

For Immediate Release  
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## Google and Wikis and Blogs, Oh My!

(North Bay, ON): 21st century learning, with its ever-evolving lingo, resources, and expectations, is best achieved through effective partnerships between the student, the school and the home, a team of NPSC educators and administrators says. This type of engagement was the focus of a literacy carousel at St. Gregory School in Powassan last week, where families did much more than simply reading and writing.

Participants rotated between interactive workshops, each introducing effective and engaging learning techniques for the 21st century learner.

Project lead and St. Gregory teacher, Chris Marsh, said new and creative approaches to teaching are important when trying to engage today's digitally-stimulated students. "It's not only about meeting the needs of a student. You have to always consider that you're trying to meet the needs of a student living in a fast and ever-changing world," he said.

In one workshop, "Writing Around the Room", participants each wrote part of a story, crumpled it up, tossed it into a circle for another writer to then open it up and continue writing it, yielding an interesting variety of multi-authored stories in the end.

In another, "Exploring the Web of Technology", parents and students navigated literacy-related websites, including *SMART exchange*, which offers over 40,000 subject-specific online lessons.

Other workshops addressed reading theatre as a group, classroom engagement, verbal storytelling, embedding and hiding words in stories, and using Wiki as a classroom tool.

Noah Dobbs, a Grade 5 St. Gregory student, said he had fun learning this way. "It made me want to write," he said. "I got to pick what to write about, so I wrote about how I love pancakes, and then I read about someone else's story about digging for clams. It was fun."

This literacy carousel was part of the action research project titled "*Hear Our Voices! Relationships Really Matter*", funded by the Northeastern Ontario Education Network. A collaboration between teachers from St. Gregory and St. Theresa schools, this project focuses on improving boys' literacy and overall engagement in schools. The team shared its research at the NEON Research Carousel in Sudbury on February 24.

**Our teachers are blogging!** A number of NPSC teachers are now using online blogs as teaching tools, as forums for engaging students, and as a way to keep parents connected to the classroom.

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