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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Marion Terry, Ph.D.

Welcome to the thirty-second issue of the *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, devoted to rural, northern, and Aboriginal education. Our authors for volume 14, 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.

- o Laura Van Mulligen's refereed article examines the problem of attrition in university nursing education programs.

- o Raj Brar's refereed article takes an educator's perspective to minimize the risks and maximize the advantages associated with adolescent use of social media.

- o Alyson Giroux's refereed article calls upon schools to address students' nutritional needs that have been exacerbated by the effects of COVID-19.

- o Jamie Blyth's refereed article explicates math anxiety as a foundation for exploring classroom-based solutions.

- o Stephen Proskurniak's refereed article challenges educators to include skilled trades training as a school subject equivalent in importance to numeracy, literacy, and information technology.

- o Shyla Mills' refereed article urges Canada to incorporate trauma-informed practices that will support refugee school children who are struggling due to past traumas in their lives.

- o Hannah Beghin's refereed article recommends having students write a currere as a catalyst for teaching them how to be respectful and aware of cultural and transcultural differences.

- o Paula Opperman's refereed article discusses ways to address the problem of increased mental health concerns among students in the school setting.

This issue also features a "Focus on Faculty" research-based article by Marion Terry.

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Addressing Student Attrition in Nursing Education Programs

Laura Van Mulligen

Abstract

With the current global nursing shortage expected to continue and even deepen, it is essential that nursing programs consider the influencing factors which are affecting student retention and attrition rates. These factors include both intrinsic and extrinsic factors, student supports within the university and community, the level of faculty involvement, and the opportunity for students to complete remediation. As well, universities need to address the constraints such as faculty shortages and the effects of the current pandemic in addressing student attrition rates within nursing programs.

In the current health care landscape, graduating competent nurses is important to fill the current staffing shortages and prepare for the future needs of the health care system. Over the last number of years, nursing programs have had a drastic increase in student attrition rates (Jeffreys, 2007), particularly in the second year of nursing programs during which attrition rates tend to be highest (Jakubec et al., 2020). Given the important role nurses play in providing safe care to patients and families (McLaughlin et al., 2008) and in consideration of the global nursing shortage (Emerson, 2015), addressing attrition rates in nursing education programs is of paramount concern. Furthermore, it is anticipated that nursing shortages will only become more acute given the COVID-19 pandemic (Fenn, 2021).

With the increased demand for nurses to graduate, the government has encouraged nursing programs to increase the number of admission seats (Hadenfelt, 2015); however, increased attrition rates create empty seats within nursing programs and result in lost revenue for nursing programs (McLaughlin et al., 2008). Most nursing programs in North America are government-subsidized and there is significant financial loss for both the government and students when failure occurs. Many contributing factors influence attrition rates in nursing programs: intrinsic and extrinsic factors, supports, faculty involvement, and the opportunity for remediation.

Intrinsic and Extrinsic Factors

Student attrition rates can be related to both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. These factors can affect student motivation and academic achievement (Emerson, 2015). Globally, students are often unprepared for the demands of post-secondary education; often they are unable to write, have limited math skills, and have not developed critical thinking skills (Daniels & Mthimunye, 2019). Having lower entrance Grade Point Averages (GPA) can influence academic success in nursing programs, because students are academically unprepared for the academic and clinical demands of a professional nursing program (Rolf et al., 2019). At-risk students have identified feeling overwhelmed with the demands of a full-time, fast-paced nursing program and often struggle in developing effective study habits (Williams, 2010).

Difficulties in fitting in amongst peers and faculty has been noted as a contributing factor for success within nursing programs (Hadenfelt, 2015). International students and older students over the age of 24 have voiced problems related to fitting in with the rest of their cohort. This is due to language and cultural differences, as well as differences in life experiences in comparison to their classmates (Rolf et al., 2019). Students who have experienced academic failure reported having low self-confidence in their ability to apply theory and clinical abilities

(Custer, 2016). Hesitance to ask for help from faculty members, based on fear of knowledge deficits, language barriers, and the stigma of asking for help, contribute to academic failure (Daniels & Mthimunye, 2019).

Unfortunately, students may experience academic failure based on external logistical factors (Gaberson et al., 2015). Factors such as finding childcare, the financial need for employment while going to school, the geographical location of the university or clinical sites, and organizing transportation can all impact the success of students (Daniels & Mthimunye, 2019). Unreliable internet access has also been identified as a barrier to student academic success in nursing programs (Rolf et al., 2019). Due to influence of various intrinsic and extrinsic factors, student supports are imperative for academic success within nursing programs.

Supports

Students are often more motivated to succeed academically when they are a part of a community, either online or in person (Emerson, 2015), because supports to assist students in post-secondary education are paramount for success (Litchfield, 2001). Some students are the first in their family to attend post-secondary education and therefore do not have familial understanding of the demands of their nursing education (Hadenfelt, 2015). Having student service supports within the university setting can assist students academically, financially, and emotionally (Gaberson et al., 2015).

During the current pandemic, the access to supports has been a challenge. Students have been expected to resume the same course workloads using remote learning (Solution Path, 2021). Many students struggle to access supports, having never met the academic faculty in person or been on campus (Custer, 2016). Faculty involvement has a crucial role in supporting students getting connected with community within the university setting and supporting students to achieve academic goals.

Faculty Involvement

The level of faculty involvement is key in supporting nursing students. Encouraging student engagement in the classroom and clinical setting creates a positive learning environment where students can feel supported by faculty (Sportsman, 2020). By creating a trusting relationship with students, constructive feedback is more likely to be received in a meaningful way, in order to develop professional and personal growth for the student (McLaughlin et al., 2008). However, both the increase in the number of students admitted to nursing education programs and nursing faculty shortages are factors in improving faculty involvement, because high student-to-faculty ratios create difficulty in forming meaningful connections with students in both the classroom environment and the clinical setting (Palese et al., 2020).

Promoting a trusting and positive relationship with students is important for faculty to consider (Litchfield, 2001). Clearly explaining expectations at the beginning of the term and revisiting course objectives throughout the year promote trust between faculty and students (Chunta, 2016). Having low-stakes learning environments increases student confidence and creates a positive learning environment (Flott & Linden, 2016). Within the clinical setting, it is imperative that faculty provide students with timely feedback (Jakubec et al., 2020). Early identification of areas requiring improvement is the first step in assisting students in professional growth and improvement of clinical practice (Thilges & Schmer, 2020).

Conducting screening prior to admission into nursing programs identifies students at risk of academic failure (Bulfone et al., 2021). If early identification of at-risk nursing students occurs, faculty members then have the opportunity to address the diverse learning needs of the students, offer supports, and direct students to support services available in the university setting (Jeffreys, 2007). Providing feedback both verbally and in written form promotes student

growth and identifying areas that require further development reinforces safe clinical performance (Chunta, 2016). Therefore, meaningful faculty involvement is important in providing students with an opportunity for remediation.

The Opportunity for Remediation

Within nursing programs, the process of creating and implementing individualized learning plans is known as remediation (Reinhardt, 2015). The remediation process can be used for both theory and clinical performance issues (Thilges & Schmer, 2020). The content covered can be basic skills or bigger concepts, including review of technical skills or application of nursing theories (Custer, 2016). Early faculty intervention and implementation of remediation plans can be very beneficial to students and promotes positive outcomes academically (Sanabria et al., 2020). The ultimate goal of remediation is for students to address theoretical gaps in areas of practice requiring review so as to promote quality care of patients and ensure patient safety in the clinical setting (Reinhardt, 2015).

After detection of knowledge deficits or practice issues, the faculty member must initiate the remediation process based on the university's guiding policies to ensure the correct process (Gaberson et al., 2015). The faculty member and student must then meet to create an individualized learning plan (Corrigan-Magaldi et al., 2014). The individualized learning plan must be student-specific and involve both the student and faculty in identifying the student's strengths and areas requiring continued improvement (Reinhardt, 2015). The process of remediation can include review of technical skills in the laboratory setting and/or can be focused on previously-learned theory, through completion of case studies, presentations, or one-on-one conversations with faculty. At this time, students may be encouraged to seek out supports within the nursing department such as tutoring services, academic advising, or university supports such as counselling services or financial aid programs (Gallant et al., 2006). The remediation process must address the different learning styles of the students (Custer, 2018). Setting deadlines for students to demonstrate clinical competence and theoretical understanding, and for faculty to provide ongoing and timely feedback, must be part of the learning plan (Gallant et al., 2006). The process of remediation increases student confidence with technical skills and application of theoretical knowledge (Jakubec et al., 2020). For success to occur, students must identify areas requiring continued improvement and be committed to professional growth (Williams, 2010).

Limitations to implementation of the remediation process are many. High faculty workload and a lack of experienced clinical faculty are barriers because the remediation process is very time-consuming within busy nursing programs (Gallant et al., 2006). Supporting students one on one is a costly endeavour for a university and is not widely supported at the administrative level for credit allotment to academic or clinical faculty (Sanabria et al., 2020). Due to the nature of fast-paced nursing programs, students may not be able to meet the objectives of the remediation learning plan and may also miss the opportunity to withdraw voluntarily from difficult areas of study without academic penalty (Gallant et al., 2006).

With the rise in student attrition rates, it is important to consider the long-term effects of passing students who should be failing, because there are implications for success with the national licensure exam (Custer, 2016) and upon graduation risks to patient safety (Jakubec et al., 2020). Students should not be passed if there is significant harm to patients or if they are deemed clinically unprepared to care safely for patients and families (Chunta, 2016). Continued remediation until the standard is completely achieved is a better alternative, given the critical stakes.

Conclusion

Adding new nurses to the workforce is paramount for the existing staff needs and for the critical needs of patients (Fenn, 2021). Understanding the reason for high attrition rates, it is important to consider the intrinsic and extrinsic factors of students who enter nursing programs (Bulfone et al., 2021). Post-secondary programs must do everything possible to ensure that nursing students have support systems in place within the university setting (Gallant et al., 2006). Faculty involvement is key for students to feel involved in their learning journey to become registered nurses (Corrigan-Magaldi et al., 2014). It is important to have early detection of at-risk behaviours that lead to student failure (Solution Path, 2021). Having faculty meet with students who are struggling academically and commence an individualized remediation process is key in decreasing the attrition rates of nursing students (Reinhardt, 2015). Given that nursing shortages that are already extremely challenging and expected to be increased by the pandemic (Fenn, 2021), retaining students who enter nursing programs becomes even more important in addressing future health care needs.

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Adolescents and Social Media: Tools To Navigate Life Online

Raj Brar

Abstract

Social media is an important part of all of our lives. However, there is no requirement for students in Manitoba to receive formalized education in regards to social media and its usage in the K-12 Canadian curriculum instruction. Such formalized education is extremely important for adolescents to understand the multiple facets of social media usage and engagement. These facets include and are not limited to exploring both the risks and the advantages associated with social media usage, consistent classroom programming with multiple members of the school team (guidance counsellor, school social worker and school psychologist), access to community resources, and management of social media to navigate their life online. When adolescents are safe online, they can use social media as an important tool to enhance their lives.

Social media is a prevalent part of our lives, as we know them to be today. As far back as only fifteen years ago, the lives of adolescents were not as connected to their life online as they are today. Today, there are many social media platforms for young people to choose from, including Snapchat, Instagram, Tiktok and Tumblr. In 2021, more than 3 billion people in the world are using social media platforms, in comparison to fewer than a billion in 2010 (Santora, n.d., para. 2). It is no surprise that adolescents growing up today are very connected virtually. There are proven long-term negative outcomes of social media usage on adolescents and their well-being, such as dangers related to sexting, body dissatisfaction, and low self-esteem (Aparicio-Martinez et al., 2019). With access to social media at the fingertips of most teenagers, solutions for safe social media engagement must be explored. In order to make social media a safe way to engage in communication and connection online, one must explore both the risks and the advantages associated with social media usage. It is important that adolescents understand the true meaning of digital citizenship through classroom programming that prepares them for safety online, which extends beyond the walls of the classroom. A part of being safe online is having access to community resources to feel supported when adolescents and caregivers require guidance. Ultimately, adolescents need rules and regulations to serve as a guideline for success when accessing social media. Formalized education is extremely important for adolescents to engage in so that they can understand the multiple facets of social media usage and engagement.

