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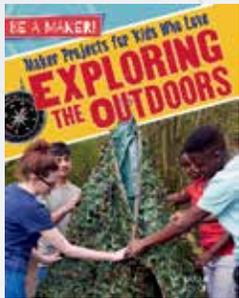
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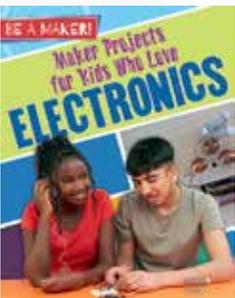
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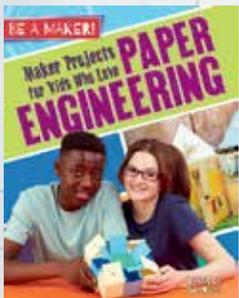
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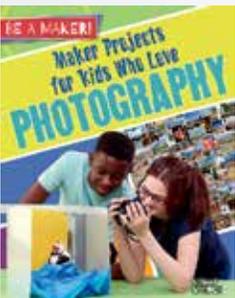
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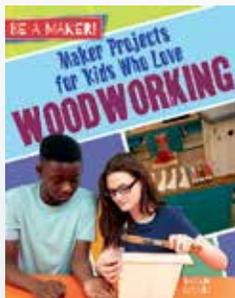
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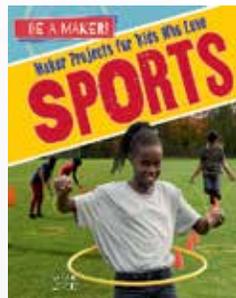
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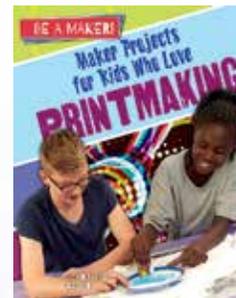
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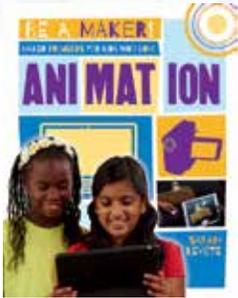
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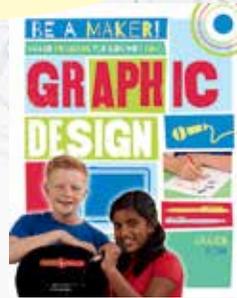
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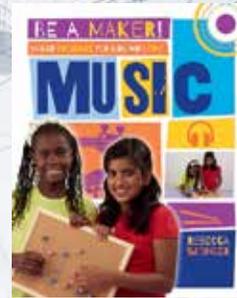
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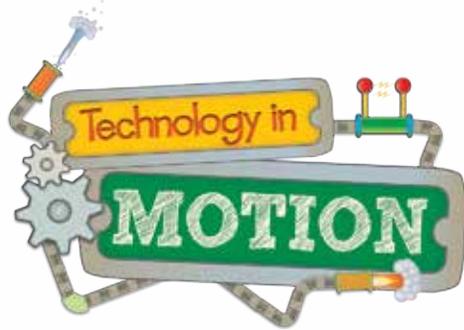
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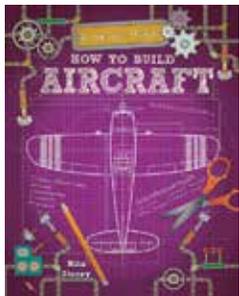
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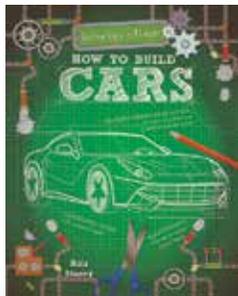
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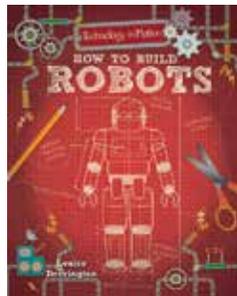
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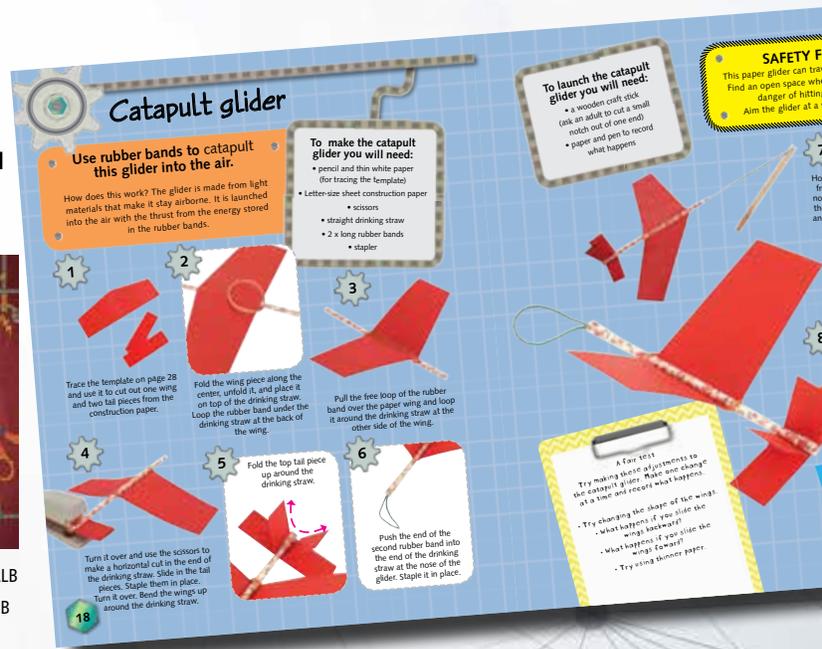
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Greetings From the President



Maxine Geller

President, Canadian Association of Principals

I'm hoping the snow has melted across the country, flowers are beginning to bloom and everyone has made it through this incredibly long and challenging winter. Knowing that we are within reach of summer, we can reflect on our accomplishments thus far and continue planning for the year to come. Reflecting on the goals we set allows us to realize how we continue to meet challenges that face us on a regular basis with the flexibility required to run a school.

Times have changed as we look into the many different faces in our schools across the country. This journal addresses the many different children that populate schools today. Who are they and how do we educate all those children? The needs of children: new comers, immigrants and refugees, First Nation, Inuit, and Metis, children with emotional, physical and cognitive challenges, gifted and talented, and adult learners to name a few, are becoming more significant as the world around us changes. This evolution in education is a time where school leaders need to seek information supporting education from colleagues, new comer organizations, cultural organizations, and social agencies as we continue to meet the needs of our children. Sharing our stories and working together helps meet the needs of all children in our care.

The CAP Executive and Board of Directors would like to thank the STA and the CAP conference planning committee chaired by Carol Sarich for the extensive work to prepare for the 35th annual CAP conference. The theme for this conference is, "Growing Together and Cultivating Change", taking place May 23 to May 26 in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. We look forward to seeing all of you there.

In closing I would like to thank the CAP Executive, the National Directors and all the CAP members for their continued support of our organization as the national voice for school leaders in Canada. A special thank you goes to Terry MacIsaac for editing and creating the journal this year. To serve you has been an absolute honor and privilege as we work together acknowledging the work you do each and every day. Keep up the great work for all who benefit from such a fabulous education system striving to meet the needs of all the faces before us. I look forward to seeing so many of you in Saskatoon.

All the best!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Maxine Geller". The signature is written in black ink on a white background.

Maxine Geller
CAP President 2016-2017



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Editor's Comments



Terry MacIsaac
Editor, CAP Journal

Greetings,

This edition of our CAP Journal titled 'Who Is Populating Our Classrooms?' is very relevant to all administrators. Schools across Canada are experiencing a change in student population as our global world continues to shrink. It would be difficult to find a school in Canada that would not have some type of diversity within it! The challenges this poses both in language and learning, as well as socio-cultural norms for new and incoming students, are faced daily by our teachers. Administrators must prepare for these school wide challenges.

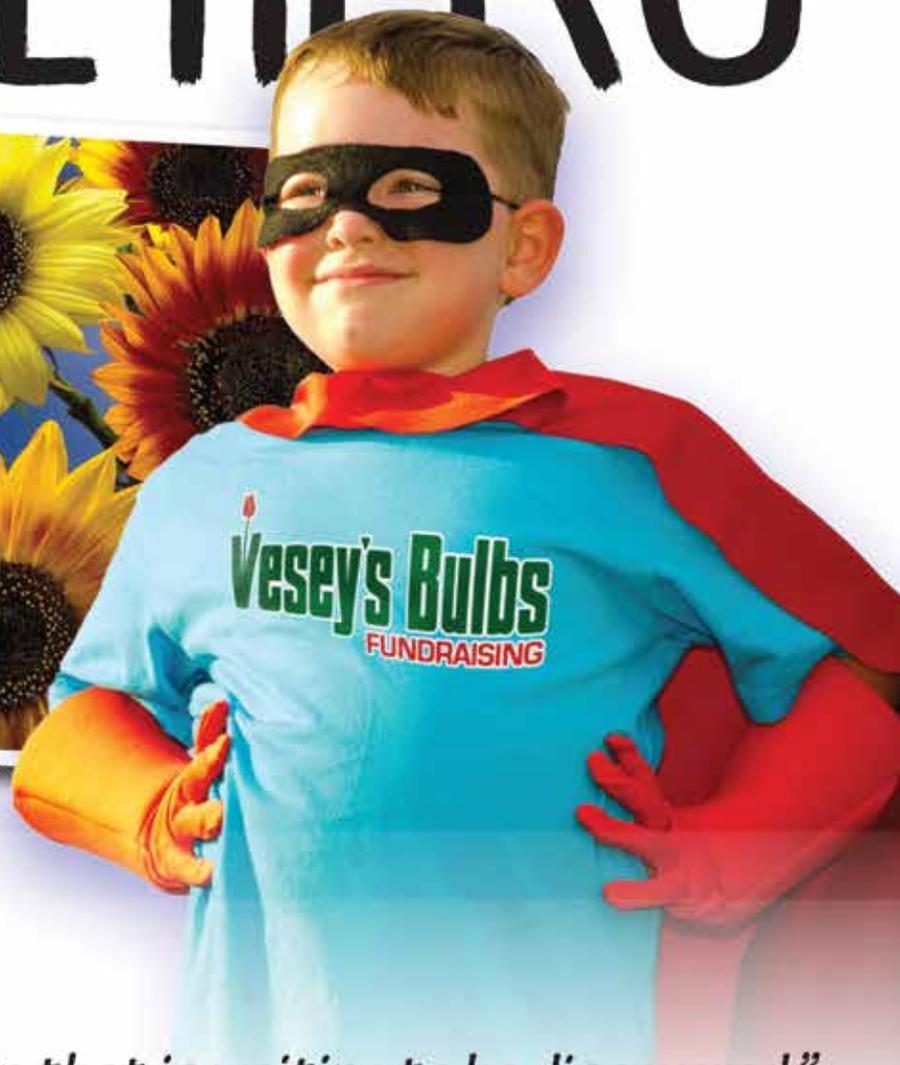
The idea of an 'average' learner within a classroom is also a thing of the past in most instances. Today's classrooms are made up of a multitude of learners of different levels, learning styles, and nationalities. Teachers require support in their training to be able to effectively manage this, while the knowledge of what skills our teachers have and support they need is integral in a successful administrative role. As administrators, we are required to balance the needs of our students, the needs of our teachers, and the needs of our parents to support all impacted groups.

