



ISC Views and Voices

“Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself.” - John Dewey

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You're Wasting My Time!

by Nicolette Groeneveld

When I taught in the regular school system, I often heard teachers complain about students “wasting their time”. Teachers would say it directly to students, too, as students took their time getting out their books, putting on their shoes, getting in line...

How many students mentally retorted, “Teacher, you’re wasting MY time!” but never dared say it out loud for fear their “insolence” would win them a detention or a trip to the office?

Students who feel school is a waste of time are right, but do any of them know just how right they are? Let me show it to you mathematically:

According to the Alberta Guide to Education, from grades 1-6, students spend 142.5 hours per year learning Math, and in Junior High, they spend a minimum of 100 hours per year on Math. Total that up and we get 1155 hours of Math over 9 years (not including homework.)

Now the student is in High School where s/he spends 125 hours per 5-credit Math course. Taking the basic grades 10, 11, 12 Math courses, the student spends another 375 hours learning Math. So, over 12 years of schooling, a student spends 1530 hours learning Math (again, not including homework!)

The Sudbury Valley School has proven over the years that any motivated

student can learn all comprehensive school Math in 50 hours. Closer to home, one of Ric’s former colleagues taught his son all of grade 10 Math in 5 hours. Fifteen hours for high school Math and 50 hours for 1-9 Math – that adds up to 65 hours total! So... *whose time is being wasted?*

From grades 1 – 9, students sit through 950 instructional hours per year – or 8550 hours total – and in High School they do 125 hours per 5-credit course – another 1875 hours if the students take 5 core courses per year. Grand total: 10 425 hours. Roughly assuming all the courses done during that time could be learned by a motivated student using Sudbury timelines, a complete education (the 5 core courses) could be obtained in 325 hours.

325 hours vs 10 425!

54 six-hour days vs 1737.5 six-hour days!

1.77 months worth of six-hour days vs 4.76 years of six-hour days (how does the system take 12 years?!)

I’m assuming my math for the above is correct (I did double check it!) but even if I’m off a bit – and even if I am generalizing here (there are variables to consider - like language classes involving more reading etc), the bottom line is that a motivated youth can learn any subject *much more quickly* than is done in regular school! So all the extra time spent sitting at a desk could instead be used pursuing other interests and enjoying what Sudbury Valley School calls the *kingdom of childhood!*

I was inspired to research and share the above information when I saw the same idea presented in an article written by Marko Koskinen, a member of a Finnish Sudbury start-up group. He had entitled his article “**Stolen Childhood**”.

No kidding.

Kylen’s Insta-Salon!

Kylen: “No matter what, don’t tell your parents my name!”



Marlaena: “I think she cut off all my irresponsibility! I feel like I’m an adult – a whole different person!”



Kassie, as she was putting the cut hair into a bag: “We’re donating our hair to Ric!”

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FAQ: What evaluation do children receive at the Campus? A Sudbury Sample

by Nicolette Groeneveld

I bought needles last night, so today, hand sewing replaced stapling in the crafts department!

While I was eating my lunch, Mars came to show me the pillow she made. "What do you think, Nicolette?" she asked.

I squeezed the pillow, feeling the soft corduroy. "Feels nice," I replied.

Nathen, who was sitting beside me, asked to feel the pillow. He put it on the table and rested his head on it. "Mmm,

it's not really that soft," he said. "Kinda lumpy, actually."

"Let me see!" said James, who was sitting beside Nathen. James took the pillow and also put it on the table and rested his head on it. "It's not that bad," he said.

"Oh, I know!" said Nathen and he took the pillow again. He put it on the table in front of him and dropped his head heavily onto it. "Ouch!" he said, as his head squashed through the pillow and made

contact with the hard table surface.

James took the pillow again and did a face flop onto it. "Ooooh! My nose!" he said.

Nathen took the pillow and handed it back to Mars. "Nope, I don't like your pillow," he said.

"Me neither," said James, rubbing his nose.

"Well, that's fine," replied Mars. "I like my pillow and that's all that matters!"



Have you heard? Halo 2 is out!



During her first two years with us, Amanda spent a lot of time "doing nothing". This year, she is bursting with motivation and busy all the time. I asked her what's made the difference. Her answer: "Now that I *know* I can do stuff, I just want to be doing stuff all the time!"



Alyassa: "When I came here, I got my creativity back. I'm allowed to express myself."



I was in the kitchen filling the watering can when Chelsea came in and said: "I'm going to get a drink and then I'm going outside to howl!"

"With the coyotes!" she added.



Experimental baking! How did it turn out? It had the perfect feeling for a cake—nice and crusty on top, but it was foamy underneath!



Kris: "You learn two things in regular school: If you're a goody-goody, you learn to listen and obey, and if you're not a goody-goody, you learn to cheat and get around things."

Real Life Cashflow!

by Nicolette Groeneveld

Mondays and Thursdays at noon the Cashflow Game comes to life! Kris and Kylene initiated an Investment Class, taught by Corinne, and through it the involved students are learning how to become financially free!

As in the Cashflow Game, the students chose a job and a salary. They are slotted in a 25% tax bracket and are paid weekly. The students deposit their pay-cheque into their general "ISC Bank" account, write a cheque for 10% to their retirement account and designate 10% for a charity of their choice.

The students have also calculated their net worth, tallying up the value of their assets—from DVDs to rare items like Kris's ostrich egg. They will review their net worth every few months.

Students have identified their short, mid and long-term goals, and with Corinne, they are learning to analyze investment opportunities and evaluate how they fit with their goals. Corinne plans to take her students to meet with an Investment Officer at a bank, and she

is also looking at inviting an investment specialist to speak to the students at the school.