Risks and Advantages

When using social media, it is important to understand the risks as well as advantages to be well equipped online. Social media presents obvious advantages that are visible to any user worldwide. Connecting with friends and loved ones both near and far is made easier than ever with access to social media such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. The OECD found that participating in online platforms is the most popular online leisurely activity among adolescents (Betton & Woollard, 2018). Engagement with social media is a balancing act for many young people. Adolescents are instantly drawn to the idea of connecting online with friends and strangers with similar social circles and interests. However, there are two sides to the coin when it comes to social media engagement for adolescents. Many adolescents describe the usage of social media as positive to connect with friends even when they are not physically close by (Wilson & Stock, 2021). Adolescents describe social media as improving their relationships with peers because they are able to connect instantly (Feliciano, 2015). Adolescents who are a part of online communities tend to feel connected, supported and understood, which is a significant advantage of social media as seen in many classrooms. Adolescents have shared that

connecting with others who are going through similar experiences helps them to feel less alone. There are also disadvantages involved in relationships online because online relationships do not provide adolescents with any face-to-face contact. However, online interaction can only go so far when connecting online with others. With a limitation of face-to-face interactions, many adolescents are lacking socialization skills (Price-Mitchell, 2019, para. 12). A lack of socialization skills in the classroom creates issues of belonging, leading many adolescents to feel unconnected to their classroom communities or peers.

While adolescents may not be connected to classroom communities, many adolescents feel a sense of community and belonging when they connect with others online. Adolescents have shared that feeling they were a part of something made them feel connected to others with similar experiences as they transition into adulthood (Wilson & Stock, 2021). This is a significant advantage to being connected online, especially during a time of enormous transition. However, the other side of being a part of an online community can consist of taking part in the sharing of negative experiences that other community members may open up about (Wilson & Stock, 2021). Sharing negative experiences amongst one another can lead to feelings of depression and increased mental health issues for many adolescents.

Hearing about the negative experiences of others can add to fear for oneself, such as sharing around issues related to health and sexuality. Adolescents may fear a sense of decline if they are going through physical health or mental health concerns (Wilson & Stock, 2021). The positive benefits of this could also be exchanging information with one another. It is important to note that the balance for adolescents could be tipped to one side at any point when it comes to the usage of social media. Self-reflection and awareness are required in order to manage when and how to best use social media for the purpose of helping adolescents to live a healthy life. With explicit instruction and support in navigating life online, a balance may become easier to maintain for many adolescents.

Classroom Programming

In order for adolescents to navigate their lives online in a safe manner, it is important to provide explicit education to adolescents about social media and their lives online. Manitoba's ICT curriculum is outdated because it focuses mostly on the use of technology, which in itself has changed drastically in the last decade. The curriculum should instead focus on the use of intentional educational programming, because it is an integral part of navigating life online. Educators and caregivers need to be involved in explicit teaching around adolescents and their lives online by using beneficial curriculums and engaging adolescents in conversations involving ICT.

Adolescents need information to navigate the choices they make online. One program that aims to do this is the My Life Online curriculum developed by Blake Fleischacker and Dave Anderson. The program focuses on workshops and curriculum that aim at explicit instruction to educate children so that they will not regret something they did online that does not match up with who they are as a person (Top Youth Speakers, n.d.). The key in making programs such as My Life Online successful is making the connection for adolescents that empathy needs to exist, whether through face-to-face interactions or online. Adolescents need to understand facts about social media usage, cause and effect of their actions, personal responsibility and online etiquette (Dickenson & Snedeker, 2021). Most of all, adolescents need to understand that the lessons of compassion they learn throughout their school years extend into the digital world, especially that of having empathy for others. One of the best ways to be compassionate toward others and ourselves is to be safe online. It is important that adolescents understand that the device they have access to, known as the internet, is very powerful and requires navigational tools that extend beyond the classroom.

In line with explicit instruction about navigating life online, adolescents need to learn about digital citizenship beyond the classroom. ICT (Information and Communications Technology)

instruction is very important to educate adolescents. When adolescents learn key features that include technical factors (viruses, spam) and ethical online behaviour in the world, they can be better equipped to handle many situations. Teachers have reported that they feel supported in regards to teaching digital citizenship and digital literacy, because this connects with positive character education (Lauricella et al., 2020). Learning about digital citizenship cannot stop at simply the use of technology in the classroom. Education around technology usage in a safe way can promote mental health, which extends beyond the classroom.

Many facets of digital literacy connect with social emotional regulation. Social emotional regulation is the "process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (Lauricella et al., 2020). The key components of social emotional regulation consist of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Lauricella et al., 2020). These components overlap with the teachings of digital literacy. Digital literacy has to be seen as interdisciplinary learning that connects with all of the curricular areas that adolescents learn about in schools to prepare them for risks online. When such risks present themselves to adolescents, community resources can provide guidance in navigating potentially dangerous situations.

Community Resources

Community resources can act as an important support system for adolescents and their caregivers when navigating the risks online. With the ongoing occurrence of sex crimes at a rapid rate, many adolescents and their families are unsure of which steps to take when navigating shared explicit photos or videos of themselves or their child online. In many cases of sex crimes, victims feel shame and think that they cannot do anything about the situation. Sexting is the act of sending, forwarding, or sharing explicit photos to others (Van Ouytsel et al., 2016). While sexting might be a part of many teens' sexual development, with 14%, or 1 in 7, teenagers engaging in the act, there are also tremendous risk factors that come with the sharing of graphic images by means of social media (Lee, 2018, para. 2). With the risk of images being shared and forwarded to unintended audiences, the risk for adolescents increases. Thus, it is important that adolescents be aware of the resources that exist to support them if needed.

One example of an important community resource is the Canadian Centre for Child Protection. The Canadian Centre for Child Protection (n.d.) is a national charity Centre dedicated to protecting all children. The Centre supports children and families in many ways, such as providing resources, information, and connections with law enforcement. The Centre acts as an important advocate for children and adolescents in cases of sexting and child pornography. Instead of feeling helpless and afraid in the cases of sex crimes, the Centre for Child Protection advocates for victims to get information and report crimes in cases where they may feel helpless and violated.

Due to the seriousness of sex crimes, being connected to services provides a safety net for families. Another community resource that is supported by the Canadian Centre for Child Protection is Cybertip!ca (n.d.). Cybertip!ca is a supportive online environment where families and adolescents can access help with concerns about shared intimate images, online luring, and other areas involving child victimization on the internet. The increase in such cases caused the Government of Canada to criminalize the unauthorized distribution of nude photographs and videos in December 2014 (Allen, 2019). Community resources help adolescents to address danger or victimization regarding sex and cyber crimes. With the support of these resources, adolescents can gain information and advocacy skills to protect themselves and others online. Despite many proactive measures to support adolescents and their learning, management of their social media with clear guidelines is necessary. With every tool that is provided to young people, it is also important that rules and regulations are shared in a clear manner.

Management of Social Media

When beginning to use any new device, there is often a "crash course" that is provided to steer individuals. Interestingly, there is no such formalized, mandated learning that takes place in Manitoba to prepare young people in navigating their lives online. The lack of rules and regulations that often come with social media lead to many adolescents feeling out of control. It is important that caregivers and educators create strong boundaries for adolescents around social media usage.

Educators and caregivers must create boundaries by giving adolescents very specific rules for using social media. In the classroom, there is significant impact when rules and contracts around social media access are co-created with students in the classroom. With student voices being central in rules established, a clear outline of expectations can be created that all students in the classroom agree to. Rules can be focused on the amount of time spent online, a "good fit" time for using social media, and what sort of content is okay for posting online.

Similar conversations with adolescents around social media contracts need to be had at home. Setting family expectations at home is important to set the tone for equality, because all household members can navigate using technology in a safe way. Creating guidelines and a social media contract around where and when social media can be used is important (Ben-Joseph, 2018). Even more important is sticking to those guidelines and developing consistency in these routines. Creating a social media or technology agreement in the home allows all members of the family to have a say in what they believe to be valuable. This also opens the conversation around any non-negotiables, such as downloading apps without permission or accepting requests from strangers. Agreements made around social media should be made visible in the home, where everyone can refer to them. Referring to rules and consequences regularly reminds family members of commitments made, encouraging open communication. The world of social media and technology needs to be monitored with the same diligence as real-life interactions.

Conclusion

Social media cannot be labelled as a social evil and therefore banned and censored from adolescents. Adolescents and their lives online are complicated. Like any other device, tools are needed to be safe when navigating social media. Understanding both the risks and advantages of social media sets adolescents up for success in knowing what to look out for as they navigate their lives online. Providing in-class programming that supports student learning in the classroom and beyond supports adolescents in exploring who they want to be online. Having access to community resources to protect adolescents online can make adolescents and their lives feel secure. Most importantly, having rules and regulations for using social media sets adolescents up for success. Social media can be an exceptional way to connect online and become a valuable part of extended and supportive communities. When adolescents are safe online, they can use social media as an important tool to enhance their lives. Thus, it is important that adolescents have a circle of support surrounding them as they navigate their lives online, in order to set them up for success in who they want to be, both online and offline. Formalized education that expands on all of the above noted topics prepares adolescents for the realities of social media, taking away the fears but also presenting the facts so that young people can be engaged online in a way that aligns with their goals and aspirations for the future.

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Hungry Students: Feeding the Body and Mind

Alyson Giroux

Abstract

Nutrition is a basic need that must be met for children to be successful. When students are inadequately nourished or food insecure, there are detrimental effects to physical health, mental wellness, and academic performance. To combat food insecurity in students, schools must support families to meet their nutritional needs. Supporting families through nutrition-based programming, such as breakfast and snack programs, connecting families to nutritional resources, and nutritional education are all ways that schools can ensure nutritional needs are met both in and out of school.

For humans to be successful, there are basic human needs that must be met. Maslow (1954) categorized needs into physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem, and self-actualization. Schools and learning environments are often able to fulfill needs of safety, belonging, esteem, and self-actualization, but struggle with the base of the hierarchy, physiological needs. Physiological needs are identified as food, water, warmth, and rest, needs that are ideally met in a student's home. Of all the physiological needs, food is the need that families struggle with most often at home. Providing adequate amounts of food is a need that schools are best equipped to help families with. Lack of access to food is often referred to as food insecurity and affects not only the physical and mental health of students, but also their academic performance (Fletcher & Frisvold, 2017). In 2018, 12.7% of Canadians were living with some degree of food insecurity (Statistics Canada, 2020, Table 13). Through education, the implementation of breakfast and nutrition programs, and connecting families with local nutritional resources, schools can start to combat the varying effects that food insecurity has on children.

Nutrition and Physical Health

Diabetes, obesity, and heart disease are health conditions that can be linked directly to food insecurity. Childhood obesity has both immediate and long-term health consequences (Kuku et al., 2012), including cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, and sleep apnea (Childhood Obesity Foundation, 2019). Children who experience food insecurity in the home are twice as likely as food secure children to be in poor health and are often affected by health concerns such as asthma and anemia (Gundersen & Ziliak, 2015). Food insecurity can also cause nutrient-deficiency in children. Families who experience food insecurity will often sacrifice the quality of food for quantity, resulting in energy-dense and nutrient-sparse foods (Anisef et al., 2017). This means students are often not exposed to fresh fruits and vegetables, which are a more expensive food. This lack of nutrients in a student's diet can lead to stunting, rickets, and bone abnormalities (Haimi & Lerner, 2014).

Children acquire and learn eating habits as they grow and develop. Implementing quality nutritional education in the school day can have positive effects on a student's interaction with nutrition (Pérez-Rodrigo & Aranceta, 2003). Schools are diverse learning environments and as extrafamilial influences become more important to students, they are more open to trying foods they would not have access to at home. Quality nutritional education relies on building upon what students already know and can do. This means that at an elementary level, nutritional education may involve discussing the differences between juice and water. Each beverage is often readily accessible in the home, but has different nutritional values. As students age, nutritional education should focus on preparation of food as well as building further skills they will need later in life (Pérez-Rodrigo & Aranceta, 2003). Nutritional education in high school may

involve preparing food budgets and navigating a grocery store to maximize nutritional value and cost of food. It is important to note that nutritional programming may look different in each school, so it should be tailored to meet community needs. While the incorporation of fresh fruits and vegetables should be the focus of nutritional education, incorporating community values, recipes, and cultural practices will increase community uptake.