I would like to thank all contributors from across Canada for submitting material for this journal. The articles that are shared are meant to be a resource that we, as administrators, can refer to for support when encountering issues within our schools. I hope they prove to be valuable and I look forward to continuing the conversation at the upcoming CAP conference in May.

Sincerely,
Terry MacIsaac

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Principals' Perceptions of Difference and



Canadian schools and classrooms are becoming perceptively more diverse, and educators are recognizing this diversity - and its correlated educational needs - more acutely than in years past. The most discernible differences in student populations tend to be visible, such as those associated with race, ethnicity, culture, some religious affiliations, and (dis)abilities (Harvey & Houle, 2006; Ryan, 2006). However, student populations can be different or diverse in other nonvisible ways, such as class, academic abilities, and sexual orientation.

and Diversity

In Their Student Populations

By Patricia Briscoe & Katina Pollock



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It is important for educators to both recognize and understand this diversity if they are going to provide an inclusive environment that promotes optimal learning experiences for all students. It is also crucial that student diversity is embraced and understood not just by teachers, but by school administrators. In this article, we illustrate how 59 Ontario principals understand difference and diversity within the student populations they serve. In this study, we asked principals how the changing nature of their student populations influences their work. We purposefully did not define student difference or student diversity in the interview or interview questions so that the participants' answers would illustrate their understandings of the concepts. During interviews, some participants asked, "What do you mean by diversity?" and we accordingly instructed them to respond based on their understandings.

Participants

We selected participants from seven school boards (four public and three Catholic) in Southern Ontario. Of the 59 principals, 46 had at least five years of experience, and 13 had fewer than five. Forty-six of the 59 participants were employed in the elementary panel, with only 13 working in secondary schools. Twenty-four of the 59 principals were male, and 35 were female. Thirty-nine principals worked in schools located in urban areas with relatively high levels of population density, and the other 20 worked in rural settings. Overall, the principals represented a range of professional contexts, levels of experience, and genders.

Table 1 - Participant Characteristics

School Board	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	Elementary	Secondary	EX*	LE**	Total
Number 1	2	4	2	4	5	1	6	0	6
Number 2	8	8	13	3	13	3	12	4	16
Number 3	1	2	0	3	3	0	2	1	3
Number 4	3	4	6	1	5	2	6	1	7
Number 5	4	5	6	3	7	2	6	3	9
Number 6	1	6	2	5	6	1	6	1	7
Number 7	5	6	10	1	7	4	8	3	11
Total	24	35	39	20	46	13	46	13	59

* EX: Experience as a principal for more than 5 years.

**LE: Experience as a principal for fewer than 5 years.

Principals' Understandings of Diversity in Their Schools

The principals in this study identified four distinct ways they view difference in their student populations: (a) no differences, or homogenous; (b) nonvisible differences defined by socioeconomic status, academic differences, gender identity, and/or sexual orientation; (c) visible differences, as a result of religion, race, ethnicity, language, or culture; and (d) an all-encompassing

understanding of student difference defined by both visible and nonvisible factors.

No difference. Sixteen of the rural principals perceived their school populations as homogenous, with little to no diversity or difference(s) among their students. For example, Larry stated, "I would say we are more or less homogenous." For these

rural principals, identifying "no differences" meant they did not see visible differences in their school populations (e.g. differences in culture, religion, race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation). Alice stated, "Our region is a very homogenous society and diverse it is not. As far as race, religion, sexual orientation - it's not prominent at this point in our K-6 school." There may have been other types of differences within Alice's student population - difference in ability levels and experiences, for example - but she did not consider these when conceptualizing student diversity in her school. As illustrated by Dennis' comment, the degree of perceived difference(s) may have been narrow for a few of the principals, but they did have some understanding of how diversity was represented in their student populations: "We don't have much diversity in this building; it is White, middle-class." In this case, while Dennis reported minimal diversity within his student population, he did describe the characteristics that defined its homogeneity: White and middle-class. These rural principals associated student diversity with observable, visible differences among students, and according to their responses, they did not perceive any recognizable diversity in their schools.



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Nonvisible diversity. Of the 59 participants interviewed, 19 principals who identified their student populations as visually homogenous also described other, nonvisible (or less visible) differences, including academic needs, socioeconomic status, mental health needs, and sexual orientations. Some of the participants focused on one specific nonvisible factor in their responses, while others discussed many factors in tandem. For example, Martin explained:

“We are primarily White, Anglo-Saxon out in the hallway, but that’s only skin tone. There is much more diversity that comes with economic status, academic issues, mental health issues, and sexual orientation. Diversity today is much greater even though we have generally the same appearance of population here.”

Most of the principals who identified nonvisible diversity in their responses worked in schools where differences in the student population were not based on culture, ethnicity, race, language, and/or religion, but rather based on other, less observable criteria. For example, Eileen, who was a special education teacher before becoming a principal, explained her understanding of difference(s) in ability: “I see diversity in special education; the trademark of our school is that students are fully immersed with special education; [students] are integrated into their classroom and the school routine.” Some participants, like Scott, suggested that difference within student populations can be associated with learning needs: “We are not diverse culturally. Everyone pretty much looks the same, but we have a lot of diversity in terms of learning and this is where differentiated learning comes in.” Others focused on differences based on socioeconomic status. Bill explained: “Diversity in my school is related to socioeconomic status. We are working at giving equal access to learning to kids who are coming from lower economic homes.” Lastly, Tony highlighted differences in student populations based on sexual orientation: “We’re predominantly White, middle-class, but a big change has been the [recognition of] gay and lesbian orientations.” The principals in this group largely serve visually homogenous student populations, and defined difference and diversity in their schools based on nonvisible, or less visible, criteria.

Visible diversity. Fourteen principals described their student populations as diverse based on visible factors such as culture, ethnicity, race, language, and/or religion. For example, Linda stated, “We have a higher number of Spanish speaking folks than before and a relatively large Islamic population - so, it is relatively diverse.” Collectively, these principals’ comments on diversity articulate an understanding of difference based on what they can see within the student population. The degree of difference can vary as well: Linda described her school population as having both Spanish and Islamic students, potentially implying that these groups are different from a dominant student population. Dan, however, described his student population as:

“[Having] almost everything. We have Spanish, East Asian, Vietnamese [students]. We have students from Africa, and I don’t know the exact countries. We have students from the Caribbean and a lot from Sudan, Nairobi, Ghana. Twenty-seven countries represented in this school.”

While Linda described one group of students being different from a majority student population in her school, Dan reported a range of visible differences within his entire student population. It is possible these two school sites also have students with differences based on academic ability, class, and sexual orientation, but these factors were not a part of how these principals understood difference and diversity in their schools. This group of principals associated

student diversity with visible factors and some participants expressed that their student populations embody many of these differences.

All-inclusive diversity. A comparatively small group of principals articulated an all-inclusive understanding of difference and diversity, defined by both visible and nonvisible factors. They did not indicate, however, that they experienced these differences within their current school site. Ten principals described different combinations of diverse student populations using both visible and nonvisible descriptors. For example, Paula stated,

“As for cultural-level diversity, we are very White, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant community. We don’t have a lot of diversity in terms of culture. Our kids are White here. In other areas, you see cultural diversity, the beautiful rainbow of colours. So, we don’t have that. We have other [kinds of] diversity in our community. We have rural kids and urban kids in our community. Some of our rural kids live in very low-income housing. There are also some very wealthy people. We have a lot of health issues; there are a lot of mental health issues. So, student needs are really diverse in the school. It is not really a homogenous school.”

Paula demonstrated that she conceptualizes diversity in an inclusive manner and has a

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Difference and Diversity

broad understanding of difference, even though many of these differences do not appear to exist in her local school population. This smaller group of principals described student difference and diversity as including visible, less visible, and/or nonvisible factors.

Why are principals' understandings of student difference and/or student diversity important? Principals have considerable influence on student success in schools, second only to teachers (The Institute for Education Leadership, 2008; Gordon & Louis, 2009; Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). How principals understand diversity will influence how they respond to the different needs of the various groups of students in their schools, and influence subsequently impact the extent to which they are able to meet these needs. If principals do not recognize certain differences, it is possible that some students' educational needs will go unmet. How principals understand difference and diversity can either help them lead school transformation in a way that ensures all students achieve academic excellence, or put their school populations in positions where some student needs are - sometimes unconsciously - ignored. ■

AUTHOR BIOS

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New in School

What's it like to send your kids to school in a strange country, when they don't even speak the language? In this article, new Canadian Esther Izarnotegui shares her family's entry into school in Canada.

First published in Education Canada, March 2017 | Courtesy of the Canadian Education Association

By Holy Bennett



Photo by Wayne Eardley, Brookside Studio

In February of 2014, Esther Izarnotegui and her family stepped off an airplane from Lima, Peru, and into the teeth of the worst Ontario winter in years. “We came from our summer, and we had never seen snow or such extreme cold,” says Esther. “It was such a shock!”

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I ask her two girls, Paula (13) and Elisa (nine) what that was like. “OHHHH!” they exclaim in unison. (The youngest child, seven-year-old Nicolas, was not at the interview.) “I was only ten,” says Paula. “I didn’t know what snow felt like so I just put my hands right in and picked up a big handful - with no gloves!”

“It felt like a slushy!” Elisa chimes in.

Esther’s English is good, with just a bit of hesitation over some words, and the girls chatter confidently. But that first winter, only Esther’s husband, Fernando, spoke more than a tiny bit of English.

As she tells their story, it becomes apparent that this family’s immigration experience was about as good as it gets. Unlike the Syrian refugee families we are welcoming now, Fernando had a job waiting for him and some work contacts who helped the family make arrangements. They had one family member who could communicate in English, and their kids had had a good start in school. Perhaps more important is the kindness Esther says she and her children have been met with, and the support of the local settlement agency, the New Canadians Centre (NCC).

And even so, it was hard. This, perhaps, is what we have to understand more deeply, with our imagination and empathy, not just our intellect, if we want to provide the best possible support for newcomer families. Learning how to live in a new country is very challenging. Sending your children into the hands of a school system you know nothing about and can barely communicate with is actually frightening.

Newcomer parents need more than just information – they need to feel assured of our care for their children in order to trust us to look after them when they are so vulnerable.

Starting school

The family arrived in the middle of our school year, so there was no time to lose in getting the children registered for school.

“People from my husband’s work had been helping us, and the next day after we arrived we went to the New Canadians Centre (NCC). They were waiting for us – that

was awesome!” says Esther. “To have an institution like the NCC waiting for us and ready to help, it was such a relief.” Esther thinks for a moment, remembering.

