



JANUARY · PENAMUJUIKU'S · JANVIER 2021



REGIONAL UPDATE

Monthly Newsletter of the Tri-County Regional Centre for Education

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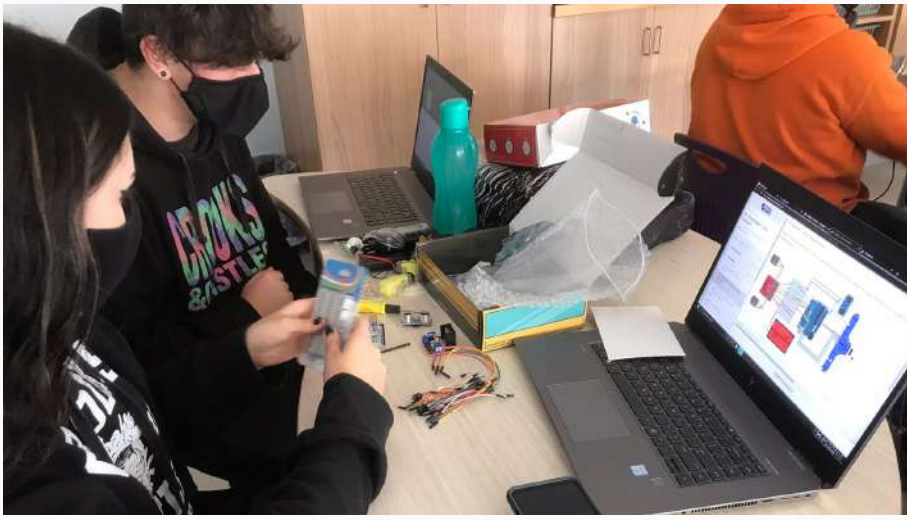
Pictured above: the TAP class at YCMHS.

Inside Instructional Innovation

Last year, YCMHS was one of just three high schools in the province chosen to provide a pilot program, called the Technology Advantage Program (TAP). TAP supports students in developing the competencies and skills needed to succeed in school and to pursue a career in the technology sector. While technology related innovation is at the core of the program, Cailen Langille, who develops and supports the TAP curriculum for TCRCE, says there has been another unexpected innovative outcome, related directly to learning strategies and techniques.

"Last year, we started trying to teach through inquiry-based instruction and moving that through all of the TAP cohort's curriculum," says Langille. "We are still meeting all the necessary outcomes, we are just approaching it in a different way."

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“The student engagement was so successful, I thought, what can we do around science nine outcomes?”

- Cailen Langille,
TAP Curriculum
Development and
Classroom Support

The Benefits of Inquiry-Based Learning & Cross-Curricular Teaching

What is inquiry-based learning?

Inquiry-based learning is a teaching approach that focuses on students' interests. It's about posing questions and letting students steer the learning based on their own discoveries. This learning method is quite different than what most adults today might remember – it's not about memorizing facts and listening to lectures.

How does inquiry-based learning work in TAP?

Last year, the TAP program started with inquiry-based learning in Math. By creating images using vector graphic designs, the cohort designed a logo to represent their class. Then, they morphed their Math work into Language Arts by presenting their ideas. The result? Cross-curricular teaching.

“The student engagement was so successful, I thought, what can we do around science nine outcomes?” explains Langille. “We looked at our local connections to oceans and fishing and I posed the question to the class – how safe is our water?”

That question was the jumping off point for work in all of their other courses, says Langille.

“We started with little stations around the class and then students had to come up with their own ideas and questions. I didn't ask the questions because mine would have been totally different than theirs,” explains Langille. “We came back and discovered what their interests were. I would have guessed there would have been an interest in the chemistry side, however, their questions focused on health and safety.”

Langille says because the students drove this project, their engagement was through the roof. “The buy in was there, we had them.”

Students then worked on their Language Arts outcomes, as they created presentations on this project. The students were asked to present their ideas at a Yarmouth Town Council meeting. Council was so impressed, they asked the students to think about solutions around recycling and composting in the town. This topic became the focus for their second semester.

“On the surface it was science based,” says Langille. “But then we incorporated this project into all their other courses, all while attempting to solve a real problem for our town.”

The benefit of inquiry-based learning and cross-curricular teaching goes beyond the students and extends to the teachers as well. Because the intent of this learning method is for the topic to transcend all classes, all teachers involved must work in tandem to achieve success. Langille says teacher support has been incredible and many teachers are taking this technique and applying it in their other classes.

