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Honey Bee on a Sunflower



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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Marion Terry, Ph.D.

Welcome to the twenty-eighth issue of the *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, devoted to rural, northern, and Aboriginal education. Our authors for volume 13, issue 3, are current and past BU Faculty of Education graduate students and professors. I thank these educators for sharing their educational, work, and research experiences.

- Amy Portey's refereed article holds administrators responsible for motivating the teachers in their schools.
- Penny Wilson's refereed article recommends school nutrition programs to address food insecurity in Manitoba's Indigenous communities.
- Taylor Schmidt's refereed article explores ways to support at-risk youths through to graduation from grade 12.
- Laura Graham's refereed article examines evidence-based skills and training to create an inclusive environment for students with autism spectrum disorder.
- Angela Caines' refereed article explains the roles of staff, parents, and students in developing safe school programs that protect students from bullying.
- Christopher Rivet's refereed article considers factors to help lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and queer (LGTBQ) youth to feel comfortable in school.
- Brittany MacDonald's refereed article challenges teachers to mitigate the effects of helicopter parenting by giving students choices and teaching them social-emotional skills and cognitive behaviour techniques.
- Katelyn Jardine's refereed article proposes replacing "band pedagogy" with progressive approaches to secondary music education.
- Karl McDaniel's refereed article discusses intervention strategies for educators to use with students who have selective mutism.
- Carla Sadler's refereed article focuses on the issues faced by Yazidi refugee students, with recommendations for resources and instructional practices to address PTSD and fill gaps in their education.

Also in this issue is our second "Focus on Faculty Research" report, which celebrates a study by two Faculty of Education professors: Dr. Marion Terry (Brandon University) and Dr. Amjad Malik (University College of the North).

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REFEREED ARTICLES

An Administrator's Role in Motivating Teachers

Amy Portey

Abstract

School administrators can take specific actions in the areas of goal setting, professional development, performance feedback, and collective teacher efficacy, which will increase teacher motivation. Positive relationships among staff, and between staff and administration, can be a product of a leader's actions in regards to these areas. This safe and supportive climate ultimately creates a positive school culture for improved teacher motivation.

The educational literature verifies that a school comprised of motivated teachers working with a collective sense of determination may be expected to increase student achievement. In order to create this environment, an administrator must craft a positive psychological culture that facilitates productive goal setting, professional development, performance feedback, and collective teacher efficacy. Diligent development of these four factors will cultivate the necessary positive relationships among teachers and administrators. Individually, these components affect teacher motivation, but when attended to simultaneously they have the potential to alter the learning landscape in a school. If leaders understand how these factors affect teacher motivation, they can take specific actions to create a narrative of achievement among the adults and children in a school.

Goal Setting

The pursuit of goals can be directed consciously, subconsciously with primes, or through the use of planning. Effective goal setting involves specificity, difficult pursuits, and a commitment from the person setting the goal (Locke, 1996). People are most likely to stay committed to a goal when they believe that they have the ability to achieve it, and when they think that the goal is important (Locke, 1996). An awareness of these key goal-setting characteristics may encourage leaders to ask their faculty what they want to work toward, or to provide a vision and listen to staff ideas of how to attain it. Numerous goals may arise from this type of brainstorming activity, but decisions about where to focus efforts and attention are necessary because conflict between goals can decrease teacher performance (Locke, 1996). Goal setting can be an effective motivational tool to create a desired trajectory of action taken upon by individual teachers, or large collectives, when properly facilitated by a leader.

Environmental cues, referred to as primes, can subconsciously help in maintaining the pursuit of consciously set goals (Latham & Piccolo, 2012). The successful use of word cues was found in an experiment wherein a CEO integrated 12 achievement priming words such as prevail, accomplish, and achieve in his 100-word Monday morning email to call centre employees. The employees who received the achievement email displayed a significant increase in efficiency in the call handling time and call resolution time measures in the experiment (Stajkovic et al., 2018). Administrators should therefore consider the language they use when addressing staff, because it can subconsciously affect their consciously set goals.

Similarly, an increase in productivity was found among call center employees who had a goal primed subconsciously by pictures (Latham & Piccolo, 2012). The pictures set in the top left-hand corner on each employee's daily call paper displayed a general achievement picture of a person running through a finish line, a context-specific picture of a group of call center employees engaged in work, or no picture at all (control group). The employees exposed to these primed goal pictures significantly outperformed the control group, suggesting that a subconsciously primed goal has

similar effects to motivation as a consciously set goal. Considering the subconsciously motivating characteristics of pictures, an administrator may want to pay close attention to the type of visuals displayed in school hallways and staffrooms.

A final key feature in regards to goal setting is that it stimulates planning (Locke, 1996). Time management planning (TMP) involves prioritizing specific tasks and creating time lines in which to accomplish them, and contingent planning (CP) is formulating how to deal with potential disruptions to one's work day (Parke et al., 2018). TMP and CP were both found to improve daily work performance through more time on task, with CP most effective in keeping work interruptions from interfering with performance. Once a goal is set, having a timed and action-oriented plan to keep focused on the goal will minimize off-task behaviours. Knowing that CP is shown to help one stay productive among distractions, administrators may use it to manage their own time in a dynamic and unpredictable school environment. Thus, a triad of best practices in goal-setting available for administrators include presenting TMP and CP as tools to help teachers stay focused, facilitating conscious goal setting, and being aware of the subconscious effects of visuals and language.

Professional Development

In order to yield the greatest results from professional development (PD), a leader should be cognizant of when it should be provided, and how to follow up with participants. When teachers do not believe that they have the skills to reach a goal, an administrator can support them by providing training through PD (Locke, 1996; Nordick et al., 2019). The teachers who thereby gain confidence in their ability will pursue goals with more persistence and effort. Additionally, effective PD needs to align with a teacher's identity and teaching philosophy (Osman & Warner, 2020). PD is beneficial when the teachers need the skill to reach a desired goal that aligns with their identity as a teacher.

Although teachers may be motivated to attend a PD event, their level of implementation may require further support from administration. The interplay between teachers' expectancy for success in using the newly acquired information and the value they assign to it is a good predictor of the level of implementation motivation a teacher will display (Osman & Warner, 2020). Teachers report a decrease in motivation after PD if the perceived cost, in terms of time lost for other activities or required for planning, and energy to implement the newly acquired information are deemed too high. A principal should confer with teachers, post PD, to offer support in terms of expressing confidence in a teacher or exploring the teacher's needs in an attempt to reduce the perceived cost of implementation, both of which can increase teacher motivation (Locke, 1996; Osman & Warner, 2020). These acts of genuine concern for the teacher's performance can increase a teacher's intrinsic motivation to work harder (Reaves & Cozzen, 2018), as opposed to abandoning the knowledge gained through PD. In summary, administrators play a vital role in identifying appropriate PD with teachers, and then supporting them as they evaluate the perceived costs of implementing what they have learned.

Performance Feedback

Performance feedback (PF) can positively affect teacher motivation and increase goal setting effectiveness, specifically when it is used to set subsequent goals (Locke, 1996). Not only can PF alter the course of action a person takes, but it is necessary for people to develop mastery (Brown, 2018). PF can be given in verbal and text messaging formats, among many others. Leaders should resolve to offer PF while maintaining their values and integrity, therefore giving feedback only when they are ready to listen, ask questions, recognize a teacher's strengths, talk about how the current challenges can be changed into growth, and own their administrative part in a particular problem. Conversely, there are strategies that can be learned to receive feedback effectively, such as using key words to remind oneself that feedback can help one grow, asking questions for clarity, and considering someone else's perspective without becoming defensive. If an administrator is giving feedback and either person is having difficulties with the process, some of these methods could be

discussed, learned, and practised in order to create the best environment in which to give and receive feedback.

Although one's experience with feedback may be predominantly in a verbal or written form, PF in the form of text messaging has been successfully used to produce positive changes in pre-service teachers (Barton et al., 2019, p. 100). The researchers posited that PF in the form of text messaging should be explored as an effective means of delivery because it offered immediate, non-intrusive feedback. A key component of this PF was that it was directed toward specific targeted behaviours identified as needing improvement by the teachers and their evaluator. Administrators working to be involved in the maintenance of teacher goals may assess the usefulness and acceptance of text messages for some of their PF.

Collective Teacher Efficacy

Collective teacher efficacy (CTE) requires not only a combination of proper goal setting, PD, and PF, but also the development of trusting and supportive relationships. CTE – the belief a group of teachers has in their ability to positively affect student learning (Goddard et al., 2000) – was found to be the top factor influencing student achievement in John Hattie's 2006 meta-analyses (Donohoo et al. 2018). Key components of CTE focus on teacher mastery of team-identified skills that improve student performance through learning, practice, goal adjustment, and a group commitment to the process (Donohoo & Katz, 2019). When a team of teachers perceives that their actions are positively affecting student achievement, their collective efficacy increases, motivating them to continue their development (Donohoo et al., 2018).

Creating time and space for teachers to collaborate is the first step in facilitating CTE, but most importantly a leader is required to shift the dialogue from what teachers need to do, to evaluating the effectiveness of what they are doing. Teachers need to become proficient at gathering evidence of student learning in order to inform their decisions about best practices, and change their methodologies if need be. Sharing this information becomes easier in a positive and trusting environment, established by a leader through setting high standards and clear communication about collaborative procedures (Nordick et al., 2019). Once the tone of the process is set, leaders need to resign the desire to control by giving staff opportunity to influence school decisions based on their ideas and findings from their conversations.

Successful PF, which includes openly sharing thoughts and ideas among peers, requires trusting relationships. The relationship a manager has with employees and the workplace culture are the two most important environmental factors under the manager's control (Heathfield, 2020). The actions that a principal can take to increase motivation will help to develop leader-faculty relationships, and the more committed a principal is to establishing CTE, the greater the likelihood of the development of positive faculty relationships. Ultimately, if teachers have high perceived CTE, they will more diligently and passionately pursue their goals, which in turn will positively affect a school culture (Goddard et al., 2004).

Conclusion

The literature confirms that an administrator should have a vested interest in motivating a faculty to strive to perform to the best of their ability in order to improve student achievement. Leaders need to guide staff in an effective conscious goal setting process while being aware of environmental cues that could be affecting motivation subconsciously. Administrators must support staff by providing PD when appropriate, and creating boundaries and processes for useful PF. Finally, it is necessary for leaders to establish a culture of trust and collaboration essential for CTE, and support teachers' efforts to achieve mastery experiences. The positive relationships cultivated in these actions will fuel the cyclical nature of seeing results, generating efficacy, and increasing motivation.

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About the Author

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Food Insecurity in Indigenous and Northern Communities

Penny Wilson

Abstract

School nutrition programs are integral to academic success. To support the whole child, teachers must appreciate what role nutrition plays in academic success. Studies of food insecurity reveal there are degrees of severity. Although the key determinate of food security is poverty, employment is not necessarily a shield. One can eat and still be malnourished by high starch low nutrient food. In northern communities, severe costs result in food insecurity reaching higher up the income pyramid. Co-occurring measures of poverty, food insecurity, obesity and diabetes within Manitoba's Indigenous communities are high. Schools are ideally positioned as supports within our communities.

In Canada, our first world society needs to evolve how we think of food insecurity. One can be fed and still be malnourished. Obesity is often a co-occurring measure. Lack of financial resources lead to purchasing energy dense, inexpensive, processed foods high in sugar, fat, and salt (Farrell, 2014). A simple illustration would be deciding between a \$7.50 head of cauliflower or a frozen pizza for \$3.99. Our food system has created a processed food environment, wherein natural nutrients are priced much higher than calorie dense, nutrient poor foods. Households that regularly consume high calorie, low nutrient meals can be simultaneously overweight and under nourished. Food insecurity in a first world country like Canada looks very different from conventional starving stereotypes.

Food insecurity in Indigenous communities can be said to be linked to colonialism. Residential schools scaffold assimilation, which included a transition between traditional foods and market foods (Skinner *et al.*, 2013). Economic disadvantages, environmental change, and geographic isolation coalesce into persistent modern food insecurity in Indigenous communities (Drachner & Tarasuk, 2018). There are no simple solutions. School buildings, staff, and the policies that rule them can be a strong force of support in the face of food insecurity for our youth. Schools, a manifestation of colonialism, can be used as a supportive, healing tool to address food security in our communities.

Food Insecurity and Its Correlates

Various definitions of food security circulate between organizations, regions, and countries. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2018) breaks food security down into four aspects: availability, access, utilization, and stability of access. A basic understanding details "limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally adequate and safe foods" (Ansief *et al.*, 2017). A deeper study reveals that, like many conditions, there are degrees of severity. Health Canada's model of food insecurity is defined by three levels: (1) food secure – no (or only one) indication of difficulty with access to food because of inadequate income, (2) moderately food insecure – the quality and/or quantity of food consumed were inadequate, (3) severely food insecure – reduced food intake and/or experienced disrupted eating patterns (Statistics Canada, 2012). As we evolve our concept food security within a first world country, we must differentiate between simple availability and nutritional adequacy.

Statistics Canada does not collect conclusive data on First Nation communities. To acquire accurate statistics for Indigenous communities, research must be conducted in co-operation with Indigenous communities, such as the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study

(FNFNES), (2012), and A portrait of First Nations and education. Chiefs Assembly on Education, (2012). Collaborative studies with Indigenous communities are key to ecological validity, as “most available statistics understate the true prevalence of food insecurity in Canada [because] First Nations communities are not covered in the Canadian Community Health Survey from Statistics Canada” (Dachner & Tarasuk, 2018, p. 231).

Through an overexposure to poverty, Indigenous communities are disproportionately vulnerable to food insecurity. Indigenous and northern communities report drastically high food insecurity in comparison to Health Canada surveyed communities. For example, Nova Scotia carries the highest rates in Canadian provinces, identifying 17.5% of households as food insecure, against a national average of 8.3% (Dachner & Tarasuk, 2018, p. 232; Roshanafshar & Hawkins, 2018). Indigenous communities participating in the First Nations Food, Nutrition and Environment Study (FNFNES) reported an extensive 38% of households identified as food insecure, increasing as one travels north to a shocking 73% (p. 2, para. 3). Higher rates of poverty in Indigenous communities manifest in greater exposure to food insecurity.

Income

Northern communities are the most disadvantaged in Canada’s food supply chain. Low income, common to northern, isolated communities, compounds the challenge. Shipping costs are severe. The price of store (market) food may be five times what southern communities pay. A study comparing a basic grocery list based on the Canada Food Guide priced a family of four’s groceries for one month at \$1909.01 in Attiwapiskat, \$1831.76 in Fort Albany, and \$1056.35 in Timmins, Ontario (Veeraraghavan et al., 2016). One month worth of similar groceries in a Manitoba First Nation communities study was \$1032.00 per month, compared to \$623.50 in Winnipeg (Chan et al., 2012, p. 173). At such high costs, food insecurity reaches much higher up the income pyramid in northern communities.

Demographically, Indigenous communities are over exposed to poverty and the repressive shadow it casts. Many organizations have recognized a relationship between race, poverty, education, and food insecurity (Ansief et al., 2017; Assembly of First Nations, 2012; Chan et al., 2012). 40% of Indigenous children live in poverty (Canadian Poverty Institute, 2019, “A Few Facts,” para. 2) compared to the national poverty rate of 9.5% in 2017 (Statistics Canada, 2019). Co-occurring measures of low academic achievement, food insecurity, obesity, and diabetes within Manitoba’s Indigenous communities are disproportionately high. This also correlates with high rates of food insecurity. Poorer health outcomes, lower education outcomes, and its ensuing short term and generational effects are the result of a complex system, to which poverty is deeply connected. Over exposure to poverty results in an overrepresentation of poverty’s negative effects.