“You feel, like, safe. The first thing that you think is, you are safe. So they helped us with starting school. There was a lady at the NCC who told us where to find the school. We went to the school and she was there, waiting for us! That was incredible. She introduced us to the people we were meeting there.”

With her husband pressed into service as translator, Esther was able to understand most of what was explained to the family. And then, another nice surprise: “That first day, it was only to meet the school and the teachers, but they took us to see each of the children’s classrooms – and in each class, they were waiting for my kids with signs and letters with their names on them. I came back feeling so much better!”

I ask the girls what their first weeks at school were like. “It was good,” says Paula. “I liked it a lot. Everyone was so nice.” Elisa nods in agreement. “Better than Peru, because there’s no homework until Grade 3.” When I ask if there’s anything in particular people at the school did that made it easier for them, Paula says, “They didn’t treat me like a baby, but they didn’t treat me like I knew everything already. They would explain things, and then they would ask if I understood.”

What worried her the most, she says, was making friends. “I was scared I was going to mess up my English and embarrass myself, so that made me feel shy.” But the teacher had some kids show Paula around the school and hang out with her at recess, and that was enough to get things rolling.

Esther says she didn’t realize it at the time, but there were some teachers at the school who knew some Spanish and were helping her kids. “At the end of the year I received a package with all my kids’ work, and there were notes in Spanish to my girls. That touched my heart!”

New school nerves

Esther says that having “people in the school waiting for us like that, that was the best” and went a long way toward making her feel more comfortable about sending her

kids off the next day. “But even with that,” she confesses, “that first day of school I was here, and I was waiting, watching the clock. I was – you know, I was really nervous. The weather and the bus and them going by themselves, and you think, what if they need something or have a problem and they can’t say what’s wrong?”

Her biggest worry was her youngest child, Nicolas, who was just starting Kindergarten. Nico has autism, and up until two months before the move he had been nonverbal. “He had just started to speak some Spanish, and then we came here where it’s not the right language!” Esther shakes her head, remembering. “I knew my girls could tell me if there was something wrong at school, but the little one, who didn’t speak – that was hard.”

Esther and Fernando were able to meet with the teacher and tell her a lot about Nicolas and his needs. But I picture the parents I know with autistic children, and the anxiety they experience when their child starts school – a situation that is full of stressors for people with the sensitivities autism often entails: so many children, so much noise, unfamiliar surroundings and expectations. How much more difficult must it be when your child won’t understand the language around him?

Settling in

Of course, school is only part of settling in to a new country. In those early months when her English was very limited, Esther remembers feeling unsure of her welcome: “I was scared to go out on my own, even to rake leaves or shovel snow. You feel like you are not from here, and you feel that all the time inside you.” And the effort to understand and make yourself understood is exhausting: “I had migraines every day for one month, because it was so difficult. I would go out, and when I came back home, I had to go to bed for a while, and just – breathe.”

When I ask the family if there was anything more the school could have done to support them, or if they ran into any difficulties, they hesitate, and I wonder if they are reluctant to say anything against their new country. The girls talk about school subjects they had trouble with (“subtraction was so hard!”). Esther considers, and offers two valuable observations.

For me, it was hard to keep in touch with the teachers, because of the language. I am the kind of mom who wants to know what they are doing in school so I can help at home. In Peru they had an agenda that said all what they were doing, but here their agenda was blank. So I couldn’t speak English and the agenda was blank and I really didn’t know anything about their school day. It’s hard to have a good connection with teachers when you can’t talk to them directly.”

Her other point is that new families continue to need help even after those intense few months. “Don’t forget that for us, everything is new for the whole [school] year. Even in June, it’s still our first June. They were really kind with us, but by the middle of the year, they figured we were OK.”

But the family still needed guidance around how the system works. Case in point: snow days. Nobody thought to tell this family from a country without snow how to check if the buses were running, so one day they struggled through knee-high snow to the bus stop, where they waited, and waited, and waited. Finally they concluded that they must have missed the bus, and walked all the way to the school – only to find it practically deserted. The family laughs about it now (“Oh, man – Peruvians in Canada!”) but I can picture myself pretty close to tears at the end of that long snowy walk, tired, sweaty, trailing three kids and completely confused.

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The following year, they didn’t know what the procedure was for going back to school in September. “In Peru, you have to go and register your kids for school every year, fill out lots of forms, buy uniforms,” Esther explains. “Here, we didn’t know what we should be doing. We had to call the school to ask.”

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New in School

And asking becomes difficult. “You start to feel, ‘I can’t ask for everything.’ You feel like you shouldn’t ask for help too often, like you should be doing things by yourself now. It’s always a little bit embarrassing.”

What can we learn from this family’s experience? I’m glad they had such a warm welcome, but we know that newcomer students may also encounter hostility, bullying, and racial slurs. As I write this, soon after the U.S. presidential election, there has been a worrying increase in these incidents. Fostering a welcoming and safe

school climate for all students needs to be an ongoing priority.

The importance of staying in contact is another important lesson. Newcomer parents will not necessarily feel free to ask for information, or find it easy to express their concerns. Teachers and school leaders can take the initiative in finding ways to communicate regularly and ensure parents understand what’s going on at school.

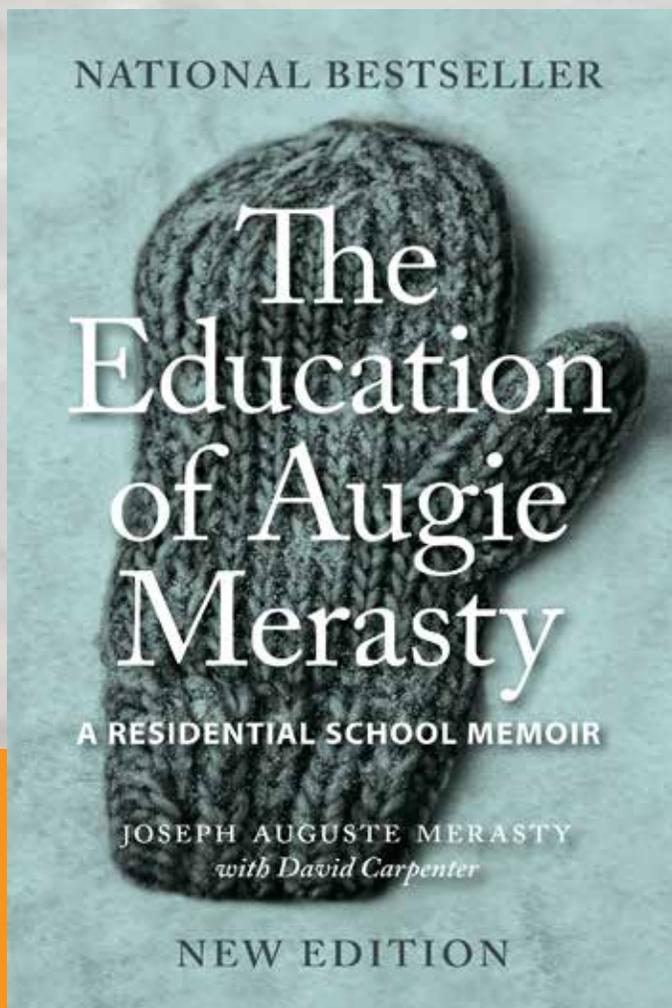
And finally, the personal touches that Esther and her children so appreciated – being

accompanied to the school by a settlement worker, the welcome prepared in the classrooms for each child – can be difficult to scale up when a school welcomes a hundred newcomers a year rather than a handful. Yet these are the gestures that reassure parents that their children will be cared for, not just taught.

As Esther puts it, “That kind of thing gave us hope that we can be part of this community, because they were trying to make us feel part of it. These good people around us, smiling to us, they made us feel confident in this place, and now, we can call this place home... our home.” ■

AUTHOR BIO

Holly Bennett is the English Editor of *Education Canada* magazine



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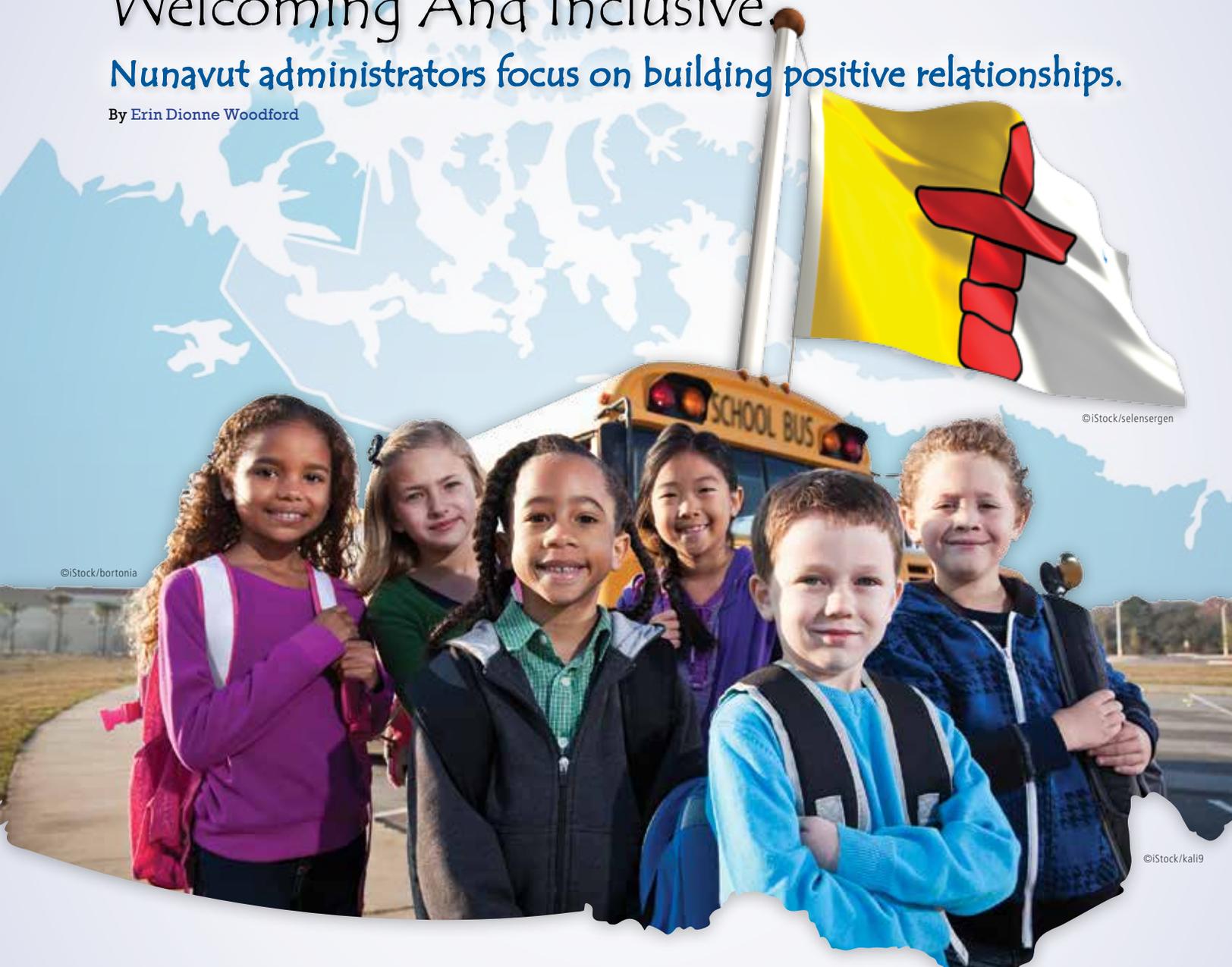
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Tunnaganarniq:

Fostering Good Spirit By Being Open,
Welcoming And Inclusive.

