

Interview on EZ Rock Woodstock:
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Jennifer: It is my privilege today to welcome John Abbott, a well renowned educator from England and President of the 21st Learning Century, also, Heather MacTaggart, Deputy Director of 21st Century Learning Canada. Now John is visiting New Brunswick for the next five days, not just the province really but more specifically School District 14. Welcome to our beautiful province John -also to you Heather.

John: Thank you very much

Heather: Thank you Jennifer

Jennifer: So this is quite a whirlwind trip that you are on, can you share with us what you hope to achieve over the next few days and really, the purpose of your visit?

John: Yes I could Jennifer. It is a whirlwind trip. I have to come about three times a year on behalf of the international initiative to share thinking with the people in Canada on the emergence of the new study of how the brain works and what the implications are for the children. One of the key things that I have spoken about here in New Brunswick is that actually education is about so much more than just schooling. It is about what happens to children at home; it is about what happens to children in the community. The whole purpose of this particular visit, as we move into Woodstock, is to share these ideas intensively within one of these districts within New Brunswick

Heather: Yes, and the central idea is to work very closely with District 14 and with Woodstock in particular, to start implementing a community-driven process where we implement many of the ideas of the 21st Learning Century Initiative and develop a model kind of community for what these sort of initiatives would look like in practice. That then can be used to expand to the rest of New Brunswick, then the rest of Canada, then the world.

Jennifer: Now, you say that we as a community have a moral imperative to make changes to our school systems so that we truly connect to our students. You even use an interesting analogy to demonstrate this. Now John, can you explain that?

John: If you use the three-legged stool analogy, which we do, and I am sure many of your listeners will know that however rough the ground is, you

can always balance on it - on a three-legged stool- but you can't balance on it on a four-legged chair. A four-legged chair needs a flat surface. If you think of a three-legged chair as made up of school, home, and community then actually what children need is a great experience in all three of those. The child who has a lot of interesting things to do in a community comes to school full of questions. A child who doesn't have any experience in a community just is a bit pallid. You know it comes to school and goes out again, and it doesn't feel excited about anything.

Jennifer: So, are you hoping to have something in place within our local schools within the near future - to help not just our educators but our communities as a whole deal with issues with our students.

Heather: These next few days are designed to get the message out about what the current research on the brain says about humans and learning and children and what our arrangements for schools and homes and communities should be all about. And then I will be working with Lisa and the district and particularly with the schools in the Woodstock area to say "now what does this mean?" what should we be doing and what needs to change and what needs to happen? And we will start putting that plan together in June and by September, yes some things will begin to be changing, we will be encouraging and wanting community partners in this too.

Jennifer: Well it is easy to see you have an amazing journey ahead of you and during your visits to School District 14 over the next few days you will be very busy actually touring Woodstock High School and Centreville Community School today, also facilitating a symposium for community leaders, school officials, and the general public this afternoon. It happens from 2 – 5:00 p.m. at District office on Chapel St. Titled "It takes a village to raise a child", again this is a free symposium this afternoon. John Abbott, Heather MacTaggart, thank you so much for spending time talking to me today. We wish you all the best as you continue with your work in our beautiful river valley.

John: Well thank you very much and we both hope we see many members of your listening public at the symposium this afternoon.