Intriguingly, conventional income and poverty measures alone do not provide a definitive measure of food insecurity. It is primarily a product of household income (Dachner & Tarasuk, 2018; Leet & Bania, 2010), and costs of living (Dachner & Tarasuk, 2018; Gregory & Coleman-Jensen, 2013). Low-income households can be food secure, whereas working households are not (Bickel et al., 2000). A study of main sources of food insecure household income revealed that 16.1% relied on social assistance, while 62.2% were employed (Dachner & Tarasuk, 2018, p. 234). Although the key determinate of food security is poverty (Skinner et al., 2013), these numbers signal that employment does not necessarily shield a family from this burden.

Education

Academic achievement for Indigenous students in Manitoba is dramatically low. Indigenous high school graduation rates hover around a dismal 48.5% compared to 87.9% for their non-Indigenous peers (Manitoba Education and Training. n.d., *Four-Year “On-Time” High School Graduation Rates*). 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 (Statistics Canada, 2017, Figure 1.3). Our education system is underserving a large portion of our Indigenous community.

Following Maslow's Pyramid of Needs, food is our students' first and most fundamental requirement (Salkind, 2008). Poor nutrition can lead to cognition and behavioural problems in children (Ansief et al., 2017; Benton, 2008). It has direct, detrimental effects on overall physical and mental health in both students and families (FRAC/Children's Health Watch, 2015). Research correlates food insecurity with multiple negative, debilitating conditions such as; "restricted physical activity, long-term physical and/or mental disabilities that limit activity at home, work, and school, multiple chronic conditions, and major depression" (Roshanafshar & Hawkins, 2018. p.1). These behaviours clearly interfere with skills acquisition. Low food security is strongly associated with poor academic progress (Faught et al., 2017; Fung et al., 2012). Within Maslow's Pyramid of Needs, to expect a student exposed to food insecurity to become a self-actualizing learner, we must support the whole child than simply providing a nice lesson plan. Food is a fundamental requirement.

Health

Food insecurity has long-term health consequences. Matching high rates of food insecurity, rate of Indigenous diabetes and obesity show extreme disparity with national and provincial averages. Diabetes rates are a shocking 68% vs. 8.7% nationally, and obesity between 64% - 89% vs 30.8% average in Manitoba (Chan et al., 2012, Figure 10). Epigenetics and interactions with environment play a key role in the development and progression of diabetes (Canadian Diabetes Association, 2013). However, there is no denying that Manitoba's Indigenous population scores a devastating incidence rate of this diet-related illness which is the leading cause of heart disease, circulatory failure leading to amputations, failing eyesight, and premature deaths (Asif, 2014; Panagiotakos et al., 2008). Positive correlations between food insecurity and obesity commute to high risks for obesity-related illness and disease as adults (Farrell, 2014; Fung et al., 2012). Poor diet leading to diabetes and obesity is a significant health hazard.

Nutrition Support

Food Delivery Programs

Providing breakfast, especially a frequent and nutritious one, has a marked, positive effect, on both classroom behaviour and academic performance (Adolphus et al., 2013; Ansief et al., 2017; Burrows et al., 2017; FRAC/Children's Health Watch, 2015). Positive food availability correlates with improved attendance, productivity, and decreased tardiness (Colley et al., 2019; Critch, 2020). Research indicates a dramatic, positive influence on participating students showing better relationships and higher trust levels with school staff (Child Nutrition Councils, 2019; Rodgers & Milewska, 2007). Better nutrition behaviours have positive health benefits. Consistently positive correlations between nutrition, achievement and behaviour outcomes show a clear path to the value of structuring breakfast support within our schools.

The focus for nutrition support programs in Manitoba schools rests firmly with vegetables, fruit, and unprocessed food (Manitoba Education and Training, 2016, p. 27). This is in alignment with science that shows fruits and vegetables have the strongest effects in preventing many chronic and serious illnesses (Wallace et al., 2019). Collective studies have reported compelling associations between consumption of fruit and vegetables and academic achievement (Burrows et al., 2017).

School nutrition programs today are a patchwork quilt of arrangements, some with paid employees, most without, run by teachers, volunteers, parents, or supported by students alone. Programs range from grab-and-go carts to breakfast and lunch. Some schools send food home with students for weekends when they have no nutrition support from the school, such as a fascinating program involving school backpacks packed with food, called *Food for Kids* (Rodgers & Milewska, 2007). Programming, delivery and intervention are diverse.

School food programs are an invaluable component of community schools. A community food bank is an important cornerstone, but cannot be seen as the only solution. The number of food insecure Canadians is 4-5 times higher than the number reported accessing food banks (Loopstra & Tarasuk, 2015). Barriers exist for families in accessing food banks, including unwillingness to accept donations, time constraints due to jobs, and transportation (Rodgers & Milewska, 2007). Relying solely on the single support of a community food bank may disregard some social behaviours around food, and underutilize the institutional asset of the school itself.

Schools, as bricks and mortar institutions in every community, are uniquely positioned to have direct influence supporting child nutrition. Food insecurity will remain a pressure on our society. This undercurrent influences serious consequences for students, families, and communities. Structuring food supports to enable all students to learn, unfettered by the restrictions poor nutrition imposes, should be an integral part of every school plan.

The Role of Government

Canada is the only G8 nation without a national food policy. Effective policy requires data driven directives. In the absence of a national plan, diverse regional and provincial food programs have emerged (Colley et al., 2019). Manitoba has had a school nutrition policy since 2006 (Manitoba Education and Training, 2016). A national policy could strengthen nutrition supports against the severity of food insecurity, enacting a code for best practice, engaging three levels of government support with common policy objectives, and creating impetus for policy and programs to have a measurable influence (Dachner & Tarasuk, 2018). Building a competent, unified response to nutrition deficits requires an alignment and adherence to policy at local, provincial and national levels.

Governing policy and a long-term plan require long-term funding. Delivery of supports requires a dedicated, consistent financial plan. Government engagement has been largely framed by supporting food charity organizations (McIntyre et al., 2016). The majority of funding for school programs comes from community groups and corporate sponsors (Child Nutrition Council of Manitoba, 2019), involving endless grant applications with a multiplicity of qualification and reporting criteria. Today, navigating Manitoba's era of austerity, food security increases in need, while funding resources diminish. Provincial government policy needs a diverse approach to funding nutrition programs, as we look to make our supports sustainable year to year.

Government has provided small pathways for industry to better manage food waste, freeing up resources for food programs. Public funding for food bank infrastructure, tax credits for farm donations and new laws absolving liability for donated food have been implemented provincially (The Food Donations Act, 1994), but more can be done. Tax incentives, making donating food financially attractive to retailers, need development. Efficient use of the resources we already have is of equal value to more purchasing power.

A Call for Research

A call is made for continued research in best practice for Canadian school nutrition programs. More studies are necessary for development of proven systems. The diversity of effort directed across Canadian schools can be honed into the best, most effective use of our meager resources. Owing to the regional and ethnic diversity of our Canadian population, external and ecological validity must be deeply considered. Attention must be paid to individual community needs at a local level, strengthening the school's supportive roll in students' individual success. Information exchange and development of best practice in nutrition programs will strengthen effective delivery of programs.

Research into community-generated solutions to food security in Indigenous and northern communities should expand. Creating a solution, in direct consultation with the communities experiencing the challenge, shows respect of experiential knowledge while facilitating self-

determination. Who better to ask about problems of practice than the people who live it? Supported community generated solutions acquire utmost sustainability when framed and administered by the members of the communities themselves.

Research needs to continue on the relationship between food insecurity, poverty, academic success, and school nutrition support programs as experienced in northern and Indigenous communities. Statistics reveal these numbers are co-occurring at much higher incidence rates. Analyses on effective interventions with the goal of directing resources in a targeted, efficient response are required.

Summary

Various definitions of food security exist, differentiating between simple availability and nutritional adequacy. It is principally a product of household income and cost of living, however, employment does not necessarily remove a family from risk. Food insecure households can simultaneously be both over weight and malnourished, due to high starch/low nutrient diets. Obesity, a major health concern, is often a co-existing condition. Food insecurity is a function of poverty. Through poverty, northern and Indigenous communities are over exposed to food insecurity and its effects. Northern communities are significantly disadvantaged in Canada's food supply chain. Costs are severe, pushing the threshold for food insecurity much higher up the income pyramid. Poor diet has direct, detrimental effects on overall physical and mental health. It can lead to cognition and behavioural problems in children, and is strongly associated with poor academic progress. Providing breakfast, especially a frequent and nutritious one, has a marked, positive effect, on both classroom behaviour and academic performance.

There is a relationship between race, poverty, food insecurity, health, and education. Demographically, Indigenous communities are over exposed to poverty and the repressive shadow it casts. Co-occurrence exists between low academic achievement, food security, obesity, and diabetes within Manitoba's Indigenous communities. These rates show extreme disparity with national and provincial averages. Food insecurity, strongly linked to colonialism, has long term consequences associated with health and education. Structuring food supports to enable all students to learn, unfettered by the restrictions poor nutrition imposes, should be an integral part of every school plan. Building a competent, unified response to nutrition deficits requires an alignment and adherence to policy at local, provincial and national levels. Research into community-generated solutions to food security in Indigenous and northern communities should expand. Supporting community generated solutions that acquire sustainability requires a plan framed and administered by the members of the communities themselves. Research and development on demographically and ecologically relevant school nutrition support programs are called for, in order to respond to this enduring student need.

Closing Comment

My role as a foods and nutrition teacher engenders an intimate knowledge of what students consume and know about food. I grew up in a small northern community. I run a food cart program for my secondary school, and teach food and nutrition all day. I apply for grants, attend professional development, co-ordinate with public health. The emphasis of my program is rooted in local, accessible, traditional, unprocessed food. Personal bias toward unprocessed, local food shapes what I teach and how I view meal preparation and nutritional evaluation. My commute to work in southwest Manitoba takes me past miles of farms, producing foods that ship across the globe. In a country as rich as Canada, where we export and waste so much food, no one should go hungry.

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High School Graduation Rates: A Concern for Everyone

Taylor Schmidt

Abstract

Earning a high school diploma is a valuable achievement, but it is a challenging goal to achieve for a growing number of at-risk youths. It has become clear how important high school graduation is to the individuals and the community where they live when considering the consequences of graduating versus dropping out. The steps needed to achieve graduation are a culmination of many factors working together, such as improving attendance, course completion, and social emotional skills development. Solutions such as engaging parents in school-based decisions, connecting students to their school, and implementing social-emotional learning programs have proven effective in increasing graduation rates, especially for at-risk and all transitioning grade nine students. Improving high school graduation rates is not just a concern for the youth in school today, but for all members of society for years to come.

Graduating from high school is a significant accomplishment, but it is a challenging goal for an increasing number of at-risk youths. When comparing the effects of graduating versus dropping out, it is evident how important high school graduation is to everyone. A high school diploma provides young people with more opportunities to pursue post-secondary education and to achieve financial autonomy, while dropping out of high school tends to lead to a higher unemployment rate and a higher incidence of involvement in illicit activities (Zaff et al., 2016). Steps have been taken to increase graduation rates by addressing predictors such as chronic absenteeism. In grade nine alone, midterm attendance and academic data can predict three-quarters of future dropouts (Legters & Balfanz, 2010). There are many reasons why students struggle to attend high school, but emotional regulation plays a significant role. Studies have shown that engaging parents in students' academics, promoting school connections (Zaff et al., 2016), and implementing social-emotional learning programs (Gayl, 2018) results in students attending school more regularly and demonstrating improvements in their ability to use emotion regulating strategies. Transitioning to high school in grade nine is a crucial time to address these issues (Hughes et al., 2018). Improving high school graduation rates is a concern not just for the youth in school today, but for all members of society.

Factors Affecting Graduation Rates

Students with poor attendance and the inability to emotionally regulate, especially in grade nine, are less likely to graduate from high school. According to Statistics Canada, 8.5% of men and 5.4% of women aged 25 to 34 had less than a high school education in 2016, equating to 340,000 young Canadians who did not earn a high school diploma in 2016 (Uppal, 2017, "Overview" section). During their lifetime, the typical high school dropout in the United States burdens the economy by approximately \$272,000 in reduced tax payments, higher dependency on healthcare, higher crime rates, and greater welfare dependence than individuals who complete high school (McFarland et al., 2019, p. 1). Through the early 1980s, there were plenty of lucrative jobs available for a high school dropout, but these jobs are rare today and pay far less than they did in the past (Legters & Balfanz, 2010). In 2016, Canadians aged 25 to 34 with less than a high school education were employed at a rate of 67% for men and 41% for women, compared to 1990, when employment rates for men and women in the same educational group were 75% and 50% (Uppal, 2017, "Overview" section). On average, American high school graduates receive \$8,000 more per year and are much less likely to be regularly unemployed compared to high school dropouts (Hughes et al., 2018). There is ample evidence to support the importance of obtaining a high school

diploma versus dropping out, for individuals and for society at large.

A main predictor for forecasting high school dropouts is school engagement, including attendance and work completion (Zaff et al., 2016). Poor attendance, low grades, and at-risk behaviour are predictors of not earning a diploma (Strompolis et al., 2012). Attendance is a more important predictor than test scores or upbringing (Lenhoff & Pogodzinski, 2018). Other factors include a student's community, school, and peer group (Zaff et al., 2016). It is impossible to identify a single factor, but schools should continue looking at high school graduation predictors, specifically attendance, as they strive to boost graduation rates.

Low attendance and poor academic success in grade nine can have a ripple effect through the next three years of high school, and are a predictor of eventually dropping out. A good predictor of course failure is poor attendance, and course failure in grade nine puts a student off track to graduate (Mac Iver, 2011). In ninth grade, whether students are on track is far more prognostic of future graduation than their eighth-grade test scores (Allensworth, 2013). Test scores are perhaps the most widely used predictor of graduation, but are not as convincing as students being on track after their grade nine year. The lasting effect of bad attendance and course failure in grade nine predicts dropout.

To be able to learn, develop, and connect with themselves and others, students must first be able to emotionally regulate. Remaining composed in a stressful situation is a foundational skill for interacting with others and the environment in a positive way (Carrington, 2020). Students with high social-emotional needs such as weak communication skills, inability to connect with school, and poor self-regulation techniques often struggle with grades, attendance, and behaviour (Tan et al., 2018), especially in grade nine when students receive less support from teachers and other resource staff. When grade nine students' social-emotional needs and attendance issues are not addressed, they are at a greater risk of failing to graduate (Strompolis et al., 2012).

Rationale for Improvement

The benefits of youth graduating from high school versus dropping out are polar opposites and have lasting effects, not only on the individual youth, but also on society at large. High school graduation correlates with a variety of favourable effects for youth, including good health, better income, and an increased chance of pursuing post-secondary education (Strompolis et al., 2012). By graduating, youth expand their possibilities for a successful future and contribute to their families' well-being and the communities where they reside. Earning a high school diploma prepares at-risk youth for meaningful work, to make positive contributions to their community, to be effective role models in their families, and to become contributing members of society (Legters & Balfanz, 2010). Increasing the graduation rate provides our youth with more opportunities to succeed in the future. It enhances the overall safety, health and economic security, and general well-being of all members of society (Legters & Balfanz, 2010). All societies benefit from communities that are committed to working toward helping their youth succeed.

