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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Marion Terry, Ph.D.

Welcome to the twenty-fourth issue of the *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, devoted to rural, northern, and Aboriginal education. Our authors for volume 12, issue 1, are current and past BU Faculty of Education graduate students. I thank these educators for sharing their work. Together, they have produced a collection of articles engendered by their educational and work experiences in Canada and abroad.

- Natasha Herring's research report examines how the educational system affects teachers' self-regulation in personal and professional milieus.
- Amjad Malik and Bushra Chohan's research report focuses on video gaming and cell phone texting within the context of various social, extra-curricular, and leisure-time activities that influence grade nine students in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
- Erin Rebecca Lauzé's refereed article discusses the reciprocal relationships of home and school supports for children with Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).
- Hoanglan Cardinal's refereed article proffers mindfulness training as a means to counter the stresses that impede students' academic and social development.
- S. Michelle Kolbe's refereed article extols stakeholders to make schools places of emotional and physical safety for LGBT and gender-nonconforming students.
- Landon White's refereed article holds classroom teachers, school administrators, and government officials accountable for honing teaching practices that will maximize student learning.
- Penny Wilson's refereed article challenges Canadian educators to Indigenize classroom education in order to enrich schooling for all learners.
- Riel Langlois' refereed article explains the rationale for bullying in the middle years, and offers concrete solutions based on Meaningful Roles intervention.
- Laura Van Mulligen's refereed article stresses training students in the appropriate use of social media for educational purposes, including post-secondary programming.
- Fitzgerald Villanueva's refereed article recommends using Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) as an instrument for learning styles-based classroom instruction.

Also included in this issue is our "Celebration of Scholarship," to honour graduate students who completed their M.Ed. degrees with theses in 2019.

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RESEARCH REPORTS

A Study of Self-Regulation in Classroom Teachers

Natashia Herring

Self-regulation is the ability to adjust one's level of energy to match the situation; monitor, evaluate and modify one's emotion; shift attention or ignore various stimuli; engage in social interactions in a sustained way; and connect and empathize with other people. This research explored self-regulation among teachers as a factor in student learning and co-regulation in the classroom environment. A quantitative survey and qualitative interviews answered the following research question: Overall, what are the impacts of the education system on teacher self-regulation? Exploring teacher perspectives opens the door to including their opinions on all aspects of the educational system and its impact on their wellness on a personal and professional level. The research aimed to promote a better awareness of teacher needs and of ways to support them, and to motivate the development of better student supports as a result.

The study revealed that negative and positive factors act either to exacerbate or to alleviate stressors upon teachers and impact their overall sense of well-being and effectiveness as educators. What is not known is what degree of imbalance between negatives and positives will result in measurable impacts on teacher wellness and student learning. Because people are all different and have different levels of resilience, this threshold will vary. What is known is that student self-regulation, and therefore performance, is impacted in multiple ways by teacher self-regulation; therefore, providing supports only to the students is not enough. Teachers also need to be supported mentally, emotionally, physically, and environmentally in order for the students to benefit. The teacher responses in this study indicated that the educational system is not yet organized or provisioned in a realistic way that will provide the supports required by teachers for the work and the level of performance that is expected of them over the course of the school year. The conditions under which teachers work do not assist or support them adequately in efficiently and effectively meeting the goals of the school system.

Almost all of the teacher respondents felt that changes are needed to improve teacher ability to self-regulate and achieve overall well-being in their workplace. As teacher needs are being recognized, shifts are slowly beginning to happen. However, the educational system is not yet supportive enough on a cultural level in terms of its traditional and current mindsets regarding implementing healthy boundaries and recognizing realistic adult self-regulation needs. This climate in which teacher needs are not being met satisfactorily can make the difference between stressors that can be dealt with effectively and are therefore temporary, and stressors that become cumulative and chronic, with consequent impacts on the students. The study revealed that there is an urgent need to support teachers across multiple domains in order to improve their chances at overall wellness and fitness for the task. There is no set formula on how to do this, except to break it into attainable and measurable next steps.

Based upon the voices of teachers in this study, and knowing the impact that a deficit of teacher supports has on their self-regulation and overall wellness, next steps need to be considered. The educational system cannot impact the personal lives of teachers directly in terms of what they choose to do with their personal lives to regulate themselves and attain wellness, but what it can do is begin to make changes in the areas that teachers have highlighted as sources of stress or support, especially the ones that overflow into their personal lives. There needs to be a re-evaluation of –

- The non-instructional roles that teachers are expected to play: The educational system needs to ensure that it is possible and practical to meet the goals placed on the teachers

in the settings in which they currently work. Teachers identified that there is often more than teaching involved because they are also dealing with trauma, poverty, and emotional, behavioural, and cognitive challenges. These needs of the students must be met first, which puts strains upon the time that teachers have, unless there are sufficient supports put in place, such as improved student breakfast or nutrition programs and better access to counselling and social work services for students. These types of supports would allow teachers to focus more on the instructional responsibilities of their positions.

- The work expected in the timeframes given: In the realm of instruction, regulating this area would alleviate a number of stressors by ensuring that there is sufficient school-based time to prepare lessons, mark work, complete reports, and make calls to parents. The culture of expecting teachers to do extensive work at school after hours or to bring things home needs to be re-evaluated.
- The tools and resources with which teachers are supplied: When a division or school is short on funding for resources and other supports to meet student demands, it is not sufficient to offload the responsibility onto the classroom teacher. That is not sustainable in either the short or long term. It is not reasonable to expect the teachers to “get creative” with what little they may have. In other professions, if supplies are missing, the work does not get done until the supplies or supports are made available; otherwise, the company fails. Fire trucks do not go out on calls without hoses and water, and hospitals do not go without X-ray machines and bandages. Education is no different.
- The understanding of how Maslow’s hierarchy, as well as the modern model of self-regulation, applies not only to students, but to teachers and administrators as well: We understand without question how these things apply to students, that is, how students at risk or students with special needs must have adaptations or accommodations in order to thrive. Let us recognize and reaffirm that a school is an ecosystem that is comprised of more than just students. Teachers, educational assistants, administrators, support staff, and even caretakers are all a part of this ecosystem and, as in any ecosystem, the health of one member or group affects the health of others and the health of the entire system itself. Let us apply this understanding to supporting teachers and other members of the system. We know what teachers are saying they need on their end. Schools and divisions can take the known stressors that teachers have identified, put them into the mental, emotional, physical and environmental domains, and explore how the system can feasibly provide supports in each of these areas.

We know what teachers need because they are telling us. Teachers are capable of making changes themselves to improve self-regulation and co-regulation, but their power to effect change is limited. Teachers are telling us that they are not able to make some of the changes on their own. This puts the onus on leaders in the education system, both within school divisions and in schools, to take a more holistic view of schooling and acknowledge that they need to make systemic and structural changes to support teachers in making changes both within themselves and for those around them. The focus needs to shift to the teachers now, so that they can support themselves and the students to the best of their ability.

About the Researcher

Natasha Herring has been teaching for ten years, and is currently working in Student Services. Her thesis for an M.Ed. in counselling was on the self-regulation of classroom teachers and the impact inside and outside of the learning environment. She explores many wellness activities that bring her balance, including spending time with her family.

Factors That Affect Grade Nine Students in Rawalpindi, Pakistan

Amjad Malik and Bushra Chohan

We conducted the research in partnership with two schools in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, in response to concerns over the effects of non-educational video gaming and texting on students' school experiences. Educational professionals wanted to refer to research findings when they advised parents to monitor their children's video gaming and texting activities. Our research purpose was therefore to examine the correlations between various factors and school experiences in grade 9. The factors included social relations (e.g., friends), extra-curricular activities (e.g., work), and leisure-time activities (e.g., playing video games and texting).

Data Collection

Complete sets of data were obtained for 205 grade 9 students:

- Academic performance data consisted of the students' final marks (percentage grades in English, mathematics, and science – biology, chemistry, and physics).
- Survey data consisted of the students' answers to 36 questionnaire items: demographics, parental support, peer relationships, extracurricular activities, school activities, self-esteem, self-advocacy, video games, and texting. (See Appendix A.)

Data Analysis

We used Spearman rho calculations to determine correlations. Correlational research requires a minimum of 30 research subjects to produce statistically significant correlations. Separating the 205 grade 9 students by gender created numerically strong data sets of 95 males and 110 females, which was important in order to test the assumption that "boys play video games, but girls text" – as conveyed to us by school professionals, parents, and other adults in the general community.

Results

Because of the nature of data collected by Likert-scale surveys, and because our quantitative survey questionnaire was "homemade," we did not anticipate collecting statistically significant findings. We were essentially testing the waters to see whether any correlations would arise. They did. Non-educational video gaming correlated with school experiences and relationships with parents and peers. Recreational texting also correlated with school experiences and relationships with parents and peers. Other interesting correlations involved other non-academic activities, peer relationships, school experiences, and self-concept.

The following tables summarize these correlations.

Time Spent Playing Video Games	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Males</u> The more hours that adolescent boys play video games the more they feel good when they play video games. . . . the more importance they attach to playing video games. . . . the more they are told that they play video games too much.	 moderate moderate moderate	 limited limited limited

Positive Video Game Experiences	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Males</u> The more importance that adolescent boys attach to playing video games the more they feel sleepy in school. . . . the more text messages they send during school classes.	 moderate moderate	 limited limited
<u>Females</u> The more adolescent girls feel good when they play video games the less they like their teachers. . . . the more they are encouraged by their parents to do well in school. . . . the less they work during the week.	 good moderate moderate	 fair limited limited

Negative Video Game Experiences	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Males</u> The more adolescent boys lie about how much time they play video games the more they feel that they “mess up” everything.	 moderate	 limited
The more adolescent boys think they play video games too much the more hours they spend sending text messages.	 moderate	 limited
The more adolescent boys are told that they play video games too much the more hours they spend sending text messages. . . . the more text messages they send during school classes.	 moderate moderate	 limited limited

Time Spent Texting	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Males</u> The more hours that adolescent boys spend sending text messages the more they feel that texting is important to them. . . . the more they enjoy texting with their friends. . . . the more they think that they spend too much time texting. . . . the more they miss school because of texting. . . . the more they are told that they spend too much time texting. . . . the less they like their teachers.	 fair moderate good moderate good moderate	 moderate limited fair limited fair limited
The more text messages that adolescent boys send during school classes the more they feel that texting is important to them. . . . the more they enjoy texting with their friends. . . . the more they think that they spend too much time texting. . . . the more they miss school because of texting. . . . the more they lie about how much time they spend texting. . . . the more they feel sleepy in school. . . . the less they fall behind in their assignments.	 moderate fair moderate moderate fair moderate moderate	 limited moderate limited moderate moderate limited limited

Time Spent Texting (continued)	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Females</u> The more hours that adolescent girls send text messages the more they lie about how much time they spend texting.	moderate	limited
The more text messages that adolescent girls send during school classes the more they lie about much time they spend texting.	fair	moderate
Negative Texting Experiences	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Females</u> The more adolescent girls are told that they text too much the less they are encouraged by their parents to do well in school.	moderate	limited
The more adolescent girls lie about how much time they spend texting the more hours they work during the week.	moderate	limited
Other Non-Academic Activities	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Females</u> The more adolescent girls work during the week the more they like their teachers.	moderate	limited
Positive Peer Relationships	Strength of Correlation	Strength of Prediction
<u>Males</u> The more adolescent boys get along with their friends the better they feel being in a classroom.	moderate	limited

Recommendations

We are convinced that school counsellors need to include “the potential dangers of video gaming and texting” at the forefront in dealing with grade 9 students and their parents. We know logically that any activity that lures students away from their schoolwork will eventually have deleterious effects on academic performance.

Several of our correlations appear to warrant further investigation. The research should be repeated, preferably with an enhanced instrument, using a longitudinal research design. Someone needs to track the academic progress of students who continue to play video games or text, or who increase their time playing or texting, in comparison to other students who do not. A longitudinal design would facilitate both types of comparison.

About the Researchers

Dr. Amjad Malik is a Professor in University College of the North in Thompson, Manitoba. He graduated from BU with an M.Ed. in curriculum and instruction in 2007.

Dr. Bushra Chohan is the Principal of the Government College for Women in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

REFEREED ARTICLES

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Continuing Focus for Educators

Erin Rebecca Lauzé

Abstract

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) affects executive function and attention. Many children display ADHD-like symptoms. However, diagnosis requires at least six symptoms that interfere significantly with a child's life for a period of time. School and home can be greatly influenced by executive function deficits that characterize the disorder. A variety of interventions are needed at home and at school to support children with ADHD. Without appropriate interventions, they may have more difficulty coping with the long-term challenges in their lives.

Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a neurodevelopmental disorder (Frick & Brocki, 2019) characterized by executive function and attention deficits. ADHD has a genetic component, but the specific gene has yet to be identified (Capodieci et al., 2019). There are three categories of ADHD symptoms. Diagnosis requires at least six symptoms in a category that interfere significantly with a child's life for more than six months. The interventions include medications and at-school and at-home supports. Without appropriate support, children with ADHD can struggle with poor grades, relationship issues, and problems with authority throughout their lifetime (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2019). Even with appropriate support, they may have long-term challenges in their personal and professional lives.

Categories of Symptoms

Symptoms of ADHD can be divided into three categories: inattention, hyperactivity, and impulsivity. A child with ADHD may have symptoms in all categories, a single category, or a combination of categories. A child with inattention symptoms may seem to be forgetful, to daydream, and to be disorganized. Someone with hyperactivity symptoms may fidget, talk too much, and be in constant motion. Someone with impulsivity symptoms may be seen to blurt out in conversation, act without thinking, and have trouble being patient (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2019). Most children have moments when they display symptoms of ADHD. However, for some children this is more than just an occasional dysregulation. Symptoms of ADHD are frequent and interfere with their daily lives (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2019).

Diagnosis

Diagnosis requires six symptoms from inattention and/or six symptoms from hyperactivity/impulsivity that lasts longer than 6 months (A.D.A.M. Education, 2019). They must also demonstrate high levels of ADHD in multiple settings, such as home and school (Hinshaw, 2014). In evaluating ADHD, teachers, parents, peers, and sometimes the child complete rating scales regarding the child's behaviours (Hinshaw, 2014). The number ADHD diagnoses has increased over the past decade, due to the increasing expectations that children face both in and outside school (Wienen et al., 2019).

Executive Function Deficits

Executive function is the part of the brain that manages thoughts and behaviour (Frick & Brocki, 2019). Executive function deficits create problems in inhibition, shifting, and working memory – which are major qualities for academic success (Frick & Brocki, 2019). Children with ADHD are missing key skills to perform academically, such as writing essays, organizing materials and ideas, memorization, reading comprehension, and math problem solving (Zeigler Dendy, 2011). Executive function allows the brain to learn from the consequences of an action and make plans around those actions in the future (Children and Adults With Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder [CHADD], n.d.). Children who lack executive function will have a hard time adjusting their behaviours, or learning, based on past events and may need help to manage their behaviours.

How Does It Influence Learning?

Executive function deficits are a major reason for academic challenges faced by students with ADHD. Students with executive function deficits will struggle to write or problem solve because they have difficulty breaking information down and reorganizing it into their own ideas (Zeigler Dendy, 2011). They may have issues with substitutes, hyperfocus, and dealing with transitions because of a difficulty in shifting (Zeigler Dendy, 2011). They may struggle to get started, work on, and complete assignments (CHADD, n.d.). Students struggling with impulsivity may blurt out or challenge authority (Zeigler Dendy, 2011).

How Does It Influence Home Life?

Executive function deficits influence life for children at home as well as at school. Talking back, blurting, and starting fights are some of the behaviours a child with impulsivity issues will display (Zeigler Dendy, 2011). These behaviours can affect the relationship between parent and child and may cause conflict at home. Parents will need to help regulate impulses, and other behaviours, for their children with ADHD (Frick & Brocki, 2019). Parents may need to help their children with ADHD to get started on assignments, plan assignments, stay on task, and organize. They may need to be the external voice until their children's internal voices can control their behaviours and reflect on their actions. Parents of children with ADHD and executive function deficits will need to spend more time regulating and managing their children than those of typically developing children. Executive function deficits can greatly influence a child at home and at school.

Treatment and Interventions

Children with ADHD will require accommodations and support to become successful academically and in their personal lives. Once diagnosed, parents, teachers and the child's doctor will work together to make a plan to support the child. Doctors may prescribe medications to help with neurological deficits and may suggest changes to the child's diet. Teachers may need to make accommodations and develop teaching strategies to target certain behaviours. Parents may need to provide access to therapists, change diet, communicate with teachers and doctors, and reinforce expected behaviours.

Medication

Doctors use two types of medications to treat ADHD: stimulants and nonstimulants. The most common ADHD medications are stimulants, for example Ritalin or Adderall, which increase dopamine and norepinephrine in the brain, thus increasing concentration and focus

(Healthline Editorial Team, 2017). Nonstimulant medications are usually prescribed when stimulants are not working. Nonstimulant medications such as Strattera or Pamelor increase norepinephrine, which increases attention and memory (Healthline Editorial Team, 2017). Medication works on some symptom areas of ADHD, but it does not affect executive function deficits (Zeigler Dendy, 2011). Medications have side effects that may outweigh the benefits for some children. They include headaches, trouble sleeping, weight loss, stomach upset, and nervousness (Healthline Editorial Team, 2017). Medications may not be an appropriate choice for every child, and there are some concerns over using medications while the brain is still developing and whether medications should be used to control behaviours (Hinshaw, 2014).

Best Teaching Practices

A major area of concern for children with ADHD is their academic success. Teachers can help to improve academic success by following whole-class best practices, accommodations, targeted training, and clear communication with home. The whole-class approaches, among others, are having clear rules and expectations, monitoring, creating interesting lessons, and providing immediate feedback (Parker, 2000). Inclusive classroom strategies in the modern classroom build empathy for a variety of behaviours within the classroom (Wienen et al., 2019). All students, and particularly students with ADHD, can benefit from receiving positive and immediate feedback about their behaviours. Teachers should praise the behaviours they want to see from students instead of reprimanding the mistakes (Parker, 2000).

Accommodations that may be appropriate for students with ADHD are monitoring work, longer test taking time, help with note-taking, movement breaks, play time, and providing assignments with step-by-step instructions (ADHD Editorial Board & Zeigler Dendy, 2019). Students with ADHD benefit from having a reduction in distractions in their work area by having teacher proximity, less objects in the classroom or on the walls, and sitting away from noises and windows (ADHD Editorial Board & Zeigler Dendy, 2019). Advanced notice for transitions may help alleviate any issues a student has with shifting.

Targeted training for students with ADHD should be used in conjunction with accommodations and whole-class strategies. Computerized attention training was proven to improve visual and auditory attention (Ghuman & Ghuman, 2014). Working memory and metacognition training improved attention and inhibition as well as parents' and teachers' ratings of behavioural symptoms (Capodieci et al., 2019).

Daily communication between school and home helps in the beginning to create behaviour plans that work for students at home and at school (Parker, 2000). Parents need to play an active role in helping their children at school by reinforcing the learning and behaviours at home. Parents can also provide many other supports for their children at-home.

At-Home Strategies

Parents influence all children's lives. However, they play an even larger role in the lives of children with ADHD because they help to regulate behaviours (Frick & Brocki, 2019). Parents manage access to therapies, support groups, eating habits, and relaxation techniques. The therapies include psychotherapy, behaviour therapy, and cognitive-behaviour therapy. In talk therapy, parents can learn how to manage behaviours by limiting distractions, allowing for enough sleep, eating enough and consistency (A.D.A.M. Education, 2011). Therapy, support groups, and family bonding can help to remove the social stigma of the disorder.

Positive, healthy family relationships can help to build resiliency for children. Children with ADHD need strong bonds with their family to cope with the challenges they often face at school with their peers. Families should focus on maintaining a healthy lifestyle with healthy eating and exercise at the centre of it. Eating a good combination of proteins and complex carbs along with massage, yoga, meditation, and exercise can improve symptoms, particularly attention and

executive function deficits (Ghuman & Ghuman, 2014). Doctors, teachers, and parents need to work together to provide support for children with ADHD.

Long-Term Challenges

ADHD can lead to personal and professional life challenges, due in part to peer rejection and challenges with academics. These issues persist into adulthood even when some of the symptoms of ADHD have lessened.

Personal Life Challenges in Adulthood

Many people with ADHD have challenges in their personal lives, mostly with regards to relationships due to peer rejection in their adolescence and conflict with parents. The emotional dysregulation that can be seen in children with ADHD often means that children with ADHD are the target of bullies in school. The emotional outbursts motivate aggressors, which leads to greater victimization of children with ADHD (Lee et al., 2018). Many children continue through school with the same peer groups, where the familiar peer group may already have formed a pre-existing expectation of the child's behaviour and may notice negative actions more readily while overlooking any positive actions (Lee et al., 2018). Peers favour preconceived ideas about their reaction, thus rejecting them for past behaviours. Peer rejection can trigger other mental health disorders, such as anxiety and depression, and can carry forward into peer problems in adulthood. Girls with ADHD often have higher peer conflict and experience more situations of bullying, making them vulnerable to domestic violence problems in adulthood (Guendelman et al., 2016). Men with ADHD have a higher likelihood of taking greater risk with their sexual behaviours, which can increase the chances of physical health problems (Guendelman et al., 2016). Male and female adolescents with ADHD have a larger number of sexual partners over their lifetime, putting them at greater risk of sexually transmitted infections (Wiener & Daniels, 2016). Children and adolescents with ADHD often have a greater likelihood of conflict with their parents (Wiener & Daniels, 2016). Due to peer rejection and family conflict, many adolescents with ADHD associate with deviant peer groups, increasing their risk of substance abuse (Wiener & Daniels, 2016). Substance abuse rarely stays in adolescence, thus leading to drug and alcohol abuse in adulthood, and trouble with the law (A.D.A.M. Education, 2011). Peer rejection, family conflict, and substance abuse can develop into lifelong challenges for people with ADHD.

Professional Life Challenges in Adulthood

Children with ADHD are less likely to graduate high school (Wiener, & Daniels, 2016), which makes it harder to get a job in adulthood. The peer rejection they often face in school alters their perceptions of school, coupled with academic challenges, so they often reject school (Wiener, & Daniels, 2016). Without a high school education, adults with ADHD will struggle to find meaningful employment and have difficulty keeping a job (Films Media Group, 2011). Personal and professional life challenges can continue into adulthood for children with ADHD.

Conclusion

ADHD is a disorder that affects attention and executive function. It may manifest with different symptoms in different individuals, but the underlying categories of symptoms remain the same. Executive function deficits are a large part of ADHD and heavily influence school and home life. A variety of interventions are available for someone with ADHD, ranging from medications to therapy and healthy lifestyles. Without appropriate support, ADHD can lead to lifelong challenges in their personal lives and their professional lives.

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About the Author

Erin Rebecca Lauzé is in her first year of the M.Ed. program, with a focus on inclusive education. When not at home with her son, she works as a grade 5/6 classroom teacher in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Becky aspires to become a student services teacher in the future.

Benefits of Mindfulness Training in Schools

Hoanglan Cardinal

Abstract

Mindfulness training contributes to greater well-being in students who encounter challenges that cause stress. Ongoing stress can be detrimental and have negative impacts on the brain, which results in academic and social difficulties. Mindfulness training can help protect the developing brain from the negative effects of excessive stress, increase focus and attention, improve self-regulation, and develop positive social skills.

In recent years, it has been recognized that teachers should not only provide formal education but also be responsible for the social-emotional needs of students. Students experience challenges that affect their ability to focus, regulate difficult emotions, and build resiliency. Ongoing stress can be detrimental and have negative impacts on the brain, resulting in academic and social difficulties. Mindfulness training can reverse these negative effects and change the structure of the brain for the better. Mindfulness is defined as paying attention to the present moment in a non-judgment manner (Lo et al., 2018). There is a growing body of research that finds mindfulness training in schools increases students' focus and attention, improves self-regulation of difficult emotions, and develops positive social skills. Implementing mindfulness training in schools is therefore vital in supporting individuals with academic and social success as well as enhancing well-being.

Mindfulness is defined as a mental state and being aware of our thoughts and emotions in the present moment without judgment. The practice of being in the present moment provides an opportunity to observe and accept whatever experiences and emotions an individual may be feeling (Huppert & Johnson, 2010). Bringing awareness to daily activities such as breathing or eating are examples of mindfulness practices. By taking the time to pause, individuals can move out of automatic pilot mode and to bring their attention to the present moment (Snel, 2013).

Over the last decade, mindfulness in schools has taken a dominant role in education around the world (Albrecht, 2019). The expansion of mindfulness training in schools has been driven by the high levels of stress that students encounter. Occasional stress is a normal part of life. It also helps people to develop resiliency and supports our immune system. However, two types of stress can have negative impacts on people: acute and chronic stress. Acute stress is experienced after exposure to a traumatic experience such as witnessing a death, abuse, or violence. Chronic stress refers to high stress over long periods of time. These types of stress have negative effects on children's psychological, emotional, and cognitive functioning, which directly affect brain development, academic success, and social competence (Jensen, 2013).