Nutrition and Mental Health

Students who experience food insecurity at home are more likely to miss school due to illness, and often suffer from depression, anxiety, or other mental wellness concerns (Seaton, 2017). The long-lasting effects of childhood hunger has also been linked to depression and suicidal ideation in late adolescence (Ke & Ford-Jones, 2015). Adolescents who experience food insecurity are twice as likely to report thoughts of dying and five times as likely to attempt suicide (Brinkman et al., 2021, pp. 102-103). These feelings of depression are linked not only to nutritional deficiencies, but to the stress and anxiety of food insecurity itself (McIntyre et al., 2017). Caloric restriction, which is often associated with food insecurity, increases cortisol secretion in the brain (Brinkman et al., 2021). Cortisol is the body's primary stress hormone, and it communicates with the brain regions responsible for mood, motivation, and fear (Mayo Clinic Staff, 2019). Increased stress levels may also be environmentally based (Brinkman et al., 2021). Increased stress may be experienced in the home from family members, and from the stigma of needing to access community resources to obtain food (McIntyre et al., 2017). Adolescent students are more likely to experience increased stress levels, depression, and anxiety, because they are more often aware of the families' financial circumstances (McIntyre et al., 2017). Students are also hesitant to access community programs because there is a fear of being different from one's peers (Seaton, 2017), further adding to the risk of anxiety and depression.

A school wide breakfast program can be used to improve the mental health of students. Breakfast consumption has been shown to lower the probability of marginal food insecurity in students, as well as reducing food-related concerns (Brinkman et al., 2021). Eating breakfast is associated with a declining trend in suicide among students from both food secure and insecure families. Using a breakfast program that is accessible to all students not only improves mental health, but also removes the stigma associated with needing to access it. Students who have fewer peer relationships experience more severe food insecurity, often due to a lack of connectedness to their school community (Brinkman et al., 2021). Students who experience food insecurity are more likely to be suspended from school and have an inability to get along with their peers (Sampasa-Kanyinga & Hamilton, 2016). Breakfast is often considered to be a social meal and a school-based breakfast program provides students an opportunity to meet and talk with peers before class, strengthening their feeling of belonging. This feeling of belonging directly impacts students' mental health, because they no longer feel isolated due to their lack of access to food at home. School breakfast programs have also been seen to improve student attendance (Bartfeld et al., 2019), because students have a reason to come to school earlier than they would normally. As well, a school breakfast program introduces students to a variety of foods that they may not have access to at home. This increased access enables students to have a more nutrient-dense diet, which helps with healthy brain development (Georgieff et al., 2018).

Nutrition and Academic Performance

Not only does food insecurity have detrimental effects on healthy development, but a child's academic success can also be negatively affected (Faught et al., 2017). The more instances of food insecurity a child faces at a young age, the greater the academic delays experienced (Johnson & Markowitz, 2018). Students who attend school despite food insecurity are often

faced with cognitive developmental delays and an inability to concentrate on schoolwork (Anisef et al., 2017; Fletcher & Frisvold, 2017; Hecht et al., 2020). Without the proper cognitive foundation, students continue to struggle in their later school years. An inability to concentrate and hyperactivity in older students has been linked to continued nutritional deficiencies (Ke & Ford-Jones, 2015). Students who experience these conditions often struggle in a classroom setting and begin to fall behind in their academic performance. As a child ages, the academic gap grows and becomes more difficult to close. Very low food security is negatively associated with achievement on standardized tests, with only 16% of food insecure grade 5 students meeting grade level expectations in language arts and math (Faught et al., 2017, p. 2781). This is comparable to 84% of food secure grade 5 students meeting grade level expectations (Faught et al., 2017, p. 2781). When children continue to experience food insecurity and hunger throughout their schooling, their risk of dropping out increases (McIntyre et al., 2018). Students who drop out of school are more likely to remain in poverty and continue the cycle of food insecurity for their families.

One of the most common complaints from students during instructional times is that they are hungry and unable to focus on the lesson. Snacks play an important role in managing hunger and boosting nutrition, while giving students the energy boost they need during the day (Gavin, 2015). Providing students with nutritious snacks throughout the day will enable students to fulfill their hunger, while also remaining engaged in the class activities. Because some students require 3 meals and 2 snacks a day, providing school-based snacks also ensures that students meet their nutritional needs each day. Using snacks to incorporate more fruits and vegetables into a student's diet has positive effects on academic performance (Burrows et al., 2016). There are multiple ways in which a school snack program can be implemented in the classroom. In elementary classrooms, teachers may have snacks behind their desk, because younger students are more likely to confuse boredom and tiredness with hunger (Gavin, 2015). When a student asks for a snack, teachers have the opportunity to recognize whether a student's hunger is the primary cause of the student's feelings. While this is very useful in younger classrooms, it is not as successful in adolescents as students are aware of the stigma of asking for assistance. In older classrooms, a communal snack area or fruit bowl can be used as a way to promote independence and reduce hunger in the classroom. Students are able to take whatever they need from the snack area, without asking the teacher and drawing attention to themselves.

Schools and Local Nutritional Resources

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and loss of income due to shutdowns, further financial strain has been put on families already experiencing food insecurity. Many schools have implemented home nutritional programs to combat further food insecurity. Prior to the closure of schools due to COVID-19, millions of children relied on school-based nutrition programs. In order to ensure that students' nutritional needs would still be met, many schools began to provide grocery gift certificates or food boxes to families (Wong, 2020). In addition to food boxes, many schools developed school-based food banks (Fong, 2020), where families could order and pick up supplies. Schools also became a place where families could come to be connected with local food banks and other food relief programming. Continuing to provide food to families in an accessible way ensures that students and their families meet their nutritional needs while at home.

Conclusion

People must have their basic needs met to be successful (Maslow, 1954), including the need to access appropriate amounts of food. The inability for families to secure food has detrimental effects on not only a child's physical and mental well-being, but the child's academic

performance as well. When students are unable to secure food at home, the school is able to support this need. Through nutritional education, schools can provide students with the knowledge they need to make healthy eating choices and provide them with the skills to improve physical health. The implementation of a schoolwide breakfast program not only fulfills a student's need for food, but also provides a sense of belonging with the student's peers. This results in lower suicidal ideation and an overall improvement of the student's mental health. Providing students with snacks throughout the day and connecting families with local nutritional programs ensures that daily nutritional needs are being met both in and out of school.

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Math Anxiety:
Finding Solutions to a Multifaceted Problem

Jamie Blyth

Abstract

Math anxiety is becoming more prevalent in classrooms around the world. Students with math anxiety experience both physiological and psychological symptoms, in addition to long-term effects. This article examines the global context of math anxiety, the causes of math anxiety, and what educators can do to support students who experience math anxiety in hopes that students can have a positive lifelong relationship with math.

Many people are under the misconception that there are those who are "math people," and those who are not. This mentality is one of the elements that can lead to people feeling anxious about math (Boaler, 2016). Math anxiety is a worldwide problem affecting people of all ages (Luttenberger et al., 2018). Math anxiety refers to feelings of apprehension and fear, as well as physiological symptoms, when individuals perform, or anticipate having to perform, math tasks (Gerado et al., 2018). Math anxiety has been reported in students as young as first grade and can continue to be a problem for some people into adulthood (Pantoja et al., 2020). In the U.S.A., two-thirds of adults report some fear of math, despite their background or culture (Mitchell, 2018). In adults, math anxiety has been shown to interfere in both daily life and academic situations (Pantoja et al., 2020). If there is evidence that this phenomenon can start as early as first grade, and plague people into adulthood, affecting even their choice of career, then it is the duty of educators and parents to understand what math anxiety is, what causes it, and how to use practical strategies to help alleviate students' anxiety surrounding math.

The Common Global Denominator of Math Anxiety

To fully understand the impact of math anxiety on our students, we need to look at how math anxiety looks in classrooms around the world. The PISA 2012 results provide a comprehensive look at math data from students around the globe. To gather data specifically on math anxiety, students were asked a series of questions about how they feel when performing math tasks (OECD, 2013). Across the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries, 59% of students worry that a math task will be difficult for them, 33% get very tense when they must do math homework, 30% feel helpless when performing a math task and 61% worry about getting a poor grade in math (OECD, 2013, p. 98). The study found that there has been an increase in math anxiety since PISA 2003. In countries that saw an increase in math anxiety, there was a decrease in self-efficacy and self-concept surrounding mathematics. The PISA results indicated that higher levels of math anxiety led to lower performance results. The countries that experienced the least amount of math anxiety were ones where the students generally performed averagely. Across all countries and economies, at least one in three students worried about their math performance (OECD, 2015, p. 2). These statistics are staggering, showcasing just how widespread the phenomenon of math anxiety is.

Isolating the Variables of Math Anxiety

Math anxiety has many causes and not all factors may play a part in each students' individual anxiety. Factors that may contribute to math anxiety are the influence of teachers, the influence of parents, gender stereotypes, prior experiences, and classmate interactions. It is important to understand how each of these causes engenders math anxiety so that we can then find strategies to help our students alleviate the anxiety and find success in math.

Teachers can be a positive influence in a child's mathematical learning; however, the opposite is also true. The majority of students' math knowledge is learned in the classroom, and, depending on their home life, this may be the students' first exposure to math learning (Gerado et al., 2018). Due to their influential nature, teachers can increase students' math anxiety for several reasons. One of the ways teachers can contribute to students' math anxiety is through their own attitude toward math (Luttenberger et al., 2018). If a teacher perpetuates the idea that math is something that one either knows or does not know, it can damage students' math self-efficacy, causing anxiety. This fixed mindset approach to learning can cause students to believe that they will never be able to learn math. Behaviours that perpetuate fixed mindsets are praising math talent, instead of praising the process, and trying to make students feel better about not being a "math person," when the students do not do as well as they had hoped (Dweck, 2018, p. 8). Both strategies promote a fixed mindset, instead of the growth mindset teachers should hope to instill in their students. Additionally, if a teacher has a negative attitude toward mathematics learning, that can transfer to the students (Oxford Learning, 2017). Higher math anxiety in teachers has been found to indicate lower math achievement in students, and more gender stereotyping (Gerado et al., 2018). Research has found that female teachers are more likely to pass on their anxiety to female students, further perpetuating the gender stereotypes that often accompany math (Luttenberger et al., 2018). There are many ways that teachers can help students with math anxiety, but first they must reflect and see whether their behaviour is the cause of it.

In addition to teachers, students can have influential math relationships with other people, including their parents. Parents can contribute to math anxiety in a variety of ways, such as while helping with homework and through their own attitudes about math or fixed mindset beliefs. In general, parents want to see their children succeed and often like to be involved in their school life (Gerado et al., 2018). Parents may spend time with their children talking about school and helping with homework. However, parents who have math anxiety may cause their children to become math anxious when helping with homework (Gerado et al., 2018). When parents struggle with math, it is easy for them to make comments that children perceive as a negative attitude toward math (Mitchell, 2018). For example, the PISA 2012 revealed that 90% of students thought that their parents believed math to be important, but only 58% of students believed that their parents liked math (OECD, 2013, p. 100). This disconnect may lead students not to embrace math like they should. On the other end of the spectrum, a parent who is comfortable with math may step in too quickly, and not allow the student to struggle, which is a key part of learning (Mitchell, 2018). Parents can also have high expectations for their child's academic success (Gerado et al., 2018). The expectations and judgements of their child's math capabilities may influence the child's math anxiety, especially if the parents are math anxious themselves (Luttenberger et al., 2018). Parents need to recognize the important role they play in their child's math learning, and work together with educators to help students manage their math anxiety.