Strategies for Success

Because low attendance is a significant predictor for dropping out of high school (Ingul et al., 2011), increasing student attendance is the primary key to increasing graduation rates. Schools can improve student attendance by engaging parents and improving student connections to school, by implementing social-emotional programs, and by supporting students in their transition to grade nine. Strategies aimed at increasing parents' influence on school-based decision-making, parent engagement, and developing a positive parent-teacher relationship will likely raise enrolment rates over time. Research has shown that linking a parent to a single school contact and doing regular at home check-ins can increase student attendance (Lenhoff & Pogodzinski, 2018). Along with engaging parents early and often, building social connections and peer groups at school can improve students' well-being and desire to attend more regularly (Zaff et al., 2016). Attention to both

the parents' and students' individual needs will facilitate meaningful engagement (Genao, 2013). Improving attendance by implementing positive interventions such as parent involvement and school connection can decrease dropout rates.

Students need to learn skill sets to persist through obstacles, understand and sympathize with others, problem-solve, and make healthy decisions to succeed in school (Gayl, 2018). Such skills come from learning how to emotionally regulate and can be taught through social-emotional learning programs at school. These programs encourage healthy attitudes in youth about themselves and school, and reduce challenging and dangerous habits, leading eventually to positive academic performance and connection to the school (Tan et al., 2018). The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning has identified standards that group skills into five areas: self-management, self-control, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and skills in relationships. Inspiring students to abandon old behaviours by building relationships with school staff and a sense of belonging and attachment at school is crucial (Main & Whatman, 2016). Teaching students how to emotionally regulate will help them to connect better with their teachers, peers, and schools, which will in turn improve their attendance and academics, and increase their potential to graduate.

Transitioning to high school has become a significant challenge for today's youth, and it has a major effect on graduation rates (Genao, 2013). Identifying and addressing incoming grade nine students' attendance and social-emotional needs early put them on a positive track toward graduation (Tan et al., 2018). Providing an opportunity for feeder schools to have transition meetings with high schools is a crucial first step in an effective transition. Transition meetings inform teachers, resource staff, guidance staff, and administrators from both schools about the incoming grade nine students and potential concerns. Also, providing opportunities for the incoming grade nine students and parents to tour the school, attend a class, and have an information evening helps to build connections and relationships before starting school. Some districts contact the incoming at-risk grade nine students over the summer, and even offer a summer transition program intended to ease the transition to high school (Allensworth, 2013). Entering high school is not an easy task. Facilitating a positive transition into grade nine, engaging parents on school-based decisions, and supporting students' social-emotional needs are crucial first steps on the road to high school success.

Conclusion

High school graduation is important, but it is a formidable goal for many at-risk youth. The difference between graduating and dropping out has a significant effect on the individuals and the communities where they live. Chronic absenteeism and emotional dysregulation highly correlate with failure to graduate. Solutions such as engaging parents, connecting students to their school, and implementing social-emotional learning programs should be included in school planning, especially for at-risk and all transitioning grade nine students. It will be essential to continue to research the various risk factors and how they act on each other, because collective risk factors are a more significant predictor of dropout than any single factor (Zaff et al., 2016). It will take the efforts of not only the school system to improve graduation rates, but of everyone to keep today's youth on the right track to graduation.

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Inclusive Education Challenges for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Laura J. Graham

Abstract

Autism is a common disorder found within the student population. Despite its prevalence, teachers report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of their students on the autism spectrum. The school environment can present many challenges for these students, and it is important that educators are provided with the evidence-based skills and training to create an inclusive environment.

Autism is a neurodevelopmental disorder that affects approximately 1 in 66 children and youth in Canada (Ofner et al., 2018, p. 2). It is characterized by challenges with language, social interactions, and communication, in combination with restricted behaviours and interests, making school a uniquely challenging place academically, socially, and emotionally (Costley et al., 2012). Students with autism require adequate support, but schools and educators often fail (Humphrey & Symes, 2013). Educators report a lack of knowledge and training when it comes to teaching students with autism (Brock et al., 2020), but successful inclusion is possible if educators and schools are willing to adopt evidence-based practices, engage in ongoing professional development, and create positive school environments.

Challenges with Inclusion

Students with autism are faced with many obstacles in the school environment, such as academic challenges, social isolation, anxiety, and inadequately trained teachers. Challenges with executive functioning mean that even students with above average intelligence can struggle academically (Costley et al., 2012). Teachers often have lower academic expectations for students with autism (Zagona et al., 2017), which increases the gap between academic results and the child's cognitive functioning (Goodall, 2015). Some students with autism also report that educators focus too much on academic outcomes and neglect to support the student in other non-academic areas such as social integration (Hummerstone & Parson, 2020).

Deficits in social communication mean that students with autism often struggle socially and report higher incidences of bullying and social exclusion (Able et al., 2014). This social exclusion increases as students mature (Calder et al., 2013). Educators report feeling unsure how to facilitate students' relationships with their peers, while parents report that schools do not do enough to encourage their children's social development (Lindsay et al., 2013). This can make schools feel like lonely and unsupportive places for students with autism (Goodall, 2018).

The school environment can be particularly stressful for students with autism due to their increased emotional needs and sensory demands. For example, students with autism report classrooms being too loud and find disruptive behaviour from other children stressful (Warren et al., 2020). Autism is frequently co-morbid with other mental health and physical disorders, which increases the complexity of their needs (Ofner et al., 2018). van Steensel et al. (2011) found that almost 40% of students with autism are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder. Schools with noisy classrooms, crowded hallways, and changing schedules can lead to anxiety for students with autism (Goodall, 2018). Students with autism and anxiety are more likely to demonstrate externalizing behaviour such as yelling, throwing things, or stomping, and to evince higher rates of physical aggression (Ambler et al., 2015). This "acting out" behaviour can be difficult for teachers to understand and manage. It is not surprising, then, when reviewing the statistics, that students with autism also have a higher incidence of out of school suspension (Goodall, 2015). Schools seem ill-

equipped to deal with the various mental health challenges presented by students with autism (Rudy, 2020).

Although educators generally report feeling positive toward inclusion (Zagona et al., 2017), they report a lack of knowledge and practical skills when it comes to including these students in the classroom (Humphrey & Symes, 2013). Educators feel ill-equipped to deal with the behavioural challenges that often accompany autism, such as emotional outbursts, lack of flexibility, and social difficulties (Lindsay et al., 2013). Teachers report a lack of equipment to provide sensory support for students, and there is a need for more paraprofessionals (Lindsay et al., 2013). Some educators have noted a tension between providing activities that a student can independently complete and aligning them with classroom activities (Zagona et al., 2017). Even with additional in-service training, educators feel unprepared with practical strategies for use in the classroom (Able et al., 2014). This perception of inadequacy is supported by the “research-to-practice gap” between best evidence-based practices and the strategies teachers are actually using in the classroom (Brock et al., 2020). Educators feel unsupported with both training and resources, as well as having limited knowledge of evidence-based practices.

Despite educators reporting low self-efficacy and lack of training, students with autism have legal rights for programming that meets their needs. In Manitoba, the Amendment to the Public School Act (Appropriate Educational Programming) requires school boards to provide “appropriate educational programming that supports student participation in both academic and social life” for students with disabilities (Manitoba Education, 2006, p. 1). Additionally, schools are morally obligated to meet the needs of their students with autism. Students with disabilities have better engagement and academic outcomes, in inclusive classrooms than in segregated special needs classrooms (Zagona et al., 2017). Students with autism report having a teacher who is understanding of their distinct communication and sensory needs as important to support their learning (Hummerstone & Parson, 2020). However, many students feel that schools attempt only to integrate them physically in classrooms (Goodall, 2018), and that key differences between them and their neurotypical classmates are not acknowledged, especially as they age (Hummerstone & Parson, 2020). Failure of schools to provide adequate inclusive education is both legally and morally unacceptable. Academic, social, and mental health challenges combined with poor teacher training are impediments to effective inclusion.

Solutions for Successful Inclusion

Students with autism can have positive school experiences if staff are trained in evidence-based practices, professional development is ongoing, and environmental modifications are in place to support the whole child. General educators must see themselves as capable of teaching students with autism, rather than it being something that should be left to specialists (Goodall, 2015). Evidence-based practices have a large amount of supportive evidence from systematic research efforts, but teachers require training on how to identify and customize these practices for their students (Kretlow & Blatz, 2011). Brock et al. (2020) suggested that teachers focus on evidence-based interventions that are already present in teacher training, such as modelling and scaffolding, and build from there. Feedback should be provided to teachers so that any mistakes can be amended, and the evidence-based practice is adhered to faithfully (Mazzotti et al., 2013). It is important that training is not just a one-off event but rather an ongoing journey that builds upon teachers’ skills (Goodall, 2015).

Numerous evidence-based practices have been shown to support students with autism in the classroom. Many of these techniques are similarly effective for other students with executive functioning challenges, such as attention hyperactive deficit disorder (ADHD) and fetal alcohol syndrome disorder (FASD). Students with autism generally crave structure and routine; the use of a clear schedule along with shorter, well-designed lessons can be beneficial (Warren et al., 2020). Conversely, it is important that teachers are flexible and tailor their lessons to meet students’ needs in that moment (Hebron & Bond, 2017). For example, a student’s work stamina may vary day to day

and certain days may require more adaptation than others. Providing an alternative choice can be useful when a student is having a particularly stressful day (Warren et al., 2020). Restricted interests, which are a symptom of autism, can also be used to engage the student in the lessons (Goodall, 2018). By implementing these practices in the classroom, educators have the tools to improve individual students' school experiences.

Additionally, support for students' social development can be cultivated in the classroom by providing opportunities for collaborative grouping and problem solving (Gibb et al., 2007). Creating a school environment where neurotypical students have been educated about autism and other disabilities has also been shown to improve outcomes for students with autism (Ferraioli & Harris, 2011). There have been significant debates about whether students should disclose their autism diagnosis. While this ultimately remains a personal decision, there is evidence that suggests sharing that information can improve attitudes toward autism (Campbell, 2006). Students who are prepared for some of the differences that might be demonstrated by students with autism are more likely to embrace their atypical peers (Ferraioli & Harris, 2011). Programs that focus on educating students about autism have led to an increase in positive social interaction between peers and students on the spectrum (Morris et al., 2020). Educators can facilitate interactions between typical and non-typical peers by using positive reinforcement techniques (Ferraioli & Harris, 2011). The use of trained peer tutors can also support the success of the student with autism when the adult steps back and allows developmentally appropriate peer interactions to take place (Harrower & Dunlap, 2001). Despite practices that support social inclusion, the inherent sensory challenges that schools present can still be troublesome.

Noisy school environments have been identified as contributing to the challenges faced by children with autism. Schools in the U.K. have experienced success with the resourced provision model which addresses some of these environmental challenges (Warren et al., 2020). These are schools that have smaller classrooms with extra environmental modifications for students with autism to spend part of the day (Hebron & Bond, 2017). This enables students to have a safe place to self-regulate while also having some time in a mainstream classroom (Warren et al., 2020). While certainly reminiscent of the older pull-out model of special education, it appears to be something many students with autism require to be successful at school. This model can help to balance students' sensory and emotional needs while still operating in the inclusive framework.

Conclusion

Autism is a common disorder found in most schools and classrooms. Students with autism often find the classroom environment challenging. Schools have a moral and legal obligation to provide inclusive education for students with autism, but they often fail to meet requirements. Educators do not feel knowledgeable or confident in supporting students with autism in the classroom. However, successful inclusion is possible if educators commit to ongoing training that uses evidence-based practices, supports students socially, and addresses environmental challenges. Students with autism are unique individuals with their own strengths and challenges. Therefore, it is important that educators are well-prepared and confident in their ability to create an inclusive classroom.

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Keeping School Learning Environments Safe from Bullying

Angela Caines

Abstract

Schools are accountable for providing all students a safe and caring learning environment. When a child feels unsafe at school, personal relationships, mental health, and academics are negatively affected. The entire school community – staff, parents, and students – must work together to develop an effective safe school program. A carefully planned safe school program that is followed consistently by all members will ensure the greatest success for all students.

All students have the right to attend school and learn in a violence free environment. Consequently, educators have the responsibility to provide students a safe school for learning. Bullying in schools is a concern because it has many implications for student development. Bullying affects student achievement, mental health, and personal relationships. Educators must work together with staff, students, and parents to implement programs, in the hope that a safe, caring, and respectful learning environment will be achieved. In the end, students will be guaranteed their right to learn in a safe environment that is free from violence.

Bullying in School

Everyone has a right to personal safety, but about 25% of Canadian students are victims of school bullying (Craig & McCuaig Edge, 2011, p. 181). Bullying experiences at school have lasting effects on the bully, the victim, and the bystander. School violence can significantly impair a student's mental, academic, and social development (Klinger et al., 2011). Educators are responsible for the safety of their students. When they do not address the issue of bullying, students are not safe at school.

Bullying is often a precursor to poor mental health. Children who are bullied become physically hurt and emotionally scarred. In a 2011 study by the Public Health Agency of Canada, students reported that as the number of incidents of fighting increased, so did issues with their mental health and behaviour (Craig & McCuaig Edge, 2011). When students are bullied, or are witnesses to a student being bullied, they feel unsafe in the classroom. In a like manner, students may have feelings of distrust toward the adults who are normally seen as their protectors (Kreps, 2018). Victims of bullying incidents sometimes report thoughts of suicide, self-harm, and depression (Ashrafi et al., 2020). Students with poor mental health often engage in social media sites that further encourage at-risk behaviours (Mérelle, 2020). Subsequently, victims of bullying sometimes continue to be withdrawn and experience low self-worth, well into adulthood. Educators who miss the signs of bullying miss an opportunity to address the issue of poor mental health (Kreps, 2018).

It is no surprise that victims of bullying incidents are less successful academically (Klinger et al., 2011). Students who are victimized spend a lot of time worrying about their safety at school. Bullying can lead to depression, which influences their ability to concentrate on their schoolwork (Kim et al., 2020). The children who witness these acts of violence are also affected emotionally, especially when they are not able to help the victim. In fact, bystanders feel concern for their own safety and they worry that they may be the next target. Over time, this concern may affect their success in school (Evans et al., 2019). When the effects of bullying last for years, the risk of an unsuccessful future increases (Craig & McCuaig Edge, 2011). Educators must realize that students who feel unsafe at school will experience higher academic failure.

Bullying is an issue that involves relationships. Therefore, students who are victimized repeatedly, over several years, are less successful in adulthood and have a higher likelihood of becoming violent themselves (Kreps, 2018). That is to say, the power struggle and violence that students experience can lead to poor relationships in adulthood. This cycle of abuse can be present

in many relationships: dating, marriage, family units, and among co-workers in the workplace (Craig & McCuaig Edge, 2011). Because this is a relationship issue, educators who do not teach students about healthy relationships will not help victims break the cycle of abuse.

In summation, bullying is a safety concern that has immediate and long-lasting effects on the bully, the victim, and the by-stander. Victims are at risk for poor mental health and self-worth, low academic achievement, negative outlook for future success, and poor relationships in adulthood (Craig & McCuaig Edge, 2011). When educators do not realize their unique position to influence healthy student development, or to foster positive relationships (Klinger et al., 2011), healthy relationships are not achieved. All relationships and areas of development are hindered when students feel unsafe.

