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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Marion Terry, Ph.D.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, devoted to rural, northern, and Aboriginal education. Our authors for volume 1, issue 1, range from first-year M.Ed. students to a university professor who completed a Ph.D. after graduating from Brandon University. I thank these current and past BU Faculty of Education graduate students for sharing their work. Together, they have produced a collection of articles on a variety of topics with one feature in common: a passion for teaching.

- Heather Duncan's research report summarizes her findings related to mentoring beginning school principals.

- Shaune Beatty's scholarly article examines parents', teachers', and principals' views of the characteristics that define effective schools.

- Eric Lowe's scholarly article recommends bookmaking as a medium for developing an art-integrated curriculum.

- Catherine Fidierchuk's scholarly article uses architectural construction as a metaphor for building a caring school.

- Christine Larson's scholarly article examines the growing phenomenon of bullying in schools.

- Lisa Bridges' scholarly article explores music, art, and creative writing as expressive art therapies.

- Cheryl Beaumont's scholarly article looks at counselling children of divorce from the child's perspective.

- Jill Martine's scholarly article analyses the pre-literacy benefits of reading to young children.

- Bruce Lyons' opinion paper probes teachers' motivations for entering and remaining in the profession.

- Marian Goldstone's opinion paper celebrates the magic of community.

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RESEARCH REPORT

Mentoring Beginning School Principals: What Works?

Heather E. Duncan

The purpose of this study, conducted in 2006-07, was to explore the effectiveness of a leadership development and mentoring program, *The Wyoming Leadership Academy* (WLA)*,* funded by a grant from the Wyoming Department of Education. This one-year leadership academy provided professional development and support to beginning school administrators. It consisted of two components: (1) workshops and conferences on school improvement and related topics (learning communities, supervision and evaluation of staff, and communicating with difficult people; and (2) an on-line discussion forum that provided opportunities for dialogue on topics chosen by the participants*.*

Research Questions

1. At what level do participants in the leadership academy implement the strategies they learn?
2. What components of the academy do beginning administrators value?

Methodology

A mixed methods research design was employed, collecting qualitative and quantitative data from surveys, interviews, and focus groups.

Setting

While Wyoming is the tenth largest state in the U.S. in area, with a population of just under half a million, it has the lowest population of all 51 states and, with 5.1 persons/square mile, has the second-lowest population density. Because of the rural nature and the large distances between schools in outlying districts, there is little opportunity for networking among beginning principals. As in many other areas of the country, the pool of skilled school administrators applying for vacancies is not abundant. It therefore becomes imperative that districts retain and develop their principals.

Participants

All Wyoming principals and assistant principals who were in their first three years of school leadership were invited to participate. Although forty-three participants enrolled, not all participants attended each leadership academy event.

Instruments and Procedures

Telephone interviews were conducted at the start of the academy and again at the end to assess the extent to which principals used the strategies that were the focus of academy professional development activities. Principals' implementation of strategies learned in the WLA was assessed with a structured interview protocol entitled *Levels of Use of an Innovation* (Hall, Dirksen, & George, 2006). A generic "paper-and-pencil" exit survey was developed to collect feedback on each academy event. At of the year-long program, a focus group interview was conducted after the final academy event. In addition, a final electronic survey asked participants

to reflect on their level of learning, the effects of their participation on their professional practice, and their views concerning the benefits of participation.

Findings

Implementation of Strategies Learned

In the areas of classroom walk-throughs, building professional learning communities, supervising staff, and communicating with difficult people, all respondents indicated that to some degree they were able to implement strategies learned through the academy. Specific data were collected for classroom walk-through implementation (see Table 1), as well as more general data from the end-of-year electronic survey.

Twenty-four of the 42 academy participants responded to the year-end electronic survey. Each respondent saw some degree of improvement during the school year in skills to monitor student achievement, to promote practices that impact student achievement, to collaborate with staff, and to foster a positive learning environment (see Table 2). Importantly, beginning school leaders felt that academy participation had increased their confidence as educational leaders.

Average attendance at the four professional development (PD) workshops and conferences was 24. The return rate of exit surveys conducted after each workshop/conference was 52 percent. In total, 50 exit surveys were collected from four workshops. Exit survey data indicated that these PD experiences were most beneficial in improving instructional practices and promoting school improvement (see Table 3).

What Academy Participants Valued

In response to an open-ended question at the end of the exit surveys, "*What was the most important part of this professional development experience*?" beginning administrators indicated that they valued the opportunity for professional dialogue with peers, networking, sharing of initiatives and issues with colleagues from other schools and districts, and the reduction of feelings of isolation (see Table 4).

Overall, participants were positive about their experiences with leadership academy professional development activities with the exception of the online discussions. Some participants expressed concerns about the time commitment required and difficulties in accessing the discussion forum. Although participants chose the online discussion topics, this was the least successful component of the academy with the lowest level of participation.

When asked on the final survey to rate the importance of opportunities for professional development and support for new school administrators, such as those provided by the academy, the average rating was 8.9 on a 10-point scale, with a score of 10 indicating "absolutely essential." When focus group participants were asked the same question, they unanimously agreed that importance of professional development and support for new school leaders would rate an "11" on a 10-point scale.

While new school administrators indicated that there was a great need for activities, such as the leadership academy, they also expressed concerns regarding the time commitment involved due to the fullness of their schedules. Interestingly, events held on weekends had much higher participation rates. Participants indicated that being out of their buildings during school hours increased their workload on return, and so they preferred professional development "in their own time," as they did not have to worry about what was happening in their absence.

Conclusion

Evident from this study was that beginning principals wanted to be successful and were eager to develop skills that would increase their capacity to lead their school communities. As

new principals, many felt isolated. They valued highly the opportunity to share best practices, issues, and problems with colleagues. In rural areas, opportunities for school leaders to network in face-to-face settings are scarce. Distances are too great. Although on-line forums and blogs can provide virtual meeting points, with the many other pressures of work they often become "just another thing." Being present in their schools during the school day was very important to academy participants.

Consideration of time constraints will be important when planning future efforts to support new school administrators. Districts should consider innovative ways to reduce isolation and to facilitate regular face-to-face meetings that not only provide professional development, but also facilitate conversations around the many issues that new principals encounter.

Table 1
Participants' Levels of Use of the "Classroom Walk-Through" Practice

Levels of Use	Description	Participants at the Various Levels	
		Fall n* = 12	Spring n* = 13
Non-User	No action toward learning about or implementing the innovation	1	-
Orientation	User is acquiring information and exploring the value of the innovation	1	-
Preparation	User is preparing for first use	-	-
Mechanical	User is attempting to master the tasks required to use the innovation	7	-
Routine	Use of the innovation is stabilized	3	12
Refinement	User varies the use of the innovation to increase the impact on students	-	1
Integration	User is combining own efforts with activities of other teachers to achieve a collective impact on students	-	-
Renewal	User makes major modifications to the innovation or seeks alternative approaches	-	-

Note: * 12 participants completed the Levels of Use questionnaire at the beginning of fall semester 2006 and 13 at the end of spring semester 2007.

Table 2
Participants' Perceptions of their Learning from the Academy

Questions: To what extent did the academy help increase…?	Mean Rating (n = 24) (Scale 1 = not at all; 5 = a great deal)
your skills in monitoring student achievement	4.01
your skills in promoting practices to impact student achievement	3.89
your skills in collaborating with staff	4.24
your skills in fostering a positive environment	4.18
your confidence as an educational leader	4.75

Table 3
Participant Ratings of WLA Workshops and Conferences on Exit Surveys

Question	Mean Rating (Scale 1 = Not helpful, 5 = Very helpful)
How did this professional development experience contribute to your ability to…?	n* = 50 responses
o serve as an instructional leader	4.16
o promote school improvement	4.14
o manage your school effectively	3.90
o facilitate democracy within your school	3.60

Note: * Total responses to exit surveys conducted after each of four workshops/conferences. Average attendance at workshops was 24. Return rate of exit surveys was 52%.

Table 4
Themes in Conference Participants' Comments on Exit Surveys

"What was the most important part of this professional development experience for you?"

Theme	Number (%) n* = 50 responses	Example
Participation in professional conversations	29# (58%)	"Critical conversations with colleagues and leaders I respect."
Opportunity to network with colleagues	17# (34%)	"The networking time and connections are wonderful."
Learning what was happening in other schools, districts	10# (20%)	"The chance to hear what was on the mind of administrators from other school districts."
Reduction in sense of isolation	5# (10%)	"Everyone has similar questions. We're all in the same situation – this was reassuring."

Note: * Fifty responses were received from exit surveys conducted after each of four workshops/conferences. Average attendance at workshops was 24. Return rate of exit surveys was 52%.

    # More than one theme was identified in some responses. Therefore, numbers do not add up to 50, and percentages do not add up to 100%.

About the Author

Heather Duncan is an assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at the University of Wyoming. She served as a high school principal in Manitoba and completed her master's degree in educational administration at Brandon University. Her doctorate, also in educational administration, is from the University of Saskatchewan.

SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

A Comparison of Stakeholder Views on Effective School Characteristics

Shaune Beatty

Abstract

This paper is focused on examining the different views that stakeholders have regarding the characteristics of effective schools. It attempts to address the following questions. What are the views of the primary stakeholder groups in education? How do these views compare and contrast with each other? How do these views influence the structure, function, and role of principals? Finally, what implications might these comparisons hold for educational leaders responsible for improving and sustaining our schools?

In recent years, the status of public education in our country has been frequently evaluated and scrutinized (Marshall & Spencer, 1999). This is not a new development, as media, governments, street-level politicians, teachers, and others have debated the effectiveness, quality, funding, organization, and management of our schools for decades. For many members of the public, the idea that schools are now being held more accountable for student achievement is a welcomed development. Within this article, the views of principal stakeholders in education – parents, teachers, and principals – are examined and compared. Young, Levin and Wallin (2007) referred to these groups as the key participants in the educational system, or internal stakeholders. These groups are often viewed as having the greatest connection or closest relationships with the learners and with educational matters.

Parents' Views of Effective Schools

Today, parents have easy access to information regarding schools, and they are also assisted by policies that promote and mandate parent and community participation in school planning and reporting. Furthermore, parent interest goes well beyond school location, school climate, and student activities. Despite the time constraints that prevent school involvement by many working parents, including 66 percent of working parents who claim not to have enough time for their children, (Families and Work Institute, 1994), parents are more interested and knowledgeable about school policies and procedures. There are parent representatives who are prepared to participate enthusiastically in decisions regarding school practices and goals.

Though teachers occasionally question the value of parent participation, experts agree that the value of parent involvement is a critical part in creating a good school (Bushweller, 1996; Lopez & Schultz, 1996). Principals should welcome parents into the school. Grandmont (1997) stated that parent involvement is more indicative of a child's success than any other factor:

> Parents, families, and community members play a very important role in the
> education system. It is important for them to realize how much influence they
> can have over students and schools, especially when they become involved
> in school matters. (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2005, p. 3)

Other parent requirements in school improvement and effectiveness include a safe environment, monitoring of student progress, high expectations for behaviour and academics, positive school climate, an emphasis on basic skills, adequate facility, parental involvement, strong leadership, staff development, and support services (Jacob & Lefgren, 2007). Of these characteristics, Dufour, Eaker, and DuFour (2005) found that strong leadership is an important factor. Parent involvement and staff development were also ranked high in Lezotte's (1991) study.

While all of the above factors are ingredients in the recipe for an effective school, the establishment of a school philosophy and mission statement requires further discussion. It is not enough simply to have these items, and their creations are less important than their achievements. These components must be living and breathing. They represent the shared direction of a school, and they identify what a school cares about. The school philosophy and mission statements should act as the magnetic north of a school, and they should direct much of what occurs within it.

Parents need to be welcomed and embraced by schools. Principals should urge teachers to look upon parent participation positively. Once people become involved and connected, especially parents within a school, they tend to continue their help (Swick, 1991). Furthermore, parent volunteers gain ownership within school communities. This results in parent stakeholders' recognizing and respecting what is good in schools. They bond with the school community, and they are more likely to extend their own decision making about schools in the required and proper directions.

If principals are unable to meet the expectations of parents, parents are very likely to exercise school of choice. As an indication of the importance of a child's education, parents may be willing to pursue private schools (Sander, 1999) or to relocate to an area with a better performing school (Pritchett Johnson, Lingston, Schwartz, & Slate, 2000) as a means of assuring school quality for their children. Principals must pay attention to parents' views in this sense, because student enrolment often dictates school funding. Declining budgets can impact school resources and staffing (Maguad, 2007), which have been identified as factors for school effectiveness.

Teachers' Views of Effective Schools

Effective school factors identified by teachers are quite consistent. Among them, principals are considered an essential component of effective schools (Dufour et al., 2005; Moorthy, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1983, 1992). Leadership is deemed necessary to foster teacher motivation, commitment, and innovation. Effective instruction and relationships are also considered instrumental, and effective teaching is more about being people centered than being managerial (Gaziel, 2003; Leithwood, 1992; Ryan, 2006).

Scieszka (1996) reported that most teachers share the following views of effective schools: strong leadership, a safe and orderly environment, clearly defined curricular goals, parent involvement, high expectations, monitoring of student progress, and professional staff development. From this list, strong leadership, a clearly defined curriculum and goals, and high expectations are particularly evident in effective schools. Rock (1988) found that teachers who hold high expectations for student learning also enjoy higher levels of learning. According to Kashdan (1997), not all teachers view high expectations as an integral part of school effectiveness. Some teachers are more concerned with order, civility, apathy, and student motivation than with high expectations. Other teachers have expressed concerns about a lack of parental involvement and support, and students' overall ability to learn.

A combination of high learning expectations and clearly defined curriculum should bring out higher levels of achievement, especially when learning objectives are set with a purpose in mind and made relevant to the students. It is disheartening to hear that there are professional educators who do not believe that all learners are capable of learning. Given ample time and resources, students should have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential. Teachers who have preconceptions about a student's potential, or lack thereof, may actually be doing the student an injustice by shortchanging him or her.

Leadership remains one of the single most important factors of school success and change. Effective leaders set direction, develop people capacity, cultivate school culture, lead programs and teams, and respond productively to issues. Hodgkinson (1991) referred to leadership as the "pursuit of the worthy" (p. 2). Despite the numerous challenges as a school leader, many

become involved in leadership to facilitate change, to work with the wide scope of stakeholders, to realize their potential, and to be an influence in education and upon students. In doing so, the leaders are also committed to working with the educational workers under them, as "the human aspect of school change is the most difficult, yet essential, element of success. Perhaps, because of this, it is often overlooked, minimized, and dismissed" (Blankstein, 2004). Despite these challenges, Elmore (1995) stated, "leadership is the equivalent of the Holy Grail in educational administration" (as cited in Blankstein, p. 191). There are rewards and professional satisfaction to be had.

Principals' Views of Effective Schools

In exploring effective schools, stakeholders consistently identify the principal as a key variable (Dufour & Eaker, 1998). Strong school leadership ranks first among many studies schools (Dufour et al., 2005; Moorthy, 1995; Sergiovanni, 1983, 1992). It ranks significantly above such other factors as staff development, quality of teachers, instructional resources, socio-economic factors, and parent involvement. Some argue that leadership supersedes all other factors because effective leadership is capable of influencing, swaying, or controlling the other factors (Deal & Peterson, 1991; Dufour et al.). The role simply cannot be overlooked.

