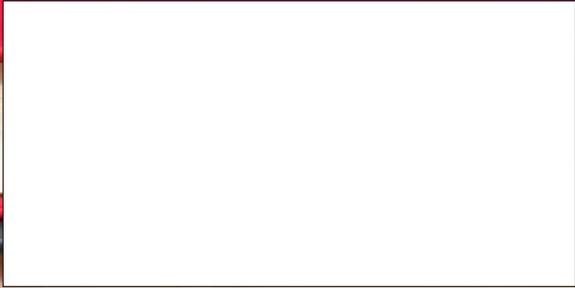


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Greetings From the President



Maxine Geller

President, Canadian Association of Principals

Greetings!

It is a great honour and privilege to take on the responsibility of the CAP President for 2016-17. As the year begins, I would like to acknowledge the CAP Executive, board and directors for their tremendous work on behalf of principals and vice-principals across our country. We want to take the opportunity to wish everyone an excellent year as educational leaders in positions of flux and opportunity.

The school leaders from New Brunswick need to be commended for a fantastic conference held in Saint John, NB, last May. The wealth of knowledge and skill of presenters enhanced and energized participants throughout the conference and beyond.

We continue our role and responsibility in research on the study entitled: The Aspirations and work life of the Canadian School Principal: National Study. We look forward to sharing the results of this study as it impacts on the work we do as school leaders going forward.

Our CAP journal, edited by Kyran Dwyer, brings educational articles, from members across the country, that are reflective, current and valuable so take time to read and enjoy.

As the national voice for school leaders, we look forward to serving our members. We hope to inspire leaders to act, engage leaders in purposeful conversation, respond positively to challenges, establish and maintain balance, and find creative and meaningful ways to support learning in our schools. I look forward to the year ahead and appreciate your support and feedback.

If you want to go fast...go alone!

If you want to go far...go together!

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



Kyran Dwyer
Editor, CAP Journal

Education in Canada is a topic that often causes lots of conversations, opinions and awakens many naysayers who put forth a negative outlook, as well as champions with positive opinions. I thoroughly enjoyed preparing this journal to be readied for publishing. The topic *Issues and Trends in Canadian Education* proved to be a great way to celebrate our Canadian education system. As you read within the pages of the CAP Fall Journal, you will find articles coming from all across our great country celebrating and demonstrating an education system that we should all be proud of. It is the administrators who work alongside great teachers that educate and enrich Canadian children and youth. It is easy to get caught up in the view of some that our education system is failing; however this is not the case. Our education system deserves to be celebrated, valued and recognized not just across Canada but around the world.

2016-17 promises to be an exciting and busy year for CAP. We continue to make research a major focus and with continued partnerships, CAP's voice will continue to be a voice for Canadian administrators.

I want to take this time to thank the CAP executive, fellow Canadian administrators and contributors to the CAP journal for helping me ensure our stories are told. As well I want to introduce Terry MacIsaac the newly elected Eastern Vice-President of CAP who will be the new editor of the CAP Journal. I have greatly appreciated my year as editor of the CAP Journal and look forward to championing the role and job of Canadian School Administrators.

Thank you.

Your in Education,
Kyran Dwyer, Editor

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CANADIAN EDUCATIONAL HISTORY

and its Relationship to Public Education

By Theodore Christou

The history of education in Canada requires a thorough encyclopaedia to be properly discussed. A single article will serve merely as a preamble, let alone an outline. Such a story might be entitled: *Canadian Public Education: From School House to 21st Century Learning*. That tale is not necessarily a story of progress, although public education in Canada is more forward-looking than historically founded. We tend to look at the history of education as a relic of the past. This past conjures images of dusty boxes on back shelves of classrooms or reliquary school facilities requiring modernization.

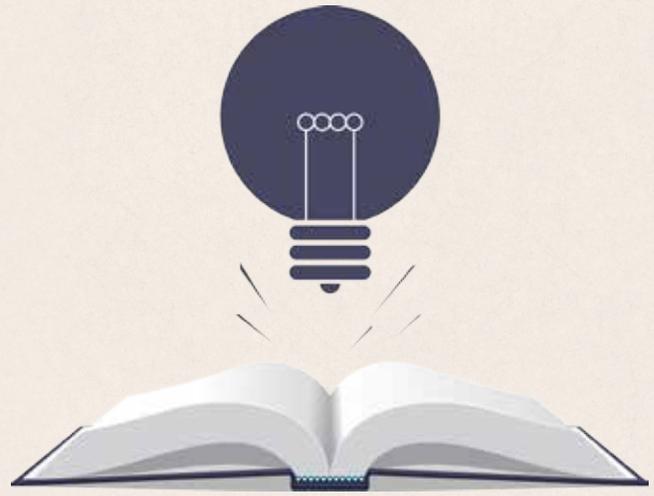
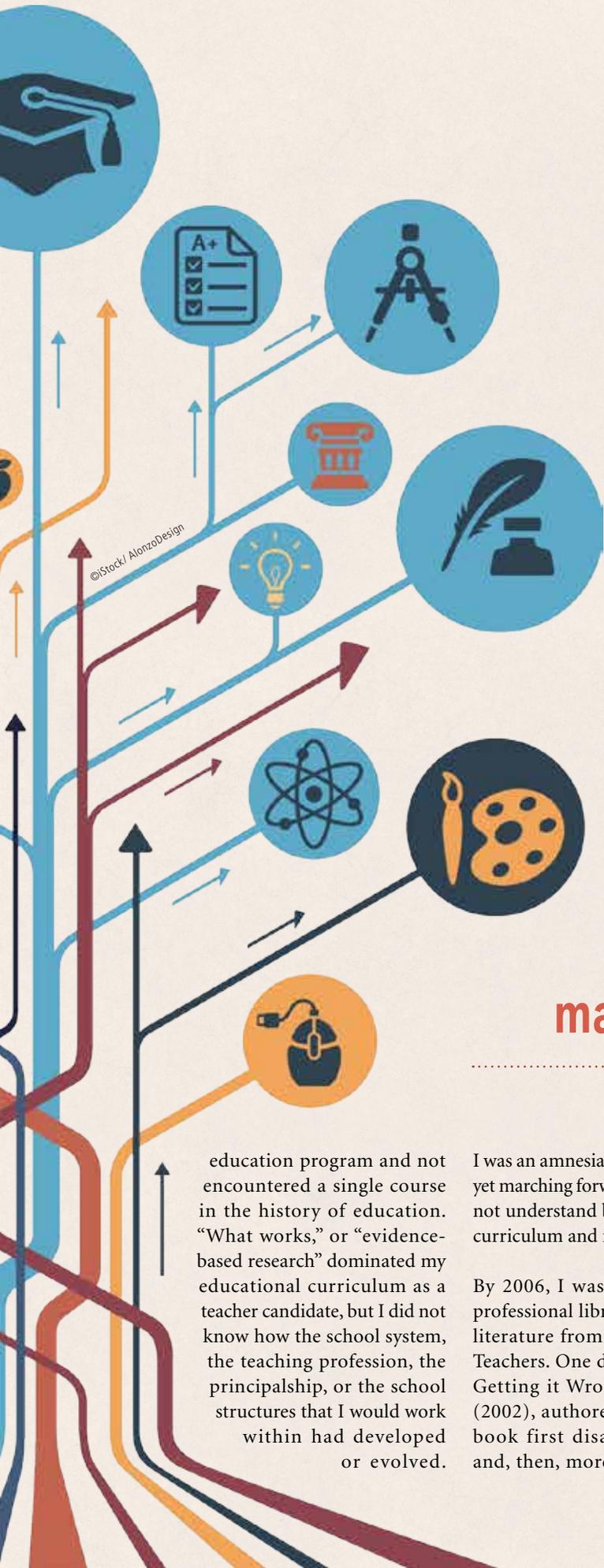
Yet the cultivation of historical mindedness in Canadian public education is needed to guide educational policy and to steady the pendulum that swings rhetorically and ideologically between progress and tradition. The record of reforms seems to embrace either tradition or innovation, but rarely both at once. Public education in Canada has served many purposes; it has pursued visions, revised these, and, in instances, made old ideas new again. Its history is a unique aspect of its present. Understanding how and why

aspects of Canada's schools look the way they do is foundational in the respect that it can inform decisions regarding what education ought to do and how it might do so.

The history of education courses occupies a very peripheral position in discussions of curriculum, leadership, and progress. I came to study and research the history of education accidentally. As a teacher, I always regarded the diverse, often contradictory, responsibilities that public education is charged with attending to with equal

parts of fascination and bafflement. As a first year teacher in the Toronto District School Board (2003), the most pressing strenuous aspect of working in my new profession was the realization that teaching was only one of the many responsibilities that I bore. In any one day, I would be an unqualified counselor, therapist, first-aid nurse, administrative assistant, security officer, and psychologist. I had graduated from a 2-year teacher





“Public education in Canada has served many purposes; it has pursued visions, revised these, and, in instances, made old ideas new again.”

education program and not encountered a single course in the history of education. “What works,” or “evidence-based research” dominated my educational curriculum as a teacher candidate, but I did not know how the school system, the teaching profession, the principalship, or the school structures that I would work within had developed or evolved.

I was an amnesiac, not knowing who I was, yet marching forward into a career that I did not understand beyond the parameters of curriculum and instruction.

By 2006, I was calling heavily on the professional library of the Board and on literature from the Ontario College of Teachers. One day, a book arrived titled *Getting it Wrong from the Beginning* (2002), authored by Kieran Egan. This book first disarmed me with its wit and, then, more deeply, with its thesis.

Over the history of public education, schools have assumed the responsibility of fulfilling three distinct aims:

- a) promoting academic excellence;
- b) developing individual students’ aptitudes and interests; and
- c) fulfilling a socializing role that is intimately related to society’s broader aims, including industry and citizenship.

Egan describes the intellectual roots of each aim, outlining how Plato, Piaget, and Herbert

Canadian Educational History

Spencer were forebears of each respective tradition. What is more, when applied to schooling, these aims actually undermine each other. Limitations of space will not permit much elaboration of this argument here but, in broad strokes, Egan convincingly argues that the three intellectual traditions he describes have fostered confusion and messiness rather than complementarity.

By the time I had finished reading the book, I had decided that the answer to my bafflement about the aims and meanings of public schooling could only be answered through the study of educational history. History could help me to understand why

we grouped children by school age, how we came to teach Medieval Times in the fourth grade, who was responsible for attendance policies and school bells, where our notions of school timetabling had come from and, most importantly, what in the world we were trying to do with public education after all? History was to be my open sesame and it remains a source of intellectual therapy.

In 2007, I began my life as an educational historian as a PhD student. I fully intended, at the time, to take some years away from the classroom and contemplate why the school in which I worked looked the way that it did. The first thing I learned

was that history is neither content knowledge about the past nor a theoretical model and discourse imposing explanations of the past. Educational history could be useful for considering the present contexts in which we teach and learn; by drawing on historical method and sources, historians of education aim to inspire, to inform, to capture and hold the imagination, and to broaden experience.

