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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR

Marion Terry, Ph.D.

Welcome to the third issue of the *BU Journal of Graduate Studies in Education*, devoted to rural, northern, and Aboriginal education. Our authors for volume 2, issue 1, range from first-year M.Ed. students to a university professor. 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: helping people to learn.

- John Kreshewski's research report proposes a mixed-methods study of EBD intervention programming based on student engagement.
- David Nutbean's refereed article blends twenty-first century technology with traditional Aboriginal learning practices.
- Margaret Nichols' refereed article discusses the neurological consequences of caregiver-child relationships, and their effects on psychological and social development.
- Jocelyn Kehler's refereed article advocates education and skills training for volunteer hospice workers.
- Angela Voutier's refereed article argues for literacy skills instruction and intervention programming at the high school level.
- David Sinclair's refereed article explores the flexible role that music plays in expressive therapy.
- Lynda Matchullis' refereed article examines how teacher induction programming can provide mentorship, professional development, and networking in rural schools.
- Krista Curry's refereed article contemplates the transference of leadership from individual administrators to whole schools through shared leadership.
- Lindsay Boulanger's refereed article recommends social skills training as a prerequisite for helping children with learning disabilities develop academically.
- Jennifer Borgfjord's opinion paper endorses multi-level classrooms as a means to maximize learning opportunities and prepare students for real life outside the classroom.
- Dayna Laturnus's opinion paper supports the use of differentiated instruction to focus on the content, processes, and products that individual students need.

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RESEARCH REPORT

Mind and Body: Forward-Looking Interventions to Educate Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

John Kreshewski

It has been my observation in almost two decades of teaching that educators often have responded to students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorder (EBD) by creating alternative programs and storefront schools. Typically, these programs lead to exclusion rather than inclusion and probably add to the feelings of alienation experienced by many students with EBD. However, focusing on forward-looking program interventions may be a more effective approach. Rather than intervening late, at times of personal crisis and academic failure, and by identifying factors that may have caused students' disordered behaviors, I wish to explore forward-looking interventions that are solution focused and promote the development of effective strategies that students with EBD may learn to use in order to deal with future challenges in productive ways. Promoting a program of early and forward-looking physical health (Asche, 2008; Bernhardt, 2008; Ratey, 2008) and academic competence interventions (Freeze, 2006; Freeze & Cook, 2005; Lane, 2004) may give students with EBD a chance to succeed before "the wheels fall off the cart." The goal of this approach is to make students with EBD physically and academically stronger, not to "fix" their problems. This approach to dealing with students who display characteristics of EBD has potential, but requires study to determine feasibility, efficacy, and limitations.

I plan to blend quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to identify positive physical health and academic competence interventions for ninth grade students with EBD, in ways that may provide inclusive pathways to success. This research promises to demonstrate viable methods to improve emotional and behavioral self-control, as well as significant academic recovery, in students with EBD. As these interventions will be applied to students with EBD in inclusive settings, I hope to demonstrate a way to reduce the perceived need for alternative and segregated programs.

Several researchers (see Kauffman & Landrum, 2009; Klem & Connell, 2004; Kreshewski, 2008; O'Rourke & Houghton, 2006) have argued that student engagement may be the main key to success for students with EBD and may have the most profound effect on their academic achievement. What may be needed are positive physical and academic interventions that give students with EBD a fighting chance to become actively engaged in school and to take responsibility for their education. Engagement and responsibility may contribute to immediate improvements in behavior, cooperation, self-esteem, and academic achievement. A considerable body of research, and my own experiences as an educator, suggest that students' sense of involvement in their education is vital to their efforts and success. Moreover, "engagement with learning may be critical to students' capacities to be lifelong learners and is likely to be predictive of their abilities to take on new challenges after they leave school" (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007, p. 13).

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John Kreshewski is currently employed as a Counselor at Crocus Plains High School and teaches sessional courses in the Faculty of Education at Brandon University. He has collaborated locally with school professionals and research academics, and internationally with Dr. John O'Rourke from Edith Cowan University, Perth, Australia. John is looking forward to bringing his proposed research focus to fruition through his Ph.D. program in inclusive special education at the University of Manitoba.

REFEREED ARTICLES

Bridging Traditional and New Worlds: Exploring a Hybrid Approach to Aboriginal and Technology Education

David Nutbean

Abstract

Using the traditional narrative as a teaching method, this paper explores how two Government of Manitoba initiatives, Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003) and Literacy with ICT Across the Curricula: a Resource for Developing Computer Literacy (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006), are compatible and consistent with each other and can be used together to provide students with a hybrid model of education that integrates traditional and modern educational approaches. Given that today's Aboriginal youth have connections to both traditional and technological worlds, the author shows how these worlds can be bridged.

Today's Aboriginal student lives in dual worlds of tradition and technology. Traditional Aboriginal activities, such as trapping and fishing, seem incompatible with the increasing presence of modern technology. As unlikely as it may seem, traditional Aboriginal education and technology education philosophies and approaches share commonalities that make the integration of technology into Aboriginal education consistent and complementary to both worlds. The Government of Manitoba has developed initiatives for both Aboriginal and technology education. With respect to Aboriginal education, Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators (IAPiC)¹ (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003) is intended to infuse an Aboriginal perspective across all curricula. Technology integration has been addressed with *Literacy with ICT Across the Curricula: a Resource for Developing Computer Literacy* (LwICT) (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006), which is meant to infuse technology use across all curricula. This manuscript explores how both IAPiC and LwICT and core curricula can be used in a hybrid approach to Aboriginal education that is consistent with both government initiatives, and is valuable to today's Aboriginal youth because it emphasizes both modern and traditional methods of education. As is appropriate to Aboriginal culture, the exploration begins with a narrative of the educational landscape in which to situate our discussion.

A Hypothetical Narrative of Contemporary Aboriginal Educational Experience

Jeremy Sanderson is 16 years old and drives past the Tolko sign on his way into The Pas, Manitoba, Canada, ready to work a shift at Tim Horton's in the Otineka Mall.² It is the night shift, and he plunks himself behind the drive-through window, his white camo hoody over his head to

¹ For the purpose of brevity, the following acronyms are used in this article:

IAPiC - *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators*

LwICT - *Literacy with ICT Across the Curricula: a Resource for Developing Computer Literacy*

SYICT - *Senior Years Information and Communication Technology: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes*

² The reader is reminded that this is a hypothetical narrative. The setting is real, but the characters and "story" are fictional.

protect him from the cold breeze when serving customers. He turns on NCI radio, but it is playing too much country for his liking so he plops an old Metallica tape in his ghetto blaster. He serves the requisite double-double and chocolate glazed donuts to some customers that drive through at 2 a.m. During a boring stretch, he flips open his cell phone and texts his girlfriend about checking the trap lines with his grandfather, George Sanderson, after his shift ends at 6 a.m.

Earlier that day, Jeremy had been in his digital video class at Joe A. Ross School. The school is progressive in promoting Aboriginal perspectives and provides flexibility in scheduling for culturally appropriate learning opportunities. When Jeremy approached his teacher with the idea of creating a trapping video, the idea received immediate approval. Not only would it combine Aboriginal education and technology education, but the product could be used as a teaching tool for the rest of the class or the school. Jeremy was given a weekend loan of all the video equipment required, and he was excited to have the opportunity to make a masterpiece.

Jeremy arrives at home at 6:30 a.m. Saturday morning from his Friday night shift. He quickly eats some breakfast and turns on the television for a few minutes, quietly so as not to wake the rest of the family. At just after 7 a.m., he hears the horn of his grandfather's truck and rushes out the door. Equipped with his parka, mitts, and good snow boots, he jumps into the old Sierra half-ton, throwing his duffle bag of supplies and equipment in the back. "Did you at least get me some coffee?" his grandfather asks. As Jeremy gives a disappointing shrug, his grandfather gives him a little push on the shoulder, "Eeey Boy . . ."

George Sanderson has been trapping for nearly 40 years and is determined on this trip to show his grandson how it is done. Jeremy starts to videotape parts of the trip for his video class. They drive out of town for about 30 minutes to a friend's cabin and from there on snowmobile, for who knows how long, to the middle of the bush. They stop the snowmobile at the end of a trap line and started walking. Looking into the camera, George tells Jeremy to pay attention, as it is important to learn by example. The snow is fresh, and they walk a fair distance until they come upon a trap with a marten in it.

The George takes his time and explains the details of trapping. He explains how the rotating jaw trap works and how to remove the deceased animal from the trap. He shows Jeremy, who is videotaping diligently, how to lean a bare tree trunk against another tree, in order to make a run to the ground that the marten can follow, and how to secure and hide the trap under the branch of the tree that holds up the leaning trunk. George also shows Jeremy how to reset the trap, and reattaches it into position.

Noticing that Jeremy had been videotaping the whole time, George asks, "Are you sure you're learning anything with that thing in your face?" Jeremy replies, "Sure, I can do this and learn it too." George picks up a loose stick and tosses it into the trap in the tree, causing it to spring shut loudly onto the stick. "Well, if that's true, then let me see you do it." "Well then hold this and I'll show you," Jeremy says, handing over the camera to his grandfather. "Just point this thing at me while I do it." Jeremy walks over to the trap and carefully separates the jaws to release the stick, but his hands slip and the trap shuts, just barely missing his fingers as it falls to the ground. "Now don't be getting your fingers caught in there. Your mother will be mad if I hurt her little boy." Jeremy picks up the trap, concentrates on spreading the jaws, attaches the retaining clip, and then places the trap carefully under the branch on the marten run.

"Nôsisê!" George shouts with delight, and gives Jeremy a hug. "You are a natural. Now take this and let's get the next one," he says as he hands the camera back to his grandson. They head back up the trail to the snowmobile and check the remainder of the lines, two more of which have animals. Each time, George demonstrates more details of the process and adds more vital tips on trapping for his young student, and each time Jeremy gains more mastery at retrieving pelts and resetting the traps. It is not long before George does very little explaining and Jeremy does all of the work to reclaim and reset the traps.

George and Jeremy Sanderson spend the entire day checking the traps in the crisp snowy air of December, enjoying each other's company as Jeremy comes to know the land feel part of

an experience that has been going on for generations. As they make their way back home in the evening, Jeremy understands the importance of a way of life that includes the people, the land, the animals, and the connections between them. Back home, he drifts off to sleep quickly, exhausted from working all night and trapping all day. His dreams are filled with images of snow and trees and trails and traps, and the adventures of the day, imagining it all as a spectacular movie.

Traditional Aboriginal Education

Traditional Aboriginal education, like Aboriginal culture, takes an ecological, holistic view of the world. The indigenous teacher, as part of the “connective ecology” (Cajete, 1999, p. 165), recognizes the balance, rhythm, and universal meaning in nature. Modern education’s focus on the intellect alone has disconnected us from the greater purpose and responsibility of education to connect generations to the ecological landscapes that help to define culture. Indigenous teachers prepare their students for their adult role in a totality to each other, integrating body, mind, spirit, and community. While schools today typically compartmentalize learning into classrooms and courses for a highly directive and minimal view of learning, Aboriginal teachings recognize the interconnectedness of all and the importance of the whole person in an integrative process (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007).

The stages of life are interwoven into an Aboriginal perspective of the dynamic of lifelong education represented by the medicine wheel and the tree of life. The First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, p. 18) represents Aboriginal learning as a tree of learning consisting of the roots (sources and domains), the rings (individual learning cycle), the branches (individual personal development), and the leaves (community well being). The rings of the tree, like the medicine wheel, represent the cyclic nature of learning and life to the individual, and portray a continuing process. As individuals acquire more rings, their branches grow and their personal development improves. Bigger branches can support more leaves, and therefore the individual is more able to contribute to the community. This growth is nurtured by many in the community: parents, teachers, elders, and mentors, in an ecological relationship of learning that recognizes a world of cyclic growth, reformation and interconnectedness: “The relationships are circular, rather than linear, holistic and cumulative, instead of compartmentalized” (Canadian Council on Learning, 2007, p. 19). The cyclic, holistic nature of Aboriginal educational practices, although contrasting with a mostly industrialized, compartmentalizing modern school system, can be integrated effectively for improved student learning experiences.

Hybrid Aboriginal Education

The dialectic between traditional Aboriginal education and modern education may seem difficult to resolve. Colonialism and its influences have meant that Eurocentric scientific positivism has become the dominant ideology directing today’s schools; that schools have been used by the dominant class to impose economic, political, and social control is of little dispute (Gutek, 2004, p. 317). The abstraction and compartmentalization of knowledge, which emphasize the separation of mind and matter, separate from experience and connectedness, are antithetical to the importance of lived experience in Aboriginal education. The usual classroom experience of instruction from the abstraction of lived experience can hinder authentic learning opportunities. Regnier (1995) explained, “Human development becomes imbalanced when education is disconnected from the experience of the immediacies of life” (p. 393). Connectedness to real experience provides genuine authenticity to Aboriginal educational practices.

Although the ideals of traditional Aboriginal education are appropriate and worthwhile, given the social and cultural realities of modern Aboriginal life, the use of an entirely Aboriginal model

of education is unrealistic. With almost 50% of the identified Aboriginal population living in urban areas (Statistics Canada, n.d., chart data, columns 3 & 4), this shift is imperative. In its historic *Indian Control of Indian Education* paper in 1971, The National Indian Brotherhood identified a goal of education “to reinforce Indian identity and provide training necessary to make a good living in our modern society” (as cited in Yuzdepski, 1989, p. 38). Alteo (2008) envisioned a “Zone of Aboriginal Education” (p. 398) that includes a dialogic of education that serves First Nations peoples within the context of Eurocentric economic realities. The shift in educational thinking must understand the past, recognize the present, and envision the future of Aboriginal peoples. This future is “contingent upon the changing Aboriginal identities in the context of modernity, and a consolidating educational vision between the Western and Aboriginal knowledge systems” (Kumar, 2009, p. 50). Only within these realities of modern and traditional Aboriginal life can new approaches to Aboriginal education be addressed.

Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives

With recognition of the need for a greater representation of Aboriginal perspectives in provincially mandated curricula, *Integrating Aboriginal Perspectives into Curricula: A Resource for Curriculum Developers, Teachers, and Administrators* (IAPiC) (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003), is intended to infuse an Aboriginal perspective across all curricula. To address historical, social and institutional bias, IAPiC is needed for the benefit of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students. Non-Aboriginal students can develop an understanding of native cultures and histories, both modern and traditional, and will develop informed (not stereotyped) opinions on matters relating to Aboriginal peoples. Aboriginal students are expected to benefit by developing positive self-identity from their histories and cultures, and by participating in a learning environment that will equip them with the knowledge and skills to participate effectively in their specific Aboriginal community contexts. Like the intent of Canada’s relationship with all Native peoples, the approach to IAPiC is that of responsible coexistence with existing curricula.

