

## Sunshine Hills Elementary School



**Letter from Cheryl Edge-Partington** (Teacher – Librarian) and Grade 5 Students

Sunshine Hills Elementary, Delta, BC, Canada, April 30, 2013

I have been working with a group of Grade 5 students this year on something new. After learning about Kieran Egan's "Learning in Depth" project I was intrigued. In a nutshell, Learning in Depth (LiD) allows students to explore a topic from any perspective they choose and at their own pace. As the teacher, I provide guidance, make suggestions, and help students build their personal portfolios on their topic.

We began this process in September and I chose to work on a group inquiry project before introducing LiD, to help the students learn a variety of search strategies. We brainstormed questions and came up with two essential questions. By now it was October so our inquiry centered on pumpkins. This gave us the opportunity to look at different kinds of questions and the kinds of answers they elicited. My hope being that as they launched into their own inquiry projects they would be able to dig deeper than simply collecting facts.

It is now almost May and we are starting to talk about the ways we can communicate our learning. The students are busily preparing iMovies, PowerPoint presentations, posters and the like but it is not the end, it is simply a check-in point on their learning journey.

As a teacher, I have learned an enormous amount from this experience. I have had the opportunity to conference with each child on a regular basis and to gain an incredible amount of insight into how each of them learns. I have shared this project in more depth here on [my own Delta Learns blog](#).

**Here are some of the reflections of the Grade 5 students involved:**

*"My experience while doing LiD was amazing. I love the topic I got. LiD is an awesome project where every single project is full of wonder. So what I am trying to say is that if you get a topic for LiD that you have never done before, you can learn to do, love, and believe that if you put your mind to it in school you can do whatever you want."* Ben

*"LiD is a great way to discover things exactly how you want. I enjoyed being able to learn on my own terms. I didn't have any restrictions to what I could do with my new knowledge. I had the choice of how I wanted to represent my learning and I decided on the criteria. I would be happy to do a LiD project every year."* Olivia

*"I really like LiD, it's fun to do in the library and study something I am really interested in."* Emily

*"LiD projects are a great way to express knowledge in a fun way with almost no boundaries. I've enjoyed learning about cool subjects, then showing what I learned in a way that I like. LiD is a fun way to share what you are learning with others. It's fun to learn and help your knowledge of the subject you chose grow from a seed of an idea to a giant tree of all the experience you've had."* Jessana

*"Personally I have enjoyed the LiD project very much. I learned so much about my topic of Greek mythology and loved making connections between all of the Greek gods."* Carroll

*"I loved working on LiD because there are no boundaries to your learning."* Katrina