This article draws its impetus from concern about marginal status of educational history within our public discussions regarding public education. I have known most administrators, educators, and parents – educationists, writ large, we might say – to be deeply concerned with the future of their schools and of schooling. We may commemorate anniversaries of a particular institution's establishment, a retirement, or years of service, thus honouring local and particular dimensions of educational history, yet our decisions regarding the future of curriculum, space, or policy are infrequently grounded in a historically minded understanding of Canada's educational past. Moving forward, we may solve problems and overcome obstacles, but we also must acknowledge the challenges, perennial problems, triumphs, and defeats that we have faced as a public interested in the pursuit of a public education for all.

History is a means of exploring our humanity, and educational history involves study of the ways that we learn, school, and indoctrinate. History of education can provoke teacher candidates' imaginations and critical sensibilities. This is by no means an uncontroversial postulate. History should not be peripheral for any educationist pondering the question of Issues and Trends in Canadian Education as this issue of the Canadian Association of Principals does. As many historians have noted in the past, the value of attending to educational history is not in the provision of answers to our present and future dilemmas but, more so, it lies in its ability to situate our problems in a larger context, to confront our work as informed citizens, and to challenge the world we face, whether we encounter the past, the present, or the future. ■



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AUTHOR BIO

Theodore Christou is an Associate Professor of Social Studies and History Education at Queen's University. He serves as co-editor of the Canadian Journal of Education. Theodore is a published poet active in the fields of educational history and philosophy.



Engaging Educators in Action Research

By Jacqueline Kirk and Michael Nantais

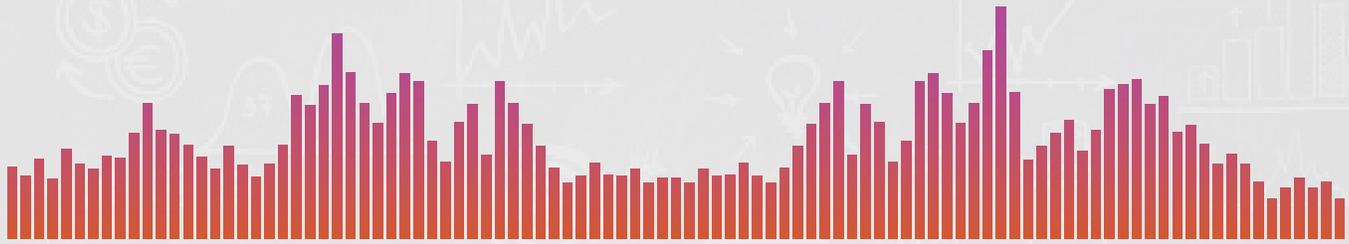
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As part of their daily practice, teachers engage in a continual process of data collection and analysis to evaluate student progress and adjust instructional strategies to meet student needs...

Therefore, undertaking action research to foster growth is a natural progression. The aim of this study was to develop a process for large group facilitation of school-based inquiry and to document the benefits that educators experienced from utilizing the principles of action research to identify and resolve challenges within the context of their own classrooms or schools.

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The Process

Over the three years that we have been involved in the project, we have maintained a similar process for the facilitation of the action research cohorts. In spring teachers and administrators, individually or in groups, apply to the division and identify projects they would like to work on in the upcoming school year. The division makes decisions about how to share the funding to provide adequate resources for the various projects. In the fall, we meet face to face with teachers to conduct a workshop about getting started with action research. During the workshop, teachers plan their inquiries including research questions and data sources. We have developed a Research Planning Template that teachers complete during the first workshop. Our goal is for participants to leave the day-long session with plans ready to implement in their schools. We meet again with the teachers in the spring to review data analysis and to assist them in completing the Action Research Report Template. Teachers submit their final reports to us through the division office by the end of June.

In the first year, the participants shared the anxiety they experienced about filling in the templates correctly, staying on task with their research between workshops, and generally living up to the expectations. In year two, we spent more time encouraging them to use common sense and less time lecturing them about the rigors of action research. We stressed the iterative nature of action research and encouraged them to make adjustments regularly when the data was indicating a need. We also revised our action research Planning Template and Action Research Report Template to make them more user-friendly. Once again, participants told us that they felt anxious about staying on task between our workshops. They also explained that they longed for feedback following their final reports. In year three, we added optional online video check-ins and provided feedback for the year two projects. The video check-ins were helpful and each of the participants joined at least one of the 30 minute afterschool sessions. At the fall workshop, participants articulated how much it would mean to them, if we visited their schools. In the spring, we visited each of the cohort members, toured their schools, and observed some of the exciting projects they had undertaken. Following the completion of the Action Research projects in year three, the feedback from participants was resoundingly positive. The process had met their needs and they were excited to share the benefits they had experienced from doing action research in their schools.

The Projects

To date, we have facilitated 35 Action Research projects. The topics have varied widely and have covered all subject areas and grade levels. One high school developed a learning commons in their library. Furniture was purchased to create different work areas and resource teachers were relocated to the space to provide support for students working independently on assignments. In another school, a teacher explored the use of iPads to enhance a Mathematics program for early years' students. Others experimented with integrating subjects, or grade levels, and with finding ways to collaborate with their colleagues. Each project added depth to the collective knowledge of the school division.

The Benefits

Teachers who participated in the Action Research cohorts have articulated many benefits in conducting classroom research. One participant said that she felt “re-energized” by the process. Another said that it had forced her to “reflect and to evaluate what was working and why; and what wasn’t and why.” Several articulated how they had enjoyed the process of learning through the research and learning about themselves. When we visited the schools, we were delighted to see teachers using data to understand their work more deeply and to see how the projects had created change in classrooms and throughout schools. Action research has provided a dynamic approach for teachers to contribute to the culture of growth that has been established in this school division. ■

AUTHOR BIO

Jacqueline Kirk is an Associate Professor and the chair of the Department of Leadership and Educational Administration at Brandon University. Her study of Educational Administration is driven by a passion for understanding what brings people together to create positive change within organizations.

AUTHOR BIO

Michael Nantais is an Associate Professor in the Department of Curriculum and Pedagogy at Brandon University. He has 30 years prior experience in public schools. His research interests lie primarily in the study of educational technology.

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The MILITARY CHILD Profile is Deserving of our Attention and More...

By Andrea Smith

As a guidance counsellor, helping a student find the ideal intersect between their academic skill set and what they enjoy is always a goal in planning for their future. In order to achieve this goal I rely on my understanding of the student's background. The various needs and strengths of the student come to my attention through academic review, awards and assistance, known participation in extra-curricular activities and sports, special education supports, individual education plans, regular counselling sessions and multi-disciplinary team meetings. Along the way a student profile comprised of personal, family, social and academic history emerges allowing me to do my utmost to guide and counsel that student.

What if I were to tell you there is a student profile that often goes unnoticed, one which has, until recently flown under the radar, so to speak? Let me introduce the military child. As educators and guidance counsellors we may learn their parent or parents are in the military. We may know they recently moved into our

catchment area and have previously attended several other schools. Still, unless they appear on our radar for specific concerns or accolades and we have occasion to understand them further, the challenges which naturally exist for the average military child may be overlooked.

“ Military children populate our pre-schools, elementary, secondary and post-secondary schools across Canada to the tune of approximately 63,000 students, with a further 400-500 returning into Canadian schools from overseas postings in any given year. ”

As a guidance counsellor, privileged to have worked in one of Canada's Department of National Defence Overseas Schools, I was afforded a 'camouflaged' window of insight into the lives of Canadian Armed Forces families. What I discovered was military families are

indeed very resilient and for the most part, the children in military families present as such. Yet, when we delve in a little deeper, military children are contending, in combination or in isolation, with factors of mobility, risk and separation on a continuous basis.

Mobility

As a civilian, I found arranging the myriad of particulars required for an international or inter-provincial posting involving the transfer of a spouse, child(ren), the shipment and/or storage of all household goods and effects as well as the sale or rental of current home and registration at a new school was enough to boggle even the most organised and detail-oriented person. The thought of repeating the process on a regular basis seems dizzying at best. However, mobility is common to most military families. The 2013 Canadian Forces Ombudsman's Report, *On the Homefront: Assessing the Well-being of Canada's Military Families in the New Millennium* found education to be one of the key concerns for Canadian Armed Forces families and cites that they are moving, on average, three times more often than

civilian families. Understandably, the imbedded concern vis-à-vis mobility and education relates to the transition students are required to make each time they relocate in the face of new school boards, requirements and curricula. The impact on children's schooling, as reported by families, has been wide-ranging and often recounts scenarios of feeling penalized by the need for their child to repeat courses, or sometimes even an entire school year.

In addition, the non-military spouse's employment is often non-transferable and can result in additional related challenges for the family in their new environment which may also impact children's adaptation in their new school.

Separation

Members of the Canadian Armed Forces are frequently required to spend time away from their families for training exercises or deployments; periods of separation can span the length of their career. These separations are unique to the occupation of the military member with some members away for close to a year and others who come and go every couple of days or weeks, following an irregular unpredictable schedule. Children in these situations are asked to adapt to this family rhythm, which can sometimes affect their schooling as they cope with related issues, such as the need

to take on additional responsibilities along with the destabilizing anticipation of where, when and how long their parent(s) may be called away. Their focus, level of achievement and ability or desire to engage in daily activities can be disturbed by the disruption of routine and adjustment to the arrival/ departure cycle of the absent parent. The caveat, as it relates to the school environment, is that this reaction can sometimes be mistaken for a general behaviour issue. The tremendous resilience required of these children to sustain this kind of separation-reunion pattern can easily go unrecognised.

Risk

Children of the military also contend with the knowledge their parent is at risk of being injured or killed in the name of the service they provide to our country. In some cases, they may have an ill or injured parent or have lost a parent in the line of duty. They may also develop a sense of responsibility for their other parent as the family copes with managing

the element of risk that is inherent to a military career. Though mobility, separation and risk are factors other children in our schools adapt to, children of Canadian Armed Forces members may uniquely contend with the effects and the concurrent combination of all three factors for a prolonged period of time, even years.

Supports

Living and working in a military milieu has taught me there is much educators can do in support of these exceptional students. In response to the anxiety, alienation and feelings of withdrawal military children may feel due to frequent moves, it has been my experience if we firstly understand the distinctive characteristics linked to their parent's employment as laid out above, we can better ensure their successful welcome and adjustment into their new school.