Many caveats are related to leadership in effective schools. These include vision, initiative, time management, high expectations, curricular knowledge, research skills, resourcefulness, problem solving, openness, political awareness, leadership, managing, and even charisma (Lezotte, 1991; Scieszka, 1996; Schmoker, 1999; Sergiovanni, 1992). Wiebe (1991) attempted to set an order to these priority traits: (1) clear school mission, (2) safe and orderly environment, (3) high expectations, (4) student time-on-task, (5) home-school relationships, and (6) monitoring student success. Greenberg (1995) suggested that the key ingredient for an effective school is a caring, active principal.

School leaders must demonstrate that they value their schools' teachers, students, and parents. Principals must be visible and participate on all levels with all stakeholders, including the students. At the same time, principals should provide a safe learning and teaching environment, instructional leadership, and opportunities for parent participation and involvement. Through these actions, the principal develops shared learning goals and responsibility for planning these goals. There is even shared leadership. In almost all cases, there is an effective leader behind an effective school.

Summary of Parents', Teachers', and Principals' Views of Effective Schools

In reviewing the views of teachers, parents, and principals, there are common themes. While there is no simple recipe for an effective school, the following themes are commonly identified by educational researchers (Brewer, 1993; Dufour & Eaker, 1993; Dufour et al., 2005; Freedman, 2008; Lezotte, 1991):
  o strong school and principal leadership
  o clear positive philosophy and mission statement
  o strong teachers and teacher development
  o high expectations for students and teachers
  o environment conducive to learning
  o balanced and focused curriculum
  o meaningful assessment and reporting on student progress
  o parent and community support

Stakeholders and the Structure, Function, and Role of Principals

The nature of relationships between stakeholders and schools is dynamic. Admittedly, schools and education are everyone's business. Education affects society on too many levels not to gather the attention of the stakeholders. The influences of the stakeholders upon the structure, function, and role of a principal can be dramatic.

There are many structures within a principal's responsibilities. From our common list of issues, one may identify several structures for Manitoba's principals. They must work within the Public Schools Act (PSA) and the Education Administration Act, alongside school boards and in the company of Manitoba Education Citizenship, and Youth (MECY). The PSA outlines areas that principals must be aware of in order to be effective, including the organization of education, attendance, transportation of students, student behaviour, length of the year and day, and language of instruction.

MECY has issued numerous documents about working with stakeholders, especially the parents and the public (Manitoba Education & Youth, 2003; MECY, 2004, 2005). Some of these documents deal directly with parents in general, while others deal with specific subject areas, language, and graduation. For example, *School Partnerships: A Guide for Parents, Schools and Communities (*MECY, 2005) provides guidelines for working collaboratively with parents. These may be presented as guidelines, but they are expectations for principals, especially those who wish to be successful. This includes implementing the process of collaboration, which can be described as

> the process of developing interdependent relationships where all are focused on a common purpose and set of goals, and where people must rely on each other to achieve these goals. It is the synergy created when a group's effectiveness exceeds what individuals can accomplish on their own.
> (Conzemius & O'Neill, 2001, as cited in MECY, 2005, p. 6)

Educational stakeholders take several forms, and principals must be responsible to all of them. For principals to be viewed as strong leaders, staff developers, curriculum workers, assessors, and builders of strong school communities, they must have knowledge and understanding of the stakeholders and structures around them, as they influence the theoretical and practical knowledge required of the position.

In observing the function of a principal, including the reasons for being hired, all of the views of stakeholders come into play. While most functions are formal, there are some that are adopted or taken as a function. As a visionary, a staff supervisor and developer, and an instructional leader, a principal needs to be on top of the current developments in curriculum, teacher pedagogy, and instructional resources in order to meet the needs of stakeholders. Because safe environments conducive to learning are a desired characteristic of effective schools, principals need to address areas such as school safety, order, and organization. Addressing student behaviour calls for the development and application of a student code of conduct. It may also require knowledge of the Criminal Code and awareness of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

To achieve their roles, principals must remain current with policy, practice, and research on the latest pedagogy, including technology in education. Communication skills, written and oral, are required to converse with staff, students, parents, school community, and outside agencies, such as law enforcement and family services. Developing partnerships is another important role for a principal. A school can truly benefit in the areas of curriculum, student assessment, and teacher development when a principal allies with departmental or university personnel.

In their day-to-day activities, principals must fulfill multiple roles. They are managers, planners, implementers, facilitators, evaluators, disciplinarians, ambassadors, cheerleaders, supporters, caregivers, motivators, coaches and players, providers, guidance counselors, timekeepers, politicians, advocates of children and education, and more. The different roles of

principals are shared in a comment by Hopkins (2000):

> "To be fair, I am in a small school system and I have to wear a lot of different hats," that principal told Education World. "Although my job is never dull or boring, it's also never finished. I feel like I am spread much too thin."

Stakeholders recognize that effective principals are able and accustomed to delivering results through their various functions and efforts.

Each view shared by the stakeholders in this paper is relevant to a principal, and it includes different structures, functions, and roles. Like a fallen pebble in a pond, a principal must contend with the ripple effect. The cause and effect on one end may influence those on the other. Principals are truly dynamic individuals, who regularly are so dedicated and self-motivated to address the needs of others that they may not even know the extent of their own roles and functions within the structures that they serve. Often, the effective principal is meeting the needs of several stakeholders simultaneously.

Implications for Educational Leaders

The views of teachers, parents, and principals engender points for principals to ponder, whether current or aspiring. Though there was some variability, the three groups did share some consistent views of effective schools. Furthermore, each group provided contributing factors, which suggests that there is no single factor that can guarantee that a school is effective. Instead, it is safe to suggest that a combination of factors is best suited for sustained school improvement and student success.

These effective school factors include strong school and principal leadership, a clear positive philosophy and mission statement, strong teachers and teacher development, high expectations for students and teachers, an environment conducive to learning, a balanced and focused curriculum, meaningful assessment and reporting on student progress, and parent and community support. While achieving these tasks, a principal should work with all stakeholder groups, as leadership decisions are best crafted and more stable when diverse groups are entrusted and involved in the process (Nelson, 2007).

Furthermore, the inclusion of many views also alerts principals to changes that they may not know are required (Gaziel, 2003). Principals need to recognize their influential abilities, for they steer the ship that is the school. They set the course for learning by all, and they may be required to bring other people on board.

Strong School and Principal Leadership

If schools are to become effective, principals must be ready to take charge and evoke change. Adopting new goals and school plans, changing the way the school operates, involving parents in different ways, partnering with community groups and organizations, and setting strategic plans for the future may be required. Leadership is considered to be "a vital precondition for an organization's success" (Stelzer, 2003, p. 3). Leading includes creating and sustaining a safe and caring school environment, being resourceful, and preserving a strong curriculum.

Leadership also builds trust within a school and school community. Teachers follow genuine and proven leadership. They also tend to dedicate themselves when the leader can provide statistical evidence that his or her guidance is delivering results. Students and parents also develop trust and confidence. This allows the principal some professional freedom, which can lead to some risk taking and possible further growth. Lastly, schools that enjoy good leadership are given some latitude by senior administrators, and further bureaucracy does not meddle with school plans and initiatives. Furthermore, school boards may be more willing to provide additional funding for projects when they are under the direction of a strong leader.

Clear Positive Philosophy and Mission Statement

It seldom makes sense to set on a voyage before deciding where to go. The same principle holds for school development and improvement. Without a plan, there is no direction, and there is no reference to indicate success and growth. A principal who, along with his entire school community, sets an action plan based on clear, time-oriented and education-based objectives significantly improves his or her opportunities to succeed. The sharing of the writing of a mission statement creates whole ownership, and it can generate life in a stagnant school.

An effective mission statement creates a whole entity of the stakeholders of a school community, narrows focus of school improvement efforts, and explains why the school community believes what it does. The mission statement identifies clearly what a school community is about and what it wants to be. The statement will be used to guide the stakeholders in their decision making when creating and working toward improvement goals. The idea of a school as a learning community suggests "a kind of connectedness among members that resembles what is found in a family, a neighborhood, or some closely knit group" (Sergiovanni, 1991, as cited in Blankstein, 2004, p. 53).

Teacher Development and High Expectations for Students and Teachers

With student learning being questioned as readily as it is (Anderson, 2007; Downey, 2008; Fullan, 1993), good teachers could arguably never be more necessary than they are today. While curricula are piling and the need for individualized programs is mounting, there is a need for strong teachers and teacher development programs. The decline of education can be attributed to the lack of creativity, innovation, inability to articulate, lack of clear thinking, and decline in verbal and written skills.

Developing stronger teachers becomes a function of all society. Much has to be done to make the teaching profession more attractive than other occupations. Teachers also need to be recognized for their many contributions, instead of being marked as excuses for a failing system. As well, universities must review their teacher development programs, as beginning teachers openly express that much of their learning takes place in their first year of teaching, when they are being asked to sink or swim. School divisions have taken on some expenses to support and to rescue new teachers by constructing mentorship programs, which are readily used not only by new teachers, but by other teachers headed into new subjects and classrooms.

Within school systems, principals must again enact their leadership, while being supportive of beginning, at-risk, and even seasoned teachers. Professional learning communities promote teachers to pursue a shared purpose for student learning, act collaboratively to achieve results, and take responsibility for student learning. In the true sense, it is time for all stakeholders to take collective responsibility.

Environment Conducive to Learning

Working and collaborating with several groups of people, who may have different priorities and views, can be a challenge for a principal. However, disagreements and debates should not always be viewed negatively. These may be required to clear the air, to see the light, or to reveal an answer. Some school staffs can thrive despite the presence of teachers and other stakeholders with different views.

A culture that squashes disagreement is a culture doomed to stagnate, because many changes begin with disagreement. Besides, disagreement can never be squashed entirely. It may be repressed, only to emerge later as a pervasive sense of injustice, followed by apathy, resentment, and even sabotage (Champy, 1995, as cited in Bass & Steidlmeier, 2007).

Branham (2004) reported that a school environment affects student learning. In terms of infrastructure, Branham reported that the use of temporary buildings, schools in need of structural repair, a lack of custodial services, limited space for students, poor teacher experiences, and low student enrollment hindered student success. All stakeholders need to be aware of school environments, including safety of schools, as these have long-term impacts on society, including a loss in overall national revenue, a loss in government tax revenue, increased access of government services, more crime, and poor health.

Focused Curriculum & Meaningful Assessment

The last decade has been marked with many curricula changes. However, these changes still do not provide the framework for student learning. Curricula continue to be too bulky, are too often based on information that will be outdated in the near future, and do not address the needs of all learners or ensure the success of students.

If present standards are inadequate, then new standards need to be put into place. These standards must be rational, relevant, and focused. Dufour et al. (2005) called these standards "power standards" (p. 49). Standards must also be accompanied by regular, common assessments. While many believe that students may be overly tested, the question should be "Are they effectively assessed?" (Dufour, Dufour, Eaker, & Karhanek, 2004). Only when guaranteed, standards-based curricula are backed with good assessment can some systems be considered accountable. Schools and education, "without the support of each of these pillars-standards, assessment, and accountability … will sag, crack, and crumble" (Reeves, 2002, as cited in DuFour et al., 2005, p. 47)

Parent and Community Support

Principals must also recognize the value of strong parent-school relationships. This belief again must be shared with teachers. Parents are an important factor in student education. Due to busy lifestyles, principals and teachers may need to be creative in how they involve parents in education. By promoting effective communication and regular participation with parents, schools can encourage and cultivate a valuable resource. Parents can evolve into agents of the school system, and they can problem solve and contribute alongside educators.

It is essential that a principal be able to work within and outside his or her community. Community members who are informed and involved in the identification of a school's issues and shortcomings, the brainstorming for solutions, and the improvement plans are in actuality taking a more active role in improving outcomes. Principals must create the forums for stakeholder participation and collaboration, so that they may facilitate the removal of any barriers that may be delaying or impeding school success. With community support, a school may have a greater argument, leverage, and political pressure through voting to have individuals in political positions pay attention to pleas for action. Through a teamwork-based and committed approach,

> School partnerships will generate strong community spirit. Community spirit makes a school more than just a building – it creates a learning environment where students feel the commitment of their fellow students, their principal, their teachers, and their parents. This shared commitment will make the common goal a reality-better education. (Alberta Learning, 1995, as cited in MECY, 2005, p. 5)

Closing

When one compares the principals' views to those of other educational stakeholders, there is a level of consistency. One might assume that the characteristics shared in this paper are much desired. Still, there is a great deal of practical research that can be further utilized by principals in their quest for school effectiveness. However, if principals pursued the views shared in this paper, and those by Dufour & Eaker (1998) and Lezotte (1991), they should enjoy some level of school improvement and effectiveness.

Two final points should be noted. First, the cultural, ethnic, economic and societal developments within school populations can represent additional challenges for principals. Language and cultural barriers represent hurdles in communication and instruction. Significant immigration by some cultural groups may affect the financial and communal outlook of an area. For example, poverty and Aboriginal education represent current challenges in Manitoba. Still, principals are obligated to provide a high quality and equitable education for all (Phuntsog, 1999; Xu & Gulosino, 2006). Second, there is a need for additional research in the area of students as stakeholders. This is especially true for early and middle years students, for whom very little literature is available on their views of effective schools. The views of these younger groups should be of significant interest to principals who are devoted improving the effectiveness of schools.

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SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

An Art-Integrated Curriculum through the Art of Bookmaking

Eric Lowe

Abstract

Society needs and values creative individuals. Therefore, demands are increasingly placed on early and middle years educators to provide more creative and challenging daily lessons that engage students in critical enquiry for everyday problem solving. The proposed art-integration curriculum, based on the art of bookmaking, offers a unique hands-on learning experience, wherein educators will learn to create and implement personalized art-integrated lessons across the general curriculum. Their students are given a deep-rooted learning experience that will meet the needs of society and our current educational system.

Society needs and values creative and inventive individuals; therefore, demands are increasingly placed on early and middle years teachers to provide more creative and challenging daily lessons. Art-integrated lessons infused into the curriculum give students the freedom of creative and critical enquiry for everyday problem solving (Donahue & Stuart, 2008). Students engage in a unique hands-on learning experience, because learning through the arts requires active participation. Art-integration through the art of bookmaking can be the perfect medium to accomplish hands-on learning with creative problem solving techniques, and a pride of ownership and accomplishment of creating one's own book.

Through professional development and education, the educators gain personal confidence and assurance that art-integration into the general curriculum is possible and fun through bookmaking. The goal is to build the individual educators' confidence in their ability to create and implement personalized art-integrated lessons across the general curriculum with bookmaking techniques. In return, their students experience real problem solving, critical reflection, and observation within an interactive, collaborative social environment that is nurtured by an art-integrated curriculum (Belver, Ullan, & Acaso, 2005). Such an innovative art-based curriculum requires thinking "outside the box" and understanding the long-term positive impact for a creative society.

Society and industry demand more creative and critical thinking for everyday problem solving. This demand is being felt in education. The Manitoba Department of Education is developing an online Arts-Integrated Curriculum for early years students in Manitoba and is asking universities to develop a methods course for art-integration (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007). There is a need for educators to set teaching goals that provide creative, inventive, and challenging daily lessons for students.

Collectively, educators should share their best teaching practices while developing an art-integrated education program (Belver et al., 2005). Art educators who have a passion for a particular subject area could share their ideas and hopefully pass along some of that passion. This exchange of ideas and passion is already taking place with such programs as "Artists in the Schools Program" (Manitoba Arts Council, 2008) and "ArtsSmarts" (ArtsSmarts Manitoba, 2004). These private and government-assisted programs, which were formed to infuse and integrate more art into the curriculum, have been very successful and have provided a fund of ideas and information. These new ideas have been shared in professional development workshops for educators. For example, bookmaker and artist Elaine Rounds was the guest artist at one of these workshops a few years ago. Such sharing of innovative ideas and best practices ensures that all educators have access to art-integrated lesson ideas that cultivate creative and critical thinking in students.