Aboriginal perspectives on education respect traditional connections regarding the land, generosity, oral tradition, spirituality, the medicine wheel, powwows, and Elders. The narrative presented previously is consistent with traditional Aboriginal teaching methods, whereby teaching is carried out by Elders and is student-centered with the focus on what the child will learn rather than what was taught. Because skills are considered gifts to the entire community, a sense of belonging and generosity connects the individual to the community. As a student’s skills grow, mastery develops that will lead to greater independence from the teachers, enabling the student to move into a position of teacher, thus completing the circle of courage and creating the whole person as a benefit to the community (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003, pp. 14-16).

Oral tradition in Aboriginal education is not simply a means of information transmission, but a method of developing higher level thinking skills. Multiple recitations of narratives are not just a mnemonic device, but encourage students to derive different lessons from the same stories. A story may hold different answers in a slightly different retelling by another storyteller. This learning by listening is enhanced by learning by doing and guiding without interfering, enabling the listeners to find their own solution even when giving them the answer would be quicker. This approach leads to solutions that provide intrinsic motivation, rewarding students for doing the work themselves, rather than giving extrinsic rewards (such as grades) that are the foundation of most assessment in today’s schools. In summary, some keys to integrating Aboriginal perspectives include the following:

- Students are treated with dignity and respect.
- Student motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic.
- Curriculum is made relevant.
- Experiential learning is used whenever possible.

- Members of the family and community are included.
 - Elders are invited to share knowledge.
 - Traditional knowledge, histories and cultures are included.
- (adapted from Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003, p. 18)

A quick review of the Aboriginal trapping experience narrative introduced earlier reveals that most of these methods of integrating aboriginal perspectives have been integrated in the teaching of trapping by George as Elder. Because the purpose of IAPiC is to integrate perspectives, it is important to look at the curricula being integrated.

Technology Education and the Hybrid Approach

Jeremy was told by his teacher to make a video of his trapping trip, as part of his Digital Picture 25S course. This course is outlined in the Government of Manitoba's *Senior Years Information and Communication Technology: Manitoba Curriculum Framework of Outcomes* (SYICT) document. SYICT emphasizes that students solve problems and express creativity, both individually and collaboratively, by using technology for tasks at school and in their personal lives (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007, p. 1). The focus of learning is on the student as learner and the teacher as facilitator. Learners are respected for their prior knowledge and use it to support future learning. Students are expected to become independent learners, to adapt to changes, and to engage in planning, developing, and assessing their own learning experiences with direction from their teachers. Teachers assist students with information, and direct students as they gather, organize, and present findings. Teachers help to refine and redirect student activity toward achieving outcomes without imposing activities or solutions on students. This approach engenders ownership of education and promotes intrinsic motivation by making assignments personally rewarding.

As the core curricular document, The SYICT document is a good complement to the IAPiC document, but these documents are not a complete hybrid solution without *Literacy with Information and Communication Technology across the Curriculum* (LwICT) (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006). Like IAPiC, LwICT is a cross-curricular approach designed to integrate information and communication technologies into learning, teaching, and assessment. By promoting technology as a foundation skill, its aim is to infuse technology into all courses. Inquiry and constructivist learning, important components of LwICT, can also be bridged into concepts of IAPiC. Inquiry learning is a methodology that motivates students to pursue personal and authentic learning in depth. Constructivists view learning as a highly interactive process whereby "students construct personal meaning from new information and ideas that are presented in socially supportive contexts" (Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2006, p. 13). Interactive processes, personal meaning, and socially supported contexts are important connecting ideas for IAPiC, LwICT, and SYICT.

The student-centered approach to LwICT is in keeping with the approaches used in IAPiC. Along with inquiry and constructivist learning, students are expected to reach higher-level critical and creative thinking skills, reach deeper understanding, display digital citizenship, and utilize multiple literacies for the twenty-first century. Teachers, like Elders in the IAPiC approach and as seen fully in the SYICT document, have a gradual release of responsibility, whereby students become more responsible for their learning as they develop mastery and teachers become facilitators of learning, "emphasizing intrinsic motivation rather than external rewards" (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2007, p. 16). Modeling, sharing, guiding, and independence are the stages of this teacher release model, which is reminiscent of the medicine wheel model of IAPiC (Manitoba Education and Youth, 2003). Assessment models of LwICT emphasize assessment FOR learning and AS learning (Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2006), and contain self, peer, teacher and parent involvement focused on conversations, observations,

and portfolios, in order to ensure the involvement of many stakeholders while remaining student-centered.

Summarizing the Hybrid Model

The hybrid model views IAPiC, SYICT, and LwICT as compatible and complementary to each other. Some key supporting features follow:

- A student-centered approach respects prior knowledge, histories, culture, and experiences.
- Student choice and interest provide intrinsic motivation, leading to higher-level thinking and greater student responsibility.
- The curriculum is personally relevant.
- Out-of-class learning is used whenever possible.
- Community and family involvement is promoted.

The links among the three documents emphasize the connectedness that can occur among diverse perspectives, providing hope that other inter-curricular analyses can evolve into hybrid approaches with student success and inclusiveness in mind.

Conclusion

This exploration of a hybrid approach to Aboriginal and technology education teaches us that bridging diverse worlds is possible. Our current curricular focus on content and outcomes in core curricula has required many cross-curricular initiatives to focus attention on the learners and their positioning within the curricula. The culturally exclusive and biased worlds of most core curricula, perhaps ironically, can be made inclusive by ideas from millennia-old traditional educational practices and models that promote future education. Teaching from this hybrid perspective requires a willingness to work individually with students, forming partnerships with members of the community and family, and working well beyond the confining physical, organizational, and temporal infrastructure of today's schools. Working with both IAPiC and LwICT in authentic ways means utilizing real lived experiences that are compatible with both Aboriginal education and modern technology. Today's Aboriginal youth deserve an approach that accommodates their backgrounds, experiences, and needs as they find their place in both traditional and modern worlds.

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About the Author

David Nutbean is in the graduate studies program at Brandon University, pursuing his M.Ed. with a specialization in curriculum and instruction. As a long-time teacher of computer technology, he is a strong advocate of technology integration and student-centered teaching practices.

Effects of Nurture Versus Trauma on Infant and Early Childhood Psychological and Social Development

Margaret Nichols

Abstract

Child maltreatment is a significant problem in North America. Maltreatment comes in many forms, such as neglect, physical abuse, sexual abuse, abandonment, and traumatic world events. The maltreatment affects children's neurobiological development, and thus, potentially their future quality of social and psychological health. This article gives a basic description of how the brain works and discusses the impact of trauma, particularly from birth to three years of age, on different aspects of the brain. It also contrasts the effects of trauma with the impact of nurture on the brain. The author demonstrates that what happens from birth to age three sets up the person's neuro-wiring for how individuals will respond to perceived traumatic events for the rest of their lives, and determines whether or not they will be prone to psychological disorders by the age of three or later on in life.

The early years of human life, from birth to three years of age, are the most crucial years for a child's psychological and social development. The quality of a child's relationship with his or her mother or primary caregiver is of utmost importance. This early bonding, or lack thereof, sets the stage for an individual's ability to cope with future stresses in relationships and in life. The complex social-emotional neuron networking that is established in the brain during these early years of life becomes the foundation upon which each person interacts with his or her world. Early childhood neglect or abuse can cause chronic stress. The brain's stress response system then creates neuro-wiring that leaves the child with a distorted sense of attachment, thus disrupting a child's ability to relate to others in socially acceptable ways. Under these circumstances the child's ability to learn to emotionally self-regulate is also disrupted. These disruptions can result in a myriad of social dysfunctions throughout the traumatized child's life. On the other hand, if the mother or primary caregiver offers predominantly nurturing and protective care during early childhood, then the child's brain is networked with effective coping mechanisms to handle life's presenting stresses. Parental care, bonding, and attachment determine, in part, an individual's future in terms of coping mechanisms in stressful situations, and the potential for developing or not developing costly psychological and social disorders, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and manic-depression.

In order to understand the effects of either nurture or trauma on the psychological development of a child, it is important to have at least a rudimentary understanding of how the human brain works. An infant is born with 100 billion brain cells, called neurons (Fletcher, 2007, para. 1). These neurons begin to form connections, or synapses, as the infant processes life experiences. The more stimuli the child experiences, the more synaptic connections occur in the brain. Conversely, a lack of stimuli from a stagnant environment will create a poor synaptic network (Fletcher, 2007, para. 2). There are critical windows of opportunity for developing each area of the brain, many of those windows occur in early childhood (Fletcher, 2007, para. 6). For example, the critical time for the development of language is between one and three years of age. The more meaningful listening and speaking experiences a child has during this time, the more the neuron connections are made in that area of the brain. Both maltreatment and lack of sensory experience can impede the creation of important neuron structures in the brain during sensitive periods of development, reducing the affected areas functioning capacity for life (Perry, Pollard, Blakey, Baker, & Vigilante, 1995, para. 12).

At an unconscious level, the human brain also has a hard-wired system that ensures survival of the species. Fear is produced in response to a dangerous stimulus, which in turn

leads to a “fight,” “flight,” or “freeze” response (Cozolino, 2002, p. 235). There are two major stress response systems in a human: the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) and the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal (APA) axis (Lazinski, Shea, & Steiner, 2008, p. 363). These two systems work together to some degree, but they also have their own specific functions. The ANS is made up of the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS) and the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) (Nichols, 2009, slide 39). The PNS prepares the body for rest. It slows a person down so that he or she can relax under normal circumstances. If the hormone cortisol is released into the system due to stress, then respiration and heart rate decrease further, and the body becomes weak, trembles, and may collapse, entering a survival freeze response (Ambrose, 2009, slide 158). The system is in the hypoarousal state at this extreme. The function of the SNS is opposite; it prepares one for action. An activated SNS releases the hormone adrenaline into the system, which causes an increase in blood pressure and heart rate, dilated pupils, and slowing of the digestive system. This system takes control during times of stress, and makes the brain alert to danger. Depending on circumstances, the brain initiates a flight or fight response, and the system is in a hyperaroused state. The unconscious level of the brain is in control at both the hyperaroused and hypoaroused states, and ensures that the person fights, takes flight, or freezes action, for survival.

The limbic area of the brain is also important in terms of stress responses. This is where the HPA axis is controlled. The limbic area contains the amygdala, orbitofrontal, hypothalamus, hippocampus, and the pituitary gland (Nichols, 2009, slide 25). The amygdala contains the only form of memory from birth to 18 months. It also alerts a person to danger. The orbitofrontal part of the prefrontal cortex is an important area for recovery from trauma and attachment difficulties. The hippocampus is involved in retrieving past memory. The hypothalamus controls the neuroendocrine system, along with the pituitary and adrenal glands (Nichols, 2009, slide 26). This is known as the HPA axis. When a stressful event occurs, the amygdala sends neurochemical messages to the hypothalamus, which in turn alerts the pituitary via more neurochemical messages. The pituitary signals the adrenal glands to release cortisol, a stress hormone, that has a stimulating effect on the PNS. In the short term, cortisol is useful in making the body respond to a stressful stimulus. However, problems result when high levels of this hormone remain in the system for a long period of time due to prolonged stress.

When an infant or child experiences chronic stress, the normal system of stress release and self-regulation do not happen. Some neurotransmitters that are released during times of stress are dopamine, norepinephrin (NE), endogenous opioids, and glucocorticoids (GC). These hormones that have been released by the ANS and the HPA axis remain in the child's system with damaging results. An increase in NE “reinforces the biological encoding of traumatic memory” (Cozolino, 2002, p. 261). It also increases anxiety, hyperarousal, and irritability. An abundance of dopamine in the system produces hypervigilance, paranoia, and perceptual distortions. In this case, the chronically stressed child views the world as a dangerous and scary place. Social withdrawal and avoidance of new stimuli (which are perceived as dangerous) can result. A prolonged high level of GC in the system can decrease the volume of the hippocampus, thus impacting on memory (Cozolino, 2006, p. 262). It also has a negative impact on the immune system, resulting in higher rates of physical illness. Another hormone called endogenous opioids, which relieve pain under flight or fight responses, can dull the emotions and lead to dissociative reactions, and even depersonalization, if it remains in the system for too long. Biological well-being is sacrificed for immediate survival. Along with the increase in stress hormones in the system, there is a decrease in the pleasure hormone serotonin. Low levels of serotonin in the body have been linked to aggression, irritability, depression, hyperarousal, and violence. These various neurotransmitters, which under conditions of stress help the individual to survive, can have devastating lifelong, psychological impacts if they are allowed to flood the system for an extended period of time.

The experience of trauma is processed in the brain (Perry et al., 1995, para. 7). The longer the duration of the traumatic experience, the denser the neuron networking associated with it.

Also, the system becomes more sensitized to the traumatic stimulus, and eventually requires less of the stimulus to produce full-blown hyperarousal or hypoarousal reaction patterns (Perry et al., 1995, para. 10). Later in life, the child's reaction pattern becomes an unconscious trait of automatic over-reacting to "minor" stressors. A child who has developed either of these reaction patterns can move easily from a state of feeling anxious to feeling threatened to feeling terrorized, resulting in maladaptive emotional behaviour (Perry et al., 1995, para. 23). The brain becomes imprinted with the resulting trauma responses, and the brain can remain that way for life.

Attachment is another evolutionary process designed to promote the survival of species; however, attachment is also important to healthy relationships in humans (Shepiris, Renfro-Michel, & Dogget, 2003, p.77). Initially, in an infant-primary caregiver situation, attachment is established through physical contact on the part of the caregiver, such as caressing and kissing, and behaviours such as reaching and grasping by the infant. Other cues, such as eye contact and vocal nuances, help in the bonding between infant and primary caregiver. As the child grows, attachment expands to encompass the toddler's anticipation of caregiver actions, and the child adjusts his or her behaviour accordingly. For healthy attachment to occur, it is imperative that the primary caregiver is consistent in displaying love and positive attention to the child. The child, through experiencing nurturing behaviour, develops a sense of security and comfort, as well as a trust that the world is a safe place to be. This positive nurturing allows the young child to explore his or her environment (Webster, Hackett, & Joubert, 2009, p. 7). As a result, the child develops a normal neural network and is "less vulnerable to long-term, negative effects on his/her neurodevelopment" (Lawson, 2009, p. 205). Children growing up in violent communities have been shown to be protected from developing aggressive and antisocial behaviour through "good family relations and optimal parenting practices" (Quota, Punamäki, Miller, & El-Sarraj, 2008, p. 232). Therefore, if a child develops strong attachments to his or her primary caregiver, then he or she will be well wired to develop healthy relationships with other people throughout life.