Military families may arrive at awkward times of the school year and require special consideration in school scheduling, equivalencies and deadlines for inclusion in mentoring, clubs and teams. Equivalencies at the secondary level may need to be crafted in a way that both respects the integrity of the current provincial/territorial diploma, but is also strategic - recognizing that dependent on their posting rotation, some children may

The Military Child

attend 1, 2 or more high schools before they graduate. And yes, they would like to graduate, ideally without being penalized because of their parent's job. Creative ways of earning missing credits may have to be entertained, such as distance learning for specific courses to specific curricula. Also, educating other staff and students/ peer mentors about what it means to be part of a military family allows for wider compassion and a sense of pride for the military child. By acknowledging these military children have unique strengths to share with their school community, stemming from their exposure to a variety of learning, cultural, geographical and sometimes linguistic experiences, it allows for their past experiences to be shared and valued. To provide a broader response to the unique military child profile,

Children's Education Management under Military Family Services, Canadian Forces Morale and Welfare Services, Department of National Defence recently instituted a Guidance Counselling Programme to assist with educational transitions of military children both inside and outside of Canada. Services are available to assist Canadian military families in mitigating the potential negative impact on children's education attributable to moving. As an example, students may qualify for reimbursable tutoring in subjects if they are struggling academically due to the change in curriculum from one posting to the next. The provision of additional services specifically for children of military families validates the military child profile is deserving of not only our attention, but the recognition that these children are also selflessly serving our country. ■

Principals and teachers who encounter military children in this circumstance are encouraged to refer the family to:

Children's Education Management

Counsellor	Student Surname	Email
Andrea Smith	A-K	Andrea.Smith2@forces.gc.ca
Carolle Coulombe	L-Z	Carolle.Coulombe@forces.gc.ca

AUTHOR BIO

Andrea Smith, OCT, has worked as a teacher and guidance specialist within the Ottawa- Carleton District School Board since 1998; has lived and worked overseas, most recently at AFNorth International School—DND Overseas Schools, and is currently working as a guidance counsellor with Children's Education Management in Ottawa.

CHILDREN'S EDUCATION MANAGEMENT

Children's Education Management ensures that the educational needs of children of Canadian Armed Forces families are supported during inter-provincial or international postings through

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Skills Canada: Energy for a Bright Future

By Alison Zenisek



In early June many of Canada's most kinaesthetically gifted students gathered at the Moncton Coliseum to demonstrate their skills in the various trades represented. Skills Canada 2016 was memorable for the high degree of energy, talent, and enthusiasm the students brought with them from each province and territory. One individual likened it to the Olympics of the trades and the competitions included brick layers, robotic technicians, potters, draft

designers, carpenters, auto technicians, mechanics, plumbers, and many more. The event was well organized, inspiring, and entertaining for the 7,500 visiting students who attended.

The three day competition which was held in the Coliseum included 500 student competitors, as well as judges from the various industries represented. Displays of tools, technology, pipes, safety equipment and other instruments used in the many trades abounded. Try-a-Trade and

technology booths kept students and other guests busy exploring their own skills. The competitors are evaluated based on industry standards. They are judged on the precision of the work, correct work procedures, and safety. Theoretical and practical knowledge are also assessed, and in certain tasks, speed. More than 200 medals are awarded to the industry champions in six skilled trade or technology categories including transportation, construction, manufacturing, information and technology, service, craft and design.

“ More than 200 medals are awarded to the industry champions in six skilled trade or technology categories including transportation, construction, manufacturing, information and technology, service, craft and design. ”

More than 60 of Canada’s top employers, institutes and government partners, as well as associations and unions were stationed in the Career Zone with booths and interactive activities for students and other attendees. Some of the primary sponsors included names such as J. D. Irving Limited, Stanley, DeWalt, MacTools, Volvo, and the Canadian Forces. The competition brings together representatives from industry, government, and education. The competitors are given the opportunity to further develop their skills in these hands on events alongside their peers. They also compete for being named the country’s best in their chosen field. Over 40 skilled trades are represented.

The Welcome Reception, sponsored by Stanley/DeWalt, officially kicked off the 22nd Skills Canada National Competition in great style. The Moncton Wesleyan Celebration Center was the venue for the evening events. The energy was electric as teams from each

province and territory wearing colourful hats and t-shirts took turns cheering and banging their thunder sticks. Delicious platters of food and various drinks provided by the Delta Hotel were happily consumed by all. Later, when all attendees gathered in the auditorium, the opening ceremony began with a parade of the teams. Once again cheers and thunder sticks echoed around the packed auditorium. The Premier of New Brunswick, Brian Gallant, and MaryAnn Mihychuk, the Federal Minister of Employment, Development, and Labour, addressed the general audience, corporate sponsors, and alumni. The lively entertainment for the evening included an Acadian fiddler and her band, as well as Aboriginal drummers and dancers.

Interviewing students and instructors revealed one quality they all shared. In every trade and every skill they never stop learning

and growing. This desire to be the best they can possibly be, and this commitment to excellence, was evident in all the interviews. One of the main goals of Skills Canada is to promote the skilled trades and technology as inviting career choices to high school students. The Skills Canada Competition is the only national multi-trade and technology event of its kind for young apprentices. These gifted youth represent the bright future for Canada and its economy.

Paul Protasovitski is one such example of an outstanding student. Tall, with a strong build, sandy hair, and an intense manner, his enthusiasm was undeniable as told me his story. “I come from a family tradition of working in the trades, and I am immensely proud of that. When my family arrived in British Columbia from Eastern Europe 20 years ago, it happened to coincide with Halloween and it really freaked us out. Now we laugh about it.”

Paul just turned 18 and loves the competition Skills Canada provides. He spent his last semester in high school at Accelerated Credit Education Training through Kwantlen University which provides students with 16 high school credits. The trade he chose to learn was plumbing, but this young man



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also had prior experience in construction. “I had already learned how to install hardwood flooring, roofing, fences, and had first-hand experience with demolition. I chose plumbing as my specialty because it is an easy skill to branch out from.” Paul made honour roll in grade 12 and also received the Raider Hansen Award. Raider Hansen is Western Canada’s largest independent industrial supplier. The company awards \$1,000 to a student enrolled in the Plumbing or Piping Foundations program. Paul told me that he enjoyed the theoretical aspect of book learning at university. He finished his course work on a Friday and was interviewed and hired the following Monday.

One of his plumbing instructors, Jeff Doolan, was sitting nearby. “The students competing at Skills Canada are forced to push their limits, and as a consequence, experience growth. I enjoy watching them compete and seeing what they can achieve.” Jeff teaches at Kwantlen Polytechnic University, and is gratified when he sees students’ skills translate into good jobs. According to Jeff, “plumbers have the skill and knowledge to install, maintain, and repair a variety of pipes, both copper and plastic. Knowledge of building codes and regulations are part of the job.” KPU offers foundational skills and three levels of apprentice technical training.

British Columbia is also known for its ACE IT program, an acronym for the Accelerated Credit Enrolment in Industry Training which is an in class component of a high school apprentice. It gives students interested in the trades a head start on their careers. ACE IT programs are usually offered as partnerships between school districts and post-secondary institutions with onsite training at either location. Students who successfully complete the ACE IT program earn credit towards both high school graduation and a post-secondary credential. Enrollment in the program is free, but students are expected to cover the cost of textbooks, tools, and other items specifically needed to work in their chosen industry.

Mackenzie Collins of Newfoundland has participated in Skills Canada since she was in grade 9. Mackenzie won provincially her last 3 years of high school. Now only 17 years old, she received the National gold medal in the Prepared Speech portion of the Skills Canada National Competition of 2016. She also received a “Best in Region” award. This talented daughter of Richard and Beverly Collins also plays violin, sings,

and dances ballet and tap. Mackenzie has obviously learned the very adult skills of a good work ethic and the ability to set goals for herself.

I asked Mackenzie how Skills Canada prepared her to face life’s challenges. “My competition was Public Speaking which entailed both a prepared speech, as well as an impromptu speech.... Communication is very important in today’s workforce and being able to communicate effectively will certainly be an advantage in my future endeavors.” When asked which character quality she gained through the many competitions, she had this to say: “It

certainly enhanced my confidence to place nationally amongst other fantastic speakers. I also gained a lot of pride and appreciation for my home province of Newfoundland.”

The memories she will always cherish were of her parents, her teacher Ms. Sheehan, and Team NL who supported her every step of the way. “...Looking into the audience to see them all there to support me was one of my most cherished moments.” Winning the gold medal at this year’s Skills Competition was also a special memory for Mackenzie. “I will never forget that incredible feeling of pride as I stood on the podium and realized that my hard work really did pay off.”

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“ I am always impressed by the levels of passion and dedication that is demonstrated by the participants. ”

John Oats is the president of Skills Canada and has long supported the development of careers in the skilled trades and technologies among Canadian youth. John could be found at many of the scheduled events during the competition. He has been a part of Skills Canada in one supportive role or another for 15 years. “I love interacting with the students and telling them about the different career options available to them. I am always impressed by the levels of passion and dedication that is demonstrated by the participants.”

He believes that there will continue to be a high demand for skilled workers both within Canada and around the world. “Skills Canada is a great organization and I encourage anyone who is interested to get involved.” Mr. Oats is looking forward to leading Skills Canada into the future, advocating for the role skilled trades and technologies play in making Canada great. John has extensive experience in strategic planning and board governance, all qualities that will well serve the bright vision of Skills Canada.

An Educators Forum hosted various speakers highlighting the importance of Essential Skills needed for success in the skilled trades and technologies. The nine essential skills include the following abilities: document use, numeracy, oral communication, reading text, thinking, writing, continuous learning,

digital, and working with others. While oral communication was highlighted this year, Skills Canada is seeking to improve the mastery of all nine essential skills as students seek out a career in the trades or technologies. Educators, industry, and the trades all need to be on the same page regarding the importance of students acquiring these skills before they leave high school.

The level of education needed for the trades is higher than ever. The modern trades demand a level of skills far greater than before, and the work itself is more complex than in the past. Thinking, problem solving, and digital skills are an imperative. The educators at the forum agreed that introducing real life competencies at an early age would go a long way to preparing students for any career path. Employers in Canada, both now and in the future, will struggle to hire and retain skilled workers. Although essential skills are being introduced in some classrooms, they are not yet part of the curriculum. The goal is to provide stronger programs in these competencies for youth across the nation. These skills are critical. Community colleges are teaching them, but clear communication as to why they are important is lacking. Employers are now asking for these competencies specifically.

A difference of 30% in reading skills can make a difference of 30% in productivity. One half of all Canadians are ill prepared for the workplace. Communication is so important in our digital world. Our teachers are our prime innovators and they understand that students need to be prepared for their next step. Teachers would benefit from additional resources made available so they could incorporate teaching these skills as part of their daily lesson plans. School administrators can do much to facilitate this process, such as finding the appropriate community partners that can transform the importance of these abilities into an essential and concrete reality for the students.

Among students, trust is gained through conversation with their teachers about what matters most to them, and what interests them. Conversation itself is a pedagogical moment, as good communication is a learned skill. The workplace only runs smoothly when face to face communication is achieved, as mobile devices are essentially unsafe in industrial settings. Employers also need to be willing to understand this new generation of workers. Knowing that 70% of oral communication is non-verbal will go a long way to establishing good working relationships between employees and their employers. A high school diploma in workplace essential skills would be an ideal preparation for the trades.