Nunavut administrators focus on building positive relationships.

By Erin Dionne Woodford



Considering the diversity of Canada and the growing diversity in our schools from corner to corner, as administrators we can learn a lot from our Inuit schools in Nunavut. Their unified approach connects inclusion to their Indigenous principles, the values and beliefs that govern society. Tunnaganarniq, fostering good spirit by being open, welcoming and inclusive, in schools is a current focus in Nunavut schools, anchored on fostering positive relationships.



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Diversity is not a new phenomenon in Canada, let alone North America. Weckler (1961) states, “Rather than find ways to help the teacher improve his techniques for dealing with diversity, we have concentrated our energies and financial resources on reducing diversity.” Furthermore, she describes that, “to put the principle into practice will require changes in our administrative procedures and changes in the role traditionally expected of teachers and pupils will have to be reduced to a minimum.”

Let's be realistic. Every province and territory has its policies and its education requirements. This is an element of our modern education and has been in effect for decades, over half a century even. As administrators, we have the opportunity to make some changes. Perhaps, they are not changes to external policies and education requirements, but we can positively reflect on our own leadership skills to create a vision that is inclusive of the diversity of students and staff within the schools. Inclusion starts from administration. How can administrators foster good spirit? Ask yourself reflective questions and connect your own experience, beliefs, and knowledge to your vision.

This article includes some of the questions and ideas that have resulted to help shape leadership in Nunavut. As a facilitator of leadership studies in Iqaluit, the opportunity for 22 principals and vice principals to come together to collaborate and reflect resulted in a shared and collective response revealing what the administrator's role is in their school and beyond. Administrators contemplated his or her own values, experiences, and diversity in relation to creating a vision that involves more than just inclusivity in the classroom or the school, but to include their community, our country and the world.

What kind of world do I want to live in?

A world free of bigotry, hatred, and racism. A world where everyone is treated based on his or her actions and not by preconceived notions. A world that is equitable, just, safe, respectful, peaceful, tolerant, and caring. A world that shows respect for resources. A world that is culturally rich. A world of harmony, of beauty, of space, of humility, of provocation, of play and of curiosity. Finally, a world of kindness.

What kind of organization do I want to create?

An organization that is student-centered, successful, positive, and respectful. An organization where can rely on one another without judgement. An organization that is effective, efficient, and sustainable. An organization where there is passion for student and staff success, where everyone is valued and respected.

What is the administrator's role in creating this world and this organization?

The administrator's role is to help facilitate the team they are in. The role is to lead by example and be a role model. The role is to inspire, support and motivate. The role is to create a positive school culture and maintain it. The role is to coach, to listen, to defend, to inform, to search, to find, to engage, and the be engaged. The role is to be a supporter and communicator, advisor, leader and a listener. The role is to co-create a vision.



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How can we build positive relationships?

We can build positive relationships leading by example and with mutual respect. We can provide orientation to new teachers and to students. We can encourage more contact opportunities between teachers and families. We can be open and connect to each person right away. We can build positive relationships by being welcoming and approachable.

In conclusion, fostering positive relationships provides a solution and a start to inclusion faced with diversity. Looking across Canada, it is evident that fostering positive relationships starts with administrators. Brown (2010) emphasizes that, “The research is clear: humans are literally “hard-wired” with the desire and need to connect. We are social beings who thrive on healthy relationships.” What we can learn from the Inuit Principle, *Tunnganarniq*, is the need to welcome all students, staff, community members and stakeholders regardless of race, gender, ancestry, religion, physical or mental disability, etc. We can take the time

to actually see and listen to the people who are in our schools. We can create a safe and caring school where all people are comfortable to ask for assistance. How we foster positive relationships can be unique across Canada, yet, the value is nation-wide in connection to inclusion and who’s populating our schools. ■

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Building Intercultural Bridges For Peace In New Brunswick:

Moving ideas into realities for sustainable futures

By Lyle Hamm, Helen Massfeller, Amanda Scott, Chantal Lafargue and Jeff Matheson



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We ask the question: How do Canadian students and their teachers perceive diversity and intercultural education in their schools and communities? We invite our readers to consider how smaller Canadian cities and rural communities are being shaped by global migration. In our lived experiences in New Brunswick, the communities of Saint John, Fredericton, Moncton and Woodstock are laying claim to being included in the diversity, intercultural and multicultural conversations of large urban cities in Canada, such as Montreal and Toronto, as an increasing number of newcomers arrive from around the world to these communities.

“Research on diversity, intercultural education and peace-building suggests that schools are productive spaces for all students and their teachers to learn how to develop their intercultural competencies and become advocates for peace.”

New Brunswick needs the steady flow of newcomers:

A recent commentary in a provincial newspaper stated that “Based on economists’ projections, New Brunswick needs to grow its population by at least one per cent annually, which is roughly 7,500 people each year. The influx of people is needed to maintain the level of tax base that will allow us to afford the health care, education and infrastructure we value so dearly as part of our way of life in N.B.” (O’Pray, 2016, A7). In the past ten years, government leaders in New Brunswick have listed several strategies to grow the population of our province to counter the reality of a fast-aging population as well as a younger population that has left – many of the latter demographic now living and working in other Canadian provinces (New Brunswick Government, 2014).

As a result, New Brunswick educators and leaders are now fully engaged in the process of integrating hundreds of newcomer students into their schools which includes international exchange students, new immigrant students and refugee students. Most recently, there has been an influx of Syrian families and their children seeking to rebuild their lives away from their war torn country. Many of these students have or are experiencing trauma and a somewhat daunting task for educators is how to respond to their psychosocial needs when they arrive unannounced at the front office of the school to register (Stewart, 2012). Their parents are looking to leaders and educators to help their children fulfill their educational dreams (Ibrahim, 2016). If the provincial government continues to be successful in attracting newcomers, we believe that classrooms and schools across our province will continually become multicultural, multilingual and ethnically diverse. Further, we believe

that many more educators across the province will soon be responding to the educational and social needs of newcomer youth and their families where increasing immigration and diversity has not yet become their reality. Though by no means an exclusive list, some new initiatives for newcomer students that are being taken by New Brunswick educators include: providing in-depth intake assessments to determine academic competencies, offering second language instruction in schools (English as an Additional Language or French as an Additional Language) and running language learning summer programs.

Our research tells us that increasing diversity is positive in schools and communities and provides enormous social development opportunities for all students and their teachers. Educational research that has been conducted on leadership and diversity in schools strongly suggests and advocates that leaders and teachers become increasingly aware, competent and comfortable in working in diverse environments (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Ryan, 2003). We argue that taking a proactive stance in preparing for rapid changes and increasing diversity is far better than reactive responses that a school and community might enact when families and their children arrive.

Becoming a “bridge-builder” between cultures and communities:

Research on diversity, intercultural education and peace-building suggests that schools are productive spaces for all students and their teachers to learn how to develop their intercultural competencies and become advocates for peace (Bickmore, 2014; Westheimer, 2015). Leeman (2003) states,

“Intercultural education is for all students. All people must prepare themselves for living in an ethnically diverse society” (p. 32). We believe it is important that all urban and rural children are given authentic opportunities to grow their intercultural competencies. Rurally educated students are more likely to encounter diverse students unlike themselves through online gaming, social media and other Internet spaces or while they are visiting larger Canadian communities. Educators play a vital role in facilitating the process of intercultural education. For these reasons, we asked delegates at the Canadian Association of Principals national conference in Saint John, New Brunswick: How can educators build bridges in an era when there are individuals who are calling for the building of fences and walls? We believe this is an important question for all Canadian school leaders and educators serving in Canada to ponder.

Educational leaders and teachers in Canadian schools have to first and foremost see themselves as “bridge-builders”. We strongly encourage you to reflect deeply on what being a bridge-builder might mean in your leadership and pedagogy, within the school you serve and the community you live in. How can you build bridges between students in schools as well as with their families as they settle into their communities and learn the general nuances of a new society? How do you provide encouragement for colleagues in your school who may be, as Lopez (2013) suggests, not especially confident working with students and families from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds? Ongoing research has to continue in the area of diversity, social justice and intercultural education as our communities change in order “to support teachers in their efforts at diversity and equity education as they wrestle with personal and pedagogical tensions” (Lopez, 2013, p. 292). Research inside and outside schools conducted by practitioners in schools and researchers working

with them could be considered a demographic imperative in our current era (Banks, et al. 2005). That is, if teachers in public systems do not take “professional and pedagogical action in their lives as students from diverse backgrounds increasingly enter their classrooms, those students will not be served equitably by their school system” (Hamm, 2009, p. 73).

It is important for school leaders to explicitly lead change when responding to the needs of new immigrant and refugee students and their families in their schools. Leading change translates into noticing and acknowledging cultural diversity and the multiple languages existing in your school and encouraging your entire staff to arrive at and agree on shared understandings related to cultural diversity and intercultural educational in your school. In our view, administrators grow their intercultural leadership by proactively engaging with their newcomer parents and families on a personal level by making time in their busy schedules for “walking physically into the communities they serve, knocking on doors, and creating a professional presence by introducing themselves as the educational leaders within the school” (Hamm, Do urga & Scott, 2016, p. 216). This direct leadership and relational action breaks away from traditional schooling where often the parents come to the school to meet with teachers and administrators at certain points in the year (ie. Parent/Teacher interviews), or when their child is struggling. We believe that if educational leaders and teachers engage communities in such ways, then many new immigrant and refugee parents, who have limited social and cultural knowledge of their new home, will have a greater opportunity to find their voice within their new society.

Find social action opportunities and connect communities:

School leaders must identify opportunities to engage and empower students and staff to reconceptualise their ideas about the world, challenge their own biases and take part in ongoing discussions about diversity. Some of these conversations are often difficult to be part of, especially if they involve difficult topics such as racism and ways to collectively respond to all incidents that carry discriminatory or prejudiced overtones that occur in the school, as well as out on the playground and within the community (Hamm & Cormier, 2015; Varma-Joshi, Baker & Tanaka, 2004). Educators and

educational leaders need to challenge the racially charged issues and conversations that may occur in community shared spaces and venues (ie., the hockey arena; the skate park; the grocery store). In doing so, school leaders provide their students with opportunities to build the confidence, agency, and skills they will require in their futures to challenge and disrupt racial discriminatory discourses that are part their social worlds. As educators and educational leaders, we have to constantly ask the simple question, what type of world do we wish to prepare our children for?

