

# Kathryn Clark

TEACHER SPOTLIGHT

*Vice Principal, DP & Student Data Achievement Coordinator, Seasoned Hockey Player and Knitting Black Belt*

*On a recent afternoon, while on a break from meetings and time with students, we sat down to chat with Mrs. Clark. A modern day Renaissance woman, she is equally comfortable discussing data analysis as she is talking about teaching, knitting, snowboarding, hockey and pretty much anything in between.*

**“ I ADMIRE THOSE WHO ARE NOT AFRAID TO HAVE A GO AND TRY SOMETHING NEW AND THOSE WHO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR MISTAKES AND LEARN FROM THEM. I AM INSPIRED BY A PERSON'S ATTITUDE TO LIFE. I TRY TO HAVE A POSITIVE, FUN-LOVING OUTLOOK.**



**Q** What are some of the things that excite you most about your work?

**A** Being able to challenge students to reach their personal best.

To be able to do this, it is important to understand the student: their learning preferences, strengths, fears, what inspires and drives them. Mulgrave's Advisor, GEO and Outdoor Education programmes provide excellent opportunities to get to know the students outside the classroom, and I jump at the opportunity to be part of these programmes. The recent trip to the Dominican Republic with Grade 9 and 10s was life-changing for many of the students and to be able to witness this first-hand was an honour. I also attend the Grade 10 Winter Camp each year not only to see how the students rise to the challenge of living 24 hrs in negative temperatures but to also challenge myself. I didn't have those opportunities growing up in the UK.

Another key piece to helping students reach their personal best is to understand a student's potential.

As Student Data Achievement Coordinator, I work with the Principals, Curriculum Coordinators and teachers to analyse student data and achievements. Through our work with the Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring (CEM) at Durham University (UK) and their computer adaptive assessments, we can set benchmarks for student achievement and review their personal progress throughout the year. This allows for personalisation of strategies to improve teaching and learning and subsequently improve the student's success. Having previously taught in the UK, where data is used in a positive way to look at the individual successes of students, I found it difficult when I first started teaching in Canada when students asked me for the class average or compared my results to the worldwide average; I was not bothered with these statistics but more interested in how the student personally achieved, was this a reflection of what they were capable of and how could they move forward.

**Q** We have found that a lifelong desire to learn is a common trait among great teachers such as yourself. If you could learn about anything, what would you be learning and who would be teaching you?

**A** I would have loved to have attended the International Solvay Institute for Physics in 1927 with a practical, classical physicist's brain to have been able to listen to top physicists (Schrodinger, Pauli, Heisenberg, Dirac, de Broglie, Bohr, Planck, Curie, Einstein, to name a few) discuss quantum physics. Would have been phenomenal!

## KATHRYN'S BIO

Born and raised in Halifax, England, Mrs. Clark, the daughter of two primary school teachers, did not begin her career with teaching in mind. The Sciences were her passion, so she set out to become an engineer. After completing a in electromechanical power engineering, Kathryn entered a depressed job market reeling from the impact of UK's privatisation of the power industry. This drove her to take a position in banking - an experience that motivated her to go back to school to become a science teacher. After a successful career of 11 years teaching in a variety of schools in the UK and becoming a Department Head, Kathryn and her husband decided to give up their jobs for a better life in Vancouver, Canada. Soon after landing in Vancouver, Kathryn was 'snatched up' by Mulgrave where she has taught Science and Physics and held a variety of leadership positions for the past nine years. When not at school, she is most content at the ice rink, snowboarding, hiking or knitting.

# 3 Things You Should Know About Mrs. Clark

Ask Mrs. Clark about her childhood and she shares that she spent most of her free time enjoying the outdoors and playing sports. These loves carried through into adulthood and, after arriving in Canada, they inspired Kathryn to learn to skate and play hockey. Starting at the young age of 38, she quickly became known as a fierce player earning her spots on both a women's and co-ed team in North Vancouver. Looking for Kathryn on a Friday night? You will find her with one of her teams playing right 'D' or right wing at an ice rink nearby.



## SHE PLAYS HOCKEY IN A CO-ED LEAGUE

Fun-loving, adventurous and outdoorsy are just a few of the many words you could use to describe Mrs. Clark. We asked her what was the most fun she has had this year, and she shared that snowboarding on a powder day at Whistler with Mike (her husband) and friends was at the top her list. Ever the sports enthusiast, Kathryn has been snowboarding for the past 20 years.



## SNOWBOARDING IS TOP OF HER LIST

Knitting needles and a ball of wool are two of the things Mrs. Clark cannot live without. For over 35 years, knitting is what Kathryn has turned to in order to relax, meditate and lose herself in thought. Knitting also allows her to test her math problem-solving and design skills. Which designers inspire her? There are several but Mrs. Clark shared that Kaffe Fassett and Stephen West would have to be on that list.

## KNITTING IS HER LOVE