The brain changes when it is stressed. The hippocampus and the prefrontal cortex are the areas of the brain that are most affected by cortisol, also known as the stress hormone. When the brain is exposed to chronic or acute stress, the neurons in the brain's frontal lobes shrink. This is an area that is responsible for making decisions, planning, and regulating emotions. Stress also impairs the hippocampus in ways that reduce learning capacity and working memory. The amygdala is activated when it detects stress and reacts to emotions. If the amygdala perceives the stress or emotion to be a threat, it prompts the brain to go into a fight, flight, or freeze mode. When the brain adapts to negative life experiences and acute or chronic stress, it becomes hyper-responsive or hypo-responsive (Jensen, 2013). Stress has serious consequences that teachers must consider.

Just as the brain is susceptible to change when it encounters stress, it can also change for the better with the right intervention. Recent research has revealed benefits of mindfulness practice and how it can protect the developing brain from negative stress. Following mindfulness training, individuals are better equipped to respond to stress by creating a calm mindset for

thoughtful decision making, which is led by the pre-frontal cortex (Hawn, 2011). Schools are an ideal environment to introduce mindfulness training since students' brains are rapidly developing. The skills students acquire may also help them cope with future life stress and challenges.

Mindfulness training is effective in increasing attention and focus which results in more on-task behaviour. Attention problems in school are frequently interrelated with behavioural difficulties such as high activity levels, off-task behaviour, and disorganization (Carboni et al., 2013). These behaviours can result in poor academic success and social difficulties. Numerous studies have examined and supported the relationship between mindfulness and attention. One particular study investigated the use of mindfulness for students diagnosed with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (Carboni et al., 2013). Analysis of collected data and observations indicate that mindfulness training was effective with increasing on-task behaviour. Another study was completed but the participants in this study were children with intellectual disabilities (Kim & Kwon, 2016). Intellectual disability (ID) is a chronic condition marked by significant limitations in cognitive functioning and adaptive behaviour. Children with ID display challenging behaviour that affects their educational progress. The aim of this study was to determine if mindfulness training could increase their on-task behaviour. Mindfulness training consisted of 25 sessions (twice a week) for 45 minutes per session for the three participants in this study. The training was composed of lessons that focused on self-awareness of their bodies and minds. Observers collected data every five days for a month to track on-task behaviour. The results not only demonstrated an increase in on-task behaviour, but also improvement in accuracy to complete tasks, and a decrease in task-avoidance behaviours (Kim & Kwon).

The benefits of mindfulness are not limited to academic success but also contribute to overall well-being by learning how to self-regulate. An aspect of mindfulness practice is learning how to respond rather than react when difficult emotions arise. Choosing to respond with intention rather than reacting in an automatic way may reduce negative behaviours, such as anger or aggression (Huppert & Johnson, 2010). A study, using the MindUP program, wanted to examine if mindfulness practice involving social and emotional learning would enhance positive school outcomes, promote well-being, and reduce stress for students (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015). MindUP is a mindfulness-based education program that consists of 15 lessons taught approximately once a week for 40-50 minutes. The curriculum includes lessons that promote self-regulation and awareness to the present moment (mindful smelling, mindful tasting). This program also incorporates social-emotional exercises that teach students skills for empathy, compassion, and promotes positive thinking. Four classes of combined 4th and 5th graders (a total of 99 students) were randomly assigned to receive the MindUP program versus a regular social responsibility program. MindUP students, in contrast to students in a regular social responsibility program, showed significant increases in not only cognitive skills, but social and emotional competences as well (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015).

Positive social skills such as empathy and compassion are another benefit to practising mindfulness. Learning to be kinder and accepting of oneself through mindfulness practice leads to greater kindness, acceptance, and empathy toward others (Huppert & Johnson). Research shows that actions of empathy and compassion can boost the production of dopamine, a neurotransmitter that revs up the high-powered thinking in the pre-frontal cortex (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). By having opportunities to practice empathy and compassion, students will be able to build the social and emotional competence they need in order to be resilient and confident (The Hawn Foundation, 2011). A study assessing new curriculum that promotes social, emotional, and academic skills through mindfulness practices was conducted in Madison Metropolitan School district (TeachThoughtStaff, 2019). This study took place over the course of 12 weeks, twice a week with 30 students. The results indicated that in addition to improved academics, these students demonstrated less selfish behaviour over time and more mental flexibility. This can result in a positive classroom environment conducive to learning. A study

by Albrecht (2019) found that teachers felt that learning about mindfulness also encouraged students to develop into global citizens with compassion for others.

In conclusion, mindfulness training contributes to greater well-being in students. Mindfulness is the practice of being in the present moment and paying attention on purpose in a nonjudgmental way. Mindfulness training can help protect the developing brain from the negative effects of excessive stress, increase focus and attention, improve self-regulation, and develop positive social skills. These benefits result in reduced stress, increased awareness of self and others, and compassion. Incorporating mindfulness training into schools would equip individual students with strategies that they can carry with them throughout their lives.

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Creating Safety in Schools for LGBT and Gender Non-Conforming Students

S. Michelle Kolbe

Abstract

This article examines the problem of bullying LGBT youth and gender minority students in school. Harassment and bullying toward LGBT and gender minority youth take place on an international level, engendering concerns of mental and physical well-being of LGBT youth and gender minority students due to heteronormative pressure and lack of inclusion. Solutions include community education, school support, and spaces of safety for youth. Educators and students can employ various strategies to make schools safe and accepting to LGBT students.

Addressing school-related anti LGBT bullying and harassment of gender non-conforming youth is vital in the role of having a safe school where all students should be protected. Bullying and marginalization of LGBT youth in schools is a problem that exists globally. Because of the acceptance of bullying that occurs toward LGBT youth, it affects all aspects of a young person's life, including mental health, sense of safety, and risk of suicide. Students are affected in schools, at home, and communities through peer victimization, intimidation, harassment, and non-supportive school policies. Supports must such as anti-bullying policies, safe zones, supportive adults, and inclusive curriculum are some steps needed to create safe and healthy spaces for LGBT and gender non-conforming youth in schools. Moving forward, it is important to look at the challenges facing LGBT and sexual non-conforming youth, in order to overcome barriers and create the positive outcome of a safe school environment.

Discrimination and Bullying of LGBT and Gender Non-Conforming Students

LGBT and gender non-conforming students are subject to a higher rate of school-related bullying and discrimination on a global level (UNESCO, 2016). Youth who identify in the "gender minority" will receive bullying on a greater level than their peers who are not in this minority (Fenaughty, 2019, p. 628). The United Nations recognizes that bullying and discrimination toward LGBT students is occurring on a global scale (UNESCO, 2016). School-related gender-based violence occurs from norms and stereotypes held by others toward LGBT individuals (UNESCO, 2016). Bullying threatens well-being and safety in forms of physical harassment, verbal harassment (Anderson, 2014), sexual harassment (UNESCO, 2016), psychological harassment (UNESCO, 2016) and online harassment (UNESCO, 2016), resulting in tragic consequences such as suicide. Bullying toward LGBT students occurs in schools all over the world, where policies and stigma fail to protect them from ongoing harassment, often due to legal and socio-cultural reasons where same sex relationships are seen as taboo or as criminal behaviour (Cornu, 2016). It is apparent that this issue is widespread and not contained within political borders, and that LGBT students on a global scale have less safety in schools; their well-being and safety are threatened continuously.

LGBT and gender non-conforming students are more subject to acts of bullying and discrimination at a higher rate than gender conforming students. Discrimination and violence are exhibited on a widespread basis, including discriminatory behaviour from home, hospitals, school, and team sports (UNICEF, 2014), with New Zealand and Australia having the highest reports of bullying during physical education classes (UNESCO, 2016) and within the community (MacDonald, 2016). In Canada, 70% of LGBT students surveyed reported some form of discrimination, with 91% average of all individuals witnessing or experiencing "homophobic or transphobic psychological violence" against peers (UNESCO, 2016, p. 44). Eighty countries have laws that act against gender non-conforming lifestyle, and may possibly

support violence toward LGBT students (UNICEF, 2014). Stigmatization and discrimination occur toward LGBT and gender non-conforming students on a global scale, affecting the well-being of LGBT and gender non-conforming students.

Direct or indirect discrimination (Anderson, 2014) leads to a belief that bullying is initiated by the bully merely on the perception of an individual's orientation. Direct and indirect bullying demonstrates examples of discrimination toward LGBT students. Students who reported discrimination in their Manitoba school division shared that they felt "cornered and despised" by their peers (MacDonald, 2016, para. 14). Direct acts can include gender discrimination in school events, such as barring same sex couples from attending prom, inappropriate derogatory language, and homophobic generic expressions such as "That's gay" (Anderson, 2014); indirect discrimination can be seen with the community of Steinbach's mixed response to their first Pride Parade (MacDonald, 2016). Discrimination toward LGBT and gender non-conforming students is an international problem (Cornu, 2016) that violates human rights.

Acts of discrimination toward LGBT students in school occur within the school community. According to the UNESCO (2016) report, older boys are the main aggressors of physical violence toward LGBT students. In Steinbach, Manitoba, LGBT students reported name calling by peers, such as "dyke," harassment from the immediate community, and indirect non-support of local dignitaries in Steinbach's first Pride parade (MacDonald, 2016). In brief, stigma toward LGBT students is not limited to peers as predators, but also community members.

Mental health and sense of safety are affected when young people are subjected to hate-related behaviours "at a crucial moment in their lives" (Cornu, 2019, p. 6). Suicide risk is higher for LGBT youth than gender minority youth (Turpin et al., 2019). Steinbach youth interviewed by Macleans stated that they had been harassed in the community, called names, and feared loss of employment and friendships (MacDonald, 2016). Students in Hanover school division have contemplated suicide (MacDonald, 2016). Bullying causes an increase in factors that affect mental health and well-being, including depression-related behaviours that can lead to suicide, low marks, social isolation, and stress-related illness (Fenaughty, 2019). Anderson (2014) affirmed that anti-gay bullying threatens well-being of gender minority students, creating stress that affects mental health. On a global level, gender non-conforming students experience a large volume of bullying and harassment from peers and community, which affects their mental health wellness and personal safety, with extreme cases leading to suicide.

Suicide results when supports are not in place for students to feel safe (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2019). Gender minority youth are two to three times more likely to commit suicide than non-LGBT peers, with youth being most vulnerable to action at the ages of 15 or younger (Turpin et al., 2019). "Heteronormative discourse" creates non-acceptance of LGBT students in the classroom, through the "valorizing" of heterosexual behaviour (Peter et al., 2016, p. 202). Lack of intervention increases a suicide risk caused by stress and depression (Gilbert et al., 2019). Marginalization can occur in and out of the school environment, because LGBT students do not feel they have a safe space. Lack of policies and support isolates victims, affecting their mental health; there is a feeling of not being safe in school and a higher suicide rate among LGBT gender non-conforming students (UNESCO, 2016).

Heteronormative dominant groups' behaviours are consistent on a larger scale of "othering" their peers by rejecting people who do not fit the common norm of their perception of gender. Females mark non-feminine females as "other," and heterosexual males shame gender non-conforming males (Levesque, 2019, p. 213); heterosexual males have negative attitudes toward males who deviate from the norm (Poytner & Tubbs, 2008). Peer victimization occurs through gendered non-acceptance (Levesque, 2019) and peer-to-peer sexual harassment (Levesque, 2019). Thus, peer victimization is distributed by dominant groups through specific group behaviour that is negative toward the mental health and physical well-being of LGBT youth.

Students are affected mentally and physically by the actions of homophobic and transphobic individuals (UNESCO, 2016). Students are mistreated through various forms of

harassment and harmful behaviours. LGBT students' sense of safety and mental well-being is affected by the actions of name calling, intimidation, witnessing peers be harassed, sexual abuse, and marginalization. Depending on what part of the world LGBT students live in, there are influences that affect how the students can be perceived, including governmental and cultural influences. Although this discrimination is now being recognized by policy makers, and changes are slowly starting to take place, LGBT and gender non-conforming students are a vulnerable minority that is affected negatively in schools by the conforming majority.

Making Schools Safe for LGBT and Gender Non-Conforming Youth

Safety and well-being for LGBT and all students can be created with the support of school, family, community, and friendships. Brave spaces, gay straight alliances, intervention, training, and policy building permit freedom of expression and safety. They help students to be themselves, feel safety, receive school support, and maintain mental health. Solutions support teachers and school staff, family, friends, and community, as well. With the solutions come barriers that need to be overcome, yet success in action toward positive outcomes is growing.