It is clear that school leaders and their colleagues cannot carry all these responsibilities alone. Thus, it is important for them to build networks and form partnerships with community based leaders and agencies. This will provide the school additional sources of support such as trauma counsellors, community leaders and translators. Further, school leaders may benefit from learning about the efforts that community organizations like church and service groups are putting forth to build bridges with newcomer families and their children. For instance, if members of community churches are providing support and language services for newcomer families, partnerships may be formed where the EAL teachers and leaders between both organizations, can share resources and ideas. Ultimately, collective community efforts among all groups are more effective than working in isolation when settling newcomers and helping them adjust comfortably to their new surroundings.

Other suggestions for diversity and intercultural leadership that school leaders and educators may consider include:

- Planning and focusing professional learning on diversity, intercultural and peace-building activities
- Opening the school for newcomers as a multiuse facility at no cost (not simply for sporting competitions)
- Advocating for multilingual communication throughout the school and community by valuing the multiple languages being used
- Reviewing curriculums across all subject areas and challenging the dominant discourses within them
- Leading discussions on pedagogy – supporting teachers to adjust theirs and to step outside their comfort zones in their classrooms
- Being aware of and having conversations about all forms of educational tracking in your school
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Closing Thoughts:

The journey ahead is not an easy one. There are competing demands and inherent complexities that will require school leaders and educators to work together with parents and community leaders to find better ways forward. Success will require commitments to common goals of building bridges to a future where all children will learn, belong and feel safe inside classrooms with competent and confident intercultural educators. ■

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I Want To Be Me

A poorly understood minority group's struggle to find their place in Canadian schools

By Asma Ahmed



Muslims have been, and continue to be, a “poorly understood” minority group in Canada.¹ Subsequently, Muslim youth have found it difficult to lead “normal” lives because of their religion’s association with terrorism, and because of the discomfort others may feel when witnessing them practice their religion.

Wanting to be Me

Muslims have been, and continue to be, a “poorly understood” minority group in Canada (Environics Institute, 2016, p.1). Subsequently, Muslim youth have found it difficult to lead “normal” lives because of their religion’s association with terrorism, and because of the discomfort others may feel when witnessing them practice their religion.

Both Muslim students and their non-Muslim counterparts share the cognitive, emotional, and physical challenges of schooling (Silbereisen & Kracke, 1997; Wolfe, Jaffe & Crooks, 2006). However, Muslim students in the public school systems, wherever they are on the continuum of practice, from secular to orthodox, have additional concerns (Elnour & Bashir, 2003; Collet, 2007; Sarroub, 2005; Zine, 2008). These often include performing their religious practices; maintaining a certain dress code; adhering to certain values misunderstood by secular culture; and dispelling stereotypes, misconceptions, and negative appraisals of their religious group (Kahf, 2006; Beshir, 2004; Zine, 2001). The distinct challenges that Muslim youth face need to be addressed and require support from schools to ensure the equity and well-being of the students.

This article reports on the challenges of Muslim students in an urban public high school in Ontario with a reputation of having a large Muslim student presence. I utilized a case study with a semi-structured interviews with 32 participants, including students, teachers, parents, administrators, and the local Imam of the city.

The findings in this research identify three of the pressures that Muslim students experience because of their faith: the pressure to represent Islam in the school; the pressure to assert their Canadian-Muslim identity; the pressure “to be yourself.”

The Pressure to Represent Islam in the School

Western Muslim, now more than ever, feel the backlash of negative portrayals and stereotypes of Muslims and Islam in the media (Helly, 2004; CAIR-CAN, 2002; Adams, 2007; Hildebrandt, 2010; Geddes, 2013; Environics Institute, 2016). These stereotypes and negative biases have seeped into school environments and cultures (Rezai-Rashti, 1994; Zine, 2001; Sisak, 2015; Nuttall, 2016). Muslim students in this study felt that they needed to represent Islam to the broader school community. During the interviews, students indicated that on the one hand they felt welcomed and respected in the school, but on the other hand, they felt Islam was misunderstood by their teachers and misrepresented in the media. Furthermore, students also mentioned, as indicated in the findings, that they feel those negative notions of Islam and Muslims in the school. Recent surveys show that Muslims hold their Islamic identity particularly close (Environics Institute, 2006, 2016). Muslims do not want their peers and teachers to be misled by the media, so they feel a sense of responsibility to defend Islam when it is attacked or undermined in their classrooms. One of the challenges of representing Islam to one’s peers and teachers is understanding Islam in depth. Muslims who adhere to the practices of Islam, without any meaningful reflection, may practice the religious obligations and follow the religious guides effectively; however, they may be unable to articulate the wisdom behind Islamic practices to their non-Muslim peers and teachers (Ghanea-Bassiri, 1997).

Most teenagers explore, understand, and construct their identities in high school, and therefore they are not in a position to defend the religion they adhere to because they have yet to fully understand it themselves. Practicing a religion does not mean one understands it. Many Muslim adults, let alone adolescents, have limited knowledge of Islam and Islamic history (Ghanea-Bassiri, 1997). Being uninformed about the reasons one performs certain rituals and the depth of rulings concerning practices of Islam puts Muslims at a disadvantage. One of the reasons, perhaps, that teachers are not well aware of Islamic practices and values is because the students themselves do not have an in-depth understanding of their religion.

The Pressure to Assert Their Canadian-Muslim Identity

Muslim students find themselves asserting their Canadian-Muslim identity to their peers, teachers, and also to their parents. During the interviews, parents of first-generation-Muslim students unconsciously would refer to themselves as “us” and to those who were not Muslim as “them” when they would talk about religion, Hijab, or maintaining their culture. One example of such phrasing was when a parent mentioned that “we are not like them” or “we don’t do that,” referring to having a boyfriend or a girlfriend.

Furthermore, teachers and parents have referred to non-Muslims and the non-Muslim culture as “Canadians” or “Canadian.” Teachers have also spoken about Muslim students living double



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“Muslim students find themselves asserting their Canadian-Muslim identity to their peers, teachers, and also to their parents.”

lives. The “double lives” referred to (1) broader Canadian values and (2) the values that Muslims uphold. Public discourse tends to turn to a question of “different values” when discussing the topics of Islam and immigrants specifically (Zine, 2012).

Even though parents, teachers, and administrators reported this issue as a problem for Muslim students, none of the Muslim students spoke in a way that revealed an “us versus them” mentality, nor did they mention feeling as though they were leading “double lives”, or of thinking or feeling that being “Canadian” was something in contrast to their culture. Language, and the words we use, are indicative of our psyche, our belief systems, and our way of thinking (Pennebaker, Mehl & Niederhoffer, 2003). The language the Muslim students used during the interview did not indicate an outsider mentality; on the contrary, they felt that they had to assert their Canadian and Muslim identities to others.

The Muslim students see themselves as Canadians. In a recent survey by The Environics Institute (2016), 83% of Muslims stated they were “very proud” Canadians, versus 73% of non-Muslims. Muslim youth, more so than their parents, feel a strong attachment to Canada and see it as their home country. Although the youth do not consider themselves to be living “double lives”, the people around them, perhaps well-meaning, suggest this concept to them in various ways.

The Contending Pressure “To Be Yourself”

Muslim students are torn between the need to represent Islam in its “true” form, and the force within, urging them “to be themselves.” Students want to be free to make mistakes and not be judged by their teachers or peers, or their fellow Muslim students. Trying to “to be yourself” requires one to first find out who they are—an exercise that requires making mistakes, experimenting, and exploring. Muslim students speak about feeling free and more open when referring to being around other Muslims in the school: “I could be “me” kind of a thing”. In this study, when the Muslim students find themselves among other Muslim students who understand them, the students feel accepted, and therefore can let their guard down and be themselves.

Individualism is not just a value sought by adolescents; it is deemed as an important Western value in general. “The idea that people should be free to explore their individuality and to express their true selves is fundamental (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985; Spindler & Spindler, 1990). Students, as adolescents trying to figure out the world and themselves, have a multitude of pressures to deal with (Wolfe et al, 2008); the pressure of representing Islam takes a toll on them. Even though the practices (such as prayers, dress-code, the expectations of gender interaction, etc) of Muslims highlight their religious identity (Brah, 1996; Jacobson, 1998; Modood, 2005; Shah, 2006), Muslim students are not in a position to be ambassadors of the religion at such a young age.

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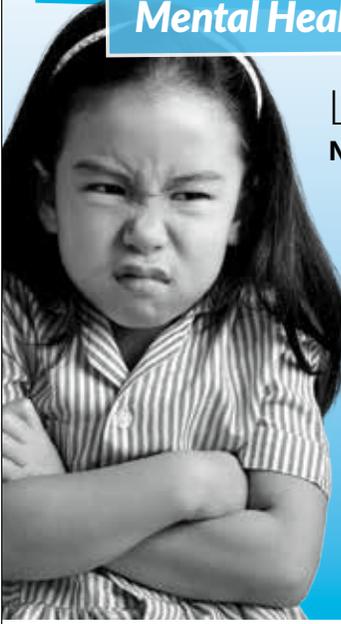


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Conclusion

This study shows that Muslim youth would like to be acknowledged, understood, and respected for whom they are - as ordinary individuals trying to find themselves, as Muslims trying to live/learn their religion and as proud Canadians trying to contribute to their country. ■