The 2016 Skills Canada National Competition was well organized and impressive. The work of numerous volunteers, industries, governments, educators, and the competing students was evident in every square meter of the event. It would be remiss not to mention the organization, courtesy, patience, and hard work of the Canadian Forces who tirelessly provided the transportation to and from the venues. Their example of an excellent work ethic did not go unnoticed.

The values instilled in the students through the Skills Canada program were also evident and noteworthy: safety, excellence, commitment, accountability, fairness, integrity, camaraderie, and inclusivity. “The goal of this annual competition is to recognize the excellence of young Canadians in the skilled trades and technologies,” according to Shaun Thorson, Chief Executive Officer of Skills Canada. In light of the competencies showcased by the students in Moncton this goal was certainly achieved. A selection of national competition winners will go on to participate in the World Skills Competition in Abu Dhabi next year. ■



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Stop Supplying Part-Time Pedagogy

By Gianluca C. Agostinelli



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"No offence but could you put a real teacher on?" This question, one which is frequently asked by seasoned teachers and school administrators alike, continues to rankle and consume me. Normally, I would have simply subscribed to the prevalent understanding that substitute teachers are, indeed, subordinate to their full-time counterparts. However, this particular instructor's query inspired me to challenge the status quo, to search not for a real teacher but, rather, to become one.

I explained to her that I, too, was a qualified and certified educator, an unequivocally real classroom teacher, with authentic credentials. Unconvinced and evidently unimpressed, however, she answered: "You know what I mean. You're just the supply." The crippling word "just," in our brief exchange, failed to recognize my membership to the Ontario College of Teachers and status a distinguished PhD student with two Masters degrees. Rather than foreground our partnership in a shared system with the same goals, this educator's remark reified a rigid hierarchical structure, a power dynamic that limits the potential, agency, and confidence of substitute teachers in Ontario.

For a moment, after I had hung up the phone, I paused to ponder the legitimacy of my title and role. As an occasional teacher, was I truly some type of deceptive fraud in need of validation and verification? Were my teaching methods, credentials, resources,

and pedagogical approaches any less official, valuable, or effective than those of teachers with permanent employment? What, exactly, made me "just" a supply? And what could I ever do to become more than simply "just"? These thoughts weighed me down as I searched for a teacher to unlock the door to my next class.

Due to its precarious and peripheral nature, many educators, including occasional teachers themselves, view daily supply teaching as an inferior effort that is often undervalued or unnoticed. While occasional teachers account for nearly a fifth of teachers currently working in Ontario, we frequently feel marginalized because we lack the ability to belong to our workplaces and, in turn, the capacity to influence, positively, a school's culture. While our nomadism and liminality afford us the opportunity to interact with and teach a greater number of students in a variety of schools, the job of a supply teacher continues to be arduous, especially in a time of economic uncertainty.

Stop Supplying Part-Time Pedagogy

Nowadays, more certified teachers in Ontario are spending more time in the classroom as daily supply teachers. The 2015 Transition to Teaching report released by the Ontario College of Teachers explains that over 30% of educators certified to teach since 2014 are still without work. Further, nearly a tenth of teachers certified more than a decade ago are still working as substitute teachers. While job security remains the foremost source of concern for occasional teachers, part-time, precarious employment is expected to "continue as the norm" in Ontario's education system.

Recently, in a school staff room, I was approached by a colleague who, before pulling up a chair to eat lunch beside me, shook my hand, and introduced himself. "I know who you are," I assured him. "You were my supply teacher when I was in elementary school." Paralyzed by shock and disappointment, this man, now entering his fifteenth consecutive year of substitute teaching, withdrew his smile and, pensively, reached deep into his lunch pail as if trying to find a response. As we sat in silence, staring evasively at our schedules, I wondered if I would soon share his fate.

Will I have a job tomorrow? I ask myself the same question each night when I crawl into bed. Before I turn off the lights, I pray that, at 6:00 A.M. the following morning, I will receive a phone call to inform me that I will be employed for another day, that I will be able to pay my bills and, hopefully, my accumulating student loans. One day, I hope to become a high school principal but, as I look toward the horizon of a barren professional landscape, I contemplate if I will soon be called a "doctor" in some academic circles, and have to press Play on a DVD player in others.

"We already did this assignment. A few times. Look!" As my student searched through her files and located her completed task, I wondered how much effort her homeroom teacher had put into planning for the day's lesson. Over the past year, there have been numerous occasions when, upon entering a classroom, I was left without plans to cover not just one period, but a whole day. Last-minute emergencies notwithstanding, it is discouraging that, as a supply teacher, receiving a lesson plan—even an incomplete one—is not a guaranteed component of my daily practice. If we are to move away from a narrative that frames supply teachers as supervisors and babysitters, it is important that principals encourage their staff to generate complete, rich lessons for their interims.

By the time Ontario students graduate from high school, they will have spent roughly one year's worth of school days under the instruction of supply teachers. If students may spend up to 10% of the school year in contact with substitute teachers, why, then, are they still assigned word-searches, games, or textbook work devoid of criticality? Why are students expected to complete mundane "busy work" or review previously taught material in the presence of a trained substitute teacher? Should every student not be able to participate in enriching and meaningful lessons on a full-time basis? How can principals work to make pedagogy more than just an occasional effort? Principals, I understand, cannot simply change the reality of the occasional teaching field; they cannot create full-time positions, nor increase the number of students in the province. What they can do, however, is improve our experiences to make us feel confident, safe, and included in school. Greet us in the hallway, show us where the staff room and washroom are, check up on us in our classrooms, make sure that we have all of the necessary resources, and remind teachers and students that we, supply teachers, deserve respect and have authority equal to permanent teachers.

While I cannot speak for all occasional educators, what is, for me, most important, is that principals stop supplying part-time pedagogy. When my students remark, "You're one of the only supply teachers who actually teaches us," I am as flattered as I am worried; what do other supply teachers do when they are in the classroom, if not teach? As administrators, demand that we enter your schools prepared to teach in an efficacious manner that enables us to take pride in our work. Ask that your teachers trust in us to instruct and care for their students as if they were our own.

If supply teachers are meant to be the educational bridges which maintain the continuity of instruction when the regular, homeroom teacher is absent, then principals should do their best to ensure that there is, indeed, opportunity for us to instruct. The presence of a substitute teacher in the classroom should not indicate a free day or a play day. We are educators, wanting to teach. We are young, but ready. Give us the chance to let us be the real teachers who we know we are. ■

AUTHOR BIO

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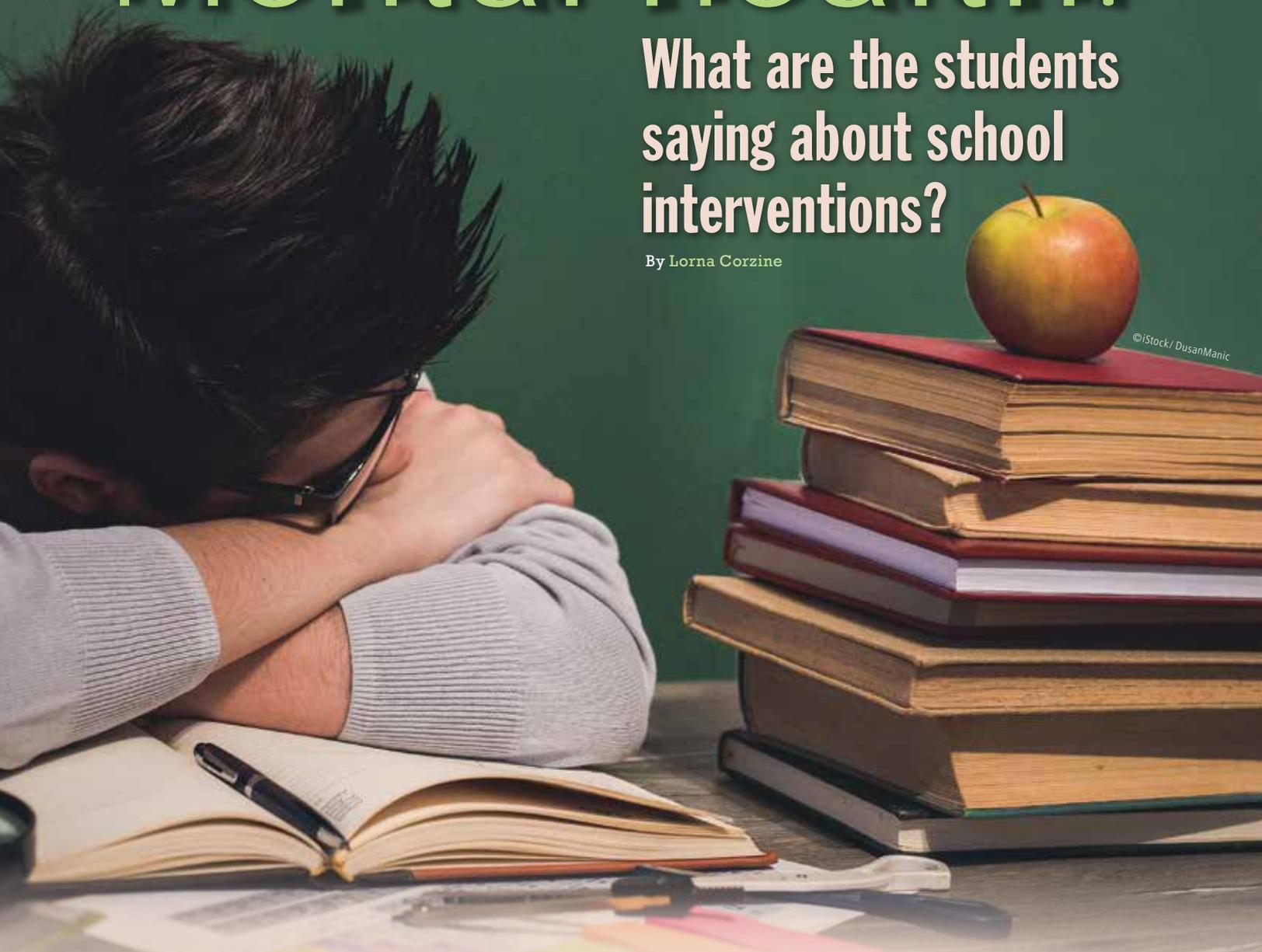
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Mental health:

What are the students saying about school interventions?

By Lorna Corzine



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Mental health in schools can be viewed in many ways: teacher knowledge, administrative guidelines, and student attitudes. It can also be viewed from the perspective of the students who have mental health challenges. Gauging students' personal and mental needs can be difficult but the examples that follow, while viewed from a mental health base, can also be applied to day-to-day interactions with students. In this article, I introduce three students who each took a different route when dealing with their depression in school: Brittany, Christy, and an unnamed student.