Along with the need for attachment is the theory of self-regulation and its importance in the human experience with regards to the ability to process traumatic experiences and, hence, to affect emotional development. Self-regulation is related to the hormonal balance within the ANS. Hyperarousal happens when the SNS is over-activated, and hypoarousal results from an over-activated PNS. Self-regulation is described as the ability to keep one's emotional state within a window of tolerance, otherwise known as the optimal arousal zone (Ogden, Minton, & Pain, 2006, p. 27). Within this optimal zone, one's brain is able to process and integrate sensory information, including traumatic memories. When one's emotional state enters hyperarousal in response to trauma-related stimuli, he or she is out of the optimal arousal zone. Hyperarousal results in "too much arousal to process information effectively" (Ogden et al., 2006, p. 26). The hypoaroused individual experiences "intrusive images, affects, and body sensations" (Ogden et al., 2006, p. 26). The hypoaroused state also causes one to depart from the window of tolerance at the opposite end of the continuum. A hypoaroused individual distances him or herself from the experience in an unconscious way and is unable to process the incoming information effectively. He or she feels "a numbing, a sense of deadness or emptiness, passivity, and possibly paralysis" (Ogden et al., 2006, p. 26). The ability to self-regulate, and keep one's emotional state within the optimal zone at least most of the time, will help that individual to deal emotionally with traumatic events, processing and integrating them into his or her system.

An infant does not have the ability to self-regulate. The baby needs a caregiver who will identify with his or her needs as if they were the caregiver's own (Gerhardt, 2004, p. 23). In other words, the caregiver feels the desire to fulfill the baby's needs immediately. When the caregiver relieves the baby's stress or discomfort, the baby can calm down to a regulated state. If this stress relief is consistently given to the infant as he or she grows, the brain of the developing child gradually produces the neuron network needed to be able to self-regulate. Then, as an adult, that individual will be able to cope with stress in a manageable fashion.

However, if the caregiver does not respond to the baby's needs on a consistent basis, the baby does not learn how to monitor and regulate his or her emotional states (Gerhardt, 2004, pp. 23-24). Instead, the infant receives the implicit message that no one is interested in his or her feelings or needs, which changes the way that the baby responds to the caregiver. These behaviours develop unconsciously, and pave the way for how that individual relates to people throughout life. An infant learns to self-regulate or not self-regulate through the relationship with his or her primary caregiver.

World conditions such as war can indirectly impact on a young child's emotional health through the child's mother's state of emotional health. The child does not have to have directly experienced the trauma due to war, in order to be affected. From birth, an infant shows interest in stimuli such as faces and voices (Kaitz et al., 2009, p. 164). Gradually, he or she attains competency in understanding the messages portrayed through social interactions. When these messages are positive, the infant develops a sense of self-trust and a trust in others (Kaitz et al., 2009, p. 165). In situations wherein the mother has been previously traumatized by war, and is herself emotionally dysfunctional, her capacity to interact with her child is negatively affected. The child is then unable to attain a regulated state from his or her unregulated mother, and may stay in a stressed state for a prolonged period of time. A child who has not personally endured the trauma of war can be negatively emotionally affected by it through his or her mother.

Traumatic events in infancy and early childhood can result in self-regulation dysfunction to varying degrees. The effect of trauma depends on an individual's perception and internalization of the traumatic event, as well as his or her ability to self-regulate. Trauma is defined as "anything that overwhelms the organism, physically, emotionally, and mentally" (Ambrose, 2009, slide 132). It is an individual's reaction to the event that determines whether it was traumatic or not (Ambrose, 2009, slide 132). An individual is traumatized if he or she feels overwhelmed by a situation perceived as threatening, feels completely helpless, and is unable to process psychological and physical reactions (Nichols, 2009, slide 35). The trauma is experienced by the entire human organism and is entrenched in the nervous system (Nichols, 2009, slide 36). The intensity of the impact of the trauma on an individual depends on the "length and intensity of the trauma, past traumas, and genetic programming" (Nichols, 2009, slide 36). Trauma produces a dysregulation in the nervous and affective systems of the body, hindering the brain from processing the body's reaction to the stimulus. If a person is not able to self-regulate, then the psychosomatic effects of a trauma can remain in the mind, brain, and body for the rest of that person's life, continuing to produce dysregulation in the system (Ambrose, 2009, slide 121). However, if a person has learned to self-regulate in early childhood, then he or she will be better able to process and integrate the effects of each trauma. The inability of a child to self-regulate has a negative effect on his or her entire system.

A small child's lack of secure attachment to his or her mother or primary caregiver is equally as damaging as the inability to self-regulate, and can lead to future emotional and social problems for the child. To an infant or small child, trauma can include experiencing neglect or abuse from his or her primary caregiver. A child who is neglected or physically abused is not as likely to develop a secure attachment with his or her caregiver (Ambrose, 2009, slide 118). A secure attachment means that a child has a clear preference for his or her caregiver, and seeks and is comforted by the caregiver. In response to the child, the caregiver acts in a caring and consistent way to meet the child's needs. There are three types of attachment disorders: avoidant, ambivalent/resistant, and disorganized. Around 35% of children are divided between these insecure classifications ("Attachment theory," 2009, para. 22). In avoidant attachment, the young child typically shows little emotion towards his or her caregiver. This behaviour is in response to the caregiver seldom meeting the needs of the child when under distress. Also, the caregiver tends to discourage crying, and expects the child to soothe him or herself ("Attachment theory," 2009, table). When a caregiver inconsistently demonstrates both neglectful and appropriate responses toward the child, the child develops ambivalent/resistant attachment. The child will seek contact with his or her caregiver, then "resist angrily when it is

received" ("Attachment theory," 2009, table). The pattern of a disorganized attached child is one of contradictory behaviour. The child looks toward the caregiver to meet his or her needs, but at the same time is apprehensive and fearful. In this case, the caregiver is the source of trauma for the child (Nichols, 2009, slide 51). All future neuron networking is set against this early life brain structuring (Cozolino, 2002, p. 259). The disorganized attached child is usually unable to use his or her caregiver as a secure base (Cornell & Hamrin, 2008, p. 36). Dysfunctional emotional and social behaviours result from disorganized attachment. If no intervention is given, these patterns of behaviour, and relating to others, stay with that individual into later childhood and adulthood (Lawson, 2009, p. 204). Poor attachment of a small child to his or her primary caregiver may be at the root of that child's behaviour problems throughout life. Knowledge of how the brain works, and the impact of early childhood trauma on the brain, would be beneficial to school psychologists and school counsellors, in order to assess the extent that early childhood trauma has affected children's presenting behaviours. This information could then be helpful in developing effective treatment programs for individual children.

Manic-depression has its roots of insecure attachment in toddlerhood (Gerhardt, 2004, p. 157). For example, Ron (a pseudonym) was both neglected and abused as a young child and developed manic-depression in adulthood. Initially, when Ron was an infant and young child, his mother was emotionally distant. She suffered from depression and had emotional instability most of her life. When Ron was six years old, his mother married. His stepfather was both verbally and physically abusive to him. Ron was forced to live and eat in the basement, not with the rest of the family, and he was continually given beatings. From about the age of eight on, his stepfather would literally kick Ron out of the house to fend for himself. He often slept at a nearby community center. Somehow, he managed to function in a socially acceptable manner, in terms of relationships with peers, throughout his teens and early adult life. Problems began to surface for Ron during the summer following the birth of his first child. He had a moderate manic episode during that summer. This manic state, which quickly turned to a moderate depression in the fall, continued through the winter. The next spring, his second child was born. This event brought on a severe manic state for about five months, followed by an equally severe depression that lasted for months as well. It was during this last depression that Ron was diagnosed with manic-depression. Ron has been plagued with manic-depression for the past 35 years. His wife was unwilling to cope with the countless social, emotional, and financial difficulties that resulted from Ron's manic episodes, and she left with their children. Ron was also unable to function as a parent most of the time. Since he usually chose not to take the necessary medication to control the illness, Ron's resulting manic behaviours landed him either in jail or on a psychiatric ward on many occasions. Ron certainly had a difficult and traumatic childhood, with devastating emotional and social consequences throughout his adult life.

Another psychological disorder that has a link to early childhood trauma is post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Cozolino, 2002, p. 258). Core neuron networks are under construction in early life, and traumatic events compromise these connections. PTSD is most common in children who have been abused or neglected (Becker-Weidman & Hughes, 2008, p. 330). The effects are most devastating if the perpetrator of the trauma is the primary caregiver (Cozolino, 2002, p. 258). The child is deprived of the nurturing, self-regulating, interactions at the same time as he or she is traumatized by the caretaker. PTSD is a result of unresolved and un-integrated, prolonged traumatic experiences in early childhood. Someone suffering from PTSD is continually re-traumatized by the memory of specific traumatic events. This continual loop of self-traumatization "can devastate every aspect of the victim's life" (Cozolino, 2002, p. 265). There is also a link between the prolonged release of the glucocorticoids (GC) hormone due to stress, and a smaller hippocampus. One study showed that adults who developed PTSD after combat, and who also had a history of childhood abuse, were found to have had a smaller than normal hippocampus (Cozolino, 2002, p. 251). As noted earlier, increased levels of GC in a young child's system can damage the hippocampus. Effects of prolonged trauma during childhood can lead to PTSD in later life.

The costs incurred by society as a result of infant and childhood trauma are both human and monetary. The traumatized child pays the price throughout his or her life in terms of quality of emotional and relational health, as well as quality of life in general. Ron, for instance, has been unable to function as a normal, productive member of society throughout most of his adult life, requiring societal care on many occasions. Children who suffer from abuse or neglect may need long-term care. Problems such as shaken baby syndrome, impaired brain development, poor physical health, poor mental and emotional health, cognitive difficulties, juvenile delinquency, other difficulties during adolescence, and adult criminality require that the child receives help from society ("Long-term Consequences," 2008, pp. 4-5). To care for special needs children with severe attachment problems, residential treatment programs can exceed \$100,000 annually per child (Shepiris et al., 2003, p. 81). It has been conservatively estimated that in excess of 4,000,000 children in the United States are exposed to a traumatic event in any recent year (Perry et al., 1995, para. 5). At least half of those children are at risk of developing serious emotional, behavioural, and social problems that will require an intervention. The costs to the traumatized children, and to society in general, are varied and huge.

Many factors in a child's early life affect his or her ability to develop healthily, both psychologically and socially. An understanding of how the brain develops in early childhood and of the impact of prolonged stress and trauma on that development is vital knowledge for every caregiver. With this information, school psychologists and school counsellors would more fully understand the children that they work with and would be better prepared to meet the children's needs. The mother or primary caregiver's ability to nurture and bond with the infant is the most critical factor. A securely attached child will learn to self-regulate from the caregiver, and will have developed the neuron networking necessary to cope with most stressors that he or she will have to deal with throughout life. Both a secure attachment and the ability to self-regulate protect the child from the various stress hormones that cause damage to the brain. This protection also reduces the risk of the child's developing PTSD later in life. On the other hand, when the caregiver is ill-equipped, or unable to attach to the infant, the baby will develop attachment problems due to stress or trauma. Depending on the nature of the neglect or abuse caused by the caregiver, and the duration of the maltreatment, a variety of difficulties will challenge the child throughout life. Many of these neglected or abused children will likely experience some form of emotional and/or social dysfunction, and may need ongoing care and treatment. The costs attributed to maltreatment of young children, in terms of human suffering and in terms of costs to society, are too high. The quality of a person's life depends on his or her emotional and social well-being. Adequate nurturing and bonding from the primary caregiver toward the infant is paramount to the child's future health and happiness.

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The Importance of Education for Hospice Volunteers

Jocelyn Kehler

Abstract

Hospice volunteers need proper training to deliver appropriate end-of-life care. Compassion and experience are not enough; hospice care workers require specialized training in their field. In recognition of the valuable contributions made by hospice volunteers, the Canadian Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and Health Canada are developing standards of best practice for hospice care. This article explores the benefits of education for volunteer hospice workers, within the context of the various support service roles that these individuals undertake.

As members of the interdisciplinary hospice palliative care team, hospice volunteers require education and skills training to deliver the distinct hospice care that they provide. Acknowledging the valuable contributions that hospice volunteers make, the Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association (CHPCA) and Health Canada have been working to develop norms and standards of best practice, which will ensure that hospice volunteers have the tools and educational support that they need. Hospice volunteers often have personal characteristics and experiential knowledge that suits them for hospice work, but these qualities alone are insufficient. Providing end-of-life care requires that hospice volunteers engage in many different roles and support services. Volunteer educational programs produce not only direct benefits, such as skills training and hospice education, but also indirect benefits for the hospice volunteers, their clients, and the hospice organization. Therefore, investing in the education and skills training of hospice volunteers is important, in order to help volunteers succeed in delivering the distinct type of care that they have to offer.

The role of hospice volunteers may seem insignificant in comparison to the role of the professional members of the hospice palliative care team; however, hospice volunteers both complement and enhance the work of professional hospice workers (Andersson & Ohlen, 2005, p. 602; Claxton-Oldfield, MacDonald, & Claxton-Oldfield, 2006, p. 192). The personal relationship between hospice volunteers and their terminally ill clients addresses other equally essential needs (Claxton-Oldfield, Hastings, & Claxton-Oldfield, 2008, p. 169; Worthington, 2008, p. 29). For example, clients will often express deep emotional concerns to their hospice volunteers, as opposed to their professional healthcare workers, because the latter seldom have time to sit and listen for long, due to their busy workloads (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2008, p. 169; Planalp & Trost, 2008, p. 223; Worthington, 2008, p. 20). Thus, hospice volunteers can be a link to sensitive personal information to which the other members of the hospice team may not have access (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2006, pp. 192-193). Dealing properly with these concerns requires not only time, but also effective communication skills and empathy (Worthington, 2008, pp. 20-21, 25-32). This role is fundamental to the hospice palliative care team.