Unfortunately, gender also plays a role in math anxiety. Females are more likely than their male peers to experience math anxiety (Luttenberger et al., 2018). Studies have looked at when the gender differences start, and have found there can be a difference as early as first grade, which continues into higher education, with females scoring higher on math anxiety indexes than males (Gerado et al., 2018). Some of the gender differences in math anxiety can be attributed to stereotypes and beliefs about girls' math, because girls tend to internalize stereotypes more than their male peers (Luttenberger et al., 2018). According to the 2012 PISA results, boys are more likely to participate in extracurricular mathematics activities than girls (OECD, 2013), which shows that girls are missing out on valuable math learning opportunities due to their anxiety. We need to work hard to help undo these internalized stereotypes, so that girls no longer experience more math anxiety than boys.

Prior experience with math can contribute to students' math anxiety in the present. Research has found that students' levels of math anxiety are directly related to how they

interpret their past math experiences (Gerado et al., 2018). There are several layers to prior experience. The first is fear of public embarrassment (Oxford Learning, 2017). If students have previously had a negative experience with math, which has caused them prior embarrassment, they are more likely to be anxious during future math encounters (Dweck, 2008). Time pressure could be another stressor students have previously encountered that made them feel overwhelmed (Oxford Learning, 2017). If students remember that they struggled to finish their assignments, or more importantly their tests, during the allotted time, they may have increased anxiety on any timed math task in the future. Students do not want to repeat prior uncomfortable experiences so they may try to avoid challenging math tasks in order to not face embarrassment again, which leads to more anxiety in the future (Dweck, 2018). Educators need to find strategies to remove the negative associations students may have with math, in order to help alleviate anxiety in the future.

The beliefs that students have about their classmates' math abilities can also impact students' own math anxiety. The 2012 PISA results found that 60% of students believe that their friends do well in math (OECD, 2013, p. 100). Further research found that when a student thinks that classmates did well, the student will feel more anxious, even if the student did well (OECD, 2015). This may be compounded by the fixed mindset belief that math is either a talent one has or does not (Mitchell, 2018). Comparison to peers and fixed mindsets are challenges to overcome as we try to find solutions to help with students' math anxiety.

Finding Solutions and Checking Our Work

The causes of math anxiety are unique to each student, and therefore the solutions will be unique as well. A variety of strategies help to alleviate math anxiety for students, such as a safe classroom environment, engaging instructional strategies, intentional feedback, parental involvement, and fostering a growth mindset. By implementing these strategies in classrooms, teachers can set their students up for mathematical success, and reduced math anxiety.

One of the strategies teachers can use to help alleviate math anxiety is to create a safe classroom environment (Kaskens et al., 2020). When students feel safe, they are more likely to participate in the lesson and ask for clarification when they need it. A safe classroom environment also promotes engagement in small-group learning (Mitchell, 2018). By making the classroom a space where it is okay not to know the answer and okay to fail, teachers can reduce math anxiety for all of their students.

Another approach that can help reduce math anxiety is the use of engaging instructional strategies. Teachers should try to instruct in a way that engages students and ties the math learning to relevant topics (Luttenberger et al., 2018). When students participate in activities that engage and challenge them, and they can collaborate with their peers, students build mathematical resilience (Reid & Reid, 2020). Instructional strategies that help students who struggle with math anxiety are clear instruction, adapted teaching, modelling, scaffolding, and efficient classroom management (Kaskens et al., 2020). When choosing instructional strategies, teachers should also be mindful of the importance of reducing the working memory load. Specific strategies that help with reducing working memory load are breaking down the information into smaller steps, the use of visual aids, and personal supports (Reid & Reid, 2020). By giving students strategies to reduce the working memory load, we are enabling them to be successful in their mathematical tasks and reducing their anxiety.

Feedback is another area where teachers can help to reduce math anxiety. In the PISA 2012, students were asked a variety of questions about teacher feedback, such as whether their math teacher told the class how well they were doing, whether the teacher gave specific feedback on the students' individual strengths and challenges, and whether the teacher told the students exactly what they needed to do to improve (OECD, 2015). These practices have been shown to reduce math anxiety in students, and educators need to keep that in mind when providing feedback in the future.

Parents can play a role in reducing math anxiety in their children. One way in which parents can help is to keep a positive attitude about mathematics (Luttenberger et al., 2018). Many parents have had a negative experience with math, but by focusing on changing their attitude they can help their children succeed. Another way in which parents can reduce anxiety is for them to have realistic expectations of their children's math ability (Luttenberger et al., 2018). Not placing too much pressure on the students will help to reduce the anxiety they feel.

The final math anxiety reduction strategy is fostering a growth mindset. This strategy is important not only for math anxiety, but for success in life. A fixed mindset is one whereby people believe that someone is born with a set intellectual ability, and nothing they can do will change that (Dweck, 2008). On the other hand, a growth mindset is one where people believe that intelligence can be achieved by hard work and practice (Dweck, 2008). Unfortunately, math is the subject that has the most fixed mindsets surrounding it (Boaler, 2016). Teachers must take on the challenge of changing math from a subject of fixed mindsets to one of growth. One of the ways to do this is to praise the process, not only the end results (Dweck, 2008). We need to show students that we value mistakes and learn from failure. Productive struggle means that "brains are growing, synapses are firing, and new pathways are being developed that will make them stronger in the future" (Boaler, 2016, p. 178). Other ways educators can foster a growth mindset in math is by encouraging mistakes, accepting that there is more than one way to solve a problem, and valuing rich questions (Miller, 2020). Teachers should also be mindful of shifting the focus from answering questions quickly and correctly, to the process of learning and growing in mathematics (Reid & Reid, 2020). By showing students the positives in failure, and changing our narrative about how we measure success, we can help students to achieve a growth mindset, and therefore reduce math anxiety.

The Final Answer

Unlike a typical math problem, there is no clear solution at the end of the problem of math anxiety. Math anxiety is a real phenomenon affecting students of all ages. By understanding possible causes of math anxiety, such as the influence of teachers, parents, and classmates, prior experiences, and gender stereotyping, we, as educators, are better able to find solutions that will help our students. Safe classroom environments, engaging instructional techniques, effective feedback, positive parent involvement, and fostering a growth mindset are all powerful tools for combating math anxiety in the classroom. As we continue to normalize that learning math takes effort and consistency, we will see a decrease in math anxiety, and an increase in a lifelong love of mathematics.

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A Skills Shortage: A "Building" Challenge

Stephen Proskurnik

Abstract

The skilled trades have long been ignored and under-valued in society. This article explores the potential problem with maintaining the status quo and the impacts it will have on future generations. It considers the steps educational institutions and leaders can make in addressing the skilled trades shortage and how changes to the current graduation requirements in Manitoba can lead to greater career pathways for all students. The goal is to include skilled trades training in the conversation along with improving numeracy, literacy, and information technology across all grade levels.

For the past several decades, a shortage of qualified skilled trades people has begun to emerge. As this problem continues to build, creative solutions will need to be explored to address this shortage. High school students, a demographic that may have been previously overlooked, could offer a practical solution to this burgeoning dilemma. However, students face several obstacles, and are somewhat reluctant to consider a career in the skilled trades even when jobs are plentiful. These obstacles must be addressed to convince young people that a career in the trades is worth exploring. They include overcoming the stigma that is attached to the skilled trades, a flawed credit system that does not recognize skilled trades equally, a slow response time to skill shortages, and a lack of work-based learning opportunities available to students. Practical solutions to overcome these obstacles include better training and awareness to address the stigma attached to working in the trades, changing how high school credits are earned, improving response time to skill shortage gaps, and creating partnerships with industry partners to increase work-based learning opportunities.

Training and Awareness

The stigma that is associated with working in an area of the skilled trades is deeply entrenched in society. Often, those who are interested in the skilled trades are viewed as inferior students. This stigma goes beyond a superficial level, and even extends into higher education, where some academia either ignore or are unaware of the possible career pathways in the skilled trades (Rothwell, 2016). There are several misconceptions that must be addressed to conquer the stigma for students to feel like the skilled trades are a career worth exploring further. Perhaps the biggest misconception is that individuals who pursue skilled trade careers are unsuccessful students compared with their fellow students who plan on attending university (Suttles, 2020). Other misinformation includes the misbelief that all skilled trades work is dirty, only males can perform the work, and wages are significantly lower than careers that require a university degree. These beliefs even extend overseas. For example, in Britain there exists a lack of political inclination to view skills training equally with a university education (The Guardian, 2020). These are all fundamentally wrong assumptions that are often passed down from generation to generation, and require a more concentrated awareness campaign to counter.

The school system, specifically educators and administrators, began this process of weakening the skilled trades training in favor of students attending university (Walsh, 2017). Schools often use a simplistic strategy to deliver the necessary information on skilled trades. One such strategy is using a signup sheet for students to self-register to hear about the trades, rather than requiring all students to get the information to make an informed decision. This is a flawed process because many students have no prior knowledge of skilled trades, and may not know what they are missing until it is too late. All students need to hear about these

opportunities at a younger age, when many are contemplating career aspirations. Students are also ill informed of possible career options that do not require a university degree to make career decisions. Hearing about these opportunities may encourage those students not engaged in learning, or struggling to attend regularly, to find a purpose (Mader, 2019). Increasing awareness also means that parents need to be better informed of the many career options for students, because they are a huge influence on their child's career aspirations. Parents whom I have encountered over the years were not aware of the many varied options, and were still stuck in the belief that a university degree was the only path to a good career. Sadly, a degree is no assurance of a rewarding career (Walsh, 2017). There is a responsibility of elected government officials and school leaders to counter this stigma with a concentrated effort in promoting the trades in all schools, starting at a young age. Perhaps a starting point would be to tailor more information sessions to parents and caregivers to overcome this stigma by raising the profile of skilled trades. The skilled trades have evolved, and those previously held misconceptions must be countered for any meaningful change in attitude to happen.

Changing Credit Requirements

There is a legitimate reason to believe that a flawed high school credit system strongly impacts the skilled trade shortage problem that currently exists. Although there is plenty of blame to go around, the K-12 school system has contributed to a skills deficiency in young workers that plagues the trades (Cappelli, 2015). The present-day school system in Canada has changed very little over the past 50 years, and does not lend itself well to promoting skill acquisition that is necessary for enhancing students' capabilities in skilled trades. Logistics such as the length of the school day, lecture style instructional methods, and graduation requirements remain relatively unchanged. Educational standards like these provide little benefit to those students who are better suited to working in the trades, and more for students preparing for university. Examples include Michigan, where students pursuing skilled trades are required to complete the same graduation requirements as students planning on attending university (Walsh, 2017). Here in Manitoba, similar requirements exist. All students, regardless of pursued career path, must complete 30 credits, 17 of which are compulsory (Manitoba Education and Training, n.d.). Additionally, the curricular outcomes of courses such as math or English fail to consider the type of skills that are required for the trades. These requirements need to be re-evaluated to recognize the specific learning that students gain through skills-based training.

There is an argument to change the way students can graduate. Many employers have little faith in a traditional high school diploma, and routinely require additional training beyond just grade 12. Allowing students to "work" toward graduation outside the traditional classroom can only be viewed as a win-win. Providing opportunities like these may reach disengaged students, and increase graduation rates (Mader, 2019). Requiring students who are interested in pursuing a skilled trade to complete the same courses requirements for graduation is not fair or equitable. One change could involve allowing students to complete compulsory credits, such as math or English, at their respective work experience placement. There is an assumption that those skills are not developed on the job, whereas in fact "on-the-job-training requirements are significantly higher for skilled technical workers" (Rothwell, 2016, p. 48). Teachers would still assess the skills gained at work experience as a suitable alternative to having a student attend class at school, and miss out on a meaningful work experience. Many of the skills that students learn through skills-based learning involve reading, writing, and mathematics, just in a different capacity. Maintaining the current 30 credits to graduate is not realistic in today's work world, and this cookie cutter approach does not work for all students.

Responding to Skill Shortages

In my experience, schools lack the ability to respond quickly to current skilled trade shortages. It can take years for new programs and curriculum to be developed, shops to be built, and staff to be found. Generally, there is a reluctance to attempt to change any programs found in schools, even if they are not meeting the current skills shortage demand. Far too often, a school's infrastructure, teacher experience, and popularity are the sole determining factors of which programs are offered in a school (Hoftijizer et al., 2018). Administrators, often with no trade experience, decide on what programs to offer in schools, without consultation from industry representatives. These are often chosen based on how expensive they are to run, not whether they fill a skill shortage. This can lead to vocational programs that vary quite substantially in quality, without meeting the entry requirements for post-secondary skilled trade programs (Green & Pensiero, 2016). Decisions like this, void of industry input, could mean that students are taking programs that are perhaps not in demand, and offer little hope of employment upon completion.

