

Enrichment Program Report Royal West Academy 2022-2023

A specific aim of the Gifted and Exceptional Learners' mandate for the 2022-2023 academic year was *Matching Instruction with Needs* through design and implementation of School-wide Enrichment initiatives and Acceleration Strategies (i.e., compacting curriculum) for individual bright and talented students at EMSB schools.

At Royal West Academy, we successfully adopted and implemented one school-wide enrichment program, namely--the Global Issues Problem Solving, which is one competitive component of The Future Problem Solving International. Our programs involved a total of 12 students (Sec 1 - 3). Royal West Academy's achievements in this program will be discussed below along with the future enrichment plans for the upcoming school year of 2023-2024.

Future Problem-Solving Program International (FPSPI) - Global Issues Problem Solving (1.5 hour / weekly November - March 2023)

FPSPI is a dynamic international program involving thousands of students annually from around the world. Developed in 1974 by creativity pioneer Dr. E. Paul Torrance, Future Problem Solving (FPSI) provides competitive and non-competitive components for today's curriculum via a six-step model which teaches critical and creative thinking, problem solving, and decision making. Student work is submitted electronically, and evaluation and feedback are provided from trained evaluators from FPSPI. Qualified students earn invitations to participate in the annual International Conference (taking place in June 2023 at University of Massachusetts-Amherst).

Four thinking skills taught and modeled systematically to student participants engaged in the program are the corner stones of the Future Problem-Solving process.

- **Creativity** – Problem solving situations are set in the future to encourage inventive thinking. Students explore future possibilities from the present.
- **Communication** – Clear and articulate communication is developed while working with a team and ideas are presented in written and verbal modes.
- **Critical Thinking** – Students use analysis to gain an understanding of global issues and to comprehend significant aspects of complex situations.
- **Collaboration** – Students work together while learning and applying problem solving skills. Teamwork is nurtured as students advance through challenging and exciting situations.

A total of 12 students from Royal West Academy (Sec 1 - 3) embarked in one competitive component of FPSI, namely the Global Issues Problem Solving program, which occurred as a weekly session of 1.5 hours coached by a mentor. A complete list of nominated participants in this enrichment program is included on page 3 of the report.

GLOBAL ISSUES PROBLEM SOLVING (GIPS):

The 2022- 2023 topics were:

- E-Waste - Practice Booklet
- Digital Realities - Practice Booklet
- Robotic Workforce - Competitive Booklet
- Throw Away Society - Competitive Booklet
- Currency (International Booklet)

This program enables students to think creatively and explore collaboratively a selected inquiry topic from a diverse range of contemporary global topics culminating in a detailed Action Plan. By employing the Six-Step of the Creative Thinking Process (Dr. Torrance), students respond to a Future Scene--a hypothetical scenario set 20-30 years in the future--provided for each topic. Entries are authentically assessed and scored by trained evaluators.

Three teams of four Royal West Academy students participated in 4 GIPS events (1 practice booklet and 3 competitive booklets). Each competition lasted two hours and teams received detailed feedback and scoring for each booklet. One team of four sec 3 students successfully qualified in the finals and was invited to participate at the international conference held from June 7th – 11th 2023 at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Students invited to participate in the GIPS competition at the international conference were Anya Figlarz-Grassino, Sophie Iny, Jake Gurevitch and Sumin Woo. The cost of student's conference fee, lodging and food totaling \$636 per student was covered by the Ministry Measure 15027 (Gifted and Exceptional Learners). Students traveled by car to the conference accompanied by Dr. Birlean, Ms. Lubbe and one parent volunteer.

In addition, an event was hosted on June 20 by EMSB's central office to celebrate the finalists. An article about this event was written by the EMSB Communication Department and will be published in the EMSB Express Newspaper (vol. 27 | N° 1 | Fall 2023) and it will also be featured on the Gifted/ EMSB website (currently under construction).

Recommendations for 2023-2024

- Start the program as soon as possible (end of September / early October) to give students the appropriate amount of time to understand the 6 problem-solving steps and adequately investigate the topics.
- Expand nominations to include sec 4 and 5 students while, if possible, renominating the students already engaged in the program so that they can build on their accumulated skills and knowledge.