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AUTHOR BIO

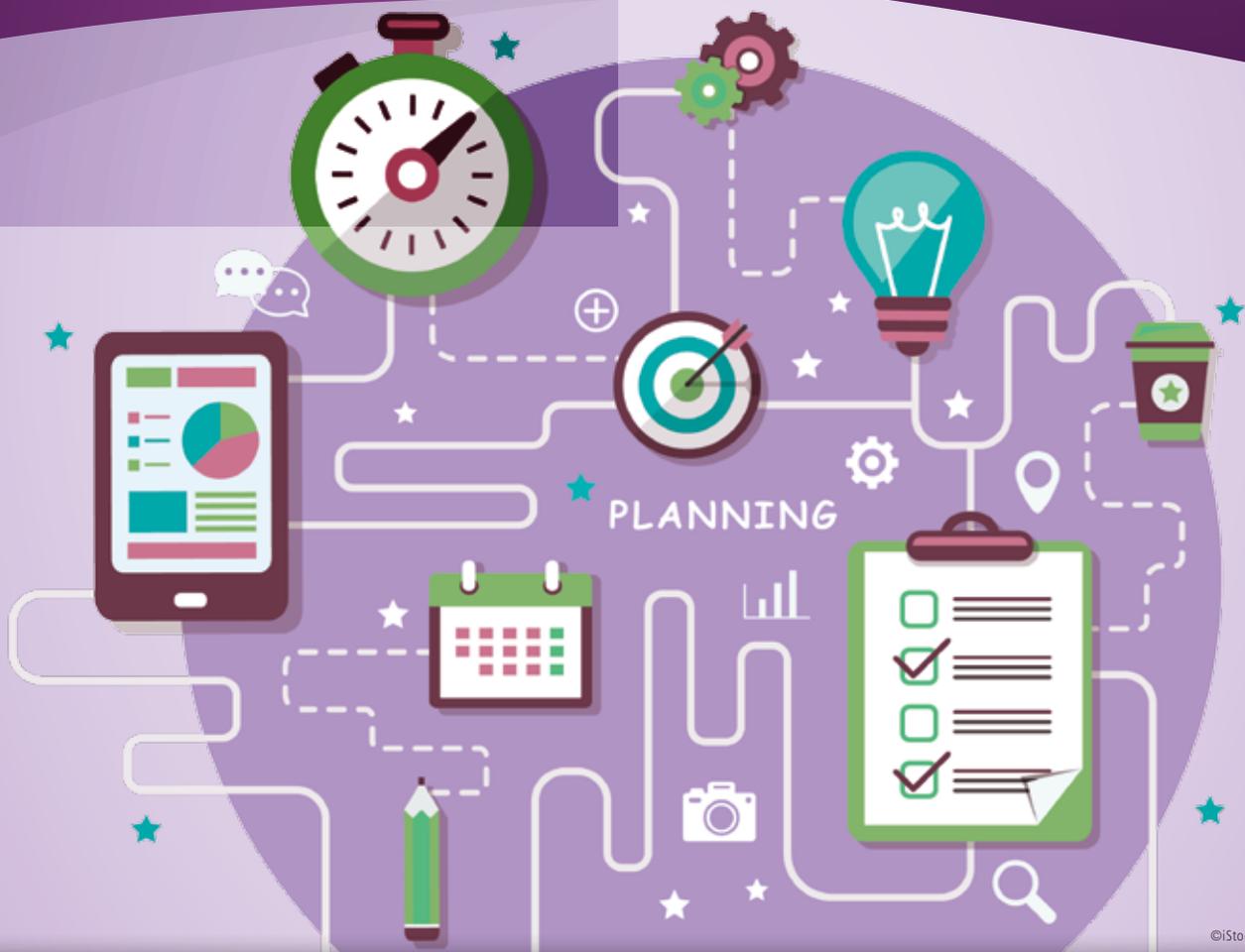
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Using Standards of Practice to Drive School Growth:



STORIES FROM THE FIELD COMPETENCY SIX: Managing School Operations and Resources

By Carmen Mombourquette and Nicole Pesta



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In the last edition of the CAP Journal we shared insights about the developing and facilitating leadership in others core professional competency for principals which emerged during our research about highly effective school leaders in Alberta. In this edition, we continue to share our research findings on the evolution of the Alberta Education standards of practice for school leaders with the sixth of seven competencies, managing school operations and resources. Read on to discover why and how this essential competency, which when practiced by education leaders will ensure optimum learning and development for all students.



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“It is the duty of the principal to identify the needs of the school, as well as effectively plan, organize, and manage the interpersonal, physical, and financial resources.”

Adhering to the Guideline

“The principal manages school operations and resources to ensure a safe and caring, and effective learning environment” (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 6).

There are several responsibilities which together embody the essence of managing school operations and resources. It is the duty of the principal to identify the needs of the school, as well as effectively plan, organize, and manage the interpersonal, physical, and financial resources (Alberta Education, 2009, p. 6). Several education and management researchers have identified the ongoing value of management by leaders within an educational setting, especially for the maximization of student learning (Hallinger, 2005; Murphy, 2005; Seashore-Louis, Leithwood, Wahlstrom, & Anderson, 2010). As seen by many emerging models, it is not only the principal that has an impact on student learning and development through informed management decision making, but this responsibility can also be shared by teachers (Jasmin-Olga & Chatzioannidis, 2013; Parmigiani, 2012).

How Are Principals Measuring Up?

Though past trends saw principals’ practices being dominated by school operations and management, our own research demonstrated a shift away from this all-consuming pattern. The principals we interviewed aligned their budgeting processes with their philosophical beliefs about best management practices for their schools. By involving others in the budget decision-making, the principals continued to garner maximum input into the best practices for facilitating student learning.

One principal illustrated how his staff came together in order to connect school goals with school division goals. In order to keep class sizes small, staff agreed to take on additional work along with making some other sacrifices resulting in an increased positive impact on their students. Another principal shared how they were careful to ensure balance with budget decisions; if one department received additional funds, then so too would a different department. The word “transparency” was used by many of the interviewed principals, whereby setting and spending a budget openly with staff as well as the parent community was prioritized. Furthermore, all parties were kept informed as to the status of each budget throughout the year.

Interview Conclusions

The management function of school leadership goes hand-in-hand with leadership, as both are required for establishing an environment that keeps student learning at its centre. The degree to which our sample of principals handled administrative matters varied. Often other staff and administrative assistants, or in some contexts school managers, were tasked with ordering resources, tracking expenses, and reporting on a regular basis. All except one of our principals involved grade teams and departments (where applicable) in discussions about what

resources were needed and within which budget allotments they were allowed to prioritize purchases. Several principals spoke of the need for transparency in these discussions and abandoned the practice of allowing staff to dip into another team’s or department’s surplus towards the end of the school year to fulfill wish lists. These understandings provided more stability in the budgeting process and reduced a lot of the conflict related to resource “raiding.” Budgets were designed to reduce class size, to bolster different kinds of programming in order to attract and better serve students, and to feed students and clothe immigrant families with supplements from grants. Significantly, all principals mentioned the core function of the budget, and their more standard administrative functions, was to ensure quality education and support the developmental needs of students. Within the discretion they were allowed by centralized funding mechanisms based on student population - and by district policies, which varied district to district - the principals in our sample gave compelling narratives about the close correlation between the budgeting process, shared decision-making, and student learning and developmental needs. ■

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- ¹ The following portion of this paper is taken from our study published in a Friesenpress.com book called *Enacting Alberta School Leaders’ Professional Practice Competencies: A Toolkit* – see <http://www.friesenpress.com/bookstore/title/119734000025830513>.
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A Culture of Care & Compassion for Refugee Students

Creating a state of nhân đạo

By Jan Stewart

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We have to be connected together as human beings. We have to spend time working side-by-side with each other, talking to each other, having connections that link the head to the heart... once you have that, then you can reveal a good space to receive the learning.

– Tam Dui

Recognizing the challenges that many refugees have incurred and the difficulties associated with forced resettlement, this article focuses on what Canadian schools and educators can do to support the needs of refugee students. Emerging from the findings of a three-year research program looking at best practices for supporting refugee students, was one inner-city school principal and his staff, who strive to create a safe environment that fosters intercultural connections, belonging, and a commitment to care and compassion.

We are living in a time of unprecedented mass displacement due to conflict, persecution, and natural disasters. As the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) reports on its website, there are 65.3 million displaced people worldwide – the highest number since World War II – and 21.3 million of them are refugees who are fleeing conflict, violence or persecution. Most alarming, however, is that more than half of the world’s refugees are children.

The experiences of refugees are diverse and complex and the situations they have left may be riddled with violence, fear, loss, and extremely stressful living conditions. The desperate search for safety can have perilous consequences, as families risk everything to flee danger. Children are frequently separated from their families, denied access to education and health care and targeted with violence and human rights violations. Literature documenting the refugee experience records loss, trauma, violence and an overwhelming sense of uncertainty. Studies relating to refugees and mental health indicate a prevalence rate of 30 percent for post-traumatic stress disorder. While not all refugees have a traumatic past, it is generally assumed that there is a degree of adversity simply as a result of forced displacement. Relocation into a host country such as Canada represents hope for a better future, but the challenges and obstacles persist and the trajectory for some refugee children and their families is punctuated with feelings of hopelessness and uncertainty about the future. Barriers such as discrimination, limited employment opportunities, poverty, lack of appropriate housing and low educational achievement are just a few of the issues complicating adjustment.

Adjusting to schools in Canada

From 2005-2014, Canada settled a total of 233,861 refugees,[1] making it one of the top countries of resettlement. The demographics of Canadian classrooms are changing and becoming increasingly more diverse, but diversity itself is not a guarantee that different cultural groups are included in a system. While some schools and school districts in Canada have implemented exemplary programs to encourage social inclusion and intercultural understanding, there are others that offer little in the way of practical or pedagogical accommodations for some of Canada’s most recent citizens.

While some refugee students excel and thrive in their new host country, others experience great difficulty with adjusting into a new school system. Academic difficulties may be a result of language barriers, disrupted schooling, distress from forced migration, or financial difficulties (e.g. food insecurity or having to work long hours while also attending school).

Research has also identified significant gaps in both teacher preparation and school readiness to support successful integration for newcomers, particularly children who have come from conflict-affected countries.[2] Teachers may even inadvertently contribute to the continuing struggles of students or their re-traumatization, simply by not knowing about their pre-migration or trans-migration experiences. For students who have experienced trauma, something as simple as displaying a poster that triggers past memories may result in distress. Although identifying all of the potential triggers would be difficult, there are certain precautions teachers and school leaders can take to create trauma-sensitive classrooms and schools.

Nhân đạo: Trauma-sensitive schools and safe classrooms

The Vietnamese term Nhân đạo – used as an overarching phrase to capture “the state of being humane in caring for and loving others” – is an axiom guiding the practice of inner-city middle school principal, Tam Dui. In a three-year research program carried out in Manitoba, Alberta and Newfoundland, we explored best practices for supporting the integration of refugee students. During phase one, our participants frequently told us to go and talk to Tam Dui* and to see what his school, Anthony Graham Middle School* in Winnipeg, was doing to support refugee students. [*NOTE: The names of both the principal and the school in this article have been changed, in accordance with the ethical requirements of Dr. Stewart’s research.] We decided to take a more in-depth look at how Tam and the staff have created a culture where all students feel connected to the school community and where families feel welcome to come into the building to share and collaborate with school staff. The school, and Tam’s unique leadership style, provide an exemplar model on which to guide future practice and inform school improvement to better meet the needs of refugee youth.

If a student is feeling threatened in your classroom, there will be little learning.

Tam was himself a Vietnamese refugee who arrived in Winnipeg as a child in 1979, and he knows first-hand the reality of what it means to be relocated to another country. Referring to himself as an “old newcomer,” Tam reflects that 35 years ago, when he



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first arrived in Canada, his family stayed at the Memorial Hotel just two blocks down the street from where he now serves as the principal. He states, “So the route is really circular, it’s the cycle of life in some way, it’s a series of opportunities. Just as I received a lot of service and a lot of opportunities, this is now part of that circle that I give back to the next generation of people.” Guiding his practice is a desire to build a solid connection with students, their families and the community. That’s why each morning, staff and students know where to find Mr. Dui: at the bus drop-off at the front door of the school as he personally greets each student, staff member and visitor, even in -40 degree temperatures.