Addressing how schools respond to skills shortages requires collaboration amongst various stakeholders. It means starting with a common goal, and involving all industry partners in the creation of programs to ensure that all are bought in to the process (Hoftijzer et al., 2018). It also means having industry partners do some of the training on behalf of local schools in a cost-shared proposal if schools cannot secure the necessary funding. This, unfortunately, is quite common because most school funding is outdated and based solely on student numbers (Hoftijzer et al., 2018). This funding model is detrimental to skills programs because class size numbers are usually restricted for safety purposes. Perhaps the future of skilled trades training means an acceptance of cost sharing to fund these trade classrooms, due to the initial cost and magnitude of such programs. If in return, these industry partners want to advertise in the school system, then we must be willing to accommodate this request. These skilled trade areas want a skilled force to meet the demand they are seeing, and we must be willing to partner with them for students to be well prepared.

Creating Partnerships

The last two years of remote learning due to Covid-19, has exaggerated the current shortage of skilled trade workers. Most work-based learning opportunities were cancelled or put on hold during this time. The decision to halt these work experiences created further obstacles for those interested in the trades because much of the learning for the skilled trade programs takes place on actual job sites during work experience. Students learn specific skills such as working in teams, problem solving, and communication skills (Hoftijizer et al., 2018). The vocational teachers I work with indicated that they struggled to replicate this type of hands-on learning during remote learning. This prevented skilled trade students from developing creative solutions and "learning by doing" (Battistelli et al., 2019, p. 364). These are essential skills that all skilled trades students require to progress through their apprenticeships.

The decisions to halt work placements put skilled trade students at a disadvantage. The learning that takes place away from the classroom is unique, and gives potential employers a chance to see both a student's ability and work ethic. Students discover very quickly that the learning environment differs quite substantially between schools and work (Schaap et al., 2012). Without these work-based learning opportunities, the skills shortage problem will only worsen, and the consequences will be far reaching for all of us. To increase work-based learning opportunities, educational leaders and provincial government authorities need to remove barriers that hinder an employer's ability to have students on the job, and provide incentives for partnerships (Hoftijizer et al., 2018). Work-based learning provides many benefits to students beyond just graduating from high school. Recent studies have shown that working in the trades has assisted those in long-term addiction facilities because it benefits them both physically and

mentally (Best et al., 2016). With the ever-increasing number of students who struggle with their mental wellness, skilled trades training could potentially offer an alternative to other treatments. Recent decisions like Apprenticeship Manitoba's (n.d.) decision to increase the trade ratio from one-to-one, to two-to-one is the first step to creating more work-based opportunities for high school students. Furthermore, various levels of government must take additional steps, such as providing more monetary incentives for employers to offset the financial strain they feel when employing young workers. Without these incentives, many employers cannot afford to wait until young workers provide a cost benefit to their bottom line.

Conclusion

Much of the focus in recent years has revolved around educational topics such as numeracy, literacy, and information and communication technology. Forgotten in much of this is a skilled trade shortage that has continued to build to record levels. With an aging skilled workforce, coupled with a rising demand for skilled workers, the skilled trades shortage problem does not appear to be going away anytime soon (Günther, 2014). To assume that enough students will eventually find their way to a career in the skilled trades without intervention is a flawed way of thinking. Regardless of a student's desired occupational path, everyone should be exposed to unique and diversified training (Baartman et al., 2018). If we are serious about addressing a skills shortage, then we need to breathe new life into skilled trades training, including work-based training, in all schools as a first step (*The Guardian*, 2020). The educational system needs to be a leader in this initiative. Skilled trade careers deserve the same recognition as other careers. If the problem is ignored any longer, it may become too big for any meaningful change to happen. Failing to act could have dire consequences for all of us, because skilled trades people are who keep our vehicles running, build our homes, and maintain the infrastructure that we all depend upon.

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Trauma-Informed Practices
in the Newcomer Child's Classroom

Shyla Mills

Abstract

Many refugee children have experienced trauma. When refugee students enter Canadian classrooms, they bring their trauma with them. Despite this, trauma-informed practices are still not the standard in Canada. When educators use trauma-informed practices, they can help refugee students who are struggling. Implementing trauma-informed professional development, behaviour specialist teachers, and specific time to teach self-regulation skills would benefit the trauma-affected students and would make the classroom a better learning environment for everyone.

When refugee students are dysregulated (unable to calm themselves down) in the class, a trauma-informed educator asks "What happened to you?" instead of "What's wrong with you?" In the 2016 Canadian census, Statistics Canada (2017) reported that refugees made up 11.6% of Canada's population (para. 4). Many newcomer refugee children experienced trauma, violence, and loss in their home country; as a result, they are more likely to have mental health issues (Chuang & Moreno, 2011). Teachers directly affected by this trauma have reported that atypical student behaviours made it frequently impossible to complete instructional outcomes (Blitz et al., 2016). Though there have been some attempts at implementing trauma-informed practices, these practices need to be at the forefront of education, because they are essential in helping newcomer children to develop self-regulation skills. Self-regulation skills refer to the ability to be self-aware and self-correct when one is becoming dysregulated (Benevento, 2004). To establish trauma-informed schools, schools must provide trauma-informed professional development for teachers, implement behaviour specialist teachers directly in schools, and allow teachers to allocate specific time for the teaching of self-regulation strategies in classrooms.

Many schools are receiving increasingly large numbers of refugee students who have experienced trauma (Tweedie et al., 2017). Trauma is identified as an overpowering encounter that changes a person's certainty that the world is positive and secure (Brunzell et al., 2016). There are multiple forms of trauma, such as familial separation, abuse, environmental disasters, terrorism, and grief (Jacobson, 2021). When children undergo trauma in childhood, this can lead to delays in educational achievement (Thomas et al., 2019), problematic behaviours in the school setting such as limited attention span and unsociable manners (Blitz et al., 2020), and poorer mental processes such as conflict resolution and management of emotions (Jacobson, 2021). Bright lights and loud sounds are considered normal in Canadian classrooms, but to children who have experienced trauma they may be overly stimulating and could cause them to react in an extremely stressful way (Tweedie et al., 2017). Trauma-affected students may go to school with hopes to perform well, but find themselves overwhelmed (Brunzell et al., 2015) and are unable to control their feelings, succumbing instead to involuntary, emotionally charged reactions (Tweedie et al., 2017). Trauma-affected students need additional support in schools to self-regulate (Blitz et al., 2020), and schools need specific polices to address this behaviour while avoiding aggravating or even inflicting more trauma on the students (Jacobson, 2021).

Refugee newcomer youth have lived through many unique stressful experiences that separate them from Canadian-born children, directly affecting their mental health (Chuang & Moreno, 2011). A refugee child's mental health can be affected by numerous stressors, such as familial separation or loss, exposure to extreme violence and war, and insecure resident status (Durà-Vilà et al., 2013). The stressors do not cease once the children have arrived in their host country. In Canada, they may experience financial difficulties, culture shock, racist hostility,

bullying, economic hardship, and social isolation (Durà-Vilà et al., 2013). Educators are a crucial factor in identifying struggling young refugees, but in the past educators have focused on modifying curriculum rather than creating a learning environment that helps refugee students to feel understood and safe (Ferlazzo, 2021). It is essential that the mental wellness of students is the priority for all educational staff.

Secondary trauma is becoming more prevalent in educators. Teachers have reported a higher level of trauma experienced by their students than ever before (Caringi et al., 2015). Many teachers have expressed that they felt resentful, upset, stressed, and exasperated due to the triggers within their classroom (Caringi et al., 2015, p. 246). Some schools have reported that the secondary trauma was so bad that the educators compared the effects to "occupational hazards" of working in education (Caringi et al., 2015, p. 245). Schools have also reported that contact with trauma-affected families was stressful, because when they asked families to improve their behaviour to protect teacher's emotional well-being, it created further separation between the school and students (Blitz et al., 2016). The stressors of secondary trauma and not knowing how to handle trauma in their students directly affects teachers' emotional well-being (Caringi et al., 2015), which then contributes to the decline of resilience in newcomer refugee children (Chuang & Moreno, 2011), because their teachers are not helping them to cope with their big feelings.

There have been some attempts at implementing trauma-informed practices in classrooms. When working with refugee students who had dysregulated responses, teachers have been advised to work first on developing self-regulatory strategies for their specific student, and second, on developing a strong bond with the dysregulated student (Brunzell et al., 2019). Teachers have admitted that it was difficult to build relationships and be positive toward students who rejected the personal connections (Brunzell et al., 2019). When schools have offered teachers trauma-informed training, the teachers felt criticized (Blitz et al., 2016). They felt that their own secondary trauma and well-being needs were not being addressed; thus, they opposed changing their strategies to fit the socio-emotional needs of their students. Instead of using trauma-informed strategies, teachers chose to focus on the core academic content, because they felt that the trauma-informed practices took away from valuable teaching and learning time (Brunzell et al., 2019). Refugee students are not having their emotional or educational needs met from this non-trauma-based approach.

Globally, there are many frameworks mandating specific trauma-informed practices in schools. Trauma-informed care (TIC) is typically driven by five standards: security, reliability, relationships, inspiration, and social issues (Christian-Brandt, 2020). TIC has used social emotional learning (SEL) to help trauma-affected children regulate their emotions, form strong relationships, and make good choices (Espelage et al., 2020). In the United States, the National Child Traumatic Stress Network developed the Attachment, Regulation, and Competency (ARC) framework to address children with severe trauma (Tweedie et al., 2017). *Attachment* refers to the connection between children and their teachers, *regulation* refers to building an awareness and tolerance of big feelings, and *competency* refers to the skills that accompany interruptions in the learning stages, such as difficulties with focus, conflict resolution, and critical thinking. In Australia, the Trauma-Informed Positive Education (TIPE) model is used, which is a school-wide mandate that has focused on three domains: teaching positive self-regulation skills, building interpersonal connections, and increasing mental health resources for student wellness (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Typical trauma-informed approaches have focused on two steps: address the student's lack of control skills, and then modify the learning tactics to fit the student's abilities (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Instead, TIPE has focused on a three-step model based in an assets-based standpoint (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Trauma-informed practices should look at what struggles the student encounters and what strengths the student can use to develop from (Brunzell et al., 2015). A school-wide framework is essential for successful support of trauma-affected students and their educators, because without specific policies school practices can deter the improvement of students.

Many schools do not require that their educators receive training related to understanding trauma, how it may affect students' psychosocial capabilities, and how they can teach their students emotional regulatory competencies (Espelage et al., 2020). Some educators have naturally relied on the support of resource teachers or administrative support to deal with students' behavioural issues, but as more refugee students join Canadian classrooms it is crucial that teachers are taught trauma-informed strategies (Tweedie et al., 2017). Over 75% of teachers have identified the need for trauma-informed professional development (Howard, 2019, p. 558), alongside other culturally responsive skills training (Blitz et al., 2020). Teachers given trauma-informed professional development have learned to consider their students' resistant behaviours and what the potential root of the behaviour could be (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). Additionally, the trauma-informed practices have assisted teachers in improving their own self-regulation skills, their strength, and their endurance, because the strategies they used with their students also helped them to regulate themselves (Stokes & Brunzell, 2019). To create successful trauma-informed schools, all schools must provide their teachers with professional development around trauma-informed practices, and must monitor the practice of these strategies in classrooms to ensure that they are being used.

