Spotlight On A Few LiD Programs February 2018

How do LiD programs get rolling in schools? In many cases, individual teachers start doing LiD with their own students. Then, other teachers take notice and want to give it a try. This was the case at **Yorkson Creek Middle School** in Langley where LiD started in Ryan Hughes's classroom. Now, thanks to Ryan's guidance, there are 15 classes of students doing it. In another local district, LiD facilitator Christa Rawlings announced earlier this year that every child at her school (**K.B. Woodward Elementary School**) has a LiD topic. Some of the students at Christa's school have had their topics for 5 years. I recently got to visit her class during LiD time and chat with those students. Their confidence in learning about their topics is evident and their interest in their topics is strong. All her students were working on preparing a "seminar" on their topic for peers and guests—this is the form of their sharing event at the end of the year.



St. Michael's Elementary School is an example of a school-wide implementation. We are seeing more and more of this kind of implementation, as well. After a trial with a few classes, LiD became a school-wide program at St. Michael's school in the 2016-2017 school year. Currently, from Kindergarten to Grade 7 there are a total of 230 students in the program. Principal Caterina Kennedy told me she was initially interested in implementing LiD as a way to incorporate more inquiry-based teaching and learning. As hoped, LiD has helped support the development of students' creative and critical thinking skills while at the same time fostering a deeper understanding of the topics studied. Caterina has observed that LiD allows students to develop the skills they need in order to be self-directed learners, while encouraging interpersonal and team skills.

Now in Year Two of their whole-school implementation, they are expanding and enriching the LiD experience for students. LiD is truly becoming a central piece of their school culture. For example, they have incorporated more "buddy" class activities including cross-grade and multi-age groupings. Students are working with the core competencies in their LiD self-assessments. I love how they kick off LiD at their school each week. Everyone knows it's LiD time when the song "Happy" by Pharrell Williams starts playing over the intercom! (*Do you have a song to kick off your LiD time each week*?) (In November 2017 Dr. Jean Warburton and I had the pleasure of working with the staff at St. Michael's Elementary school. It is always a pleasure to meet LiD teachers to hear about their unique programs and to support their success. (**Looking ahead**: St. Michael's Elementary School will be the location of our October 2018 Professional Development Day conference on LiD and Imaginative Education. See Newsletter for details. Thanks for hosting us St. Michael's!).

Here is an update on the LiD program at **Chute Lake Elementary School** from Vice-Principal Lindsey Hamilton: Learning in Depth (LiD) at Chute Lake Elementary is in its third year, however this is the first year that our whole school, from Kindergarten to Grade 6, is participating. Our school has 20 classes with a total of 492 students. LiD takes place on Wednesdays from 12:30-1:30pm. Our school currently uses 30 of the 90+ topics. Teachers host topics in their classrooms and act as facilitators to the students— helping them get supplies and research materials if necessary. The classes are multi-aged where the older students often mentor and learn alongside younger students. Teachers often provide provocations for the students to peek their interests and show them other sides of their topics that they may not have considered. We also invite our community in to speak on topics and book Virtual Field trips that relate to our topics. Last March, we interviewed our LiD students and they all spoke to how they enjoyed the freedom to explore their topic in a way that was relevant and interesting to them. They

freedom to explore their topic in a way that was relevant and interesting to them. They also like meeting new students in the school and moving around the school into different spaces. For more information, please visit **our website**.

LiD International

In my last news update I mentioned a thriving LiD program at Great Torrington Bluecoat Primary School, in North Devon, UK. (Read more about the program here: <u>"Recommendations For Running A Successful LiD Program In Your School"</u>.) Ian Thomas introduced the program there and was a driving force in its successful implementation and expansion. In a recent conversation with Ian he told me over 200 students there are working on their LiD projects and the program is going "from strength to strength". Ian is now Headteacher at another school and will be introducing LiD there.

Towards the end of 2017, Kieran gave talks in Italy and Poland, witnessing the start of LiD in those countries. In Italy, following a conference and school visits in late 2016 at which Kieran gave talks about LiD, he returned in December 2017 to make additional presentations about the program but also—more fun—to be present at the starting ceremonies for, he was told, 624 students in a number of schools in the Bressanone, Modena, and Reggio Emilia regions. He enjoyed visiting a number of schools at which somewhat different opening ceremonies were created to encourage the students' enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, some kids had the idea of getting him to sign the folders they received at the ceremonies, which then meant a very tired hand. Kieran's favourite occasion involved entering a large room with around 60 9- or 10- year olds. He was introduced to the students who offered polite applause. Being a bit punch-drunk after a few school visits during the day, the grey and funereally-dressed professor stood up waving his arms demanding louder applause, to which the kids happily responded, but then the demand was for more, until whistles and shouts and stamping went on and on, as though Verona had just scored the winning goal in the final minute of the game. Not quite as planned, but it certainly set the ceremony off in a good mood.



In Bressanone, the children picked their topic out of a basket, and then their "starter kit" was given out in the white bags by Drs. Federico Corni and Enrico Giliberti. Dr. Federico is leading the push for LiD in the north of Italy. Kieran also met with senior educational leaders in Modena, who seemed keen to spread LiD to other schools in the region. A major conference is being planned for September 2018 in Italy.

Below are some pictures from Modena schools.





In Poland, the main proponent of IE and LiD is Dr. Stanislaw Dylak. He arranged a series of meetings with schools, professors, and educational institutes, mainly in Poznan and Warsaw, and arranged initial contacts for IERG with, among other groups, the Copernicus Institute. Kieran gave a series of talks, mostly about LiD to teachers, and IE to more general audiences. This visit was rather like that made the previous year to Italy, which led to the implementations this year. Dr. Dylak is working to help teachers begin LiD programs in a number of schools in September 2018.

Dr. Stanislaw Dylak outside the university in Poznan.

learning in depth