



MASS Journal

Spring 2016

The official magazine of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents



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On the cover: In March 2016, students from Garden Valley Collegiate, located in Winkler, Manitoba, visited the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. As part of their Law 40 class, with teacher Amy Warms, the students were discussing the Canadian Charter of Rights and the development of rights within law. The cover photo shows the Canadian Journeys gallery, which takes a multi-layered approach to dozens of Canadian human rights stories, from French-language rights to the Chinese head tax, from voting rights to cultural dispossession in the North. A digital canvas relays stories across a 96-foot screen, while others are told in floor stations and story niches. Photo by Alexandra Walld.



SAVE THE DATE

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MTS and MASS are joining forces to bring you Educating for ACTION: Our Human Rights Journey on April 20 & 21, 2017 at the Victoria Inn, Winnipeg. School Divisions are invited to send teams of trustees, senior administrators, principals, teachers, parents and students to join numerous community groups on this timely journey.

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Mike Borgfjord
Superintendent,
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“Education is what remains
after one has forgotten what
one has learned in school.”
~ Albert Einstein

Education has always provoked the deepest passion from educators, parents and the greater community, not because of the need for debate but because of the opportunities that public schools have in creating stronger citizens and brighter futures for our society. Each article in this journal will focus on the kinds of citizens that public schools develop and the great work educators do in promoting quality and equity—in achieving this purpose.

The Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS) believes strongly that education has a greater purpose than simply transmitting knowledge to students. We have the opportunity to develop learning cultures that promote critical thinking, innovation, collaboration, respect for diversity and mindsets that foster the development of each child's individual passions in order to contribute to the greater common good. It is a tremendous responsibility but also provides great opportunities for a more optimistic future.

An underlying theme in our work is creating rich learning experiences where all children are able to think and act accordingly. That is, preparing them to be able to participate in a democratic society in a safe and caring environment. In this regard, we need to provide learning spaces where children learn to ask good questions, develop alternative perspectives, share knowledge and create new meanings. These are the skills and aptitudes that future democratic citizens need to develop in order to prepare them to participate in an ever increasing global democratic society.

This coming November, Joel Westheimer will be facilitating MASS's Fall Conference, guiding the discussion through the question *What Kind of Citizen?* We hope that the articles found in this edition of our journal provide opportunities to intellectually engage you with this fundamental question. After all, “Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school.”

« L'éducation est ce qui nous
reste lorsque nous oublions
ce que nous avons appris à
l'école. » ~ Albert Einstein

L'éducation a toujours soulevé les passions chez les éducateurs, les parents et la collectivité en général, non pas parce qu'il faut en débattre, mais parce que les écoles publiques ont l'occasion de former des citoyens plus forts et de créer un avenir meilleur pour notre société. Chacun des articles du présent bulletin porte sur le genre de citoyens que les écoles publiques aident à développer et sur l'excellent travail que les éducateurs accomplissent à cette fin, en offrant un enseignement de qualité et équitable.

À la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS), nous croyons que l'éducation ne sert pas seulement à transmettre des connaissances aux élèves. Nous avons l'occasion de créer des cultures d'apprentissage qui favorisent la pensée critique, l'innovation, la collaboration, le respect de la diversité et l'établissement de structures qui aideront chaque enfant à assouvir leur passion, pour le plus grand bien commun. Il s'agit d'une très grande responsabilité, mais cela crée des perspectives d'avenir prometteuses.

Notre travail vise entre autres à créer des expériences d'apprentissage enrichissantes où tous les enfants peuvent réfléchir et agir en conséquence. Autrement dit, on les prépare à participer à la démocratie dans un cadre où ils sont protégés et encadrés. À ce titre, nous devons fournir des espaces d'apprentissage où les enfants apprennent à poser les bonnes questions, saisir d'autres points de vue, partager leurs connaissances et créer de nouvelles significations. Voilà les compétences que les futurs citoyens d'une démocratie doivent acquérir pour être prêts à prendre leur place dans cette société démocratique mondiale qui ne cesse de croître.

En novembre prochain, Joel Westheimer animera la conférence d'automne de la MASS, guidant le débat autour de la question *Quel genre de citoyen? (What Kind of Citizen?)* Nous espérons que les articles du présent numéro de notre bulletin vous pousseront à réfléchir sérieusement à cette question fondamentale. Après tout, « l'éducation est ce qui nous reste lorsque nous oublions ce que nous avons appris à l'école ».

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Mayor Brian Bowman
Mayor of Winnipeg/Maire de Winnipeg

It is my pleasure to extend greetings to the readers of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents' Spring 2016 *MASS Journal*.

The City of Winnipeg understands the important role MASS plays in creating and supporting fully inclusive classrooms where all Winnipeg students can thrive both socially and academically.

As Mayor, I truly believe that we build a better and stronger community through collaboration, and the membership of the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents have used their strong and respected voice for many years to advise all levels of government of the learning and developmental needs of young people in our communities.

Winnipeg is a growing, thriving and diverse city. Now, more than ever, is a time for us to embrace our values of openness and compassion, and realize that acceptance of new people and cultures are what make us strong. This is why I was proud to declare 2016 as the Year of Reconciliation for Winnipeg. It is my hope that this will enable us to continue open dialogue and maintain our focus to be more inclusive and understanding within our schools and the greater community.

This Spring I will be launching a High School Tour to share my vision and enthusiasm for our city, while emphasizing the importance of civic engagement and diversity within our community. I have also announced the inaugural Mayor's Scholarship for Community Leadership, which has been established to award scholarships to youth who are making a positive and meaningful impact in their communities. Learn more at www.mayorbowman.ca/contact/mayors-scholarship.

On behalf of the City of Winnipeg and my City Council colleagues, I look forward to our continued partnership and extend my best wishes for many more years of success.

Warmly,

Mayor Brian Bowman
City of Winnipeg



C'est avec plaisir que je salue les lecteurs et lectrices du numéro du printemps 2016 du bulletin de la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents (MASS).

La Ville de Winnipeg comprend le rôle important que joue la MASS dans la création et le soutien de classes entièrement inclusives où les élèves peuvent s'épanouir tant socialement que sur le plan scolaire.

En tant que maire, je crois vraiment que la collaboration aide notre collectivité à devenir meilleure et plus forte, et les membres de la Manitoba Association of School Superintendents, depuis de nombreuses années, ont fait entendre leur voix forte et respectée pour informer tous les paliers de gouvernement sur les besoins en apprentissage et en perfectionnement des jeunes de Winnipeg.

Winnipeg est une ville en pleine croissance, florissante et diverse. Il est temps plus que jamais de faire preuve d'ouverture et de compassion et de prendre conscience que c'est notre capacité à accueillir de nouveaux peuples et de nouvelles cultures qui fait notre force. C'est pourquoi j'ai déclaré avec fierté que 2016 était l'année de la réconciliation à Winnipeg. J'espère que cela nous permettra de poursuivre une discussion ouverte et de continuer à mettre l'accent sur l'inclusion et la compréhension dans nos écoles ainsi que dans la collectivité en général.

Ce printemps, je vais commencer une tournée des écoles secondaires afin de partager ma vision et mon enthousiasme pour notre ville, tout en mettant l'accent sur l'importance de l'engagement civique et de la diversité dans notre collectivité. J'ai également fait l'annonce de la première bourse d'études du maire remise pour le leadership communautaire – un programme de bourses pour les jeunes qui exercent une influence positive et significative dans leur communauté. Pour en savoir davantage, rendez-vous à l'adresse www.mayorbowman.ca/contact/mayors-scholarship (site en anglais seulement).

Au nom de la Ville de Winnipeg et de mes collègues au conseil municipal, nous sommes heureux de poursuivre notre partenariat, et je vous souhaite encore de nombreuses années remplies de succès.

Cordialement,
Maire Brian Bowman
Ville de Winnipeg

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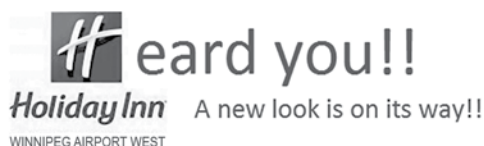
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School Leadership in a Democratic Society Requires Standing Up for Politics

By Joel Westheimer

Much has been written about what schools in democratic societies should do, but here is one characteristic that I believe is essential: Schools in democratic societies must engage students with contemporary political controversies.

If we are to educate for real democratic citizenship, then students need practice in entertaining multiple perspectives and viewpoints on important issues that affect our lives. These issues can sometimes be controversial. But education in a democratic society requires embracing that kind of controversy so that citizens can engage in dialogue and work together toward understanding and enacting the most sensible policy decisions possible.

Why would we expect adults, even members of Parliament, to be able to intelligently and compassionately discuss different viewpoints in the best interests of their constituents if schoolchildren never or rarely get that opportunity in school? It is only by engaging with political issues of concern that students can gain experiences with the kinds of skills in critical analysis and debate on which democracy depends.