Brittany spoke about a fear of telling teachers about her depression. She felt she would be defined by her mental health issues and stigmatized by both teachers and students as was the case for many students who required extra help. Trust was also an issue for Brittany. She said that she could never have a relationship with a teacher that would allow her to express her needs and, as she saw it, vulnerabilities. She mentioned that teachers might be used as references, so she

did not want to be seen as different or in any way that could affect their recommendations. Upon reflection, she said that it would have been a good thing to ask for help. Although her grades were good in high school, upon experiencing accommodations in post-secondary, she recognized the difference in her success. She ended by stating that she is a strong advocate for talking about mental health because "I don't want to see anybody suffer through depression. 'Cause I suffered through it and it's horrible."

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After telling her two closest friends about her challenges with mental health, Christie was cyber-bullied by them for a brief time. While she and her friends eventually reconciled, Christie was quite upset by it. A teacher noticed her acting differently on the first day and approached her. She simply asked, “Are you okay? What’s going on? If you’re ready to tell me anything, I’m always here.” They sat in silence for a few minutes as Christie tried to say she had depression. The teacher listened to her story and then worked with her to design some accommodations to help her in her class. They worked through a few ideas before they came up with Christie writing her tests in the hallway to reduce classroom distractions. Another teacher was also made aware of Christie’s need for accommodation, but she was still cautious about which teachers learned of her mental health needs. She was wary because she had been in the staff room a few times and heard some teachers speaking negatively about various students with needs and did not want to be talked about in that manner. Christie said that while she used to be uncomfortable with talking about her depression, she now wants people to know because “if I’m going to be judged, I want to be judged accurately.”

The unnamed student was experiencing anxiety and depression at such a level as to be suicidal about upcoming exams. To help alleviate these pressures, the student chose to use an intermediary, a public mental health worker, to assist in obtaining accommodations. The student then identified a teacher in the school who was trusted, could be approached during the school day if assistance was needed, and offered a safe space to talk. Together, the mental health worker and the student determined that school accommodations were needed and, as the student would not be present, decided what could and could not be said and agreed upon. Both the trusted teacher and principal were open, helpful, and understanding. This intermediary relationship worked well for the student and accommodations were made that helped alleviate the student’s stress level and the intention of suicide was greatly reduced. The social worker emphasized that it is important to “identify a safe teacher the student trusts, someone that they can go to if they’re experiencing difficulties or difficult emotions. They can go to that teacher who can guide them or lead them to the appropriate service, or help, or referral.”

My research is supported by other Canadian researchers such as Leahy & Robb (2013) who conducted group studies with students. In one example, a student completed an anonymous survey and indicated he felt his mental health issues were ignored by the school and he wanted to die. A teacher recognized his handwriting and passed it on to the guidance counsellor. He was then called to the counsellor’s office where he was confronted with the survey. He felt that the teacher had broken his trust and indicated that he may have spoken about his issues, had the teacher approached him first. Instead, he turned away from school assistance.

Leahy & Robb (2013) also found that supportive teachers checked in with students who were having a difficult time, created safe spaces to talk, worked with students to create learning plans, and were flexible in ways of learning. In another instance, one student had anxiety and difficulties remaining awake during class. The class had been asked to read an article but, knowing her limitations, she asked the teacher if she could walk through the halls to help her remain awake. Upon returning to class, she found that the other students were finishing their reading as well. She felt success at what had previously been a problem and was thankful to the teacher who had listened to and accommodated her.

In Ontario, Mel A. created a YouTube video entitled “Joan” (2015) in which Joan talks about her experiences with depression and anxiety and her interactions with her high school. She felt she was identified by her flaws, considered a problem to her teachers, and was, at one point, encouraged to drop out of school. She felt she was treated differently by the teachers and when her peers learned of her difficulties, she became an outcast. At the end of the video, Joan says “I am not a problem. I am an individual. I am complex. And I deserve to be listened to.”

From these stories we learn a number of different things:

- Talking about mental health needs is a huge challenge for students. To overcome this, trust must be built between student and teacher which could then lead to more open discussions about the students’ needs. Students should be involved in determining who is informed of their needs.
- The school and teachers’ response to mental health is crucial and will determine if a student will even come forward with his or her difficulties. Ensuring that only positive messages about mental health are conveyed by teachers will not only help those in need but also model good practices and anti-stigma messages throughout the school.
- It is important to recognize the different needs of the students as well as the flexibility required in determining accommodations. Sometimes it is trial and error, other times the students may have suggestions, or teachers who understand the student’s learning style may be able to offer ideas.
- Of note, neither the Child and Family Services Act nor the Ontario College of Teachers has any laws about reporting mental health concerns or even student self-harm declarations. Processes to handle these types of issues are often left to individual schools or school boards to implement.

There are no quick and easy solutions for helping students with mental health needs. Understanding, patience, trust, flexibility, and willingness to make changes seem to be good places to start. As a reminder, these suggestions can also be useful in assisting adolescents with typical teenage issues. ■

AUTHOR BIO
 Lorna Corzine holds an MEd and a PhD in Education. She has studied the effects of mental health for the past 8 years and is currently applying for a post-doctoral fellowship in anti-stigma mental health research.

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PROACTIVE ACTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION:

The Role of Threat Assessment Teams in Education

By Dr. Vicki Squires and Tracy Spencer

Over the last few decades, the issue of violence in schools and post-secondary campuses has been discussed and examined. However, the highly publicized shootings which took place at Columbine High School in 1999 and Virginia Tech in 2007 were traumatic events which raised the issue of school violence and threat assessment to the forefront of the minds of senior leaders in these educational institutions (Cornell, 2015). Furthermore, these high profile events stimulated a nationwide public demand for institutions to implement threat assessment and safety measures to keep campuses safe (Cornell, 2015). Given this context, threat assessment teams have been established at elementary and secondary schools, and at post-secondary campuses.

Threat Assessment Teams

Influential events: Columbine High School shooting and Virginia Tech shooting

The 1999 Columbine shooting was a pivotal event in terms of threat assessment. While it was not the first school shooting, this tragic event was the catalyst for the threat assessment movement (Cornell, 2011). One major recommendation of the Columbine Review Commission (2001) included the adoption of a threat assessment approach to preventing violence within schools. While school violence and threat assessment were serious concerns within primary and secondary school systems, post-secondary institutions did not feel as vulnerable until the Virginia Tech shooting in 2007 (Harwood, 2011). The Virginia Tech Review Panel (2007) outlined a list of recommendations which included the need to share information (and eliminate information silos) and the need to create multidisciplinary teams to gather and assess information, determine risk level, and implement interventions to prevent the threat (Leavitt, Spelling, & Gonzales, 2007). Although infrequent in Canada, our country is not immune to violence. As illustrated in Table 1, there was a total of twelve school shootings in Canada since 1975 (“Deadly school shootings in Canada,” 2016; Tait et al., 2016), with the latest being the shooting at La Loche Community School this year.

Table 1: School Shootings in Canada

Year	School Name	Location	Details
1975	Centennial Secondary School	Brampton, Ontario	A 16 year old student shot and killed a teacher and himself. He also wounded thirteen students.
1975	Saint Pius X	Ottawa, Ontario	An 18 year old student killed three people, including himself. He wounded four other people. He also raped and killed a female prior to the school shooting.
1978	Sturgeon Creek School	Winnipeg, Manitoba	A student shot and killed another student.
1989	L'Ecole Polytechnique	Montreal, Quebec	A man shot and killed fourteen students and one employee. He then shot himself.
1992	Concordia University	Montreal, Quebec	A professor shot and killed four colleagues and wounded another.
1999	W.R. Myers High School	Taber, Alberta	A student shot and killed one student and wounding another.
2004	Bramalea Secondary School	Brampton, Ontario	A teacher was killed by her husband in the parking lot of the school. No other people were injured.
2006	Dawson College	Montreal, Quebec	A male shot and killed one student and then killed himself. Nineteen other students were injured.
2007	C.W. Jeffries	Toronto, Ontario	Two males shot and killed one student.
2012	University of Alberta	Edmonton, Alberta	An employee shot and killed four co-workers.
2013	Les Racines de vie Montessori	Gatineau, Quebec	A male shot and killed an employee in the school's daycare. The shooter then killed himself.
2016	La Loche Community School	La Loche, Saskatchewan	A student shot and killed four students. Seven other students were injured.

“ With approximately 15,500 elementary, secondary, and mixed elementary and secondary schools in Canada and approximately 133 universities, colleges and polytechnics the number of school shootings in relation to the amount of schools which exist in Canada is incredibly low. Nevertheless, the potential exists and public attention has been heightened by these highly publicized events. ”

With approximately 15,500 elementary, secondary, and mixed elementary and secondary schools in Canada (*Council of Ministers of Education, Canada, 2016*) and approximately 133 universities, colleges and polytechnics (*University of Lethbridge, 2016*) the number of school shootings in relation to the amount of schools which exist in Canada is incredibly low. Nevertheless, the potential exists and public attention has been heightened by these highly publicized events.

Educational institutions have responded with further professional development regarding assessing risk and with the establishment of threat assessment teams. The names of these teams vary among institutions and among school divisions, according to the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association (*NaBITA, 2016*). Team membership also varies, although most teams have a multidisciplinary composition. Deisinger, Randazzo, O’Neill, and Savage (*2008*) listed senior leaders from student affairs, campus safety, counselling services, and human resources as potential members of post-secondary threat assessment teams, with access to legal representation, either as a team member or through consultation. NaBITA (*2016*) added members from case management, disability services, media relations, and academic professionals and/or faculty. Notably, each member has unique professional responsibilities on the team (*Deisinger et al., 2008*).

In schools, the teams consist of school-level administration (principal, vice-principal) and other professionals who either work within the school or are itinerant. These other professionals could include school counsellors, school psychologists, police liaison officers, and social workers (*Cornell, 2011*). Furthermore, a senior administrator (superintendent or director) oversees or coordinates the team within the division or school district.

Threat Assessment Mandate

Ultimately, the focus of a threat assessment team is to ensure the safety of the school or campus community; however, in achieving that mandate, they have evolved into a more complex role. Many teams have developed into behavioral intervention teams with threat assessment being one component of their



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responsibilities (Sokolow et al., 2011). Other responsibilities include gathering information, assessing the information and risk, developing coordinated intervention plans, and monitoring troubled students (Dunkle, Silverstein, & Warner, 2007-2008). The gathering of data is the team's way of "connecting the dots". By reviewing all information gathered from various stakeholders, the team paints a fuller picture in order to understand the situation and assess risk. Gathering information is critical for breaking down information silos that tend to exist, especially within post-secondary institutions. Additionally, threat assessment teams are responsible for the safe retention and ethical dissemination of information they obtain (Penven & Janosik, 2012).

Significantly, threat assessments are not supposed to be a punitive response to violence, rather as a way to assess risk and intervene by using on and off campus resources to mitigate the risk (Cornell et al., 2004). Intervention plans may include, but are not limited to, connection to counselling services, referrals to health professionals including doctors and psychiatrists, and the restriction of access to weapons.