The four steps of Long's (2008) "Full Circling Process" engage students in creative thinking and observation. This four-step method is deeply rooted in an individual's social development and sparks a growing interest to explore and expand new possibilities and directions. Parker (2005) added, "Creative intelligence is relevant to all aspects of the school curriculum" (p. 188). Teachers in all subject areas should strive to develop creative and innovative approaches, rather than "ordinary thinking" (Parker, p. 187). Individuals strive to reach their maximum potential when they are engaged in the learning process.

Strand's (2006) conclusions also support the value of art-integration in the schools: the interrelationships among various themes support curriculum development into an art-infused general curriculum in all subject areas. Burton, Horowitz and Abeles (1999) found that "pupils in arts-intensive settings were also strong in their abilities to express thoughts and ideas, exercise their imaginations, and take risks in learning. In addition, their teachers were seen as more cooperative and willing to display their learning" (p. 45). Eisner (2002) described the arts as having diversity and variability, which opens up new considerations, directions, and possibilities for creative expression. Educators who have a passion for their work and are able to be creative and think outside the box can use art-integrated lessons to add joy to all of their classes.

Most visual information in society today is delivered by mass media, such as television, videos, and video games. The audience participation is reactive, rather than proactive, requiring very little creativity. In art activities such as bookmaking, the artist is the creator, constantly making new decisions through trial and error (Atkinson, 2006). This process can be intimidating for young minds unfamiliar with creativity in visual form. Improving and heightening individuals' observation skills and knowledge of art as a visual language gives them an increased awareness and a respectful understanding of their environment (Donahue & Stuart, 2008). Teachers need to motivate and stimulate young minds so that they gain confidence in this hands-on approach. Bookmaking engages young minds in a creative process that engenders pride in personal accomplishments.

Art-integrated hands-on classroom activities such as book art provide a unique learning process. Students become excited when physically and mentally involved in a deep-rooted educational experience. Developing art-integrated lessons through book art across the general curriculum addresses many of the needs and goals that students and society have today, which heightens the students' appreciation of the society and the environment in which they live. Eisner (2002) wrote of enriching individuals to learn with an eye towards aesthetics, something that is emphasized in effective art education. Art-integration through bookmaking can build and sustain understanding through hands-on learning in many subject areas across the curriculum.

Educators need to motivate and stimulate young minds so that they gain confidence in their ability to create their own expression from their own experience (Atkinson, 2006). This journey can be intimidating for teachers; teaching young minds unfamiliar with the creative process can be very challenging. Being able to communicate and express oneself is the foundation of teaching art (Donahue & Stuart, 2008). Book art and the art of bookmaking are not intimidating and are easy for educators and students to gain confidence and success. Students will respond if they find a connection with the topic.

Students love to learn and explore new possibilities and directions if they find a connection or bridge. Educators must be able to motivate the students to attempt the unknown, which requires dedication and passion (Atkinson, 2006). Integrating book art methods into the general curriculum, educators meet this demand and students enjoy a more lasting and grounded educational experience. Hands-on bookmaking engages all of the learners' senses; art-integration gives students the opportunity to become physically and mentally involved in a unique learning process that provides personal ownership. Therefore, the job of the educator is to convey a personal relationship and build a bridge between student and task (Belver et al., 2005).

High expectations are placed on educators to incorporate the arts into their lessons, but how can they be confident in knowing how to integrate art into the general curriculum without any

formal training or an instructional background in art? Art is a visual language that requires an understanding of the fundamental elements and principles that are used in this language (Donahue & Stuart, 2008). Educators require training in the basic foundation skills so that they become familiar with the fundamentals of art.

The art of bookmaking requires very little training, but it can encourage educators to develop a personalized art-integrated curriculum and their own art assignments and, in the process, incorporate the elements of design and art. With book art they can draw, paint, and paste their way into an appreciation of what certain materials can do, and what they can do as creative entities in their own right.

It is only through a hands-on approach that an understanding of the potential and limitations of any medium can be realized. Completed student books can be studied for the elements of art, and suggested improvements or alternative approaches can be critiqued, thus enhancing the students' observation skills. Heightened observation skills and increased understanding of the visual arts as a language give educators and their students a chance to explore the creative process with positive final results (Belver et al., 2005).

Art teachers often are concerned that an art-integrated curriculum will pose a threat to art as a subject in its own right. Jacobs (1989) countered that "experiences in purposeful curriculum integration can serve to increase the power of our creative teaching, increase job satisfaction and interaction with our teaching peers, and increase direct student interest and active involvement in learning linked within the school environment" (as cited in Fisher & McDonald, 2004, p. 246). Many examples exist of students experiencing activities and wishing to become more involved in training in a particular subject area. As Jacobs explained, "Finally, with the idea of improving and enhancing quality arts instruction for every child, we have nothing to lose as we include others in our collaborative teaching efforts" (as cited in Fisher & McDonald, p. 246). An art-integrated curriculum and bookmaking techniques enhance and strengthen art as a means to deliver and understand information from a new perspective.

Learning through the arts and teaching through the arts require a distinct approach for integration of new knowledge and skills. Simple bookmaking is a medium that has infinite possibilities for integration across the curriculum. Book-artist Elaine Rounds introduced this technique at an ArtsSmarts workshop in Brandon a few years ago. Since then, her hands-on book making technique has been introduced to hundreds of students with extremely positive feedback from students, educators, school administrators, and parents. Students begin their class by examining sample books provided, and then they are given instructions in simple folding techniques for making a simple pop-up, accordion, or flag book. Once the book is folded, book covers are selected from a number of possible resources, such as magazines, old calendars, newspapers, wallpaper, hand-made paper, and cloth ties or scarves.

Once the book is completed with the covers, endless possibilities exist for what could, or should, be put into the book. The student has been engaged and has taken ownership of the book. Now the subject matter is important, because it is going into a personal book. The student researches the subject with passion and conviction, wishing to find the best possible visual examples and pertinent information available for the topic. Envelopes are glued onto the back cover of the book to hold extra materials that could be found at a later date. "I know you throw away some of my art work," a student told his mother, "but never ever throw away any of my art work from Ms Rounds." The little books are captivating, and the students have accomplished the making of a treasure. What better way to educate for lifelong learning! (See Appendix for examples of book art.)

Educators gain personal confidence when teaching new concepts and ideas. Art-integration through bookmaking should serve as a fundamental catalyst in the transformation of individuals, increasing creative expression while working towards developing the "whole person" in a process that validates the importance of all subject areas across the curriculum, including art. Our society will be enriched with imaginative individuals eager to confront the challenges of the

future. Individuals capable of thinking outside the box, becoming creative thinkers, will solve the unique problems that our planet is facing.

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Eric Lowe is an art educator with 16 years of experience in teaching for Brandon School Division. He was the art coordinator of the ArtsSmarts project, wherein artists and educators developed art-integrated lessons. He is now a sessional lecturer at Brandon University, developing an art-integrated curriculum for his M.Ed. project.

Appendix

The following examples of book art have been provided courtesy of book-artist Elaine Rounds, Brandon, Manitoba.

Circle book of paste-paper

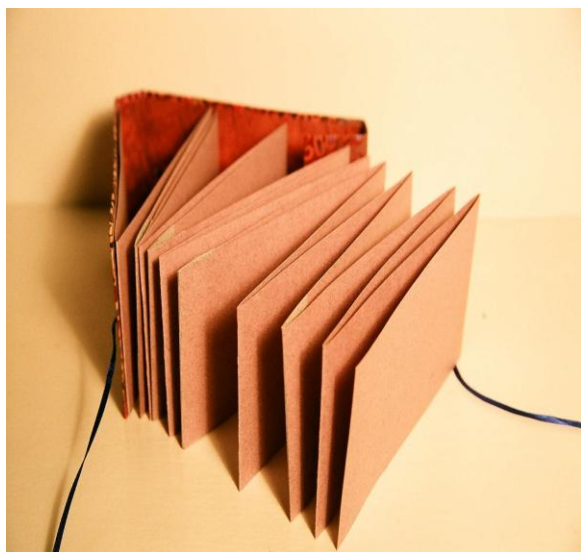Origami book with collages

Concertina book recycling sheet music

Flag book with collages

Long accordion book with fabric cover

Flag book with collages and batik cover

Concertina book with CD covers and fabric collages

Concertina book with CD covers and nature prints

SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

Building a Caring School Community:
Using Architecture as a Metaphorical Link

Catherine L. Fidierchuk

Abstract

The creation of a caring school community is foundational to student success. When students and staff are able to work together in an atmosphere of harmony and mutual respect great goals can be realized. Feeling a part of a caring community of learners results in a high degree of safety, security, and the freedom to realize one's potential.

Successful schools are buildings that must be imbued with a sense of care and community. Many buildings fill one with a sense of awe, and an appreciation for their beauty. These buildings may be places of worship and wonder, and because they are charged with the mission to care for all who enter into them we sense their comfort. They are inspired creations, and there is value in the masterpiece of achievement that has been required to create them. The metaphor of building can be used to illustrate the necessary components in creating a caring school. Considering that the creation of a caring school environment is the responsibility of the educational system, what would it take to create this desired state within all school buildings? Educators must prepare the ground, create the blueprint, lay the foundation, secure skilled artisans and craftsmen, work with the bricks and mortar, and ultimately polish the design and décor of the caring school building. These stages of construction will be used as a metaphorical link. Architecture, like education, is a blend of both science and art.

The concept that "the relationship between those in the school and those outside it must be fundamentally reframed" (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. v) supports the metaphor of building and construction. The reframing of school walls is also conceptualized in the statement that school walls cannot pretend to keep the world at bay (Elkind, 1997). The walls within the school building and between the school and the community must be porous and permeable. The school must reflect and mirror the community that it is a part of and the society that it represents. The explanation of how schools can be transformed from an organization to a covenantal community, "The heart of the school as a moral community is its covenant of shared values" (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 102), aptly illustrates how the community and the school must be intertwined. From these shared values, Sergiovanni believes that virtuous schools can be built. Central to this exploration are the factors to consider at each stage of the building process.

Creating the Blueprint

The blueprints are the plans. In order to build a caring school, all of the stakeholders must share in the planning process. Formal school plans that direct policy and programs, as well as the informal plans that pertain to individual events or classroom subject-centered plans, must keep the concept of care at the forefront. By trying to ensure that the whole child is the focus, it is more likely that care as a central component of the plan is realized.

There must be a willingness to infuse the current curriculum with caring. Some examples are recognizing virtues to encourage in all human beings; planning social, cultural, and environmental citizenship opportunities in subjects such as science and social studies; incorporating service learning and promoting community inclusion, cross-age grouping and sharing opportunities; and planning school programs around the defined moral purpose of care. Among the many purposes of schooling, four stand out as having special moral value: to love

and to care, to serve, to empower, and to learn (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). These four areas of moral purpose can help to shape the blueprint for planning a caring school.

Preparing the Ground

The preparation of the ground on which to build a caring school is of extreme importance. The site must be surveyed with a vision in mind. There would be a sense of stability and others who would share a common vision about what the school can become. If there is a comfort with the lay of the land (stability), there is a level piece of ground (common vision), and the school shares the norms and values of the community, then the location is ripe for growth and change. Working on a firm foundation is imperative.

Purpose, passion and hope – these bold words should serve to direct and inspire the work within the school building (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). In times of increased educational complexity and change, with huge forces acting on the school environment, one must take a good look at exactly what it is that is valued both within the school and in the wider community. There must be an awareness of the pressures that are imposing themselves on educators, and these educators must go deeper. The idea of going deeper and wider is an apt one for this discussion of preparing the ground. In the wider context, Hargreaves and Fullan explained that schools have a duty to widen their foundation to include such stakeholders as parents, employees, universities, and technology. As for going deeper, we should examine our practice and ascertain whether we are educating students with a passion and a moral purpose.

Laying the Foundation

The foundational work must begin with a shared trust and mission in creating the philosophical base from which the school community will evolve. Schools must believe that care is a moral purpose. Noddings' (1992) audacious statement "To care and be cared for are fundamental human needs" (p. vii) opened her discussion of the challenge to care in our schools. Noddings' view that the main aim of education should be a moral one is a popular position in our current time. She also recognized that society is plagued by a multitude of social ills that are increasingly encroaching on the goal of educating students. Her observation, "The need for care in our present culture is acute" (Noddings, 1992, p. xi), is more evident today than ever. There are many examples every day of bullying, violence, alienation, apathy, poverty, and negativity that prevent educators from working with students in a positive environment, and these should hasten the school's response. Responding to these issues, while maintaining an educational system that prepares students to be educated, productive, joyful members of society, remains of paramount importance.

Noddings' suggestion that education be organized around centers of care not only for self, but also for those closest to us, as well as the widening circle of others and the wider natural world, is compelling. Her discussion of the many school reform ideas that have been attempted in the past, including revision of curriculum, the behavioural objective focus, teaching methodology experimentation, standardized lessons plans, and improving classroom management skills for teachers, have shown little gain in school success. These reforms all held the promise of intellectual development of students: however, they fell short because they ignored the development of students as moral individuals.

Some attempts that schools have made to improve their response to the social condition of children, such as feeding them and bussing them, Noddings (1992) observed, still had at the root improving academic performance, rather than raising "healthy, competent, and happy children" (p. 13). Some attempts to alleviate the challenging social condition that children find themselves in are indeed short sighted and self serving. It will not be until we have more altruistic motives that we will make a difference for children. Care, combined with academic achievement, must be at the center of the transformation. Thinking about building a caring

school environment can indeed incorporate Noddings' ideas as part of the foundation.

Reaching down to find the moral purpose of education will involve infusing emotion and hope into the educational process and into the heart of good teaching (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998). These are necessary qualities, because they encourage educators to care more deeply for those they teach and to forge stronger emotional bonds with others, especially parents who share the love of their children and care deeply about their well-being. Staying optimistic and full of hope for all children can be challenging, but it is critical to hang onto hope for all children if a difference is to be made in their lives.

Instead of looking at all of the limitations in schools, the focus should be to look for possibilities. Validating what students currently care about in both their relationships and programs, and using these as foundational building blocks, should be the aim. As example is the high degree of importance that middle and high school students place on sports and extra-curricular activities in school. Because they truly care about having these opportunities, we must value them as a school and make sure to provide strong opportunities for student involvement. Students must be encouraged to understand that school is indeed a place for their voice, and educators must begin to listen to that student voice.

Power relations must be set aside, replaced by a commitment to a shared sense of community (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006). Through sports, caring life skills such as participation, fair play, physical fitness and camaraderie can be explored. An arts focus on appreciation of talent, beauty, individualism and the dedication that it takes to create can be embraced. Schools that value and support a sense of belonging and personal identity, as well as the importance of social interaction among students and staff, affirm the concept of community (Vieno, Perkins, Smith, & Santinello, 2005). These factors all add to the "connectedness" (Blum, McNeely, & Rinehart, 2002) that a student feels.

Securing Skilled Artisans and Craftsmen

A caring school will only be as good as the artisans and craftsmen entrusted with its construction. The staff of the school must be chosen carefully, and gained from them will be their contract or promise to care for students. The labourers, who will provide the workmanship within the rooms and walls of the building, will view their labours as labours of love. Peterson and Deal (1994) explained,

> The role of school leaders in the crafting of cultures is pervasive. Their words, their nonverbal messages, their actions, and their accomplishments all shape culture. They are models, potters, poets, actors, and healers. They are historians and anthropologists. They are visionaries and dreamers. By paying fervent attention to the symbolic side of their school, leaders can develop the foundation for change and success. (p. 30)

The role of school leadership is to guide, direct, build and affirm the collegiality of a team of teachers who share a humanistic vision and philosophy of education. Further, it is their job to make the community aware that this is the vision of care for the children of the school. This approach will provide comfort and confidence for all parents and community members.