Yet the education reform rhetoric employed by politicians and policy makers too often steers the conversation in exactly the wrong direction. We often hear that schools should remain “above politics” or that we should “keep politics out of schools.” I think we should put it back in.

Democratic Citizenship Requires More Than Basic Skills

Across Canada, a great deal of discussion has been focused recently on so-called 21st Century competencies built on the “foundations” of literacy and numeracy. There is real risk here that this reform effort will simply default into a back-to-the basics movement under the guise of curriculum redesign that once again emphasizes memorization and regurgitation and that runs counter to almost everything we know from education research about how to make teaching and learning meaningful.

We live in a time when facts are at our fingertips in seconds. Smart phones and other electronic devices make the acquisition of information easy. The hard part is teaching students how to sift through that

information and think deeply about its origins, potential bias or viewpoints, and its value. Students in the 21st Century do not suffer from a lack of information but rather from an overwhelming flood of it!

Of course, nobody is against children knowing the basics. I have never encountered a teacher or parent or administrator who boldly proclaimed themselves a member of the group “Teachers Against Kids Learning How to Add” or “School Principals in Support of Illiteracy.” Everybody supports children knowing the basics. But a focus on the basics to the exclusion of all other educational goals makes for a profoundly impoverished view of education. It relegates important issues of debate and concern to the margins of the students’ experience. Ironically, excluding politically contentious material from the curriculum greatly diminishes learning of basic skills as well. We know from research that engaging students with materials that have resonance in social and political life results in deeper and fuller understanding.

The goals of K to 12 education have been shifting steadily away from preparing active and engaged public citizens and toward more narrow goals of career preparation and individual economic gain. Pressures from policymakers, business groups, philanthropic foundations and parents, and a broad cultural shift in educational priorities, have resulted in schools being seen primarily as conduits for individual success and, increasingly, lessons aimed at exploring democratic responsibilities and politics have been crowded out. Much of the current education reform is limiting the kinds of teaching and learning that can develop the attitudes, skills, knowledge and habits necessary for a democratic society to flourish.

In too many schools, ever more narrow curriculum frameworks emphasize preparing students for standardized assessments in math and literacy. At the same time many schools are shortchanging the social studies, history and even basic citizenship education. Moreover, higher-achieving students, generally from wealthier neighborhoods, are receiving a disproportionate share of the kinds of citizenship education that sharpen students’ thinking about issues of public debate and concern. This demographic

We often hear that schools should remain “above politics” or that we should “keep politics out of schools.” I think we should put it back in.

divide—what some scholars have called the “civic opportunity gap”—results in unequal distribution of opportunities to practice democratic engagement.

Curricular approaches that spoon-feed students to succeed on narrow academic tests teach students that broader critical thinking and questioning is optional. In other words, the challenge to foster thoughtful consideration and analysis of contemporary problems has all too often been replaced by the single-minded drive to make students better test-takers, rather than better citizens.

To make matters worse, North American culture beyond our schools now sees politics as something unseemly. The current U.S. presidential primaries are on my mind as I write this, and the Republican debate circus in particular has done a great deal to entrench this vision of politics as dirty. Being political has become an insult, as if “politics” were a four-letter word. If someone is accused of being political these days, it’s like saying little more than that he or she is a mud-slinging candidate running for political office for self-aggrandizement. Education, in this way of thinking, should not advance “politics” but rather should reinforce some unified notion of truth that supports—without dissent—officially accepted positions.

Time to Re-embrace Politics

It is not difficult to understand, then, why we often hear that schools should be “above politics” or that we should keep politics out of school. Although there is no shortage of examples of dirty politics, casting all politics in such a light denies the more noble origins of the concept. Politics is the way in which people with different values from a variety of backgrounds and interests can come together to negotiate their differences and clarify places where values conflict.

Politics is, as Bernard Crick observed in his classic work *In Defence of Politics*,

“a great and civilizing activity.” To accept the importance of politics is to strive for deliberation and a plurality of views rather than a unified perspective. If we are to educate thoughtful, civically engaged students, we must reclaim the important place for politics in classrooms in schools.”

Being political means embracing the kind of controversy and ideological sparring that is the engine of progress in a democracy and that gives education social meaning. The idea that “bringing politics into it” (now said disdainfully) is an educationally suspicious act is, perhaps, the biggest threat to engaging students in thoughtful discussion.

It is precisely this aspect of politics with which educators wrestle. While many see education as an opportunity to teach the critical and deliberative skills that are consistent with democratic citizenship and enable students to participate effectively in contentious public debates, others are uncomfortable with teaching approaches that encourage dissent and critique of current policies.

There’s a saying among teachers: Everybody likes to teach critical thinking, but nobody wants a school full of critical thinkers. Current education reform indicates that policymakers are taking this tongue-in-cheek dictum far too seriously. Although education rhetoric almost always touts the importance of critical thinking, the policies that actually affect classroom teaching belie a different agenda. Because of a myopic focus on testing in math and literacy, it is becoming more and more difficult to make time for deep consideration of important ideas and controversies.

Social studies scholar Stephen Thornton notes that by “critical thinking” school officials too often mean that students should passively absorb as “truth” the critical thinking already completed by someone else. Students are being asked to become proficient in adding numbers,

but not at thinking about what those numbers add up to—in other words, how their learning connects to broader concerns about the common good.

Manitoba educators should be relatively proud of their resistance to at least the worst of standardized testing regimens that strip schooling of its democratic goals. But no province has been immune to the cultural shifts that demand accountability at the expense of rich and varied curricula and professionalized teaching staff. Standardization, after all, means making everything the same. That makes it exceedingly difficult to allow controversial issues to permeate the classroom. True citizenship education will share common features, but will always be rooted in local concerns that draw on passion of teachers and students, as well as their interests and experiences.

The idea that we must keep politics out of the classroom in order to improve it is a myth. Next time you hear someone say “keep politics out of the school,” remind them that political discussion and debate is the engine of a democratic society.

Joseph Campbell famously expounded on the role of myths in creating a sense of awe, wonder and gratitude. Myths have the power to uplift and provoke thinking about possibilities that are not yet realized. The myth that we must protect children from political ideas, however, has the opposite effect. In fact, our culture is now suffused with so many damaging myths about schools and classroom practice that many of the worst ideas for education reform have grown out of the false beliefs these myths keep alive.

In my most recent book, *What Kind of Citizen: Educating Our Children for the Common Good* (Teachers College Press, 2015), I take on seven common myths about schools because I believe that all educators have a responsibility to help the public understand the damage these enduring myths cause for schools. School and district leaders have important roles to play in this regard. It is a truism that myths are based not on evidence but on unproven beliefs. That’s why efforts to demonize teachers, wrest school control from educators, and create an ever more restrictive curriculum thrive—not on evidence, but on myths.

Yet, teachers who work tirelessly in our schools demonstrate the power of evidence to lay damaging myths to rest. I have spent time with countless educators who, in fact, have filled me with awe and a sense of what is possible in our schools. There are a myriad of ways to teach the skills of democratic thinking and civic engagement. Schools do not need to avoid controversy and politics, and they can teach students to participate in civic and community life in creative and provocative ways. What citizenship education requires is a strong public commitment to support the kinds of schools that strengthen democratic life and that educate our children for the common good. And we need school leaders who bring that vision to life. ■

Joel Westheimer is education columnist for CBC Radio’s Ottawa Morning and Ontario Today shows, is a University Research Chair in Democracy and Education at the University of Ottawa, and is author of What Kind of Citizen: Educating Our Children for the Common Good (Teachers College Press, 2015) from which this article is adapted.



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Citizenship Mathematics

By Dr. Ralph T. Mason

What can students in an Essential Mathematics course tell us about the development of citizenship? Too frequently, school activities that foster a sense of social responsibility, such as student council and fund-raising activity, are left to the top academic students.

This article describes a teaching experiment that provided other students a chance to engage as leaders in their school. A richer understanding of citizenship as an aspect of their personal identities emerged. Their experiences might have something to offer to our shared understanding of citizenship education.

The Context

Miami School in Prairie Rose School Division* has approximately one homeroom of students in each grade, kindergarten to Grade 12. Too often, articles about high school programs in small schools feature the challenges associated with

offering a full program in a school that must accommodate all grades with so few high school students and staff. For instance, offering a range of high school mathematics courses in each grade often requires combined classes, such as Grade 10 and 12 Essentials Mathematics, in the same class. Staffing such a broad program calls on flexibility from high school teachers such as Craig Blagden, prepared as a social studies teacher but willing to teach Essential Mathematics as well.

This story presents such features in a different light. On one level, it is a story of the opportunities afforded by a school with all of the community's children in one building. It is a story of educational possibilities with teachers that have long-term relationships that encourage students to take risks outside their comfort zone. And it is a story of how a teacher with an identity in two subject areas can draw together the deep goals of two subject areas—an understanding of what it means to become a citizen and a belief in oneself as a learner of mathematics.