Safe zones, brave spaces, and gay-straight alliances are places of safety that serve the function of "talking, training, and skill building" (Ali, 2017, p. 6). These places give LGBT youth a "guarded" space (Ali, 2017, p. 6) and have "ground rules" to enforce limits and respect (Poytner & Tubbs, 2008, p. 126). Students can be honest and exchange ideas authentically in brave spaces (Ali, 2017). Results of these spaces include personal growth, empowerment of campus leaders, and provision of a space where "voices" matter, by allowing young people to feel less isolated (Ali, 2017) and affirm their identity (Colvin et al., 2019). Gay straight alliances and safe zones can be used as places for LGBT and allies to train, talk, and develop new skills (Ali, 2017) for people to connect to each other socially. Safe zones, gay-straight alliances, and brave spaces provide the opportunity for LGBT and gender non-conforming students to be themselves, and to experience personal growth and safety while receiving support.

A safe school includes different forms of support based on a change in perspective and practice. The reduction of homophobic behaviour and affirmation of identity, can increase acceptance within a school climate (Weinhardt et al., 2018). When gender and identity are affirmed, students feel more supported with increased attendance and a "stronger sense of belonging" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 93). Peer and teacher support can promote inclusive practice within a school that accepts people for who they are, regardless of their sexual orientation.

Shifting from heteronormative instruction, as referred to in "queer theory" (Vega et al., 2012, p. 254), to inclusive curriculum is the responsibility of the school (UNESCO, 2016). Curricular outcomes can be both inclusive (Poytner & Tubbs, 2008) and multicultural (Vega et al., 2012), leading to normalization of LGBT culture. Curricular outcomes can also be designed for certain age groups, in turn increasing empathy (Smith et al., 2019). Normalization and acceptance can make students feel they have a voice and can ask for help (Poytner & Tubbs, 2008), learn about the "intersections of straight and gendered identity" (UNESCO, 2016, p. 223), and promote social justice (UNESCO, 2016). By means of normalization, the curriculum of inclusion provides a framework to support LGBT and gender non-conforming students.

School staff who are fully trained to support LGBT can provide support and awareness of needs of LGBT students (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2019). With training in place, staff have more confidence to work with students in need, and be confident with students through acceptance and affirmation. Staff must be dedicated (UNESCO, 2016) and approachable so that students are comfortable (Smith et al., 2019). Front line mental health professionals being "counsellors, school psychologists and school social workers" provide services to students, in which students feel most at ease (Smith et al., 2019, p. 399). "Teachers have burden of responsibility" to show support and acceptance toward their students (Vega, et al., 2012, p. 253). In turn, LGBT students have a safe school environment with trusted and trained adults.

School safety also requires changing policies within schools to contain negative homophobic behaviour toward LGBT students, in order to protect them from physical and mental harm. Policy changes that protect LGBT students increase a sense of safety, with some US districts showing lower suicide rates as a result of these policies (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2019). Other policy changes may be social changes of general acceptance, one example being the idea of allowing LGBT students to show affection while dating (Smith et al., 2019) and protection from physical aggression (Levesque, 2019). Increased support is needed, because 10% of US school districts currently have LGBT anti-bullying policies in place (Atteberry-Ash et al., 2019). With increased anti-bullying and inclusive policies in place, negative homophobic behaviour is reduced, creating school safety through normalization of LGBT culture and a safe environment.

Socially constructed barriers need to be overcome in order to implement the following positive solutions of supporting LGBT and gender non-conforming students to increase empathy and support. These barriers include personal belief, lack of language, and that teachers may be undertrained. Public perception affects progress when people have fears of political climate changing, fear of being thought to be gay, and fear of backlash from families and school authorities (Vega et al., 2008). Lack of training creates lack of confidence for teachers (UNESCO, 2016, p. 93), with teachers remaining “silent” (Vega et al., 2012, p. 255), including failure to report incidents and downplaying language such as name calling, instead of supporting LGBT youth (Vega et al., 2012). Moving forward, training exists (UNESCO, 2016) that will create awareness for teachers to work with LGBT students and to support marginalized identities (Poytner & Tubbs, 2008). When socially constructed barriers are overcome, acceptance and empathy toward LGBT students is increased.

Positive solutions exist for LGBT and sexual non-conforming schools in school, but staff must overcome barriers in order to support positive action. Brave spaces, safe zones, gay-straight alliances, supportive adults (Colvin et al., 2019), and change in curriculum and policy are necessary for the implementation of a safe environment free of homophobic behaviour toward LGBT youth. As UNESCO stated clearly, it is the responsibility of the school to change delivery to an inclusive model, thus resulting in positive mental health and positive school climate outcomes (Colvin et al., 2019). By overcoming difficult barriers of perceptions and practices that marginalize gender identity, positive action moving forward can be taken.

Moving Forward Toward Positive and Inclusive Practices

In conclusion, school safety for LGBT and gender non-conforming students can be implemented by dedicated professionals who promote inclusivity. Acceptance toward LGBT youth can be nurtured through changes in school practice, policies, and the roles of support that people play to create a safe school. Normalization through curriculum changes and adequate training for staff to be effective are key to this process. All schools have a responsibility to implement changes (UNESCO, 2016) in the area of LGBT youth safety. Safe zones can create places to have a voice and grow, gay-straight alliances can strengthen students’ confidence, and anti-bullying practices must be put into place to protect LGBT students. Although socially constructed barriers of belief, stigma, and silence exist within school walls, the journey toward understanding can take place through education and training for school staff and students with the help of brave spaces (Ali, 2017). Thus, safety for LGBT and gender non-conforming students is possible when a school moves forward through the barriers of social norms to create safety and equality for all students through learning and support through inclusive practices.

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The Importance of Accountability in Teacher Learning

Landon White

Abstract

It has been suggested that the best way to improve student learning is to improve teacher practice. In order to do so, all levels of the educational system must accept accountability for teacher learning. Teachers have a responsibility to improve their practice, administrators have a responsibility to create an environment that fosters growth, and government has a responsibility to offer quality material and learning experiences. Fulfilling these expectations will improve results for schools, teachers, and students alike.

Accountability is an important and interesting aspect of educational leadership. It builds trust and effectiveness, two characteristics that schools, divisions, and even provincial departments strive for throughout their organizations. Though used frequently, the term *accountability* is often used rather freely and can be rather difficult to explain (Yan, 2019). By definition, accountability means responsibility. In education, that could mean the responsibility a teacher has to students or the responsibility educational leaders have to provide opportunities for teachers to improve their practice. When considering the importance of accountability in teacher learning, we can explore the roles of government, administrators, and the teachers.

The “pyramidal accountability of performance” (Chitpin & Jones, 2015, p. 389) explains how government officials, administrators, and teachers are all accountable in the educational system. However, when the system is not working and achievement levels are less than desired, the pyramid can be inverted and create a culture of blame (Chitpin & Jones, 2015). This culture occurs when each level blames those above or below instead of being responsible to them. Therefore, the system works in two ways, each level desiring accountability and trust from the others. Smith and Benavot (2019) explained trust as a required condition in systems such as education, where accountability is required. There is currently a lack of trust between those at the government level and those at the school level.

Role of the Government

With the most authority over public education in Manitoba, the provincial government has a great deal of responsibility in teacher learning and establishing a vision for education within the province. Divisional leaders or school administrators are regularly expected to perform unfamiliar tasks, which is unfair if they were not involved in the process (Postholm, 2019). They are often asked to provide time and opportunities, or even to instruct their teachers on mandates and materials created by the government department of education. Examples include government-developed curricula and assessments that schools and teachers are to implement. Government, schools, and teachers must work together, but this relationship is problematic in Manitoba because teachers do not always receive the necessary “resources, capacity, motivation, and information” (Smith & Benavot, p. 197). Government departments attempt to provide training, but too often this training is insufficient. There is a disconnect between governments and schools because teachers are rarely involved in developing curriculum or assessment. Therefore, the voices of those working in schools are usually missing from these conversations about accountability, leaving mandates to lack validity in the eyes of classroom teachers (Smith & Benavot). The success of schools is dependent on both teachers’ and students’ experiencing “rich curriculum” (Bae, 2018, p. 13). This increases the importance of the government’s role in teacher learning, because it must start with quality curriculum material and be followed up with the necessary supports to attain teacher and student success.

The inclusion of teacher voices in the development of provincial curriculum and assessment would greatly decrease the need for government personnel to travel around offering training sessions. Sinek (2009) wrote about the most successful organizations in the world being able to state clearly why they do what they do. He used examples ranging from Apple Computers to the Wright brothers having success due to a clear vision and an unwavering belief in their purpose. Governments do not present new mandates in this way. The mandates are often presented with little direction, reasoning, or an explanation of the vision for education in the province of Manitoba. This lack of communication leaves divisional and school leaders to fill the “gaps in professional knowledge” (Copp, 2019, p. 188) by sending teachers to professional development, buying more resources, or hiring extra support. With limited resources and declining budgets, divisions and schools are seldom able to provide what is required for teachers to be successful. Unfortunately, government departments are not always willing to provide these supports to teachers.

Role of the Administrator

As support from government declines, the role of the administrator in supporting teacher learning becomes increasingly important. Administrators must remember that teachers may need encouragement to be more critical of their instructional practices and underlying logic (Chitpin & Jones, 2015). Many leaders do not encourage teacher learning by modelling their own growth and emphasizing its importance. Administrators tend not to “break away from the isolation of their work” (Chitpin & Jones, 2015, p. 391) in order to advise and mentor their teachers. It can be difficult for administrators not to focus only on results and outcomes, but it is more important to focus on building trusting relationships and creating environments with an expectation for everyone to improve. The everyday routines of administrators often interfere with instructional leadership that ensures teachers feel successful. Administrators forget that even though they may not directly influence classroom learning, they can prompt student success by helping to uncover the “existing potential” (Postholm, 2019, p. 438) in their teachers. When it comes to increasing accountability administrators must increase trust, which in education is considered to be “trust in the person, trust in the profession, and trust in the process” (Smith & Benavot, 2019, p. 196). Within relationships of trust and respect, administrators will understand how their teachers will learn best in order to improve their practice. While the role of an administrator is challenging, it presents an opportunity to create professional relationships built on trust and foster an environment wherein everyone feels accountable to grow.

The administrative challenge of creating accountability in teacher learning can be compounded by having teachers at different stages of their career. While it is important for administrators and other leaders in education to come alongside their teachers in the process of teacher learning, it is crucial to do so with new teachers. Infusing an accountability for growth early in the careers of teachers will have lasting benefits. Two of the best ways to support new teachers are to afford learning experiences focused on various instructional methods and to form meaningful relationships between teachers and administrators (Bonato, 2019). For this to occur, it is imperative for leaders at the division level to strengthen the capacity of administrators to help teachers improve and recognize the value of teacher learning. Even though teachers are thought to be the primary influence on student success, principals remain a crucial factor in the process as well (Cortes et al., 2019). This must be built, supported, and strengthened in school leaders. Teacher learning is often considered a professional development event, which does not enhance accountability in the process. Administrators can provide opportunities for teachers to improve, such as by sharing between colleagues and using programs such as teacher mentors or professional learning communities (Pierce, 2019). These practices take time, preparation, and organization but they are vital for division and school administrators not only to enforce a sense of accountability around teacher learning but to increase their instructional leadership. Professional development sessions are not always the best source of teacher learning.

Teachers tend to appreciate, and benefit more from, having time to meet and discuss practices with their colleagues. Administrators must understand what works for their teachers, consider more than the latest test scores, and link teacher practices with school goals in order to practise true instructional leadership (Chitpin & Jones, 2015). They must accept their role in teacher learning in order to have a positive, lasting influence on the success of their teachers.

Role of the Teacher

Teachers play an equally important role in their own learning and infusing accountability throughout the educational system. Research continues to show that at the school level teacher quality has the biggest effect on the performance of students (Bae, 2018). Unfortunately, teachers can quickly fault government or administrators for not providing enough support. Teachers' casting blame rather than taking responsibility creates a problem because there is increasing pressure from the general public for accountability in education (Smith & Benavot, 2019). Taxpayers want to know that their money is going toward improvement, especially when it concerns the education and training of youth. However, teachers tend to perform better when they have professional freedom to determine their classroom strategies and resources (Bedard, 2015). A balance between autonomy and accountability must be found, because both are vital in education (Chitpin & Jones, 2015).