Tam and the Anthony Graham staff have created a culture of care and compassion that informs their day-to-day interactions. They aim to provide a welcoming and safe space where refugee youth and their families come together to learn, interact and engage with each other and their new culture. When Tam learned that many of his newcomer families missed eating certain vegetables from their homeland and that many were in need of activities to keep them busy, Tam’s family donated farmland and there is now a robust gardening club where students and parents farm together and learn about growing food from around the world. Each weekend a school bus transports parents and students to a farm south of the city to work together looking after the crops and while doing this, the newcomers practice speaking English and learn about local farming practices. Through Tam’s connections in the city, local organizations and businesses have donated seeds, equipment and start-up funds to help assist the gardeners.

Within the school, staff and students are uniquely divided into four teams: Team Humility, Team Wisdom, Team Courage and Team Truth. Each team has three homeroom teachers and specific core teachers who teach the same students from Grades 7 to 9. Tam believes this organization allows the teachers to form more meaningful relationships with the students and to monitor more closely students who are dealing with adverse situations or challenges. With carefully chosen staff and school leaders, Tam stresses the need to have teachers try a term or two at his school before he is convinced they have what it takes. Tam notes, “When it



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comes to inviting staff into our community, they have to have compassion, the heart has to be there and there needs to be a trusting relationship that creates a safe place where conversations can occur – and you cannot always see this in an interview.”

Tam believes that providing a safe place where students feel respected and honoured is essential for learning to take place. “We know the trauma is there, we recognize that students have had horrific experiences and it is our job to create a space where they can be safe, feel cared for, and be open to learning,” he says.

Guiding principles for supporting refugee students

A trauma-sensitive school is not intended to be therapy-focused; rather, it is an environment that acknowledges the potential for traumatic experiences in

the lives of students and creates universal supports that are sensitive to the unique needs of each student, while being attentive to avoiding the possibility of re-traumatization. When we took a closer look at the activities, support programs and teaching strategies offered at Anthony Graham, and combined these with the literature on supporting refugee students, we uncovered some unique approaches and best practices that we believe are necessary for creating safe, trauma-sensitive schools.

Know your students: Take the time to learn about where your students come from and acknowledge their past. Be open to hearing their personal story, but remember that behind the trauma story is the story of survival. See students with an “asset perspective” instead of a “deficit perspective.” Help reorient students to focus on the skills, resources and power that they have to get through difficult times. View each student who comes to school as



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having unique experiences and backgrounds that are worthy of celebrating.

Know and build your community: Teachers, school staff, students, and the community need to collaborate with each other, have a willingness to hear different perspectives, and a readiness to take risks to try new approaches. Invite community members in to organize after-school clubs or a lunch-hour activities. Have a designated “community room” where staff, students, and the community can come together to discuss current issues and plan future events.

Know the signs: Students who are coping with distressing events and experiences might display hyper-arousal, avoidance, withdrawal or disassociation. They might be easily over-stimulated and lack a readiness to learn. Communicating and self-expression may be difficult and problem-solving and decision-making may be compromised. Students who have experienced trauma may have difficulty regulating emotions; you might see a state of calmness one moment and anxiety or anger the next. Fear and concern for their own safety or the safety of their family members may occupy their thoughts. If a student is

feeling threatened in your classroom, there will be little learning. As a colleague once said, “You can’t teach away trauma.” A sense of security and trust are the foundation for providing support to students; once safety has been established, the process of healing can begin. Healing takes time and the process of settling and adjustment can take years. Listen to what students and parents tell you they need, and know that some will talk and others will not. Be open to listening and providing comfort and support.

Know who can help: If you have concerns about the safety of the student or the safety of others, refer to the next level of care. If you have a “gut feeling” that something is wrong, trust your instincts and get additional support. A counsellor or therapist may need to be involved when you see serious changes in behaviour, or when the student talks or writes about death, dying or suicide. Significant substance abuse and heightened aggression or protectiveness are also signs that the student needs more support. Work with the student’s family or caregivers and ensure that you are working together to support the student. When there are cultural issues that you may not fully understand, seek out the help of a cultural broker or support worker.

Settlement agencies and community groups can be a tremendous support to school staff and when the various systems work together, a more holistic and supportive environment is created. Link to mental health professionals in your community and know who you can go to for help or guidance. Welcome assistance into your school and classroom – there are many support people in the community who are ready and willing to help out.

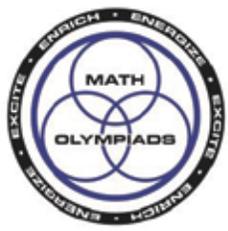
Know yourself: Working with refugee students can be rewarding and also extremely difficult. There is a personal impact from hearing about the trauma, torture, violence and persecution inflicted on others. It is common to feel helpless and overwhelmed. It can be extremely distressing to hear about violations to children and the impact this has had on a child’s life. For many teachers, it can seem like an overwhelming task to support the increasing numbers of students coming who are dealing with various forms of trauma. In some cases, you may be the only support in a student’s life and this can be a tremendous feeling of responsibility. Know your personal signs of stress and distress and know when, and how, to look after your own mental health.

Supporting children from refugee backgrounds can be a challenging journey and it can also be a process of renewed hope and opportunity. According to Tam Dui, you need three things to do this kind of work: “Competence, character, and chemistry. Can you do the work? Do you have the character and compassion to do the work? Do you have the chemistry to get along and trust each other to get the work done?” A new start offers refugee students hope and promise for a better future. If we do the work, schools can provide an environment of care and compassion that fosters acceptance and supports the successful integration of Canada’s newest citizens.

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Jan Stewart, PhD, is a Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Winnipeg. She is the author of *Supporting Refugee Children: Strategies for Educators* and a lead researcher in a national research program investigating best practices for building welcoming communities for newcomer and refugee children.



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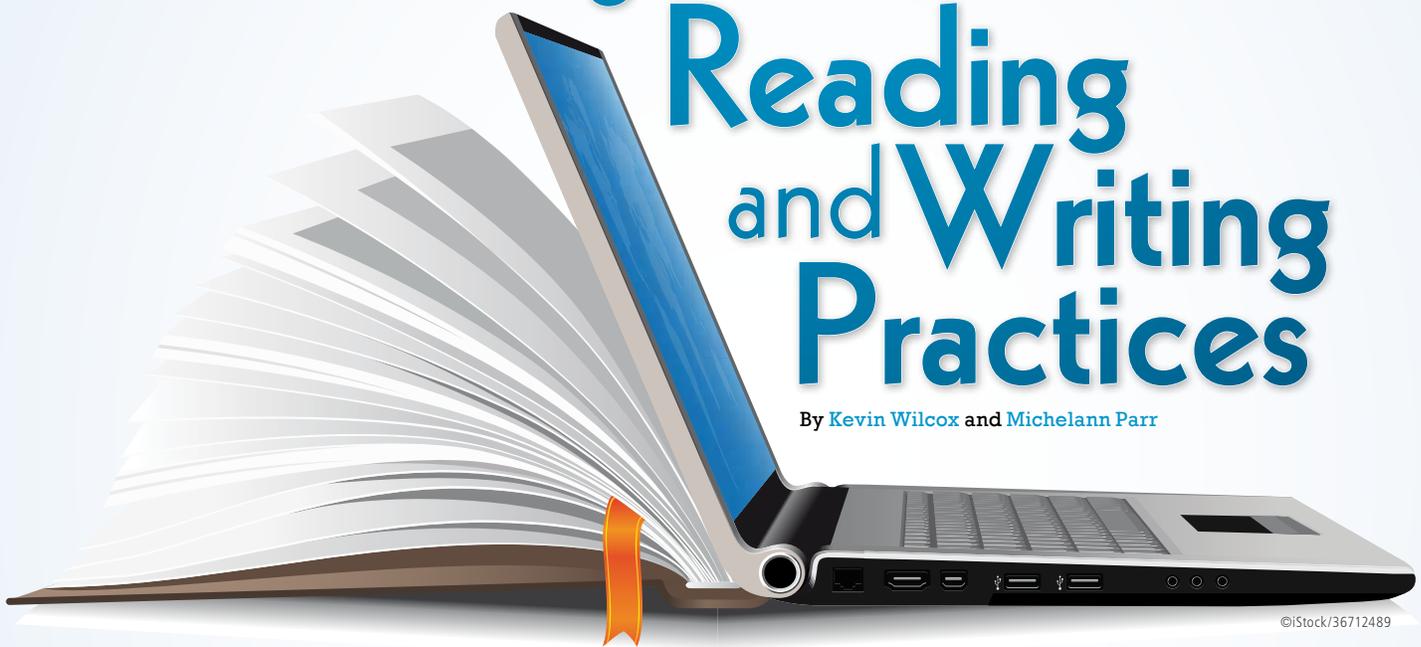
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Using Text-to-Speech and Speech-to-Text Technologies as Inclusive Reading and Writing Practices

By Kevin Wilcox and Michelann Parr



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Individuals who make their abode in vitreous edifices would be advised to refrain from catapulting petrous projectiles.

Chances are that, if required, you could read and write this text with between 90 and 100 percent accuracy. But... how long would it take? How much energy would you have left once your task was complete? And would you have anything left to make sense of what it all means? While a computer could likely read and write the text efficiently with a similar accuracy level, what it cannot do is make sense of the text and apply it in the real world. Solving this puzzle is the real work of readers and writers.

Text-to-Speech (TTS) and Speech-to-Text (S2T) technologies are tools that offer support with the tasks of decoding and encoding complex texts, freeing students to focus their attention on meaning making and information acquisition. When used in new ways (Rose & Meyer, 2000) as part of a multiple ways of knowing and multi-sensory approach, technology may facilitate exactly what readers and writers need to do to strengthen their skills: read and write more (Stanovich, 1986).

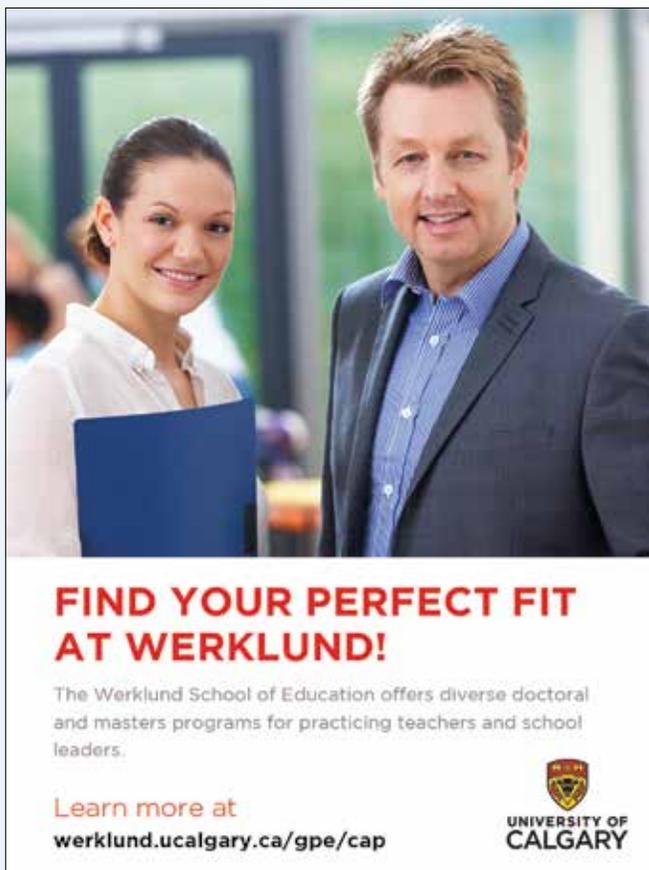
Consider auditory-visual learners who brilliantly waded through spoken and media texts, but struggle to access traditional print texts, largely due to inefficient word-solving. Alternatively, consider learners with excellent oral language skills, those who can eloquently speak and communicate, but whose ability to get ideas down on paper is labour intensive.

