Space radish science: Mount Logan students consult Russian counterparts in seed experiment

By Kelly Cannon  Mar 15, 2014
After weeks of tending some very special radish plants, students at Mount Logan Middle School got to share their experiences with students in Russia who also grew radishes during a Skype session Friday.

Called the Bion Project, the two groups of students grew radishes from seeds that had been in orbit in a Russian space capsule. The goal was to see if there was any noticeable difference between the plants whose seeds had been to space and a control group whose seeds had stayed on Earth.

“What the students are doing is they got to plant the seeds, then they monitored how they were growing and they watered them every other day,” said Krista Gurko, the research coordinator for GEAR Up, a program that helped organize the collaboration between countries.

Seven schools in Utah and one in Nevada also grew the space seeds, but only two schools were able to participate in the video conferencing, Gurko said. In addition to Mount Logan Middle School, a school in North Sanpete County participated, Skyping with students in Japan.

The Mount Logan students were able to talk to Russian students from Moscow and Korolev with the help of Natalia Linetskaya, a Utah State University student from Ukraine, who translated.

Dalan Parker, a 12-year-old seventh-grader, said speaking with the Russians was a really good experience and he learned a lot.

“I liked how we got to show each other our plants and how they were different,” Parker said. “I learned that different circumstances affect plants in different ways and probably (based on) where you are in the world.”

Gurko hoped that students not only learned that science is fun and enjoyable but also universal.

“Students all over the world are learning about science, and they can do similar experiments and they can talk about that and learn about it because they have different results and they ask different questions,” Gurko said. “And I think that we’re just becoming a more global
world. Celebrating education and celebrating science in your community will help these students be successful in their later years.”

———

kcannon@hjnews.com

Twitter: @mskellycannon