Even though teachers may prefer a degree of professional freedom, they must remember that they are accountable for continuously improving their instruction. Because teachers in Manitoba are generally paid with taxpayer dollars, they have a responsibility to provide the best possible instruction. This may require learning new pedagogies, strategies, or assessments. When directly associated with student learning, the professional learning of teachers translates to improved professional practice (Killion, 2016). Teachers can be creatures of habit, but they will alter their practices if the required changes are expected and are clearly and fairly implemented and evaluated (Copp, 2019). Whether stemming from evaluation, mandates, or expectations, teachers cannot forget their own accountability for learning to improve their practice.

Conclusion

Accountability for teacher learning is the responsibility of all levels of the education. In the province of Manitoba, this includes the government department of education, administration at both the division and school levels, and the teacher. The government must provide meaningful learning opportunities in order to establish clear expectations of their material and mandates. Administrators must develop trusting relationships and create, facilitate, or find beneficial opportunities for teacher growth. Finally, teachers must accept their obligation to improve professionally in a way that benefits their students.

One of the most effective ways to improve student learning is to improve teacher practice. To improve results for schools, students, and teachers, each level of the education system must be accountable for improving teacher practice. Each level must accept responsibility for their role in teacher learning and agree to work together to create a system whereby everyone works toward the common goal of instructional excellence in Manitoban classrooms.

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About the Author

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Indigenous Content in Curriculum: The Challenge

Penny Wilson

Abstract

Canada has legions of strong Indigenous voices, yet our educational system fails many of our Indigenous students. A comparison of Metis, First Nations and Inuit high school graduation rates to non-Indigenous students in Manitoba shows significant disparity. Reasons for leaving school are complex, and disengagement with education can generate adults vulnerable to low income realities. Broadly recurring challenges include diversity of Indigenous communities, communicating and understanding new curriculum, transitioning existing classroom practice, authenticity of presenters, necessity of expert knowledge, problematic textbooks, meaningfully incorporated material, assigning value to Indigenous programming, and navigating a multicultural framework. Evolving education to include Indigenous perspective better serves all students and our larger society.

High school graduation rates in Manitoba show a devastating deviation in performance between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students. Although our economy has a multitude of strong Indigenous contributors at every level, the educational system fails many. Lower education levels bring exposure to higher levels of poverty. Poverty brings with it a higher incidence of many debilitating conditions. Academia is embracing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action 62-65, and the abecedarian stages of evolving the massive educational system are upon us. Diversity of Indigenous communities, and the challenge it brings to developing program content and delivery, are complex issues. Broadly recurring challenges include communicating and understanding new Indigenous curriculum directives, socially rooted frameworks and identities of teachers themselves filtering classroom content, authenticity of presenters, meaningfully incorporated material, undervaluing Indigenous course content, and the balancing philosophy of multiculturalism. Enhancing transformative change will require building stronger relationships within our communities, requiring careful, structured and sustained funding in identified frameworks for success. Targeted evolution of curriculum perspectives will benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners, better serving a growing segment of our identity, and our nation as a whole.

The Statistics of Education

There are powerful Indigenous voices of success in every level and profession in Canada. These numbers are multiplying, but tremendous educational challenges still face Indigenous Canadians. Statistical facts show us that our schools continue to fail many Aboriginal students (St. Denise, 2010). In Manitoba, the 4-year graduation rate in 2018 of non-Indigenous girls was 90.6%, while only 51.2% for Indigenous girls. It is worse for boys, where non-Indigenous boys graduate at a rate of 85.4%, compared to Indigenous boys at only 48.5% (Manitoba Education and Training). When separated into Metis, Inuit and First Nation, Metis students accomplish slightly higher graduation rates at 67.4% vs 47.1 % for First Nations (Ontario Ministry of Education). The causes of this achievement gap are complex and interconnected (Ferguson, 2019), but there is no questioning its consequences. A quarter of a million Manitobans are Indigenous, and 31.2% are aged 14 and under (Statistics Canada, 2017). The educational system is underserving a large portion of our community, and there is an urgent need to change.

Poor education manifests adults in a weak economic position. Numerous studies across North America have linked lower education levels to low household income, and many more link poverty to crime and incarceration rates (Duke, 2018; Dyson et al., 2009; Rotenberg, 2016).

Having less than high school education is one of a team of predictors that connect poverty with poor long-term health, unemployment, food insecurity, low household income, and poor housing (Rotenberg, 2016). Poverty is the result of a complex system, to which poor education is deeply connected.

As a demographic, First Nations, Metis and Inuit are over exposed to poverty and the socio-cultural norms associated with it. Within Canada's demographic profile, Indigenous peoples experience the highest levels of poverty: 25% are living in poverty including 40% of Indigenous children (Canadian Poverty Institute, 2019). When compared to the national average of 9.5% in 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2019d), there is a clear demographic distinction to poverty exposure.

There are strong links between lower education levels and high incarceration rates, as high as 70% (Duke, 2018). This rate is mirrored in Saskatchewan, where 70% of chronic offenders qualify as low income (Boyce et al., 2018). Indigenous youth are significantly overrepresented in our corrections programs, with 81% and 92% of admissions to youth custody identified as Aboriginal males during 2017/2018 in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and 98% vs 2% female youth (Statistics Canada, 2019a). Admissions to adult custody in Manitoba were 75% Indigenous vs 25% non-Indigenous in 2017-2018 (Statistics Canada, 2019b, 2019c), numbers that are signals of a complex system of disenfranchisement, in which education is deeply embedded.

Evolving perspectives will benefit all learners. Indigenous disenfranchisement is a complicated problem. Dropping out of school is driven by many influences, and students' inability to see themselves or their communities reflected in institutionally mandated knowledge and society plays a large role (Brant Castellano, 2014). When student self-esteem is supported by showing respect and value for community and culture, attendance improves, and self-identification increases (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2018). Actively supporting culture strengthens resilience in youth (Chandler & Lalonde, 1998). It is clear that education is empowering, that education needs to evolve to meet the needs of today's learners, and that change will benefit both Indigenous and non-Indigenous students (Hansen, 2016; Manitoba School Boards Association, 2016; St. Denise, 2011).

Inclusion of Indigenous Perspectives

Although the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Education for Reconciliation mandates continue to be supported and implemented with success in areas across Canada, the work to "integrate Indigenous knowledge and teaching methods into classrooms" (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015) faces significant and complicated challenges. Indigenizing perspectives will be a living, complex work of a generation (Pidgeon 2015). It is a multifaceted interplay of policy change and engagement with Indigenous communities, across widely diverse cultural practice, geography, and community experience.

The concept has received strong endorsement from educators at every level. Like all great changes, there are stages of evolution "indifference, intimidation, image, integration, incubation and initiation" (MSBA, 2016). It is important to acknowledge that all of us are at different stages in this journey. Lakehead University and the University of Winnipeg, which have made Indigenous studies mandatory for service careers for years, are developing an expansion of this mandate to include all course studies. We must think very carefully about how to implement changes in a way that moves us forward as a diverse educational community. To borrow a fitting colloquialism, the Devil really is in the details.

Diversity of Indigenous Communities

Diversity of Indigenous communities engenders a variety of experiences geographically, historically, and socially. There are 633 First Nation communities, with over 60 language

dialects (Assembly of First Nations, 2012). Relevant content must therefore be addressed with an equally diverse social story. Local perspective must come from local communities (Hansen, 2016; Milne, 2017; St. Denis, 2011).

Lack of information about resident First Nation, Metis, and Inuit communities reflects the disconnectedness of our society. This knowledge gap is understandable given that Indigenous culture and shared traditions were institutionally and legally discouraged for generations (Hansen, 2018). After a week-long discussion on Metis issues with @IndigenousXca, one participant claimed having “learned more about Metis in a week than throughout their entire formal education” (Gaudry, 2015, p. 96). Because there are close to 90 000 Metis in Manitoba (Statistics Canada, 2017), this excludes a significant perspective to our social story.

Because of the diversity of Indigenous cultural practice, geography merits deep consideration, and a pan-Indian mindset must be avoided. Michelle Diagle expressed frustration at continually being approached, as an Indigenous academic woman, to consult and join research projects while new to the University of British Columbia. As a Swampy Cree from Treaty 9 in Northwestern Ontario, she was entirely unfamiliar with the local Indigenous political and legal traditions of coastal British Columbia, and was shocked that colonial settlers, who had lived there all their lives, knew so little of it. She cautioned requests for personal consultations on local issues, citing ignorance of local Indigenous communities and a lack of local connections. Meaningful dialogue calls for a geographically sensitive, integrated approach in the continued evolution of Indigenization of course content (Daigle, 2019).

Developing Program Content and Delivery

A lack of expertise is crippling, and speaks to the necessity of expert knowledge. This is compounded by the fact that social identity is a fluid construct dependent on lived experience (Ferguson, 2019), which can manifest as a spectrum of practice within Indigenous communities. When unprepared instructors teach what they know of Indigenous perspective, it is frequently wrong (Gaudry, 2016). Articulating meaningful Indigenous perspective onto course work means moving beyond beads and bannock (St. Denis, 2011). It is of paramount importance that content reflects accurately meaningful Indigenous perspectives, or we risk repeating the very institutionalized mistakes we are trying to rectify.

It is important to acknowledge that Eurocentric perspective pervades our curriculum. Defying a change of this re-affirms the power of colonialism, an active process that reproduces advantages for some and disservice to others (Gaudry, 2016). Indigenization of curriculum perspective changes a colonial educational system. Just as it is our inherent right and duty to be stewards of the land, it is also our responsibility to be a part of shaping how classrooms construe our world (Pidgeon, 2016). We must embrace this opportunity to create a system reflective of who we are.

Teachers want a textbook to pick up and teach from, and an Indigenized one is generally not available (Milne, 2017). Textbook definitions of racism are problematic. Defining racism as a personal flaw, as attributing behaviours or values to a racial group, leaves out the dynamic of systemic racism, whereby hidden yet more powerful disadvantages connected to race exist in our institutions (Montgomery, 2005). One example is the difference in funding allocated per student for federal reserve schools versus public provincial schools. As such, the experience of racism is narrowly defined, and thereby partially ignored. To pass the course, students must learn a lens of perspective that subtly legitimizes and formats preference to a colonial settler viewpoint (Montgomery, 2005). This is a powerful indoctrination into colonial societal beliefs.

As a Metis student, my personal experience with social studies classes was uncomfortable. The textbook portrayal of Metis felt like disloyal villains. This did not match what I knew. I realize now that events were explained from a Eurocentric point of view. As an educator, including Metis perspectives years later when I taught the course myself was a natural transition. The unfolding events of the Red River Rebellion and the Manitoba Act are far more complex, and

infinitely more engaging to teach and debate, when connected to personal accounts. This is how we will bring about change; all of us have to risk being willing to contribute.

Broadly Recurring Challenges

Releasing new educational directives and seeing them manifest in the classroom are not immediate and fluid events. Many Ontario teachers remain unformed of Indigenous curriculum initiatives (Milne, 2017). During the implementation of a new, Indigenized social studies curriculum in Alberta in 2010, overall resistance within the teaching body was documented (Scott & Gani, 2018). Even when given a strong curriculum to follow, personal frameworks and philosophies of teachers implementing the new curriculum have a profound impact on effective delivery. A perception that only Indigenous teachers should teach Indigenous content exists (Milne, 2017; Scott & Gani, 2018), and the practice of undervaluing Indigenous course content in comparison to other subjects continues (Milne, 2017; St. Denise, 2011). Multiculturalism has also been identified as an argument against inclusion of an Indigenous perspective (Scott & Gani, 2018; St. Denise, 2011). These difficulties have been cited broadly across Canada as challenges to implementation.

Professional development raises awareness of directives, but does not necessarily change classroom practice. Training to address how teachers are bound by socially rooted frameworks and identities, and an acknowledgement of how this filters classroom content, has to be a cornerstone of introducing Indigenized perspective (Hansen, 2018; MSBA, 2016; Pidgeon, 2016). The reasoning behind including Indigenous perspectives must be clearly articulated and disseminated by administration, not left to individual instructors to create or defend (Daigle, 2019; Gaudry, 2016; Sims, 2016).

Many teachers emancipate themselves from the responsibility of implementing Indigenized curriculum, citing unfamiliarity with the subject (Scott & Gani, 2018; Milne, 2017), and perhaps justly fearing cultural appropriation (Smith, 1999). However, Emily Milne's study of implementing Indigenous policy suggested that many parents and students were accepting of, and open to, non-Indigenous educators teaching Indigenous focused content. Parents expressed support for teachers' efforts, and emphasized that what was important was not the teachers' ancestry, but presenting material in a respectful way (Milne, 2017). As such, much depends on solid supportive training and a willingness to engage by both educators and Indigenous communities.