It began when Craig, who was concerned with how disengaged his Essentials Mathematics classes were with school activities, mentioned the matter to me. Craig was completing a Master of Education program in mathematics education at the time, and I was his advisor. We decided to think together about it, and the Citizenship Mathematics program was born.

The Citizenship Mathematics Project

At its core, the instructional program involved pairs of Essentials Mathematics students engaging Grade 3 to 6 students within enjoyable contexts that naturally included the concept of multiplication. For example, in *Race to 50*, the younger students, playing as a team against the Essentials students, would roll two dice and place a tile on a hundreds board to advance the specified amount toward the "finishing line."

Then it was the Essentials Mathematics students' turn—and they ALWAYS moved seven squares. As

the younger students placed a new tile each turn, the sequence of tiles showed their irregular progress toward 50. The Essential Mathematics students' tiles showed the regular seven-each-time progression of 7, 14, 21, 28, and so on. *Race to 50* was just one of more than 20 activities called *PennyFlower Math*, all designed to let kids experience the sevens sequence in a variety of authentic contexts and a variety of forms. Students were able to engage in the seven-times-tables in non-traditional non-threatening ways, and build a richer repertoire of images and examples about the meaning of multiplication.

But this is a story of an emerging sense of citizenship, not mathematics. Let's start at the beginning. Craig and I introduced the Essentials Mathematics students to the project in an all-day workshop that led them to experience approximately 20 activities that provided foundational experiences with the sevens sequence. They engaged nervously, partly because of their own lack of confidence in their times-tables recall—they all described their experiences learning times-tables as consisting only of various memorization drills which had had varying degrees of effectiveness with the multiplication facts, but had convinced almost all of them that math was hard and boring.

Then they were told of the upcoming activity with the younger students. The Essentials students would lead the Grade 3 to 6 students during the 20-minute silent reading period every other day for four weeks. Each pair of Essentials students would lead a small group of about six students from the Grade 3 to 6 classes. The Essentials students would have to choose activities from the long list that they had only just experienced, according to the students' interests and needs.

I started to call the Essentials students "math citizens," partly because it was important to them that were not going to have to be teachers. They would not be instructing the "little kids" (a term they adopted to refer to the Grade 3 to 6 students). Their role was to entice the students to play, to encourage them to

engage in the activities and in conversation about them. Because they knew they'd have a partner, they thought that they could handle the small groups of students—maybe. But they were NOT confident.

Once the project began, the Essentials students got to know the little kids in their groups by playing the games with them and chatting about them together. Although the role was challenging, their confidence grew quickly. When the project was scheduled to end, the Essentials students requested that it continue. We and the teachers agreed to an additional four weeks.

Craig and I insisted that they get the little kids to do five-minute writing at the end of each session, responding to a question developed in advance by the Essentials students with our help. Questions included "What made *Multiplication Golf* so interesting?" and "Where's the math in *PennyFlowers*?" The Essentials students wrote responses to each little kid and gave it to them at the beginning of the next day.

Meanwhile, the Essentials students wrote to me and Craig once a week in response to a question we posed to them. We responded directly to their

requests for strategies for challenging students, and helped them to select activities that would help kids understand multiplication in richer ways. But as with all good teaching, it wasn't so much the activities—it was the relationship-building that mattered most.

Over time, the writing of the Essentials students grew longer and more intense. Their concerns for supporting all of the little kids in their group deepened, and we encouraged them to think strategically about how to respect and guide each of them. At times, it became a chance to help students think about challenging situations. One such letter from myself to two students is shown at the bottom of this page.

The interactive writing was time-consuming. Yet, our replies were opportunities to sympathize, to encourage and to coach. We also saw the writing as a significant form of thinking informally about the effects of the program on the math citizens. And it gave Craig and me food for thought.

The Voices of Diverse Students on In-school Citizenship

Beyond referring to the Essentials students as "math citizens," we never defined or talked about what the words

To: Carla and Allison

From: Dr. Mason, University of Manitoba

Date: April 25

Thanks for writing about the children you assisted in your role as math citizens, Allison and Carla.

Allison, you describe Thompson as understanding almost everything you taught him. You suggest that he deserves credit for that, because he is very smart. You also mention that you appreciated the way he interacted with you. He was good with the Race to Seventy. I wonder if that was because he remembered the sequence of numbers, or if he had a sense of the flow, the pattern in the sequence.

Carla, you had the pleasure of describing Stephen. I think it's tragic when a person constantly uses negative judgment of those around him and the activities they provide. It's a way to push the world away. He pushed you away quite aggressively, I'd say, if he even went as far as insulting not just the activities but you. It's hard to help people like Thompson and Stephen. It takes thought, planning, and attention to details. But it's including ALL persons in an activity that's really hard, when some of those persons make it painful for everyone. Stephen's still a kid, and it will take time for him to learn to change the style of interaction he has chosen for himself. I wonder if he might somehow have benefited by the style of interaction that you and Allison provided. Even if he didn't show any evidence of it, we can hope.

might mean until the project had ended. We provided an opportunity for the high school students to do something worthwhile and challenging, something citizen-like. And they were welcomed to form their own meanings.

In the follow-up interviews with each pair of math citizens, the students described how their confidence grew, and how excited they were to see kids succeeding with mathematical activities and ideas because of them. Many talked about the effectiveness of the activities, giving credit to their qualities as “fun” or “different.” They talked about how different this approach to learning math was from the opportunities they had had when they were younger. Many talked about how important it was that the little kids had seen them as different from their regular teachers, outside the authority of the school.

They were all positive about their experiences. So, we asked them if it felt like citizenship to them. In their closing interviews, the students gave their own answers to that question.

- Darlene, one of the Grade 10 math citizens, was surprised and moved by her success helping Grades 3 and 4 students:

The citizenship experience for me has been more of a learning thing. I'm learning how to understand the way that the children think, and what interests them, when something bores them they tend to goof off more. It kinda makes me want to have something to do with early childhood development so I can get these children into math or whatever, earlier, teaching them that it's not all that hard. I've seen the look on the children's faces when they finally get the answer right, and it's a good one. This was a good thing to do.

- Before the project started, Devin, a Grade 12 math citizen, had said two things vehemently at the beginning of the project: “I’m afraid they’ll be smarter than me,” and “I don’t like working with kids!” By the closing interview, he’d changed his mind: *It showed us a new way to think and gave us new people skills and umm, I enjoy working with kids more now*

than before and it gave them, it showed them how to think of math in another way, that there's an easier way to figure it out. So, the benefits on both sides, were really worthwhile.

- Kelly, a Grade 12 student, had thought about citizenship beyond the confines of the project itself:

Me: You did something that was citizenship, but did you learn about citizenship?

Kelly: I think I already knew about it, but yeah I learned to value it. Citizenship is not just helping out little kids with their math though. It's like, citizenship can go far, it's a wide, wide word. I didn't know it, but I was just as much a citizen of the school before this project, and it's not because I helped little kids for a while. Being a citizen, that's who you are, and they can't take that away from you.

Teaching Citizenship as Identity-Making

How do you learn what it can mean to be a citizen? In this project,

students extended themselves beyond their comfort zone to help others achieve their goals. They paid close attention to the people they were helping. They adjusted their own thinking along the way to become more effective. Most important of all, they had opportunities to see the results of their actions as citizens. To foster the development of our students’ individual identities as citizens, we can lead them into acts of citizenship and coach them to interpret those experiences in their own terms. ■

Ralph Mason is a professor of education at University of Manitoba.

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Making the Connection Between the Canadian Museum for Human Rights and Citizenship Education



By Mireille Lamontagne, and
Matthew RçRae

Several years ago, Andréanne Paquet was living in Montreal. As part of her job, Andréanne visited grade schools to speak with children about respecting difference and ending bullying. Students were receptive to her message but Andréanne noticed that when it

came to Muslims—Muslim women in particular—some people were less willing to accept diversity and difference. Muslim women who chose to wear the hijab, a headcovering veil or scarf, made some students uncomfortable. Andréanne wanted to probe the reason behind people's discomfort with the hijab and she decided to do something about it.

In 2010, working with a photographer and over 50 Quebec Muslim women

who choose to wear the veil, Andréanne created the *Ce qui nous voile* (What Veils Us) project to challenge misconceptions about women who wear the hijab. It featured photographs of women who wear the veil, accompanied by testimony from the women about why they wear the hijab and what they have experienced while wearing it. Special nights were organized where the women themselves would be there so that the public could meet with

them and begin a dialogue. Through this, Andreanne hoped people would begin to question their assumptions about the veil. The event encouraged attendees to see past the veil, to look at themselves as well, and at what veils *us all*—what prevents us from achieving a more harmonious coexistence with those around us.

The story of *Ce qui nous voile* is one of hundreds of human rights stories told inside the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. This story is in the *Actions Count* gallery, alongside stories of other Canadians who have worked to make a positive difference—like the story of Travis Price and David Shepherd, two Nova Scotia high-school students who created Pink Shirt Day after seeing a fellow student being bullied. Or the story of the Franco-Manitoban School Division, which was created in 1994 when Manitoba's Francophone community asserted its linguistic right to an education in French.