Noddings (1992) explained the relationship of care between students and teaches as an unequal relationship:

> The contributions of teachers and students are necessarily unequal, but they are nonetheless mutual; the relationship is marked by reciprocity. Students cannot be expected to teach their teachers, but they can be expected to respond to growing sensitivity to attempts to promote their own growth. (p. 108)

The disparity in "power relations" (Rudduck & Fielding, 2006, p. 225) must be overcome in order to achieve full success as a caring school community. The artisans and craftsmen who are chosen to serve the students in the caring school must forge a strong, shared alliance.

Bricks and Mortar

Programming can be likened to the bricks and mortar that will be used to reinforce the structure of the caring school. A good deal of thought must go into the development, implementation, and augmentation of programming if the school building is to be imbued with care. Noddings (1992) defined the relational aspect of care as mutual and reciprocal, and as exemplified by the relationship between mother and infant. This is a strong and compelling example of care. The positive relationship between parent and child is most often mutually rewarding and satisfying. Moral education from the prospective of an ethic of caring includes four main components: modeling, dialogue, practice, and confirmation. In summary, Noddings stated that we do not tell children to care; we show them care through our own modeling, we engage in open-ended dialogue which provides knowledge and connection, we shape minds through opportunities to practice caring for others, and we confirm caring through affirming and encouraging the best in others. Thus, we are lifted to a vision of a better self (Noddings, 1992).

These aspects of caring are evident in family relationships, and they can be practiced in school environments just as effectively. They are the bricks and mortar of a caring school building. Real-life application or connection give school programming activities a moral purpose of caring. Service learning is an example of this application, as "from service learning programs young people develop a sense of hope, they realize that they have a place and a future in their world. In short, service nurtures the soul" (Krystal, 1998-1999, p. 60).

Cross-level partnership with students also can reap huge dividends. The building of close relationships between primary and junior high students develops a real sense of community and belonging. Observing these warm, nurturing relationships can result in a pinnacle of satisfaction for the staff at a school, and can affirm and inspire others to continue to work on this area of relationship building and hope for all students. The strength of cross-level partnerships is illustrated in the following quotations from students, parents, and teachers:
- o "The students learn to respect and feel affection for someone not in their immediate family and they also learn you get what you give."
- o "They really like the lovingness of the younger children and having someone to look up to them."
- o "My kids adore their buddies."
  (Youngerman, 1998, p. 59)

Teachers, parents, and students themselves all recognized and were able to articulate the feelings of connection and caring that they felt with their cross-age partners. The power of these emotional connections between students is particularly palpable when these types of relationships are allowed to develop over time and in as many venues as possible. These opportunities can be woven into the arts, sports, academics, and community citizenship activities.

To be clear, all of the provincial curricula areas can be addressed while still maintaining an ethos of caring and community building. Academic rigour is not sacrificed, but rather there is an infusion of caring throughout many curricular outcomes. The difference is that the school becomes more attuned to opportunities that learning can be grounded in care. When one takes the opportunity to look for what it is that students and communities care deeply about, it becomes much easier to make these an authentic and meaningful part of the school philosophy, the school programs, and the school day. Programming can be infused with caring.

Design and Décor

Paying attention to the design and décor of a caring school building can be likened to the painstaking attention that one will give to the finishing touches in one's own home. These areas include the attention to the symbolic. Schools can adopt many symbols that reflect their visions. For example, a school symbol or mascot may be the eagle. The eagle epitomizes for students

and staff the feelings of power, freedom, vision, and strength. It is a symbol that is familiar to children, possibly chosen because they live in the north and the children see the majestic eagle often. They are proud to be compared to this symbol. It might adorn the school handbook, the gym wall, team uniforms, and the school office. The students would care about this symbol and what it has come to mean to them.

Honouring ceremonies are also an integral part of building the tradition and continuity of care within a school. A school may honour the graduating class each year by planning a special year-end event, such as a field trip or a ceremony. This would be a time for the class members to celebrate their time in their school and for the school to bid them farewell. Another component of this celebration could involve some type of symbolic transition to the next phase of their life, a new school, or the work world, demonstrating that while the students are leaving the safety of their caring school they are entering another phase in which they will have continued support. Photographing these traditions of celebration and posting the pictures for posterity in the school also demonstrate that the students have had, and will continue to hold, a place of importance in their caring school community. Photographs are a significant symbol of something special, their time spent as part of the school community.

Aside from these concrete symbols, there are many other more abstract acts of symbolism that can be present in a caring school. Staff members who are visible when students arrive to school and open classroom doors would be two welcoming signs. Having a snack for those who may be hungry, and extra mittens for those who arrive without them, would be symbolic gestures that illustrate an atmosphere of care in the school. Glickman's (2003) statement about the importance of symbolism, that

> figures, places, and images, form a vision of home – of memories that tie me
> to the past, but continue to live in my hope for the future. These places are
> sacred to me because they signify continuity and an effort to keep a way of
> life alive for future generations (p. 34),

clearly illustrates the point. A parent of one of the schools in Glickman's research affirms this concept further in her statement, "This school never leaves you, it is with you forever. We are standing on sacred ground" (as cited in Glickman, p.36).

If the community believes that its school is a sacred place, one would infer that support and involvement would be visible and strong (Bergman, 2004, p. 158). The symbols and traditions that are woven into the design and décor of the school have significance for both the school and the community as it becomes evident that the children are a shared responsibility of both school and community (Joseph & Efron, 2005, p. 526).

Belonging in a Caring School

The power of belonging in a caring school would create a fusion for action. In this state, we could accomplish many of the "going deeper" goals that Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) goals discuss:

- o We need to involve students in talking about what makes learning difficult for them, what diminishes motivation, and engagement, and makes some give up or settle for minimum effort.
- o We need to commit to and insist on early childhood intervention- to shape the twig so the tree will not grow twisted.
- o We need to foster and support caring teaching, to build stronger bonds for better learning and improved opportunity.
- o We need to build relationships between teachers and parents that involve learning and caring on both sides.
- o We need to ensure that school structures and timetables support the purpose of care instead of squeezing it to the margins.
  (pp. 40-41)

Taking up residence in a caring school would be the very best of times. It would begin a time of belonging:

> So it is that belonging is the place where we grow to maturity and discover what it means to be human and to act in a human way. It is the place we need in order to live and act in society in justice, in truth, without seeking power, privileges, and honours for our own self-glory. It is the place where we learn to be humble but also audacious and to take initiatives in working with others. It is the place where our deepest self rises up into our consciousness and so we become more fully ourselves, more fully human. (Vanier, 1998, p. 59)

Conclusion

This sense of belonging in a caring school would free everyone to learn and to grow as individuals, whether students, parents, teachers, principals, or community members. All would live and learn together in this caring school. Within this caring school there would be a sense of deep contentment and fulfillment. Growth, change, and human connection – the power to create this utopia – exists. There are pieces of this community of caring in many school buildings. It will be in sustaining efforts over time, harnessing the creative energy of many, and securing commitment and vision to look for the real answers to reform that there exist the real possibilities within the collective future through the doors of the educational building.

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SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

Bullying: Traditional Bullying and Cyberbullying

Christine Larson

Abstract

Bullying, the most common form of violence in youth, is a major issue facing educators, administrators, students, youth, families, and communities. Bullying takes various forms and remains both visible and virulent at all ages. It exists in all communities and schools, and at all levels of society. Identifying types of bullying and combating bullying are important for school staff, parents, community members, and especially students. Developing a plan that will ensure a safe school environment allows students to learn, free of feelings of fear and anxiety.

The most common form of violence in modern society is bullying, and it is occurring as a result of the actions of minors. According to Rowan (2007), "Between 15 percent and 30 percent of students are bullies or victims" (p. 182). Other studies show bullying to be an even larger problem, affecting over 40 percent of Canadian school students (Canadian Children's Rights Council, 1999-2007). Bullying is a behavior by both males and females in our school hallways, classrooms, playgrounds and lunchrooms, and it is increasingly spreading into our communities and even homes.

Unfortunately, like many things in our technological world, bullying is evolving. No longer do young adults merely verbally and physically accost their classmates. With new technologies, bullying has evolved. Use of technology has allowed young adults to bully more cruelly than ever before as cyberbullies. From a school perspective, all bullying prevents student learning. Bullying makes it difficult for all school staff to create safe environments for student learning.

The questions to be investigated in this paper are as follows: What exactly are traditional bullying and cyberbullying? How are traditional bullying and cyberbullying different? Who are the bullies and victims? How much bullying and cyberbullying are occurring; i.e., how big is the problem? What are the repercussions of bullying on our children? What can parents and educators do to raise awareness and reduce all kinds of bullying?

Bullying Myths

There are numerous "bullying myths." Boynton (2007) outlined six of the most common bullying myths. First, bullying is only hitting. Bullying is much more. Second, some kids deserved to be bullied. Bullying is cruel, and no individual merits this type of treatment. Third, fighting is the best way to stop bullying. Fighting propagates violence. Fourth, only babies complain about bullying. Students need to understand that speaking up for yourself is positive. Fifth, bullying teaches kids to be tough. Bullying results in insecurities, fear and unhappiness. Sixth, telling on a bully is "ratting." Telling on a bully is actually reporting, not ratting; reporting on one person to help somebody else or yourself is a positive step towards increased feelings of self-confidence.

Scarpaci (2006) added to the list of myths with the following: only boys are bullied; bullying is a normal part of growing up; bullies will go away if you ignore them; and people who are bullied might hurt for a while, but they will get over it. The reality is that bullying can have repercussions, as "the psychological trauma of recurring harassment puts victims at risk of suffering from depression or low self-esteem as an adult. The younger the child, the more he or she ultimately will suffer from bullying" (Scarpaci, 2006, p. 172).

Youth bullied may attempt or manage to commit suicide, self-inflict injury, or retaliate with violence such as school shootings and massacres. Society is increasingly seeing the results of bullying on newscasts across North America. For example, bullying has been a prime factor in two-thirds of school shooting rampages, with revenge as the prime motivation for more than half of them (Scarpaci, 2006).

Bullying Defined

Bullying has been defined by Koki (1999) as "repeated oppression, either physical or psychological, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group." Bullies are often characterized as individuals who instill fear in others, who intend to hurt, and who enjoy it (Rowan, 2007). Bullying behavior is most frequently manifested in three distinct forms. Physical bullying includes behaviors such as hitting, shoving, tripping, and sexual harassment. Extortion or stealing is often grouped into physical bullying, as there is generally a physical aspect to it. Verbal bullying includes name calling, insults, negative personal remarks, and teasing. Social bullying, also called psychological bullying, results in individuals being excluded, or isolated and rejected by peers. Racial and sexual harassment is also common.

Cyberbullying is a relatively new phenomenon, having developed with the arrival of technology which allows individuals to bully others from a safe distance. Cyberbullying is defined as occurring when "a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones" (Aftab, 2004).

Bullying commonly consists of direct or indirect behaviors. Direct behaviors, which include verbal and physical bullying in addition to behaviors such as stealing, are commonly carried out by an individual or group of individuals against a victim. Indirect behaviors include social bullying, such as socially isolating the victim through calculated deliberate exclusion and the spreading of rumors. The commonality between direct and indirect bullying is that physical and psychological intimidation occurs repeatedly over time.

The most commonly reported method of cyberbullying is verbal abuse and harassment. Nasty comments about physical appearance and social bullying come in a close second (Koki, 1999). Cyberbullies commonly use instant messages, text messages, blogs, and web sites. Pictures are sent using e-mail and cell phones; it is not unusual for the pictures to be unflattering or digitally altered to cause the victim distress. Internet polling is not uncommon, whereby questions are asked which are often hurtful and offensive and on which other students vote.

In interactive gaming, which allows children to interact via the internet with other gamers, verbal abuse, threats and offensive language are not uncommon. Individuals can be sent pornography or junk e-mail after a fellow student has signed them up. Passwords can be stolen or hacking programs can be implemented to gain access to fellow students' computers, after which students can spy on each other or virus programs can be sent into systems. Impersonation allows the bully to pose as the victim, and considerable damage can be done when messages, for example, are sent or posted.

The really important difference between traditional bullying and cyberbullying is that once home with a traditional bully, you are relatively safe. Home can become a haven of safety. With cyberbullying, home is no longer safe, because bullies can reach you anywhere via electronic media. Cyberbullying can be harsher, as children can say things online that they would never say in person. There are no feelings of remorse or regret in cyberbullying, as there often are with traditional bullying based on the reaction of their victims. A bully and victim no longer need to be situated anywhere near each other for bullying to occur. A bully may not even be aware of all the damage that he or she has caused (Jackson, 2005).

Characteristics of Bullies and Victims

Scarpaci (2006) explained some basic characteristics of bullies and bullying:
- Bullying takes at least two people: bully and victim.
- Bullies like to feel strong and superior.
- Bullies enjoy having power over others.
- Bullies use their power to hurt other people.

According to Scarpaci, "while the stereotype is that bullies have low self-esteem, actually they're often self-confident, popular and make friends easily. If slighted, however, they may take it out on someone who can't fight back" (p. 173). As they mature, bullies often increase use of violent behaviors and suffer from depression, suicidal behavior, and alcoholism. Many bullies come from homes in which they themselves witnessed or were victims of bullying. In a study of 800 aggressive children, it was discovered that by age thirty, 25 percent had an arrest record while only 5 percent of non aggressive children did (Davies, 2001). Chronic bullies seem to maintain their negative behaviors well into adulthood, and they often have difficulties developing and maintaining positive relationships as adults (Koki, 1999).

Bullying has far-reaching consequences for the victims. According to Koki (1999), up to 7 percent of eighth graders stay home at least once a month to avoid bullies. Victims of bullying see school as an unsafe place to go and are fearful. When bullying is occurring during the day, teachers are unable to create safe, healthy, welcoming environments where learning can successfully take place.

How do parents know if their children are being bullied? Bumps are bruises are the obvious signs of some sort of physical altercation, but there are less obvious signs of bullying, also. If children invent mysterious illnesses to avoid school, miss personal belongings or money, or experience sleeping problems, bedwetting, irritability, poor concentration at school and home, or unexpected changes in routine or problems with school work, they may need to be questioned about what is happening during their day away from home. Victims of bullying are prone to experience anxiety, withdrawn behaviors, and depression, and they may struggle to form healthy relationships (Canadian Children Rights Council, 2007).

Victims of bullies are carefully chosen by their tormentors, as they commonly have poor social skills and few friends. Victims are often physically smaller than their bullies and act or look unlike their peers. However, contrary to common belief, students who wear glasses, are overweight, or speak differently are not the most common victims of bullying. A passive, submissive individual is likely to be a victim 85 percent of the time. Aggressive victims targeted due to a unusual feature of their personalities make up the remaining 15 percent of victims of bullying (Scarpaci, 2007).

It is interesting to note that the majority of victims have also been the aggressors in a bullying situation at one time or another. In fact, one-third of victims have also been the bullies (Li, 2004). The effects of bullying are felt by bystanders as well as by victims and bullies. This silent majority, often fellow students, may feel anxious or fearful, and may feel that if no negative consequences are evident for bullies they may be drawn into the violent behavior themselves.

The cyberbullies' primary victim is female (Li, 2004). Although the primary cyberbully is male, the margin separating males and females is small. Like the traditional bully, many cyberbullies have also been victims. Half of cyberbullies have above-average grades, although when questioned only 35 percent of the bullies reported their grades as above average. Data in Li's study showed that 31.8 percent of the victims of cyberbullying were bullied by their fellow classmates, 11.4 percent by people outside their schools in the community, and 15.9 percent by other identifiable sources. The highest percentage, 40.9 percent, had no idea who cyberbullied them.