It's not difficult to predict that one way or another, these learners will likely be marginalized by tasks that privilege reading and writing in the traditional way; too far down this path, and they will likely disengage not only from the task but from learning. With a little technical fluency, understanding, creativity, and leadership on the part of educational leaders, TTS and S2T technologies can both support learning and expand learners' repertoire of literacy skills and strategies (Elkind, 2004).

Making Transparent the Tools of TTS and S2T

TTS and S2T work as reciprocal tools in text encounters, a natural extension of the reciprocity that exists between reading and writing (Anderson & Briggs, 2011; Rosenblatt, 1988). In a nutshell, TTS technologies transform traditional print texts to soundbites accessible on a range of devices. TTS texts differ from audio-texts in the sense that text is typically read (and/or highlighted) in a computer-synthesized voice, leaving the reader to bring expression and sense-making to the process (Edyburn, 2007). Through TTS, students gain increased access to print text, which supports repeated readings, less time spent decoding, and increased exposure to letters, sounds, and words they may not otherwise encounter on their own (Balajthy, 2005; Parr, 2008; 2011). Kurzweil, Adobe Read Out Loud, Read/Write Gold, Internet Screen Readers, and ReadPlease are examples of TTS technologies.

S2T technologies allow spoken ideas to instantly become print texts shareable with the world. Typically, writers speak to their device, and their spoken words and ideas are transformed into print that can then be digitally manipulated, revised, and edited to suit diverse purposes. With S2T, students see their spoken words appear on screen, observing “similarities in words, and the ‘ways words work’” (Askew & Frasier, 1999, p. 46). As well, the immediate visual feedback provided by S2T may promote additional reading and motivation to clearly speak, particularly when S2T cannot capture their spoken words accurately (Kartal, 2006). Siri, Apple Dictation, Cortana, Read/Write Gold, and Dragon Naturally Speaking are examples of S2T technologies.



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TTS and S2T support reading and writing in much the same way shared reading and shared writing are used; they are natural additions to a balanced and comprehensive literacy framework. These digital technologies transform student understanding of what it means to be a reader and writer while providing them with increased exposure to text, efficacy, agency, and choice (Parr, 2008; 2011; Zabala, 2000). Not only are TTS and S2T inclusive methods, but they are also easy to use and serve as effective tutors.

Making Meaning: At the Heart of TTS and S2T

TTS and S2T require us to consider how we conceptualize reading and writing in today's inclusive classrooms and further how we use these technologies in the classroom. To do this, let's revisit our opening puzzle... this text can be read through TTS and written through S2T (with minimal effort on the part of the computer). Where the water becomes muddy is in the solving of the puzzle and figuring out exactly what it means. First, the technical jargon needs to be translated into something more recognizable. With a whole lot of word solving, we arrive at

People who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

Simply translating, though, is not good enough. Now we need to look beyond the literal meaning of the phrase, bring our own awareness of proverbs to the task, and our prior experiences, finally asking the critical question of, “So what?” What does this mean in the grand scheme of reading and writing?” Today's computer, on its own, just can't do this work for learners! This work requires the intricate workings of the human mind (Huey, 1908, 1968).

Breaking the Glass Ceiling Through the Use of TTS and S2T

While access to diverse types of technology, particularly TTS and S2T, is ubiquitous (Anderson-Inman & Horney, 2007), the skills and strategies required by teachers and learners are not; each teacher and learner presents with a diverse profile of strengths, needs, experiences, and dispositions, which will, in turn, require us to understand, use, and create new learning opportunities (Centre for Media Literacy, n.d.) to support meaningful, authentic, and effective use of TTS and S2T (as outlined below).

Build understandings of TTS and S2T within the context of real reading and writing

- Discuss what it means to access and communicate meaning (e.g., talking, reading, writing); use the definitions in the Ontario Expert Panel on Literacy in Grades 4 to 6
- Engage in collaboratively solving the puzzle referenced in this paper. Model the use of S2T and TTS: Use S2T to transform the text from spoken to print. Use TTS to listen and view the text read aloud by the computer. Discuss what is happening. Ask: Has the computer solved the puzzle? What still needs to happen for meaning-making to take place? How is this reading? How is this writing? In recognition that technology moves at the speed of light, the answers to these questions will change over the course of our lifetime
- As a group, read and write a variety of texts using a shared reading/writing approach (e.g. poems, excerpts of short stories), with and without TTS and S2T. Discuss and compare the similarities and differences. Ask: What can the computer do? What can't the computer do?

“With a little technical fluency, understanding, creativity, and leadership on the part of educational leaders, TTS and S2T technologies can both support learning and expand learners’ repertoire of literacy skills and strategies.”

Develop competence, understanding, and use through guided and independent exploration

- Assign the use of TTS and S2T for diverse purposes – individual and collaborative (e.g., read a novel and participate in literature circles; create a short story using the writing process). Openly discuss the role of TTS and S2T in the knowledge acquisition and communication processes. Ask: What do TTS and S2T actually do? What are you noticing about the way you work with information in text?
- Establish TTS and S2T as learning centres and choices during independent reading and writing, literature circles, inquiry-based learning. Challenge learners to further explore what the computer can and can’t do. Ask: How do you feel about sharing reading and writing work with a computer?
- Conduct mini-lessons on the features of TTS and S2T, continually drawing them back to discussions about reading and writing. Provide language of decoding and encoding. Explore reading and writing definitions, word-solving, and metacognitive strategies within the context of technology. Ask: If TTS and S2T are the equivalents of decoding and encoding, what work is there left to do in reading and writing?

Provide universal opportunity and access within a framework of informed choice

- Encourage and support students in making informed choices regarding technology use (e.g., for reading and writing out loud, independent reading and writing). Observe and encourage students to reflect on their choices and conclusions. Ask: What do you now know? Who should use it? When/Where can it be used? Why do we use it? How can it be used? Is it a choice, a privilege, a nuisance? What would happen if all students were required to use technology? What would happen if no one was permitted to use technology? What did you learn about yourself? What did you learn about others?

Beyond the Glass Ceiling

Today’s inclusive classrooms are dynamic environments with diverse teachers, readers, and writers. Technology puts us on the cusp of change and when used in creative and innovative ways has the opportunity to build efficacy and agency (Hasselbring & Bausch, 2005/2006; Parr, 2008, 2011). While this is exciting, this is also overwhelming. As educational leaders, we are tasked with staying on the breast of such improvements and supporting teachers and students as they explore, understand, and use technology in new and innovative ways. TTS and S2T position today’s schools to produce readers and writers not only for today, but for future generations. With or without us, today’s learners will explore these technologies; making the connections explicit and breaking the glass ceiling opens possibilities and opportunities that will serve learners for a lifetime. ■

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Erratum: In the print version of this issue of CAP, this article was credited to the incorrect authors.

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Kevin Wilcox, B.Ed, is a first year Masters of Education student at Nipissing University in North Bay, Ontario. His masters research focuses on speech-to-text technology and its role in literacy practices, and the process of technological integration amongst preservice teachers.

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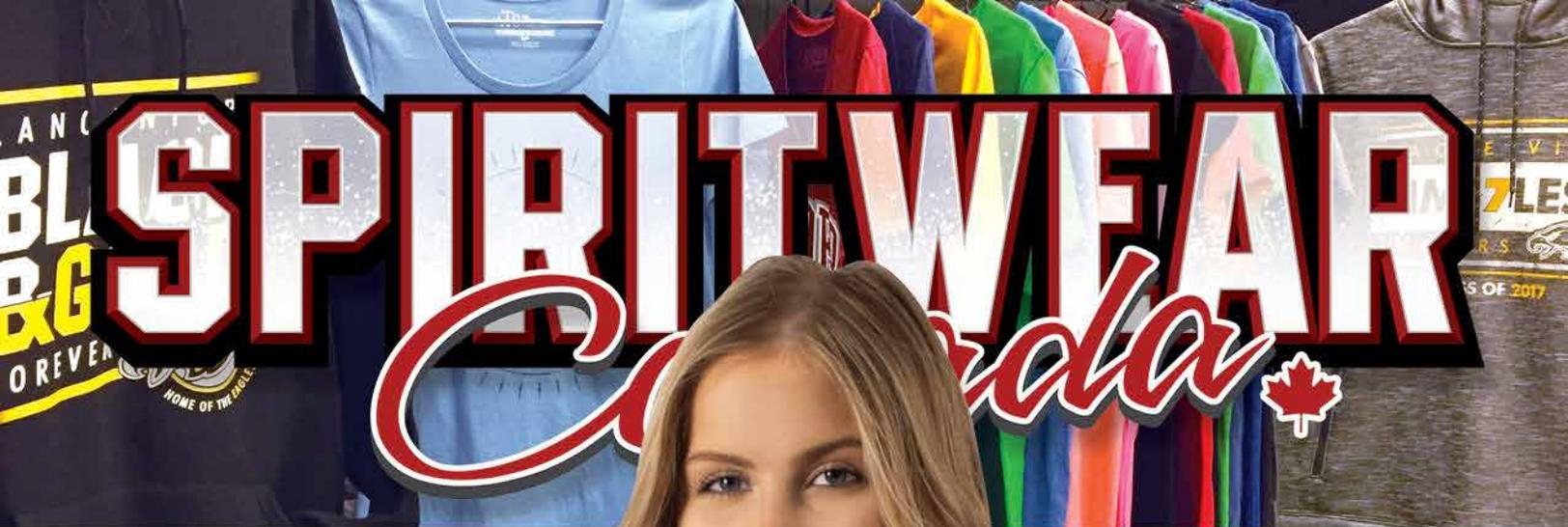
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A group of diverse children of various ethnicities and ages are smiling and looking towards the camera. They are arranged in a loose group, with some standing and some sitting or kneeling in the foreground. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. The word "Outserts" is written in a large, bold, blue font with a white outline and a slight drop shadow, centered over the middle of the image. Two horizontal dotted lines are positioned above and below the text.

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