



ÉCOLE GLENMORE SCHOOL

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March 26, 2017 - Learning Log

Dear GME Parents and Guardians;

RE: Respecting Traditional Knowledge and Protocols

Yesterday, I had the great honour to be a part of a daylong session at Sensisyusten Centre for Learning in Westbank. The Suk'wtemsqilx'w West Kelowna Arts Council organized a panel discussion with Dr. Greg Younging, Dr. Michelle Jack, Lauren Terbasket, and Jordan Coble with facilitators Tracey Kim Bonneau, Julia Trops, Sarah Parsons and Pat Raphael. You can google these people if you are curious who they are and what they are working on. Even though I have spent the majority of my 52 years in the Okanagan, I learned a lot about the land and the history of our place.

Did you know that the En'owkin Centre is an indigenous post-secondary arts and cultural centre located on the Penticton Indian Reserve? There is a NATIONAL ABORIGINAL PROFESSIONAL ARTIST TRAINING PROGRAM housed there and their focus is to protect and preserve Indigenous world-view and arts expressions in traditional heritage, utilizing interdisciplinary works with contemporary practice. They have partnerships with the University of Victoria, Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and the University of British Columbia. One day I would like to go visit and one day I would like to learn the Okanagan/Sylix language. My experience with learning many languages has taught me that it is truly a way to understand the culture and people to understand and be able to communicate in the language.

I really did not know what to expect from the day. How my thinking changed would not have been what I predicted. For me it became a global experience. From all my travels and living experiences around the world and the many examples shared at the Sensisyusten session, I have seen how the desire by a relatively small group of explorers to colonize the 'uncivilized' nations has resulted in the near devastation of indigenous cultures. Our understandings of indigenous ways of knowing today are not what they were several hundred years ago. Now is the time to restore relationships and recognize the value of traditional knowledge and protocols. In fact, in British Columbia this is our educational mandate. Your children should probably learn more about indigenous ways of knowing than you or I ever did at 'school'.

The transformed curriculum with a focus on developing core competencies including communication, thinking skills and personal social development presents us with the golden opportunity to teach our children not to be compliant and complacent. For too long we have taught our children to be quiet, to sit down, to listen to us and to do what we tell them. Certainly, there is a time and place for these skills but far more important is the ability to critically and creatively think and do the most right thing.

I believe that our children are a brilliant community of young people who will change the world for the better. I am counting on it.

Next week I will explain the Element Hour experiment with our intermediate students for April, May and June. Have you read the book, Element, by Sir Ken Robinson?

Respectfully,

Wendy Briggs
Proud Principal