Prevalence of Bullying

Victims of cyberbullying tell parents that they are being harassed only half of the time, tell their friends that they are victims only one-third of the time, and tell school authorities only about one percent of the time (Jackson, 2005). Jackson found that while 46 percent of traditional bullies speak to their teachers about bullying, it is estimated that 24 percent of cyberbully incidents are totally undisclosed. Jackson stated that the traditional bully is reported on to teachers by victims 41 percent of the time. Jackson concluded that 54 percent of the victims of traditional bullying report the harassment to their parents, while 35 percent of bullies speak of bullying to their teachers.

Bullying is an enormous problem in schools and society. The question is, how much bullying is occurring? According to a 2004 U.S. poll of children, 86 percent of more than 1200 nine to thirteen-year-old boys and girls polled said that they had seen someone else bullied, 48 percent said that they had been bullied, and 42 percent admitted to bullying other children at least once in a while (Canadian Children's Rights Council, 1999-2007).

In Canada, based on a survey in 1997 in which children in grades one to eight were given a self-report on bullying and victimization, 29.5 percent reported that they had bullied others once or twice (O'Connell, 1997). Six percent reported that they had bullied other students more than once or twice. Little difference was documented between genders. In the same survey, 38 percent of children reported that they had been bullied at least once or twice during the term, and 15 percent documented that they had been bullied more than once or twice. Victimization decreased as the children got older, and there was no gender distinction between victims (O'Connell).

In the *2007 Survey of Canadian Attitudes towards Learning* completed by the Canadian Council of Learning (2007), which included data from The World Health Organization, it was documented that internationally, "with a bully rate exceeding 40%, Canada ranks ninth out of 35 countries for the highest bullying rate among 13-year-old children." Bullying is a growing problem.

Traditional bullying appears to be more prevalent in middle school. More bullying occurs in middle and junior high schools than in senior high schools. "Student Reports of Bullying" (2005) indicated that "24 percent of 6th graders reported being bullied at school, compared to 7 percent of 12th graders."

Several reasons have been suggested for this increase in bullying during the middle years. Bullying may be a way for students to establish a social hierarchy when students transfer first from elementary to middle school, and then middle school to junior high school. Students leave familiar environments and move into larger, more competitive learning environments. Added to the stress of the move are puberty, hormones, and the need for good grades.

Li (2004) stated that bullying at the adolescent level merits attention. Labeling it a "brutalizing period," Li further noted,

> Adolescence is a period of abrupt biological and social change. Specifically, the rapid body changes associated with the onset of adolescence and changes from primary to secondary school initiate dramatic changes in youngsters' peer group composition and stats. Changes in peer group availability, individuals' status within groups, and peer support confront youngsters as they are entering new, larger, and typically impersonal secondary schools. One way in which peer status is achieved is by selective use of aggression and other agonistic strategies.

The "Student Reports of Bullying" (2005) document notes that, traditionally, students move into middle school around the sixth grade, which could account for the high bullying rate noted in the *Results from the 2001 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey*. The move of Canadian students from middle school (junior high) to high schools around grade nine is characterized by another spike in bullying behavior (Canadian Council of

Learning, 2007).

Cyberbullying, according to a recent study, is not yet happening at the same rate as traditional bullying, but is on the rise (Li, 2004). Li established that 14.9 percent of young Canadians have been threatened via an electronic device. In the same study, 24.9 percent of students admitted to being victims of cyberbullies. The majority of these victims are female, and the majority of cyberbullies, by a very small percentage, are males. Cyberbullying is most prevalent in the senior high school years and is most frequently implemented by older teens.

Reducing Bullying

The obvious question is, how do we reduce bullying and victimization in schools? What can teachers, schools, communities, and parents do to assist both victims and bullies in halting this behavior? Some suggestions are as follows.

School staffs must abide by a "zero tolerance" policy for bullying of any sort. Traditional bullying primarily takes place in middle and junior high schools, and cyberbullying primarily takes place in high school by older teens. School codes for behavior and consequences for misbehaviors should be constantly updated and maintained because, while some aspects of bullying remain the same, other types of bullying continue to evolve and include new technology and methodology.

Cyberbullying is much more difficult for supervisors to detect. Supervision must be vigilant, and interventions must be made when bullying of any sort is witnessed. Teachers need to approach the problem from two different directions. Teaching potential bullies social skills, while developing a capacity to avoid intimidation, is the first step. Next, teachers are required to create, and then implement, the practices and strategies needed to stop bullying at school while assisting its victims.

Many strategies to combat bullying in schools have been created and are successful. First, teachers and schools need to work towards the elimination of harassment; it can not be permitted in schools. School investigations into how much bullying occurs are necessary when planning implementation and prevention programs (see Appendix). Teachers and/or school administrators need to investigate every complaint or rumor. A school-wide anti-bully or anti-harassment policy needs to be implemented in every school, and consequences need to be part of this policy.

Second, teachers need to encourage openness. Bullies tend to work in secret, so teachers need to encourage students to discuss the issues of bullying and any incidents that have occurred. Bullies need to be held accountable for their actions.

Third, schools need to practice bully prevention. Teachers need to provide environments that are positive and in which teachers are interested and involved. They need to enforce the school and classroom harassment policy consistently and fairly at all times for all students, and they need to act as role models and authorities on the issue of bullying.

Fourth, teachers need to be able to neutralize bullies and teach victims of bullying some simple techniques to assist them. Even comments like "So what?" and "And your point is …," which seem fairly general, allow victims to make light of bullies and their comments. Comments such as these do not generally incite bullies to further action.

The fifth, and final, important strategy that can be taken by teachers is to learn how to resolve conflict. Bullying creates conflict for both bully and victim. Conflict should be viewed as normal. Any conflict is an opportunity for teachers to teach coping skills, mediating skills, and conflict resolution. If the conflict involves physical violence, it is necessary and appropriate for teachers to step in. Violence, once started, stops only when someone is hurt. Teacher intervention is less necessary when students are involved in a conflict in which a resolution can be negotiated (Scarpaci, 2007).

Students, parents, and teachers can take several specific steps to reduce the chance of being a victim of cyberbullying. Students can guard all personal information, never give out

passwords, not respond to mean or threatening messages, never open e-mail from unknown senders, not put anything online that they do not want the world and their classmates to see, not message when they are angry, and finally, help other children online who are being bullied by not responding and showing the message to an adult.

Parents can also take measures to protect their children. Parents should keep computers out of young children's bedrooms, ensure that the screen names of all children's contacts are known, set up e-mail accounts and chat accounts, discuss cyberbullying with children and check regularly to ensure that they are not victims, reassure them that it is not their fault if they become victims of cyberbullies, and watch for signs of cyberbullying occurring (such as a reluctance to go online or go to school). Parents should contact a child's school, the police or Internet Service Provider if bullying is occurring and appears severe.

Teachers also have a role to play in cyberbully prevention. Youth-targeted education is very important, involving the safe use of technology. Intervention in incidents of cyberbullying is not only an opportunity to educate about safe use of the internet, but also an opportunity to address adolescent health-related issues, traditional bullying, substance use – all of the issues that youth may be facing. Teachers need to ensure that they target prevention and intervention efforts that are appropriate to the population most at risk. Cyberbullies are most likely older teens and are just as likely to be male as female (Jackson, 2005).

Conclusion

Bullying, direct or indirect, traditional or nontraditional, is a negative action with hostile intent, repeated over time and performed to give the aggressor feelings of power and superiority. Bullying is a serious problem that exists the world over, in all types of schools and among all kinds of students. It should not and can not be tolerated, because its effects are far reaching and destructive. The victims experience fear, depression and a lack of confidence and self-esteem throughout life, affecting at the very least their relationships with others. Many bullies, due to their continued violent behaviors, end up with criminal records in adulthood.

Traditional bullying has occurred throughout human history. With the advent of new electronic technologies new methods of bullying, some more vicious and destructive than traditional methods, have been developed and perfected by teens. Koki (1999) wrote,

> Bullying is not a developmental phase of growing up – it is a serious social problem that can greatly affect the ability of students to progress academically and socially. Because it can have negative life-long consequences for both victims and perpetrators, it is necessary for schools and communities to develop interventions that specifically address the problem of bullying.

When bullying is occurring, it is important for school staff, parents, community members, and especially students to collaborate to develop a plan that will ensure a safe school environment that will allow students to learn, free of feelings of fear and anxiety. Teaching staff must not turn a blind eye to the behaviors; a zero tolerance attitude must be embraced by all staff. Bullying is not a behavior that can be ignored, especially as research is indicating that it is increasing across Canada. Bullying happens regardless of the number of students in a school, gender, socio-economic class, grade level, and school size and location. It will continue unless schools first acknowledge it and then come up with a plan to battle it.

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Appendix

<u>HIGH SCHOOL BULLYING SURVEY</u>
<u>FOR STUDENTS</u>

Instructions:

Please help make your school a better place to live, grow, and learn by answering some questions about the way people act toward one another in the school. Your answers will help us learn more about the way this school "feels" to you and your friends. There are no right or wrong answers to any of the questions.

We want to know what you really think about the way things are at our school.

Your answers will be kept strictly confidential. The idea of the survey is to learn how you see your school so that adults in the building, together with you, can design a more student-friendly school.

<u>Bullying definition:</u> Bullying occurs when one student or a group of students pick on another student or treat him/her in a way that they do not like. Bullying is the act of intentionally causing harm to others, through verbal harassment, physical assault, or other more subtle methods of coercion. The harassment can be verbal, physical and/or emotional.

ABOUT YOU-Circle the correct answer

Gender:　　　FEMALE　　　MALE

Age (years): 14 15 16 17 18 19 20

School Year:　　　grade 10
　　　　　　　　　grade 11
　　　　　　　　　grade 12
　　　　　　　　　Upgrading

Do you feel bullying is a problem in our school or community?

_____ yes　　　　_____ no

Do you think that our school (as compared to other schools you have experienced) is a safe place to grow and learn?

YES　　　　USUALLY　　　　NO

A: *FREQUENCY OF BULLYING:*

Please use the following scale when you answer the next group of questions about bullying

      0 = has not happened in the past 3 years
      3-4 = has happened 3 or 4 times in the past 3 years
      more = has happened more often than 4 times in the past 3 years

Question	0	1-2	3-4	More
During this past school year have you ever been bullied with the intent to intimidate in any way at school or on the way to or from school ?				
Have you ever been physically attacked with the intent to intimidate at school?				
How often have you been hit, kicked, punched, pinched, or tripped?				
How often have you been teased at school or on the way to or from school?				
How often has someone said something cruel to you either at school or on the way to or from school? (ex. About your appearance or actions)				
How often has someone excluded you on purpose? That is, how often has someone kept you out of things you'd like to do?				
Have you ever felt threatened because an individual in our school has had a weapon of some sort?				
How often during the school year has someone spread rumors about you?				
How often have you sent a hurtful or threatening email or text message?				
Do you ever threaten a fellow student physically or verbally? How often?				

B. METHOD OF BULLYING:

Put a √ in *each box* to indicate methods with which you have been bullied

☐ Verbal   ☐ Physical   ☐ By an individual
☐ Texting   ☐ MSN   ☐ By a group
☐ Facebook/Twitter   ☐ E-mail   Other: _____

C. *WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN BULLIED?*

Put a √ in *each box* that describes a place at school, or coming to or from school, where you have been bullied. Check all that are true for you.

☐ On the school bus
☐ Washrooms
☐ Walking to or from school
☐ Classroom
☐ Cafeteria
☐ Hallways/locker area
☐ Gym
☐ Change rooms
☐ Smoking Area

☐ Elementary School
☐ Junior High school
☐ Senior High School (WCS)
☐ Parking lot/School Bus loading zone
Other _____

D. *ATTITUDES ABOUT BULLYING:*

Please indicate if you agree or disagree with the following statements:

	Agree	Disagree
Most teasing I see is done in fun, not to hurt people.		
Most students who get bullied bring it on themselves		
Bullying helps people by making them tougher		
It's okay for people to use physical violence to keep a boyfriend or girlfriend in line.		
It's okay for people to encourage their friends to fight if they've been insulted.		
Walking away from a fight, whether or not you think you'd win is a sign of weakness		
It's okay to ignore the situation when someone is being picked on		
It's okay to exclude someone who is not your friend		
It's okay to make negative comments about someone behind their back		

E. SUPPORT NETWORKS

If I were being bullied, I would seek support/help from

	Yes	No
Parents / Family Members		
Friends		
School Staff		
Police		
Clergy/Minister		
No one (I would try to deal with the problem by myself)		
Other (Specify): _____		

COMMENTS:

Look back to the first question on the survey. Do you feel bullying is a problem in our school or community? Please explain clearly your viewpoint on this question. Some people do not see bullying as a big issue to be concerned with while others do. Defend your viewpoint on the issue.

_____
_____

Have you ever experienced bullying in a form not discussed or mentioned in this survey? If yes, and if you feel comfortable, describe the incident. (don't forget this survey is anonymous)

_____
_____
_____

What do you think would be the most effective way to deal with bullies, bullying and harassment in this school?

_____
_____
_____

SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

Examining Expressive Art Therapies

Lisa Bridges

Abstract

Expressive Art Therapy is an unconventional therapeutic technique that can help individuals to heal emotionally. Music, art, and creative writing can help clients to re-align their emotions and bring forth healing within themselves. Music brings people together and may evoke different emotions in each person. Art represents the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of all people by using imagery rather than words. Finally, creative writing lets intrusive thoughts out of the mind and releases them onto paper. When clients reconnect their heads and their hearts, positive emotional changes can begin in their lives.

In a world full of hopelessness, darkness, and despair, many people are falling victim to a great disconnect between their heads and their hearts. They are concerned with making ends meet, rather than minds. They struggle from paycheque to paycheque with little time to find themselves, little time for family, and little time to de-pressurize. Adults carry around hurt, frustrations, and deep pain, often stemming from childhood, without any way to release it. Their paths continue along a dark, lonely road, and they see no way off the path into a more peaceful and meaningful way of life. Between running from activity to activity with their children and working all hours just to pay the bills, adults have become tired and even exhausted. At their breaking points, some individuals will seek counseling to try to make sense of and manage these issues. One therapeutic method is expressive therapy, or art from the heart. Expressive therapy can include all forms of artistic works from music, to drawing and painting, to writing about emotional experiences.

Expressive therapy is a unconventional form of therapy and, therefore, is not as commonly used as some traditional methods. Expressive therapy is a humanistic approach (Seiser & Wastell, 2002), centering people as experts on their own lives (Morgan, 2007). As with any therapeutic method, the "client's readiness for change has significant impact on success" (Gold, Wigram, & Voracek, 2007, p. 584). Expressive therapy assumes that people have positive characteristics, even in times of need, such as skills, beliefs, values, and abilities (Morgan). This method incorporates a variety of alternatives for clients to express their feelings in addition to talking to the clinician.

Music

Music has power. It has existed from the beginning of time, growing and changing throughout history. From the moment a human is conceived, he or she begins life and movement following the most beautiful musical interlude – the mother's heartbeat. This constant rhythm becomes comfort for the baby as he or she grows and develops in a safe environment. Music is all around and within each person, and each person responds to the emotional tone of music in his or her own way. Music influences our feelings about ourselves and about others, and "makes us feel stronger, gives us more endurance, and enhances coordination" (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005, p. 291). Music can create a more relaxed mood and can help reduce stress, or it can change a mood in an instant to a feeling of being scared. Music can be used without formal music knowledge or experience, and is a non-evasive and painless technique (Cheek, Bradley, Parr, & Lan, 2003; Batt-Rawden & DeNora). Music has been valued throughout time and across all cultures and, with the aid of technology, can be accessed any time, any place, anywhere. It has the power to cross generations and bring people together.