All of these stories teach us about what it means to be an active, engaged citizen. At the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, citizenship education is at the heart of what we do. We are building a culture of respect for human rights and for each other that focuses on understanding the connection between respect, rights and the responsibilities of Canadian and global citizenship.

This is reflected not just in the storytelling you will find in our galleries, but in our educational programming. We recognize that democracies need active, informed and responsible citizens; citizens who can and will contribute to their communities and to the political process. At the Museum, we believe that providing strong and effective citizenship education starts with raising students' and teachers' consciousness and competence around human rights because human rights education and citizenship education are inextricably linked. If students come to understand that even the smallest of actions truly do count and that every one of us has the power to make a difference through our actions, then we are creating a solid foundation for democratic citizenship.

Becoming Engaged Citizens

Student-led and student-centred projects have proven to be some of

the most effective ways to learn about human rights and citizenship at school because they show students that they have a voice in their school and community and can assert their rights. Human rights education includes citizenship education and involves all the 21st Century skills needed to be a positive force in Canadian society and successful in today's world. Students explore Canadian values and develop competencies in areas such as critical thinking, problem solving, reasoning, communication, initiative, team work, negotiation, debate, creativity, imagination, use of technology and media literacy—skills that will serve them well as they enter the modern workforce as adults that are active in their communities.

In order to prepare young people for an active and informed role in our complex and constantly-changing world, it is not enough to teach students *about* human rights. Knowing your rights and freedoms is only part of the equation. Children need to understand that rights come with responsibilities, which is why it is important to integrate it into their day-to-day lives or through sustained projects and actions as opposed to one-offs. This builds empathy as students learn *through* peoples' human rights experiences, including their own. At the Museum, we use an interactive and inquiry-based approach where students work cooperatively and independently to engage in investigation, discuss and debate, all the while not even aware that they are learning the very tools they will need to take action *for* human rights.

Like Andréanne's *Ce qui nous voile* project, human rights education encourages students to ask questions and to challenge their own assumptions. It gets them to think for themselves and do something about it.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is committed to providing educational programming that actively engages young people in their rights and responsibilities as citizens. This is reflected in the structure of our galleries, such as Actions Count, but it goes far beyond the walls of the Museum.

Canadian Human Rights Toolkit – An Online Hub of Resources for Educators

We are aware that it is not possible for every student to visit the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in person. That's why the Museum is reaching into every classroom in this country through online programming. We know that to get to students, we must first reach out to teachers. To this end, the Museum partnered with the Canadian Teacher's Federation (CTF) to survey 2,585 teachers from across Canada in 2013. We asked how, when and why they incorporate human rights teaching into their classrooms.

The results showed that while many human rights educational resources exist online, it is not always clear which resources are reliable or balanced. There is also an acknowledged gap in resources designed for elementary students and for students learning in French. For example, for every 200 educational resources on human rights accessible on the Internet in English, there are only 15 available in French. Our conclusion was that there is a pressing need for convenient access to resources educators can trust on human rights in both official languages.

To meet this need, we created the *Canadian Human Rights Toolkit*. Built in partnership with the CTF, the Toolkit is a central online hub for human rights education resources that is free to all K to Grade 12 educators across the country and the world. Educators can search the toolkit for teacher-reviewed resources and tools focusing on human rights lesson plans and activities, teacher guides, manuals, handbooks, study guides and more. Starting with an initial selection of more than 200 resources, the Toolkit will continue to grow with time and you can be part of its growth by adding reliable human rights educational resources that you may be aware of and that we may have missed.

Speak Truth to Power Canada – Custom Lessons for the Classroom

Research shows that only one in four Canadian teachers has received any formal training in human rights education. The Museum is responding to this in multiple ways, including offering

teacher training at the Museum, but also by working with others to create a unique new online educational resource called *Speak Truth to Power Canada* (STTP Canada).

Developed in partnership with the CTF, the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the Assembly of First Nations, and the Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights organization, STTP Canada features the powerful stories of 12 Canadian human rights defenders. It is available in French and English, and certain lesson plans are also available in Inuktitut, Cree and Mohawk.

STTP Canada includes original human rights lesson plans, a timeline of 100 Moments in Human Rights History, a Short History of Human Rights and plain language legal instruments, such as the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* to support teaching in the classroom. It encourages students and teachers to identify as human rights defenders by connecting them to actual Canadians who have advanced human rights.

In choosing the 12 Canadian Defenders, we looked for individuals that students would be able to see as role models, regardless of where they come from or what their background is. Students can learn about Canadians like Remzi Cej, a former Kosovar refugee who became the Chair of the Newfoundland and Labrador Human Rights commission; or Mary Simon, an Inuit woman from Northern Quebec who has represented her people to the Canadian Government and the United Nations; or Jeremy Dias, who experienced severe bullying and discrimination because of his ethnicity and sexual orientation but went on to found the Canadian Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity. The purpose of STTP Canada is to help teachers and young people realize that anyone can be a human rights defender, including themselves.

But this is only a beginning. We will add more defenders, lesson plans and tools over time. We hope this resource will launch discussions and have positive ripple effects in schools and communities everywhere.

School Visits to the Museum

Our school programs offer children the chance to experience the Museum first-hand. With the help of a guide, students visit exhibits, participate in activities, explore human rights concepts, interact with each other and with technology. School programs are designed for K to Grade 12 and are curriculum based, age-appropriate, inclusive and accessible.

For Early Years, a program called “My Rights, Our Rights” is about learning the rights we all have as human beings for the first time and discussing basic concepts, such as fairness, sharing, cooperation and inclusion. Using movement and sound students learn how their actions impact others and become aware of how they can show respect for each other’s rights.

For Middle Years, the “Be an Upstander” program fosters the understanding of how rights come with responsibilities. Students discover how others have taken action for human rights, as they are presented with human rights defenders and champions and learn how individuals can go from being bystanders to upstanders. Then they are challenged to take action themselves using an interactive table game that presents them with different human rights scenarios where they make the decisions about what to do next.

For Senior Years, a number of different programs are available to students, each focusing on a different aspect of human rights and citizenship education. Topics include Indigenous peoples’ rights; key milestones and events in Canadian history; human rights debate and the law; women’s rights and gender equality; and major international human rights violations. Each program encourages students to express their thoughts and feelings, to familiarize themselves with politics, history and law, and to engage in respectful dialogue.

By the end of this school year, 50,000 students will have participated in our school programs since we launched them in January 2015. We have received plenty of positive and constructive feedback, and we are continually looking for ways to tailor

programming to best meet the needs of schools. Many teachers have praised the balance of learning and doing, the interactive activities, and the age-appropriate and inclusive nature of our programs. Bookings are open to all schools on a first come, first served basis and we will be launching new school programs next fall.

We are also piloting a national student program to bring high school and post-secondary students from across the country to experience the Museum in person to learn about human rights and the importance of active citizenship, in which 500 students have already participated.

Creating Human Rights Defenders

To create a generation of human rights defenders, we need active and involved citizens. We want to raise more Mary Simons, more Remzi Cejs, more Jeremy Dias and more Andr  anne P  quets—individuals who took responsibility and made their actions count. The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is committed to developing the skills and aptitudes that will allow children to achieve their full potential, and that foster respect for justice, diversity, democracy and the law. We want these children, when presented with a challenge, to react as Andr  anne did in 2010—to ask themselves how they can get involved. ■

Mireille Lamontagne is the Manager of Education Programs and Special Projects at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. Matthew McRae is a Communications Advisor and has also worked in Research and Curation at the Museum. He is currently completing a PhD in Canadian history.

The Canadian Museum for Human Rights is the first museum in the world solely dedicated to the evolution, celebration and future of human rights. It is the first national museum in Canada to be built outside the National Capital Region. Using immersive multi-media technology and other innovative approaches, the Museum will create inspiring encounters with human rights as part of a visitor experience unlike any other.

Developing a Deeper Understanding of Ethical Issues: The High School Ethics Bowl

By Michele Polinuk (with LSSD students Ava Truthwaite and Chanel Hoium)

How do you prepare for a competition where there are no “right” answers? Six high school teams prepared for and participated in the Regional High School Ethics Bowl, held December 2015. Many hours were spent training, researching and practicing in the lead up to the event. The teams arrived with great anticipation of the day ahead. Who will walk away the winner at the end of the day? How will this competition help prepare the citizens of tomorrow?

The Regional High School Ethics Bowl

Manitoba is the only province in Canada that hosts a regional competition, with the winning team securing a spot at the National High School Ethics Bowl in the United States. This is the second year that the Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties has hosted this competition.