The stock market is also part of the students' learning. Corinne is teaching them all the basics and will then show the students her own particular trading strategy. Students will begin paper trading, and will likely progress to real trading.

Another very "real life" experience the students are looking into is buying, renovating and selling a house. Through a mortgage program Corinne is involved with, the students will translate their "ISC Bank" money into real money and buy a house. They will learn about all the real costs involved, including lawyer fees, insurance, mortgage payments, utility bills, renovation costs and other expenses. They will also learn about real profits as the profits from the sale of the house will be divided between the students in real cash! Corinne already has a real estate specialist lined up to take the students to look at houses and teach them about real estate, and someone has been identified

who may help with the renovations (and get the students doing some of the work!)

Finally, Corinne invited her students to create their own businesses so Jared now sells hot lunches every Wednesday and Kris has a candy business.

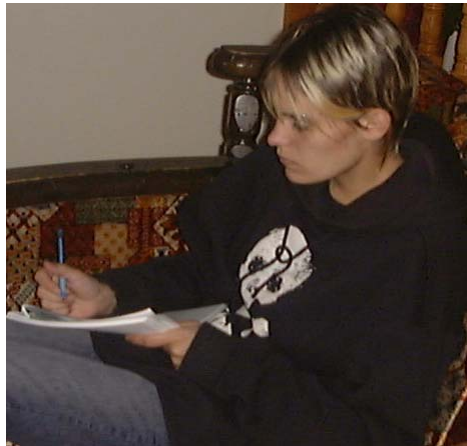
Driving home with Kris, Josh and Marlaena a while ago, Marlaena spontaneously asked,

"Kris, what do you want to be when you grow up?"

"Retired," Kris answered.

He's well on his way!

And people wonder what kids will ever learn in a "free" school!



Alyassa, as Matthew tried to dip his finger into her brownie mix: "Don't! You're eating my profits!"



A Changed Man

by Ric Rosborough

At the Association for Global New Thought (A.G.N.T.) “Awakened World Conference” in Palm Springs, in the fall of 2004, I experienced a profound awakening. As I sat in the session of the conference entitled, “**Human Kindness Overflowing**”, and as I conversed with the “like minded” people in attendance at the conference, I came to a clear understanding that we, as a species, are evolving and that an important part of that evolution is the transformation of our institutions, not the least of which is education. I return to Edmonton and to my duties at ISC a changed man. I bring with me an increased resolve to spread the word about the Sudbury philosophy and a steadfast determination to live the philosophy to the absolute best of my ability – every moment of every day.

I know that we, as a species, are changing. I see the students at ISC living their passion and loving life and each other. I know they are being exposed to experiences and possibilities that are not available in public schools. I feel the love growing in our building and I rejoice in the blossoming, positive self-esteem shining through each child as they grow in peace. But, I am now watching and listening with different eyes and ears. I now have a different understanding of the communication process. I have a new standard for the quality of communication I expect from myself in this, my professional life, and in also in my private life.

The A.G.N.T. conference has ignited a new fire in my soul for better, more empowering, freeing communication. In a school where students are free to find their own interests and follow them to a logical end, the discovery and the development of innate talents, skills and inter-

ests happens spontaneously. However, because of what I’ve learned, I have placed my role as a staff member under serious personal scrutiny and I wonder, what is the role of the staff members (and the parents)? From my new perspective, it really is hard to *truly* follow the philosophy, but if the staff members (and parents) actually *do* follow the philosophy to the letter and wait to be asked for help, the confidence, talents and interests of each individual student will evolve naturally and contribute to the richness of the social fabric of our Campus.

As each student explores his/her passion from a place of self-assurance, the cyclone of activity and interest at the Campus continues to quicken and grow. New students are sucked up into the vortex of individual and collective expression of talent and interest. They are motivated by the passion of the group to face their demons and move confidently forward. What may be missing (at the campus and in some of our lives at home) is the communication methods that will set all of us free to find and express our true talents and passions. Communication blocks and emotional literacy (including the ability to express and negotiate for the fulfillment of our individual needs) are my new focus since returning from the A.G.N.T. conference.

At the conference, the communication workshop facilitated by Gay Luce was the most powerful change agent. It moved me deeply. Gay provided a list of thirteen communication roadblocks (attached) and had us read them and identify the blocks we habitually use in our personal and professional lives. I was shocked to discover that many of the communication techniques I use in my personal life and professionally, and that I thought were the

strengths in my communication style, were actually having a negative effect on the people I habitually and consciously chose to use them with.

In the session, I worked with a partner who was instructed to communicate with me in the manner I was used to using (and thought was my strength). The feelings inside me were strong and taught me a clear lesson. I have to change and because of this new level of awareness, I can never go back to this draining and power sucking form of communication. I am committed to discovering and implementing a new talent in the form of better, more empowering, more emotionally literate communication.

Is communication an issue at your house? Would better communication make your life more enjoyable? Would there be any value in gathering at the Campus and growing together in this critical interpersonal skill?

Attached to this newsletter are the 13 communication blocks followed by alternative responses and ideas on “right speech”.



Announcements and Wish List

- If you have a **chainsaw** and would be willing to lend it to us, we need to chop some fallen trees. If you have any **firewood** you can donate to the school, that would be most appreciated! (To be used for heating in an emergency situation.)
- We have a few students who are looking for someone who is trained in helping people do **past life regressions**.
- Our Computer Corporation is looking for **Video Cards—8MB and above**.
- **World Indigo Day** is on January 29th. We will be hosting some kind of activity at the school to celebrate the occasion. We will keep you posted as our plans unfold! If you might be willing to help organize some activities, please let Nicolette know.
- Thank you so much to **Conrad Braun** for the ping pong table and to **Tiina Burns** for sorting through all our library books!

The Sudbury philosophy personified!