Creating Safe Schools

Schools can offer students safe learning environments by implementing programs that prevent bullying, offer staff training, and include intervention programs. These programs are most effective when they require educators to teach coping strategies to all students, address student mental health issues, and encourage support from parents. Furthermore, student success will increase as educators, parents, and students work together to create a caring and safe school environment (Coloroso, 2016). At the end of the day, educators must acknowledge that prevention programs, proper staff training, and intervention programs will offer students the safest place to learn.

Schools must acknowledge that consistently following a bully prevention program will keep students safe. Prevention programs are important because students need to be taught not to bully (Evans et al., 2019) and, equally important, such programs help to prevent violent incidents from reoccurring (Kreps, 2018). These prevention programs are most effective when all students take part (Joo et al., 2020, p. 2). The most effective prevention program begins with a student survey, for the purpose of helping the school gain an understanding of the problem. Then, specific rules need to be taught to the students. Equally important, a well-developed policy needs to focus on the inclusion of all students in the school and on the overall culture of the school (Coloroso, 2016). This policy must be communicated to all students, staff, and families, and be followed consistently in order to ensure that all students are safe.

Educators require training to recognize the signs that a child is being bullied (Kreps, 2018). One common sign is that the child will become withdrawn and, if incidents of bullying keep occurring, the child may become inattentive, fearful of joining in regular classroom routines, or act out aggressively (Kreps, 2018). Educators need to be aware of what is happening and act accordingly when they notice something is not right (Coloroso, 2016), including sharing that information with other staff (Evans et al., 2019). Students need encouragement to confide in a trusted adult when something bad happens (Kreps, 2018). Educators will be better equipped to help students stay safe when they are trained to recognize and respond to signs of students being bullied.

Intervention programs help to create a safe learning environment for all students (Kim et al., 2020), with clear consequences for everyone who was involved in a bullying incident: discipline, possible solutions, a home plan, a safety plan for the victim, and how all students will be supported at the school (Coloroso, 2016). In addition to supporting the victim the intervention program should include staff intervening as early as possible (Evans et al., 2019). Intervention involves more than a quick chat and then walking away from the incident. Educators need to address all students who were involved and make sure that limits are set so that everyone is immediately safe, and then effective discipline needs to be handed out. After this, children need to be given time to discuss what was wrong and how to fix it. Overall, this reinforces the need for educators to implement intervention programs that support the entire school population.

The violence that often characterizes bullying affects more than the bully and the victim (Joo et al., 2020). The victim, the bullied, and the bystander all need to be supported immediately following

an incident. For the victims, this means they are immediately kept safe from the bully and supported from further retaliation or humiliation (Coloroso, 2016, p. 54). This immediate support may also prevent victims from skipping school because they fear being hurt again. The consequences should include both discipline and restitution (Evans et al., 2019), so that the bully learns how to respect and care for others, makes amends with the victim, and is given opportunities to participate in acts of kindness (Coloroso, 2016, p. 318). Finally, school staff need to support bystanders who take an active role in helping victims, in the hope that other students may help (Evans et al., 2019). Educators must be prepared to support all students after a violent act, because all students are affected by school violence.

All students affected by bullying should be supported and offered opportunities to address their mental health and well-being (Sibold et al., 2020). For example, some mental health programs teach students how to recognize incidents of violence, stand up for themselves, and report incidents (Coloroso, 2016). Other programs teach bullies appropriate social skills and help them to find opportunities to take on leadership roles, so that they will learn how to make a positive influence on others (Evans et al., 2019). When bystanders are supported and taught appropriate social skills, they become more successful in school, have positive feelings about their future, and sometimes experience positive mental health and self-worth (Evans et al., 2019). One study found that bystanders who had developed positive behaviour reported incidents of bullying more often (Joo et al., 2020). Educators must make a conscious effort to teach coping skills, so that students learn how to deal with problems that affect their mental health.

Educators need to implement regular physical activity as part of their intervention plan to address effects of bullying in schools (Sibold et al., 2020). Students who exercise on a regular basis experience positive self-esteem and report less depression. Likewise, some youth report that being active helps them build social relationships, which has a positive influence on their mental health (Janssen et al., 2011). To illustrate, one recent study concluded that students who exercised more than three days a week felt less sad, and thought about suicide less than other bullying victims who worked out for less time (Sibold et al., 2020). The benefits of exercise on student mental health must be shared with all staff, students, and parents.

Equally important, students who feel supported by their parents openly communicate with them, experience better mental health, and cope better when personal issues arise. As an example, in a 2011 study by the Public Health Agency of Canada, students acknowledged the importance of having supportive parents and valued being able to communicate with them openly (King & Hoessler, 2011). Students said that a happy and supportive home influenced their mental health because they could share their thoughts and problems. Students who have a positive relationship with their parents are also bullied less because they feel comfortable discussing bullying incidents (Ashrafi et al., 2020). Parents can support their children by taking an active role in helping them, such as by discussing coping strategies with their children and speaking to the principal (Georget, 2009). Parents must realize that supporting their children and communicating with them on a regular basis will influence the children's mental health and ability to cope with future problems.

To ensure academic success of all students, the environment of the school needs to be respectful and caring, and a place where educators promote peaceful interactions between all students (Coloroso, 2016). Students perform better in school when they know that their teachers will keep them safe and will support them (Kim et al., 2020). Hence, educators need to create environments that foster kindness and respect, by including others and celebrating differences among students. When students feel a sense of belonging, they will be less motivated to take part in negative behaviours to gain acceptance from others (Coloroso, 2016). It is therefore crucial that educators promote caring and positive interactions within the school, so all students feel respected and perform at their best.

In summation, educators are responsible for implementing programs to keep students safe while they attend school. It is of utmost importance that teachers implement prevention programs, receive training to recognize when a student is being bullied, and know how to react appropriately when incidents happen. Additionally, educators must teach students coping strategies when they

are bullied, support student mental health, and encourage parental support. Bullying programs are most effective when all staff, parents, and students work together to provide a safe learning environment.

Conclusion

Schools are obligated to meet the needs of all students, including their right to personal safety while they attend school. School bullying incidents that are not addressed will negatively affect academic success, mental health, and interpersonal relationships. Therefore, it is pivotal for all school staff, students, and parents to work together for the safety and well-being of the entire school population.

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Meeting the Socio-Emotional Needs of LGBTQ Students in Schools

Christopher Rivet

Abstract

Many LGBTQ youth struggle to be included in schools and have their emotional needs appropriately met. As a result, their identity and overall self-concept suffer due to unsafe school environments, poor peer relationships, and poor engagement within the school. Schools need to address these concerns and provide safe and inclusive environments that support the emotional well-being of LGBTQ students. Without these supports, students will likely continue to become disconnected and disengaged from their education due to adverse experiences that are common to many LGBTQ youth.

Lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual, and queer (LGBTQ) youth face significant adversity in our schools. Many LGBTQ youth struggle with connections between peers and staff, and ultimately within themselves. The process of coming out is one that is unique to each individual. There is a correlation between the overall environment of the youth and how successfully they come into their own selves with respects to identity. Unfortunately, many schools are not safe environments for youth, which can result in poor interpersonal relationships with friends, romantic relationships, and engagement with their schoolwork. In schools, LGBTQ youth frequently experience bullying and other forms of victimization from peers, they have personal health concerns, and the school environment does not support their overall well-being. Fortunately, there are solutions that can help change the overall experience for LGBTQ youth: these start with providing emotional supports, providing programming to support personal health, and improving the overall school climate to be welcoming and inclusive.

Effects of Bullying and Victimization from Peers

LGBTQ youth frequently experience targeted homophobic attacks in schools from their peers. This bullying has a negative effect on youth's internal perspectives regarding their identity and beliefs toward the LGBTQ community. This effect appears to impact both the victims and the bystanders who also may be questioning their identities. Furthermore, it has been found that male-identified youth are the primary recipients of targeted bullying (la Roi et al., 2020). Students who identify as either straight or LGBTQ experience bullying; however, the latter are at greater risk of micro aggressions and overt victimization. Depending on their presenting gender, male-identified individuals appear to be involved in more physical forms of assault whereas female-identified individuals tend to be the recipients of bullying that is more subversive. What seems to be the newer trend is that LGBTQ youth are more susceptible to cyberbullying. Cyberbullying has been linked to "behavioural disorders, poor educational outcomes, as well increased involvement in crime and substance use" (Kahle, 2017, p. 4961). Therefore, it can be concluded that homophobic attacks from peers have a detrimental effect on LGBTQ youth.

In order to counteract the effects of homophobic attacks from peers, it is important to provide supports that address the potential long-term effects of the victimization, both within and beyond school walls. These effects can be addressed by improving self-esteem, addressing the effects of trauma from bullying, and providing a safe space to explore personal identity. Self-esteem can be reframed as "self-empowerment," meaning that one recognizes one's worth and can advocate for oneself. When youth are able to speak out and effectively communicate their needs, there is a greater chance of being heard by teachers and administrators in their schools, thus resulting in the feeling of empowerment because that student advocate for themselves (Testa et al., 2015, p. 76). When self-esteem is addressed, this can provide an opportunity for students to work on addressing the trauma.

Most individuals who have experienced trauma, in this case bullying, have a difficult time with coping by managing their thoughts because blame becomes pervasive in their internal dialogue (Raja, 2012). Mindfulness is often taught to bring individuals back into the present and recenter themselves in their surroundings during moments when their internal dialogue becomes too much to handle (Raja, 2012). Many people who experience trauma also experience flashbacks and recurring memories. Students who learn mindfulness are able to apply those skills to quieten their mind and thought patterns in order to minimize the distress that is felt during these flashback moments.

Lastly, by providing skills for self-advocacy and skills for managing traumatic flashbacks, students can work on exploring self-identity and who they are as members of the LGBTQ community within the broader society. Gender identity is multifaceted, and so helping students understand that there is no one correct way to express themselves is key to establishing a positive self-identity. Those who have determined their gender identity tend to be more comfortable with themselves and who they want to be (Testa et al., 2015). In conclusion, homophobia requires multiple approaches to help minimize the long-term effects of the victimization that is experienced by LGBTQ youth.

Personal Health for LGBTQ Youth

Personal health, both mental and sexual, is a multifaceted issue for LGBTQ youth. A common link is relationships with peers, which often are fraught with challenges due to increased susceptibility to bullying and other victimization attacks (Reisner et al., 2020). One could draw the conclusion that “once bitten, twice shy” can explain the hesitation from LGBTQ youth to seek out supports without the consequences of accidentally being outed (Reisner et al., 2020, p. 416). Mental health studies have found that LGBTQ are at greater risk of suicidality and depression, which is commonly rooted in anxiety-based disorders (Baams et al., 2020). While these experiences do not account for all LGBTQ youth, there is a shared experience of stigma due to their sexual identity. During the time of self-discovery, LGBTQ youth engage in higher risk sexual behaviours, which results in increased transmission of sexually transmitted diseases (Health Considerations, 2019). During self-discovery, LGBTQ youth need supports with their mental and sexual health while navigating their personal identity.

All students require supports to help them navigate the uncertainty of self-discovery and figuring out who they are as they begin to mature. When supports are inadequate, mental and physical health begin to suffer within our students (Ontario Secondary Teachers’ Federation, 2010). If LGBTQ youth are to initiate the counselling process to address issues experienced by the coming out or living “in the closet,” their counsellor must be knowledgeable about the LGBTQ experience. They need not identify as LGBTQ themselves, but rather, recognize that they hold a certain privilege by being a part of the heteronormative society.

By recognizing their privilege, informed therapists can understand the experiences of LGBTQ youth, including the process of coming out and the effects of being outed by others. This understanding will improve their relationship with those youth (Brill & Kenney, 2016). After seeking out an informed counsellor, youth can then begin to work through any suicidal ideations and feelings of depression. There is a direct link between the stress felt about not being a part of the “hetero-centric” world and attempted suicide (Brill & Kenney, 2016, p. 190). Suicidality in youth is a multifaceted issue with several different causations, and each one needs to be addressed in order to minimize the chance of that youth making an attempt to die. These issues may include “thwarted belongingness: isolation and a lack of connectedness,” “perceived burdensomeness,” “gender identity confusion and/or discomfort,” and “low self-worth” (Brill & Kenney, 2016, p. 199). It is the hope that by addressing mental health issues and working on improving self-worth, LGBTQ youth will minimize engaging in harming and risky behaviours.

Youth who have an improved self-worth will have likely learned about positive and healthy ways to be intimate with one another, and will engage in safe exploration that has clear

communication and safe boundaries (Singh, 2018). Supports need to be given to guide our youth in a safe, respected, and positive manner. This ensures that supports do not diminish the experience that LGTBQ youth have had up to this moment. Positive guidance and supports will help to improve self-worth and resiliency, and reduce risky sexual behaviours, because the underlying anxiety and depression has been treated, and hopefully, negated.

School Environment

The school environment has a significant effect on LGTBQ youth's overall well-being, both physically and mentally. As a whole, schools are not a welcoming and a safe space for all students. The lack of safe space contradicts the mandate that is set by the Province of Manitoba, which believes that is important for schools to set goals as a collective and fully understand the needs of all students (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017). Schools currently fail to set and review goals, which in turn means that they are not adjusting to the needs of the school change. In Ontario, with respects to LGTBQ issues, there is a disconnect between LGTBQ students and the overall policies that surround gender and sexuality. This disparity appears to be rooted in misinformation, policies that are not reflective of the needs of LGTBQ students, and improper training of students surrounding the needs of LGTBQ individuals (Martino et al., 2019). Without adequate school planning and direction for safe and inclusive spaces, LGTBQ youth will continue to feel that disconnect between themselves and their schools.

A positive and inclusive connection with schools will help LGTBQ youth to feel connected and well supported. When communities, including schools, are uninformed about gender variant youth, the likelihood of finding schools that are accommodating diminishes. It is important for schools to be positive and provide space that respects a student's change in pronouns or names, and that offers opportunities for students with similar experiences to connect (Krieger, 2017). Schools that set and review goals to adjust overall school programming (Manitoba Education and Training, 2017) will recognize that there needs to be representation of all youth in their textbooks and lessons. In addition, there will be a recognition that schools need to celebrate diversity in order to foster a positive school climate.

One way that teachers can improve school climate is to provide lessons that educate about discrimination, heterosexism, and diversity (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2010). These classes will then result in a reduction of non-inclusive language in hallways, on school grounds, and in turn within the community. By challenging the "hetero-norms," we bring a voice to disenfranchised individuals, thereby generating positive change in community because accurate information is shared throughout (Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation, 2010, p. 5). In conclusion, schools that have inclusive programming that to educate students about gender diversity and learning differences will have LGTBQ youth who feel more connected, safe, and supported. This education will also help to shift the overall community to become more inclusive and accepting of the broad diversity of its members.

Conclusion

Much adversity still exists within our schools; however, schools do not have to continue to operate this way. There are many avenues that a school can explore in order to address the struggles that LGTBQ youth face on a daily basis. If schools can recognize how their overall climate affects their students, then they can initiate changes to create an inclusive environment for all. This environment will then be safe, welcoming, and free from students feeling victimized from being bullied. In addition, if schools have trauma and informed counsellors in house, these counsellors can support students who are questioning and experiencing mental health concerns. Students who are well supported emotionally will then experience positive feelings, which will result in a school environment that is positive and inclusive for all. A school that is inclusive will have a population of students who are accepting and welcoming to everyone, and who will have strong interpersonal

connections with one another, thus negating the adverse experience that many LGBTQ youth have with their school and personal lives.