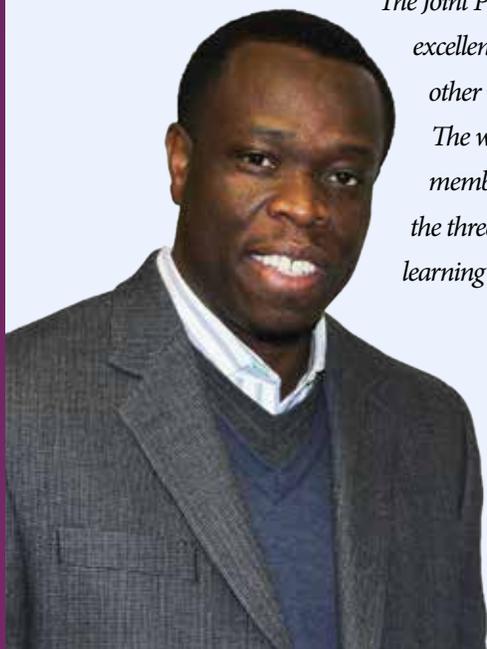
Threat assessment teams require a culture of trust to support the collaborative communication necessary among on and off campus stakeholders (Penven & Janosik, 2012). Another key concept in threat assessment is the understanding that violence is an evolutionary process and people do not just 'snap'; those who engage in serious violence often go through a justification phase where they seek out reasons to justify their actions (Cameron, Woods, & Campbell, 2011). Most threat making or threat related behaviour is a cry for help, but people have a tendency to either overreact or under react to those situations. Another key concept in threat assessment is fluidity,

which is the psychological shifting from homicidal to suicidal thoughts (Cameron, et al., 2011). Indeed, many offenders exhibit fluidity when those who engage in serious violence and school shootings end up taking their own lives.

Importance of Threat Assessment Teams

According to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) (2016), school violence, in any form, has a powerful impact on students, faculty, staff, parents, and the community. The RCMP suggested that the impact goes beyond the walls of the school and leaves a long lasting impact on its community. Some of the impacts are fear, anxiety, and paranoia that perpetuate as a result of the violence. Furthermore, Flynn and Heitzmann (2008) stated that, "one of the most sweeping and significant consequences of the Virginia Tech episode was the wave of unsettling emotions that swept across our campuses. The sense of vulnerability, direct threat, and the shattering of the usual sense of safety reverberated across our nation's campuses" (p. 489). The emotional impact of school violence can affect students' experiences within the educational institution, and impact their academic success, with the potential to interrupt or halt their education altogether. Therefore, given the impact school violence can have on an educational institution, its people and the broader community itself, it is critical for senior leadership to ensure that threat assessment is taken seriously. Proactive measures such as implementing a threat assessment process and establishing threat assessment teams to mitigate potential risks, will contribute to the overall safety of the learning, living, and working environment and have a positive impact on the students' success and the well-being of all the whole community.

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Conclusion

Threat assessment teams are tasked with responding to potential threats and campus violence. Accordingly, these teams provide an essential service to the educational institution and immediate community by helping to mitigate threats of harm towards students, faculty and staff. While there might be slight variations in the missions of threat assessment teams, they do share a common goal – campus and community safety. While the work of the team often goes unnoticed, team members and senior leaders continue to work collaboratively together, breaking down silos, assessing and responding to any and all potential risks, thereby contributing to a safe learning, living, and working community. ■

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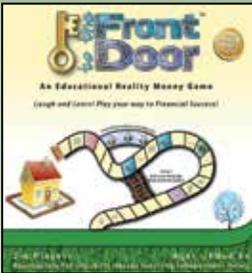
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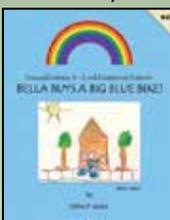
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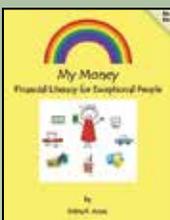
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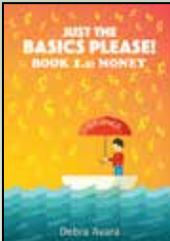
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Using Standards of Practice to Drive School Growth:



STORIES FROM THE FIELD COMPETENCY THREE:

Leading a Learning Community

By Dr. Carmen Mombourquette and Nicole Pesta



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In the last edition of the CAP Journal we shared insights about the second of seven core professional competencies for principals which emerged during our research, embodying visionary leadership. 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 third of seven competencies, leading a learning community. Read on to discover why and how this essential competency, which when practiced by education leaders with teachers, parents, and staff will help to ensure optimum learning and development for all students.

Adhering to the Guideline

“The principal nurtures and sustains a school culture that values and supports learning”

(Alberta Education, 2009, p. 5).

Of the seven core professional competencies for principals, Leading a Learning Community captures the heart of what school leadership is all about: developing teachers, parents, and staff leading to opportunities for optimum learning and growth for all students. Critical to the effectiveness of learning communities of practice is active principal involvement where he/she works alongside teachers to model, support, and improve student learning (Timperley, 2011).

Increased student learning gains are seen among both low- and high-achieving schools when a culture of high expectations are set for students, teachers, and staff. Furthermore, it is

the principal who influences these expectations via hiring processes and teacher placements (Donaldson, 2013). Additional direct principal impacts on teachers have occurred in recent years, with a shift toward developing teacher skills, knowledge, and attitudes – a process of teacher empowerment, whereby individuals seek out their own improvement (Timperley, 2011). By involving principals in professional development activities addressing teachers’ skills, dispositions, and knowledge, the building of school capacity is actualized (Youngs & King, 2002).

Principal involvement doesn’t stop at school doors. Leading a Learning Community also extends to students’ parents, informing

them about and involving them in their children’s learning and development (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). Six types of educator involvement that should be engaged in with parents include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration (Epstein & Sanders, 2006). There is evidence that active parental involvement in schools, as a result of principal leadership, results in higher student performance, enjoyment, and endurance (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). In order to mitigate potential challenges involved with increased parental involvement in schools, principals must develop clear visions, goals, and plans for positive parental involvement (Horvat, Curci, & Partlow, 2010).

How Are Principals Measuring Up?

Our interviews with ten principals unearthed several themes and varying degrees of involvement pertaining to Professional Learning Communities (PLC) as an example of the Leading a Learning Community competency. The theme of teacher collaboration emerged as grade level teams, whole staff PLCs, groups working on common goals, division PLCs, dyads, high school and junior high school PLCs, and department structures. Although individual methods varied, principals ensured their involvement in the PLCs included being informed about issues and decisions.

Interestingly, several of the interviewed principals described that their level of involvement in the PLCs had evolved over time. A progression from trying to be at the centre of agenda making and activities, to delegating tasks and activities to teams or committees. Principals’ beliefs grew from thinking that their presence was required at all meetings to an understanding that allowing for teachers’ increased professional autonomy facilitated leadership in others. Thus, the principals’ roles changed from being highly involved to a less central position, maintaining involvement when concerns came up, as well as overseeing decisions.

With the principals encouraging shared responsibility of student learning, collaboration emerged as a central theme within school culture. For example, teachers present what they’re doing with their classes at staff meetings, principals provide feedback to teachers and students, inviting teachers to conferences with the principal, centering staff meetings on professional learning and problem solving, and more. Across interviews, principals described the importance of actively supporting student learning and growth by providing resources for its development, and periodically checking to see the status of these efforts. For many principals, collaboration extended beyond the walls of their own school by having staff members from other schools visit and also their own visits to other schools, expanding educational networks.

Many principals spoke to the embedding of active professional development in their schools, and the direct high-yielding results. By having committees comprised of teachers and staff, student needs were identified through multiple forms of data, and the resulting professional learning was engaging for teachers, staff, and principals. Interestingly, highly imaginative methods were utilized by principals to find or make time for these collaborative meetings to take place. Some of the examples provided included organizing school-wide assemblies led by one school leader to allow for teachers

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to meet in PLCs for extended lengths of time, changing monthly staff meeting structure to a PLC format, or closing the school early on a chosen day to allow for PLC work.

The big take-away is that these collaborative efforts were not left to chance, but rather that active engagement such as classroom visits, teacher observations, conversations with students, data analysis, etc., ensured that the results were improved student learning. These collaborative efforts are not effective solely due to support, but also due to peer pressure. For example, in the case of teacher-to-teacher observations, colleagues could affirm what their co-workers were doing, while also applying pressure to do better.

Our principals had a strong sense of themselves as agents of cultural change, linking and influencing the values, beliefs, and practices of the professional staff with an increasingly informed and engaged community of parents. Various media tools were developed and scores of face-to-face encounters with parents were encouraged by principals to reach out in an invitational style to the larger community. Shaping a professional learning culture is an endeavour in building the social capital of the school, with relations among individuals built on trust, collaboration, and a sense of obligation. It is all about honouring high expectations for all the students, for the staff, and for the community.

Building school capacity means addressing “teachers’ knowledge, skills, and dispositions; professional community; and program coherence” (Youngs & King, 2002, p. 647). Our principals understood this implicitly and put these pieces together to change the nature of the learning communities in their schools. They ensured their teachers encouraged meaningful parental involvement, informing parents of student progress and making them feel welcome within the school. The more parents are engaged in their children’s education—and distributive leadership also supports this value—the better the opportunity for the children to learn.

The combination of strong school based learning community structures coupled with the work of principals to actively engage parents led to learning growth of students within the schools involved in our study. Principals built into their school communities the physical capital (resources), social capital (relationships), and human capital (knowledge) required of the leading learning work. ■

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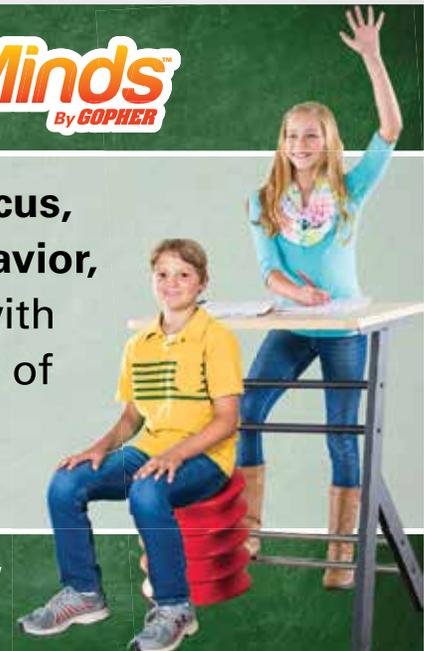
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1:1 COMPUTING IN A RURAL H



Increasingly, schools are embracing various forms of one-to-one computing. Since the first initiative in Australia back in 1990 (Watters, 2015), various programs have come and gone. These have included “bring your own device” (BYOD) programs or variations with school supplied devices (Bebell & O’Dwyer, 2010; Neebe & Roberts, 2015). These programs are intended to apply the power of digital technology to learning. The literature reveals that a number of tasks and conditions must be completed for a successful one-to-one program. These include developing a vision, supportive leadership, careful planning, clear communication, and professional development (Topper & Lancaster, 2013; Holcomb, 2009). Several studies also concluded that individual teachers are vital to successful implementation of one-to-one programs (Bebell & Kay, 2010; Bebell & O’Dwyer, 2010; Holcomb, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to investigate a 1:1 computing initiative – the implementation, the successes, and the challenges – from the perspectives of administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The data sources included school and division documents, and interviews with division administrators, in-school administrators, and teachers. Additionally, researchers conducted a teacher focus group, classroom observations, and a survey of parents and students.