As with most competitions, rules exist. The emphasis with the ethics bowl is on collaborating not only as a team, but also with the opposing side. The work leading up to the competition develops skills that lead to a depth of thinking regarding ethical issues. Thought-provoking scenarios and questions provide opportunities for inquiry. Although the first instinct is to argue and debate, participants are required to be critical listeners and respond with a strength-based approach to the other team. A more collegial and collaborative stance occurs with the goal to have



the teams essentially work together to present a stronger case.

Cases are provided ahead of time to allow for research and determining the central moral question. Multiple viewpoints must be considered. Using researched facts, the team moves toward agreement on a position for the case. The students are judged on breadth and depth of thought on the ethical scenario. For the competition, the team does not know on which cases they will be commenting.

Who Participated?

Teams from schools consist of up to five students, with named alternates. At the Manitoba Regional High School Ethics Bowl

2015 competition, the Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School (LSRCSS) team was preparing to meet up against Miles MacDonnell Collegiate, River East Collegiate, College Pierre-Elliott Trudeau, Springfield Collegiate Institute and Churchill High School. This would be the first time that students from LSRCSS had the opportunity to participate and these highly involved students were very enthusiastic about this competition.

Ava Truthwaite, a Grade 11 student, and Chanel Hoium, a Grade 12 student, both from LSRCSS were interviewed and provided insights as to how they felt before, during and after the experience.

Participants from LSRCSS's team listen to another student's thoughts and opinions.



Preparing for the Competition

The group of students researched each case individually and prepared their information to be able to share and discuss at meetings. How did they prepare for the competition when there was no “right answer” to the ethical question? Ava Truthwaite responded, “For me, it was a matter of looking at the situation from every possible aspect we could.” She also mentioned that the team was comprised of very diverse individuals with different interests and life ideals. The diversity of the team helped to consider the many perspectives on any given topic.

Chanel indicated that many discussions did end up with agreement on a final perspective for an ethical situation, but participants didn’t always have 100 per cent strong feelings on the subject. They came up with a way to answer the question the best that they could.

Ava agreed, saying, “I had to learn to understand that not everyone would think this way, and I had to figure ‘why’ that is, and then apply it to our presentation.”

As the competition day neared, students were asking each other to meet before and after school, along with most noon hours. The students were worried about “rambling”—they were nervous—but what was most evident was the enthusiasm and passion for the cases that they had been researching. Positions were developed and validated through

their research and interviews. The ethics bowl process was practiced with the group dividing into “Team A” and “Team B” to share, confer and respond. Before they knew it, the Ethics Bowl Competition day arrived.

The Big Day

Snowy and blustery conditions didn’t keep this team from arriving from Selkirk! The students rode together in one car, so that they could mentally prepare together one last time. This group of individuals truly bonded as a team. They arrived excited, nervous, scared, overwhelmed and yet calm.

Chanel shared, “It made me feel like I was making a small step towards something that I will possibly do in the future.”

In practices and at the Ethics Bowl Competition, Ava came across as a very confident Grade 11 student, when in fact she admitted “I was nervous, as I think everyone was, but not in the way that I expected. I think I was most worried that we would be presented with an opinion/question that we honestly would not know how to approach.”

The itinerary for the day included an opening ceremony followed by three rounds. The rounds took place in three classrooms with a moderator and three judges. The moderator helped ease the tension in the room, while sharing final instructions. A specific procedure was followed, with

Team A having five minutes to present their case with only one member allowed to speak at a time. Then Team B was allowed to confer for one minute, followed by three minutes to comment on Team A’s presentation.

Ava noted that this wasn’t a debate, and more of a collaboration of opinions and thoughts, rather than a battle of whose opinion was “right.” They were able to build off each other’s answers and achieve the best response possible. Team A then had one minute to confer followed by three minutes to respond to Team B’s comments.

The judges then had the opportunity to ask Team A some questions. Judges scored Team A’s response and then the process repeated for Team B. Each judge had a score sheet but there was no feedback provided to the students after each round. There were three rounds, so each team faced three of the other teams in the competition. The final round included the top two scoring teams.

Challenges and Broken Hearts

“The most challenging aspect for me in this experience was having to think in a way that was completely opposed to my personal belief. For this kind of situation, I had to think objectively, and often, completely disregard any personal feeling that I had towards the topic we were discussing,” shared Ava.

The planning and preparation stage helped the students have their own debates about the topics, each with different perspectives. The students were challenged to consider other people’s thoughts and feelings towards the situation, rather than only thinking about how they personally felt. Ava believes that this experience has helped her become much more considerate than before.

Even with all the practice and preparation, the students found out that it was impossible to be “fully” prepared. There is no way of knowing which scenario you’ll be asked to address and what questions the judges might ask. The students were

told that this was not a debate, and through the three sessions, they were surprised to the extent that it was truly a collaboration and the teams built the cases from each other's answers to achieve the best response.

During the competition, the teams were not provided with the results after each round. All teams waited in anticipation to hear the ranking of the teams. All scores and wins were tallied and the top two teams were announced. The LSRCSS team received third place and were very disappointed in not making the finals. The team felt that they responded with thorough and well thought-out positions.

For Chanel, one of the most challenging aspects was not only the loss but the realization that they would no longer be meeting to prepare for the competition. The students had invested many hours personally and as a team to prepare for this competition. The day was stressful, not only driving in stormy conditions, but in anticipation of what was to come. Chanel believes "The best way to overcome stress and fear is to not think about it and just laugh." Laughing was difficult when the team learned that they were not competing in the final. The car ride home was difficult until Chanel shared that they "just had a laugh, blasted the music and sang their hearts out."

Their hearts were broken individually and as a team, but in the end they all agree that they were proud of each other and grateful for this "amazing, inspiring and life changing" experience. In Chanel's words, "It doesn't matter what the outcome of the day is, hard work and dedication leaves you feeling more proud and inspiring than anything."

For Ava, "The loss is not what defines us, it is what we said and our attitude towards the whole process that will leave this experience to be one of the best moments of my life."

Impact Going Forward

The students and alternates that participated were all winners as they developed a deeper understanding

of the ethical issues impacting our world. They experienced an opportunity to develop strong citizenship skills of collaboration, to look at all sides of issues, to gain critical thinking strategies and to keep an open mind. Active listening skills were also a requirement during the competition. These students will be more apt to become actively engaged citizens, especially when faced with moral decisions.

This is true for Ava, whose perspective has changed with this experience. She says she now looks at life through a different lens, noting, "This event has caused me to consider more of what other people feel and think about an issue, rather than only thinking about how I feel about it."

Chanel won't be as quick to jump to conclusions and solve problems immediately. "I will try to understand all angles of a story, even if it means trying to understand where that bad guy is coming from. Everyone deserves a chance to explain

themselves and we shouldn't be so quick to jump to a final conclusion."

We can all learn from opportunities when we have conversations and network with others. As educators, we can learn from our students. Consider this advice from Chanel: "Other people will be affected by the decisions you make, so when you can, think ethically. Standing up to racism and bullying, fighting for human rights and gender equality, and thinking of others is so important now. In the end, we need happiness and empathy in the world and it starts with you to make an impact."

The comments shared from Ava and Chanel are evidence that the opportunity to participate in the Manitoba High School Ethics Bowl had a profound impact, helping prepare them as contributing citizens to make a difference. ■

Michele Polinuk is Assistant Superintendent at Lord Selkirk School Division.



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Everybody has the Right



This mosaic was created by students across the division, and represents individual views of what rights and responsibilities mean to them.



A student meets Winnipeg Mayor, Brian Bowman, during a student-focused division-wide summit.

By Rob Riel, and Chantelle Cotton

Winnipeg School Division has deep roots in its practices of educating our youth about human rights, and their responsibilities both in the local and global contexts. Several years ago we created a sustainable development policy that embeds the indigenous perspective of making choices that will not harm the next seven generations.

Additionally, and most successfully, when our city opened the doors to the Canadian Museum of Human Rights we created a division-wide, ongoing program called “Everybody has the Right.” This program changes every year according to the needs, interests and emerging concerns of our society. All students, staff and community members are invited to participate within their local schools and across the division.

Our division has teacher-created, mandatory human rights units that

begin in Grade 7 and continue to Grade 10. These units are being taught under the Social Studies and English curriculums, but also embed Education for Sustainable Development, Literacy with ICT, and use the inquiry model by posing essential questions. Through hands-on experiential learning, multimedia tools and research, students are supported to answer the essential questions as well as to begin critically questioning more of what they witness in their own neighborhood, across the country and around the world. These units gradually give them the tools to act as independent critically-thinking citizens of the 21st Century.

In Grade 7 our students are asked the following questions:

1. What are human rights?
2. Why do we study human rights?
3. What does this mean to me?”

The third question asks each student to deepen their engagement by turning their knowledge into action. According to their age and ability,

the teachers support each child and classroom to actively connect with a topic that resonates with them. These tools give students a chance to use their voice in a safe and effective way as they begin to build lifelong citizenship skills. We aim to create a culture of learning and then doing, when an event, policy, organization or person strikes a chord with each student.