Defining the role of hospice volunteers within the interdisciplinary palliative care team has been the focus of recent initiatives undertaken by the CHPCA and Health Canada (Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, 2009, paras. 1-7; Health Canada, 2007, pp. 1, 6). In 2001, the CHPCA began working on the development of guidelines, based on their publication of *A Model to Guide Hospice Palliative Care Based on National Principles and Norms of Practice* (Canadian Hospice Palliative Care Association, 2009, paras. 1-7). Health Canada, in collaboration with Minister Sharon Carstairs, then formed the Secretariat on Palliative and End-of-Life Care (the Secretariat) (Health Canada, 2007, pp. 2, 6; Health Canada, 2009, paras. 1-3). From 2002 to 2007, the Secretariat, in consultation with 150 palliative and end-of-life disciplines, developed the *Canadian Strategy on Palliative and End-of-Life Care* (Health Canada, 2009, paras. 2, 4). This strategy officially recognized volunteers as integral members of the interdisciplinary hospice palliative care team. The Secretariat also proposed a framework for

hospice volunteers, which introduced standards of best practice for the delivery of quality hospice volunteer care (Health Canada, 2007, p. 6). The framework emphasized the need for educational tools and skills training, in order to help volunteers succeed as team members. These recent initiatives by the CHPCA and Health Canada have highlighted the role that hospice volunteers play as members of the hospice palliative care team.

Individuals interested in becoming hospice volunteers frequently have personal qualities and past experiences that suit them for hospice work (Claxton-Oldfield, Crain, & Claxton-Oldfield, 2007, p. 464; Jaffe & Ehrlich, 1997, p. 34; Wilson, 2000, p. 108). Hospice volunteers are often warm and caring individuals who possess good people skills (Jaffe & Ehrlich, p. 33). These are important assets, which help them in comforting hospice clients who are experiencing pain and suffering. Hospice volunteers must also be patient and flexible individuals, because they work with clients whose health status can change suddenly (Wilson, 2000, p. 108). Frequently, hospice volunteers have personally suffered the death of a loved one, and have gone through a grieving process of their own (Andersson & Ohlen, 2005, p. 604). Their own experience of loss is often what attracts them to hospice work, and also helps them to relate more empathically with their clients. Although very helpful, these personal qualities and informal learning experiences alone are not sufficient in equipping hospice volunteers adequately for the job.

Caring for the terminally ill requires that hospice volunteers engage in a wide variety of roles and support services (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2008, p. 169; Egan & Labyak, 2006, p. 37; Kemp, 1999, p. 12). These various roles and support services can include physical support, such as taking the client for a walk; practical tasks, such as running errands and shopping; social and emotional support, such as listening and spending time with the client; and spiritual support, such as reading scriptures and praying with the client. Care that hospice volunteers extend to the client's families and friends can include respite services, in which the volunteer will spend time with the client while the caregivers take time for themselves (Lattanzi-Licht, Mahoney, & Miller, 1998, p. 184; Macmillan, Peden, Hopkinson, & Hycha, 2004, pp. 2-3). Another service offered to families and friends of the client is bereavement care (Egan & Labyak, 2006, p. 37). Bereavement care offers the families and friends of the client the opportunity to deal with their loss in a safe way, by having trained hospice volunteers listen empathically and compassionately as they openly express their grief and share their feelings (Lattanzi-Licht et al., 1998, pp. 40, 228). Thus, in caring for the terminally ill, hospice volunteers serve in a wide variety of roles and services when caring for clients, their families, and their friends.

In light of the variety of roles and services that hospice volunteers deliver, initial training is necessary (Berry & Planalp, 2009, p. 462; Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2007, pp. 464-465; Health Canada, 2007, p. 6). Initial training has the direct benefit of teaching practical and psychosocial skills. Hospice associations often provide structured training courses for new volunteers (Westman Hospice Association, 2008, para. 1). These courses often run over a series of weeks, and usually cover the following types of topics: learning about what constitutes hospice and palliative care services; the role that volunteers play in hospice care; the different beliefs, misconceptions, and attitudes that exist about death and dying; effective communication skills, including empathic listening skills; physical measures to increase comfort; the signs and stages of dying; spiritual care; and dealing with grief and loss (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2007, p. 465; Westman Hospice Association, 2010, p. 4). Thus, initial training courses can equip hospice volunteers for the variety of roles and services that they deliver to their clients.

Initial volunteer training courses cannot cover everything that hospice volunteers will encounter on the job; ongoing education and support is also required, in order to address the additional issues that hospice volunteers encounter while working (Berry & Planalp, 2009, pp. 458-459). Hospice organizations can offer ongoing education and support to their volunteers in different ways. Providing opportunities for volunteers to share and reflect on their experiences with other hospice volunteers, or the volunteer coordinator, not only provides support for the volunteers' own emotional needs, but also reinforces and consolidates the informal learning that results from these experiences (Mundel & Schugurensky, 2008, pp. 56-57; Wilson, 2000, p.

108). Having reading material and video resources, which hospice volunteers can borrow for free from the hospices organization's library, is another way that hospice organizations can provide ongoing educational support (Wilson, 2000, p. 108). In addition, provincial and national hospice palliative care associations host annual conferences, which bring together professional speakers from every discipline within the hospice palliative care team (Hospice and Palliative Care Manitoba, n.d., para. 1). These conferences highlight the most current topics and issues in hospice and palliative care, and provide hospice volunteers with the opportunity to have any questions that they might have answered by leaders in the field of hospice care. By receiving ongoing education and support, hospice volunteers can learn about any additional topics and issues that are not covered during the initial volunteer training courses.

Training and educating hospice volunteers produces not only the direct benefits of teaching specific skills for the job, but also several indirect benefits to the hospice volunteer, the client, and the hospice organization (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2007, pp. 465, 467; Lattanzi-Licht et al., 1998, p. 157; Manthorpe, 2007, pp. 220-221). For example, hospice volunteers are taught communication skills and social support (Claxton-Oldfield et al., 2007, pp. 464-467; Worthington, 2008, p. 20). Gaining competence in these psychosocial skills helps volunteers to develop increased feelings of self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-efficacy in their own abilities. Increasing these attributes can also lead to enhancing the meaning and satisfaction that these individuals derive from their volunteer service (Jaffe & Ehrlich, 1997, p. 36; Manthorpe, 2007, pp. 220-221; Worthington, 2008, p. 20). In turn, these enhanced feelings can influence the quality of care that volunteers deliver to their clients. Better quality care also leaves clients and their families feeling satisfied with the care that they have received, from both the individual volunteer and the hospice organization (Worthington, 2008, p. 32). In addition, training and emotional support serve to increase the volunteers' motivation (Jaffe & Ehrlich, 1997, p. 36). Volunteers who have a sense of accomplishment and who feel valued tend to volunteer longer, which benefits the hospice organization in the long run (Hong, Morrow-Howell, Tang, & Hinterlong, 2009, pp. 202-203; Jaffe & Ehrlich, 1997, p. 36; Worthington, 2008, pp. 27-30). Thus, in addition to teaching job skills, investing in the education and training of hospice volunteers leads to indirect benefits for the volunteer, the client, and the hospice organization.

In conclusion, hospice volunteers need education and skills training to be successful in delivering their distinct hospice service. In their initiatives to develop the norms and standards of best practices for hospice volunteers, the CHPCA and Health Canada have also highlighted the value and importance of training and educating these volunteers. Personal characteristics and experiential knowledge alone are not sufficient to equip hospice volunteers for the variety of roles and services that they provide. They require initial skills training courses, as well as ongoing educational training and support. In addition to the direct benefits that are produced, educating and training hospice volunteers also results in several indirect benefits to the hospice volunteer, the client, and the hospice organization. Therefore, in order to ensure that hospice volunteers are successful in delivering their distinct hospice service, it is necessary to afford them the education and skills training that they require.

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Improving High School Literacy Programming: Necessary Changes

Angela Voutier

Abstract

Contemporary classrooms are increasingly more diverse and thus present all teachers with a wider range of literacy levels and abilities. This is a particular concern of high school subject area teachers, as they have certain expectations of students' abilities to read and comprehend course materials. This article proposes an alternate view of this range of literacy competency, based on current research on literacy theories and pedagogy.

Many teachers at the secondary school level have rigid expectations of the students who arrive at high school.³ They expect students to be able to read and identify with the curricula materials of various different disciplines; however, not all students have this ability. Nevertheless, even with the new awareness of literacy across the curriculum, the belief is widely held that individual subject area teachers, especially at the high school level, should not have to concern themselves with the literacy difficulties of students. Students who struggle to understand course materials often fall through the cracks of high school, achieve few credits, become frustrated, and drop out. For these reasons, it is clear that the ways in which literacy difficulties are dealt with at the high school level need to be re-evaluated and changes made in order to increase student achievement. This response is necessary in light of some current theoretical and pedagogical debates about literacy difficulties.

Unfortunately, under the current educational system in Manitoba, financial resources are provided to address these literacy difficulties only for students who have been assessed by a psychologist and diagnosed with a learning disability. Most of these resources are used to hire educational assistants and resource teachers who are spread too thinly to address the broader needs of more students. Additional interventions may be planned, such as remedial programs for students to receive help with assignments or instruction in perceived problem areas. Even though resource teachers prepare plans for these students and distribute lists of adaptations and accommodations to be made by subject area teachers, no professional development is provided on how to use these strategies, and little follow up is done to see whether they were used successfully. Alternatives to this model have been essentially ignored.

One such alternative is the primary prevention method outlined by Pianta (1990), who proposed that this type of programming can "strengthen the well-being of the individuals in the population as a form of inoculation against the causes of subsequent problems" (p. 306). Pianta also wrote that these interventions will not only help individuals who have the reading problem, but will also benefit the entire class. Slavin (1996) also presented evidence to suggest that these types of programs, if implemented in the early years, could help nearly all children to be successful in reading. This endorsement speaks volumes for the continuation of such programs at the high school level so that improvements will be of an enduring nature. However, the programs require financial support in the way of professional development, which is not always available. Primary prevention programs would be worth the investment, though, because they would alleviate the overload on the secondary and tertiary level, resulting in less planning and fewer required support staff.

Reconsidering the type of secondary interventions provided at the high school level is necessary, as well. This type of programming is meant to help teachers and students by reducing the degree of diversity in the classroom. The programs are usually offered in the

³ Unless otherwise specified, all information in this article is based on the author's professional experiences as a high school English teacher in a rural school division in Manitoba, Canada.

“absence of primary intervention or if the individual did not benefit from primary prevention services” (Pianta, 1990, p. 307). One such program was the Academic Development Program at Vincent Massey High School in Brandon, Manitoba, Canada, which provided programming for students identified as being “at risk” during transition meetings with sending schools. Students who are at risk of dropping out display characteristics such as “failure to read, poor attendance, or history of retention” (Pianta, 1990, p. 307). The Academic Development Program was not very successful in its attempts to increase credit completion for these students and was subsequently discontinued. One reason for its lack of success could be that the work done did not correlate closely to classroom instruction, which is a key component of secondary prevention (Pianta, 1990). Secondary intervention programs also need to be high quality and short term, which the Academic Development Program was not. The students were required to attend class regardless of whether they required help with particular skills and assignments. Care needs to be taken to ensure that secondary interventions do not become tertiary or permanent. These are the “protective factors” (Pianta, 1990, p. 311) that enable students to remove themselves from the at-risk list. The students need to be rewarded for improvements and for hard work.

Most students designated for the secondary and tertiary interventions are those who have been diagnosed prior to entering high school as having a learning disability. However, Spear-Swerling and Sternberg (1998) disputed the learning disabilities paradigm, based on their research findings that “many of the underlying-abilities tests then in use lacked validity” (p. 38). Clay (1987) also advised educators to question these diagnoses as markers of low achievement. Caution must be used when thinking from a deficit model. Teachers cannot fill in the things that the students do not know. Even if these gaps are filled, the student may still experience difficulties, which makes it appear that something is wrong with the child and may essentially teach the child to be learning disabled. An alternate model for teaching is the approach that teaches students to accept that reading is complex but necessary (Clay, 1987, pp. 162-163). In this approach, educators do not distinguish between learning disabled and low achieving readers, but provide differentiated programs for individuals from both groups.

The idea of providing primary intervention to all students in a regular classroom setting was supported by Stanovich (1986), who proposed the concept of the Matthew effects. This concept translated the biblical notion that the rich get richer and the poor get poorer into an educational assumption that good readers are surrounded by positive and enriching reading experience, while poor readers (such as those labeled learning disabled) are removed from the “environment that will be conducive to further growth in reading” (Stanovich, 1986, p. 382). Out-of-school environmental factors can make the cycle difficult for educators to break. Therefore, students must be given every opportunity in their school environment to associate with accomplished readers in a classroom setting, to be read and listen to good samples of literature, and to read and write for pleasure. They will not experience these learning opportunities in most secondary intervention situations.

One consideration of effective primary and secondary intervention programs should be the types of remedial direct instruction given to students who struggle with reading and writing. Not surprisingly, evidence offers “unequivocal support for the critical role of phonological process in learning to read” (Blachman, 2000, p. 483). However, re-teaching phonological decoding skills may not be the best option for older students who are still struggling to read. Pearson and Fielding (1991) concluded that “there may be a threshold level of linguistic functioning below which instruction fails to make any appreciable difference (p. 832). Many exceptions to spelling rules can be explained using morphological knowledge, such as the same sound spelled differently, as in “locks” and “fox.” A reciprocal relationship can develop when students are directly taught these units of meaning in words (Numes, Bryant, Pretzlik, & Hurry, 2006, p. 31). Morphological knowledge affects reading, while more successful reading experiences alert students to new morphological distinctions.

This concept has even more relevance when considering the cultural and linguistic diversity that exists within contemporary classrooms (McCollin, O'Shea, & McQuistan, 2009). Morphological knowledge benefits all students, but especially those who struggle to decode words. These students typically do not read extensively and, consequently, they do not acquire background knowledge essential for comprehending secondary-level content-area subject material" (McCollin, O'Shea, & McQuistan, 2009, p. 133). McCollin et al. (2009) suggested direct instruction in word structure and word analysis, evaluation of similarities and differences among words, study of orthographic patterns (spelling structures), affixes activities (morphological instruction), vocabulary study in context, daily oral reading, and the creation of a print-rich environment. It is important that all teachers in content areas at the high school level realize that struggling students need this type of help to integrate new information with their prior knowledge (McCollin et al., 2009, p. 135). This assistance could be accomplished with primary intervention.