One benefit of music therapy is that music can be a form of communication that is expressive and nonverbal, allowing people to "express feelings that may not be definable by words" (Cheek et al., 2003, p. 206). Through an individual's reaction to the music, he or she is taught different methods to explore feelings that have been either overlooked or cut off for whatever reason. Music encompasses our whole body, so feelings that have been blocked or forgotten may be aroused and the ability to deal with these feelings becomes possible. Because music can influence an individual's mindset, it can help to make a client feel more comfortable in a therapeutic situation and create an atmosphere wherein the client may be willing to disclose issues more readily.

A second benefit of music therapy is the results that it has on the social interactions of the client. Often, clients coming to therapy have difficulties building and sustaining relationships, low self-esteem and self-confidence, and problems with social behavior. Music therapy allows these clients to "reconfigure the body/mind in ways that distances it from the physical trapping" (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005, p. 292). Through music therapy in a group setting, clients have reduced feelings of isolation, and are able to connect with colleagues through social bonding, increased coping skills, and opportunities to express negative emotions through nonverbal behaviors (Batt-Rawden & DeNora; Cheek et al., 2003; Gold et al., 2007). Clients can build upon their relationships during therapy sessions and use these skills in their daily lives.

Another benefit of music therapy is the self-care that can be learned through this expressive technique. Self-care in this context includes, but is not limited to, the choices that a person makes to enhance or improve his or her emotional health. Tuning into psychological needs and allowing oneself to express emotions and feelings will result in healthy self-care. Schools and homes have created environments wherein creativity has become very limited and even squelched. Less and less time is spent in self-expression through the eyes of the heart. Individual characters are influenced by words, which are not always positive, and by actions of rejection at times. Clients can learn positive ways to express their emotions and learn better tools to deal with everyday negativity that may enter into their lives.

To assist clients in reconnecting with themselves, various techniques are used within the music therapy practice. Music techniques can be used to help process emotions and experiences by listening to the sounds and the words of relevant pieces, with the goal of working to gain an understanding of these emotions. Some therapists include improvisation of music, which is either sung or played on an instrument. The clients are free to make the sounds that they are feeling and to experiment with a variety of sounds to express emotions. Sometimes, the client will work with a partner and improvise a song or sound. Other times, a client will listen to recorded songs and work on emotions that emerge through the music.

Music pieces can be chosen to reflect attainable self-images and those that seem do-able for the clients. Selections can be chosen to set a mood or to re-create an event that needs to be addressed. Music therapy can be seen as "the catalyst for self-help and self-extension" (Batt-Rawden & DeNora, 2005, p. 300). The clients learn that different music styles can be used at any time to understand a feeling or emotion, and they learn to recognize these emotions and reconnect with themselves before the emotions become problematic. Batt-Rawden and DeNora explained,

> The fact that music is both a symbolic medium and a physical medium, like the body, with pulse, rhythm, and degrees of tension (such as pitch), is a bonus, since music, unlike literature or plastic arts, may speak directly to and so entrain bodily processes. (p. 299)

Thus, through the engagement of music, our bodies, inside and out, can be brought together and aligned once emotions have been released and healed.

Art

In addition to music, art, through drawing, painting and coloring, can aid in healing. The healing process through art "involves the cultivation and release of the creative spirit" (McNiff, 2004, p. 5). Ganim and Fox (1999) reported that "within all of us is a silent language that reveals the truth of our thoughts, feelings and emotions far more fluently than words. That language is imagery" (p. 1). Ganim and Fox noted the importance of using art to "reduce stress, release anger, resolve conflicts, get in touch with feelings, and give a voice to your soul" (cover). This technique involves first setting an intention for the activity, which is a guide to let the body know that there is a purpose going on. A focus is placed on "body-centered awareness" (Ganim & Fox, p. 25) as the client is instructed to take a few deep breaths and envision breathing in light and exhaling color. Then the mind is drawn to an area of the body that senses hurt or pain or joy or any other emotion. The feeling or sensation then becomes transformed into an image in the mind, and the final step of the technique is to draw the image. The drawing, painting or coloring can be something recognizable or can be abstract, whatever the heart is seeing.

After the image is completed, it can then be processed. The clinician guides the client through eight questions to gain an understanding of the image. The clinician asks how the drawing makes the client feel, what the drawing tells the client about how he or she feels emotionally, how the colors make the client feel, if there is anything disturbing about the image, what the client likes best about the image, what he or she has learned from the drawing about his or her feelings, whether the emotions are related to a particular current issue or concern, and, finally, whether knowing what the client feels about the issue helps him or her to deal with it (Ganim & Fox, 1999). Through answering these questions, the client is able to create a visual perspective on certain issues or concerns that he or she may not have had the right words to express or explain, or even been aware of, and to process the feelings that are attached to it.

Creative Writing

An alternative technique within the expressive therapy method is creative writing. Hunt (2003) found that a focus on experience through expressive writing is beneficial for many clients. Hunt demonstrated a decrease in relapse and recurrence of depression by reducing the impact of negative intrusive thoughts when clients were involved with creative writing. Creating an understanding of an individual's identity can be attained through writing of a story, a poem, a document, a certificate, or handbook. As a story unfolds, the writer seeks to make events meaningful. In order to make this connection, the writer must engage with the text and release emotions. Having a written document visual for referral leads to further exploration of alternative stories and allows the client to build upon and follow what has been written down. Although there may be hesitation upon beginning to write, the clinician can be helpful to the client in finding words that start the story flowing.

Conclusion

These expressive therapy methods have been proven to help individuals to reconnect within themselves. Lusebrink (2004) explained that through the art therapy process, the visual expression of the client is revealed by means of varying levels of complexity. The client may begin to express an emotion or situation one way, but a deeper, hidden emotion may be revealed by listening to his or her heart. The client is taught how to keep the focus of this therapeutic process in the right-side of the brain, the hemisphere that processes visual-spatial information, visual imagery, and visual memory. The client learns to turn down the left-brain analytical and sequential functions, and turn up the right-brain visual-spatial and expressive functions. Artistic activities involve "different motor, somatosensory, visual, emotional, and cognitive aspects of information processing" (Lusebrink, p. 125). Often, these are the

processing aspects that have been denied throughout an individual's life because of societal beliefs and values.

One therapist in Canada, Marie-Jose Dhaese (2001-2008), treats people with symptoms such as anxiety, depression, fears, and sleeping problems. Her approach takes into consideration the physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual needs of the client. By carefully choosing a variety of media for the clients, she helps to "bring into the open the behaviors and blocked feelings that have interfered with healthy emotional growth" (Dhaese). Her clients are helped to deal with past experiences and are taught positive coping skills, which they can then apply to their everyday lives.

Expressive therapy, or art from the heart, is limited in its frequency of use because of its "touchy-feely" nature. However, certain individuals will benefit from its various techniques more than they will from traditional therapeutic techniques. As the journey of life becomes more complicated and more people find themselves struggling with relationships, finances and jobs, people may be more willing to turn to expressive therapy in order to heal from the events of the past and grow within a rewarding and fulfilling life. The particular technique is not as important as the bigger picture of "doing what works" to release the emotional baggage that is carried from day to day. Once this burden is released, the world changes through the connection that the individual has created within himself or herself. In actuality, the limitations of art from the heart can be expunged through a drive to understand oneself and a desire to reconnect the mind with the body.

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SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

The School Counsellor and Divorce: A Child's Perspective

Cheryl Beaumont

Abstract

In Manitoba, more than half of marriages end with divorce. Many of these families include children. This article addresses the need for school counsellors to understand the impact that divorce has on children's lives. Children require a method to deal with unresolved feelings related to divorce. A school counsellor can support children through the separation process by examining how divorcing parents' decisions disrupt the family system, understanding how children progress through the post-divorce developmental tasks, and exploring possible therapeutic approaches.

According to Statistics Canada (2007), in 2006, 51% of Canadian marriages ended in divorce. In Manitoba, there are over 2,000 divorces a year. Separation and divorce affect many children. Many children experiencing their parents' separation or divorce feel depressed, confused, guilty, and stressed (Pehrsson, Allen, Folger, & Lowe, 2007). Parents also feel stressed during separation and divorce, and are often unable to recognize how their behaviour is affecting their children. It is important for guidance counsellors to have knowledge regarding divorce, in order to help the children of divorce create coping strategies. This article examines how divorcing parents' decisions disrupt the family system and how school guidance counsellors can support children through the separation process.

The Parents

When parents divorce, they typically have been through a series of events that have led them to the decision to separate. An actual divorce or separation indicates that marital conflict, unhappiness, or dissatisfaction has reached a critical level for a given couple (Acs, 2007). There may be many reasons for divorce; however, the job of being a parent continues (Strohschein, 2007). Family interactions, such as family dysfunction and parental conflict, not only predict and precede marital dissolution, but also take a toll on children's mental health. Therefore, it is important for parents to rear their children in a positive, supportive manner rather than in a negative, hostile manner.

Parents become divorced for many reasons. At the beginning of a relationship, individuals are aware of their partner's deficiencies (Kluwer & Johnson, 2007). Relationship distress starts with problems that existed in the beginning of the relationship, such as incompatibility in personality and high levels of conflict. However, the frequency of conflict may not be the only cause of lower relationship quality. Relationships end through divorce for several other reasons. One reason is financial (Schilling, 2007; Osborne, Manning, & Smock, 2007). Schilling also discussed three additional reasons: people change, infidelity, and illness. Regardless of the situation, anything that diminishes the real or perceived gains to marriage constitutes a risk factor for marital disruption (Teachman, 2002). Divorce may be a sobering alternative to personal unhappiness, financial instability, and emotional liability (Pehrsson et al., 2007). Inevitably, it will end the relationship between the parents; however, the relationship between parent and child will continue.

The behavior of parents greatly influences how children adjust emotionally after the separation (Manitoba Family Services and Housing, n.d.). It is sobering for parents to hear that it is not necessarily the divorce, but their behavior and quality of their co-parenting that

continues to echo throughout the family system (Ahrons, 2006b). If parents have a good relationship with their children and the children feel the parents' love and acceptance, the children can tolerate parenting imperfections (Manitoba Family Services and Housing). However, some imperfections are not easily tolerated by children: unpredictability, parental conflict, and parentification.

An important challenge for parents is avoiding unpredictability. Inconsistent parenting is likely an important aspect of unhealthy family functioning in general (Thomson Ross & McDuff, 2007). Although flexibility is necessary, so is dependability (Manitoba Family Services and Housing, n.d.). Children of divorced parents need to know that they can count on their parents.

Parents can be more predictable by following a parenting plan. A parenting plan includes decisions that are based on the children's developmental stages (Sanders, 2007). The plan includes various strategies for topics such as parent time schedules, transitions, communication, decision-making responsibilities, and tools and resources for post-divorce parenting. To help children cope with changes, parents can prepare them for transitions, provide explanations that make sense but do not place blame, and dispel myths about their new family arrangements in order to increase the probability of understanding their new life (Bernstein, 2006). Providing stability will give children a routine and the security that is needed to succeed.

A second parenting challenge is avoiding parental conflict in front of the children. High parental conflict is a powerful predictor of the negative effects of divorce for both children (Portnoy, 2008) and adults (Lebow & Newcomb, 2006). Discordant parenting is linked to elevated levels of psychological distress when the children become young adults (Amato, 2000). Children need to know that they will continue to see both parents and that the separation is not their fault (Family Conciliation, 2007). Although hiding animosity between parents can be difficult, it is necessary for children's welfare.

In order to reduce conflict, the central goal of the parent plan is to reduce the most damaging aspects of custody disputes (Lebow & Newcomb, 2006). Since the transition from one parent to another is a convenient time for arguments between parents, a plan must be in place to avoid tension. For example, transfers may occur in the absence of one parent or take place in a public area. Controlling the amount of hostility that the children witness can improve transitions and overall adjustment.

A final challenge for parents is avoiding parentification, which refers to role reversal in the parent-child relationship, wherein parents rely on their children for emotional support (Peris & Emery, 2005). Children are not emotionally capable of being a parent's friend or counsellor (Family Conciliation, 2007), and if these children are faced with task demands that exceed their developmental capabilities, they are likely to experience stress and frustration (Peris & Emery). Parents must remember that children are not mature enough to handle adult problems.

To prevent using the children as emotional support, parents need to find resources to allow themselves to work through their issues without the direct involvement of their children. Separation and divorce are times when adults experience a high degree of change and a need for information and support. Some parents may benefit from talking individually with extended family members or counsellors. Other parents might prefer reading information on websites or in books. A support group may provide a sense of "normality" because there are other parents dealing with the same issues. These examples are just a few of the resources that are available to parents who are separated or divorced. Regardless of which resource a parent chooses, children should not be used as confidantes for their parents.

Divorce is often viewed as unavoidably destructive, and people with failed marriages are often assumed to lack the qualities to be good parents (Strohschein, 2007). Furthermore, divorcing couples are increasingly at risk of being labeled as deviant and morally deficient (Adams & Coltrane, 2006). In truth, these beliefs are not necessarily true. If parents can set aside their resentments and parent together, their children can have healthy relationships with their parents, grandparents, stepparents, and siblings (Ahrons, 2006b). Parenting practices clearly have an effect on child mental health and well-being (Stroschein, 2007); therefore, in

many cases, parents should make their decisions together in joint custody (Kelly, 2006). However, there is no single model of post-separating parenting that is perfect for all children (Gilmour, 2004). Regardless of the parenting strategy selected, parents can rise above society's stereotypes and parent well from two homes.

Joint custody is characterized by cooperative parenting whereby both parents plan for their children, coordinate schedules, and offer support to each other (Kelly, 2006). This type of custody promotes resiliency in children and increases parents' ability to resolve differences on their own, or with mediators and therapists as required. Divorce issues can harm relationships (Pehrsson et al., 2007). However, consistent and appropriate parental monitoring and positive discipline influence the children's post-divorce adjustment (Strohschein, 2007). In addition, adolescents can adjust reasonably well to divorce when parents set clear boundaries, explain their conflict briefly, and avoid hostility in front of their children (Amato & Afifi, 2006). Regardless of the reasons to separate and the obstacles that can hinder positive parenting, separated or divorced parents can raise children who are well adjusted and successful.

The Children

Studies of children who are experiencing family breakup show that different reactions occur, depending on the age of the child at the time of separation (Sanders, 2007; Schilling, 2000; Symons, n.d.). Children's understanding of parental divorce depends on their developmental stages. It is important to know what thoughts and feelings children of different ages may be having, so that parents can modify their own behaviors to help children adjust to divorce.

When parents are explaining the separation, children need a "no blame explanation" (Family Conciliation, 2007). The children need to know that both parents love them, that they will continue to see both parents, and that the separation is not their fault. Children require the parents' permission to love both parents and their families. Children may become insecure if marital conflicts disrupt the parent-child relationship (Schoppe-Sullvan, Schermerhorn, & Cummings, 2007). A no-blame explanation will help children to understand the circumstances that are affecting their family.

Children's lives are changed radically in a short time when their parents divorce (Portnoy, 2008). To cope with the changes in their family, children must undertake developmental tasks in order to carry on with their lives (Symons, n.d.). It is important for children to have a post-divorce environment to accomplish these developmental tasks (Sanders, 2007). Accepting the reality of divorce is one of the tasks children must resolve (Symons, n.d.). Twenty-five years after the divorce, children still recall the shock and bewilderment of the beginning of their family restructure. Children may feel that they have little control over what happens (Schilling, 2000). However, the reality is that divorce is an adult decision and their family will change as a result.