Trauma-affected children often bring their stress to school (Blitz et al., 2020), making it the utmost importance not to have the responsibility of students' mental well-being solely on their classroom teacher, but instead to have students access many different social supports within the school (Karkouti et al., 2020). Schools can become more trauma-informed by having a behaviour specialist teacher in schools. A behaviour specialist teacher is a trained educator who provides direct interventions to trauma-affected students who are exhibiting behavioural problems (Jackson, 2020). A behaviour specialist teacher will also provide skill training for teachers to help build their trauma-informed practices, and will develop behaviour intervention plans (BIPs) in conjunction with the classroom teachers. For a behaviour specialist teacher to be effective, the school administration must designate intentional collaboration time between the classroom and behaviour specialist teacher, and must specifically outline a behaviour specialist teacher's roles and responsibilities in order to create an environment that supports them and the work that they do (Jackson, 2020). This role removes some of the responsibility of challenging student behaviour from the classroom teacher and offers the trauma-affected students a person of support in the school outside of the classroom teacher.

The specific teaching of self-regulation strategies in the classroom is missing, leading students not to have the skills to participate in their own learning (Egan, 2017). The specific teaching of self-regulation comes in two steps: teaching students about their own trauma response with tactics to modify their reaction, and using specific self-regulation strategies to help students recognize their own capacity to influence their emotions (Brunzell et al., 2016). Directly teaching students self-regulation strategies such as brain breaks, self-regulation rubrics, and escalation maps can help students to be mindful of their own heightened emotions and what triggers their reactions. When students have been in classrooms that taught them resiliency, their academic commitment, focus, and overall educational achievement improved (Espelage et al., 2020). Designating specific instructional time to the teaching of self-regulation skills is essential when creating trauma-informed classrooms.

A trauma-informed educator looks at a newcomer child's social, emotional, and mental well-being first. Immigrant students are present in Canadian classrooms now more than ever, because 1 in 10 people in Canada is a refugee (Statistics Canada, 2017, "About 6 in 10 Recent Immigrants" section, para. 3). Traumatic experiences change the way children see the world as good or bad, and can have negative consequences on a student's educational achievement (Brunzell et al., 2019). The involvement of educators in identifying psychologically distressed students is crucial to students' achievement and educational trajectory (Durà-Vilà et al., 2013). When they identify trauma's influence on learning, teachers can work proactively to support refugee students who are struggling (Brunzell et al., 2019). Trauma-informed professional

development, behaviour specialist teachers, and specific time to teach self-regulation skills would benefit the trauma-affected students and would make the classroom a better learning environment for everyone. Useful trauma-informed practices in the school are essential in helping newcomer children adapt to the Canadian classroom.

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Using Currere as a Way to Start Dialogic Conversations
When Introducing Transculture and Culture to Classrooms

Hannah Beghin

Abstract

Teaching students how to be respectful and aware of cultural and transcultural differences is often overwhelming for students and teachers. Students need to be understanding of different cultures and transculture because all humans will interact with others whose cultures differ from theirs. Understanding transculture and cultural differences and issues is important for better understanding of others. Allowing students time to write a currere is a way for students to think about their experiences related to culture, while also reflecting on the knowledge and understanding that they currently have on a culture. This is a personal way for students to think about their knowledge, while also thinking ahead to what they would like to understand about culture. Once students have had time to personally reflect in a currere, providing class time for students to converse is a great way to question, teach, discuss, and share experiences about culture.

Introducing transcultural and general cultural differences or issues in classroom settings can be daunting, but having students begin with writing a personal currere, and then expanding upon those thoughts by encouraging participation in classroom discussions, can be a way to bring awareness to transculture and culture. Students are often not aware of cultural differences and issues, so sharing their preconceived understandings may be uncomfortable, but allowing time for personal currere prior to classroom discussions is a way to bring personal awareness to opinions, knowledge, and understandings that one may have of others. The term transculture is being used within this piece, as it is more encompassing than the term multicultural. Transculturalism is a "process through which 'individuals and societies chang[e] themselves by integrating diverse cultural life-ways into dynamic new ones'" (Guo & Maitra, 2017, p. 84). Transculture "sees cultures as fluid, and places them in constant interaction with other cultures" (Guo & Maitra, 2017, p. 84), and is often what is seen within Canada when immigrants and refugees try to not only learn the new culture seen within Canadian towns, but also maintain their own cultural ways. Since transculture is fluid, it is important to remember that most students in our classes come from fluid homes too, and that fluidity means all students can become more aware and understanding of other cultures too. Using the self-reflective practice of currere is a great way to learn more about oneself prior to expanding transcultural knowledge in a dialogic classroom. The need for transculturalism will be explored within this writing, along with how currere can be a teaching practice that leads to productive classroom conversations when introducing the topic of transculture and culture.

Cultural and Transcultural Learning in Schools

Transcultural learning is something that should be taught in classrooms as understanding and respecting cultural differences is an important skill for all students to have. Teaching about culture and transculture is important because "students will interact with multicultural, multiracial, multilingual, and multiethnic people" (Milner, 2005, p. 392) for the entirety of their lives, and students need to be respectful and understanding of any cultural differences there may be. With the "increasing urgency for Indigenous Nations and Peoples to restore and regenerate lifeways" (Corntassel & Hardbarger, 2019, p. 88), learning about other cultures, such as the Indigenous cultures, is important for not only the cultural group, but for those who are learning about the culture too. With the resurgence of Indigenous cultures, the hope is that

Indigenous ways of knowing is transmitted and celebrated by young people (Whitlow et al., 2019). All cultures need to be respected and celebrated, despite the transculturism that occurs for families in communities where there is very little differing in cultures. All students should learn how to interact respectfully with other students, especially when there are cultural differences. Since transcultural learning is important for students in the present, and in their futures, it is a topic that should be explored in all classrooms.

Teaching different cultural values in a classroom can improve student success socially and academically. Antrop-Gonzalez (2006) found that when an emphasis was placed upon Indigenous culture in classrooms, that not only did student self-esteem increase, but so did academic achievement, similar to how academic and social success for students of color increases when culture is explored in classrooms (Milner, 2005). Milner (2005) stated that "culturally relevant teaching is a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically" (p. 395), which demonstrates the importance of teachers creating classrooms where culture is an important curriculum. When culture is important in classrooms, students will flourish in many ways, making learning more meaningful and relevant. Having cultural and creative expression in a classroom promotes strength, pride, spiritual connection, and cultural recovery in students from many different cultures (Whitlow et al., 2019). When a classroom encourages the celebration of many cultures, that cultural expression teaches students to value those cultures while also building respect and understanding toward those cultures. All students can become more successful in their lives if they learn how to value other cultures.

In many schools, especially in rural settings, differences among cultures is very limited. Even though there are often few cultural differences in those areas, it is still important to teach students how to be respectful and knowledgeable about transculture. Depalma (2010) suggested that to mitigate an oversimplified view of multiculturalism, "students must encounter a broad range of perspectives (even, and perhaps especially, those they might disagree with)" (p. 441). When people are able to "shape their daily lives by stories" (Driedger-Enns & Murphy, 2014, p. 91) that are shared either by texts, video, reflection, or dialogue in class, students begin to learn about the multiple stories on a single subject. Sharing stories allows experiences to be remembered, making "people understand their purpose, which in turn generates hope, well-being, and collective identity" (Whitlow et al., 2019, p. 186). Students who have very little to do with transcultural students still need to be aware of the contradictions and inequities in both their community and larger world (Milner, 2005). Depalma (2010) suggested that students need to recognize and be introduced to serious issues in social justice, and allow the students a place and "opportunity to engage critically with various perspectives on these issues" (p. 450), especially when the students have little knowledge on transculture. As teachers, we should strive to help all students "reach a level of cognitive transformation" (Milner, 2005, p. 399) by presenting a classroom curriculum that encourages students to "accept and embrace different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and racial groups" (Milner, 2005, p. 399) and to encourage students to make a change in society by speaking out on cultural injustices. If all students are more aware of transcultural and cultural issues, then hopefully they do better because they know better. In their futures, all students, even rural students, need to be aware of transculture, culture, and issues related to them so students can strive to be more respectful toward the differences in cultures.

People can change, and the more students know about a culture, the more understanding one can be. People can travel between worlds and can inhabit more than one world at any given time (Lugones, 1987), meaning that students can be aware of more than one culture at any one time. When one learns more about others cultures and ways of life, it may make understanding other's easier because one can then travel to another person's culture, allowing for a new educational experience and understanding. People are not stuck in any particular world, and "travelling to someone's 'world' is a way of identifying with them because by traveling to their 'world' we can understand *what it is to be them and what it is to be ourselves in their*

eyes" (Lugones, 1987, p. 17). Understanding other cultures may help students "think about multicultural content and to broaden or change their minds-sets to think about others in more relevant and meaningful ways" (Milner, 2005, p. 408). Understanding multiple cultural identities within classrooms can be "central in understanding the students' sense of belonging and acceptance in the larger community of students" (Milner, 2005, p. 408), which allows students to think about themselves in relation to others, creating more acceptance of all people in the school. To assist children in learning more about other cultures, dialogue can allow all voices to share their experiences, but teachers also need to provide a space that "encourages its students to connect their education to their respective social realities" (Antrop-Gonzalez, 2006, p. 277) in the hope that they transform their lives and communities. If classrooms can allow a place for students to reflect and discuss how they want to make a positive transcultural difference in their classroom and lives, then students may feel as if they can make a difference in their personal understanding of transculture.

Understanding Currere as a Precursor
for Dialogic Conversations About Transculture

Currere is similar to an autobiography. While an autobiography is a story of one's life, a currere has the added element of seeking to understand the "contribution academic studies makes to one's understanding of his or her life" (Pinar, 2004, p. 36). Currere is a strategy where students "study the relations between academic knowledge and life history in the interest of self-understanding and social reconstruction" (Pinar, 2004, p. 35), which is important when introducing culture, transculture, and issues surrounding these topics to students. Currere, while it is a "conversation with oneself" (Gibbs, 2014, p. 151) in relation to new knowledge and altered understandings, it also encourages students to think about the "conscious and deliberate transformation of the self" (Strong-Wilson, 2017, p. 168). This type of writing also "employs the past to reveal the present assumptions and future intentions of the story teller" (Strong-Wilson, 2015, p. 615). When students are able to think about their current understanding in relation to their past experiences with culture and transculture, they will be better equipped to write about the present in-class topics of transculture and culture. This personal reflection may also provide an awareness of a misunderstanding too, which can make visible the need to learn more about transculture moving forward. Currere, while similar to autobiography in the way that it is a story told about one's past, also includes looking into one's future while exploring what is being learned at that time.

Currere can assist students in making meaning of new information gained about transculture. As "a method of study, of intellectual engagement, of learning, of becoming an individual" (Strong-Wilson, 2017, p. 157), currere provides a space where students can reflect on themselves and their understandings (Gibbs, 2014) when exploring transculture. Reflection is often used to improve one's practices, understandings, and situations (Clandinin, 1992), so currere can help improve one's understanding of cultures and transcultures. When we reflect, we have a double awareness of our thoughts (Grumet, 1992), and it is in that slowing down and re-entering our past experiences where we can see who we are in the present, and how we imagine the future (Pinar, 2012). The permanence of writing a currere about transcultural understanding and experiences can demonstrate how far we have come as an individual when we look back on our opinions, and we can see how our understandings have changed (Grumet, 1992). Acting upon information revealed in reflection can cause one to want to transform one's world (Aoki, 1983). The physical act of writing a reflection, in the form of a currere, can create more understanding of new information gained when learning about transcultures, and what one may need to learn more about due to missing or incorrect information.

Currere can be used for exploring misunderstandings around transculture. Currere can bring awareness to the possibilities and constraints in one's worlds while providing access to others worlds too. We sometimes may misunderstand our experiences, our stories, or the

information that we are presented, and writing a currere can make the writer more aware of these misunderstandings. When we "misunderstand ourselves, we misunderstand our world" (Grumet, 1992, p. 36), and when we cannot know who we are, and we cannot see the world full of all the differing cultures and people when we have misunderstandings of others. Personal stories, experiences, and understandings can change when one learns, and learning transculture can be an "ongoing cycle of 'living, telling, retelling, and reliving'" (Driedger-Enns & Murphy, 2014, p. 92). The act of writing out one's personal understanding can bring awareness to how one's knowledge may not only need to change, but has already. Writing a currere allows the writer to shape their understanding and vision so they can encounter the world differently (Grumet, 1992), with the hopes that one can, going forward, be more accepting of those who are different from oneself. Since currere is a call for a change, conversations can be opened (Gibbs, 2014), making this a seamless transition to the learning that can come from classroom conversations, especially around difficult topics that can arise from discussing transculture.

