



Photo by Sean Dennie

Grade 9 students Lance Felicen, Zophia Bumactao and Ben Oosterwijk.



Photo by Sean Dennie

Sloane Grier and Tess Provost work on their animation project.

Grade 9s create animated Blackfoot videos

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GAZETTE EDITOR

Grade 9 students at F.P. Walshe school have created a new resource for teaching the Blackfoot language.

The students created animated videos based on Blackfoot words with the help of the Calgary Animated Objects Society (CAOS).

"We feel really happy to be here working with these students and to make a piece that is about the language," said Xstine Cook, artistic director of CAOS.

CAOS is working to make people aware of the Canada Learning Bond, which provides up to \$2,000 for post-secondary studies to low-income young people simply by opening a Registered Education Savings Plan (RESP).

"We picked a project to teach kids how to make animation and tell their own stories as part of teaching them about the Canada Learning Bonds," Cross said.

"We were talking to all kinds of different people and nobody had ever heard of the Canada Learning Bond, which has been going for 14 years," Cross said.

If a student opens an RESP, Canada Learning Bonds will put \$500 in the account followed by annual contributions of \$100 up to \$2,000.

Any student born in 2004 and later can apply. Applications are retroactive to the first year of eligibility.

As part of the process representatives of CAOS met with Celestine Twigg, a Blackfoot language teacher at F.P. Walshe school.

"She said, 'What I've always wanted to do is make Blackfoot language videos,'" Cross said. "Part of our project is to do a

school residency using animation for storytelling."

Sandra Lamouche, the First Nations, Metis and Inuit co-ordinator for Livingstone Range School Division, obtained an Alberta Education grant for languages.

CAOS taught the 53 Grade 9 students basic animation principles and assigned Blackfoot words.

"They had to come up with their own concept of how they were going to express the word, storyboard it out, make all the artwork and then shoot it," Cross explained.

Cross said the F.P. Walshe students were eager and enthusiastic about the project, diving in and getting to work in the crash course on animation.

"Some of the work they have created, it's just totally beautiful," Cross said.

People who speak Blackfoot were enlisted to say the words for the videos.

Cross described the process of making an animated film as painstaking, requiring students to shoot 24 pictures for one second of video.

Grade 9 student Sloane Grier agreed.

"I realized how much work it is to create animation," Sloane said with a smile.

Student Tess Provost said creating the animated videos was an enjoyable task and a new experience.

"We were pretty excited to learn how the animation process works," Grade 9 student Kristine Cleaver said.

As First Nations students, Tess and Sloane liked the idea of creating animated videos based on the Blackfoot language.

"It's pretty special because you don't see a lot of people using it," Sloane said.

Added Tess: "It's kind of



Photo by Sean Dennie

Auna Gray and Ciara Shot Both Sides work in their animated Blackfoot language video.

fun to show other people our culture."

Kristine said it was interesting to find out more about Blackfoot.

The videos will be available free of charge through Livingstone Range, F.P. Walshe school and the CAOS Web site.

"It's so important to teach the language in schools and also to hear it every day," Cross said.

"It's another way to reach people."

Celestine Twigg was delighted to see the students learn to speak some Blackfoot words and looks forward to using the videos.

"It's another easy way of learning the language," Twigg said. "This is just the beginning."

"The kids are loving it."

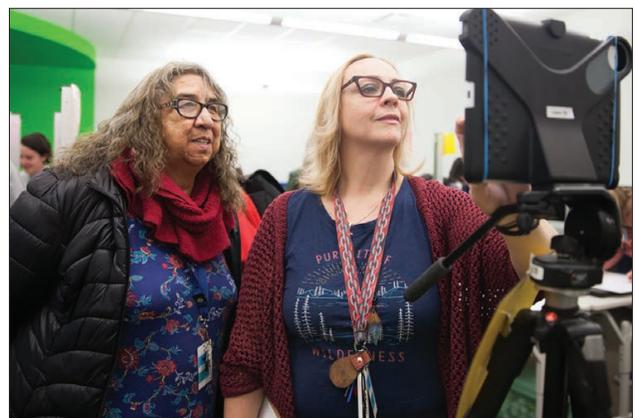


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F.P. Walshe Blackfoot language teacher Celestine Twigg and art teacher Shanan Tynan look at a video.