Another necessary task is to separate themselves from their parents' conflict (Symons, n.d.). Children with parents in high-conflict marriages are more likely than other children to feel caught between parents (Amato & Afifi, 2006). These feelings are associated with lower subjective well-being and poorer quality parent-child relationships. The act of separating themselves from the conflict may help children to avoid interpersonal problems (Jacquet & Surra, 2001). If conflict does occur, children must realize that the hostility is between their parents and is not directed at them. Older children may ask parents to have arguments or heated discussions in private, in order to avoid involving them. The level and type of interactions that children have with their parents also influence their well-being (Acs, 2007); therefore, if children can separate themselves from their parents' conflict, they can have a better relationship with both of their parents.

Another essential task for children is to resolve their feelings of loss (Symons, n.d.). Because the children's family is changing, children may require a grieving process. The loss of the nuclear family will bring permanent changes in the children's lives. Children need to realize that they are not alone and that children and parents alike will need time to adjust to the

changes. To cope with feelings of loss, children need to know that there is no definite formula for dealing with these feelings; however, hurrying the process or using substances such as alcohol is not a healthy way to work through the loss. Fathers who are unable to see their children on a daily basis are able to distract themselves with activities such as work (Hallman, Dienhart, & Beaton, 2007). Children can also distract themselves by participating in activities, hobbies, and exercise. Children who draw on a support system, such as extended family and friends, may preoccupy their minds and avoid feeling alone and depressed.

A significant task for children is to resolve feelings of anger and feelings that they are to blame in some way for the divorce (Symons, n.d.). A divorce occurs because of something that happens between the adults who are getting the divorce; nevertheless, children may think of the times that their behavior caused strain on the family. These instances may turn into a self-dialogue that stars the child as the problem (Bernstein, 2006). Parents need to express their reasons for the divorce to their children, so that the children will not blame themselves.

A further task for children is to accept the fact that divorce is permanent. Children sometimes believe that if they are well behaved, their parents will stop fighting and get back together. The children's behaviours will not influence their parents' decision. Although many things will change, there will be many that stay the same. For example, although parents will not love each other, they will continue to love their children. Most children whose parents divorce will be in stepfamilies at some point of their growing-up years (Bernstein, 2006; Stoll, Arnaut, Fromme, & Felker-Thayer, 2005); children can still see the other parent.

A final task for children is to begin to plan for their own lives by making goals (Symons, n.d.). Children with active coping skills such as problem solving are less likely to feel passively impacted (Portnoy, 2008). When children are able to make their own informed decisions, they feel confident. If children have high self-concepts, they are less likely to suffer from psychological disorders such as depression, use drugs and alcohol, or be under-achievers at school or work (Gilmour, 2004). When children feel that they have control over their lives, they are more apt to make goals.

As time passes and children recover, the signs of stress should become less apparent (Strohschein, 2005). Children will require time to work through their developmental tasks with support from their parents. Most children with divorced parents develop into well-adjusted adults (Amato & Cheadle, 2005). However, in order to accomplish these developmental tasks and acquire appropriate coping skills, children may be assisted significantly by trained school guidance counsellors.

The School Guidance Counsellor

The school counsellor is a resource that can be a part of the support system for children experiencing the separation process. Helping children after separation or divorce is a complicated therapeutic process of family reorganizing (Ahrons, 2006a); therefore, guidance counsellors need to be familiar with the many different types of therapeutic interventions that are advocated for children of divorced parents (McConnell & Sim, 2000).

Therapeutic approaches must emphasize trust between the counsellor and the child (Lowenstein, 2006). McConnell and Sim (2000) noted that two main concerns for children in counselling were the interrogative nature of the counselling and the issue of confidentiality. Both of these issues can cause a communication barrier between the guidance counsellor and the child (Young, 2005). If the counsellor maintains a nonjudgmental manner, children will communicate their concerns. If the children perceive that the counselor genuinely cares, they will be more willing to share information about what is happening in their lives. If a trusting relationship cannot be formed, the problems that children experience when dealing with separation and divorce can be left unresolved and undetected. Once a trusting relationship is achieved, then the child can begin to explore deep-rooted feelings.

Children are often referred to the guidance counsellor to help them adjust to the changes in their family (Lowenstein, 2006). The children of separation and divorce may feel anxious about participating in therapy; therefore, they may be hesitant to talk candidly about their family and the divorce. The guidance counsellor must possess skills to allow children to feel comfortable to express their thoughts and feelings (Kottler, 2001). If the children of separation and divorce are able to expose their stories in a truthful and open manner, therapy can begin.

Although they may not have the vocabulary to describe their emotions, children continue to experience and interpret their surroundings. To resolve feelings associated with separation and divorce, guidance counsellors need to explore the children's self-narratives that attempt to explain past memories, validate current behaviours, and predict future behaviours (Bernstein, 2006). The script of the children's self-talk is not necessarily right or wrong, but can interpret the way the children think about how they fit into the family's changes. Children may not be able use words to describe how they are feeling. Therefore, guidance counsellors may use various expressive therapies to enable children to explore the emotions related to their experiences with separation and divorce.

Expressive therapies, such as bibliotherapy, play therapy, and art therapy, may be perceived as less intimidating than many traditional therapeutic strategies (Kahn, 1999). These strategies can help clients reach deep into their unconscious and release emotions and conflicts that are not necessarily acknowledged by their conscious minds. Many children of separation and divorce need to work with a guidance counsellor to be able to understand, explore, and express feelings about divorce (Lowenstein, 2006). By using expressive therapies, guidance counsellors can encourage children to communicate and understand their emotions that are related to their parents' separation or divorce.

Bibliotherapy involves using books, literature, pamphlets, play scripts, narratives, journals, songs, and stories adapted from movies and television for the purpose of specific therapeutic goals (Pehrsson et al., 2007). Bibliotherapy is a useful strategy for looking at someone else's situation by taking an observer's stance and empathizing with the character that is experiencing similar problems. By means of story characters, children can avoid feeling isolated and alone by identifying with the characters and realizing that others have similar concerns. This method allows children to discuss the characters' actions as well as to examine coping strategies and various choices that the children could also pursue.

Bibliotherapy allows children of separation and divorce to experience the issues associated with family restructuring. After reading about other children experiencing similar circumstances, the counsellor could ask questions about the characters in the story. For example, if a child in counselling read a story in which the child blames himself for his parents' divorce, the counsellor could ask questions about how the character felt as well as the similarities and differences between the character and the child (Lowenstein, 2006). This technique could lead to a discussion that explores the children's feelings rather than the feelings of the fictitious family. Bibliotherapy can enhance communication by providing a strategy that allows children to take a less direct approach when exploring their emotions about separation and divorce.

Play therapy is another strategy that encourages children to explore their thoughts and feelings regarding separation and divorce. This strategy uses play as a primary means of communication because, unlike adults, children have less developed verbal ability to express their thoughts and emotions (Wittenborn, Faber, Harvey & Thomas, 2006). Play therapy allows children to express their thoughts and feelings both verbally and by manipulating objects or toys. By acting out various scenarios, children can deal with similar circumstances in their daily lives.

Play therapy is a natural way for children to develop coping strategies, practice problem solving, and release underlying emotions associated with separation and divorce. Children may find play therapy calming because the technique does not rely on verbal communication between child and counsellor (Carmichael, 1994). When a child has many characters to play with, the child is able to find objects to resemble his or her family members and home. The

counsellor allows the child to build a miniature world to mimic his or her life. Afterwards, the counsellor observes how the child makes the toys interact with each other. For example, if the child pretended that the toy family members were arguing, the counsellor could ask the child how each character was feeling. A conversation could take place between counsellor and child that would perhaps lead into how the child was feeling. Play therapy is a strategy that opens communication between the guidance counsellor and children of separation and divorce.

Art therapy is a form of expressive therapy that uses art media such as drawing, painting, sculpturing, and photography. When children participate in art therapy, they are able to explore and express feelings that they cannot verbalize (Waller, 2006). Children who have been exposed to cumulative traumatic events such as conflicted, violent, and unresolved parental separation, which has resulted in symptoms of post-traumatic stress, may have difficulties discussing stressful events or family concerns (Kozlowska & Hanney, 2001). These repressed feelings can be externalized by using art therapy.

Children may experience many emotions after their parents' separation or divorce. For instance, they may feel angry. To release this anger, children can scribble on a piece of paper. The art activity allows children to release their anger in an appropriate way. Art therapy is less direct, allows for desensitization of anxiety, and helps children to tell their stories through physical manipulation of art supplies. By using art, the counsellor can bring the children's emotions to the surface and discuss various coping strategies that will help the children deal with the changes in their family.

Children experiencing separation and divorce require a method to deal with any unresolved feelings, in order to ensure mental health. Although marital disruption does not consistently harm all children (Amato & Cheadle, 2005), most children will need some guidance to develop into well-adjusted adults.

Conclusion

Children and parents alike are under stress due to family changes after separation and divorce. To reduce perceived negative characteristics of divorce, it is important for parents to provide an environment that supports the children's developmental stage. Due to stress, parents may not be conscious of their own behaviors and may not be able to support open communication with their children. The way that children interpret these family changes is essential for proper emotional maturity. Guidance counsellors can aid families during this time of change by helping children to work through the developmental tasks associated with separation and divorce.

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About the Author

As an educator, Cheryl Beaumont believes in student-centered philosophies of teaching. Her beliefs are based on her teaching experience in early and senior year classrooms, and on her own childhood experiences as a student and a child of divorce. She is currently enrolled in a master's degree program at Brandon University.

SCHOLARLY ARTICLE

Storybook Reading: The Importance of Reading to Young Children

Jill Martine

Abstract

If young children are read to interactively by their caregivers, they will begin to show such signs of understanding as how to physically handle books; their vocabulary will be enriched because of book experiences; they will begin to understand that books convey messages; they will begin to make connections beyond the books; and they will enjoy reading because they will associate reading with positive feelings. Thus, through reading effectively, parents are helping to set their children up for success and a love of literature for the rest of the children's lives.

Today my son and I went to the zoo, where we saw monkeys, bears, parrots, giraffes, peacocks, and penguins; we then visited the jungle, where we saw alligators, lizards, frogs, and snakes; we finished by visiting the Sesame Street fair. Yes, through reading we were able to explore many different places and share many exciting experiences from our living room. Reading is not only an enjoyable experience that parents may share with their children, but it is also very valuable in terms of language development as literacy. Reading interactively with a young child (beginning before he is one year of age) will benefit the child emotionally and socially, will develop the child's language, and will lead to more success in school. Although most parents and educators understand the importance of reading, they also need to know what is involved in successful reading with young children, and the benefits of this reading.

Developing Emergent Literacy Skills

Reading to a young child lays the foundation for independent reading. Before a child can read independently, he or she needs a set of emergent literacy skills. Emergent literacy refers to the knowledge and skills of reading and writing that young children obtain prior to achieving conventional literacy (Justice & Pullen, 2003). In a jointly issued statement, the International Reading Association and the National Association for the Education of Young Children acknowledged that reading and writing abilities develop prior to formal schooling, so the early childhood years are an important time for developing literacy (Burgess, Lundgren, Lloyd, & Pianta, 2001). Children are born not knowing how to connect their knowledge and experiences to printed and pictorial texts; rather, they must be taught strategies for understanding texts (DeBruin-Parecki, 1999). It is through the context of reading storybooks that children gain this knowledge (Lynch, 2007)

Reading skills provide a critical part of the foundation for children's academic success. Children who read well read more and, as a result, acquire more knowledge in numerous domains (Juel, 1988). Furthermore, Juel found that preschool children who experience difficulties in emergent literacy development are at an increased risk for entering elementary school without an adequate literacy foundation. That is, it will take these children longer to learn to actually read because they are lacking the basic concepts of reading, such as how a book is read from left to right and that a storybook tells a story. Moreover, if children start their academic learning slowly, they rarely catch up to their peers. From these statements comes the responsibility for parents to introduce and to help establish good literacy habits (Debruin-Parecki, 1999). Adult shared storybook reading is an effective strategy for parents to use to increase pre-literacy skills, as it provides an interactive context that is contextualized, authentic,

meaningful, interesting, and motivating (Justice & Pullen, 2003).

Shared Reading

According to the social-constructionist hypothesis, book reading is a socially created, interactive activity, which gives parents a central role in stimulating their child's interest (Bus, 2002; Lynch, 2007; McGee & Richgels, 2004). Stories in books, including the wording of the story, deviate in many respects from the child's world and from the child's familiar interactive verbal language, so books may not be enjoyable and comprehensible for young children without intensive help and support from adults (Bus). Consequently, the words of the author need to be surrounded by the social interaction between the adult reader and the child.

Further, it is within the interactive framework of the family that the child first learns to handle written language skills. Thus, the social constructivist argues that the social context determines whether the child becomes interested in books and shared reading experiences (Lynch). There is evidence that children who are frequently read to by both parents begin at an early age to attend to books, to show initiative to read, and, most importantly, to enjoy reading (Bus; McGee & Richgels). Moreover, the more access children have to books, the more likely they will be read to, and the more interest they will show in books and reading (Kuo, Franke, Regalagdo, & Halfron, 2004; McNaughton, 1995). Therefore, the ambient home environment is vital in establishing a love for reading.

Given the central role of the parents in the reading process, it is imperative that parents understand effective reading – that is, reading that will stimulate their child's interest. It is not only the frequency with which a parent reads to his or her child that affects the child's success, but also what a parent does during shared reading (DeBruin-Parecki, 1999). Dialogic reading (DR) is an evidence-based approach to shared book reading (Blom-Hoffman, O'Neil-Pirozzi, & Cutting, 2006). DR involves adults using strategies to actively engage a child during story time.

The goals of DR are for the child to become the storyteller, and for the adult to facilitate, expand, and respond to the child's verbalizations; for example, parents are taught to ask the child *who*, *what*, and *when* questions, as opposed to questions requiring *yes* or *no* answers. In addition, parents are instructed to follow the child's answers with questions, repeat the child's answers, provide assistance as necessary, praise and encourage the child, follow the child's interests, relate concepts to real life experiences, and have fun (Blom-Hoffman et al.; Otto, 2002). The key to ensuring that DR is successful is that parents must actively engage their child as well as monitor their child's understanding and adjust mutual dialogue to acknowledge this understanding. Adults can collaborate with the child and adjust the amount of scaffolding that they provide as the child gains understanding and completes tasks. Eventually, the child will internalize these scaffolding behaviours, and then the child will be an independent reader.

In order to involve children further in their reading, Van Kleek (2008) suggested that beginning at the preschool level, children can be supported in their ability to make inferences about stories read aloud to them. By asking both literal and inferential questions that relate to causal structures of stories, adults will help children make inferences. Thus, a child might be asked to infer a character's feelings or to predict what the character might do in the story. What Van Kleek found was that that children and adults tended to match their inferential language. Therefore, questions focused on informational and evaluative inferences serve to enhance a child's story comprehension. In developing book sharing interventions for preschoolers, one goal should be to embed the kind of inferencing questions that require more active thinking, and this technique will eventually engage preschoolers in inferencing spontaneously.

Another key factor in high quality storybook reading is the way in which adults mediate the reading experience in response to children's interests, personal experiences, conceptions, and knowledge. Using intimate knowledge of their child's personal world, the settings, possessions, and sensations which are familiar and meaningful, as well as the language with which the child may relate, parents are able to bridge the world of the infant reader and that of the book (Bus,

2002). Therefore, with parents actively engaging their child in reading that is in accordance with (and a bit beyond) the child's intellectual level, co-constructing knowledge in a social setting, bridging the gap between the child's world and the author's world, and negotiating meaning (Bus), the child will develop both socially and intellectually.