“It was a rewarding idea for teachers,” says Langille. “When students drive the learning, their engagement level increases significantly, resulting in better outcomes all around.”



"For teachers,
innovation involves
constant
collaboration with
colleagues."

-Dr. Chris Boulter

A Message from the Regional Executive Director

After an extended holiday break, students are back in their classrooms and back to learning. While we recognize we are still in the midst of a pandemic, we know we must remain focused on education and are committed to continuing to implement our system improvement plan, all while working diligently to keep our schools safe.

We believe students' well-being will be enhanced and their academic achievement will improve when educators grow and improve in meeting the individual needs of learners. As we head into the second half of this school year, implementing strategies to achieve this is our top priority.

There are three key areas of our system improvement plan: well-being, literacy, and mathematics. Throughout this newsletter you will see examples of ways teachers are achieving success in these areas through instructional innovation.

Innovation in education is about thinking of a different way of doing something. That new or different way of doing something doesn't have to be technology related. Innovation in education encourages teachers and students to explore, research, and use a variety of techniques to learn something new. It involves a different way of looking at problems and solving them. This change in process will help students develop their creativity and problem solving skills.

For teachers, innovation involves constant collaboration with colleagues. An example of this teamwork is highlighted on the cover story as we read about how inquiry-based learning and cross-curricular teaching is thriving in YCMHS's TAP program.

Inevitably, in today's world, many of the ways in which we innovate will directly relate to technology. Just scroll to page 4 and meet COVi, a robot that not only provides guests with a virtual presence in a classroom, but also allows them to move throughout the room via the device.

The implementation of these teaching strategies and innovative learning techniques is only successful with the participation of teachers, students, and regional support staff. It's our role as a Regional Centre of Education to be open and encouraging about these instructional innovations and to provide the support to get them up and running in classrooms, where the impact matters most.

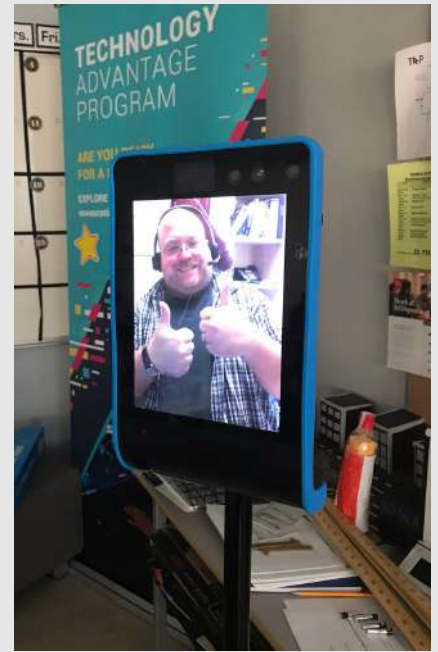
Dr. Chris Boulter
Regional Executive Director of Education
Twitter: @drboulter



Meet COVi

There's a robot roaming the halls of Yarmouth Consolidated Memorial High School. A robot named COVi. The device allows guests to easily visit classrooms virtually with the ability to be interactive and move about the classroom, even visiting students desk by desk, all without actually stepping foot in the classroom.

Although the idea of obtaining this robot originated before the pandemic, it has been a welcomed addition this school year, allowing teachers to deliver education like never before. There are plans for COVi to visit additional schools in the future as well.



TCRCE Technology Integration Consultant, Jeffrey Raine, visits students through COVi.

Allen Whittaker is the Project Lead for the Technology Advantage Program and was instrumental in obtaining COVi. He provides the following COVi tidbits:

What/who is COVi?

COVi is a virtual presence device; think iPad on a Segway, or what Sheldon Cooper is known to have used on the Big Bang Theory. This allows us to go into schools, businesses, or bring in specialists and outside experts. Users can navigate the device around by logging into COVi and "driving" it like a video game from a computer, laptop, or even their cell phone!

How does COVi benefit students?

In 2019, when I first took on the Role of Project Lead for TAP, there were many businesses that would have loved to host our students but didn't have room for 20+ students in their offices. With COVi, it only takes one person (plus COVi) to venture around. Also, due to public health guidelines, experts and guests can't currently visit schools, but COVi provides better access and allows guests to be more interactive within the classroom as they can navigate around and check on group work.

Where did the name COVi come from?

