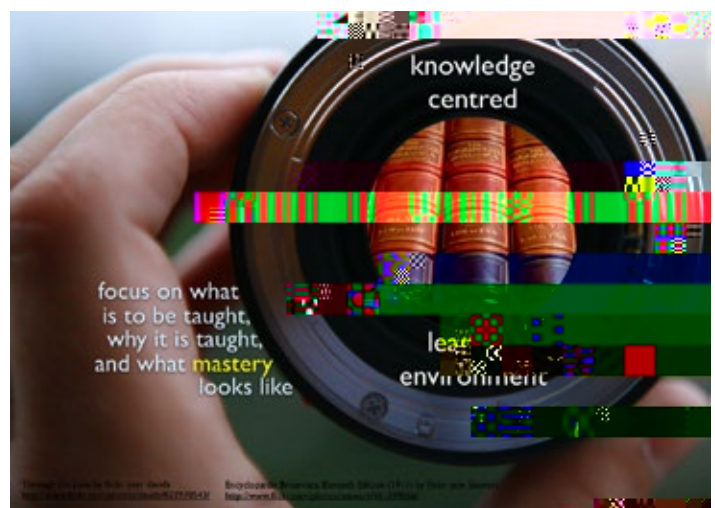
I can focus on the task at hand. When I want to learn about how those around me think I want to be able to engage in a conversation with them. When I want to learn what is going on in the world I go online to my favourite news apps. When I want to learn which fishing lures have the best action I want to be on the lake casting about and watching how they return to the boat. When I want to learn about my community I want to collaborate with my neighbours. When I want to learn about the best place for pizza in Winnipeg I Google it.

My learning is supported by a wide variety of learning environments all determined by what it is that I want to learn. That is just how it is for me in day to day life. As we are preparing Our Kids to be lifelong learners I believe we should also be very intentionally preparing them to understand how their learning environment can support their learning.



Darren Kuropatwa, Director of Learning

How do we create an interactive learning environment that establishes a climate and culture for learning? I first starting thinking about learning environments in terms of the physical learning spaces in our schools. One of the Learning Coaches shared with me a conversation with a teacher who said: “Once I changed the learning environment I couldn’t teach the way I had before.” There’s a book called *The Third Teacher* that explores the connection between our physical spaces and their impact on student learning. (Parents and teachers are the first and second teachers, the third teacher is the learning space.) Throughout this issue of *Learning Matters* you’ll read examples of the interplay between the physical environment and student learning. That said, the learning environment is so much more than the physical spaces within which we all learn and teach. We can think about learning environments through four lenses that help capture this relationship between the physical and nonphysical.



Is your student’s learning environment learner centred? It is if you’re building bridges. Learners of all ages bring their beliefs, understandings, and cultural practices with them into the classroom. Learner centred learning environments are essentially where teachers build bridges; teaching is a bridge connecting what students bring into the classroom with the curriculum. As teachers we know our curriculum very well. To make these connections for our students we have to get to know them just as well. Learning begins by starting with where our students are.

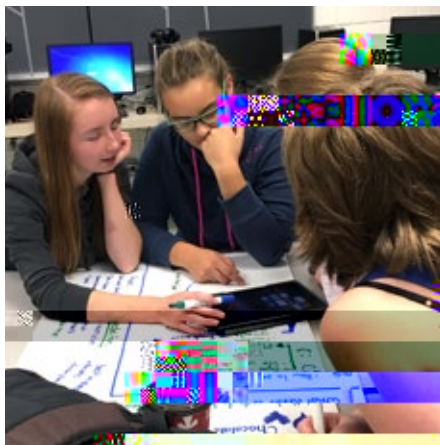
“Learner centred learning environments are essentially where teachers build bridges; teaching is a bridge connecting what students bring into the classroom with the curriculum.”

If you look up the definition of knowledge you’ll find it described as a noun. Increasingly, knowledge is valuable more for what we do with it than just having it, and we’re co-constructing our understanding of our world by developing an understanding of how ideas are interconnected in knowledge networks. You can see this in action, in real time, with this musical visualization of how wikipedia is being co-created right now: <http://listen.hatnote.com>. While wikipedia is certainly not the last word on how we understand our world, you can literally see people making sense of their world as they collaboratively create it.

The knowledge we teach is outlined in the curriculum; a word whose latin origins mean “to run a race.” Learning a landscape is a stronger metaphor for a knowledge centred learning environment; we need to know more than what is there, but how all the parts of the landscape are related to each other and where we are in that landscape. We help students become knowledgeable by learning in ways that lead to understanding and transfer; we help them learn the landscape of a discipline emphasizing sense making. When students expect new information to make sense and ask questions when it doesn’t they are also engaged in metacognition which overlaps with another lens we have on learning environments.







It's that time of year where we embark on the annual Green Valley tradition of chocolate sales! During discussions on how to promote this to our students, we wanted to explore an alternative to the school-wide assembly and I offered that my Digital Film class could make promo videos.

Now, in all honesty, I didn't think much of it when I proposed this. But we decided that the winning video would be shown to our high school classes in lieu of the assembly and the middle years' students would get to see the top three during a middle years' only assembly. Now the hard part - I had to get my students on-board with this video contest...