Benefits of Reading

As young children (newborn babies to five-year-old children) actively read with their parents, they acquire some foundational concepts about literacy, and these concepts help to inspire children's social, emotional, and academic development. To begin with, literacy activities are usually very pleasurable. Shared book reading is an interactive activity that promotes literacy as well as the socio-emotional development of young children. A two-month-old baby may not be cognitively prepared to benefit from the words on the page of a book, but the act of sitting in a parent's lap and listening to the rhythm and intonation of language will strengthen the bond between parent and child. As well, this shared reading time addresses important linguistic precursors such as rhythm and prosody (Kuo et al., 2004).

Furthermore, book reading is one of the closest activities parents and children share; a child may nestle into dad's lap, or lean over mom's arm while they read together. These special feelings that children experience from this closeness to their parents become associated with books and reading; it is no wonder that some children will sit alone and look at books far longer than they will sit with their other toys (Kuo et al.; McGee & Richgels, 2004).

Secondly, literacy activities occur in predictable routines. Children and their parents develop book sharing routines (Kuo et al., 2004). Often, children learn how to initiate book reading, for example by picking up a book and snuggling up to a parent. Furthermore, children learn how to instigate dialogue, for instance by pointing to an object. This familiarity is often why children have a favourite book that they wish their parents to read over and over again. Therefore, reading gives children predictability and comfort.

Learning how to handle literacy materials is another result of early interactive reading. In the beginning, children learn how to hold books right-side up and how to turn pages one at a time progressing from the front to the back of the book (Ezell & Justice, 2005). They also discover that books are for viewing and reading, and not just for turning pages (McGee & Richgels, 2004). Furthermore, with exposure to reading, children begin to know where the story begins, to identify the front of the book and the title on the cover, and to understand the directionality of reading from left to right (Ezell & Justice). A child will learn the foundations in reading through storybook reading.

Another key component of early reading is the development of language. Indeed, literacy development and language development seem to play mutually supportive roles (Huebner & Meltzoff, 2005; McGee & Richgels, 2004; Otto, 2002). Repeatedly reading the same books and using the same language gives the child many opportunities to hear and to learn the meanings of these words. As the child learns more words, the parent will add more words to the routine. Furthermore, through reading children begin to understand the phonology of the language. That is, children begin to develop a sensitivity to the sound structure of language and a conscious ability to detect, combine, and manipulate different sizes of sound units.

Burgess (2002) conducted a study that found that shared reading variables were significantly related to the oral language composite, expressive and receptive vocabulary, and phonological sensitivity. This finding is important because it demonstrates not only the relationship between shared reading and a variety of language outcomes, but also the relationship between phonological sensitivity and a child's success with reading. Stanovich (1986) believed that once one experiences difficulty with phonology, the whole reading process and development are affected. Stanovich argued that evidence is mounting that phonological awareness is necessary for reading success. Therefore, Stanovich believed that once one experiences difficulty with phonology, the whole reading process and development are affected.

If a child is read to from a young age, there is more of a chance to develop a more extensive vocabulary as well as a phonological sensitivity, and, therefore, have success with reading.

Children also learn that literacy involves the use of symbols. Illustrations in books are symbols in that they represent real objects or people. At first, children treat books as objects to manipulate and explore with their senses, often chewing. Only gradually do children learn to look at the pictures in books as representations, rather than as interesting colours, shapes, and lines (McGee & Richgels, 2004). This realization occurs when they begin to label the pictures. Eventually, children begin to understand that print tells a story, to know that the letters make up words, and to identify the first letter of a word and the space between words (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Therefore, through storybook reading, children begin to gain the understanding of representation, an abstract concept.

From the recognition of symbols and their early experiences with books and other kinds of print, children learn that books and other print material communicate a message (Ezell & Justice, 2005; McGee & Richgels, 2004; McNaughton, 1995). While reading, the adult ought to incorporate verbal and nonverbal references to print, in order to encourage a child's explicit and implicit interactions with and attention to oral as well as written language. This approach leads to gains in print concepts, word segmentation, word concepts, and alphabet knowledge (Justice & Pullen, 2003; Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared, 2006). By age four, children demonstrate a clear understanding that writing follows conventions that are different from drawing. Indeed, they begin to understand word constituents and letter orientation.

Clearly, there is a reciprocal relationship between print understanding and reading. The more children read, the more they will learn about print and spelling conventions. Thus, prior to knowing how to read words, young children must closely examine the print and develop an understanding of written letters as well as how they encode words in the English writing system. Therefore, learning that print conveys a message begins informally through encounters with print during preschool years and will help to develop a complex understanding of print.

Finally, from storybooks, children develop knowledge about the world (Ezell & Justice, 2005; McNaughton, 1995). Books introduce them to ideas, concepts, and people that otherwise they would never see. For instance, without books, a child would not usually observe some animals, such as a zebra or an elephant. Also, books provide comfort, insofar as a character might be experiencing a similar situation to the child, for instance, the first day in preschool or a visit to the dentist office. Therefore, reading allows the child to explore and to feel comfortable in the unfamiliar world.

Once formal education begins, children will rely on their reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills, which are skills that are dependent on an underlying foundation of language competence. Thus, by helping their children become competent language users, parents are building a solid foundation for the children's future learning (Ezell & Justice, 2005). Book sharing is not intended to teach children to read. Instead, book sharing helps children to develop a foundation for learning to read. Reflecting on the outcomes of beginning to read to a young child reveals how "rich" a child may become academically, socially, and emotionally. Indeed, the learning that takes place during storybook reading and the benefits from reading to a child are astounding.

Conclusion

If a child is read to from a young age, that child will begin to understand the foundational concepts about literacy, which will lead to more reading and, as a result, more benefits. If young children are read to, they will begin to show signs of understanding the directionality rules in book reading as well as how to handle books; their vocabulary will grow and be enriched because of book experiences; they will begin to understand that books are representative and that books convey messages; they will begin to make connections beyond the books with regard to reading and writing; and, most importantly, they will enjoy reading because they will

associate reading with positive, comforting feelings. These results are both exciting and challenging for parents and educators. Indeed, the parent, as the child's first teacher, now has the responsibility to introduce and to present literature as part of everyday life.

The commitment to reading effectively takes time, but the results are exciting. Through reading, parents are helping to set their child up for success and a love of literature for the rest of the child's life. Educators do not have an opportunity to work with children until they are of school age; however, they need to promote reading programs for young children, as well as programs that help parents to recognize the importance of reading to their children and of making literature a daily part of their lives. It is during the first few years that children may learn the foundational concepts of literacy and develop a love of reading.

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About the Author

Jill Martine is currently a stay-at-home mom of two young boys (ages one and three). Before her boys were born, she was a high school teacher. Presently, she is working on her Master of Education at Brandon University. Her thesis is a case study of early literacy development.

OPINION PAPER

Why Teach?

Bruce Lyons

There was a time when no specific vocation of a teacher and student was required. The master lived with and worked with his apprentices, and the apprentices lived with him and they learned. For the most part, this type of education is gone forever. The prototype of the teacher as master, however, has remained. In the not-so-distant past, teachers were considered professionals who held a certain degree of knowledge in their subject areas. This knowledge was passed along to students who would sit, spellbound in their straight rows, listening to every word that was delivered by teachers during their lectures. Most teachers entered the profession because they believed that they had some knowledge to pass along, and students listened to them because, for the most part, teachers did have information to disseminate.

Today, educators live in a special moment in human history, when there is an accumulation of knowledge greater than at any other time, and the growth of that knowledge is expanding exponentially. Information is readily available to our students and, because of the ease of access to that information, today's students are more knowledgeable than ever before. Some researchers have concluded that IQ's have been steadily rising for the past forty or so years. Because of advancements in communication technology, students now have access to more information than any other collection of people in history.

It is increasingly more difficult for teachers to hold the attention of their students, as there is substantial competition for students' mental energy. Indeed, with the availability of interactive video games, text messaging, email, internet – all accessible to the student at any time in the palms of their hands, in high definition and in digital surround sound – how does a teacher compete for the students' attention? Teachers are no longer indispensable as the "vessel of knowledge" that they once were. Students can now "Google" any variety and quantity of information they require by merely flipping open their cell phones. With all of these rapid transformations taking place in the world, the question needs to be asked, why teach? Are teachers necessary in the process of education?

The answer to that question is that if education is no more than the straightforward acquisition of knowledge, then students, in fact, do not need teachers. However, the concept of education as considerably more than simply the acquisition of knowledge has been with us for some time. Even at the turn of the first millennium, the Greek philosopher Plutarch recognized education as the source and root of all goodness. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the great American philosopher, psychologist, and education reformer John Dewey recognized that the most important task of education is in the creation of conditions necessary for the growth and development of democracy. If these two great minds were correct in their assumptions about the purpose of education, then teachers are more important than ever in that process.

The simple fact is that the function of teaching has never really been simply about imparting knowledge, but rather helping students in their development of judicious use of that knowledge. Information can be found on the Internet, but wisdom cannot. Wisdom comes from experiences and through the development of human relationships in context with the information that is being presented in the classroom. It is not just about the information. The process of education (as opposed to a model of "schooling") is still very much a "people business," and the teacher is absolutely essential in that process.

The teachers' purpose is to pick up on the energy and the needs of the imminent nature of the personalities in their classes, directing them in positive ways and creating the pedagogical conditions necessary to accomplish their goals. Teachers – good teachers – are not happy

unless they can make a significant difference in the lives of their students. Good teachers live to see the "light bulb turn on" above the heads of their students when they teach them. Good teachers are passionate. They relentlessly go outside themselves and enter the many lives that surround them, many of which appear dreary and meaningless to those who cannot observe these lives with the insight of a good teacher. Teachers are directed in their approach to planning for learning by observation and by careful study of conditions that are at work in their classrooms. They take advantage of difficult situations when they present themselves and find opportunity for instruction where many would seek only to chastise. Good teachers find ways for their students to make independent decisions, to take responsibility both for themselves and for those who will follow in future generations. Teachers understand that their job demands a high degree of asceticism and a gratified acceptance of the responsibility for a life entrusted to them, a life that they must influence without any suggestion of supremacy or arrogance.

Good teachers see education not as merely a service. They identify the role of education as having a purpose that is not only meaningful in and of itself, but also influential in the manifestation of a civil society. The creation of an arena of unforced collective action around shared interests, purposes and values cannot occur without competent and judicious leadership. Teachers throughout history have been recognized as a major catalyzing influence in that process. No matter how much information is created in our world, we will always need leaders who possess the unique ability to make use of that knowledge in order to impart wisdom to our young people.

And that is why we teach.

About the Author

Bruce Lyons, M.Ed., is a resource teacher at Killarney School in Killarney, Manitoba. He has spent his entire 29-year career in the Turtle Mountain School Division as a classroom teacher, principal, and special education teacher.

OPINION PAPER

Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow?

Marian Goldstone

> In the city
> there is carpet on the floor
> pavement on the playground
> and magical AV rooms
> that dispense canned knowledge
> at the flick of a switch
>
> But here
> we learn where floors are rough boards
> where playgrounds are dirt
> and voices of ancient spirits
> speak through our souls
>
> In the city
> a bell rings
> and children, like so many filings of lead
> drawn up by a magnet
> run quickly into a building
>
> But here
> a bell rings
> a flock of wild geese flies overhead
> and we pause and watch,
> and obey the calling of the moment.

It was the fall of 1979. I had just scribbled these few words on a scrap of paper as my rosy-cheeked, breathless class, fresh from their noon hour activities, bumped and jostled about as they hung up their jackets, rattled their tin lunch buckets, and clamored excitedly about the huge flock of Canada geese that had just flown by. As I had walked about the schoolyard just minutes before afternoon classes were to begin, I was pursued by a bevy of younger students, all negotiating for a turn to ring the old hand-held brass school bell. Then suddenly, the geese were overhead, and time and motion were suspended. School time, clock time, the concept of time itself ceased to exist. The pulse of something far more primordial drew us together as one. Mesmerized by the beauty and power of nature, we stood there for a long time, until the flock was well down "the ridge," and their honking had faded into the distance. It was a magical moment.

I recall that moment now, not because everything was marvelous in the "good old days." Today's young teachers who deftly download, e-mail and Xerox, shake their heads in disbelief when I describe the trials of carbon stencils and the spirit master copying machine. I, too, share their amazement when I consider, in light of today's legal-minded society, how unacceptable it would be for a lone teacher to march an entire school of children across roads and railway crossings to spend their noon hour at the skating and curling rink. I even describe to them the chill that ran down my spine that mid-August day as I inspected my first classroom, and opened

the big desk drawer to find a regulation strap staring me in the face. I tell them that I was expected to use it, but that I quickly threw it in the back of a cupboard.

I also try to tell them about the "mystery," as well. I try to describe just what created the magic that happened that fall day in 1979. Back then, there was also the general store, the community hall, and Mr. Johnston's elevator. There was old Mrs. So-and-So, who was ninety, and someone else's new baby, and Pete and Jean, who used to have me out to their farm for supper. Somehow, in that community, in much the same manner as when the geese flew by and time stood still, boundaries just strangely evaporated.

It wasn't about just being at school. It wasn't about just being the teacher. It was about being a part of a much larger whole; it was about being connected to elements so deep and vast that words alone could not name them. An old man at the general store in that community probably said it best when he sagaciously observed, "After a while the gravel just gets into your soul." The farmland was poor in that area; sand and small stones were everywhere. He was right. It was just as he said. Whether people knew it or not, they were the land they lived on. They were the ancestry that flowed in their veins. They were the community and how they worked and played together. What happened to one happened to everyone. What happened to the land was reflected in the feelings of each citizen from the youngest to the oldest. Theirs was a knowledge that had grown from that place, that earth, and the things upon it. They might physically leave, but they could never leave that place behind. All of that "oneness" came to school and, in microcosm, to my classroom.

When I tell this story, I am often reminded that it was indeed a time long ago, and nostalgic as I may be, those days are past. While the innocence of this era cannot be replicated, time is not the only variable at work. The sense of closeness to our place on this earth is also a factor in this mystery. It's that same sense of place that sees me driving back to that community each spring in hopes of seeing the crocuses as they bloom for a mile or so along the railway tracks that follow the ridge road. To this day, thoughts of the time spent in that school are never in isolation from the sense of place. They are always accompanied with the visual reminiscence of that little community, and the myriad other sensory memories associated with that experience.

It has been over thirty years since I first entered that humble classroom to embark upon what was to become my life's work. I marvel at the advancements and changes that have since taken place, especially in technology. How far we have advanced in the creation of the tools that serve us! I feel proud to have been a part of the huge growth in professional development amongst teachers, as well as the huge expansion of knowledge about education. Our students, present and future, will be the benefactors of such growth.

However, in our quest for bigger, better, faster, let us not lose sight of the energy and power of community and place. Unlike subservient artificial extensions, place defines us. In unempirical increments unlike gigabytes and dollars, place inescapably permeates the very essence of our beings in a way that is fundamental to our very existence. It empowers us with a perspective that is individual and unique. It determines who we are. It grounds us and grants us stability in an unstable world. Acknowledgement of place is basic to the development of community and citizens. This force, combined with our many modern advances, creates energy to lead us into the future. Such was the fascinating mystery revealed to me the day the geese flew by. The implications for education are limitless!

About the Author

Marian Goldstone is currently enrolled in the M.Ed. program (special education). She also holds a B.A. (psychology) and a M.A. (English). She lives in Brandon with her husband and numerous pets. Together, they have five children and seven grandchildren. Her past publications include short articles, poetry, and song lyrics.

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