

Students share collective voices

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Morning Star Staff

It's their education and they want to have a say on what and how they learn.

Student Voice representatives from secondary schools around the valley were listening and thinking as Douglas Macleod, associate dean of science, technology and health, Okanagan College, talked to the Okanagan Region Forum.

"Human beings are programmed to play and to groom each other," Macleod told the audience. "We invented language as a means of grooming. When you communicate, in person, by Facebook or Tweet, you are grooming that group, exchanging information and maintaining relationships."

The forum brought together 65 students to talk about what role they would like to see technology play in their education, formally and informally.

"We need to figure out how we could use an on-line world to share learning materials," said Macleod. He reminded the students that a teacher who is passionate about his or her subject is vital but as they grow older, it is their responsibility to manage their own passion for learning. He told them to expect to learn for all their lives and to find ways to make learning enjoyable with any technology.

"Use technology. But remember that you can't

replace a great teacher with any technology. We are quite bad at predicting technology."

The students were ready with questions when he asked for them.

"You say play is important for learning but classes become more and more boring as we get farther along in school. Where is the music, the colours, the toys?" asked one student.

Macleod agreed that environment is important at any age and that animals continue to play as they get older and added that music and art can teach people many of the skills, including math, needed for higher learning.

Jeremy Woo, Grade 10 student representative from Kal Secondary, said, "We are glad to have the ability to express our opinions to people who have the power to make decisions. Technology allows teachers to present information for all styles and lets us see the world from a different perspective."

Anna Klering is a Grade 12 student representative from Penticton Secondary School.

"I find everything interesting. There are so many aspects to consider — the psychology, the classroom, the community. There are a lot of ideas but I think we have to get the teachers to be more technology friendly. I'm finding out a lot of things, particularly about different ways of learning that I am going to



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Douglas Macleod (left) associate dean of science, technology and health, Okanagan College, talks with Seaton School Grade 12 student Sarah Armstrong at the BC Student Voice Okanagan Region Forum.

take back to my school," she said.

Grade 12 Seaton School student representative Sarah Armstrong was at a Student Voice Forum for the first time.

"I disagree a lot with the way our education system is and I'm going to be part of change in the future, maybe as a teacher," she said. "I've found the education system challenging and I've learned a lot here that is incredibly interesting. I think technology is a great way to learn and connect with people and to express the imagination."

"I use my cell phone all the time and my laptop to keep everything organized. I hope Student Voice will get bigger and we might have some kind of informal, outdoor conference in the summer."