

"It's what students do with what they learn when they can do what they want to do that is the real measure of educational achievement."

(Eisner, 2001)

As an IE educator, this quote by Elliot Eisner has stuck with me and is my driving force.

I ventured upon implementing Learning in Depth (LiD) in my grade 2 French Immersion classroom last year. It was a challenge to say the least, but I believe that anything worth doing will present challenges and, in all honesty, is there any avenue of effective teaching that is challenge-free?

I noticed very early on that, despite the challenges an additional language and early-literacy stages presented, the students in my class enthusiastically took on their LiD topics and quickly made them their own. There were Lego castles and Lego pirate ships coming to class which the students had made on their own time with no requests on my part. When presenting speeches, objects that were brought in were connected to their LiD topics. When we were at the Children's Festival, students waited extra time in line, just so they could have the costume that represented their topics, got henna tattoos connected to their topics, molded clay representations of their topics, explained that they just saw something which was connected to another child's topic, and were sharing facts out of the blue with me regarding their topics.

The epitome of it all involved two students near the end of the school year. One little girl, let's call her Lisa, came to school one day having spent the weekend working on drawing and creating a flag that represented her topic of birds. In Social Studies, we had been learning about Canada and how particular symbols and colors can represent its different features. Lisa used symbols and colors effectively and appropriately in creating a flag to represent birds. She took her learning from one area of schooling and applied it to another (her LiD topic) by her own initiative and in her own time.

Jacob's topic was bees. One day, his father caught up to me in the school parking lot and asked if I had a moment. I was in a hurry, but, of course, said, "Yes." He

proceeded to show me a little video Jacob had taken using his dad's phone of a little bee in their yard on Thanksgiving weekend. He narrated it and here are some of the comments he made in his narration:

"I found this bee, my topic. He could be dead, or he could be alive. You can see the pollen on his legs. He's cool, isn't he? It's [the date].....on Thanksgiving day, I find a bee my topic." Again, this precious video clip was filmed by Jacob in his own time and of his own initiative.

(link to the video: <http://ierg.ca/LID/videos-about-lid/>)

LiD has provided an avenue by which my students take ownership of, make connections with and are emotionally engaged and excited about their learning. It's the fact that they took these elements outside the four walls of the classroom that is true cause for celebration.

Kavita Hoonjan