Context and Implementation

The school in this study was a rural high school in Manitoba with a population of 170 students in grades 9 to 12. The staff of 20 included 12 teachers and a principal. Just over four years ago, they decided to embark on a unique 1:1 computing initiative. A school document from that time, states that “rather than replace our current stand-alone PC’s and laptops, we feel that it would be more cost

effective and academically efficient to provide our students . . . with appropriate technology” and this “will allow all of our students to be more engaged in their learning.” One of the early challenges was ensuring that the necessary infrastructure was in place before the devices were rolled out.

The device delivery model used in the first four years included guided time for students to explore various devices and to discuss

their choice with parents. The division then purchased the devices and turned them over to students. This program is unique because ownership, and responsibility, for the devices is given to students. Students are expected to use their device at home and in class and teachers are expected to develop a tech-friendly classroom environment. Currently the grade nines, who began this program four years ago, have completed their grade twelve year.

HIGH SCHOOL: A CASE STUDY

By Michael Nantais and Jacqueline Kirk



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The Challenges

Several challenges had to be overcome, before and during the process. These included various technological problems, communication issues, teacher resistance, classroom distractions, and pedagogical shifts - including learning to let go of some control.

Technology issues posed many problems: software glitches, aging devices, batteries not able to hold a charge, and an older building without a sufficient number of outlets. Overall, the school tried to address these issues, and many students began to make use of mobile phones to supplement their tablet or laptop. Others purchased their own devices by the time they reached grade 12. These issues, while they existed, did not seem to limit the success of the initiative.

One of the common concerns about technology in the classroom is that it is distracting. One teacher suggested that it was typical teenage behavior to test the boundaries and shared the conversation that takes place in the classroom, "So I'm talking to them right now ... it's affecting what you are doing and I'm not getting your best work. You need to

decide what you're going to do here." During the interviews, several teachers addressed this issue but most, like this teacher, viewed such incidents as learning opportunities.

Teacher resistance, especially as the program began, was an issue. One teacher explained,

"There was no clear vision for me as to what it should look like in my classroom and when I was asking questions, no one was giving me answers and it was really, really frustrating." The superintendent commented, "If I had it all to do over again, I would probably spend... more time preparing the teachers." Another



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“ This program is unique because ownership, and responsibility, for the devices is given to students. Students are expected to use their device at home and in class and teachers are expected to develop a tech-friendly classroom environment.”

teacher felt like the administration was asking for too much change, “I hate to see the whole baby in the bath water scenario play out too much. I like more refined changes that are thoughtful...

but also realize, too, that sometimes you need a major shift to actually try to stir things up.” Despite this, the staff came together and worked collaboratively to make the initiative a success.

A reality of any technology, as suggested by Postman (1998), is that there is always a trade-off. One teacher described this, “I can almost provide an advantage and a disadvantage to everything. I can say it’s brought in more visual. This is another way to show the relationship here. But the counter argument ... is they’re not using their imagination to actually recreate something of their own that really makes a strong connection.” It is important for technology use to be thoughtful and to enhance learning.

Successes and Benefits

Participants shared many successes and benefits of the program including: creativity, independence, problem solving, risk taking, collaboration (amongst both teachers and students), organization, communication, deeper learning, access to information, and student centered learning. The school principal told us that he thinks the greatest success is, “seeing students demonstrating learning in ways we couldn’t have imagined before.” Several teachers and administrators commented on how the devices led to increased creativity. One explained, “... students are capable of amazing things, if we give them the space to be amazing” and a student confirmed the benefits included, “creativity [and] everyone having their own way to learn.”

One of the major outcomes was the learning community that arose among staff as they met to share ideas and collaborate on making best use of ubiquitous access. Teachers explained that they needed to shift the way they thought about technology in the classroom. As a result of having students, who were working with a variety of devices, teachers grew comfortable in releasing some control to let students decide how to show their learning, and help one another. The result was more independence and better problem solving. One teacher stated, “I think the biggest shift in my mindset was that it wasn’t about technology, it was about learning and how I needed to rethink learning. Redefine what learning meant in my classroom.”



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Conclusion

Four years later, the 1:1 initiative is a great success. One teacher proclaimed that they “couldn’t imagine teaching in a non 1:1 school” with another adding that the initiative was “incredibly positive.” It is clear to us that leadership, at both the division and school level was crucial to this success. These leaders encouraged and supported risk taking. Holcomb (2009) pointed out that “simply providing each student with a laptop is not enough” (p. 52), and the educators we interviewed agreed. Challenges arose, and still do, but they are handled collaboratively and thoughtfully. Our observations showed that the wide variety of devices used in the classroom were a benefit. Students made use of their devices as they were needed, distractions were rarely seen in our observations, and both students and teachers seemed comfortable in this twenty first century environment. This statement from a teacher is a powerful one...



“I think it sounds super over the top and cheesy, but there were pivotal moments that I can remember, sitting at my computer marking, that changed the way I thought about everything that I have ever done in education...even thinking back to them now, they are almost emotional...aha moments.” ■

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The Impact of Increasing Educational and Technological Expectations on Hutterite Colony Teacher-Principals

By William Randall Rodger

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Hutterite society (predominantly located in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta) is a religious community. Hutterites live communally and they strive to remain physically, socially, and politically independent from mainstream society. On the wide-ranging geographic expanse of the prairies, these goals can still be accommodated although less so than in previous generations.

Hutterites are part of Canada's national fabric and, notwithstanding their participation in the economic sphere, their relatively isolationist choices counter globalization. However, as producers and consumers many colonies are connected to the local, regional, national, and international economies regardless of their wishes. Globalization has, according to Kaplan (2012, p. 50), "erased borders, regions, and cultural distinctions." Redekop and Shafir (1987), described Hutterites as an "agricultural and cultural enclave system with the express purpose of guarding them from being influenced and corrupted by the world." (p. 350). In Saskatchewan's approximately 60 Hutterite schools, students attend "one-room," multi-graded schools, and their teacher-principal commutes daily to the colony. Traditionally, teacher-principals at Saskatchewan's Hutterite schools have been non-Hutterite. Due to the often relatively low student enrolment of a colony school, the classroom teacher is assigned the leadership and administrative duties of the principal, as defined in Saskatchewan's The Education Act. As compensation for the extra work and responsibility (budgeting, ordering supplies, implementing curriculum, etc.), teacher-principals receive the principal's basic administrative allowance as prescribed in the Saskatchewan teachers' province-wide collective agreement (\$7,576 for the 2015-2016 school year).

Education is very important to the Hutterites (Hostetler, 1997; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). Katz and Lehr (2012) reported that "through education Hutterite doctrine is instilled and a significant part of the Hutterian socialization process is achieved" (p. 116). On the Hutterite colony, pressures to be effective and succeed in school are guided by their society, the Hutterite colony governance structure, families, the school division, and the Ministry of Education.

Traditionally, many Hutterite children attended school until the age of 15 or the completion of Grade 8, whichever came first. However, the education of Hutterite children is being subjected to internal and external change forces (Hostetler, 1997; Janzen & Stanton, 2010; Katz & Lehr, 2012). Internally, curricular and instructional pressures exist (e.g., teacher and culturally relevant resources availability, distance education, and colony support/conflict) as Hutterite students

advance their education. Externally, colonies are being subjected to dramatic economic and technological changes that are affecting agriculture, manufacturing, and small communities worldwide (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). The contemporary agricultural economy demands greater knowledge and expertise from colony members if they are to survive in an environment of narrow agricultural profit margins (Pastor C. Grosse, personal communication, September, 2003); therefore, more education for colony members is required. As well, not all colonies rely strictly on agriculture in 2016, as they did in the past. Some colonies have diversified and moved into manufacturing; e.g., domestic and office furniture production (Janzen & Stanton, 2010). As one example, office furniture construction is a thriving commercial activity at the Riverbend Colony, situated near Waldheim, SK. This endeavour requires that colony members have an extensive understanding of CAD and CAM.

A consequence of an increasingly demanding technological and computer-assisted agricultural economy has been the introduction of high school classes, and a concurrent desire for students to complete their formal schooling. The colony teacher-principals are on the front-line of these changes. Because many of the colony schools traditionally may not have offered classes beyond grade eight, the colony teacher-principals tended to be elementary and/or middle school teachers. A dilemma for many of the teacher-principals, therefore, was the challenge of providing high school credit courses at the colony school. Some colony schools have provided high school courses on-site, taught by the teacher present or an itinerant teacher. Fortuitously, the integration of computers and the internet on the colony has provided the opportunity for on-line classes through "virtual" high schools and other distance education venues. Colony students can now complete their high school training and receive specialized instruction without leaving the colony (although few, if any, ever did).

The introduction of on-line schooling was a blessing for the colony teacher-principals, many of whom felt unqualified and lacked the resources to teach some of the senior courses necessary for matriculation. However, along with the opportunity for colony students to expand their learning, complications arose for the teacher-principals. Technological proficiency to effectively provide on-line learning could be a challenge, again due to the lack of expertise

at the school. On occasion, the quality of on-line courses was affected because some colonies had poor, if any, access to the internet. Often the resident “fixer” for any of these issues was the teacher-principal.

Not surprisingly, the teacher-principal could become frustrated due to the absence of the proper technological information and components to offer the much-desired instruction.

Preserving, Modernizing, Growing, and Sustaining Hutterite Culture

The colonies' ambition and need to accommodate technology is captured by Fukuyama's (2011) comment: “political decay occurs when political systems fail to adjust to changing circumstances” (p. 7). Fukuyama (2011) observed that “when the surrounding environment changes and new challenges arise, there is often a disjunction between existing institutions and present needs. Those institutions are supported by legions of stakeholders who oppose any fundamental change” (p. 7).

Many colonies have adopted the technological practices (e.g., internet banking, computerized agricultural practices such as GPS, and accounting software) of mainstream Canadian industrial culture and others will do so as time passes. To support these practices, according to Janzen and Stanton (2010):

“Hutterite progressives are interested in post-elementary and postsecondary education for at least some of their members” (p. 180). This approach has enabled colony children to complement a technological world that impacts their lifestyle, welcomed or not.