NOTE: students nominated for this program excel academically across subjects (90%+) and have remarkable leadership skills, creative thinking, reading skills. They have a predisposition to think creatively, pose interesting, high-level questions or solve problems in novel ways and with clear reasoning, are usually leaders in their classes (peers look up to them) and are curious learners, who enjoy reading to discover and learn about the world and how it works.

- Provide a short information session for teachers and administration to help with the student nomination process.

- Depending on topic, provide field trips to places of interest and arrange talks with professionals.

Nominated Students for the academic year of 2022-2023 (N=12)

STUDENT NAME	Secondary
Markéta Antonicka-Johns	1
Sparsh Nishit Shah	1
Charles-Henry Chaki	1
Naima Hottenroth	2
Mia Kaneko-Crump	2
Rebecca O'Neill	2
Sunny Picard	2
Katherina Trofimovich	2
Anya Figlarz-Grassino	3
Sumin Woo	3
Sophie Iny	3
Jake Gurevitch	3

Plans for 2023-2024

Addressing Student Individual Needs: Differentiation, Acceleration, and Enrichment

As part of our mandate for the Gifted and Exceptional Learners, we will continue to offer support bright and talented students at RWA, who require additional cognitive stimulation to keep themselves learning and motivated.

At the request of school team and administration, Dr Birlean can also conduct strength assessments for talented or formally identified gifted students. The strength assessment is based on three inventories created for gifted and talented learners by Dr. Renzulli at University of Connecticut and validated by over 30 years of authentic research evidence from schools across the world. This assessment aims to collect data about student interest, learning preferences, and student's preferred ways to demonstrate learning. Outcomes of this assessment inform ways to differentiate teaching, learning, and assessment, specifically by (a) aligning instructional strategies to identified learning preferences, (b) offering alternative assessment that match identified expression preferences, and when differentiation is not sufficient, (c) tailoring enrichment activities that center on learner's interest and learning preferences.

When independent enrichment is needed, the student will benefit from a formal alternative program, specifically, a weekly independent enrichment program tailored to student's needs and interest and monitored by a mentor. The process and outcomes of this work are disseminated at the formal Knowledge Fair organized near the end of the school year (usually in May).

An Additional School-Wide Enrichment Program in our Menu for 2023-2024
Let's Talk Science Competition (1.5h/ Weekly)
(Sec 1-2, February-June 2024)

NOTE: This program has been implemented in some of our EMSB schools during the academic year of 2021-2022 and resulted in numerous distinctions and awards, including 2nd place in the **Final Q & A Competition** (e.g., VMC), along with numerous *Above and Beyond Awards* for design and build challenges in related STEM topics (e.g., Earth and Space Sciences).

Since 2005, Let's Talk Science Challenge offers to Canadian youth (Grades 6-8) with an interest in science the opportunity to engage in enrichment challenges related to technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Specific benefits associated with engagement in LTSC include:

- Provides an outlet for students who are not being challenged by the curriculum
- Inspires students to consider future education in STEM and potential STEM careers
- Enriches curriculum in eight subject areas: Biology, Chemistry, Earth Sciences, Engineering & Technology, Environmental Sciences, Math, Physics and Space Sciences
- Emphasizes team collaboration, cooperative learning and problem-solving skills

Through engaging in STEM enrichment challenges, students develop key skills including:

- Creativity
- Critical analysis
- Teamwork
- Initiative
- Communication
- Problem solving
- Independent thinking

The Play and Learn Weekly activities will be conducted under the guidance of a mentor with the scope of helping students prepare for the final competition. The Let's Talk Science Challenge includes three components:

- The theory component with the weekly quizzes leading to the *Final Question and Answer Competition*
- The hands-on component with multiple *Design and Build Challenges* that help students prepare for the Final Engineering Challenge
- The team spirit component with the *Above and Beyond badges* and the *Lorna Collins Spirit Award*.

Report Completed by Dr. Birlean

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