Once our students are given the general overview of human rights and their responsibilities, we continue the work in Grade 8 by asking them to learn more about their own identity. The essential questions are:

1. Who am I and how do I represent myself?
2. How am I perceived by others and how do I perceive others?
3. What does this mean to me and what are my responsibilities now?

Once again this unit asks them to fully consider self and others, and to act towards a just society. We ask them to imagine a world where they are a

part of the solution to the inequity and inequalities that they are witnessing. What do they see as being the problem, why and how will they respond?

By Grade 9 the students have a strong sense of what their human rights and responsibilities are, and how their identity is inter-connected with others in society. We ask the students to research questions such as, "What impact does the Holocaust have on me and my community? How can my prejudicial attitudes and discriminatory practices escalate to violence? What allows some individuals to take a stand against prejudice and injustice, and how does an individual's response reveal his/her character? And, finally, how do beliefs, choices and actions have an impact on the world around us?" Students work through these personal and historical dilemmas using the Holocaust and other genocides as case studies and as a lens into human behaviour.

This reflection deepens when they enter Grade 10 and are asked:

1. How is identity influenced by the relationship with culture, place and community?
2. How is identity shaped by the colonization process?
3. How is Aboriginal identity and Aboriginal cultural diversity being reclaimed and celebrated?
4. In efforts to continuously turn pedagogy into action, the final question is, "What are our roles and responsibilities in supporting reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples within our lives and communities?"

Aside from these four particular units of learning, Winnipeg School Division has committed to implementing and embracing Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) across the entire division. Our policy was written by embedding governance, curriculum, capacity building, facilities/operations and partnerships specifically within so that all who work for and with the Winnipeg School Division are impacted and included in this policy. For example, we have hired an ESD consultant to ensure that ESD becomes an intrinsic part of classroom

instruction, school planning and ongoing job embedded professional development in all levels of the division.


Notably, Winnipeg School Division also has a divisional committee where all the different levels of our education system are represented, from superintendent to building managers to teachers. This committee is tasked with keeping the policy up to date, while building new networks as technologies and innovations bring us closer to being fully, yet justly, sustainable. Most importantly, our Divisional ESD committee is committed to the students of our division and the communities from which they come.

The goal of Winnipeg School Division is that each child graduates knowing that every choice they make has a consequence. We want to instill into the ethos of each child that their decisions carry the weight of the next seven generations. Therefore, the ESD vision is synthesized into the following philosophy, "Enough for All, Forever." Whether you are acting as a consumer of goods or a merchandiser, each choice is critically decided on its final effect on the rest of society.

One of our many examples of authentically embedding ESD into our schools was to be the first school division in Manitoba to build a partnership with Jane Goodall's Roots & Shoots education program. This global youth-led community action program supports an entire school population to act where they see local concerns.

Our final approach to embedding social justice, environmental impacts, mental health, and well-being and sound economical choices, noted at the start of this article, was to create a division-wide program called, "Everybody has the Right." This program originally coincided with the opening of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights during the 2014-2015 school year. A number of students from each school worked together to create a large mosaic that tied their individual view of having rights and acting on its responsibilities into a large collaborative art piece that was on display during the grand opening. This art piece has now been donated to The Children's Hospital of

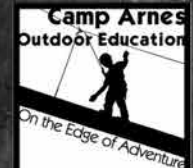
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Winnipeg so that people can continue to be inspired by the voices, images and collaborative efforts that came from our teachers, support staff and students.

During the 2015-2016 school year, our division has moved from the opening of the museum to focusing on "Everybody has the Right... to Celebrate Diversity." This was in response to the infamous *Maclean's* article from January 2015, citing Winnipeg as being the most racist city across Canada. For this year, we have met several times to work on understanding diversity, role-playing empathy and embracing indigenous culture with understanding that strength and depth of compassion also comes from learning about our newcomers.

We have held two division-wide, student-focused summits where Winnipeg Mayor, Brian Bowman, challenged us as individuals and as a division to make the necessary changes towards building respectful and understanding relationships with ourselves and others. We will conclude "Everybody has the Right... to Celebrate Diversity" by meeting at

The Forks on May 20, 2016. A number of students from all 77 schools in our division will march while carrying silk banners that each school has made in response to the need to embed diversity into our way of living, acting and breathing in shared spaces.

During this celebratory diversity march, various student groups will sing, dance or drum us around the The Forks as we proudly share who we are and what we do while living as Treaty People. Aside from the three division-wide gatherings, each school has created school specific goals and tasks in efforts to show commitment and desire towards accepting all who work with us and walk through our doors. Some schools have shown their commitment through public pledges, while others have hosted assemblies, written stories and invited guest speakers to learn about who is being heard in society versus who is not being heard and respected in society.

Finally, "Everybody has the Right" will continue into the 2016-2017 school year as we seek to understand our own identity and its many layers,

while considering the "other." We will work with staff, students and community members to learn how to consider the impact of self upon others when making choices and engaging as a community.

As with every year, there will be room for schools to craft their own vision and learning opportunities under this theme. However, we will continue to gather as large groups to learn from each other by telling each other our stories and, most importantly, being given a place to be heard. We will continue to create collaborative art pieces in order to effectively bring all the varied ages, abilities and histories together in order to make a public statement that Winnipeg School Division is creating socially just, active and engaged students who are prepared for the challenges and opportunities that are presented while living on Treaty One land as treaty people. ■

Rob Riel is Director of Aboriginal Education and Newcomer Services for Winnipeg School Division. Chantelle Cotton is an ESD Consultant with Winnipeg School Division.



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Building a Culture of Respect in Pembina Trails Schools

By Susan Schmidt

Pembina Trails School Division has implemented a focus of “Respect” programming in numerous schools since 2002. The goal of the work in Respect is to continue to develop the culture of safe, caring, inclusive schools and communities by developing Respect agreements and teaching respectful behaviours.

Shortly after the program began, a teacher noted, “I have taught for 30 years and this is the first time in my career where we are all on the same page and students all understand what is expected of them. It took to the end of my career to see this happen. I wish it had been at the beginning.”

The process to be involved in the Respect program has been led by Jane Friesen, Director of Clinical and Extended Programming. Jane works with schools when they identify a need to enhance their programming. Schools send training teams for two days of professional development and the school division has continued to sustain the work through regular meetings and school-based visits with implementation teams. The training and school-based support has been facilitated by Marie Geelen, a consultant from Ontario.

Marie works directly with whole schools and it is magical to see the engagement in the students and staff when they have a voice and input in the culture of the school. Everyone in the school participates in creating definitions of respect and respect agreements to use school-wide. Recently, a school principal stated that, “The involvement of Marie gives me the opportunity to deepen my learning as a leader on how to enhance and strengthen our work in Respect. It is invaluable to have someone in that role.”



These images showcase artwork and initiatives that promote respect in Pembina Trails schools.

The agreements and the definition are created through the process of developing student leaders who lead the school in determining what is important to students and how they would like to see the school. The agreements are thoughtfully developed with the use of inclusive language that all in the school and community can understand and are able to share.

The key success in our schools has been that the agreements have had input from students, staff and parents. They are signed and there is a congruency between the school, the classrooms and the Pembina Trails School Division Standard of Behaviour. When you visit schools involved in the Respect program in Pembina Trails, there is high visibility of the agreements.

Schools have developed a variety of responses in the agreements. We have found that even if the school-wide agreement and the teaching of specific behaviours to clarify the agreements are where a school is at, there has been a change in behaviour and thus a change in culture in the school. School principals in Pembina Trails have reported that when there is consistent language throughout the school, it saves time in the office!

The uniqueness of this work is that each of our schools have developed the programming to reflect their strengths and areas for growth and development.



Many projects come and go in schools and school divisions. The success of the Respect programming in Pembina Trails has been demonstrated through the initiatives that follow.

Strong Implementation Teams

Schools that have developed teams have sustained the program through distributed leadership. A middle school has created a PLC where staff and students meet together to work on school goals. Students who have participated comment, “Students have a voice,” and, “I learned that people can have very diverse opinions and still manage to agree.”

Training for All

The most successful schools have maintained training for all staff, with

new staff receiving training before the start of a school year. Schools observe when common learning in behaviour occurs with all staff, they respond in a unified fashion and students report that they feel safe when there is consistency.

Family Groups

Numerous schools have developed cross-age family groups that work together on a regular basis on the theme of Respect. The implementation teams prepare the lessons for the family groups. Students report looking forward to the time together and they feel safer with the relationships that have been developed.

Common Language

Students and staff report it is clear to them what is expected in the school. Other groups that have reported positive interactions are substitute teachers, lunchroom supervisors, specialists and other guests to the classroom. Classroom teachers report an increase in academic learning and time on task. A guest to one of our schools

commented how amazing it was to go from one place to another in the school where the language and expectations were clear and caring.

Feeder Schools

The model of developing the programming from one school to another has enabled our feeder schools to give feedback that students who have had this experience are stronger in social and emotional development, and the transition from one school to another has been easier for students.

