

An Acadia University Partnership provides Math Enrichment for Grade 7 students



What do google searches, GPS, geometry, secret codes, and reproducing artificial life have in common? More than you'd probably expect: They involve considerable math, they are something a grade seven student can understand, and they're being explored by students of Wolfville School as part of a "math enrichment" program being offered by **Hugh Chipman** and **Jeff Hooper**, two Acadia professors from the Department of Mathematics and Statistics at Acadia University.

The program was started in 2008 when Angie Rushton, a grade 7 math teacher at Wolfville School, approached Acadia's math and stats department. She had some gifted students who she felt could do much more than the standard curriculum if given the chance. Would the department be interested? Pretty soon, a group of students was trekking over to Huggins Science Hall for an hour a week, learning how to count with 0s and 1s, how math can be used to generate secret codes, and how a scanner at the supermarket checkout knows when it's made a mistake in reading a barcode. They also spend time solving pure puzzlers, just for the fun of it.

Over the years the program has grown and changed, with new topics replacing old ones and a new crop of students every year. The material they learn is often outside their curriculum, but still complimentary. As Hugh Chipman says enthusiastically, "Students are fascinated to work with different problems and realize that math is everywhere".

Thanks to Hugh and Jeff for giving our grade 7 students the opportunity to explore new and exciting concepts in math!

Hugh Chipman and **Jeff Hooper** teach and do research in Acadia's Department of Mathematics and Statistics. Hugh holds a Canada Research Chair in Mathematical Modelling and is editor of *Technometrics*, a scientific journal on industrial statistics. Jeff is entering his second term as Department Head, is an Associate Editor of the *Mathematics Journal Crux*, and from 2007-2009 was Acadia's Fellow in Engaged Learning.

A longer version of this article was published in "The Grapevine" in March 2012. Check it out at http://grapevine.wolfville.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/02/grapevine_03_29_2012_web.pdf