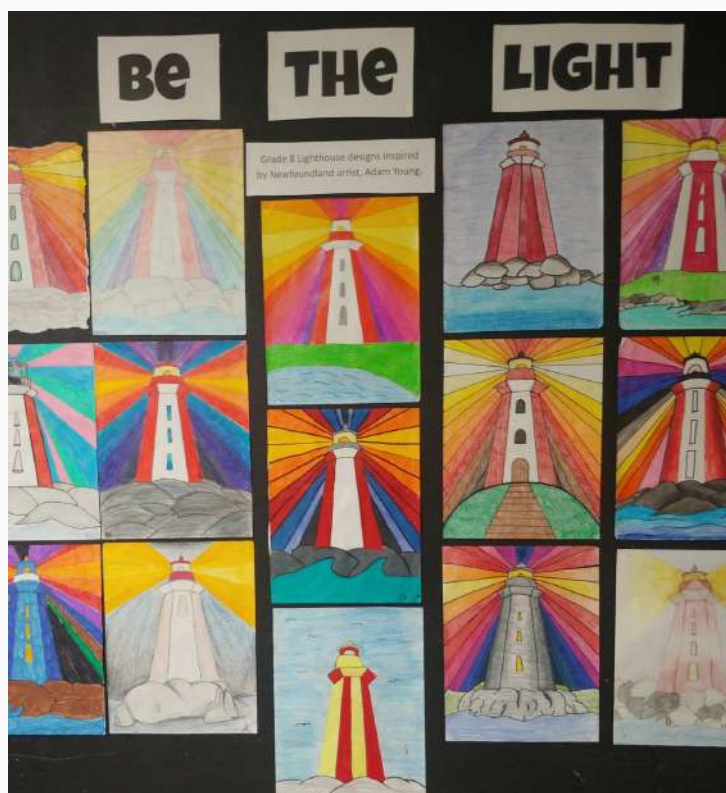
COVi came to us from Double Robotics, and is the Double 3 model. The company is located in California. We ordered COVi in October 2019 and received it almost 10 months later! The delay was due to COVID-19. The Department of Education & Early Childhood Development purchased COVi for us and because of the delivery delays, they appropriately named it COVi.

SPOTLIGHT ON SCHOOLS



A sock monkey was used as a stand in during a Google Meet practice at Forest Ridge Academy. The week of professional development allowed for many great technology learnings (above).

Students at Carleton Consolidated Elementary School show off their new school gear (left).



Pictured above: members of the Shelburne Regional High School Wellness team took time during the Professional Learning Week to try new recipes and prepare snacks for the breakfast program to fuel students during exam week.

Grade 8 Visual Arts students at Maple Grove Education Centre created these lighthouses under the guidance of Mrs. Doucett! (left)



Reading Recovery

What is Reading Recovery?

Reading Recovery is a short-term, daily, one-on-one intervention program for children in grade one. It is a program offered at most TCRCE elementary schools and teachers who deliver Reading Recovery have been specially trained to deliver individualized lessons designed to build on a child's strengths.

Established in 1993, the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery is a charitable organization that works with educational communities across Canada to implement Reading Recovery in their elementary schools, TCRCE included.

Reading Recovery is an innovative way to teach students how to read. It's not about reading in a group with the same topics for all students, Reading Recovery is one-to-one with individualized learning styles to the specific interests of the student.

What does it take to become a Reading Recovery teacher?

When a teacher enters a position in Reading Recovery, they must undergo intensive training before receiving their course completion certificate. Throughout the training, Reading Recovery teachers attend bi-weekly in-service sessions, where they learn a variety of teaching procedures that are used to help build individual lessons for the students they work with.

By the end of the training, Reading Recovery teachers, on average, receive a minimum of 40 hours of professional learning at in-service sessions, and spend approximately 300 hours working one-on-one with their students.



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Reading Recovery

Congratulations to the most recent Reading Recovery grads

Three Reading Recovery teachers from the TCRCE have recently received their course completion certificate; Kristen Hayes, Katrina Mood Ross, and Charlene Pitman.

Kristen is a Reading Recovery teacher at Plymouth School, Katrina is a Reading Recovery teacher at Clark's Harbour Elementary School, and Charlene is a Literacy Coach, and teaches Reading Recovery at Port Maitland Consolidated Elementary School.

A huge congratulations goes out to these three, not only for receiving their course completion certificate, but also for the dedication it takes to help students build a strong foundation in reading and writing.