It is the non-resident, non-Hutterite teacher-principal who carries the responsibility for creating the educational setting and climate for the accommodation of these changes in the school. He or she is the educational leader and advocate on the colony. Increasing educational and technological expectations and advances are impacting the role of the colony teacher-principal. To sustain opportunities and a future for Hutterite children, colony teacher-principals will be challenged to stay abreast of the innovations affecting their schools and classrooms. ■

AUTHOR BIO

William Randall Rodger, PhD, has over 30 years of experience in the education field as teacher, vice-principal, principal, and curriculum consultant in Saskatchewan. He has a PhD in educational administration from the University of Saskatchewan, and is presently teaching Department of Educational Psychology and Leadership Studies at the University of Victoria in Victoria, BC.

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CHANGING NOTIONS OF TEACHER MENTORSHIP in BRITISH COLUMBIA

By Ching-Chiu Lin, Julian Lawrence, and Rita Irwin (rita.irwin@ubc.ca)
Faculty of Education, University of British Columbia

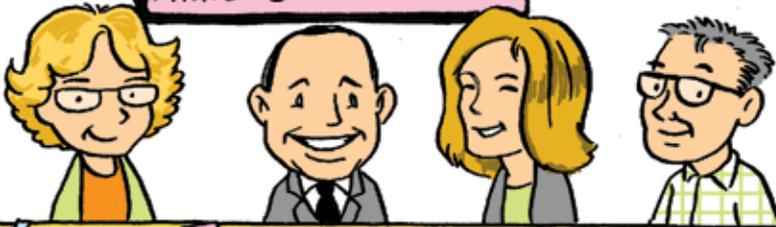
This visual essay shares findings from a research project--*Pedagogical Assemblage: Building and Sustaining Teacher Capacity Through Mentoring Programs in British Columbia*-- exploring how teacher mentorship enhances and sustains teacher practice and leadership capacity. This project brings the:

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British Columbia School Superintendents' Association (BCSSA)

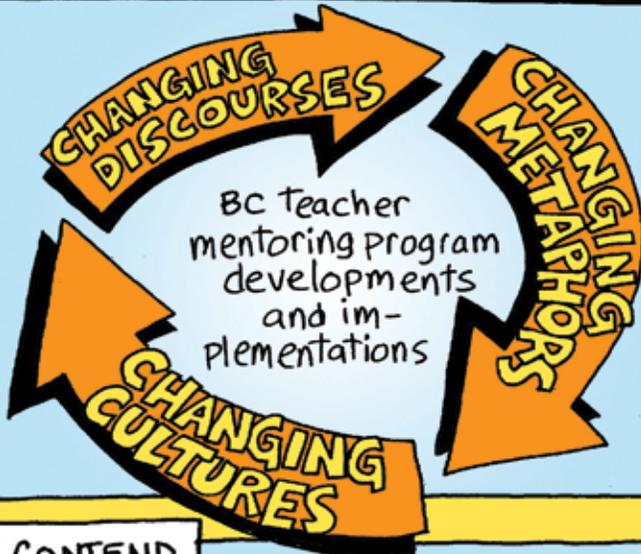
British Columbia's Ministry of Education

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TOGETHER--
as key allies and research partners for supporting and strengthening professional learning networks.

We take on 3 lenses through which to discuss the changing notions of emerging teacher mentorship.



We position teacher mentorship within the complexities of systemic educational improvement, highlighting the potential of mentoring in making educational change coherent and aligned at the provincial, district, and school level.

WE CONTEND

THAT TEACHER MENTORSHIP

IS A COMPLICATED CONVERSATION.

HENCE...

... IT IS NOT OUR INTENT

TO PROMOTE GOOD/BAD, RIGHT/WRONG

BINARY

THINKING...

-- instead, we invite you to reflect on the in-between spaces of these ideas that allow us to explore what the right fit may be for the relationship in its context.



CHANGING DISCOURSES

Teacher mentorship matters because teacher quality is the most important lever schools have for enhancing students' learning experiences. In British Columbia, new teachers leave the profession for various reasons including:

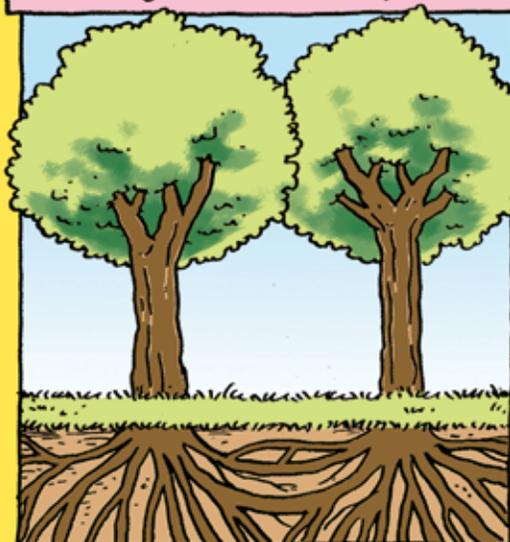
- difficult work assignments...
- feeling isolated in school communities...
- and experiencing a low sense of belonging to the profession (BCTF, 2009).

The consequences and current reality of high teacher turnover can lead to:

- teacher attrition...
- diminished school capacity...
- waste of education dollars...
- and most important, negative student-learning outcomes.
- SPARE CHANGE?

While we acknowledge mentoring's impact on retention, findings from our research show that effective teacher mentorship has impacts beyond improved retention of new teachers. In fact, it is a form of professional development that enables teachers at different career phases to continually refine their practice.

Thus, mentoring programs are not merely short-term initiatives; they have the potential to be part of action for achieving profound and lasting change in practice.



In response to the increasing global demand for continuous improvement and sustainable change in education, we envision shifting the conversation from considering mentoring program developments and implementations as the end goal to "mentoring is a means to a large end" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2000, p. 56). That is, mentoring is seen as a vehicle for enhancing professional growth and capacity building, as well as fostering a culture of collaboration among schools, teachers, and students.

CHANGING METAPHORS

The metaphors for mentors have shifted from local guides, counsellors or experts, to educational leaders, inquirers, co-learners, or collaborators. This shift shows that the role of mentors is not just about providing psychological or classroom-based support for mentees. More and more mentors are becoming active leaders promoting:

Experienced teachers and administrators become regional mentor leaders. They are not just the outside experts parachuting in and out of the job; they are the co-planners working with the district steering committees to design mentoring workshops that suit the needs of the districts.

Currently, BC's Provincial Mentoring Resource Team (PMRT) has 15 dedicated mentor leaders working with 23 school districts.

While many jurisdictions' district and school administrators act as evaluators to assess the programs or the teachers, in BC many administrators are more of the enablers who create conditions and provide support for innovative educational practices to flourish.



One common theme among the effective programs in BC is they all have on-going support from local teacher unions and the administrators at the district or school levels. Strong administrative leadership is essential to sustainable mentoring programs.

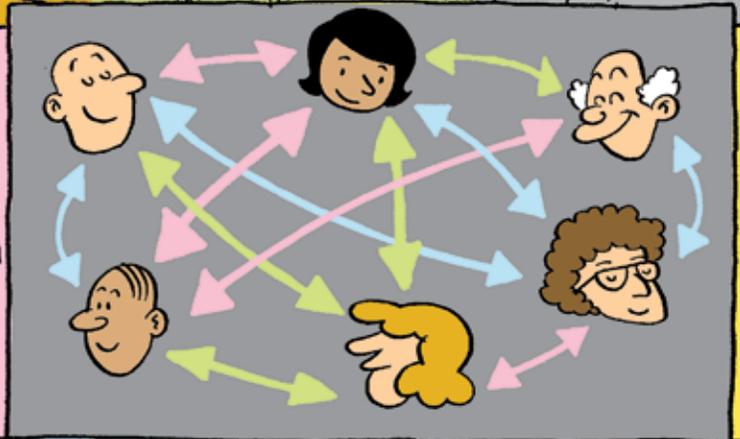


CHANGING CULTURES



The conventional notion of one mentoring model for all doesn't respond to the complexity and uniqueness of each learning community, especially in British Columbia, a province with sixty school districts serving diverse communities in rural and urban settings; small, remote, large, and transient place-conscious learning that focuses on constructing understandings of one's community based on local needs and knowledge has become a critical consideration when establishing responsive mentoring programs across BC.

In BC, teachers are often changing assignments, schools or districts. They are not new to the profession but new to their assignments. Thus mentoring in BC isn't just about the needs of new teachers; it represents an ongoing process of learning in professional learning communities for teachers across all levels of the system. It is about developing communities of practice that are based on a relationship of trust.



Teacher mentorship in BC has shifted from the traditional idea of transmitting skill and knowledge to knowledge co-construction among mentors and mentees. Rather than identifying and transmitting a set of facts, skills, and practices, mentoring involves a process of collaborative inquiry in which mentors and mentees are learning together. Therefore, we have observed that mentoring relationship in BC has moved from a top-down structure to networks of professional collaboration. While mentors' roles and mentees' benefits are the common foci in the discussion around mentoring, we have observed that inquiry, reflection and meaning co-construction are becoming the core values of the mentoring process. This shift signifies a culture of collaboration that is not operated under management, but grows through reciprocity among colleagues. It also demonstrates the power of professional responsibility over administrative accountability in teacher development and educational change.

FINAL REMARKS

Worldwide, transforming education is about establishing greater cohesion in learning communities. Although successful mentoring programs can be seen as pockets of innovation we believe that teacher mentorship is an integral element of educational change that helps shape British Columbia's educational landscape. Strengthening professional practice through teacher mentorship is important to Canada's regionalized education systems, as professionals are the drivers of change, and their sufficient autonomy to create more flexible conditions of learning, teaching and leadership is essential to ensuring success for the wide range of interests and abilities of students.

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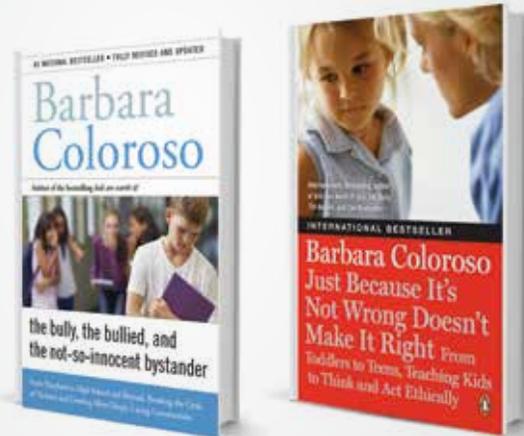
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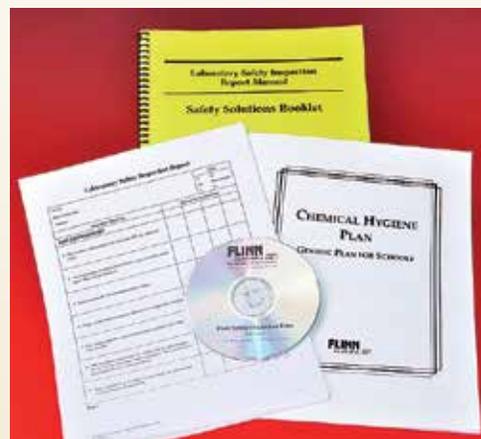
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