Strong Leadership

Schools that have maintained and enhanced the Respect program in a deep and enriching experience have all had dedicated leaders who continue to lead the school in creating safe, caring and inclusive initiatives.

Leading a school is hard work and sustaining the course of the work in Respect takes dedication, a strong belief in the work and unwavering passion to make a difference for our students.

Pembina Trails School Division is proud of the work our schools have accomplished in developing a culture of respect in our schools.

What's Next?

Where do we go next? Pembina Trails has established a partnership with Dr. Thomas Falkenberg, University of Manitoba, who is collaborating with schools to focus on collecting data on social emotional learning. This next step will assist the division in quantifying the importance of building safe, caring and inclusive schools. We look forward to this partnership and all the opportunities the data will provide us for the future. ■

Susan Schmidt is Assistant Superintendent of Student Services in the Pembina Trails School Division. If you are interested in further information about this project, please contact either Jane Friesen, at jane.friesen@pembinatrails.ca, or Susan Schmidt, at sschmidt@pembinatrails.ca.



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Truth and Reconciliation in Our Schools

Reconciliation must support Aboriginal peoples as they heal from the destructive legacies of colonization that have wreaked such havoc in their lives. But it must do even more. Reconciliation must inspire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples to transform Canadian society so that our children and grandchildren can live together in dignity, peace and prosperity on these lands we now share.

~ Final Report of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada

By Brian O'Leary, and Rebecca Chartrand

How can schools embrace Truth and Reconciliation? How can schools contribute to the transformation of Canadian society envisioned by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission? As educational leaders this requires self-examination, to see the intersections between our professional and personal lives. We must see ourselves as part of an unfolding Canadian story that needs each and every one of us to embrace truth, reconciliation and action.

Historically, over the past 300 years, what Aboriginal students have experienced as education began as a government-driven initiative that targeted First Nations, and to some degree, Métis and Inuit children (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2014). It was an experience for children that was both imposed and regulated by Canadian legislation, and largely led by the political, legal and economic goals of westerners.

Broadly speaking, Aboriginal education as it exists today, emerged from social and political wrangling since Confederation. The concept of education for First Nations children was first negotiated in the Canadian Indian Treaties that began shortly after confederation in the 1870s (Carrs, 2001), but the interpretation of these agreements has

been an ongoing struggle. The first stage of education imposed on First Nations children was paternalistic and followed assimilation policies, which led to the creation of residential schools run mainly by churches under the exclusive jurisdiction of the Federal Government (RCAP, 1996). There was no defined curriculum, no input from First Nations people and no accountability.

Unfortunately, the average Canadian, as well as the average teacher, until recently has been unaware of the controversial history from which Aboriginal education has emerged. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (2015) is the first in our efforts to really understand what happened in these schools through the testimonies of survivors.

Today, we can have the opportunity to improve the educational experience of all children in Canada. Pressure to close the education gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in Canada has led to numerous provincial curricular developments and funding initiatives, such as the Aboriginal Academic Achievement (AAA) grant or Building Students Success with Aboriginal Parents (BBSAP) grants. And, although there is a growing cadre of First Nations, Métis and Inuit educators, we must go beyond the scope of our professional duties to see that Aboriginal education is as much about

reconciliation as it is about academic success for Aboriginal learners. Therefore, we must hold ourselves accountable to the Call for Action outlined in the 94 recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report.

It is important to realize that no two divisions are alike. We cannot overlook the diversity and unique possibilities that are presented within each school division, but there are lessons to be learned when we are willing to take risks that can be applied anywhere. Our initiatives in Seven Oaks School Division (SOSD) build from the possibilities that are presented when we look at the unique make up of our division.

For example, we have the second largest influx of new immigrants. In response, our professional development for teachers includes the illumination of the Battle of Seven Oaks or the 1817 Selkirk Treaty—a pre-confederation treaty with local Indigenous peoples that afforded opportunity for settlement in this area. We have piloted peace building projects in some of our schools that aim to build bridges between Aboriginal peoples and new immigrant families, and have engaged many staff members in a colonization simulation activity that helps us understand the need for reconciliation.

We also have the second highest number of children in care of any school



division in Winnipeg. We have a divisional committee that is working with Child and Family Services (CFS) agencies and community organizations to improve wrap around supports for children in care. We have hosted learning opportunities for foster parents as community building opportunities and work hard to engage children in care in extracurricular activities, including our Pow Wow programming or language revitalization initiatives.

Our initiatives must go beyond what we expect of ourselves as school systems. We must be innovative and always work to build community to ensure that any child entering our schools sees themselves, their race and their culture reflected back in the staff of the school. Twenty years ago, this was not the case.

Twelve years ago, we advertised for an Aboriginal studies teacher for one of our high schools and failed to attract a single candidate from Manitoba. To address this, we had a vision to grow our own teachers. We approached the Winnipeg School Division and found a shared concern and a willing partner. We then approached Manitoba Education and the University of Winnipeg and found support. And this is how The Community Based Aboriginal Teacher Education Program (CATEP) was born.

The program enabled Aboriginal candidates to work as educational assistants while certifying as teachers at the

University of Winnipeg. They take courses one evening a week and every second Saturday. Our goal was simple, we went for it!

We've Changed the Face of our Staff

CATEP has worked for us and it can work for others. As our Aboriginal staff grew in numbers through CATEP we found other staff reclaiming their heritage, tracing family roots, taking out Métis cards or reclaiming treaty status. Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal staff came to embrace their role as allies more fully, which has resulted in a growth in the number of Aboriginal education groups (AEGs) we have in each of our schools.

We have also created a divisional Aboriginal education Path committee, which has representation from each school. The committee meets a minimum of four times each school year to network, share ideas and assess school initiatives up against an Aboriginal education policy we created in 2011.

It's tempting to see the progress through a strategic planning lens, but in reality, our record of engagement and our multitude of initiatives occur as groundswells that often spread to other schools. For example, what started as one after-school Pow Wow club has, this year, turned into 16. Likewise, an after school fiddling club turned into a division-wide fiddling program with 1,200 participants.

We've Had Help

We've benefitted greatly from the partnerships we've established and associations with Aboriginal leaders, such as Justice Murray Sinclair, and scholars, such as Niigaan James Sinclair at the University of Manitoba and Kevin Lamoueux at the University of Winnipeg. We engaged Mary Courchene, a residential schools survivor, career educator and pioneer in Indigenous education to work as our "Elder in Residence."

We've Kept Expectations High

In addition, we've been insistent on keeping all students in the mainstream with access to highly skilled staff. We believe that streaming

students into programs with low expectation and limited opportunities is the worst form of racism. We have avoided this by keeping class sizes reasonable and by delivering support to needy students in the class. We'd rather put an extra teacher in a class than pull a student out. We've also extended the school day and the school year to provide students with additional programming, tutoring, mentoring and support.

Let Them Lead

We find opportunity for all our students and staff to lead. There is no more powerful learning experience than leadership. We find opportunities for students to mentor and lead younger students, to perform for real audiences, and to contribute to both their school and the broader community. This happens naturally in multi-age classes in the early grades and in student leadership, mentoring and service learning in senior years.

Making Aboriginal Education a Priority

We expect that all teachers should be teaching Aboriginal education, as it is fundamental to being Canadian. After all, we would expect our teachers to learn about other subject areas if they were required to teach math, for example. Aboriginal education will continue to be a priority and we must align ourselves with this provincial and national priority.

This is our responsibility as educational leaders, as Canadians and as Treaty People. The Canadian Indian treaties were signed between First Nations people and the Canadian government on behalf of all Canadians, past and present. The Treaties opened up many opportunities, to settle in these lands, to own private property, to raise our families.

As a division, we are working to embrace this truth. **That's reconciliation!** ■

Brian O'Leary is Superintendent of the Seven Oaks School Division. Rebecca Chartrand is an Aboriginal Education Team Leader in the Seven Oaks School Division.

Unpacking Citizenship

in the Classroom

By Joan Badger, and Tara McLauchlan

As you scroll through the Instagram feed of George Waters Middle School, in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division (SJASD), it becomes very clear that the photos are more than just snapshots into the daily events at the middle years level. They tell a story of citizenship, and show a community of learners who believe in caring for the world and for those with whom they share it.

One photo features the smiling face of a father and his two children, recent arrivals to Canada from the Sudan. Another shows students participating in a mystery Skype with classrooms in Iowa and Chile. In recent years, posts like this have become a common story for many schools in the SJASD. These photos reflect a school's ability to engage with not only their immediate community, but the global community that exists beyond the physical school.

There is no doubt that technology has helped play a role in connecting our schools with a larger global context. Social media platforms, such as Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, shrink our vast world and relocate it to a small glowing screen. Here, walls, borders and boundaries no longer exist. However, this access to a wider, global community is not without its challenges.