Using Conversations To Continue Learning About Transculture

When discussing transculture, using conversations in classrooms can make personal understandings, experiences, and knowledge, as explored through currere, more meaningful. If teachers allow students to explore their experiences of transculture in a currere, those students will continue to learn and grow from classroom discussions based around the transcultural topics that were previously explored in a currere. While currere is important for personal reflection and understanding, classroom discussion is important for continued growth (Grumet, 1992). Words, in both currere and discussions, can "bring new beginnings into the world" (Biesta, 2017, p. 10), but dialogue can extend learning beyond information found in a textbook (Monahan, 2017), which can make learning about transculture more impactful for students, especially when they have a chance to share their related personal experiences and stories about culture aloud. When introducing topics which may be unfamiliar to some students, such as Indigenous or other transcultural issues, starting instruction by encouraging students to write a currere about their experiences related to cultures that differ from their own, and then expanding upon those experiences and opinions through conversations in class can be beneficial for students. Classroom based conversations can make learning more meaningful and personal to engaged learners.

Experiences are important for student learning, and sharing experiences related to transculture can be "moving forces" (Dewey, 1938, p. 38). Dialogue is the basis of education (Grumet, 1992). Human experience is primarily social, which includes contact and communication (Dewey, 1938), making conversations in classrooms important because of the cognitive development that occurs when students participate in dialogic conversations within classrooms (Grumet, 1992). Stories that are shared by peers is a way in "which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful" (Driedger-Enns & Murphy, 2014, p. 91). "Storytelling provides opportunities to disrupt and reconstruct existing knowledge" (Howard et al., 2016, p. 758), which is important to remember when students are participating in dialogic classrooms and are learning from not only their experiences, but from others too. Critically reflective classrooms allow for experiences and understandings to be explored (Aoki, 1981), and students learn from their past experiences, along with the experience of actually engaging and participating in classroom discussions (Jardine, 2012). When stories related to transculture are shared, explored, and listened to, students take those experiences and interpret lessons from them and, ultimately, learn from them.

While writing a currere about transculture can bring awareness to one's thoughts while exploring past experiences, participating in classroom conversations can bring new understandings to the same topics being covered. Since knowing does not arise just from inward speculation, but also from "intentional engagement with and experience of lived reality"

(Aoki, 1983, p. 120), dialogue between students in a classroom is an open conversation between two or more worlds about transcultural and cultural issues (Aoki, 1981). Common interests and experiences can lead to more conversation (Monahan, 2017) about transculture within classrooms because "understanding begins . . . when something addresses us" (Jardine, 2012, p. 109). Students who are able to share their own, or others, points of views and experiences in dialogic classrooms provide classrooms with a "multiplicity of views that generally inspired (rather than stalled) dialogic discussion" (Depalma, 2010, p. 442). When students are beginning to learn and recognize transculture within their lives, these difficult conversations may feel less daunting when students can connect to what their peers are expressing. "One insight leads to another" (Jardine, 2012, p. 119), and reflecting on one's own thoughts along with others "allows new questions to emerge, which, in turn, lead to more reflection" (Aoki, 1978/1980, p. 105). When conversations around transculture occurs in a classroom, the students are gaining more insight from one another's thoughts and opinions, while also liberating themselves from hidden assumptions (Aoki, 1978/1980). Through classroom discussion, participants part from discussions as changed beings because "discussion bears fruit" (Jardine, 2012, p. 130). Learning occurs through dialogue, and this type of learning is important to the students since the conversations that occur between the students is not only on the topic of transculture, but is also meaningful to them due to the personal connections they can make to the topic. The act of conversing in classrooms about thoughts brought forth from a currere can bring more understanding to participants of discussions when introducing transculture.

Many students may think of discussing difficult topics, such as transculture, as overwhelming and intimidating, but tension is a necessary part of new experiences (Driedger-Enns & Murphy, 2014), and understanding is an adventure that involves some risks (Jardine, 2012). When students partake in an adventure of learning about uncomfortable transcultural topics, students can only become educated if they learn about experiences and knowledge that interrupts their own personal, current, and learned understandings (Biesta, 2017). Risky dialogue is often needed in discussions, since different viewpoints often identify various issues or commonalities related to culture (Depalma, 2010), and the sharing of experiences can either challenge previous understandings, allowing for growth, or can validate current understandings, allowing for the expansion of knowledge (Howard et al., 2016). Monahan (2017) stated that "understanding different viewpoints raises collective consciousness of previously unknown perspectives" (p. 81), which allows students to work together to make a difference in their learning, and in their lives, while also understanding mutual problems related to cultures within communities, and the need of searching for solutions. Sharing stories and experiences related to transculture may cause tension in one's understanding, especially if the transcultural topics that are being discussed are uncomfortable or are against what one believes, but tension is a "growth-oriented endeavor" (Driedger-Enns & Murphy, 2014, p. 98). Embracing difficult discussions and topics when talking about transculture is a learning experience because people learn when they become enlightened (Biesta, 2009). Students who are comfortable in the classroom setting will often speak first in classroom conversations, and when one student voices their opinion, other students will become more comfortable and will state their opinion or understanding too (Depalma, 2010). Although some conversations in class may be uncomfortable, that tension can make students more aware and understanding of others, especially when exploring transcultural issues.

Conclusion

Teaching students about transculture is important for the futures of all students. While transculture specifically refers to the change that people encounter when learning a new culture while trying to stay authentic to their own, teaching students about both culture and transculture is important because all humans need to interact with people from cultures that differ from

theirs. Knowing how to introduce topics around culture in classrooms is sometimes overwhelming, but starting students off with writing a currere about experiences related to culture is a reflective and meaningful place to start, since students are often more interested in learning when it directly relates to them. Once students have had ample opportunity to explore their personal experiences, stories, knowledge, questions, concerns, and understandings by first writing a currere, students will continue to learn from their peers when they participate in classroom conversations about transculture. The act of sharing dialogic stories can not only strengthen current beliefs, but can also challenge one's personal knowledge and opinions, creating an experience of growth. Using both currere and classroom conversations when introducing general knowledge and issues about differing cultures and transculture is a great way to make students more personally invested in learning about transculture, because knowledge about transculture is important for students in their futures so they can create respectful relationships with others.

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About the Author

Hannah Beghin is currently in the last course of her Master of Education, and is focusing on learning about curriculum and pedagogy. She continues to find an interest in learning about cultural learning, especially Indigenous learning. Hannah is a grade five teacher in a rural school, and enjoys spending time outside with her dog and husband.

Youth Mental Health: Roadblocks and Solutions to Student Success

Paula Opperman

Abstract

This article looks at ways schools can address the problem of increased mental health concerns among students in the school setting. Insufficient training of school staff, lack of mental health professionals in schools, inconsistent programming, and teacher mental health concerns make supporting students mental health difficult. Addressing these concerns is possible through teacher training, mental health professionals in all schools, school programming, and support for teacher mental health. These changes would have a positive influence on student academic success and children's future emotional well-being.

After 25 years as an educator, it is evident to me that schools are not doing enough to address the rising mental health concerns of our students. Schools are an ideal place to address mental health issues faced by a large number of youth (Reinke et al., 2011). Unfortunately, roadblocks prevent schools from effectively providing the mental health support needed by up to 25% of school aged children (Ohrt et al., 2020, p. 833). Insufficient training is making it difficult for educators to support the mental health challenges in today's classrooms (Ohrt et al., 2020). When a mental health disorder is recognized, choosing the strategies to support the student can be a daunting task (ACMH, n.d.). It is important that teachers have accessible mental health professionals to consult (Korinek, 2021). For these reasons, schools need to have mental health professionals working on site. In addition, there needs to be a commitment to a whole-school approach for mental health education (Manitoba Education, n.d., 2021). Teachers have a difficult job in the classroom, given the curricular and management demands. They are experiencing an increase in their own mental health disorders (Zarate et al., 2019). Support for teacher mental health is essential in supporting youth mental health (Carrington, 2019). If schools can solve these problems, we can begin to address the mental health concerns of our students.

Training Educators

Educators do not have the training to recognize when a mental health issue is responsible for learning difficulties. They can often mistakenly assume it is due to factors unrelated to mental health (ACMH, n.d.). When the mental health issues of children go unrecognized, it can negatively affect their academic success during school years, and their future adult life (Ohrt et al., 2020). Early identification can be extremely effective (Hubel et al., 2020). However, recognizing mental health issues can be difficult because many people working with young children are not well versed in the identification process. Mental health difficulties are often ignored because of this lack of knowledge (Danby & Hamilton, 2016). Professional training on how to help students suffering from mental health issues needs to be offered to all educators (Ohrt et al., 2020). More training for teachers would increase their ability to support students and their emotional well-being (Reinke et al., 2011). Training on mental health issues would facilitate early identification, intervention, and possible prevention of youth mental health concerns in classrooms.

Lack of training on the topic of youth mental health is a common issue. This has been my personal experience in my school division. Our division has offered minimal training. For example, the last professional training on the topic of mental health, Mental Health First Aid, was offered over five years ago. It was optional, and offered in August during summer holidays, so participation was minimal. Since then, there has been high staff turnover, no training offered to incoming staff, and no discussion on what teachers are expected to do in their classrooms to

support the mental health of their students. Training could be accomplished more effectively in a variety of ways. Using scheduled professional development days, or monthly early closures, to offer workshops by trained professionals is one option. Short informational sessions at monthly staff meetings would be another ideal way to keep the topic current, and would ensure that new staff hired are included in important conversations about the mental health of our students. Teacher training is an important piece in supporting youth mental health in schools.

Including Mental Health Professionals

Schools require the support of mental health professionals to choose effective strategies (Danby & Hamilton, 2016). Addressing the mental health concerns of students is essential to their success, but meeting their needs in the classroom is not always easy. After a mental health issue has been identified, proper supports are necessary to increase academic success. Teachers do not feel confident that they have the needed skills to offer these supports (Reinke et al., 2011). Educators alone do not have the necessary skills to treat the many mental health concerns facing youth. Mental health professionals, including psychologists, youth mental health workers, counsellors, and social workers play a vital role in supporting students with mental health issues. Their role in supporting educators in the classroom is equally important. Mental health professionals, working in the school setting, can offer support to educators on identifying mental health concerns or managing students' mental health needs in the classroom. Also, these professionals are often the connection between families and important professional services in the community (Korinek, 2021). Having qualified people readily available to consult in the school setting, and act as a liaison between teachers and families, is an invaluable service. If schools want to support student mental health, having mental health professionals available is necessary.

Lack of available professionals is a problem that many schools in Manitoba are currently experiencing. For example, our division has been unable to hire a full-time school psychologist. In recent years, we have had to share with neighbouring divisions or contract a psychologist on a case-by-case basis. This year, securing a .25 psychologist for our school division felt like a victory. In reality, the wait time for psychological assessments in our division is lengthy and we cannot offer the services our students need in a timely manner.

This is also true for youth mental health workers. Our school relies heavily on our youth mental health worker for student therapy, consultations with teachers, and as a connection to families. This role is essential in supporting students with mental health issues and supporting teachers in classrooms. Currently, youth mental health workers are often shared among several schools and multiple divisions, especially in rural areas. Our school has one mental health worker, shared among seven schools and two school divisions. The logistics of this, including services lost to commute time and a large caseload, are unacceptable. All schools need more access to these professional resources. There need to be recruitment procedures and an increase in funding for these important positions. Using schools as the venue to care for students' mental health needs makes sense; however, it needs to be done in partnership with other agencies and experts (Danby & Hamilton, 2016). Funding to have mental health professionals in every school would be another important step toward supporting youth mental health.

Programming and Commitment

Along with providing support to children diagnosed with mental health disorders, schools need to commit to offering programming for mental health education for all students (Manitoba Education, 2021). Educating all students about their own mental health needs to be a priority. Currently, many programs are available for use in classrooms to teach children about mental health and emotional well-being. The problem is when teachers are completely autonomous in

choosing and implementing programs. If school administrators do not give a clear mandate on programming, there is no guarantee it will be used consistently, or at all. Consistently incorporating mental health education across all curricular areas gives students strategies to maintain their emotional well-being as they move through childhood into adolescence (World Health Organization, 2004, as cited in Manitoba Education, n.d.). This is a preventative measure, giving all students the tools that they need to manage their mental health as they age.