In addition to supporting students in their development of word identification skills, high school teachers must help students to comprehend the challenging subject-area texts that they are required to read at this level. Because students are in a particular class does not mean that they can independently read and comprehend the course materials, and many eighth and twelfth grade students cannot "perform the higher order cognitive work required for deep learning of content through reading" (McCollin et al., 2009, p. 135). Teachers need to model and teach comprehension strategies before, during, and after reading. Asking questions and engaging students in discussion should also be used to teach and promote critical thinking skills. McCollin et al. (2009) also recommended thematic units, Web quests, meaningful and authentic writing tasks, and the use of a class Wiki space to post and discuss work. Moreover, text structure instruction for expository texts will help students to comprehend and remember key ideas from subject-area texts (Pearson & Fielding, 1991, p. 832). None of these suggestions are aimed exclusively at students experiencing literacy difficulties, but would benefit all students.

Another specific way that these comprehension strategies can be modeled and explicitly taught is through reciprocal teaching. The comprehension of all students, regardless of age and reading ability, improves when they are given opportunities to draw relationships between their background knowledge and the reading content (Pearson & Fielding, 2009, p. 84). Strategies such as predicting, comprehension monitoring, summarizing, question answering, and question generating should be explained and modeled by teachers (McCollin et al, 2009). In addition, reciprocal teaching puts the onus on the students to perform these skills.

As described by Lederer (1997), the "premise of reciprocal teaching is that students, by active discussion of text in a small group of their peers, can enhance their learning and improve their ability to comprehend text and monitoring understanding of text" (p. 92). Students are taught to assume the roles of clarifier, questioner, predictor, etc., and to alternate between them during group discussion. They also learn to teach and encourage their classmates to participate. Reciprocal teaching can serve to build consistency between elementary and secondary schools and between disciplines, as well. As students become more comfortable and proficient with conducting the discussions, comprehension will improve in all curriculum areas. Reciprocal teaching may challenge typical high school classroom structure, but it builds a more positive classroom climate wherein students feel welcome to share ideas and clarify meaning.

The practice of retention, or keeping a student from progressing to the next grade, is another issue for consideration in improving literacy rates at the high school level. High school has traditionally been seen as the venue for the proverbial "rubber to hit the road," because students need to complete assignments in order to receive credits towards graduation. Although "the existing evidence research overwhelmingly points to negative effects of retention" (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003, p. 623), 74% of Manitoban parents would like their children to be held back to repeat a grade if they have not met the requirements for promotion to the next grade (MTS Poll, 2010, p.1). The negative effects of retention are easily visible when students who are repeating

a course display negative behaviours and are less confident, less self-assured, and less engaged in the classroom. Jimerson and Kaufman (2003) outlined an “assortment of challenges” influencing low achievement, such as gender, minority status, and attendance. These out-of-school factors cannot be changed but need to be compensated by rich literacy experiences at school. The broader societal repercussions of dropping out include “higher levels of emotional distress, and more substance abuse and reckless behaviors” (Jimerson & Kaufman, 2003, p. 627). Interestingly, Manitoban parents who most strongly support retention are middle class, earning \$50,000 or more (MTS poll, 2010, p.1), so this problem does not affect only students from lower socio-economic levels.

One option to produce student achievement without retention is course restructuring with mandatory summative assessments. This initiative may require parental support and supervised time with support staff, in order to ensure that students complete the assessments. Another option is summer school to prepare students for the next level in the fall.

Retention may be more of a concern for boys at the high school level, because “boys are significantly more disengaged with schooling and more likely to be at risk of academic underachievement – especially in literacy” (Rowe, 2000, p. 2). Male students are more often diagnosed with learning disabilities and behavior problems, and engage in more undesirable societal behaviors (Rowe, 2000, p. 2). It is not really clear when the shift happened from girls being disadvantaged in the education system to boys being on the losing end. It may be that curriculum has demanded higher levels of what Rowe (2000) termed “operational literacy . . . especially verbal reasoning and written communication skills . . . – areas in which girls, on average, have distinct maturational and socialization advantages” (p. 5). One of the best predictors of student literacy is students’ attentiveness in the classroom, which is greatly influenced by gender (Rowe, 2000, p. 5).

Although inattentiveness affects literacy, literacy achievement also drastically reduces inattentive behaviors and improves educational and behavioral outcomes for boys (Rowe, 2000, p. 5). Therefore, literacy instruction is essential, with differentiated instruction to accommodate individual students’ needs. Appropriate classroom practices include highly structured instruction and specialized (such as the comprehension strategies mentioned previously) support for literacy across the curriculum facilitated by professional development for teachers, explicit criteria for presentation of work, and early diagnosis and intervention for students who struggle with literacy (Rowe, 2000, pp. 7- 9). Teachers need to be vigilant to identify students who are struggling to achieve key skills, and intervene as necessary through primary intervention strategies. As well, they must positively reinforce increased effort, improved behavior, and quality work. This positive reinforcement is important for all students, but especially for those experiencing literacy difficulties, more commonly boys.

Educators need to be aware of the implications of poor literacy skills, both in school and after students leave school to join the workforce. For some students, school is the only place that provides them with literacy education. Therefore, every class must be a literacy class with teachers working as a team, using common language and strategies that will help students to become literate, critical thinkers. Only by taking into consideration the direct instruction of the desired skills, the texts used with students, and the students’ unique characteristics and circumstances – and with the support of administration – can a literate society be achieved.

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Music Therapy: An Effective Approach to Helping

David Sinclair

Abstract

Music therapy is a unique form of psychotherapy that has a broad range of applications. Music has the advantage of being an unobtrusive instrument with communicative flexibility, reaching to clients who may not accept other forms of therapy. The transformative qualities of music are valued because a client can ascribe meaning to sounds, or thoughts to music.

Music therapy is an effective form of expressive therapy. Clients who are unable or unwilling to communicate in traditional counselling styles (such as gestalt therapy or cognitive behavior therapy) may find success with music therapy because of its communicative malleability. Music therapy addresses a client's need for self-awareness and self-expression through the nonverbal interpretation of his or her issues and feelings. Music therapy is defined as "a special type of psychotherapy where forms of musical interaction and communication are used alongside verbal communication" (Gold, Solli, Krüger, & Lie, 2009, p. 194). In addition to music therapy as a form of psychotherapy, "music therapy as an expressive intervention includes both the activities of composing or improvising and playing music, or passively listening to it" (Tobin, 2007, p. 300). This article examines the importance of music to people, the flexibility of music therapy, and considerations for its use. It demonstrates music therapy as an effective type of expressive therapy.

The Importance of Music

Music is an intrinsic part of the human experience, and people's brains are attuned to the timbres, pitches, and rhythms that music offers. For virtually all people, music has great power (Sacks, 2007, p. ix). An attraction to music is part of human nature, and going back to the beginning of the human species: it may be shaped by the culture, but it is an intrinsic force (Sacks, p. x). Music generally evokes a positive feeling (Lehmann, Sloboda, & Woody, 2007, p. 6). To conceptualize how music has potential as a form of therapy, one needs to examine the intrinsic importance of music to a developing mind.

Provided that their hearing is within normal range, babies respond positively to music. Human babies are predisposed to attend to music; babies are able to extract precise information required for perception and memory of the complex melodic and rhythmic sequences that make up music (Lehmann et al., 2007, p. 29). If babies can respond to music, they can create basic forms of music, as well. The early use of a baby's voice demonstrates his or her musical capacities: babies experiment with their voices, by playing with the elements that will later form speech, through cooing and pitch repetition (Lehmann, et al., 2007, p. 29). In response, parents will speak rhythmically with syllable emphasis, almost song like (Lehmann, et al., 2007, p. 29). It is possible that some of these music behaviors are may be biologically programmed to be useful and adaptive (Lehmann, et al., 2007, p. 6). This early positive musical relationship becomes the primary method of communication for a baby.

Because music is so important in childhood, it may be assumed that music is biologically significant. Understanding music is a universal, inherent human capacity, becoming part of what it means to be human (Lehmann et al., 2007, p. 30). Music becomes a natural method to enclose a therapy type within its framework. If music is intrinsic and defining for people, therapy in the form of music can have universal appeal and work with people's natural response mechanisms. Music's instructional qualities make it useful to help an individual who may be

suffering. Through the use of music, the client can learn how to cope, because music is instructional and it was important in his or her childhood.

When I used music to teach English to young people in the Republic of China, students who participated in singing along to songs in English learned the language faster. The rhythmic qualities are easier to remember than are ordinary speech patterns. The qualities of music, as well as its ability to teach, make music an ideal vehicle for therapy. None of the children taught could speak English initially. Once an English language song was played, the children would jump up and start dancing (trying to sing the lyrics). Although a young child's mind is more elastic and can learn faster than an adult's, music helped the students enormously as they learned the complexities of the English language. With very few exceptions, all of us can perceive music, perceive the tones, timbre, pitch intervals, melodic contours, harmony, and rhythm in music (Sacks, 2007, p. xi). Music is universal in its appeal, and very flexible in its uses.

The Flexibility of Music Therapy

Music therapy is a malleable approach to psychotherapy; it has the potential to offer a client relief from mental and physical ailments. As a form of therapy, music can be used in such situations as working with the elderly, working with people who suffer neurological disorders (such as apraxia), working to foster growth in a group counselling sessions to foster growth, working with clients who need an increased in self-awareness, and with individuals who are suffering physical pain, working to reduce pain symptoms in an individual. These are diverse areas, which establish music therapy as a malleable approach

Elderly people may lose the intensity and quality of many of their faculties, such as memory or verbal skills. Music therapy offers a conduit for the elderly to communicate and relieve their symptoms (which may be stressful). Music has been proven to reduce pain, tiredness, and drowsiness in palliative care patients (Horne-Thompson & Grocke, 2008, p. 588). For the elderly, music has the potential to reignite memories or create a sense of calm; better yet, in a quiet place such as a hospital, music can create an aural environment that is rich in comparison to the dull nature of a care facility. For patients who suffer from dementia, music therapy can enrich and enlarge their existence, and help suffering individuals to find freedom and stability (Sacks, 2007, p. 337). Music therapy can help elderly patients who are losing the quality of their mental abilities.

Neurological disorders such as apraxia are challenging to deal with. In their study of helping a three-year-old girl with apraxia, Beathard and Krout (2008) used music therapy as follows:

The music therapy treatment involved a mixture of behavioral, improvisational, and creative approaches in what has been termed a data-based music therapy approach. A variety of musical interventions, visual, and interactive aids were used, as well as an engaging, playful dialogue between child and the clinician. (p. 107)

The goal of their research was to help the girl to communicate more effectively. When the study was completed, they noted that the girl had experienced an increase in vocalization skills and cognitive recognition of the individual letters of her name (Beathard & Krout, 2006, p. 115). Music therapy is not a cure-all for neurological disorders, but it has the potential to help clients who are difficult to reach using other methods.

Group counselling dynamics can be complex, and finding a unifying force when counselling a group (if needed) can be challenging. The task of helping clients who are suffering the same illness, such as post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), can be daunting. In one study, playing instruments together (drums) as a group created a unifying force and alleviated symptoms of PTSD: group drumming was found to create feelings of openness, togetherness, sharing, closeness, connectedness and intimacy (Bensimon, Amir, & Wolf, 2008, p. 38). Without having

the sufferers of the PTSD did not speak to their symptoms; they were able to communicate and alleviate effectively through drumming. Additionally, in a separate study, music was found to have strong and significant effects on global state, level of general symptoms, negative symptoms, depression, anxiety, functioning, and musical engagement (Gold et al., 2007, p. 203). Music therapy is flexible enough for use in group counselling.

Self-awareness is understanding oneself. Many events in life can distance an individual from his or her centre. Music is universal and a part of our early upbringing; in a sense, people evolve with music. For clients to regain a lost or missing self-awareness, music therapy has great potential. Much of modern music employs lyrics, with which most people are familiar. One may imagine clients conceiving their own lyrics to represent themselves. O'Callaghan & Grocke (2009) found lyric writing to be very powerful, because "through the therapist's supportive presence and musical validation, client song writers can develop new awareness or rework troubling issues" (p. 327). If clients are asked to write a poem, it may appeal to them. It is likely, though, that creating a song may be more effective in raising the clients' self-awareness because it appeals to the intrinsic qualities of music and sound.

The use of music can be productive in treating various forms of illness or pain: "Physical ailments such as headaches, fever, dizziness etc., are shaken off through the musical exercises as a result of singing, clapping and dancing" (Adedeji, 2008, p. 150). If a client has physical illness or pain, a counsellor may suggest listening to music. Recently, I had the opportunity to play music for people who were not feeling well. I played soft music, and many of the participants reported that they felt better. The music had created a soundscape that absorbed their focus. With their focus shifted, some paid less attention to the issues related to their feelings. Music is effective in helping individuals deal with their physical or mental pain.

For music therapy to be appreciated, the flexibility of the approach needs to be understood from the clients' and counsellors' points of view. Music is an adaptive form of creativity; therefore, it becomes an adaptive form of therapy. To fully appreciate and understand the effectiveness of music therapy, other considerations need to be addressed. These other considerations are guidelines to consider when employing music therapy.

Other Considerations

The effectiveness of music therapy depends on two factors: the music style being appropriate and motivating to the client, and the administrator of the therapy being patient and understanding. In his study to determine the effectiveness of the guitar as a suitable instrument for music therapy, Krout (2007) found that "the guitar as an instrument of motivation, preference, and choice has been used a vital resource for music therapists in their clinical treatment options with clients ranging from young children to seniors" (p. 48). It is essential that the appropriate music be selected for the demographic of the client. For example, it is unlikely that an octogenarian would respond favorably to a clinician suggesting hip hop songwriting. Though this example seems obvious and unusual, it does distil the point that the client should be properly acknowledged during the therapy.

Though music is universal in many ways, its appeal can waiver if it is introduced incorrectly. A counsellor needs to maintain an open mind, and regard the client as a participant. The counsellor should not bias the approach to suit his or her own taste in music. It is important that the client feels comfortable in order for music therapy to reach its potential in helping and healing. Therefore, patience and understanding, in addition to choosing the appropriate music, are essential factors to consider when implementing music therapy.

Conclusion

Music has a universal appeal; therefore, for most clients there is something in it that they can grasp. Clients may perceive the innate intrinsic quality, or simply the aural sensation that

may relieve them from their issues. Music therapy also has the advantage of being unobtrusive, as long as the client has a say in the type of music used, and the therapist is careful with the approach. The flexibility of sound makes it endearing to most people. Music therapy belongs in a counsellor's repertoire; accordingly, "music in one sense 'belongs to' medicine as an adjunct resource in healing" (Evans, 2007, p. 143). Music therapy is uniquely flexible in its use and adaptive in its application. Because music is a part of almost everyone's life, it can create a comfortable and enriching environment for a client to receive help within the protective setting of a counsellor's or therapist's office. Music translates feelings into sounds, poetry into song, and passivity into action. Music therapy is effective and should be a part of any therapist's approach.

