

Digital Historian: Community Connected Experiential Learning

Upper Grand District School Board (2016)

Description:

This video describes the [Digital Historian Project](#), 4-credit cross-curricular math and history course for secondary students that provides an opportunity to engage in deeper learning outside of the usual school setting. The community-connected experiential learning project engages students in historical inquiry into the lives of local war veterans and uninterpreted museum artefacts, in the authentic setting of the community museum and through real-world partnerships with experts. Students also analyse historical statistics as a large component of this historical inquiry, to gain deeper understanding of their local history and how it connects to Canadian and world history. Students' findings and subsequent products become part of the museum's collection, and veterans' families learn more about their family history through their interactions with the students. Community partners such as writers, historians, and museum archivists collaborate with teachers and students to create this engaging, technology-enabled, and powerful learning environment.



Themes and ideas:

- » Community-connected experiential learning
- » Technology-enabled learning
- » Real-world authentic tasks
- » Learning partnerships
- » Global competencies
- » Immersive learning environments
- » Math



This video is for:

- » Educators
- » School and System Leaders
- » Parents
- » Community partners



Discussion questions:

- » One of the educators in the video mentions "designing new pathways" to reach students. In what ways might community partners help to deepen the learning environments for your students?

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Discussion questions:

- » Authentic, real-world learning environments can sometimes involve students creating new understandings that are shared publicly and benefit the wider community, such as the artefacts that students create for the museum. In what ways are students creating new knowledge for the world in your context? In what ways might you imagine this happening?
- » Some student interviewees expressed that they were not strong math learners to begin with, but that this program has made math more accessible and meaningful. They indicate they are now more confident in their math and statistical analysis skills, and seem to have developed an understanding of math's relevance to their lives and to other disciplines. What design features of this program might have contributed to this shift in math mindset? How might such design features be transferred or adapted to a different learning context in your school environment?
- » Each student in this program was challenged to investigate 2 complex problems: (1) interpret an uninterpreted locally-sourced museum artefact, and (2) learn about the life of an unknown local war veteran listed in the museum's archives. Referring to [Ontario's 6 draft competencies](#) (see p. 56), consider how the competencies were addressed in this program. How might the design features of this kind of course be transferred or adapted to a different learning context in your school environment?
- » In this deeply immersive learning environment, are students engaged "as" curators/researchers/historians, or "like" curators/researchers/historians? This learning environment is physically immersive - the classroom is located within an 1871 lodge within the museum, and also immersed in the authentic museum and archive environment. It is emotionally immersive - student interviewees mention they have developed a deep emotional connection to their veteran research. Consider your subject or discipline - how do you immerse your students in real-world experiences, or experiences that mirror real-world contexts? Who might you connect with your students to make classroom experiences more authentic?