

Global Learner:

Not Just Art Workshops

We would like to provide parents with an overview and update on the progress of the **Global Learner Program**. The Global Learner Program was developed at Montroyal to meet the diverse needs of our students and provide opportunities for student centred learning and multi-aged groupings at times throughout the school year. Beginning in the spring of 2007, students, parents, teachers and administrators were invited to provide input into the future direction of our school. Through looking at the unique skills of our staff, studying the future needs of our students, and incorporating the views of parents, the Global Learner Program was developed. The Global Learner Program was designed to develop each student as a whole and teach the skills needed for his/her future. The program focuses on 21st century skills including digital-age literacy, inventive thinking, effective communication, and high productivity.

Digital-age Literacy

In the past, being able to read, write, and do basic calculations was considered being literate. Today, our students need more. In addition of knowing the basic skills of reading, writing and math, they also need to learn basic science and technology skills and develop a global awareness as the entire world becomes more inter-connected.

Inventive Thinking

Technology has changed society. With the dramatic rate of change, students in this generation will need to be adaptable. To stand out, they must be creative and thoughtful; they need to be willing to make mistakes, to take risks, and to understand that there is not always one "right answer" in life.

Effective Communication

Research has shown us that effective communication skills are essential for today's knowledge-based society. Students need to learn to be able to work independently but they also need to be able to work on teams by developing interpersonal skills, communication (speaking and listening) skills, as well as learning social and civic responsibility. For our students to become responsible global citizens, they must learn to be informed, to effectively share their own ideas, and to really listen to the ideas of others.

High Productivity

To achieve their potential, our students need opportunities to practice and learn productivity skills. They must learn to prioritize and plan projects in

order to achieve results. Students need to be exposed to real-world tools, and to learn how to make high quality finished products.

During the 2008 school year, everyone began to work on the goals for the Global Learner Program. To facilitate these changes, the decision was made to start small with Fine Arts as that was an area of expertise for many Montroyal teachers. Through much hard work and planning by staff members, school-wide art workshops began. The intent of the art workshops was to encourage inventive thinking, high productivity, and collaboration skills. Students would then be able to practice their communication skills and showcase their learning with the community during the Gallery Gala. However, the Global Learner program is *not* just about afternoon art workshops.

Through inquiry based learning, we are developing 21st Century Skills in all areas of the curriculum. The focus on the use of technology as an educational tool in our school engages our students and accommodates those students with unique learning needs. Student engagement in learning translates into better understanding and positive results. Creating opportunities for students to develop digital age literacy and practice using real-world tools allows them to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.

This year we will continue to work towards our goals of developing 21st Century Skills in our students. The staff is collaboratively planning, learning, and implementing lessons developed to address the specific needs of our students. We will be doing a "School-Wide Write" which Primary and Intermediate teachers marked cooperatively as a team. The information gained from this assessment is used to make plans to improve students' writing skills.

As the Global Learner philosophy has continued to evolve, the Global Learner Workshops are also evolving to reflect the ever changing face of society's expectations, teachers areas of expertise and the needs of our students. The Global Learner Program is an ongoing part of the fabric that makes up Montroyal. It is the philosophy behind many in-class activities that may or may not fall under our three school-wide themes (Children of the World, Leaders and Leadership, and Global Stewardship).

We continue to look for opportunities to create real-life learning opportunities for students through project-based learning, continued leadership opportunities for students, and the acquisition of resources that promote real-life learning.

The Montroyal Parent Advisory Council (MPAC) has been a consistent supporter of our goals. MPAC has purchased many of the technological tools that the students use on a daily basis, including two carts of iBook laptops equipped with printers and projectors, additional multimedia projectors, digital cameras, and SmartBoards for every enrolling classroom. Ipad and a SmartBoard for the Music program are being added to the cache of technological tools at Montroyal.

The SmartBoards are being used on a daily basis. Teachers are finding new and innovative uses to present and practice curriculum. These technological initiatives continue to support student learning and assist students and staff in achieving our *Global Learner* goals.

The collaborative relationship among our parents, students and staff is fantastic.