Employing more Indigenous educators will aid in the curriculum perspective shift. Cluster hires of Indigenous staff, underrepresented in education at all levels, are suggested (Gaudry, 2016; Milne, 2017; Pidgeon, 2016). Implementing language and culture programs within the school will take financial support. Long-term provincial and federal financial support to core funding for successful programs must be addressed (Hansen, 2018; Snyder, Wilson, & Whitford, 2015) in order to animate resources for educational availability. Educational, cultural, and language programs are an asset we must access in order to diversify school programming.

Notions of universal equality, or multiculturalism, have been identified as a reason to restrict Aboriginal curriculum (Scott & Gani, 2018). Explicit multiculturalism suggests Aboriginal perspectives should not be given more precedence than other ethnic histories present in Canada. It is a mistake to equate the experiences of colonial immigrants with the Canadian Aboriginal experience, because it inaccurately assumes commonalities where there are few (St. Denis, 2011). Ongoing land claims and treaty agreements set Aboriginal people apart, in a unique position, where understanding Canada necessitates understanding Indigenous experience and perspective. Defending public education as neutral denies the Eurocentric perspective it is written in. This is a colonial perspective we must avoid.

Assigning value to Indigenous perspective for all learners is a key component to implementation of programming (Gaudry, 2016; Hansen, 2016; MSBA, 2016). *Indigenization* implies pervasive perspective in content across curriculum. This is a departure from what has been done in the past, and is perhaps a reflection of where we are as individual schools on the

inclusion spectrum. Offering Indigenous programs to Indigenous students only during class time actively segregates. Affording language or cultural programs unrecognized for school credit institutionally devalues the language and culture (Milne, 2017). Including meaningful Indigenous perspective is not just counting buffalo instead of sticks (St. Denis, 2011), adding a teepee to the playground, or bringing bannock to class. Careful consultation must happen on goals, what to include, and how to deliver. Including Indigenous perspectives will benefit all learners (St. Denis, 2011). A targeted evolution of perspective will benefit all learners, better serving a growing segment of our Indigenous identity, and our nation as a whole.

Conclusion

Canada has strong Indigenous voices at every level of our economy. However, there is no ignoring the statistics of Indigenous disengagement with high school. Poor education increases exposure to many diseases of poverty such as housing insecurity, food insecurity, poorer health and higher incarceration levels. High school graduation rates for First Nation, Metis, and Inuit students are dramatically lower than their peers. The diversity of Indigenous communities brings complexity to the development of program content and delivery. The following broadly recurring challenges need to be addressed: (1) communicating and understanding new directives, (2) socially rooted frameworks and identities of the teachers themselves filtering classroom content, (3) authenticity of presenter (4) meaningfully incorporated content, (5) under-valuing indigenous course content, and, (6) the equalizing philosophy of multiculturalism. Professional development, in co-operation with local Indigenous communities, must happen to further strengthen our educational system in order to serve all of our learners.

Looking forward, Indigenous perspective in a truly meaningful way cannot happen without complicated conversations with the communities we mean to support. In changing the historic dis-harmony between Indigenous communities and formal education, we must recognize that tensions will inevitably occur. Evolution is a process, and we must interpret change as a sign we are engaging our communities (MSBA, 2016). Education is our most powerful tool for shaping how we frame our society. As so aptly put by the Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, "Education got us into this mess and education will get us out" (Sinclair, 2015). Including culture in curriculum does not magically accomplish reconciliation; however, it is certainly a vital step in our evolution toward a stronger society.

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About the Author

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Middle Years Bullying: Theories and Solutions

Riel Langlois

Abstract

Bullying in middle school can be understood through the lens of the evolutionary theory. This theory views bullying behaviours as aspects of a drive for power and status, dark facets of charisma and leadership. In this light, we seek to channel these natural instincts into more positive outlets, giving "bullies" – and all students – more and broader opportunities to hold power and status within the school that do not come at the expense of others; the Meaningful Roles intervention is part of this solution strategy.

Middle Years Bullying: Theories and Solutions

Bullying in the middle school years is a multifaceted problem that has existed historically over many cultural contexts. To address this problem today within a K-12 school – specifically in a school of approximately 180 students north of Thompson, Manitoba – the first step will be to find a definition of bullying. A research-backed explanation for the causes of bullying must be adopted, including an understanding of the motivations, both conscious and unconscious, for bullying behaviours. The intervention itself in bullying situations may also have adverse effects for the victim, as labeling occurs. Bullying can lead directly or indirectly to the death of the target; sometimes the bullied are straightforwardly urged to commit suicide, but more often bullying causes suicide indirectly through “feelings of powerlessness and helplessness” (Volk et al., 2016, p. 169); this powerlessness can also spread to the parents. Strategies in line with the evolutionary approach for dismantling bullying in the middle school years will be explored. Commonly used strategies that have been proven ineffective are zero tolerance and empathy training, and the debunking of these methods will lead into a discussion of evolutionary-based approaches that have proven effectiveness. Also, building resiliency in bullying victims will be investigated as part of the solution.

The first step in identifying anti-bullying strategies that work is to find a working definition of bullying. An effective definition must take into consideration the social forces at play, including “racism, ableism, sexism, and homophobia” (Meyer, 2014, p. 214), and must be based upon an understanding of how individuals and groups of humans vie for dominance, prehistorically, historically, and in modern times. Bullying behaviours are ways the dominant individual or group operates to achieve and preserve advantages in “reputation, reproduction . . . and social or material resources” (Farrell and Dane, 2019, p. 1). Farrell and Dane based their definition on studies by researchers Volk et al. (2012) and Volk et al. (2014). This cluster of studies viewed bullying as having an evolutionary basis, whereby bullying is identified as an adaptive behaviour (as opposed to maladaptive); effective bullying techniques would have enabled “the bullies” in prehistoric times to achieve and maintain dominance and survive in times of scarce resources. In other words, bullying is viewed as an “adaptive social strategy” (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 12).

“Reputation” and “resources” (Volk et al., 2014, pp. 329, 330) are two motivations for bullying. “Reproduction” (Volk et al., 2014, p. 331) is another motivation for bullying: the dominant male demonstrates more favorable attributes than the dominated, which can make the male more attractive in heterosexual unions; this also holds true for the female bully to a lesser extent. Similar power structures can likely be identified in competitions for homosexual partnerships; however, this is complicated by a level of stigma still associated with homosexuality, especially in school-age students. It is important to reiterate that the bully may or may not be aware of his or her motivations.

The bullying process as it plays out in school usually results in the labeling of the bully and the victim (Farrell and Dane, 2019), and even this labeling itself is part of the negative

socialization process; The labeling only increases the relative social distance between the bully and victim since being identified as a victim lowers social status even further. The fact that calling out the bullies can and does increase their status is part of this complicated social dilemma, and is connected to a feeling of powerlessness in the victims.

The feeling of powerlessness can also spread to the parents of the bullying victim. Parents of a bullied student expect that a meeting with the principal and teachers will have a positive effect on the situation, but the opposite usually occurs: things get even worse for the bullied child, and the relationship between the family and the school become even more fractured (Hein, 2014). An understanding of the evolutionary perspective can help to alleviate these feelings.

The evolutionary perspective on bullying is a theory that seems to explain the bullying within the specific case study school identified in the introduction. Adopting the evolutionary approach is problematic in the sense that it adds more weight to the argument that bullies are behaving in natural ways and that perhaps the bullied are partly to blame, that the bullied are “too sensitive” (Hein, 2014, p. 308), and that the bullies are simply jockeying for limited resources in the school setting (such as teacher attention). However, it seems only logical that the evolutionary perspective has merit, and that strategies that actually work in alleviating bullying situations can come from the adoption of this framework.

There are many strategies that help to alleviate bullying, and some that should hypothetically be effective in the middle years of a K-12 school, specifically a Canadian school north of Thompson, Manitoba. In Manitoba, zero tolerance initiatives to stamp out bullying have been used widely, and even if this strategy is not utilized, it is usually part of the conversation at the administrative level. (The zero tolerance strategy, as its name implies, usually means that the bully is identified and removed from the school for a period of time.) However, the zero tolerance approach has been proven ineffective (Ellis et al., 2015), because simply removing the bully from the school does not stop the social benefits of bullying from existing. Likewise, empathy training has some effect, but only in children in grade 7 and lower, and the effect is “modest,” and “we cannot yet confidently rely on [empathy-based] anti-bullying programs for grades 8 and above” (Yeager et al., 2015). While increasing empathy, even to a small degree, can only be a good thing, this approach does not address the social benefits of bullying. Researchers have shown that lack of empathy is not really the problem in bullies anyway. “Callous empathy” is what exists in bullies; that is, they know what their victim is feeling and simply do not care because it does not outweigh the social benefits (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 3). Thus, while empathy training is not harmful, neither does it appear to be a useful component in an anti-bullying campaign.

The Meaningful Roles intervention is based on the evolutionary approach. It addresses the social benefits of bullying directly, by providing other avenues for all students in the school to receive social recognition, and gives opportunities for status enhancement. Jobs programs within the school are key: students take on positions such as homework monitor or captain. Another key element is the partnering of bullies in these roles with “highly competent students . . . who are neither bullies nor victims” (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 7) so that there is a positive role model for the bullies to follow. Perhaps the most crucial element is that “the identified bullies do not even know that they have been identified and targeted in the intervention” (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 7); publicly identifying the bullies and the bullied is not part of this intervention.

The roles assigned to students in the Meaningful Roles intervention must actually be meaningful. The jobs must be viewed as high-status jobs that are important to the functioning of the classroom and the school; otherwise, the intervention will be ineffective and likely even counterproductive (Ellis et al., 2015). One caveat to the Meaningful Roles approach is that popular bullies tend to be resistant to the approach (Veenstra, 2017). Current stereotypes of bullies as oafish, socially inept thugs are incorrect (Marini & Volk, 2017, p. 104), and understanding that popular children can be bullies is part of the mindset shift that is necessary to effectively tackle the problem.

A second component to the Meaningful Roles intervention is the use of “praise notes” (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 6). These are notes written by peers to each other. They may be signed or unsigned, and they reinforce “prosocial” and “achievement-related behaviors” (Ellis et al., 2015, p. 6). The praise notes fit with the evolutionary approach because they offer more constructive ways for students to achieve and maintain social status. Peer praise notes were proven effective by Teerlink et al. (2017) when they used them to reduce negative behaviours, including bullying. Significantly, students in grades 4 to 6 were assigned roles of “peer praisers” (Teerlink et al., 2017, p. 124), which also fits well with the Meaningful Roles approach.

While there is strong support for the Meaningful Roles approach, it has also been proven to build resiliency in all students, particularly in students who have been identified as victims of bullying. (It is important to reiterate that it is counterproductive to identify and label the bullied publicly as such.) Moore and Woodcock (2017) investigated the resilience-based approach to bullying as an alternative to current anti-bullying strategies. They identified a cluster of characteristics associated with resiliency, including “hardiness, optimism, competence, self-esteem, social-skills, achievement, and absence of pathology in the face of adversity” (Moore & Woodcock, p. 69). (These characteristics were identified as protecting students against bullying, and they are also positive characteristics that can make life easier and more rewarding, so it seems unlikely that a program that fosters these traits could interfere with a Meaningful Roles agenda.) Students with higher levels of resilience felt less distressed with regards to bullying, students with higher levels of emotional reactivity exhibited more bullying behaviour as compared to peers, and younger students demonstrated higher levels of resilience as compared to older students. Part of resiliency training should provide students “meaningful opportunities to embrace hardship and then rise up and overcome” (Hinduja, n.d., A New Direction section, para. 1). Resiliency seems to complement the Meaningful Roles strategy, but no investigation into the pairing of these specific strategies has yet occurred, perhaps due to the newness of the Meaningful Roles approach.

In conclusion, the Meaningful Roles intervention offers strategies that may alleviate bullying in the northern Manitoba school of Leaf Rapids Education Centre. The next step will be to introduce the teachers and administration to the evolutionary approach to bullying, and to the Meaningful Roles intervention and the power of peer praise notes. Incidentally, some use of peer praise notes has already started in the fall of the 2019-2020 school year, so the gulf that the administration and staff need to traverse together may not be that great. When teachers and administration are unified and have a high degree of psychological ownership of an anti-bullying strategy, and when the principal is on board and leading the initiative, it makes sense that the chance of eradicating bullying will be greatly increased (Li et al., 2017, p. 18). This strategy that focuses on positive traits in both bullies and victims, and backed by a unified faculty, could be the solution.

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Riel Langlois is a teacher working toward his Master of Education. He has a marked interest in putting theory into practice in the service of guiding students toward self-actualization.