For the teachers and students in SJASD, this means engaging in deep conversations about what it truly means to be a participant—a citizen—in today's world. This is where the

global initiative, New Pedagogies for Deep Learning (NPDL), began to provide a framework and continuum in which to anchor our thoughts and discussions around the six C's: collaboration, creativity, communication, character, critical thinking, and citizenship. The progressions developed by NPDL, provide a continuum describing each dimension of citizenship, beginning with limited evidence through to proficiency and beyond.

For the purposes of this article, we will focus on our journey with New Pedagogies for Deep Learning, through the lens of citizenship. Particularly, we will discuss how it connects to the synthesis of citizenship to new pedagogies, learning partnerships, and leveraging the digital and learning environment.

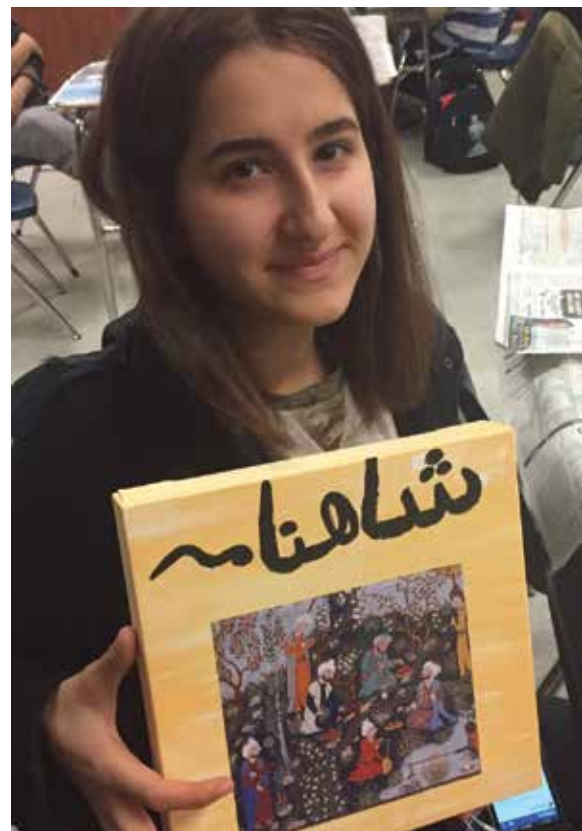
Feeding the Curiosity of Early Learners

Early years learners are full of wonder, and often the simple act of going out for recess or walking through the community can inspire questions, such as, "Where do tears come from?" or "What does #shoallake40 mean?" Since delving into partnership with the New Pedagogies for Deep Learning, the teaching and learning practices at Crestview Elementary have shifted to include pedagogies that promote inquiry and support actively planning for students to acquire skills as defined on the learning progressions of the "C's".

The innate curiosity of our learners, about the natural world, inspired the creation of "Wonder Walls," where



This photo, and the one directly below, shows canvas art created as part of "The Most Beautiful Word" project.



Students are encouraged to explore and be involved with causes that they are passionate about.

students are encouraged to share their questions about the world around them. With teacher guidance, students were able to focus in on questions that would connect with an authentic audience. Teachers could then easily take the questions students had developed about the world and find connections in the curriculum to springboard new knowledge and skills into active problem solving about real-world problems and challenges.

Learning has become seamless as children's questions cross disciplinary boundaries. For example, the question "What does #shoallake40 mean?" inspired actions like advocating for access to clean drinking water for all peoples in Manitoba, and has students in Grades 4 and 5 drawing upon their skills and knowledge in language arts, science, social studies, mathematics, and the arts to improve and represent their understanding.

A learning partnership with Manitoba Keewatinowik Okimakanak (MKO) Grand Chief, Sheila North Wilson, and Shoal Lake #40's Chief, Erwin Redsky, empowered students to ask "how can we help?" Chief Erwin Redsky's response was clear, "Education. People need to know what is happening in Shoal Lake."

Students are now invested in the learning process because they have been given a key role in directing how to share what they've learned. These pedagogical changes have fostered a culture of citizenship and collaborative learning amongst students and teachers. Most importantly, this partnership and professional learning has

made possible a fundamentally different approach to teaching and learning.

Challenging Middle Year Learners

Adolescents navigate their way through the "middle years" by trying to make sense of who they are why working to find their place within the world as citizens. They thrive on learning partnerships and participating in real-world challenges. Cynthia Sinclair, a Grade 7 teacher from Lincoln Middle School, focused on this when planning a learning experience for her students.

After learning about the Charter of Human Rights, the quality of life in developed and developing countries, and of the many injustices facing people today, Sinclair challenged her students to draw from their knowledge, creativity and empathy to positively impact the world around them. Using the NPDL Citizenship learning progression as a guide, students tackled real world problems that were open-ended and unstructured, in which they themselves created a perspective or way of looking at the issue rather than have one framed for them.

Students formed their own groups based on what area (hunger, education, child labour, access to clean drinking water, etc.) they chose to pursue. Next, they created multimedia presentations to help promote their cause/fundraiser. The goal of the activity was to create an intriguing presentation that would compete with the other groups in the class in a Dragon's Den type competition. The winning campaign would then receive

class support to implement the fundraising activities.

Facilitated through the use of technology, new learning partnerships emerged between students, parents, local businesses and organizations, such as Red Road to Healing, Education Without Borders, Osborne House/Willow Place, and Little Warriors. Sinclair notes that students developed an intrinsic motivation and stopped focusing on their "marks" during the process.

While the project itself ended in early April, students continued to be involved in their fundraising and activism beyond the end of the school year. As Michael Fullan states in *A Rich Seam*, "Digital access makes it possible for students to apply their solutions to real-world problems with authentic audiences well beyond the boundaries of their schools. This is the real potential of technology to affect learning—not to facilitate the delivery and consumption of knowledge, but to enable students to use their knowledge in the world."

The learning partnerships created by Sinclair and her students were fundamental in developing a concept of citizenship that is about making decisions that are good for everyone, not just themselves.

Empowering High School Students

High schools can be loud, bustling learning environments and it is not uncommon for some of the quieter voices to get lost in the crowd, especially if English is not their first language. One project at Collège Sturgeon Heights Collegiate is empowering the EAL community to help bring these global voices to the forefront.

In an innovative project called "The Most Beautiful Word," over 75 EAL and International students and staff worked together to select the most beautiful word in their first language. Using canvases and paint to create a visual representation, these 75 canvases will become the basis of an art installation in the school cafeteria. Each canvas will also feature



a QR code that links to an MP3 file of each artist explaining their word in both their first language and English, and also sharing why that word is so important to them.

Once installed, this art exhibit will create an environment that invites staff and students to interact with the artwork on a more personal level. Scanning the QR code adds a “virtual reality” to the artwork in which the artist speaks directly to the viewer. Each accented voice of an artist will reveal a global perspective and begins to give insight into the values that we share as global citizens, as well as highlight the things that make each culture unique.

When looking through the lens of NPDL and the 6C's, it is easy to see the educational complexity of “The Most Beautiful Word Project,” with particular focus on the character and citizenship progressions of the NPDL. For many of the students participating in this project, writing, speaking and recording the script to explain their artwork required massive

amounts of the “grit” and “tenacity” described in the character skill of the NPDL deep learning progressions.

Explaining an abstract concept, such as love, fate or friendship, can be a challenge to do in your first language. So, imagine the perseverance needed to translate this abstract concept into another language (in this case English). Then, add to this, the vulnerability of sharing (and recording) your perspective with a voice that sounds different than the majority of the voices around you.

Through their grit and tenacity, these EAL and international students are empowered to share their global perspectives and cultivate a school-wide discussion that explores the concept of citizenship. This clearly connects to the citizenship progression of NPDL as learners are “developing a sense of their individual cultural identities” while also creating a learning environment that encourages their school community to develop an “open minded curiosity about different cultures and worldviews.” (NPDL Progressions).

Citizenship, No Matter the Age

From early years to senior years, citizenship is a common thread throughout our curricular documents. The NPDL progressions provide discussion points around the growth and development of our learners as citizens. Furthermore, and perhaps more importantly, the NPDL inspires action, not just discussion.

The fusion of the citizenship progression with pedagogy, learning partnerships, leveraging digital technology and the learning environment encourages our learners to look outwards and to “think like global citizens, considering global issues based on a deep understanding of diverse values and worldviews, and with a genuine interest and ability to solve ambiguous and complex real-world problems that impact human and environmental sustainability.” (NPDL Progressions). ■

Joan Badger and Tara McLauchlan are Curriculum Coordinators in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division.



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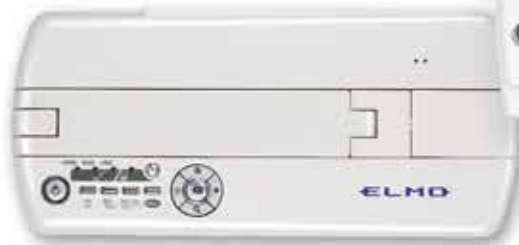
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