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Mitigating the Effects of Helicopter Parenting on Student Mental Health

Brittany MacDonald

Abstract

Rates of anxiety and depression in youth have been increasing, and helicopter parenting although not the only factor, is at the core of the problem. When parents overprotect children and control their lives, children do not gain the skills needed to face the world; this lack of preparedness leads to anxiety and depression. As teachers, we can help by giving students opportunities for choices about their work, and by teaching social-emotional skills and cognitive behaviour techniques. Making these changes can arm the students with the skills, confidence, and resilience they need to feel prepared for the world, which would lower levels of anxiety and depression.

For a variety of reasons, adolescents around the world are showing increasing rates of depression and anxiety (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020). Poor/fair perceived mental health and professionally diagnosed mood and anxiety disorders have become more prevalent in Canadian youth over the last decade, such that from 2011 to 2018, poor/fair perceived mental health increased from 4.2% to 9.9%, diagnosed mood disorders went from 4.3% to 7.8%, and diagnosed anxiety disorder rose from 6.0% to 12.9% (Wiens et al., 2020, p.3). At the same time, young people have become more emotionally fragile, and demonstrate a lack of coping abilities, which coincides with the shift toward a “helicopter parenting” society (Gray, 2015b, para. 1). Helicopter parenting is when parents protect children in a way that is not appropriate for their child’s age and abilities (Hall, 2017). Making all decisions and resolving all conflicts for children and giving them everything they need/want are inappropriate because children should be performing and managing some tasks on their own in order to develop. While helicopter parents are well-meaning, their children are likely to struggle as youth with some form of “psychological distress, low self-efficacy, narcissism, extrinsic academic motivation, poor academic adjustment or engagement, delayed or inhibited leadership emergence, and alcohol and drug use” (Segrin et al., 2020, p. 181). When children do not experience independence and difficult emotions, they do not learn to problem solve, their social and emotional development may be stunted, and they do not learn lessons from exploring their world (Gray, 2020b). This results in helplessness, a lack of self-confidence, and uncertainty, which lead to anxiety and depression. Children who are feeling anxious or depressed will not be in the mindset to learn. Adding student choice, practising cognitive behaviour techniques, and teaching social-emotional learning in our classrooms can help students to become more independent, resilient, and prepared, which can help to decrease the levels of depression and anxiety that are exacerbated by helicopter parenting.

In a helicopter parenting society, parents subscribe to the idea that the world is dangerous and their children need to be protected from any difficulties at all costs (Gray, 2019). Even if parents do not wish to parent this way, they do not have an easy alternative. For example, parents who give their children the independence to play outside alone or to come home to an empty house after school are likely to face social backlash and, depending on where they live, they may be breaking the law (Skenazy, 2019). The belief in a helicopter parenting society is that all difficulties – whether physical, emotional, academic, or social – may be traumatic and/or permanently damaging to children, and that parents should always be supervising, guiding, and intervening in order to do their job correctly (Skenazy, 2020).

A Lack of Freedom of Choice and Independence for Students in a Helicopter Society

Children who have no freedom of choice and independence develop issues with self-confidence and readiness, which leads to anxiety and depression when they see they are ill-prepared for the world (Gray, 2020b). Today, parents often make decisions for their children about

what they are to do in their spare time (Gray, 2020a), and sometimes what they are learning at school. *Bill 64, The Education Modernization Act in Manitoba*, will require schools to contact parents when topics of human sexuality, substance use and abuse, and personal safety arise in Physical Education/Health, so that parents can choose to opt their child out of learning about said “sensitive content” (Manitoba, 2020). While that section of the Bill empowers parents to protect their children from discomfort, it deprives the children of the knowledge and understanding of how to protect themselves and others. In addition, when adults choose activities for children, they often focus on extrinsic motivations, rather than the child’s enjoyment of the activity (Gray, 2019). Students are feeling the same pressures in school. If they do not get perfect grades, engage in the right extracurricular activities, and get accepted into a top-rank post-secondary institution, they feel like failures (Hurley, 2018). With these pressures, students have cited school and other adult-directed activities as their number one source of anxiety (Gray, 2020a). When children do not get to choose their activities, or they are denied free play and a chance to explore their environments on their own terms, they feel a lack of control over their lives (Gray, 2020b). In English class, we teachers often prescribe texts for students, tell them what to write, and how to write it; our own external pressures make us hesitant to relinquish control. We place a heavy importance on marks and what we deem as “academic achievement,” which are not always true representations of intellectual development or meaningful education (Gray, 2020b, p. 51). We must increase the opportunities for student choice in our classrooms, so that our students can have some level of independence in school and develop skills they do not gain when adults control everything for them.

Providing Opportunities for Student Choice in the High School English Classroom

There are multiple areas in which English teachers can provide opportunities for choice. Rather than prescribing readings, we can allow students to choose what they read. This gives students independence, which results in them connecting with the literature on a personal level, making them more likely to become lifelong readers than when we place a book into their hands. We can initiate book clubs, lit circles, and independent reading time, so that students can choose a much higher percentage of their reading material (Kittle, 2020). They also must be given opportunities to choose what they write, whether that is their topic, their form, or both (Kittle, 2014). When students choose what they write, they connect more to their own ideas, and they often end up doing better work than when we make those decisions for them. Having choice in their reading and writing gives them the independence that they are missing in other areas of their life, the focus is shifted away from the competitive aspect of school because students are not all doing the same work, and students develop a better relationship with reading and writing. This increase of student independence, lessening of competition pressures, and the more positive connection with content and skills will help the students take initiative, be creative, and solve their own problems, skills they miss when they do not get the opportunity to choose for themselves (Gray, 2020b; Kittle & Gallagher, 2020). Teachers giving students choices in the classroom leads to students developing the self-confidence they need to be ready for the world, which would cause a drop in anxiety and depression levels (Gray, 2020b).

A Lack of Practical Social-Emotional Knowledge in Children of Helicopter Parents

Young adults who were “helicopter parented” have issues coping with everyday problems; they are more likely to turn to drugs and alcohol, and lack self-efficacy (Segrin et al., 2020). These individuals are more entitled, narcissistic, and they have poor leadership skills. Academically, they may struggle with extrinsic motivation and becoming adjusted and/or engaged in the content. These individuals are less socially and emotionally resilient, and helicopter parenting is at the centre of the problem (Gray, 2015b). These difficulties and missing skills are caused by a lack of social and emotional knowledge, due to having their childhood challenges smoothed over for them by their parents while they were growing up (Segrin et al, 2020). While helicopter parents want to save their

children from any pain or difficult emotions, they are setting the children up for a life of emotional fragility (Gray, 2015a). Instead of being allowed to feel, understand, and deal with difficult emotions, children are taught that these emotions are “bad” and must be avoided; they may even get the message that difficult emotions signal failure and weakness (David, 2020). This cycle causes a lack of resiliency because, when individuals are denied the opportunity to cope with everyday difficulties and emotions as children, they have emotional crises over everyday difficulties as adolescents and young adults (Gray, 2015a). Once again, we see the trend of anxiety and depression coming in when individuals do not feel prepared to handle the world around them (Gray, 2020b). Individuals must be equipped with social-emotional learning to feel like they can hold their own in society.

Adopting a Social-Emotional Learning Program in the Classroom

With the increase of depression and anxiety, and the decrease of student resiliency, educators and psychologists have identified a need for social-emotional learning at the school level, and many programs and curricula have been created to counteract the effects of helicopter parenting and other negative socio-cultural factors. The province of Alberta has created educational documents to support the instruction of social-emotional learning in schools, at all age levels. In high schools, the English teachers are responsible for planning projects that explore this learning through literature (Alberta, 2020). The key understandings are about setting and achieving goals, recognizing and managing emotions, forming and maintaining relationships, showing concern and care for others, making responsible decisions, and preparing for, handling, and recovering from challenging situations. Social-emotional learning programs, such as Alberta’s, can improve academic performance and fortify healthy relationships. They can help schools to address bullying, social isolation, and peer aggression, and they can help to enhance student mental health, while they gain protective factors. Another program that can be used in school is Let Grow (Skenazy, 2020). Let Grow has activities available for schools and parents, with a focus on building independence in children, and promoting free play. For example, teachers can send students home to perform a task of independence they had never done before, such as walking the dog alone or cooking a meal for the family, and they come back to school and report on it. Parents can also use this program at home, in order to foster independence and self-confidence in their children. Adopting such programs can help to restore student independence and teach them coping skills, which will both build resilience and self-confidence and reduce rates of depression and anxiety.

A Lack of Self-Regulation in Children of Helicopter Parents

Children of helicopter parents are not given the opportunity to feel difficult emotions, understand them, deal with them, and see them pass (David, 2020), which leads to a lack of self-regulation skills later in life (Gray, 2015a). Individuals who lack self-regulation skills feel helpless and vulnerable, become reactive (Stosny, 2020), are more likely to become anxious in the future (Schneider et al., 2020), and need more external help (Gray, 2015a). The mental health workers at the school in which I teach are overworked. They do not have enough hours in the school day to meet with everyone who needs their help. This trend is echoed by university counsellors, whose emergency calls have increased by over two times since 2010 (Gray, 2015a, para. 1). Students who cannot self-regulate rely on others to help them calm down and work through their emotions, and many institutions do not have enough resources; the demand is too great. Students must be taught to take control of their own emotions, so that they can rely on themselves more often, and reduce the workload of school counsellors.

Teaching Cognitive Behavioural Techniques in the Classroom

Because school is where teenagers feel the most anxious (Gray, 2020a), it is fitting that teachers model and teach cognitive behavioural techniques in the classroom. Engaging in these

techniques regularly, whether daily or weekly, would help students to strengthen their emotion regulation skills (Schneider et al., 2018). For relaxation techniques, for example, teachers could model abdominal breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, shorthand muscle relaxation, relaxation without tension, cue-controlled relaxation, and/or visualizing a peaceful scene (McKay et al., 2011). These techniques are scientifically studied, and serve the purpose of slowing down thoughts, and easing fear and anxiety. They reduce heart rate, breathing rate, blood pressure, and muscle tension, among others, and when practised regularly they can reduce various forms of anxiety, such as general, interpersonal, and performance anxiety). Cognitive behavioural techniques can be used for more than relaxation; techniques can be found for worry control, panic, depression, problem solving, controlling anger, and mindfulness (McKay et al, 2011). Preparation for these techniques is not labour intensive or time consuming, and modelling them in class can take five minutes or less. Step-by-step instructions can be found in books (for example, see McKay et al., 2011), or by conducting a Google search. Therefore, adding cognitive behavioural techniques into class time is an easy way for teachers to help their students reduce stress, get them in the right frame of mind for learning, and help them self-regulate and reduce pressure on school counsellors.

Conclusion

Helicopter parenting plays a significant role in the increasing rates of depression and anxiety in the world's young people. Denying children independence and the opportunity to face difficult emotions, and not providing them with the tools to help them cope, are all contributing to these mental health problems. While teachers cannot change parenting styles, we can give students opportunities for choice in our classrooms. We can teach them skills to build resiliency, and cognitive behavioural techniques to reduce stress and help with self-regulation in the future. Educating the students in these areas in our classrooms will help them with their mental health issues, it will help teachers because our students will be in the position to learn, and it will help school counsellors because students will become more apt at looking to themselves to cope.

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Moving Secondary Music Education Forward

Katelyn Jardine

Abstract

Band pedagogy has become the dominant teaching approach found in secondary music education. Band pedagogy's focus on meeting performance objectives in large ensemble contexts has created inflexible and teacher-centered learning environments. This paper seeks to examine the problematic aspects of band pedagogy being at the forefront of curriculum implementation, and to propose solutions for educators that better meet the needs and interests of students. To create a clear path forward for secondary music education, educators' need to be open to informal pedagogical approaches, cultivate an awareness of their own positionality to the music curriculum, and embrace popular music practices.

Band pedagogy is a unique teaching approach that is specific to secondary music education. Typically, band pedagogy is teacher driven and focuses on building students' skills so that performance objectives can be met in a large ensemble context (Regelski, 2020). While many teachers enjoy implementing band pedagogy, most are dissatisfied with current practices (McPhail & McNeill, 2019). Alternative pedagogical approaches can be implemented to create student-centered learning environments, but educators must change their mindset and begin pushing back against the cultural expectations and longstanding traditions of band pedagogy. Informal music pedagogy can provide flexibility for students and teachers by permitting large-group, peer, and individual learning opportunities, but it also requires teachers to transfer their musical skills and knowledge into new genres (Green, 2016). Popular music practices can create a sense of enjoyment and self-belief for students because they can pursue their own interests during class (Hallam et al., 2018). Educators' being open to alternative pedagogy, cultivating an awareness of their own positionality to the music curriculum, and embracing popular music practices can help to create a clear path forward for secondary music education that better meets the needs and interests of students.

Band in Secondary Education

Few teachers and administrators outside music education are aware that in most Canadian provinces, band is not mandated as part of the provincial curriculum but is instead pushed due to its long-standing cultural expectation and tradition. Band pedagogy in Canadian schools has been the common practice since the 19th century (Tan, 2016). *Band* is typically considered a large ensemble practice that belong to a subcategory of music education known as instrumental music. Instrumental music education typically begins in middle school and consists of the "teaching and learning of music through symphony orchestras and wind orchestras" (Tan, 2016, p. 92). Band is primarily teacher-driven and consists of students gathering to learn how to play a specific collection of westernized wind and percussion instruments. The goal of band is typically to perform wind ensemble repertoire that meets measurable music performance standards during a concert or festival (Heuser, 2011). In secondary schools, this has been the traditional approach to band with little change from administration and teachers.

Band Pedagogy

Band in secondary music education has led to the development of band-specific pedagogy, which has become the dominant pedagogical approach for most North American educators (Heuser, 2011). "Band pedagogy" and "instrumental music pedagogy" can be used interchangeably and have the same focus and goals. Band pedagogy focuses on the most effective ways to teach

large groups of students in a large ensemble format (McNeill & McPhail, 2020). The goal of band pedagogy is to help students become proficient on their instrument in the shortest time possible (Regelski, 2020). This is primarily done through a teacher-centered approach whereby the teacher leads students through a series of drills or exercises during a band rehearsal (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). A unique aspect of band pedagogy is that it has a heavy focus on skill repetition to help students meet specific performance objectives; therefore, learning is more about the product created than the learning process in band (Allsup & Benedict, 2008). Band pedagogy is the dominant pedagogy for most North American secondary music educators.

Problematic Curricular and Pedagogical Approaches

The push to implement band pedagogy as curriculum has contributed to inflexible learning environments that do not meet the needs and interests of each student. Due to the common practices of band in schools, band pedagogy has become the dominant lens for interpreting music curricula, causing secondary music education to struggle to find a clear purpose for students. Many North American music educators' lack of curricular intent reveals a curricular "blind spot" that is created by combining band pedagogy and personal beliefs surrounding music (McPhail & McNeill, 2019, p. 365). That is, despite the physical existence of a secondary music education curriculum, many music educators remain hesitant or unable to express their understandings of music curricula in their classrooms. Unfortunately, this blind spot has contributed to conflicting curricula being implemented in many classrooms, because educators avoid defining their curricular understanding, and instead embrace cultural band practices as curricular outcomes and values (Saetre, 2018). This has resulted in educators' struggling to find a clear curricular purpose for students in secondary music education.