KRISTEN HAYES



KATRINA MOOD-ROSS



CHARLENE PITMAN



@TCRCENS



@TCRCE_NS

Teacher Features



Reading Recovery Teacher, Stephanie Johnson, works with a student at Carleton Consolidated Elementary School.

Each year, Reading Recovery Teacher Leaders from across Canada come together for professional development, hosted by the Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery. This year, the professional development took on a virtual format, and live Reading Recovery lessons, which are the staple to Reading Recovery professional development, were observed virtually, rather than in-person.

In late November, Stephanie Johnson, the Reading Recovery teacher at Carleton Consolidated Elementary School, taught a live lesson for a small group of Teacher Leaders from Nova Scotia, Ontario, Manitoba, British Columbia, and the Yukon. Not only did this live lesson provide a platform for collaborative conversations focused on reading and writing, it also provided a platform to discuss the pros and cons of virtual professional development in Reading Recovery.



Joan O'Neil is pictured above with Islands Consolidated students. Pictured below is a Christmas tree made from books her students have read.

Celebrating Reading at Islands Consolidated

Hats off to Joan O'Neil and the high school English Language Arts students at Islands Consolidated. The senior high students at Islands read more than 100 titles between Sept. and Dec. of 2020. Pretty impressive for just 34 students.

It's easy to see how Ms. O'Neil promotes a culture of reading in her classes. Her room is full of current titles, the front of the class is covered in book jackets, there is a running total of books read at the front of the class, and the ledge always features new books in the collection.

The class even created a Christmas tree from books read and decorated the tree with ornaments containing summaries, book recommendations, art work and reactions.

Congratulations to Ms. O'Neil and her students!



Register Now for French Immersion

We are now accepting registrations for Early French Immersion and Late French Immersion programs.

Registration is also taking place for the grade 6 Intensive French program at Maple Grove Education Centre.


If you are interested in enrolling your child, please call your school to register or visit www.tcrce.ca/french-programming.

Registration closes February 1st.



Wondering if French Immersion is Right for Your Child?

We've created three videos to showcase our programs. Watch to find out if Early Immersion, Late Immersion, or Intensive French is the right fit for your family. Click here to view the videos.

 [Early French Immersion Video](#)

 [Late French Immersion Video](#)

 [Intensive French Program Video](#)

Open to ALL students!



Delmore "Buddy" Daye Learning Institute
Excellence in Africentric Education & Research

The 2021 African Nova Scotian History Challenges

Entries accepted from October 21, 2020 to February 12, 2021
Awards include bursaries totalling \$3,000.00, prizes and gifts.



Could you be the next winner from TCRCE? Talk to your teacher today!



COVID-19 Daily Checklist

It is important to closely monitor your health and the health of those you care for. Please consider these questions each day before leaving home and entering public spaces.

If you are feeling unwell, you should **stay home or go home immediately**, and **follow the instructions below**. Stay informed. For the most recent information, changes and restrictions visit <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>.

1

Are you feeling unwell or do you have new or worsening health symptoms?

If yes, stay home and avoid public spaces, including work, school/child care, and shopping.

2

In the past 48 hours have you had, or are you currently experiencing, any of these symptoms?



Fever (i.e. chills/sweats) **OR** Cough (new or worsening)

OR two or more of the following symptoms (new or worsening);



Sore throat



Runny nose/nasal congestion



Headache



Shortness of breath

If yes, stay home and complete the COVID-19 self-assessment online, <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/>. If you are unable to access the online tool, call 811.

3

In the last 14 days, have you or anyone in your household travelled from anywhere except Prince Edward Island or Newfoundland and Labrador?

If yes, and the travel is not essential, everyone in your home is required by law to self-isolate for 14 days. For more information on isolation and essential travel, visit <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/#self-isolate>.

4

In the last 14 days, have you had close contact (within 2 metres / 6 feet) with someone confirmed to have COVID-19?

If yes, you must stay home. You are required by law to self-isolate if you have been identified as a close contact of someone with COVID-19. If you haven't spoken with Public Health or been tested, you should complete the online assessment at <https://covid-self-assessment.novascotia.ca/> or contact 811 to be screened for testing for COVID-19.

5

Are you waiting for results from a COVID-19 test or have you tested positive for COVID-19?

If yes, stay home. You are required by law to self-isolate while awaiting COVID-19 test results or if you have tested positive for COVID-19. Please follow instructions given by Public Health.

novascotia.ca/coronavirus

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