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New Teacher Induction Programs: A Rural Perspective

Lynda Matchullis

Abstract

The geographic and professional isolation that can drive new teachers out of the profession is especially pronounced in rural school divisions and must be overcome with quality induction programs. Induction has evolved beyond simply socializing teachers into a multifaceted approach that addresses their developmental learning needs. Programs must provide mentorship, professional development, and networking, in order to help novices survive their first three years in the classroom and begin to thrive as skilled teachers. In a rural division, these components are best delivered using a blended approach of face-to-face meetings and distance technologies.

The first stage of a new teacher's career has been characterized as a "sink or swim" period when many individuals choose to leave the profession, particularly those in rural placements (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 4). In order to retain new teachers, small rural school divisions must design quality induction programs that indoctrinate novice teachers into the norms of their profession, within the context of their rural situations. Induction programs use teacher socialization to address the challenges of teacher isolation and skill development. This approach improves job satisfaction and new teacher retention. In order to be effective, induction programs must be multifaceted and be the joint responsibility of several individuals in the division. External support networks are particularly difficult to maintain in rural school divisions, which have fewer human resources that are spread over greater distances. The use of distance technologies is required to meet the needs of new teachers in rural divisions and the goals of quality induction programs.

New Teachers' Challenges and Contributions

While pre-service training can prepare new teachers for the act of teaching, it cannot be used to predict the context of their first assignments or the feelings of isolation that they may experience as a result (Bartell, 2005, p. 12). Experienced teachers put student learning first, but novice teachers are more concerned with their personal survival and their own performance (Bartell, 2005, p. 30). Novices in other professions, such as medicine and law, are required to participate in a training sequence before they are fully recognized as professionals (Bartell, 2005, p. 3). In school cultures, there is little understanding that new teachers require descriptive feedback from their colleagues and that they, in turn, can reciprocate by sharing. New teachers need collegial interaction to overcome their feelings of isolation. Although new teachers are expected to move into their first teaching assignments assuming all the responsibilities of the profession, induction program planners must recognize that novice teachers have unique developmental and isolation challenges that are often not addressed by existing school cultures.

The initial period of teaching is called the career entry stage, which has been described as a developmental period of survival and discovery (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 2; Bartell, 2005, p. 32). Initially, new teachers concentrate on surviving a variety of challenges in the areas of classroom management, reporting to parents, long-term planning, and communicating with administration (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009, p. 817). As they become more comfortable meeting those challenges, new teachers begin to focus on identifying students' specific needs and selecting the best instructional methods for their students (Bartell, 2005, p. 22). Working with special needs students and with English-as-a-Second-Language learners are perceived as specific stressors (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009, p. 817). Networking new teachers with other

teachers, in particular working with mentors, can help to minimize the novices' feelings of isolation and provide focused observation of their skills. If successful at the career entry stage, teachers move into a period of stabilization when their commitment to students grows alongside their instructional mastery (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 2). A successful transition may also depend on the age of the teacher, as younger teachers are more comfortable with learning from their mistakes than are those individuals who have come into the profession later in life (Irinaga-Bistolas, Schalock, Marvin, & Beck, 2007, p. 21; Heller, 2004, p. 39). The period of survival and discovery that is experienced by new teachers can last from one to three years (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 4; Bartell, 2005, p. 5).

Teacher growth is not only developmental, but also contextual (Bartell, 2005, p. 31; Herrington, Herrington, Kervin, & Ferry, 2006, p. 120). All teachers must consider the contexts of their classroom, their school, and their community. New teachers often are assigned classes with the most academically demanding students, the most taxing classroom management situations, and the largest student numbers (Heller, 2004, p. 38; Bartell, 2005, p. 3). It is not surprising that student behavior issues may arise (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009, p. 817). Novice teachers also find that needed resources often are considered the property of veteran teachers (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 7). In terms of workload and resources, veteran teachers feel that they have earned certain privileges even when exercising those privileges puts new teachers at risk. New teachers may feel socially isolated, without influence to make decisions that affect the school community; unable to identify the problems that they face; and reluctant to seek help (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 4; Bartell, 2005, p. 30). Isolation can be magnified in a small rural school wherein there are few teachers for collaboration, there is generally only one teacher per grade or subject area, or mixed-grade classrooms are common (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 3; Harris, Holdman, Clark, & Harris, 2005, p. 23). It is difficult to find a mentor at the same grade level or in the same subject area with whom to confer a daily basis (Harris et al., 2005, p. 30). The challenges faced by new teachers must be contextualized.

In order to overcome feelings of isolation, teachers must be networked with each other. The idea that new teachers must simply survive and discover during their initial years is evolving with the new recognition that teachers also need to develop as professionals in a supportive school culture that acknowledges the contributions that they can make. New teachers must put theory into practice in order to survive, thus discovering the management techniques and instructional strategies that they will use over a lifetime of teaching (Bartell, 2005, p. 30). They must also learn how to be lifelong learners, reflective practitioners, and change agents (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 8). Along with new knowledge, novice teachers can share twenty-first century attitudes and current technological skills with their colleagues (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 4; Heller, 2004, p. 39). The career entry period of survival, discovery, and professional growth is better described as an induction period, and should be treated as such by implementation of induction programs.

Role of Induction Programs

Initially, induction programs were thought to be the bridge between pre-service training and present practice, designed to retain teachers, but these programs have evolved into a socialization role (Bartell, 2005, p. 23; Fry, 2006, p. 2; Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 3). Teaching has high attrition rates, with 40% to 50% of new American teachers leaving the profession in the first five years (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 1; Heller, 2004, p. 50). The rural American situation is even worse, as 50% of rural teachers will leave their first job at the end of the first year in comparison with 20% of urban teachers (Harris et al., 2005, p. 29). Isolation is thought to be a contributor to these attrition rates (Fry, 2006, p. 2). Although induction programs have had little influence on changing teacher assignments, they do help to retain teachers by enabling those individuals to network (Bartell, 2005, p. 18). When surveyed, rural teachers indicate that they want an opportunity to work with others who teach the same subject or the same grade level

(Heller, 2004, p. 56). If teachers are likely to leave the profession during the career entry stage, more emphasis must be placed on skill development through socialization, so that new teachers learn the norms of their organization and experience increased job satisfaction.

Over the last 30 years, induction programs in the United States have gone through developmental waves that focused on aspects of teacher socialization (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, pp. 2-3). In the early 1980s, the first induction programs were based on unfunded, informal mentorships between teachers. With each new wave of political interest and funding, induction programs gradually added components such as educative mentorships, professional development, and formative assessment of teaching skills. The teacher was the focus of these programs, which were carefully designed to be developmentally appropriate and individualized (Bartell, 2005, p. 68). An increased focus on teacher accountability for student learning has emerged in the latest wave of programming, and that concentration is reflected in Canada with the New Teacher Induction Program introduced in Ontario in 2005 (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 5; Fantill & McDougall, 2009, p. 815). Teachers need to examine the diversity of their student populations and differentiate their instructional techniques. Approximately 43% of student achievement is linked to teacher qualifications, including the education levels and experiences of teachers (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 16). Such experiences were once left to chance, but are now carefully designed to provide new teachers with the same opportunities as other professionals to have a “phased introduction to the responsibilities of the profession” (Bartell, 2005, p. 23). It is no longer good enough to socialize teachers without consideration for what they are learning; the quality of their shared experiences must be carefully planned and connected to student learning.

Effective Induction Programs in Rural Settings

Effective induction programs, regardless of where or how they are delivered, are multifaceted and must be viewed as the collective responsibility of all members of the school division (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 6). School boards, unions, and school staff must have a shared vision of good teaching and value the culture that nurtures new teachers (Cherian & Daniel, 2008, p. 9; Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 5). Divisional leadership needs to establish clear goals, standards, timelines, and evaluation practices for the induction program (Bartell, 2005, p. 48). A divisional team needs to network new teachers and deliver professional development that is developmentally appropriate (Bartell, 2005, p. 68). Networking is key to overcoming the isolation that many novice teachers experience (Fry, 2006, p. 2). Existing personnel must also be trained in educative mentorship practices and focused observation, so that new teachers can be teamed with mentors (Heller, 2004, p. 82). Principals need to schedule time for collaboration between new teachers and their mentors, as well as with themselves (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 11). They can use that time to model how to set goals and when to reflect on practice (Heller, 2004, p. 74). Principals and other staff members must set a tone in the school that supports induction programs.

Delivering the key components of quality induction programs is difficult when there are few new teachers and inadequate human resources, as is often the case in rural school divisions (Harris et al., 2005, p. 31). Under such conditions, the regional induction program “Project Launch” began in North Dakota during the late 1990s (Harris et al., 2005, pp. 30-31). Project Launch trained new teachers in setting goals using a predetermined framework, provided 25 hours of one-to-one mentoring, and delivered four day-long conferences for new teacher groups. Rural teachers in Project Launch set goals focused on classroom management and content development, rather than collaboration. Attempts were made to foster collaboration by combining two elementary classes for joint projects, and by encouraging both mentors and mentees to attend resource meetings about the new teacher’s students. Principals must support such networking practices, even when they are difficult to administer in rural schools. The key recommendation from Project Launch was that principals attend the introductory induction

meeting and all subsequent meetings whenever possible (Harris et al., 2005, p. 30). Effective induction programs can occur in rural school divisions when administrators and school boards are committed to find new solutions to the challenges.

Networking and professional development can be delivered electronically, as outlined in the following study. The Technology Support Induction Network (TSIN) was developed to support student teachers during practicum training in southeastern Wyoming by providing email and telephone contact, an online discussion board, and compressed video professional development sessions (Fry, 2006). Networking was accomplished through the discussion board, which facilitated asynchronous usage by preserving messages for participants to view and to comment on at a later time. Although the teachers did not prioritize going to the discussion board during the regular school day, they did find time after school to post comments that were reflective in nature. Fry (2006) recommended adding the ability to share documents, having teachers provide the prompting questions for discussion boards, and regularly scheduling live chats to encourage more networking. The compressed video sessions in TSIN were used to deliver five 90-minute professional development sessions, which participants found valuable. Fry (2006) also recommended that teachers be given a practice session in order to increase their competency with the technology, and that face-to-face professional development sessions also be part of the program. Using electronic tools enables school divisions to deliver more complex induction programs.

One rural Manitoba school division has begun to use a variety of distance technologies to network teachers and to provide professional development (C. Cuddy, personal communication, March 15, 2010). A new teacher in this rural school in the division participated in a four-month book study with her novice colleagues, using Elluminate. That web-conferencing technology facilitates collaboration over the Internet by enabling the users to hold virtual meetings (Hanson, 2009, para. 4). When the study finished, the new teacher expressed comfort with using that delivery method and a desire to move on to new tools such as blogs. In another example in the spring of 2010, mathematics teachers in the division scheduled an hour-long Elluminate session with a provincial consultant in order to discuss a particular statistics project in the new curriculum for grade 9 mathematics. This session enabled individuals from 28 rural schools to interact with the consultant in Winnipeg, without having to leave their buildings. The teachers also have requested the use of a blog to continue their discussions about setting learning targets and selecting assessment tasks. Finally, when teacher professional learning groups are successful in applying for professional practice funding, they are given an Elluminate link to the World Wide Web in order to facilitate discussion between teachers in different buildings. External support networks are growing in rural school divisions through the use of distance technology.

Rural school divisions should use a blend of face-to-face meetings and distance technologies to keep their induction programs effective. Divisions may have to look to a variety of external support networks that link teachers in different buildings (Schuck, 2003, p. 51). Networking between new teachers and their mentors can be done at in-school meetings or through visitations. It can also be supplemented by use of external email, phone calls, and electronic mailing lists (Irinaga-Bistolas et al., 2007, p. 21). When new teachers go to professional electronic mailing lists, they connect with other novice teachers and gain access to good ideas (Wood & Stanulis, 2009, p. 163). This process is called "telementoring," and it helps teachers to get feedback when they are not teaching (Heider, 2005, "Reducing Teacher Isolation," para. 1). Novice teachers may prefer viewing instead of participating, due to the intensity of some discussions (Schuck, 2003, p. 60). Successful induction programs provide a variety of ways for new teachers to communicate with other teachers, including communicating via distance technologies.

The use of distance technologies is a fiscally responsible approach to professional development. Training can occur at scheduled meetings, but it is also accomplished through the use of video conferencing or webcasts. The Ontario Teachers' Federation offers a website with

online professional development services for new teachers, called *Survive and Thrive Virtual Conference for Beginning Teachers* (Herrington et al., 2006, p. 122). It is cost effective to use online tools, as travel costs disappear and substitute teacher costs are minimized (Wormeli, 2003, p. 166). Use of distance technologies means that rural induction programs can be multifaceted, involving a number of professional staff members throughout the school divisions.

Conclusion

Rural school divisions must develop induction programs that network teachers via in-person meetings and distance technologies, in order to combat the feelings of isolation that can drive novice teachers out of the profession (Harris et al, 2005, p. 23). Upon entering their careers, new teachers go through a period of survival and discovery influenced by the context of their rural schools. Over a three-year period, effective induction programs move teachers past their survival stage to a sustained use of expert skills and a greater focus on individual student needs (Bartell, 2005, p. 15). These programs provide mentorship, networking, and professional development, which help novice teachers “in moving from being students of teaching to quality teachers of students” (Achinstein & Athanases, 2006, p. 2). External support networks use distance technologies to link teachers on a regular basis. The challenges of shrinking enrolments over large geographic areas highlight the importance of using distance technologies for program delivery, especially when the alternative may be no induction program at all (Fry, 2006, p. 7). Quality induction programs help to retain new teachers in rural areas, and guide those novices to mastery in the art and craft of teaching.

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Shared Leadership: A Shift in Thinking

Krista Curry

Abstract

In a time when educators are questioning whether they have the energy to embark on a leadership journey, a different way of thinking about leadership is needed. Shared leadership demonstrates a shift in thinking. Shared leadership leads schools and divisions to function with multiple leaders by accessing, at differing times, individual strengths and talents. Although definite barriers to this model exist, a level of synergy can be experienced when shared leadership is successfully implemented. By investigating this new approach, we may improve our ability to attract educational leaders.

