

Teacher uses Microsoft to help students connect with others across Canada

By Julie Slack
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Kaylyn Dorland doesn't just teach Grade 2; she takes her class into the 21st Century — and then some.

She's made her Queen of Heaven Elementary School classroom into a collaborative learning experience that's light-years ahead of the way most people learned their three Rs.

Dorland was selected to be a Microsoft Innovative Educator Expert. She uses Microsoft

products, along with Microsoft Surface Tablets with her students to create a forward-thinking, technologically-advanced environment.

It's like Pen Pals getting a technology make-over.

In her Milton classroom, she partners students one-to-one or in a group of three, with a partner, or threesome in another class at another school.

The students use Skype, Twitter and Microsoft Sway.

This year, one of the schools they communicated with was from Edmonton. Together, they researched polar bears and their habitats, puffer fish, ways to save electricity and more.

The project they co-ordinated on is called #WHOtoYou.

The Grade 2 student groups get to know each other and share ideas as well as research together while they are video conferencing on their computers.

The ultimate goal of the project is to teach

students how to collaborate with national and international partners — something they'll use in their future careers, said Dorland, who's been teaching with the Halton Catholic board for four years and calls Milton home.

She invited parents into her classroom one day so they could see their children video-conferencing with their long-distance friends and fellow students in Edmonton.

Dorland said more than 50 per cent of the parents came out to see it.

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