A large component of band pedagogy practised in secondary music classrooms that has been problematic is teachers' having to fulfill the role of conductor. Traditionally, the role of the conductor is not one that fosters individual and collective learning but is instead the director or primary influencer of all musical decision-making during rehearsals, which leaves little room for student autonomy (Heuser, 2011). When teachers are placed in the role of conductors, they stand on a podium to signify a physical and intellectual position of authority, superiority, and power over their students. Therefore, as the teachers conduct an ensemble by moving their baton, the intent is one of commanding or disciplining student musicians into creating quality music (Tan, 2016). The challenge of having teachers fulfilling the conductor role is that it fosters a teacher-centered learning environment wherein the beliefs and performance objectives of the conductor are imposed or projected onto students, therefore creating little room for student exploration and autonomy in a band setting.

Band pedagogy's focus on the achieving performance objective has continued to perpetuate an inflexible teacher-centered learning environment that has contributed to many teachers' dissatisfaction. In disciplines beyond secondary music education, pedagogical shifts toward student-centred learning approaches have been embraced to provide more flexibility, choice, and autonomy for students (Brown, 2003). However, most band pedagogy remains incompatible with pedagogy found in other disciplines. The heavy focus placed on achieving performances objectives has caused on average 68% of North American secondary music educators to be dissatisfied with the learning environments they must create (McPhail & McNeill, 2019, p. 439). This is largely due to educators' not being given the flexibility to "tactfully respond" (Van Manen, 2015, p. 82) to students and explore their musical interests when band pedagogy is implemented. Implementing band pedagogy that remains focused on achieving performance objectives has continued to perpetuate inflexible teacher-centered learning environments that have left many teachers dissatisfied. The ongoing push to implement band pedagogy as curriculum has contributed to a lack of clear purpose and inflexible learning environments that do not meet the needs and interests of students.

Informal Learning: The Needed Pedagogical Approach

There are several solutions to these problems, including educators' becoming more open to alternative pedagogy, cultivating an awareness of how curriculum is being implemented in music classrooms, and carrying out informal popular music practices to provide more flexibility for students and teachers. Educators who are willing to keep an open mind to alternative pedagogy outside traditional band pedagogy provide the possibilities for students' needs to be better met and for more flexibility to emerge as the focus shifts from a teacher-centered learning environment to a student-centered learning environment. For this shift to occur, educators must consider creating a learning journey for students that is a true representation of how the discipline of music relates to students' lives. To make music more relatable and meaningful for students, teachers must be willing to embrace journeying in music education as a "genuinely free space" (Smith, 1999, pp. 3-4) that can move away from the cultural expectation and long-standing traditions of band. It is only when educators become more open to alternative pedagogy in secondary music education that more flexibility can emerge and the interests and needs of individual students can be embraced.

Many music educators struggle with communicating how curriculum is being implemented in their classrooms; therefore, one of the solutions is for teachers to reconsider their own positionality to music curriculum so that they can better meet the needs and interest of their students. To help teachers reconsider their own positionality to curriculum, there are two curriculum worlds: "curriculum-as-planned" and the "curriculum-as-lived," which educators must understand and cultivate an awareness of moving forward (Aoki, 2012, pp. 159-161). The curriculum-as-planned world can be depicted as a place focused on specific objectives for the year or the outcomes prescribed by a physical curriculum document. This world is where most secondary music educators live when they focus on equipping students with instrumental skills in order to meet rigid yearly performance or concert objectives (Heuser, 2011). The curriculum-as-lived world is characterized by students' hopes, dreams, curiosities, and relationships to the subject being studied (Aoki, 2012, pp. 160-161) and is often the curriculum world that is overlooked by music educators. If educators readjust their positionality to the music curriculum so that they can dwell in between these two curricular worlds, they will be better equipped to communicate a clear purpose for how the music curriculum is implemented in their classroom; therefore, students' needs and interests will be better met in their classroom.

The reality is that many music educators have a wide musical skill set and knowledge base that can be easily transferred to different musical genres so that the alternative pedagogical approach of informal learning can be executed (Black, 2017). In Nordic countries and the United Kingdom, a shift to informal pedagogical practices in secondary music education has been implemented so that students' needs can be better met and students' interests can be represented in the content learned (Hallman et al., 2017). Informal music pedagogy differs from band pedagogy by requiring teachers to give up sole control of the content and transfer their musical skills and knowledge into different musical genres so that students can become co-creators of the content explored (Hallman et al., 2017). Giving up control provides opportunities for informal learning to exist in the classroom, because students set their own learning objectives, determine the music they would like to learn, and engage in individual, peer, and large-group learning (Green, 2016). Many educators have a wide enough skill set and knowledge base to execute the alternative pedagogy of informal learning so that the needs and interests of their students can be met.

Implementing informal music practices specific to popular music can provide flexibility for students by creating opportunities for them to pursue their own musical interests. The ways students can experience music in their daily lives is typically broken down into three categories: listening, playing, and composing (Green, 2012), all of which are best embodied by how popular musicians learn. In the United Kingdom, informal popular music practices have been implemented in secondary music education by allowing students to pick their own groups, form bands, and learn songs of their choice (Hallman et al., 2017). In these learning contexts, teachers played the role of facilitators or co-learners by providing mini lessons or instruction to specific individuals or in large

groups as needed (Green, 2016). The results of implementing informal popular music approaches were that it increased students' development of musical skills and knowledge while increasing students' desire to attend music class, find enjoyment in music, and feel a strong sense of self-belief to complete the tasks presented in music (Hallman et al., 2018). If informal music practices of popular musicians are implemented in secondary music education, they can provide the flexibility for students to pursue their own interests. Educators' becoming open to alternative pedagogy, cultivating an awareness of how curriculum is being implemented in music classrooms, and executing popular music practices can provide the flexibility needed for students and teachers moving forward.

Conclusion

The dominant practices of band pedagogy in secondary music education leave much to be desired for teachers as they try to meet the needs and interests of their students. Current expectations and traditions of implementing band pedagogy are teacher-centered and have left many educators dissatisfied. Alternative pedagogical approaches can be implemented to create more student-centered learning environments. These approaches depend on educators' changing their mindset and beginning to push back against the cultural expectations and long-standing traditions of band pedagogy. Informal music pedagogy provides flexibility for students and teacher by providing opportunities for large-group, peer, and individual learning as long as teachers are able to shift their musical skills and knowledge to new genres. Using popular music practices in the classroom can create a sense of enjoyment and self-belief for students, because they pursue their own interest during class. Once educators become open to alternative pedagogy, cultivate an awareness of their own positionality to the music curriculum, and embrace popular music practices, secondary music education can have a clear path forward that better meets the needs and interests of students.

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The Silent Response: Selective Mutism

Karl McDaniel

Abstract

Selective mutism is a disorder that can negatively impact a student's learning. It can be treated effectively if it is understood as an anxiety related condition and if it is diagnosed early. Intervention strategies can be complex and are therefore difficult for educational practitioners to implement. Simplifying intervention by addressing the anxiety of the child and then moving to video self-monitoring, fading, contingency management, and cognitive behavioural therapy can make treatment more practical. By using these select methods, educators will have an easier time addressing a difficult problem, and children will benefit substantially.

Very few have ever encountered or heard of selective mutism (SM). The prevalence of the disorder is variously reported; most agree that it affects between 0.03% and 1% (Muris et al., 2016, p. 94) of the population. Since many individuals never encounter someone who is selectively mute, understanding how the terms *selective* and *mutism* define the disorder is confusing. The terms work together to describe a phenomenon that is related to the comfort and anxiety levels of those affected. SM, in contradiction to many assumptions, is not a manifestation of oppositional behaviour, and children do not simply outgrow it. Repercussions for children with SM who do not receive intervention are profound and lifelong (Kovac & Furr, 2019). However, early intervention has been proven to be very successful. To deal effectively with SM, general treatment of anxiety through relaxation and breathing is essential. Other specific interventions are also necessary. However, many current interventions take a systematic approach, resulting in increased complexity and making application difficult (Zakszeski & DuPaul, 2017). Video modelling, as one example of a specific and focused intervention, provides an approach that is more accessible to educators and facilitates treatment to reach students, freeing them so that their voices can be heard by all around instead of only a select few.

Diagnosis and Implications of the Disorder

Understanding how selective and mutism define the disorder is confusing due to the seemingly random partial or situation-specific environments in which the child chooses to speak. The child is not completely silent, a point which the history of the disorder's name makes particularly clear. SM has been variously labeled voluntary mutism, partial mutism, situation-specific mutism, and elective mutism (Kearney, 2010). "Selective" indicates that the child speaks in some situations and not in others, based on an appraisal of the anxiety the situation causes. However, because the child will talk in various familiar environments, many pediatricians unfamiliar with the disorder pronounce that the child is just shy, predicting that they will grow out of it (Kovac & Furr, 2019). There is an assumption that speech in some situations will transfer to others as the child continues to develop. However, such a prognosis is incorrect because the underlying reason for the mutism is not that the child is shy but that the child feels heightened anxiety in certain situations where speech is required (Capozzi et al., 2018). If this anxiety is not addressed directly, the child may have difficulty communicating for the remainder of their life (Arigliani et al., 2020). To avoid confusion, selective mutism must be understood as an anxiety-related disorder in which speech occurs at certain times and not others.

SM is not shyness and in contradiction to many assumptions, neither is it a manifestation of oppositional behaviour. Some educators may misinterpret a lack of speech in the classroom as defiance or stubbornness. Accordingly, they may use behavioural strategies that demand or require speech and so unintentionally humiliate the child in class (Bergman, 2013). These strategies would have the reverse of the desired effect on students with SM by increasing anxiety. The result would

be a resistance to speaking at all. The solution being offered here will not work and is not recommended. It is based on a fundamental misunderstanding of the underlying cause of SM as opposition rather than anxiety (Arigliani et al., 2020). A false conclusion that the child with SM has an oppositional nature leads to an entrenching of the disorder and not its treatment.

While most perceive not treating this disorder as having little negative effect, the repercussions for children with SM who do not receive intervention are profound and lifelong (Kovac & Furr, 2019). The time of diagnosis, usually between 5 and 8 years of age, falls within a period of significant verbal and linguistic development in the life of a child. Since verbal communication is tantamount to literacy and social skill acquisition, absence of speech can create significant deficits on academic, social, and personal levels (Bork & Bennett, 2020). Also, the quality of instruction in a classroom setting will be significantly hampered if a child cannot ask questions or interact verbally with other students. This difficulty with engagement leads to lower academic outcomes and a lack of connection with the classroom in general (Zakszeski and DuPaul, 2017). Inability to communicate and the anxiety that comes from it can also lead to depression (Arigliani et al., 2020). Lack of intervention does not simply mean that the student sits silently in class; rather, it can lead to possible lifelong impairment.

Anxiety

Preventing lifelong difficulties means addressing the underlying cause of SM: anxiety. Chemically, in children with SM, increased levels of salivary cortisol reactivity have demonstrated an activation and response in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system which indicates heightened anxiety (Poole et al., 2020). Thus, understanding the treatment of anxiety is important in targeting the root cause of SM (Muris et al., 2016). However, even though the literature has demonstrated a clear relationship between SM and anxiety, little is expressed on methods to alleviate this underlying anxiety apart from the specifics of word creation in distinctive environments. Christopher Kearney (2010) is a notable exception and addresses general anxiety directly. He provides instruction in breathing and relaxation training, which have been shown to reduce anxiety in children.

Breathing exercises reduce shallow or quick breathing when someone with SM is anxious and normalize it, thereby helping speech production. Having children with SM practise breathing exercises three times a day in anxious situations helps in alleviating anxiety and prepares the child for speech production in these environments (Kearney, 2010). Another method to ease anxiety is progressive muscle relaxation. In this technique, the child tenses and releases different muscles in the body in order to reach a state of relaxation (Kearney, 2010). Teaching children to use these methods any time they feel anxious is important. Starting therapy sessions regularly with one of these exercises is important, since anxiety should be reduced as much as possible before other treatments are introduced.

Complexity of Treatments

Beyond addressing basic anxiety, specific treatment of SM is necessary but very complex (Kearney, 2010). Treatments typically involve a combination of cognitive restructuring, contingency management, defocused communication, goal setting, hierarchical exposure, modelling, priming, prompting, role-playing, shaping, social skills training, and stimulus fading (Zakszeski & DuPaul, 2017). With so many methods available, typical teachers or counsellors must make a significant time investment to familiarize themselves with these intervention strategies. Further, this intensive treatment endeavor requires co-ordination of numerous personnel: parents, teachers, counsellors, vice principals, educational assistants, and others. Together, these professionals must be educated on how each can play a role, agree on the treatment methods to be used, and coordinate the implementation collaboratively (Zakszeski & DuPaul, 2017). Finally, the time commitment involved can extend from several months to a year (Bork & Bennet, 2020), posing organizational and fiscal

challenges. Treatment for SM seems daunting due to the complexity involved yet, if the implications for the life of the student are considered, perhaps these barriers could be overcome.

Simplifying Interventions

Removing the complexity of SM treatment involves educating those involved in a few methods, particularly those methods that have demonstrated the most effective outcomes for students. By alleviating the burden related to mastering so many approaches, teachers will have more time to focus on what is necessary and so eliminate much of the time investment in researching every possible method that might be used in treatment. Also, by simplifying the approach, administration, counsellors, and teachers will be better equipped to coordinate their efforts. Poling Bork and Sheila Bennett (2020) are aware of the above need for consolidation of treatment options. Given this, they present video self-modelling, an approach that also incorporates fading and reinforcement (contingency management), as most effective. Their research indicates that effective treatment could take place in as little as eight weeks. Consolidating options, educating staff, and constraining treatment time may resolve many problems educators face in dealing with SM.

Video Self-Modelling

Video self-modelling (VSM) involves recording the child speaking to a trusted adult in an empty classroom (the student's home room) with a parent. In other words, the student is recorded producing speech in a low anxiety situation. The child is read a list of questions from a script by the trusted adult and answers each question in the order presented. The video is then edited, and the teacher replaces the trusted adult in the position of asking the questions. In this edited scenario, viewers perceive the child with SM as responding to the teacher in the classroom. Through viewing themselves corresponding with the teacher, the children become desensitized to the idea of speaking with the teacher. They become more comfortable with the recognition that they can do so (Bork & Bennett, 2020). Subsequent to this, students with SM move beyond recognition through the use of fading.

Fading

Fading involves "desensitizing the child of his or her feared stimulus (e.g. speaking to a teacher/peer) by gradually exposing the child to the stimulus until it no longer poses a threat to the child" (Bork & Bennett, 2020, p. 448). Other authors call it exposure-based practice (Kearney, 2010). It is based on an accumulation of information that ranks the child's anxieties and fears based on a hierarchical scale ranging from one (being very comfortable) to ten (being very anxious or afraid). Once the list is compiled, slow steps are constructed so that the learner can become comfortable in new and more difficult situations. The teacher and the child move down the list until the child becomes comfortable in even their most challenging situations. In video self-monitoring, the child is comfortable with a parent in the classroom alone. The child then becomes comfortable watching the video of them interacting with the teacher in the classroom with the parent. Another example of fading is having the parent and child play Guess Who in the empty classroom. After the child is comfortable playing with the parent, the teacher is introduced to the periphery of the room. Eventually, the teacher comes into proximity with the game and starts making statements related to the game. These statements are not directed to the child but take the form of general comments such as the following: "Maybe it is . . ." or "I wonder who is left?" At this point, eye contact is avoided (Bork & Bennett, 2020). This approach is called defocused communication, and it reduces the anxiety of the child since they do not feel compelled to answer (Oerbeck et al., 2018). Eventually, the child feels comfortable responding to the comments of the teacher. To make the treatment even more effective, researchers have also added contingency management to reward and reinforce positive behaviour.