The definition of *leadership*, a term that has existed in education for years, has evolved and changed as society has, and leaders have evolved to rise and meet societal expectations. The role of educational leader has become more complex, demanding, and stressful. This challenging role lacks appeal for many educators and, as a result, educational leadership is once again being re-examined. Shared leadership has surfaced with the potential to broaden our perspective beyond the current practice of one leader and several followers. The days of one-person leadership are over, as it leaves the talents of teachers relatively untouched and school improvement relatively unstable (Lambert, 2002, p. 37). Shared leadership has distinctive characteristics, specific roles for principals and teachers, advantages, and definite barriers, all of which need to be examined if school principals wish to implement shared leadership as their practice.

As much as educators have tried, they have failed to establish a model of shared leadership that can be spread across many different schools (Lindahl, 2008, p. 298). Leadership today needs to initiate strategies for encouraging leadership from all members of a school community, regardless of their position (Frost, 2008, p. 342). A roadblock is the lack of differentiation between the concepts of leadership and administration. Leadership involves leading people, whereas administration involves managing things (Lindahl, 2008, p. 300). Shared leadership offers the opportunity to lead people in more ways than simply sharing administrative duties that teachers see as unsatisfying. It takes teachers beyond their classroom doors and transfers leadership roles from an individual to a school. In shared leadership, individuals are committed to improved student learning through participatory decision-making (Margolis, 2008, p. 294). In order to be sustainable, shared leadership is not to be looked at as another practice, but rather a new way of conceptualizing current leadership.

At first glance, some may view shared leadership as another form of teacher collaboration. Shared leadership, however, is more than just collaboration, as it focuses on the results from an activity and not on the label given to the activity (Harris, 2004, p. 15). For example, a study group of high school math teachers collaborate, ask reflective questions, and challenge their teaching practices in grade nine mathematics. As a result, new lessons are developed and the scores of the students improve. Shared leadership is identified as the result of the action, the increased scores, not the practice of the study group (Spillane, 2009, p. 209). Shared leadership is concerned with professional knowledge, but is more concerned with teachers' roles in the creation of that knowledge, and in its transfer to other educators and students alike (Frost, 2008, p. 345). The core of shared leadership involves educators being responsible for the learning of their colleagues, more than collaborating with each other.

Shared leadership has been identified as a practice of collective leadership, wherein teachers develop expertise by working together. Shared leadership focuses on engaging expertise wherever it exists within an organization, rather than looking only to the people holding formal positions (Harris, 2004, p. 13). The breadth of participation does not automatically result

in an increased level of student achievement. It is not a scenario that has everyone in the school sharing responsibility for leading. Shared leadership involves all individuals leading, at one time or another, when their level of expertise is required. Shared leadership occurs when ownership is encouraged, sharing occurs, and learning is essential (Doyle & Smith, 2009, para. 17). In summary, shared leadership involves spreading the leadership function among many people, thereby accomplishing tasks through the interactions of multiple leaders.

The principal has been the sole leader in schools for decades. Only if a school warranted a vice principal would there be shared leadership. In contrast, within a model of shared leadership, the principal must be prepared “to relinquish power to others” (Harris, 2005, p. 260). The ability to share leadership power rests in the principal’s belief that engaging in shared leadership will result in sustainable school improvement. The principal must believe that teacher leaders, not just the principal, are also the drivers of change and catalysts for important work (Harris & Townsend, 2007, p. 171). There is no pay scale built in for teachers; therefore, the principal needs to encourage teacher leaders and then be creative in how teacher innovation will be rewarded. A principal engaged in shared leadership must bear in mind the learners’ views, but at the same time challenge them (Lambert, 2003, p. 2). Shared leadership involves questioning the actions of teachers through reflective inquiry and dialogue. It is imperative that, prior to engaging in this type of activity, a principal builds trust among colleagues, fosters self-esteem in teachers, enhances personal professional competence, and gives staff responsibilities beyond those of teaching (Harris, 2004, pp. 16-17). Only when collegiality has been built can sharing leadership flourish among those beyond the office doors.

In shared leadership, it is a priority that the school principal be the primary person to articulate the vision so that staff members work towards a common goal. The principal, while working with members of the school community, must construct the shared vision (Lambert, 2002, p. 40). This vision development is done by facilitating conversations, by keeping the focus on student learning, by modeling collaboration, and by posing questions that facilitate reflective dialogue. The early stages of shared leadership will require that the principal supports the teachers emotionally and guide them to embrace this new way of working together (Margolis, 2008, p. 298). Research indicates that successful leaders are those who lead both the cognitive and affective lives of the school by developing clear goals, by building alliances, and by improving teachers professional development (Harris, 2004, p. 16). These are gradual changes in principal leadership, which take time and work to achieve. Positive promotion and encouragement of shared leadership are conducive to a mutual understanding of the role of the principal.

The success of shared leadership also relies on building leadership capacity in teachers. For leadership capacity to increase, teachers must believe that all members of the faculty have unique information to share, and be willing to contribute enthusiastically (Maznevski, 1994, p. 535). During reflective conversations, when current teaching practice is being challenged, teachers must have both high morale and a tolerance for conflict while working towards the betterment of student learning. Professional development should be led by inspiring leaders, as they are able to make theory come alive in practice. They can show current examples of student work, and they know the reality of how things work in the classroom (Margolis, 2008, p. 299). Teachers have classroom credibility for offering professional development to their colleagues, which the principal lacks. Although the principal articulates the vision, it is the teachers who assist in developing it, by bringing it to life in their classrooms and by providing ongoing assessment throughout its implementation (Lindahl, 2008, p. 304). Teachers are growing and contributing to shared leadership when they increase their involvement in school-based decision making, improve student learning, organize and lead in-services, and mentor other teachers.

Several positive factors are associated with leading through a shared leadership model. Once effectively introduced, a school under shared leadership has lower resistance to change, more teacher control over the work place, greater self-efficacy, and greater readiness to promote the common school goals (Addi-Raccah, 2009, p. 162). Schools are often places

where teachers work in isolation, with little conversation about the happenings in their classrooms. Teachers who believe that their school is led by a cooperative leadership team, characterized by group cohesion, are more committed to working together towards their school goals (Hulpia, Devos, & Van Keer, 2010, p. 46). In a shared leadership model, teachers who believe they have a voice in decision making also feel more connected to their administrator, and less professional apathy (Heller, 1993, p. 96).

The greatest benefit of shared leadership in education is the likely improvement of student outcomes, as teachers become empowered in areas of importance to them (Harris, 2004, pp. 14-15). This improvement occurs as a result of teachers' listening and contributing as a collaborative group. The actions are spearheaded because of the rightness of what is being said. As leadership capacity grows, so does the importance of student leadership in the school, which leads to greater student achievement. Once that leadership capacity in a school has been built, a point may come when there is a willingness to lead without a principal (Lambert, 2006, p. 251). Other positive side-effects in schools that lead through shared leadership are the increased level of teacher confidence, built-in professional development through collaboration, and less vulnerability to organizational change. These benefits encourage the teachers to continually reflect on their teaching practice in order to enhance student learning.

Shared leadership, however, is not without barriers. Changing tradition always comes with struggle. Educational leadership has traditional hierarchies with positions and pay scales that are not instantly responsive to a more fluid approach. There are inherent threats to status as well as to the status quo (Harris, 2005, p. 260). A principal may feel vulnerable and experience a loss of control after distributing leadership tasks. If shared leadership is misconstrued as delegation, it will not work, so a principal must think carefully about what tasks will be selected and to whom they will be delegated. Teacher relationships may be affected, as teacher leaders may feel disrespected and disregarded. Others may become resentful as significant challenges to teaching practice take place (Timperley, 2005, p. 412). In the early stages, shared leadership may involve smaller groups of leaders who come across as trying to represent the whole and, as a result, skepticism may creep into the thoughts of those not involved (Kirby, Wimpelberg, & Keaster, 1992, p. 92). A major pitfall to shared leadership is the time that it takes to involve more teachers. Dedicated time to ensure that reflective conversations occur is difficult to find. For success to be encountered, shared leadership has implications that must be overcome.

There are a few specific ideas for a principal to consider when implementing shared leadership. Principals need to begin by involving others in some shared decision making with regards to budget and policy items in the school (Harris, 2004, p. 18). They should look for teachers who naturally build skills and confidence in others, nurture a culture of success, and have follow through. Selected teachers could be allocated important tasks and leadership responsibilities rotated among them, possibly through study groups, vertical learning communities, or leadership teams. There are three ways to view shared leadership implementation: division of labor, whereby jobs are split to achieve a goal; co-performance, whereby individuals work together to achieve a goal; and parallel performance, whereby colleagues work alongside each other to achieve a goal (Lindahl, 2008, p. 302). Each method is chosen based on the needs of the school, and more than one arrangement may occur at any given time. Factors to consider when determining which arrangement may work in a school include the school culture and setting, and staff ages, motivation, morale, and turnover. Shared leadership should not be implemented when many other initiatives are underway, as it requires a significant amount of dedicated energy (Kirby et al., 1992, p. 95). Careful consideration is important when implementing shared leadership, in order to see its full benefit.

Research on shared leadership, and on its effect on student learning, is relatively sparse. More research is needed into approaches, models, and forms of practice wherein shared leadership can flourish (Harris, 2005, p. 262). It is important that school leaders work at developing a support group of critical friends to assist in the maintenance of energy, and to maintain enthusiasm throughout the implementation. Although a shared leadership model may

be effective in rural schools with small staff numbers, little research has been done in that venue. A beginning step to working towards shared leadership is to educate staff on what good conversation is, in order to develop “ways of being” in communication, including silence, which allows action answers to surface (Doyle & Smith, 2009, para. 34). Shared leadership is an emerging concept that needs to continue to evolve, with research coming from schools currently engaged in its practice.

Shared leadership is not easy, nor is it prescribed. It takes courage and work on a daily basis, but in the end it is very rewarding. Leadership is the professional work of everyone in a school, and shared leadership is the vehicle to building a culture wherein all members of an organization are expected to lead at an appropriate point. When people work efficiently together in authentic relationships, focused on a shared purpose, they create synergy (Lambert, 2003, p. 76). Synergy regenerates people instead of draining them. Synergy arises from conversations that are collegial in nature and in the resulting actions. Educational leaders today are in highly stressful and demanding positions, and are looking for renewed energy. The notion of shared leadership suggests that principals think differently about their leadership. It suggests that they extend the leadership function over multiple people, in order to create synergy to build sustainable school improvement and to empower others. Shared leadership demonstrates a shift in thinking about leadership, which ultimately makes a principal’s position more appealing and effective.

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Social Skills Training: Is It Essential for Students With Learning Disabilities?

Lindsay Boulanger

Abstract

In our inclusive schools, teachers work with many children who have learning differences such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and learning disabilities. For most children with special learning needs such as these, educators focus on helping them to achieve academic skills. However, educators are finding that delays in social skills negatively affect students' abilities to reach their academic potential. Social skills training should have equal priority with academics, because without suitable social relationships, children cannot focus on the educational goals designed for them.

In today's inclusive educational system, teachers work with increasing numbers of children who have unique learning needs. Although teachers may teach only a few children with a specific, low-incidence disability, such as cerebral palsy or Down syndrome, they will probably work with many students who have learning differences such as attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and various learning disabilities. For most children with high-incidence disorders such as ADHD and learning disabilities, the focus is on determining their learning needs and finding appropriate teaching methods. Academics seem to be the top priority in most cases. However, these children also have major issues with social skills and behaviour, and these issues negatively affect their ability to reach their academic potential. As a result, researchers wonder whether social skills training should be essential components of education plans for students with learning disabilities.

Theoretical Background

A primary need of all humans is to be liked and accepted by other human beings (Lavoie, 2005, para. 13; Mather & Goldstein, 2001, p. 125). Numerous human development models, such as Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs (as cited in Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009, p. 15), suggest that in order for children to meet needs such as self-actualization, their needs such as hunger, safety and belonging, must first be met. Based on these premises, it makes sense to believe that most social skills errors are unintentional (Lavoie, 2005, para. 13.) One wonders why children would act in a way that would deliberately cause others to dislike or reject them (Lavoie, para. 13). For students to attain success in academic areas, they must first succeed in social-emotional areas.

A Review of Learning Disabilities Research

In the early 1970s, researchers began to analyze the social-emotional component of learning disabilities (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 31). Since social skills deficits can adversely affect the students' social domain as well as their academic competence, researchers became more concerned about the effects of these deficits on children's overall development (Kavale & Mostert; Maag, 2005, p. 155). Investigating social skills deficits became even more of an issue when studies determined that a significantly higher proportion of children with learning disabilities exhibit social skills deficits, as compared to their non-learning disabled peers (Bauminger, Edelsztein, & Morash, 2005, p. 56; Gadeyne, Ghesqui re, & Onghena, 2004, p. 510; Kavale & Mostert). Social skills intervention programs were seen as necessary to help students develop the skills needed to ensure academic and vocational success, as well as long-term social acceptance and participation (Gumpel, 2007, p. 351; Lopes, 2005, p. 349; Miranda,

Soriano, Fernández, & Meliá, 2008, p. 171). However, in many cases, teaching these social skills seems to be last on the list of educational goals (Kavale & Mostert, p. 37; Lopes, p. 354). Students are not receiving adequate social skills training to be successful in this area of their development.

Different learning disabilities can affect different aspects of a student's learning: reading and language, math and spatial reasoning, and memory and organizational abilities (Kemp, Segal, & Cutter, 2009, paras. 17-28; Mather & Goldstein, 2001, pp. 36-37). They can also affect a variety of social abilities: social competence, social cognition, social behaviour, peer status, self-concept, interpersonal skills, social adjustment, anxiety, and communication (Bauminger et al., 2005, p. 45; Kemp et al., para. 29; Miranda et al., 2008, pp. 171-172). The cognitive and social effects vary by individual and by learning disability. Students diagnosed as having learning disabilities later in their school career tend to have increased social, emotional and behavioural problems (Lopes, 2005, pp. 353-354; Mather & Goldstein, 2001, p. 39). There seems to be no one correct way to help support children in learning positive social skills. Students require programs that take into consideration the individual effects of their learning disabilities.