The next day, I introduced this video contest to the students and got our Vice-Principal, Mr. Adrian, to come into class to explain the particulars so that it would create the buy-in for why this was important (it also helped that the winning group would be treated to pizza). The students got into groups and began to plan out what these promotional videos would look like. They had only two and a half classes to get all of their filming done - that's the only time that our iPad cart was available - and the chocolate and prize props wouldn't be available until the last day of filming. Students borrowed my iPad

at GVS

to check out the iMovie trailer templates and other iMovie features to prepare for filming on the next day.

While this project was not something out of the ordinary for my students, as I viewed it through the lens of Deeper Learning I was able to see it a little differently. Students were thriving in the collaborative environment that this project offered and they were eager to do their best because of the 'real-world' context. On the filming days, students left our classroom confines to explore the entire school (inside and out) as their learning environment. They could be found in the library, on the play structure, in the gym (and even in the parking lot!) They came to find me to show me their progress and to ask for help when they got stuck.

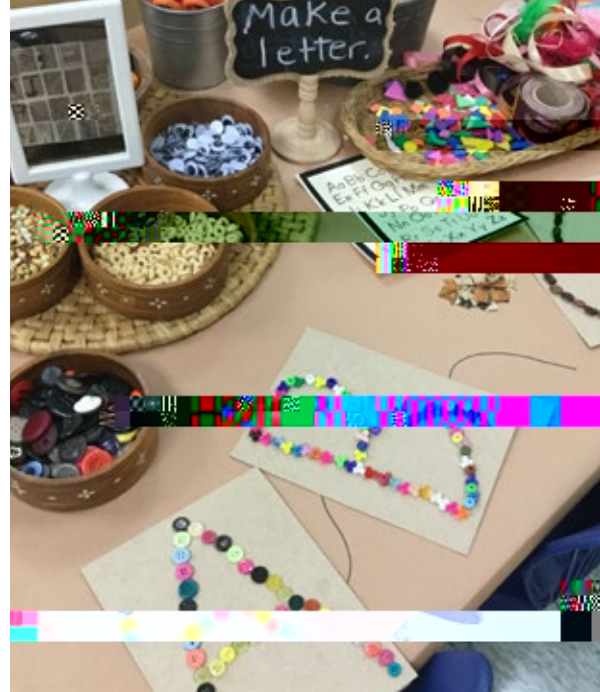
It was inspiring to see these students working so hard to get their projects done in time. Further to this, students who normally were not accepted by their peers were given a safe place to belong and those who rarely participated in class activities were working hard to get those last shots filmed before the end of that last class.

This opportunity for real-world learning gave them the chance to have an impact in their school community and leveraged digital in a way that brought the student learning out of the classroom.

- Sarah Harder, Green Valley School



Check out this QR code to see the winning video!



at Kleefeld

ABC wall made from loose parts during Strong Connections with both morning and afternoon classes. Students really enjoyed this centre as they were given the opportunity to pick which objects they wanted to use to build their letter. It was a lot of fun and the result is a beautiful wall made by their own hands.

- Gloria Dueck, Kleefeld School



The Third Teacher: 79 Ways You Can Use Design to Transform Teaching and Learning

6collec.33

(2010)

Take a piece of paper and fold it in two. On one side of the paper draw your current classroom or 'learning space' (a gym, library, science lab, etc.) and provide as much detail as possible. On the other side of the paper map out what you think would be the ideal learning environment for you and your students. What would that learning space look like? Would the learning space offer experiences for your students that would heighten their multi-sensory awareness? Allow for choice, risk-taking and the open sharing of ideas? Experience a sense of wonder and feel encouraged to explore, play with big ideas, share those ideas, and take responsibility for their own learning? Would your learning space facilitate small or large group discussions;

have flexible and reconfigurable spaces; include active areas for inquiry, investigation, quiet thinking and exploring technology? their obut3





"It's more colorful and vibrant and creates a happy environment."

at MMS

– Mr. Tuord

These rooms have been so successful that other teachers within MMS have been using the rooms to see how their students react and enjoy the space. The school will be developing a three year plan to purchase more flexible seating for other classrooms to encourage collaboration, communication and to ensure that our students have the best opportunities to become effective and deep learners.

- Andrew Mead, Mitchell Middle School

"It suits people's different learning styles"

IN OUR SCHOOLS

The art of thinking flourishes within an emotionally, intellectually and physically safe learning environment that is carefully constructed by the classroom teacher. Learning environments that are dynamic enable students to develop a deep understanding of core content and can use that knowledge to solve problems, think critically, communicate effectively, and be self-reflective about their learning.

In the spring of 2016, two classrooms were remodeled with these ideas in mind. Furniture was purchased that encourage students to share and move while they learn. Classrooms were retrofitted with low and high work spaces, Hokki stools (stools that wobble), and other comfortable chairs for students to use. Four desks were left in each of the classrooms and teachers noticed that students would choose the new furniture rather sitting in typical

classroom desks. Also, additional whiteboards were installed to encourage vertical learning spaces which allows for easy sharing between groups of students.

MMS students and staff agree that creating a learning space to encourage collaboration and communication helps learning.

"It's comfortable, lets you move around and helps your brain focus."

– Mr. Martens

"It's better for group work."

SAGE PD Day

Oct. 21

EY/MY In-Service

SY Admin Day

Oct. 31

School Bus Safety Week

Oct. 17-21

**Public Consultation
on Budget**

Oct. 25

SY In-Service

EY/MY Admin Day

Nov. 14

