

The Greater Victoria School District's website boasts a comprehensive research/learning vehicle that can, with the use of a computer, be readily accessed both at home and at school. Visit this site, <http://www.sd61.bc.ca/> then look to the top, find "educational resources", scroll to *eLearning* and click. What will appear is an amazing world of knowledge and learning opportunity, all categorized under the headings "elementary", "middle" and "secondary". Some examples of what is available to supplement your child's learning.

## Elementary

Under "**Encyclopedia**" you will find five choices, each with its own level of sophistication, (*World Book Kids*, *World Book Student*) or language (*French and Spanish*) or specific category (*Encyclopedia British Columbia*). Ready access to this is the equivalent of having five voluminous sets of encyclopedias sitting on your bookshelves.

**Magazines and Journals** is another category.

*Kids Search* provides a rudimentary dictionary, a nice image collection and a topic research possibility. (type in Pond and a host of html (text only) and pdf (text and images). For example, the first one on the list is "Ponds in Spring" where there's a full article from Scholastic magazine. One can also limit (filter) where information is to be accessed from (newspapers, magazines, pictures etc.)

*Searchasaurus* is another option: One major difference between this site and *Kids Search* is the ease of accessing the "lexile number" attached to many of the articles. A lexile number is a reading rating so a parent (possibly with the help of a teacher) can guide the child to an article that is within the appropriate range of challenge. Two sites that provide conversion interpretations of lexiles to reading levels or grade equivalency are: <http://www.newportrischools.org/Assessment/GuidedReading.pdf> and <http://www.dupage88.net/aths/resources/AT%20MCweb02/TEAMS/ELLResources/LexileConversionChart.pdf> For example, go to animals, type in dinosaurs and see the number of articles that appear. You will see that many articles (but not all) come with lexile numbers. (In *Kids Search* this can be accomplished under "detailed search" (lexile options are displayed)).

**Library:** Here you will find access to the *School Library* using the District's Destiny program (Follett). Click on "*School Library Collections*" find your school and click again. Try searching *Harry Potter*. You will then find out what books in the series the library has, and if they are available to be signed out. Depending on whether or not the school subscribes to *Title Peek* you may or may not see the jacket design. (even then some images will be missing.)

*The Greater Victoria Public Library* link is also provided. Of course, with an active library card, one can locate books and reserve online. There are many features on this site (click on *Kids and Teens*), including youth opportunities and the *Tumblebook* possibility for those readers who enjoy or need to hear the written word. Because of site licensing restrictions this can be accessed at home but not in the classroom.

**Literacy:** The *Kids World Book Dictionary* is available. Occasionally accompanying the definition is a Pictionary piece (image).

To access *Destination Reading* each student will need a username and a password. These can be provided through the school setting. (a generic username and password cannot be issued because it could then be accessed by virtually anyone in the world who is on the net.) The program combines numeracy and reading. For the reading components click on 'exploration' and then scroll to the bottom half. There one finds a series of skills associated with learning to read (from rhyming to learning about persuasive literature).

*Jeunesse (Radio Canadien)* provides reading and listening opportunities for those learning in the French language.

*Jeunesse (TV5)* has vocabulary and grammar games and learning experiences for French Language learners.

*Jim Becker's French Resources* (scroll downwards) includes a host of French language learning sites including the BBC.

*First Voices* is an award winning site that keys in on learning the languages of many of the "Indigenous Cultures" across Canada.

**Numeracy:** *Destination Math* is open to all students. However, because there is a district licence involved each student is required to enter a username and password. These can be provided through the school setting. (a generic username and password cannot be issued because it could then be accessed by virtually anyone in the world who is on the net.) *Destination Math* which provides explanations and questions for skill sets between grade 1 and 12 is on the same site as *Destination Reading*. Click on 'explorations' and choose the level and skill. There is a management system in place to track individual progress.

*Virtual Manipulatives* provides measurement activities K-12.

**Science and Social Studies:** *Wonderville* has a series of fun choice activities ages 6-12. The *Junior Worldmark Encyclopaedia* keys in on Canadian Provinces and is for Intermediate (plus) students. The *Gale Virtual Reference Library* is a fact laden site where information is introduced in a traditional encyclopedia format. (Once accessing the site, go to the *eBook index* and click on a subject area.)

**Other:** Under this category are a host of different sites which do not necessarily fit under any of the other specific groupings but they are very educational. Some are more middle school and secondary school focused but adjustments by teacher and parent can be made.

The *Ebsco Image* search does just what the title implies. (type in 'rattlesnake' and see what comes up.)

One can access the latest "*Consumer Report*" articles: (Oct. 2010, "Our reader reveal: best burgers".)

The *Gale Data base* has a massive collection of Canadian Periodicals and a Virtual Reference Library.

Also included is a very interesting "*Global Issues in Context*" site. For example: browse 'Issues and Topics' click on 'Environment and Climate Change' and proceed to read and learn.

The *LearnNowBC* site is comprehensive and covers a host of topics and learning options for parents and educators and does so for learners at all levels.

The *Media Awareness* site is, given the huge impact media has on the student population, a very topical site. There are strands for parents and teachers but any parent who chooses to move to the teacher strand would find topics to discuss with their child and ways to focus that discussion. (Cyber bullying, tobacco advertising, sports media... are just a few of the topics.) This site is also in French.

Other sites include a *National Film Board* access (French and English), *Statistics Canada* (French and English) and a *typing tutorial* program.