While many children with learning disabilities do not receive an official diagnosis until later in their school years, their inadequate social skills can often be identified in their first years of formal education (Kalyva & Agaliotis, 2009, p. 193). These children miss their peers' social cues and they may not use appropriate actions when initiating social contacts. Their abilities to cooperate with peers, establish positive relationships, and maintain peer relationships are significantly lower than those of their typically developing peers. Because early years teachers spend many hours teaching and reinforcing basic social rules, many children with learning disabilities may be working on these skills throughout their day, without any specific programming. However, their learning disabilities may hamper their ability to understand and use these social skills appropriately (Gumpel, 2007, p. 370). As well, middle years teachers tend to reduce the time that they spend reinforcing social skills, and children who do not easily acquire these skills may be left floundering. It is important for teachers to initiate social skills programs as soon as they notice that children are not interacting with their peers in a typical way, as the problems may become so serious that they are difficult to rectify (Lopes, 2005, p. 356). Moreover, these social skills training programs may need to continue well into the students' adolescent years because they must learn new social skills rules and competencies as they mature.

A Review of Social Skills Intervention Programs

Social skills impairments are more noticeable at school than at home because children interact with more children and adults at school than in their home environment. Consequently, schools generally take on the primary responsibility of implementing social skills training programs (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 32). At school, students with learning disabilities are surrounded by their peers and by trained educators who can teach social skills properly. Social skills teaching can also be implemented with their academic programming, in order to increase the amount of time spent on social skills instruction.

Various programs are available to provide social skills training for children with learning disabilities who are experiencing social problems. Some programs focus more on the speech and language component of social skills acquisition, while others focus more on nonverbal skills such as reading facial expressions and social cues (Bauminger, Edelsztein, & Morash, 2005, pp. 56-57; Lavoie, 2005, paras. 40-47; Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 32). Some programs work with a number of students at the same time, while others have an adult working one to one with the child who needs extra support (Lavoie, 2005, para. 49; Kalyva & Agaliotis, 2009, p. 193; Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 32). A number of practices, such as social stories that are commonly used with children with autism spectrum disorder, are now being used with children with learning disabilities (Kalyva & Agaliotis, 2009, p. 193; Lavoie, 2005, para. 46). Intervention

programs may focus on teaching new social skills that replace specific, inadequate behaviours (Lavoie, paras. 25-26). Therefore, instead of teaching just new social strategies, educators must also teach which strategies are not successful, so that the children no longer use them (Maag, 2005, p. 165). In order for social skills intervention programs to be successful, they must focus on the students' individual needs, which can vary greatly with specific learning disabilities and other personal differences (Maag, p. 164). There is no "one size fits all" program for teaching social skills.

A major focus of current research is to determine which social skills intervention programs are most successful in meeting students' social-emotional needs. A concern for many researchers is the lack of success that prior social skills training programs have had (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 37; Maag, 2005, p. 156). Despite initial social skills gains, certain intervention programs are inadequate because children do not maintain the skills over the long term (Kavale & Mostert, p. 41; Lavoie, 2005, para. 16; Maag, p. 165). The potential reasons for this lack of success could be the training programs themselves, the intensity of the programs, the assessment devices used to measure effectiveness, and the conceptual design of the programs (Kavale & Mostert, pp. 37-38; Maag, pp. 163-164). There also needs to be more coordination between academic remediation and social skills training programs (Kavale & Mostert, p. 41; Maag, p. 169). Social skills programs require time and attention to be successful. We must not discard them in an attempt to find more time for specific academic pursuits.

Social Skills Training is an Essential Component

Based on the research surrounding social skills deficits and students with learning disabilities, it seems clear that social skills training programs are essential components of comprehensive education programs (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 37; Maag, 2005, p. 168). These programs must be developed to meet not only the students' academic needs, but their social-emotional needs as well. Because certain learning disabilities are not detected until later in a child's school years these programs should be put into place as soon as social skills deficits are noticed (Lopes, 2005, p. 356), whether the children are diagnosed with a learning disability or not. Successful intervention programs should be developed to meet children's specific learning and social needs, and be implemented in a consistent, ongoing manner (Kalyva & Agaliotis, 2009, p. 201; Maag, p. 168). This instruction may take a number of years, at varying levels of intensity, depending on the students' current social needs. Effective programs should also include varying degrees of practice, immediate feedback, instruction, and positive reinforcement (Lavoie, 2005, para. 20). Well-designed and properly implemented programs will ensure the continued use of new social skills, as well as increase the generalization of previously learned skills into different social situations.

Conclusion

During the last three decades, social skills deficits have become a primary source of remediation in children with learning disabilities (Kavale & Mostert, 2004, p. 32; Maag, 2005, p. 156). Schools have used social skills training programs to teach the social skills necessary for these children to be successful in their daily lives. Many children with learning disabilities require the extra support provided by social skills intervention programs, but what is not clear is which programs actually work and why. Nevertheless, teaching social skills should have equal priority with academics, because without peer relationships and social connections, children are often not able to focus on learning the curricular goals set out for them (Lavoie, 2005, para. 13; Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2009, p. 15). Future research needs to focus on determining which programs are most successful for the specific sub-types of learning disabilities and how to facilitate the long-term use of intervention strategies within a student's education plan. Pro-social skills are essential for the overall development of our students, and

educators must ensure that students receive the training required to ensure the healthy development of this vital domain.

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OPINION PAPERS

Classrooms: Meaningful Microcosms

Jennifer Borgfjord

Have you ever worked in an environment with co-workers who were all the same age as you? Is that environment quiet and orderly? Are all the areas of your job broken down into separate sections? Chances are, in today's world, the one answer to these questions is "no." However, most schools continue to organize classrooms into single-grade structures wherein quiet orderliness is expected, and different teachers deliver curricula as separate units. In my opinion, deeper and more meaningful learning experiences occur in multi-level classrooms. The very nature of these environments mirrors real-life experiences and better prepares youth for life beyond school. These microcosmic communities epitomize our much larger world.

My experiences of teaching in a multi-level learning community have been the richest, most rewarding, and challenging of my career. I learned to teach children, not subjects. I made my biggest mistakes and experienced my greatest successes during this time, which contributed to my growth as an educator and the development of strong beliefs in the power of teaching and learning in a combined grade setting. There were many benefits for teaching and learning, and the development of citizenship. My growth as a teacher was exponential during this time.

The benefits for teaching and learning were many for both teacher and students. I could see the learning over the years in the behaviour of the children as well as on paper in portfolios and assessment binders. The students and I created a continuum of learning, whereby the focus was on the learner. We carried projects and learning targets into following years, which led to deeper and more meaningful learning. Significant gains in language and reading were achieved primarily because most activities were student centred and subject integrated. These experiences fostered the students' growth of independence and allowed them to construct their own meaning of concepts. Furthermore, I found ways to promote learning when primary methods of instruction failed. I would be working with the same children in subsequent years, so I had to rethink my instruction. Instruction and assessment were relevant to the needs of students, not to the demands of curricula. Another epiphany for me was that all of the children were special in the sense that they all had individual learning needs. Learning experiences were tailored to the ability of each student. My students were not the only learners in our classroom.

Multi-level learning communities are also powerful tools for building community and creating responsible citizens. There are many social and emotional benefits to learning in these classrooms, as the format creates a sense of security and belonging. Deeper connections are created between students and teacher. In my classroom setting, we needed to find ways to work with each other, even when personalities clashed. The act of peer tutoring became a normal way of learning, because the best way to learn something is to teach it. Furthermore, outcomes could be worked on in following years without having to retain or fail. My students practised responsible citizenship and community building.

Multi-level classrooms are not a new concept. Some school division choose these mixed-age classrooms out of necessity due to low enrolment; others choose them for philosophical reasons. The bottom line is that teaching and learning in such a learning community is not easy. The multi-level structure is not enough. In order to be successful, these classrooms need to provide a meaningful, rich, and safe environment for all learners and teachers. The great news is that all educators have elements of multi-level learning communities in their classrooms. They may not teach the same children for more than one year, but there are many different levels present even in a single-grade classroom. These ideas are applicable in most classrooms, but are critical to the success of a multi-level environment.

Careful planning and management of experiences, coupled with infusion of available technology and communication with the community, are critical to the success of multi-level classrooms. Teacher willingness to teach in this capacity is essential, bolstered by supportive leadership. Educators in these classrooms need time to learn and grow as facilitators, and they need proper resources at their disposal. Furthermore, these leaders need flexible and creative natures to deliver instruction and assessment practices. A big budget also helps! Job-embedded professional development is indispensable to the success of teaching and learning. Networks of professional friends via Professional Learning Communities, Professional Learning Networks, email groups, and face-to-face meetings are also advantageous. The advancement of technology provides amazingly beneficial additions to the multi-level classroom. Small laptops facilitate ease of use; children can take them into their work area instead of taking their work to the computer area. Hand-held gadgets, such as MP3 players, are valuable teaching tools that immediately engage learners. Not only are these devices helpful, but the students also feel that they “look cool” using them. Fortunately, tools are also available for teachers to monitor progress and ensure that students are on task.

Another sometimes forgotten element is that of the wider community. Many times, caregivers feel that classrooms should run in the same way as when they went to school, and they are strongly opposed to a combined grade format. It is important to explain the research and experiences that show why classrooms have to evolve. With thoughtful communications, opinions will change. Invite parents into the classroom. Publicly display student work, communicate through journals and phone calls. Publish a newsletter highlighting student work and include a spot for teachers to share their thoughts and ideas, and explain why concepts are presented in different ways.

Why do we teach? We are preparing our students for life in the real world. Our students need to become critical thinkers, problem solvers, and lifelong learners. Properly implemented multi-level classrooms are flexible environments that combine learners, and honour and value individual differences and abilities in all students. These microcosmic communities are a meaningful way to provide our students with the opportunity to practise the skills required to interact successfully in our much larger world.

About the Author

Jennifer Borgfjord is currently completing an M.Ed. in special education. She taught on a Hutterite colony when she wrote this opinion paper, but she is now sharing her love of multi-level learning at La Verendrye School in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. In addition to spending quality time with her husband and three children, she loves to read and garden.

Philosophy of Differentiated Instruction

Dayna Laturnus

Differentiated instruction (DI) is a necessary strategy for planning instruction for all learners in response to the standards-based reform that has developed with the inclusive movement. It strives to meet all student needs regardless of age, sex, gender, culture, religion, socio-economic status, and intellectual or physical disabilities. DI draws a teacher's attention away from presumptions about what a child "cannot do," to learning and discovering the methods by which a child "can do." Contemporary educational systems are standards based, so "local school districts, states, and the federal government have each set standards that all students must achieve regardless of the teacher, socioeconomic status, disabilities, or other differences in either the educational institution or the student" (Levy, 2008, p. 161). DI methods ensure that instructional choices provide every student with the optimum opportunity to learn.

DI is based on the premise that it will meet individual students where they are when they begin a school year, and will move their learning forward as far as possible as they move along their educational journeys. The instructional goals that are established for each child should be flexible in what and how new learning opportunities are presented. DI also requires that new learning is connected to previous learning, and that this new learning is ultimately related to real-life experiences so that students internalize their learning in a meaningful way. As well, it encourages teachers to become more creative by moving beyond their own preferences and biases to meet the learning needs of all students, particularly of those who struggle and of those who excel in their abilities.

At DI's central core are content, process, and product. It is imperative that the focus of students' learning is based upon their own individual strengths, their personal and academic needs, and their individual thinking and learning styles. It is vital that educators understand the distinction between learning abilities and styles, and recognize that "a style of thought is a preference for using abilities in certain ways. It is not an ability itself, but the way one likes to utilize abilities" (Sternberg & Zhan, 2005, p. 245). Learning styles are individual preferences in learning materials. Styles matter. It is not uncommon for teachers to misinterpret learning styles "with abilities, so that students are thought to be incompetent – not because they are lacking in abilities, but because their styles of thinking do not match the styles of the people creating the assessments" (Sternberg & Zhan, 2005, p. 252). Teacher misconceptions can have a detrimental influence on student assessment and reporting, and on the students' self-perceptions of who they are as learners.

It is important to understand the thinking preferences in DI planning and to capitalize on these resources for each student, as they are ultimately important for future success. Teachers need to be diligent in order to ensure that they know and understand all of the children in their rooms, know their likes and dislikes, understand their personal thinking and learning styles, and create learning opportunities that permit the students to learn and express their learning in the ways that are most natural for them. Educators also need to be cognizant of the fact that their practices within the educational setting can either enrich students' opportunities or deprive them of opportunities for future success. Knowing students as persons is vital to ensuring future success.

The utilization of DI can enhance an awareness of and appreciation for the uniqueness of all students, not just those who find school difficult. It focuses on instructing all students as a heterogeneous group. Following whole-group instruction, small groups can be created according to learning needs or styles, in order to reinforce learning. The grouping of students does not focus on set ability levels, but is based upon the teachers' short-term goals for meeting set criteria in order to achieve the desired standard. Thus, learner objectives and performance

expectations are not lowered, although the content might be differentiated through the use of texts or stories at varying reading levels.

Student grouping should never be static. Student grouping assists students in being more aware of their own learning styles and preferences, and those of others as well. It provides opportunities for students to assist each other in their learning journeys by combining similar strengths and by combining a variety of strengths so that all learning is enriched and enhanced. The type of grouping should focus on ability levels, learning styles, and interest levels.

Assessment is critical to the success of implementing DI strategies. Good assessment strategies demand that “teachers determine at the onset of their planning what their students should know and what each child should be able to do at the conclusion of the lesson or unit” (Anderson, 2007, p. 50). In order to meet the needs of each student, pre-assessments must occur to provide an accurate picture of where students are currently performing, so that instruction can begin precisely where each student is. The use of formative assessment to readjust activities or presentation of learning is critical to the success of each student. Summative assessments assist in determining whether the students have learned what was taught. It is important to keep in mind that the assessment tools do not need to be identical, as one student might not achieve to his or her best ability with the same test as another individual.

I believe that it is not only the teachers’ responsibility to teach each student content, but it is their legal, moral, and ethical responsibility and obligation to ensure that all students receive the best learning opportunities possible. Teachers need to move beyond their own learning style in order to accommodate the different styles of their students. Effective teachers must do all that is in their power to ensure that the needs of all students are met on academic, emotional, and social levels. These efforts should include conducting ongoing self-learning audits and reflective inventories that identify areas for further professional development.

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About the Author

Dayna Laturnus has served as an early/middle years educator and K-8 music specialist in Brandon since 1992. She recently completed an M.Ed. in special education studies and was awarded the Governor General’s Gold Medal. Students who require adaptive learning strategies are her primary passion. Her current research interests include DI practices, assessing special needs, and special education policy and administration.

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