The Relationship Between Social Media Use and Student Success, with an Additional Focus on a Post-Secondary Professional Program

Laura Van Mulligen

Abstract

Integrating social media platforms in academic curricula can increase student participation and equality within group work; encourage innovative thinking, collaboration, and community; and facilitate the creation of flexible assignments. Students in post-secondary professional programs, such as in the Faculty of Health Studies at Brandon University, are provided with guidelines regarding appropriate social media use upon admission. Educators must therefore be proficient in navigating these platforms and must be aware of the benefits and the risks. Students do report using social media excessively and having experienced negative consequences associated with inappropriate use. The risks of cyberbullying, procrastination, breaches of privacy, and the inability to discern credible sources can negatively affect students' academic success and overall well-being.

In an era of technology, it is essential for educators and parents to be well informed about social media and the effect it may have on students (Freitas, 2017). The use of social media in curriculum can improve student outcomes in the learning environment. However, the effects and benefits of social media use have not been studied extensively in post-secondary professional programs. Many educators have preconceived ideas about what social media entails and view social media as dangerous (Greenhow et al., 2016). However, students are already using social media platforms every day (Hosler, 2019), the most popular being Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat (Journell, 2019).

General Education

There are many positive aspects to the relationship between social media and learning (Greenhow et al., 2016). A few reasons to incorporate social media into the school curricula are the potential to build online communities, create collaborative relationships, and encourage innovative thinking (Tierney et al., 2018). The use of this technology in the classroom can increase flexibility in the design of assignments, and therefore increase student satisfaction (Purvis et al., 2011). Online social media platforms have the potential to increase student participation in online group work and can create equality among students (Tierney et al., 2018). Social media use in the curricula is student centered (Casey & Evans, 2018) because students are using online resources for everyday personal and educational purposes.

It is essential for educators to ensure that the institutional policies regarding management of cyberbullying are being followed (Redmond et al., 2018). Educators need to articulate course expectations regarding boundaries and requirements of appropriate social media platform use in the curriculum (Purvis et al., 2011). Students do not always recognize the consequences of their online presence, such as how unprofessional posts can affect future employment (Chester et al., 2013). Cyberbullying, procrastination, breach of personal information, and credibility of online news sources all have the potential to jeopardize student success. Therefore, these concerns must be addressed by ensuring that students and educators receive ongoing education and technological support that targets these concerns and maximizes the positive aspects of online learning.

Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying can be a major concern when using a social media platform, because it can have a negative effect on student engagement and academic achievement (Sarwar et al., 2019). There are reports that 20% to 40% of students have been bullied online (Hosler, 2019, "The Internet Is a New Medium" section, para. 2). Cyberbullying can hinder students' learning (Sarwar et al., 2019) and threaten their mental health (Mishna et al., 2018). Students often feel pressured to have the perfect image online (Freitas, 2017). For this reason, some students may be apprehensive to share within a social media platform if required for a course, which in turn can affect their academic achievement.

To aid in the prevention of cyberbullying, ongoing education during the kindergarten to grade 12 years is important (Redmond et al., 2018). Providing students with guidance on how to communicate professionally on social media platforms is essential (Freitas, 2017). This guidance should not be delayed until enrolment in post-secondary institutions (Redmond et al., 2018). Methods in cyberbullying prevention include providing students and parents with examples of respectful communication on social media platforms (Cassidy et al., 2012), and encouraging educators to feel confident in talking about and managing cyberbullying within the classroom setting. Other important preventative methods include creating an environment for students to feel supported and safe to report their experiences (Redmond et al., 2018), and ensuring that institutional policies are followed by educators in the management of cases of cyberbullying (Cassidy et al., 2012; Redmond et al., 2018). All parties can assist in the prevention of cyberbullying, including educators, parents, and students (Cassidy et al., 2012). Coupled with cyberbullying, procrastination can also negatively affect students' success.

Procrastination

Students' use of social media platforms such as Facebook can be problematic because it often leads to procrastination of academic requirements, causing increased stress and affecting mood and overall well-being (Meier et al., 2016). Social media can be highly addictive and distracting for students, which can lead to loss of valuable study time (Hosler, 2019). Students may have decreased motivation for academic requirements if procrastinating due to non-task related social media use (Chang et al., 2019). In the qualitative study conducted by Alwagait et al. (2015), over half of the students self-reported excessive use of social media, which can negatively affect academic success.

Encouraging students to examine how social media use is affecting their own health and relationships, both in person and online, is a way to raise awareness of the possible negative effects of excessive social media use (Freitas, 2017). Providing students with clear guidelines combined with ongoing support in navigating social media platforms, assists students in meeting academic objectives (Purvis et al., 2011). Behaviour changes, such as reducing personal social media use and taking social media breaks, are effective ways for students to be more engaged in school (Meier et al., 2016). Procrastination is very common for anyone using social media. Ensuring open dialogue with students and providing ongoing instruction are imperative (Tierney et al., 2018). Along with procrastination related to social media use, breach of students' privacy online when using social media platforms is an area of major concern for many students, educators, and parents.

Breach of Privacy

The breach of privacy is a major concern for students who use social media platforms. Personal information can be highly accessible on the Internet (Sarwar et al., 2019), and there is a high risk for personal data leak (Alwagait et al., 2015). Students can be at a major risk because they do not have the knowledge to ensure privacy on social media platforms

(Greenhow et al., 2016). Educators as well as students often lack education to protect their personal information and privacy online.

Educators play an important role in providing resources to navigate social media safely and to understand the implications of posting in the digital age (Tierney et al., 2018). In the study conducted by Casey and Evans (2018), involving both parents and students in online safety was encouraged. The researchers had students follow frequent, basic rules, such as posting appropriate videos, comments and pictures. It is important for students to gain awareness in navigating social media platforms not only for their current academic courses, but also for their future careers (Tierney et al., 2018). Having students take ownership of their own learning in regards to privacy and ethics with online social media use is an appropriate way for students to gain knowledge in collaborating with peers (Casey & Evans). As educators, having current knowledge of common online social media sites is important, but it is essential to research what the new sites are that students are using (Vie, 2017). Coupled with privacy breaches, the damage can be more distressing if the information circulated on social media platforms is not true.

Credibility of Sources

Deciphering the credibility of online news sources as factual or fake can be difficult, because social media platforms have an overwhelming number of newsfeeds going through every hour. Many educators view online news sources within social media platforms as dangerous and useless (Greenhow et al., 2016). In a study conducted in 2017, nearly half of the teen participants self-reported that they were unable to differentiate between real and fake news on social media (Journell, 2019). This finding is concerning, because social media platforms are filled with both factual and false news (Greenhow et al., 2016).

Educators play an important role in providing tools for students to assess the credibility of online sources. Many students between the ages of 18 and mid-20s follow newsfeeds on Instagram, Reddit, and Twitter, whereas younger students, preteen age to 18, use YouTube and Facebook (Journell, 2019). It is imperative for students to understand the significance of assessing credibility (Journell, 2019). Educators play a critical role in assisting students to gain confidence in navigating credibility, because it is important for the students' own learning and for professionalism in the online community (Tierney et al., 2018). Providing current examples of newsfeeds, encouraging collaboration with peers, and facilitating conversations about limitations are meaningful ways to assist students (Journell, 2019).

Focus on Health Studies

Within the context of the Faculty of Health Studies in Brandon University, using evidence-based research is one of the key educational pillars of the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) program and reflects entry-level practice requirements as defined by the professional regulator. The faculty's role is to encourage students to use critical thinking skills when assessing the credibility of online sources and using social media programs to enhance learning.

Students are introduced to the Bachelor of Nursing Program Student Handbook upon admittance to Brandon University's BN program. This document contains guidelines on professional student conduct, such as the use of social media, use of electronic devices, and respectful online communication (Faculty of Health Studies, 2019). The policies in the handbook include how the misuse of social media can negatively affect academic standing and can have implications for continuation in the academic program. In recent years, faculty have discovered that these policies regarding appropriate online behaviour need to be referred to throughout the year, not just upon entrance into the program. Students anecdotally report having forgotten the policies and guidelines, experiencing negative consequences to their inappropriate use of social media platforms.

One recommendation would be to refer to the Bachelor of Nursing Program Student Handbook at the beginning of each term. Also, class discussions on professional, personal, and in-classroom social media use (Casey and Evans, 2017) are necessary for students to understand this useful learning tool. In the study conducted by Smith (2016), the participants identified the need to separate private and educational social media accounts, because of the risk for increased distraction and because of the need for professional relationships and boundaries with peers and faculty. Faculty must rely on general education literature for guidance, because there are limited published resources pertaining to social media use and the effect on student success in post-secondary professional programs. A further recommendation would be for post-secondary institutions to endeavour to develop resources specific to their programs.

Conclusion

The negative effects of social media can limit students' academic success (Phulpoto, 2017). Cyberbullying and procrastination impedes students' overall well-being and academic achievement. Breaches of personal information and the inability to distinguish real and fake news can affect students' safety and their ability to interpret online sources for learning. Educators have a critical role in providing guidance for students to navigate social media safely (Chester et al., 2013), because maintaining professionalism online and using critical thinking when assessing online sources are skills that students will use for years to come. In order to address the negative effects and to foster the positive benefits, it is critical for educators to be proficient in navigating social media platforms when integrating these technologies in their curricula.

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The Use of Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory (LSI) in School Settings

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Abstract

Proponents of learning styles-based instruction recommend using learning styles inventories in school settings. One such inventory is Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI). Critics, on the other hand, discourage the use of such questionnaires because of some challenges associated with learning styles-based instruction. Despite these challenges, learning styles-based instruction continues to thrive because of the proponents' effort to ground learning styles in sound pedagogy. Consequently, the use of Kolb's LSI in school settings is worthwhile.

The use of Kolb's Learning Style Inventory (LSI) in school settings is a contentious issue in the literature because of the following challenges. First, the meshing hypothesis remains unresolved. This hypothesis states that students learn best from classroom instruction suited to their learning preferences. Second, the question of validity and reliability undermines the questionnaire. Third, the construct of learning cycle oversimplifies the learning process. These challenges offer deep insights into the discourse of learning styles-based instruction. Therefore, addressing these challenges related to the use of Kolb's LSI in school settings is important.

The Unresolved Meshing Hypothesis

Pashler et al. (2009) commented on the cost associated with the criteria for resolving or refuting the meshing hypothesis. In particular, the criteria require an experimental design, involving a large-scale instructional intervention. However, the projected cost of the design outweighs the benefits of resolving or refuting the hypothesis. As a result, the hypothesis remains unresolved. Critics of learning styles-based instruction, on the other hand, have used the unresolved meshing hypothesis in order to discourage the use of learning styles questionnaires in school settings. Nonetheless, they have shown bias in their results by disregarding the cost associated with the criteria.

Cuevas (2015) disregarded the cost associated with the criteria when he selected for evaluation 31 peer-reviewed articles, including seven correlational studies that administered Kolb's LSI in adult settings. None used instructional intervention, validity test on the questionnaire, and experimental design in order to confirm the hypothesis. Cuevas concluded that the papers lacked quality because none met the criteria, without mentioning the cost associated with the criteria.

Gudnason (2017) cited Cuevas' inconclusive results in order to discourage the use of learning styles questionnaires in school settings. First, she highlighted the unresolved meshing hypothesis. Second, she criticized the association of learning styles with differentiated instruction and inclusive education. Consequently, she discouraged the use of learning styles questionnaires in school settings because of Cuevas' inconclusive results.

These critics of learning styles-based instruction focused more on the problem of unsubstantiated teaching practices in pedagogy. For example, Cuevas (2015) criticized learning styles-based instruction because of its lack of support in the literature. Similarly, Gudnason (2017) criticized Jennifer Katz's three-block model because of its association between learning preferences and multiple intelligences, pointing out that Howard Gardner himself, who innovated multiple intelligence theory, has opposed such association. Having discouraged the use of learning styles questionnaires in school settings, they discussed the confirmation bias associated with learning styles questionnaires (Cuevas, 2015; Gudnason, 2017). Nonetheless, they showed bias themselves because of their disregard of the cost associated with the criteria, despite their deep insights into the problem of unsubstantiated teaching practices in pedagogy.

The challenge of the unresolved meshing hypothesis reinforces the cost associated with the criteria. Critics of learning styles-based instruction have discouraged the use of learning styles questionnaires in school settings because of the unresolved hypothesis. Without mentioning the cost associated with the criteria, on the other hand, they have shown bias in their results. Consequently, they have misrepresented the unresolved meshing hypothesis in the literature.

