

SPACE EDUCATION AND OUTREACH SYMPOSIUM (E1)
Ignition - Primary Space Education (1)

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INCORPORATING “FROM BLUE TO RED – THE FIRST HUMAN MISSION TO MARS’ – AS
IGNITION FOR EDUCATION AND OUTREACH AT THE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LEVEL.**Abstract**

“From Blue to Red” is a children’s illustrated hardcover book, audio book and eBook created by over 450 students at Lord Beaverbrook High School (LBHS), their teachers and a professional creative leadership team led by co-producers Ross McIntyre and Samantha Whelan Kotkas in Calgary, Alberta, Canada. This book and music are the culmination of a one-year project that was undertaken in 2011-2012 through funding from the Canadian Space Agency. “From Blue to Red” was created in both English and French and showcases the LBHS students in the conception, writing and production of a hard cover book that explores the science of an adventure on the first human mission to Mars. The student’s created a world-class project that attracted the talents of narrators Diana Krall, Julie Payette, David St. Jacques and Robert Thirsk.

The delivery of education is changing so rapidly we must change our teaching strategies to meet the needs of children. Co-producers and educators Ross McIntyre and Samantha Whelan Kotkas have created an inventive approach to deliver knowledge in the Space Sciences incorporating the children’s book ‘From Blue to Red’ in the classroom.

Initially, elementary students involved in this project had an equal voice in the making of “From Blue To Red”. The storyline was guided through the elementary student’s collective voices. Upon completion of the book, Secondary students (15-18 years of age) have been visiting elementary schools to tell the younger students the story and about how the book was made.

Utilizing the many resources that are included within the hard covered book and eBook we have been able to share first hand accounts of life in Space and current research through the voices of Canadian Astronauts. Students using these resources have been completely engaged resulting in student led discussion and research.

As a professional artist, Samantha has spent time in schools for extended periods as an artist in residence. She has witnessed the overwhelmingly positive results of incorporating both the eBook and the hard covered version of ‘From Blue to Red’ as a resource to facilitating Space Science research and learning.

Together, Samantha and Ross are rapidly getting their message across that creative and innovative teaching practices are the future in education.