Contingency Management

Contingency management is based on the behaviourist idea that rewards motivate positive behaviour. In Bork and Bennet's (2020) example of VSM, children were asked to watch the video. Each time a child viewed their own response to the teacher within the edited video, the video was paused, and the child was invited to select a reward. After the child became comfortable with this process, a mystery reward concealed in an envelope on top of the teacher's desk was revealed. To receive this mystery reward, the child would need to ask for it in front of the parent and classmates. Moving forward, rewards should be given in relation to speaking and encouraging a SM student, but one needs to consider the situations in which the speech happens. Rewards must consider the volume of the speech, the setting of the speech, and the extent of the speech (number of words uttered). Intervenor should encourage an increase in the volume of speech, variety of settings in which speech occurs, and length of sentences (Kearney, 2010). Rewards can be chosen by the child to keep the child highly motivated, but educators must never reward a child if the behaviour is not exhibited. Additionally, educators must maintain and communicate very clear expectations if contingency management is to be effective in coordination with the other techniques.

Fading and contingency management were added to VSM so that the desired results will be lasting and the onset of speech quick. The longitudinal nature of this intervention must still be studied; the trial discussed here included only a one-month follow up (Bork & Bennett, 2020). The only successful treatment for which longitudinal studies are available is cognitive restructuring or cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). Some psychologists fear that contingency management training will not prove to have lasting longevity since the desired behaviour might fade as rewards fade. For this reason, they turn to changing thought patterns that influence behaviour in order to decrease the likelihood of relapse.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

CBT methodology focuses on addressing the underlying thoughts of the child, particularly those related to fears and anxieties. The idea is to have children slowly replace negative and nonproductive thoughts with positive ones or coping statements (Oerbeck et al., 2018). Many children with SM will have "maladaptive thoughts or worries about speaking before others" (Kearney, 2010, p. 93). The goal of CBT, usually implemented over a period of two to six months (Oerbeck et al., 2018), is to alleviate these concerns. If a child is focusing on a possible negative speech outcome such as peer laughter, the teacher or counsellor can inquire about how many times that outcome has occurred. The teacher or counsellor can then discuss what might be done if laughter were to take place. Educators should advise children with SM not to "guess" how people will react and remind them that embarrassment is temporary. Children should also be reminded that practice will result in better speech (Kearney, 2010). Alleviating fears and reminding children that they are not logical can help to restructure thought patterns that are preventing speech (Anxiety Canada, n.d.). VSM, incorporating fading, and contingency management seem highly effective in the short term for addressing SM in an educational setting, while CBT treatments can present more lasting longitudinal results.

Conclusion

Students with SM tend to sit quietly and do their work. Teachers stand by quietly misdiagnosing and misunderstanding, thinking the student is shy or displaying oppositional behaviour. Counsellors are overwhelmed with the complexity of intervention methods, and vice principals cannot justify intervention for an otherwise average student. However, students with SM no longer need to struggle by themselves or face potentially lifelong deficits. Focusing on anxiety and consolidating treatments such as VSM, fading, contingency management, and CBT can help teachers and

educator teams to prepare a toolkit to intervene effectively. If properly applied, we can all begin to tell a new tale, especially those who used to struggle with SM.

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About the Author

Karl developed a strong interest in childhood education after having children of his own. "What are they learning?" "Are they learning to the best of their ability?" These questions moved him to begin a Master of Education degree where he is beginning to uncover even more questions!

Yazidi Refugee Students: A Lost Generation Finding Their Way

Carla Sadler

Abstract

This paper examines issues that Yazidi refugee students face upon arrival to Canada, and interventions that schools can implement to support these students. Due to traumatic experiences, Yazidi students suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Therefore, school staff need training to recognize the symptoms of PTSD, and schools must provide targeted counselling services and connections to community-based services. Yazidi students are often illiterate or have gaps in education, so schools need to incorporate inclusive practices to increase engagement, and provide instruction that focuses on emergent literacy and functional language. Teachers require specific training that addresses the academic needs of Yazidi students.

The Yazidi refugee population is a relatively new, but growing, group of refugees. Winnipeg currently has the largest population of Yazidi refugees in Canada (Wilkinson et al., 2019). Most Yazidis come from northern Iraq, and are escaping religious persecution and genocide at the hands of Daesh¹ (Standing Committee, 2018). Beginning in August 2014, 40,000 Yazidis tried to escape to the Sinjar Mountains. Thousands of women and children were kidnapped, raped, and sold in slave markets (Kizilhan & Noll-Hussong, 2017). Yazidi families who escaped and arrived in Canada are living with extreme trauma (Standing Committee, 2018). Their children are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), resulting in mental health issues and emotional dysregulation (Khamis, 2019). Schools can be key in identifying the symptoms of PTSD and ensuring that students and their families have access to essential mental health services (Baak et al., 2019). Most Yazidi students have significant gaps in education or no formal education at all, and are therefore illiterate (Wilkinson et al., 2019). To close these gaps, schools must adopt a holistic approach that incorporates language and literacy, and initiatives that embrace diversity and inclusion (McNeely et al., 2017). This poses challenges for teachers who are not trained to support students with such intensive academic and emotional needs (Raponi, 2016). Teachers require professional development related to PTSD and, especially for middle and senior years teachers, early literacy learning and intervention strategies (Jowett, 2019).

Mental Health Supports

Yazidi children, young girls in particular, have had horrendous experiences that make them susceptible to mental health issues (Standing Committee, 2018). When children suffer from trauma, they frequently exhibit symptoms of PTSD such as mental health issues, recurring memories about the traumatic event, and severe anxiety (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). In turn, this can lead to prolonged states of emotional dysregulation (Mancini, 2019). For refugee children, PTSD and emotional dysregulation often go hand in hand (Khamis, 2019). They may have a dissociative response, mentally removing themselves from the present situation. Essentially, the students will shut off their emotions and become “numb” to the world around them (Perry & Szalavitz, 2017). As a result, Yazidi students struggle with behaviour problems and hostility, which can lead to a lack of connection with their classmates and their school community. I have witnessed Yazidi students whose anxiety is so debilitating that they withdraw to the point of not leaving their homes. If the mental health needs of Yazidi students are not properly diagnosed and treated, students will disengage. This can lead to a lack of academic success, and in the later grades students are more

¹ “also called ‘Islamic State,’ ‘IS,’ ‘ISIS’ or ‘ISIL’” (Standing Committee, 2018, p. 7)

susceptible to quitting school (Mancini, 2019). For Yazidi students to thrive, it is imperative for schools to recognize and to deal with the effects of trauma that these students face.

Identifying the signs of PTSD and providing mental health supports are essential to the education of Yazidi students. Learning cannot take place until these needs are first met (Baak et al., 2019). Aside from home, students spend the majority of their time in school, which makes it an ideal place to begin counselling interventions (Raponi, 2016). In many schools, counselling services are limited (Hos, 2016). For example, I work in a school that has two counsellors for approximately 700 students, despite having a high number of refugee students in addition to other students with counselling needs. Schools that have a high number of students suffering from trauma need to be provided with extra counselling support. Staff need to be trained to recognize the symptoms of PTSD, so that they can proactively refer students to the necessary services. There needs to be an organized system that leads from recognition to referral, to support, to follow up, with communication and documentation at each stage (Baak et al., 2019). Schools should also offer support for students' family members who are not in the educational system.

Many Yazidi families encounter obstacles while accessing mental health supports that they desperately need. Aside from the obvious language barriers, there is often a cultural stigma surrounding mental health (Standing Committee, 2018). In Winnipeg, Ryerson School hosts a "Newcomer Community Hub" specifically for Yazidi and Syrian refugees. This is a collaboration between Pembina Trails School Division and various newcomer organizations (Gaidola, 2019). Families can access mental health services and gain an understanding of the importance of counselling. It is my experience that if a family unit thrives, the student will achieve greater success. Once the effects of PTSD are addressed and being managed, Yazidi youth must next face the challenge of adapting to the Canadian school system.

Academic Programming

Students with interrupted formal education (SIFE) are students who have had "limited access to education" or poor-quality schooling (Drake, 2017, p. 338). Manitoba Education considers immigrant SIFE to be three years or more below grade level or students who have never attended school (Jowett, 2019). Schools are frequently closed during times of war or there is no schooling available for refugee students while they are en route to safety, so education is often inaccessible (Bang, 2017). Most Yazidi SIFE who arrive to Canada are illiterate in their own language, Kurmanji, since it is not taught in Iraqi schools. Some have very limited literacy in Arabic, but because this was the language of their slave owners, most refuse to speak it (Wilkinson et al., 2019). Learning another language is challenging. Being illiterate and learning a new language is even more challenging. Yazidi SIFE also do not have the content knowledge or critical thinking skills mandated by the provincial curricula or typical of the grade level that they are entering. They must begin by learning basic "student skills" (Bang, 2017, p. 56). Many competences learned in the primary grades are first learned by older Yazidi students when they enter Canadian classrooms. To remedy these issues, schools must provide targeted literacy programs and content area interventions.

To ensure academic success, it is essential that Yazidi SIFE have comprehensive language and literacy programs. This is especially true for middle years and senior years students. On average, it takes ten years for SIFE to learn academic English, so time is of the essence (McNeely et al., 2017). Practical language skills necessary for everyday functioning should be a priority for Yazidi students. This will increase student engagement as the language learning spreads into curricular areas (Ross & Ziemke, 2016). It is common for middle schools and high schools to have SIFE begin with a separate program that focuses on functional language and specific language related to academic content. This facilitates a smoother transition to regular classes. Instruction should be flexible and adapted to meet the needs of each SIFE (Jowett, 2019). Language and literacy need to be incorporated across all subject areas, not just in English language arts. Content area teachers must ensure that the chosen texts match the literacy and language levels of SIFE (Ross & Ziemke, 2016). Teachers can use common reading comprehension strategies such as

retelling, summarizing, and asking questions. Comprehension strategies should be paired with word study that includes phonological awareness, word sorting activities, and word walls. This will support students who feel more comfortable with the content, but lack the language and vocabulary (Jowett, 2019). Above all else, teachers need to ensure they access students' prior knowledge. Although they do not have traditional education or knowledge of western educational values, Yazidi SIFE come to Canada with a multitude of valuable experiences. When possible, teachers should try to relate content to Yazidi experiences and culture (Hanover Research, 2014). This will help students engage academically. It will also help them to feel accepted as members of the classroom and school communities.

Social-Emotional Wellness

Incorporating inclusive practices and creating a sense of belonging are essential for Yazidi students. Social connections are critical ways to keep SIFE engaged and to reduce the risk of them dropping out of school (Jowett, 2019). Whole school and classroom level community building is imperative. Schools need to create a climate where diversity is valued and seen as an asset, and inclusion is embedded in the school culture (Hanover Research, 2014). Every student should feel like their culture and background is valuable, and every staff member has the responsibility to ensure that this happens. In the classroom, teachers play a key role in helping Yazidi students adjust socially and emotionally (Hos, 2016). Teachers must purposefully implement activities that create a strong sense of classroom community. A good place to start is learning about each student's personal interests and finding ways to incorporate them into the classroom and into lesson planning. This will increase student engagement, attendance, and overall success (Schnellert et al., 2020). Making collaborative classroom agreements is a way for students to feel like they have a voice. Sharing circles are a way for students to get to know each other, value each other's diversity, and foster empathy. When strong connections and relationships are developed, at-risk students, such as Yazidi SIFE, become more engaged and are more likely to stay in school (Schnellert et al., 2020). To ensure that Yazidi students achieve optimal success, teachers first need specific training related to working with SIFE.

Teacher Training

Teachers are often untrained and unprepared to meet the unique needs of Yazidi students. Many teachers have expressed feeling ill equipped to teach instructional level literacy and English language acquisition (Jowett, 2020). This is especially true for middle years and senior years teachers, whose backgrounds focus more heavily on content area teaching (Drake, 2017). A lack of appropriate resources, such as low-level high interest reading materials, is also a significant issue (Raponi, 2016). Most teachers do not have specific training related to working with students who have suffered extreme trauma, nor have they had professional development related to the history or experiences of the Yazidi population (Wilkinson et al., 2019). As a result, there is sometimes confusion and miscommunication between Yazidi students, families, and educators. Teachers are often left feeling frustrated by their lack of efficacy in supporting these students. Administrators have the duty to ensure that they are providing teachers with appropriate professional development so that they are properly equipped to teach Yazidi students.

Currently, teachers do not require any specific training to work with SIFE (McNeely et al., 2017). However, they overwhelmingly express wanting training related to supporting the mental health needs of Yazidi students and early literacy and language intervention strategies. Teachers want to help these students achieve the same level of success as their peers (Raponi, 2016). Whole school professional development in relation to cultural competency is essential. All school staff working with Yazidi SIFE should be aware of their backgrounds and their experiences (Hanover Research, 2014). This will help inform teaching topics and create an understanding of why Yazidi students may require extra attention. Teachers must have training from experts to

recognize the symptoms and effects of PTSD and to understand that these symptoms are not simply behaviour issues (Baak et al., 2019). Yazidi students need support as quickly as possible, and teachers are often the first people to witness these behaviours. Teachers need to know when to contact counsellors, school psychologists, or school social workers (Jowett, 2019). Finally, although not typically seen as part of middle or high school teachers' jobs, it is essential that all content area teachers of Yazidi students receive training in emergent literacy strategies and language development (Ross & Ziemke, 2016). Teachers must be able to competently adapt and differentiate for each student, including SIFE.

Conclusion

Yazidi SIFE face many challenges in the Canadian school system. Although Yazidi students indicate that they appreciate being part of a school community, the effects of their trauma and mental health needs create many barriers in learning and in overall school performance (Standing Committee, 2018). Interventions must be timely and should involve all stakeholders, including family members (Raponi, 2016). The significant amounts of interrupted or no formal schooling have led to extremely high rates of illiteracy in the Yazidi mother tongue of Kurmanji, which makes learning English and learning the Canadian curricula difficult (Wilkinson et al., 2019). Schools must provide a holistic education that meets the academic and social-emotional needs of Yazidi students. Educators do not have the professional training required to reduce the academic disparities and to mitigate the effects of trauma that Yazidi students face (Raponi, 2016). Administrators must build capacity in their staff by providing relevant professional development and training that addresses the needs of Yazidi SIFE. Yazidi children are among the most resilient children that I have encountered as an educator. Despite their past traumas, they have a determination and a drive to succeed. Teachers have the opportunity to be life-changing mentors for these special students on their journey to success.

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FOCUS ON FACULTY RESEARCH

Factors That Affect Grade Nine Students in Northern Manitoba, Canada

Marion Terry and Amjad Malik

We initiated the study in response to school counsellors' concerns over the effects of non-educational video gaming and texting on students' school performance. The research purpose was to examine the correlations between various factors and academic performance 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 data sets were obtained for 21 of the grade 9 students who were invited from six high schools in a Northern Manitoba school division (6 boys and 15 girls). Academic performance data consisted of the students' attendance (number of classes attended) and final marks (percentage grades in English, mathematics, science, and social studies). Survey data consisted of the students' answers to 40 questionnaire items: demographics, parental support, peer relationships, extra-curricular activities, school activities, self-esteem, self-advocacy, video games, and texting.