The Question of Validity and Reliability

Cassidy (2004) commented on the contentious issue of the construct validity of Kolb's LSI in psychometric research. He also reported the inconclusive results of a few test-re-test studies on the questionnaire's reliability. In contrast, Terry (2001) reported the questionnaire's established reliability in the literature. It is important to note that Kolb (2015) himself reworked the questionnaire over the years in order to improve its validity. Consequently, the question of validity and reliability have undermined the inventory because of such contradictory results in the literature.

Kolb (1981) disputed his critics' contrapositive approach to discrediting the LSI's validity and reliability, offering instead a more standard approach to validating these psychometric properties. Nonetheless, he merely presented a brief overview of the four opposite modes, mentioned a few published papers that already established the questionnaire's validity, and reinterpreted his critics' inconclusive results on the questionnaire's reliability in the context of his own theories. As a result, he expressed bias in his response, despite his use of a more standard approach to validating these psychometric properties.

Kolb followed a more rigorous approach to validating these psychometric properties in his 2015 book. First, he reported his own results on the correlation between the four opposite modes in order to establish internal validity. Second, he analyzed the result of a longitudinal study that compared Kolb's LSI to other learning styles questionnaires in order to establish reliability. Third, he accounted for the bias effect of the questionnaire's forced-choice format through a study that controlled the effect. Fourth, he reinterpreted his critics' inconclusive results on the questionnaire's external validity through a heuristic approach. Consequently, he established the questionnaire's psychometric properties through a more rigorous approach in his 2015 book.

Kolb (2015) focused more on the purpose of the LSI in pedagogy. He argued that the inventory represents the unique learning process of individuals grounded on the constructs of individuality and possibility-processing structure. Furthermore, he described that the questionnaire reflects the "holistic, dynamic, and dialectic" relationship between the four opposite modes. Lastly, he maintained that the primary purpose of the questionnaire is to help students reflect on their own learning preferences. Consequently, he encouraged the use of the LSI in school settings because of its purpose in pedagogy.

Terry (2001) embraced the questionnaire's purpose by proposing learning styles-based instruction that uses Kolb's LSI in adult settings. Terry (2002) also proposed the use of Gregorc's styles delineator. These papers reflect her educational philosophy; that is, she strongly believed that teachers usually self-regulate their teaching strategies based on their own learning styles, but they often adapt willingly, perhaps unconsciously, to their students' learning styles in order to help them achieve success (M. Terry, personal communication, October 30, 2019). As a result, she offered deep insights into the use of learning styles-based instruction in adult settings because of her educational philosophy.

Contrary to Kolb's favourable results, the questionnaire's validity and reliability continue to pose a credibility challenge in the literature. For example, Barry and Egan (2018) highlighted the continued lack of coherence among psychometricians on the question of validity and reliability of learning styles questionnaires in adult settings, including Kolb's LSI. Consequently, this credibility challenge remains unresolved in the literature.

Challenges to the LSI's validity and reliability emphasize the importance of establishing the psychometric properties of learning styles questionnaires in research. Proponents of learning styles-based instruction have focused on pedagogy, as infused by their own educational philosophy, in order to encourage the use of learning styles questionnaires in school settings. Consequently, they have offered deep insights into the discourse of learning styles-based instruction, despite the challenging questions of validity and reliability in these questionnaires.

Oversimplification of the Learning Process

Kolb identified in his 2015 book six constructive criticisms that influenced his views on experiential learning theory. One of these constructive criticisms was oversimplifying the learning process within the construct of learning cycle. Nonetheless, he circumvented the challenge through an indirect response filled with quotations and personal anecdotes, wherein he consistently referred to pages in the book. Having said this, the challenge offered opportunities to research one of the six constructive criticisms that influenced Kolb's views on experiential learning theory because of his indirect response to the challenge.

Based on his indirect response, Kolb (2015) disregarded the role of unconsciousness in the learning cycle. Furthermore, he dissociated his views on experiential learning theory from Freud's psychoanalytic theory. In contrast, Peterson et al. (2015) explicitly acknowledged the role of unconsciousness in the learning cycle. It is important to note that the paper's authors, one of whom was Kolb, merely inferred the role of unconsciousness in the learning cycle. As a result, Kolb contradicted himself in the paper because he disregarded in his 2015 book the role of unconsciousness in the learning cycle.

M. Terry (personal communication, October 30, 2019) acknowledged an automated mechanism in the unconscious mind ("Freud's Model," 1994-2018) or unconscious mechanism (Papies & Aarts, 2011) that regulates learning disposition (Gray et al., 2014) when she stated her educational philosophy. In particular, she referred to an unconscious mechanism that moves teachers to adapt to students' learning styles. Similarly, in his 2015 book Kolb acknowledged an unconscious mechanism that elicits motivation and self-confidence from prolonged studying. Consequently, these authors inferred the role of unconsciousness in the learning cycle because of their acknowledgement of an unconscious mechanism that regulates learning disposition.

The role of unconsciousness in the learning cycle is suggestive of nonconsciousness self-regulation (Papies & Aarts, 2011). For example, M. Terry's acknowledgement of an unconscious mechanism that regulates learning disposition suggests a construct of self-regulation at the unconscious level (personal communication, October 30, 2019). However, Etkin (2018) defined self-regulation in terms of consciousness or working memory (Hofmann et al., 2011). These contradictory statements elicit a deep question that Papies and Aarts (2011) explored: How is it possible for the mind to form a goal outside of consciousness? Consequently, the role of the unconscious in the learning cycle offers research opportunities concerning the unconscious mechanism that regulates learning disposition.

Conclusion

The use of Kolb's LSI in school settings is a contentious issue in the literature because of the unresolved meshing hypothesis, problems with the questionnaire's validity and reliability, and dangers of oversimplifying the learning process within the construct of learning cycle. These challenges suggest research opportunities in the discourse of learning styles. Consequently, the use of Kolb's LSI in school settings is a worthwhile endeavour despite these challenges.

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About the Author

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CELEBRATION OF SCHOLARSHIP

We are honoured to recognize the following students who defended M.Ed. theses in 2019.

Pamela Pahl

February 4, 2019

Thesis Adviser: Dr. Marion Terry

Women's Satisfaction in Today's Canadian Armed Forces' Climate

Women have struggled throughout history in order to integrate successfully into the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF). This research examined the cultural experiences of non-commissioned female members in male-dominated, non-combat arms occupations. Women's historical to present-day service was examined and compared to other paramilitary organizations within Canada and other countries. Implications were also explored regarding strategies to recruit and retain women in the CAF and improve their quality of life within the organization.

This qualitative study consisted of interviews of ten CAF members who identified as female and were serving in the ranks of Corporal to Sergeant. To this end, the primary research question was as follows: "What are the experiences of females who are currently serving, and who have previously served, in predominantly male-dominated, non-commissioned, non-combat arms trades?" The volunteers for this study were interviewed in a one-on-one confidential setting and were asked 6 preliminary questions, 16 main questions, 5 additional questions regarding the CAF's Operation HONOUR initiative, and 1 final question.

Four main themes resulted from the data: motivation, elemental differences, navigating gender, and the impressions of Operation HONOUR. Congruency of interests, skills, and experience strongly influenced job satisfaction, and 50% of the participants indicated that they would have selected a different occupation when enrolling in the organization. Despite instances of tokenism and harassing language and behaviours directed at the servicewomen throughout their careers, poor leadership in general and difficulties with overly competitive serving members had been the primary reasons for two members to consider exiting the organization. Job satisfaction was linked primarily to the perception of being provided challenging, interesting, and fulfilling work. Direct or indirect support from superiors and peers were also factors that related to job satisfaction.

Postings and their associated environments of Army, Navy, or Air Force strongly influenced the women's personal and professional experiences, with the Navy and Army being associated more closely with overall more misogynist treatment of women. The women navigated their gender in numerous ways in order to succeed, with most problems stemming from pregnancy and child care, and managing heavily physically demanding tasks. Male-to-male interactions were described as more physical and easygoing, cross-sex interactions were complex and varied but most often related to discrimination against females because of pregnancy and child care, and female-to-female interactions were described as extremes of either camaraderie to counteract male peer interactions or highly competitive and counter-productive. Female superiors in particular were mostly described in a highly negative manner, compared to male superiors.

All of the servicewomen were very familiar with the Operation HONOUR initiative, and although they recognized that a problem of sexual harassment existed within the CAF, they attributed it to only a few perpetrators. Of these women, 90% believed that Operation

HONOUR has made a positive difference, although 50% believed that it is has been implemented in too extreme a manner, and comments also included ways in which it has made their daily functioning more difficult because of servicemen's retaliation to the initiative. Suggestions were made regarding Operation HONOUR to improve leadership, and to elicit feedback on a one-on-one versus group-oriented setting.

Based on the study's findings, recommendations for practice are provided to improve the quality of life of all serving members, from a recruiting standpoint via the CAF's recruiting website to programs to orient women more fully to the CAF and its occupations. For those members who are currently serving, mandatory and consistent mentorship and leadership training are recommended, particularly regarding leading and assessing others, and managing instances of inappropriate conduct. Additional recommendations are made to counteract the difficulties of those members who are pregnant, on parental leave, or caring for their children. Suggestions are also made to counteract the problems associated with group-oriented reporting on the success of Operation HONOUR and making decisions when encountering harassment-related behaviours. The recommendations for further research respond to the limitations of the current study.

Randeen Cayer

April 11, 2019

Thesis Adviser: Dr. Alexa Okrainec

High School Teachers' Attitudes Toward Inclusion: A Canadian Perspective

The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate Canadian high school teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with exceptional learning needs in the general classroom environment. The study was modelled after Dr. Catherine Ernst's 2006 study "High school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with special needs." The current study is of great importance because it is the first study within Canada to focus specifically on high school teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

The online study examined teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes toward inclusion. Data were collected using a demographic questionnaire and the Inclusion Attitude Scale for High School Teachers (Ernst, 2006). The survey was conducted with a population of 151 high school teachers from a large urban school division in western Canada. Participants' demographic information was analysed using descriptive statistics. The Somers' Delta was used to determine the strength and relatedness of independent demographics and school environmental variables and the dependent variable of teacher attitude.

Findings showed that high school teachers' behavioural attitudes toward inclusion were most positive, while their affective attitudes toward inclusion were least positive. The demographic variables shown to have the greatest influence on teacher attitudes toward inclusion were (a) experience as lead teacher in an inclusive setting, (b) access to human resources and supports, and (c) professional development and training related to inclusion.

*Building Social-Emotional Competence of Elementary Students
Through Non-Competitive Basketball Embedded with Social Skills Instruction*

This study examined the effects of non-competitive basketball embedded with social skills training on the development of social-emotional competencies of children. Twelve female students in grade four participated in a five-week program consisting of 10 sessions of non-competitive basketball embedded with social skills instruction. Pre-and post-test measures of social-emotional competence (Child Trends Teacher and Student Surveys) were administered to provide baseline scores and to track the participants' social-emotional development and overall effectiveness of the program. A Basketball Interest Inventory was also collected pre-and post-intervention to measure the change in student interest as a result of participation in the program. Teachers completed a Social Validity Questionnaire to assess the social acceptability of the program.

Thorough analyses of the data revealed that participation in the non-competitive basketball program embedded with social skills training resulted in positive changes to students' levels of persistence, social competence, and academic self-efficacy. The Child Trends Teacher and Student Surveys were used effectively to measure and monitor social and emotional skills development, and therefore may be used proactively in future educational practice to identify and provide preventative support to students in kindergarten through fifth-grade. A slight increase in the average level of basketball interest was observed across all participants at the end of the program. Furthermore, the program was evaluated positively by teachers, enhancing its social acceptability and validity.

Exploring Our Roots: Knowledge Gathering with the Elders

This qualitative research study explored how four elders from Pine Creek First Nation, Manitoba, impart knowledge and teachings on mino-bimaadiziwin through story. Mino-bimaadiziwin is a philosophical principle describing one's journey of walking in a good way through life. This research focused on the culture, history, knowledge, and teachings of the participant elders as they relate these concepts to mino-bimaadiziwin. The participant elders shared knowledge and teachings in open-ended, face-to-face interviews using storytelling methods. The principles of mino-bimaadiziwin knowledge and teachings are categorized into four themes: ceremony, land, language, and story. These four themes have emerged through this study to integrate Indigenous knowledge and practices in classroom and land-based learning experiences. This research study deepens our collective understanding of how elders and Indigenous practices and pedagogy have an essential role in education models, such as Pine Creek First Nation. Through this research study, elders have identified and recommended teaching practices to honour and support mino-bimaadiziwin. Mino-bimaadiziwin can help shape one's identity to support academic success with a balance of perspectives from both Indigenous and Western models of learning.