I found two Manitoba Education (n.d., 2021) documents that address the role that schools play in teaching mental health. Both reinforce the idea that mental health education in schools has to be addressed on a whole-school basis. The fact that I had never seen either of these documents, as a veteran teacher, made me question my division's commitment to mental health education. A whole-school approach ensures that we are reaching those children who may not have recognizable mental health concerns, and works as a collective approach to mental health education (Manitoba, 2021). Schools need to be as accountable for mental health education as they are for all other curricular areas. Being committed to mental health programming is essential in successfully supporting students' mental health needs.

Supporting Teacher Mental Health

Supporting teacher mental health is essential in supporting student mental health. Educators have many obligations in the classroom and can struggle with meeting academic expectations. The demands on teacher time are leaving many teachers feeling unable to meet the increasing needs of students in their classrooms. The task of effectively supporting the mental health difficulties of students, without adequate time and support, can be emotionally taxing and affect a teacher's own mental wellness (Strahan & Poteat, 2020). Schools need to find ways to support increasing demands on teachers in the classroom. Solutions such as support from administrators, support for student needs, increased preparation time, and mental health support for teachers are crucial to help teachers meet classroom obligations.

Administrators need to find ways to ensure that educators feel supported and valued. Carrington & McIntosh (2021) explored the idea that teachers do not feel burnout because of the difficult job caring for students, but rather when they do not feel like their work matters or is appreciated (Carrington & McIntosh, 2021). Administrators who make time to listen to teachers and ask for feedback are letting teachers know that they are valued. Teaching is being recognized as a "profoundly emotional activity" (Kinman et al., 2011, p. 37, as cited in Hanley, 2017, p. 254). Having support from other professionals can help to prevent teacher burnout (Hanley, 2017). Educators need opportunities to debrief with a colleague or supervisor on difficult days. Having emotionally healthy teachers in the classroom is vital to supporting students.

In my school, the administrators have implemented several initiatives that have been a part of successfully supporting teachers' emotional well-being. Common preparation time and personal learning communities give teachers time to collaborate with colleagues on immediate classroom needs. It allows them to share knowledge on teaching strategies, or seek emotional support on a regular basis. Early closures at the end of every month are used for professional development or to give teachers time to address classroom needs. Time to learn and prepare is important for teacher mental health. When teachers feel acknowledged and supported, they are better able to care for their students.

Conclusion

Recognizing and addressing the mental health needs of students is complicated work. Mental health issues can have a significant effect on a child's ability to successfully perform in school (Agnafors et al., 2021). Schools have an obligation to address the mental health needs of their students (Mental Health Commission of Canada, 2013). Finding effective ways to

overcome the roadblocks that prevent students from achieving academic success is challenging, but possible. If we are serious about addressing youth mental health in schools, solutions need to be implemented. Educators need training in mental health issues (Reinke et al., 2011) and the support of an expert team to implement best practices (Danby & Hamilton, 2016). Having mental health professionals readily available in the school setting, for students and staff, is imperative. In addition, schools need to be committed to mental health education for all students, evidenced by staff training and programming. Finally, schools must address the needs of students without jeopardizing the well-being of teachers (Carrington, 2019). Support from administrators and opportunities to implement wellness strategies contribute to protecting teacher mental health. These solutions would be an investment toward improving academic performance and the lifelong well-being of our children.

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About the Author

Paula Opperman graduated in 1995 with a B.Ed. from Brandon University. After spending 25 years as a classroom teacher at Killarney School, she became a Student Services teacher, which led her to enrol in the M.Ed. program. She has 3 children, who inspire her to challenge herself and learn every day.

FOCUS ON FACULTY RESEARCH

Lessons From the Field: The Gift of Unconditionally Positive Regard

Marion Terry

The following reflection is based on my experiences with community-based adult literacy programs in northern and rural Manitoba, Canada.[1] All names are pseudonyms, and all quotations are of program coordinators and instructors who were interviewed during qualitative research studies. I realize that unconditionally positive regard is not restricted to adult literacy practitioners, but can characterize educators at all educational levels and in all service capacities. I chose to reflect on community-based adult literacy as one focus for my research since coming to BU in 1992.

What is it that separates gifted adult literacy practitioners from the rest of the field? Since 1990, I have been privileged to witness this separation in the form of adult literacy coordinators' and instructors' unconditionally positive regard for learners. Whether expressed as a fervent "Oh, I wish you could meet him. He's such a kind and generous soul. He shows up early whenever there's a storm and he shovels the walkway," spoken by adult literacy instructor Alice in relation to a thirty-year-old literacy student who had spent most of his adult life in and out of jail for violent offenses (predominantly against women), or "You take them in and come to love them like your own children, and then you just can't give them up," spoken by adult literacy coordinator Sheila in relation to youth who had come to her adult literacy program by default after being permanently expelled from public school due to misbehavior, unconditionally positive regard is a gift that exceptional adult literacy practitioners bestow upon learners above and beyond their academic calls of duty. This quality of care is manifested as an unbridled acceptance of students regardless of their incoming personal and academic experiences, including those affected by substance addictions and learning disabilities.

Personal Experiences

Students' personal experiences include past and present behaviors. Literacy instructor Francine explained that "for many students, it's a refreshing change just to be accepted for who they are, regardless of what they look like or what they wear." In Francine's adult literacy program, students were allowed to wear bandanas and other headwear, and no one "[made] a fuss" (Francine) about tattoos. Literacy coordinator Bonnie spoke of learners who came to her program with "lots of rough edges." She insisted that although the goal of her program was to "make people into better citizens" by helping them to fit into mainstream society, "You can't do it all at once, or you scare people away." Literacy instructor Tom spoke warmly of a homeless young adult male who came to his program with addiction and "cutting" issues, and who gradually learned appropriate classroom learning behaviors by watching staff model respectful interpersonal relations. Instructor Vera also praised the students in her program who were

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[1] Manitoba's community-based adult literacy programs receive financial support from the provincial government. Depending on their other sources of funding, the hours of operation range from several hours to five days a week, including daytime and/or evening sessions. The facilities also vary from rent-free community buildings and school classrooms to rented rooms and stand-alone buildings. Most of the instructors are fully certified teachers with previous experience in the public school system. Incoming student needs range from instruction in basic reading-writing-numeracy to assistance with secondary (and sometimes postsecondary) academic and trades courses.

"trying to make better lives for themselves" by learning new nonviolent ways to solve problems in their lives. Coordinator Sam expressed admiration for students who had "faced adversities that most of us shudder to think about. These learners' struggles make them role models for other students, and the staff as well." These practitioners cultivated success in their programs by unconditionally accepting learners' entrance behaviors, and then gradually influencing students to change these behaviors as they were ready.

Perhaps the most difficult of all incoming personal behaviors is substance addiction. When asked how she handled students who came to her literacy program "under the influence," coordinator Rebecca replied, "I gently suggest, 'It appears that you're not feeling that great today. Perhaps it would be better for you to go home now, and then come back when you're feeling better.'" Rebecca understood that she needed to remove students who posed a threat to other students' right to a safe and healthy learning environment, but she was loath to make any student feel unwelcome in the class. Coordinator Cathy sidestepped the question of removing students under the influence, speaking instead of the need to give unstable students time to build trust, and then letting them broach the issue of their addictions. She insisted, "You can't preach at them, or they'll be gone in a minute." Instructor Robert added, "I don't think a lot of people know that we provide personal supports to help people with addiction problems and emergency mental health. Cathy will even stay with them while they wait in the counsellor's office or medical clinic. I think that's important for the stability of these people." All of the exemplary literacy practitioners with whom I have interacted referred to taking time and being patient with new learners who came with addiction issues, in order to build unconditionally positive relationships before "talking out" problems and exploring solutions.

Academic Experiences

Adult learners bring a broad range of academic experiences to literacy programs, some of which have left them fearful of even trying to learn the literacy skills that they so earnestly desire. Adult literacy coordinators and instructors spun true tales of students with abysmal schooling histories, and conveyed sincere appreciation of these learners' efforts to undo some of the harm that had been done. Coordinator Sheila explained, "It's about letting people do what they do well," in terms of "orchestrating successes" so that learners "begin to believe 'I can do,' as opposed to believing, forever and forever, that they cannot." She spoke of individualizing students' learning plans with "authentic literacy tasks" that would help learners meet their goals. Coordinator Cathy acknowledged that students sometimes came to her program with unrealistic learning goals, but she insisted, "It's not up to us to burst the bubble. What we do is start the learning plan from wherever the learners are." Instructor Robert added, "No matter how long the learning journeys might be, we help students develop the prerequisite skills for as long as they are able to attend the program." When instructor Patricia spoke of students who needed more time to develop basic skills, she explained, "Not everyone learns at the same rate. Some people have to nest awhile before they can spread their wings." The deference with which these literacy practitioners beheld their learners' academic needs was borne of an unconditionally positive regard for students' incoming learning behaviors.

Learning disabilities (LDs) challenge adult literacy programs' instructional expertise. Adults come to literacy programs with a myriad of diagnosed, undiagnosed, and misdiagnosed learning disabilities, all of which require academic attention. The coordinators and instructors with whom I have interacted reported Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), with or without Hyperactivity (ADHD), as the most common LD that learners brought, but they were also quick to protest against labeling students with terms that struck fear into them and their parents in school, and that had come to represent real or imagined barriers to learning. Coordinators Sheila and Alice spoke of time as the most important factor in working with students whose learning difficulties appeared to stem from a learning disability. Alice explained, "Most people with learning disabilities need the freedom to work at their own pace and to take breaks whenever they need.

That's why they didn't do well in school." Sheila reported dyslexia, nonverbal LD, and visual-spatial LD as the most problematic learning disabilities for students who were trying to improve their reading, writing, and math skills. She admitted, "The learning plan for most of the nonverbal folks is employment related because their academics aren't going to improve much, and they will need jobs." These and other adult literacy practitioners' unconditional acceptance of learners was reflected in the sensitivity and honesty with which they spoke of students with LDs and other learning challenges.

Conclusion

Unconditionally positive regard for learners is a gift that some may say comes from God. It distinguishes the merely skillful from the masterful among adult literacy practitioners who interact daily with learners who manifest challenging personal and academic behaviors. I admire the literacy coordinators and instructors who welcome these challenges and value the individuals who pose them. These literacy practitioners are truly gifted individuals in our society.

About the Author

Dr. Marion Terry is a professor in Brandon University's Faculty of Education. Her career as a professional educator spans 47 years in public, adult, and post-secondary education. In addition to teaching M.Ed. students and researching topics related to youth-at-risk and adult learners, Marion is the founding editor of the BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education.

SHOOTING GALLERY
sculpture by Eric Lowe

This sculpture honours the bison killed for fun and/or sport, on the great Canadian Plains. Around 1500, an estimated 30-60 million bison roamed free on the western prairies. They were the main food source of the Indigenous peoples, providing food, clothing, shelter, carrying vessels for food, tools, and accessories. The bison were spiritually respected because they supported all life.

By 1910, there were only about 1000 prairie bison left. How could these animals become endangered in only four hundred years? *Shooting Gallery* is Eric Lowe's statement on this tragedy. Europeans killed the bison for sport, and left the carcasses to rot. They viewed the bison as nuisances that got in the way of their fences and railway lines, and they did not the respect the vital physical and spiritual relationship between the bison and Indigenous peoples.

The sculpture's ring is welded steel rolled one and a quarter inch square tubing with eight metal washers welded around the hoop. The hoop is wrapped with nylon rope, and the large bull bison skull is respectfully presented front and centre, lashed to the washers in a traditional manner such as bison skins would be lashed for tanning. The ends of the nylon rope are strung with large multicoloured wooden beads that satirize the "fun" of shooting bison from trains, wagons, or horseback.

Shooting Gallery was on display at the Eagleridge One Five Exhibitions in Winnipeg, September 2-28, 2022.