Data Analysis

Pearson product-moment calculations determined correlations between the school performance scores for attendance and school marks. Spearman rho calculations determined correlations that involved the Likert-scale survey answers. Correlational research requires a minimum of 30 research subjects to produce statistically significant correlations. Separating our 21 grade 9 students by gender further reduced the overall statistical significance of our findings, but was important in order to test the assumption that "boys play video games, but girls text" – as conveyed to us by counsellors, other educational professionals, parents, and other adults in the general community. The following classifications reflect the relative strength of the 165 correlations chosen for this report.

<u>coefficients</u>	<u>strength</u>	<u>predictability</u>
(+ or -) .500 to .599	good	fair
(+ or -) .600 to .699	very good	good
(+ or -) .700 to .799	excellent	very good
(+ or -) .800 to .899	superior	excellent
(+ or -) .900 to .999	almost perfect	superior
(+ or -) 1.00	perfect	absolute

Results

Our results confirm school counsellors' concerns over the relationships between non-educational video gaming and texting, and academic performance and other school experiences. Of the other factors, self-concept, peer relationships, parental support, and other non-academic activities produced the most interesting correlations.

The following tables summarize the gender-separated correlations ranging from good to perfect. Despite the small numbers of male and female research participants, we obtained correlations with statistically significant two-tailed low probability of error: $p < .01$ or $p < .05$. These probabilities of error are indicated where relevant.

Males

Table 1. Time Spent Playing Video Games

The more hours adolescent boys spend playing video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>video games</i>		
. . . the more they think they spend too much time playing video games.	very good	+ .657
. . . the more they are told that they spend too much time playing video games.	good	+ .500
<i>school</i>		
. . . the more they miss school because of playing video games.	almost perfect	+ .920 p<.01
. . . the less they feel good in school.	good	- .575
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the more they fear being rejected by their friends.	superior	+ .826 p<.05
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the less they like other activities more than school classes.	superior	- .836 p<.05

Table 2. Positive Video Game Experiences

The more adolescent boys want a video game club in school . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>texting</i>		
. . . the more text messages they send during school classes.	good	+ .566
<i>school</i>		
. . . the more they fall behind in their assignments.	excellent	+ .767
. . . the higher marks they earn.	almost perfect	+ .939 p<.01
<i>self-concept</i>		
. . . the more they feel that other people are happier.	good	+ .567
. . . the more they feel hurt when they are criticized.	superior	+ .894 p<.05
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the less frequently they play sports.	excellent	- .733
The more adolescent boys feel good when they play video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i>		
. . . the higher marks they earn.	good	+ .548
<i>self-concept</i>		
. . . the more they feel that other people are happier.	excellent	+ .783
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the less they have friends who quit school.	very good	- .671
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the busier their lives are outside of school	superior	+ .820 p<.05
. . . the more they like other activities other than school	excellent	+ .763
. . . the more hours they work during the week.	very good	+ .657
The more importance adolescent boys attach to playing video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>texting</i>		
. . . the fewer text messages they send during school classes.	good	- .566
<i>school</i>		
. . . the fewer school classes they attend.	good	- .546
. . . the less they feel good in school.	very good	- .635
. . . the more they feel sleepy in school.	excellent	+ .750
. . . the more they fall behind in their assignments.	good	+ .581
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the more they fear being rejected by their friends.	good	+ .508

Table 3. Negative Video Game Experiences

The more adolescent boys think they play video games too much . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>texting</i> ... the fewer text messages they send during school classes.	good	-.566
<i>school</i> ... the fewer school classes they attend. ... the less they feel good in school. ... the less they like their teachers. ... the less teachers say they have a good attitude in school.	excellent superior very good good	-.751 -.853 p<.05 -.652 -.567
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that they “mess up” everything.	good	+.567
<i>peers</i> ... the more they have friends who quit school. ... the more they fear being rejected by their friends.	good excellent	+.559 +.754
<i>parents</i> ... the more their parents encourage them to do well in school.	excellent	+.710
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the fewer hours they work during the week.	very good	-.602
The more adolescent boys miss school because of playing video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the fewer school classes they attend. ... the less they feel good in school.	good excellent	-.514 -.718
<i>peers</i> ... the more they fear being rejected by their friends.	superior	+.898 p<.05
The more adolescent boys lie about how much they play video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>texting</i> ... the fewer text messages they send during school classes.	very good	-.632
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn. ... the more they fall behind in their assignments.	superior very good	-.840 p<.05 +.671
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel hurt when they are criticized.	perfect	+1.00 p<.01
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the less they like other activities other than school ... the less frequently they play sports	superior superior	-.836 p<.05 -.894 p<.05
The more adolescent boys are told they play video games too much . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn. ... the more they fall behind in their assignments.	excellent good	-.789 +.584
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel hurt when they are criticized.	almost perfect	+.980 p<.01
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the less frequently they play sports.	superior	-.876 p<.05

Table 4. Time Spent Texting

The more hours adolescent boys spend sending text messages . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i>		
. . . the more they like their teachers.	good	+ .539
. . . the more teachers say they have a good attitude in school.	good	+ .566
. . . the less they feel sleepy in school.	good	- .548
<i>self-concept</i>		
. . . the more they feel that other people are happier.	excellent	+ .707
. . . the more they feel that they “mess up” everything.	good	+ .566
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the more they feel that they are easy to get along with.	very good	+ .696
<i>parents</i>		
. . . the more their parents encourage them to do well in school.	good	+ .548
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the busier their lives are outside of school.	very good	+ .696
. . . the more they like other activities more than school classes.	very good	+ .674
The more text messages adolescent boys send during school classes . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>texting</i>		
. . . the more they enjoy texting with their friends.	good	+ .539
<i>school</i>		
. . . the higher marks they earn.	very good	+ .664
. . . the more they feel good in school.	very good	+ .696
. . . the less they feel sleepy in school.	good	- .548
. . . the less they fall behind in their assignments	excellent	- .707
<i>self-concept</i>		
. . . the less they feel hurt when they are criticized.	very good	- .632
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the more they feel that they are easy to get along with.	very good	+ .696
. . . the less they have friends who quit school.	very good	- .632
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the less frequently they play sports.	good	- .566
. . . the more hours they work during the week.	excellent	+ .775

Table 5. Positive Texting Experiences

The more importance adolescent boys attach to texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>self-concept</i>		
. . . the more they feel that other people are happier.	excellent	+ .738
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the less they have friends who quit school.	excellent	- .707
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the busier their lives are outside of school.	excellent	+ .726
. . . the more they like other activities more than school.	almost perfect	+ .905 p<.05
. . . the more hours they work during the week.	very good	+ .693
The more adolescent boys enjoy texting with their friends . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>self-concept</i>		
. . . the more they feel that other people are happier.	good	+ .509
<i>peers</i>		
. . . the more they feel they are easy to get along with.	superior	+ .813 p<.05
<i>other non-academic activities</i>		
. . . the more they like other activities more than school.	good	+ .500

Table 6. Negative Texting Experiences

The more adolescent boys think they spend too much time texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the less they like their teachers. ... the less teachers say they have a good attitude in school. ... the more they feel sleepy in school.	very good very good very good	-.606 -.652 +.677
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that they “mess up” everything.	very good	+.652
<i>peers</i> ... the less they feel they are easy to get along with.	good	-.594
<i>parents</i> ... the more their parents encourage them to do well in school.	good	+.554
The more adolescent boys miss school due to texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more they feel sleepy in school.	good	+.548
<i>self-concept</i> ... the less they feel hurt when they are criticized.	very good	-.632
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the less they like other activities more than school. ... the less frequently they play sports.	good good	-.539 -.566
The more adolescent boys lie about how much time they spend texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>peers</i> ... the more they fear being rejected by their friends.	very good	+.696
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that other people are happier.	good	+.566
<i>parents</i> ... the more their parents encourage them to do well in school.	good	+.548
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the less they like other activities more than school.	good	-.539
The more adolescent boys are told they spend too much time texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the fewer school classes they attend. ... the less they feel good in school. ... the more they fall behind in their assignments.	very good good superior	-.669 -.575 +.876

Table 7. School Experiences

The better adolescent boys feel when they are in a classroom. . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more school classes they attend.	superior	+.893 p<.01
The more adolescent boys fall behind in their assignments. . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the fewer school classes they attend. ... the lower marks they earn.	excellent very good	-.736 -.626

Table 8. Negative Self-Concept

The more adolescent boys feel other people are happier than they are . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the higher marks they earn.	very good	+ .611
The more adolescent boys feel hurt when they are criticized . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the higher marks they earn.	superior	+ .840 p<.05

Table 9. Negative Peer Relationships

The more adolescent boys have friends who quit school . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the less they like their teachers. ... the less teachers say they have a good attitude in school.	good very good	-.533 -.671
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that they “mess up” everything.	very good	+ .671
The more adolescent boys fear being rejected by their friends . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more school classes they attend. ... the more they feel good in school. ... the more they like their teachers.	excellent excellent good	+ .708 + .742 + .563
<i>parents</i> ... the more their parents encourage them to do well in school.	very good	+ .635

Table 10. Parental Support

The more adolescent boys’ parents encourage them to do well in school . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more school classes they attend. ... the more they feel good in school. ... the more they like their teachers. ... the more teachers say they have a good attitude in school. ... the less they feel sleepy in school	very good good almost perfect almost perfect good	+ .606 + .508 + .985 p<.01 + .904 p<.05 -.500
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that they “mess up” everything.	almost perfect	+ .904 p<.05

Table 11. Non-Academic Activities Other Than Playing Video Games and Texting

The busier adolescent boys’ lives are outside of school . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more school classes they attend. ... the more they like their teachers. ... the more they feel sleepy in school.	very good good good	+ .647 + .532 + .508
<i>self-concept</i> ... the less they feel that other people are happier.	very good	-.656
<i>parents</i> ... the more their parents encourage them to do well in school.	very good	+ .635

The more adolescent boys like other activities more than school classes. . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more they feel sleepy in school.	good	+ .554
<i>self-concept</i> ... the less they feel that other people are happier.	excellent	-.715
<i>peers</i> ... the less they fear being rejected by their friends.	good	-.563
The more frequently adolescent boys play sports. . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the higher marks they earn.	excellent	+ .751
... the more teachers say they have a good attitude in school.	good	+ .567
<i>self-concept</i> ... the less they feel that they "mess up" everything.	good	-.567
... the less they feel hurt when they are criticized.	superior	-.894 p<.05
<i>peers</i> ... the more they have friends who quit school.	good	+ .559
The more hours that adolescent boys work during the week . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the less they feel good in school.	good	-.539
... the less teachers say they have a good attitude in school.	good	-.584
<i>self-concept</i> ... the less they feel that they "mess up" everything.	good	-.584
<i>peers</i> ... the more they feel that they are easy to get along with	good	+ .539
... the more they have friends who quit school.	almost perfect	+ .980 p<.01

Females

Table 12. Time Spent Playing Video Games

The more hours adolescent girls spend playing video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>video games</i> ... the more they feel good when they play video games.	good	+ .534 p<.05
... the more importance they attach to playing video games.	good	+ .527 p<.05

Table 13. Positive Video Game Experiences

The more adolescent girls want a video game club in school . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the less teachers say they have a good attitude in school.	good	-.529 p<.05
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the less frequently they play sports.	good	-.512

Table 14. Negative Video Game Experiences

The more adolescent girls think they play video games too much . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn.	very good	-.661 p<.01
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that other people are happier. ... the less they feel hurt when they are criticized.	good good	+.504 -.517 p<.05
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the more they like other activities more than school.	good	+.550 p<.05
The more adolescent girls miss school because of playing video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the fewer school classes they attend.	excellent	-.719 p<.01
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel that other people are happier.	superior	+.824 p<.01
The more adolescent girls lie about how much they play video games . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn.	superior	-.884 p<.01
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel hurt when they are criticized.	almost perfect	+.955 p<.01
The more adolescent girls are told they play video games too much . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn.	superior	-.884 p<.01
<i>self-concept</i> ... the more they feel hurt when they are criticized.	almost perfect	+.955 p<.01

Table 15. Time Spent Texting

The more hours adolescent girls spend sending text messages . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>texting</i> ... the more they enjoy texting with their friends.	good	+.515 p<.05
<i>school</i> ... the more they like their teachers.	good	+.503

Table 16. Positive Texting Experiences

The more adolescent girls enjoy texting with their friends . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>peers</i> ... the more they feel that they are easy to get along with.	very good	+.604 p<.05

Table 17. Negative Texting Experiences

The more adolescent girls think they spend too much time texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>peers</i> ... the less they feel that they are easy to get along with.	good	-.572 p<.05
The more adolescent girls miss school due to texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>other non-academic activities</i> ... the less they like other activities more than school.	good	-.522 p<.05

The more adolescent girls lie about how much time they spend texting . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more they feel sleepy in school.	good	+ .524 p<.05

Table 18. Negative Self-Concept

The more adolescent girls feel other people are happier than they are . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the fewer school classes they attend.	superior	- .835 p<.01
The more adolescent girls feel hurt when they are criticized . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn.	superior	- .885 p<.01

Table 19. Positive Peer Relationships

The more adolescent girls think they are easy to get along with . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the more they feel good in school.	very good	+ .699 p<.01

Table 20. Non-Academic Activities Other Than Playing Video Games and Texting

The more adolescent girls like other activities more than school classes . . .	correlation strength	coefficient
<i>school</i> ... the lower marks they earn.	good	- .574 p<.05

Discussion

Males

The more grade 9 boys play video games, whether the experiences are positive or negative –

- the less likely they are to have positive school experiences such as earning higher marks and feeling good in school classes
- the more likely they are to have negative school experiences such as feeling sleepy in class and falling behind in their assignments.
- the more likely they are to have negative self-concept attributes such as feeling that other people are happier than they are, feeling that they “mess up” everything, and feeling really hurt when they are criticized.
- the more likely they are to have negative peer relationship attributes such as fearing rejection by their friends.
- the less likely they are to engage in other non-academic activities such as playing sports and working during the week.

The more grade 9 boys send text messages and have positive texting experiences –

- the more likely they are to have positive school experiences such as earning higher marks and feeling good in school classes.
- the less likely they are to have negative school experiences such as feeling sleepy in class and falling behind in their assignments.

The more grade 9 boys think, or are told, that they text too much –

- the less likely they are to attend school classes and to have positive school experiences such as feeling good in school, liking their teachers, and having teachers say that they have a good attitude toward school.
- the more likely they are to have negative school experiences such as feeling sleepy in class and falling behind in their assignments.

Females

The more grade 9 girls think they play video games too much or miss school because of playing video games –

- the less likely they are to attend school classes and have positive school experiences such as earning higher marks.
- the more likely they are to have negative self-concept attributes such as feeling that other people are happier than they are.

The more grade 9 girls lie about how much time they play video games or are told that they play too much –

- the less likely they are to earn higher school marks
- the more likely they are to have negative self-concept attributes such as feeling really hurt when they are criticized.

The more grade 9 girls send text messages and have positive texting experiences –

- the more likely they are to have positive school experiences such as liking their teachers.
- the more likely they are to have positive peer relationship attributes such as being easy to get along with.

The more grade 9 girls think they text too much –

- the less likely they are to have positive peer relationship attributes such as being easy to get along with.

The more grade 9 girls lie about how much time they spend texting –

- the more likely they are to have negative school experiences such as feeling sleepy in class.

Closing Comment

Our findings are remarkable in that such a small research sample yielded notable correlations, many of which are statistically significant. Replicating the study in other similar communities would ascertain whether our results are generalizable to other grade 9 students in this geographic and socio-cultural region of Canada.

About the Researchers

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