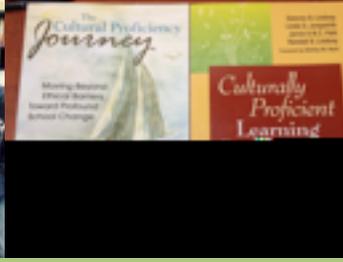


RCH NEWSLETTER



DECEMBER 2014

THE PRINCIPAL CONNECTION/ AFFIRMING DIVERSITY



Students' needs are obvious when they are hungry, tired, or afraid; we can see it in their faces. But children have less obvious needs that must also be met. Because it's not

measured in percentiles or included on achievement tests, we may forget that a student's sense of personal identity must be strong if she or he is to be receptive to learning. Children need to feel valued for who they are, both as individuals and as members of a particular group. Whether a student's group identity stems from race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, gender, or sexual orientation, that identity must be affirmed. We cannot control what happens outside school, but we can validate students within our schools by ensuring that we show respect for *all* groups students claim as their own.

An Affirming Formal Curriculum:

A school should start by ensuring that its formal curriculum—the officially presented materials, lessons, and requirements—conveys appreciation for diversity. Are a range of racial and ethnic groups represented in materials used throughout the year,

for example, or does celebrating Black History Month imply that African (descents) are absent from the curriculum the rest of the year? Is history presented only from a Eurocentric point of view, or do teachers consciously show how other cultures might see key events? Is the expansion of (Canada) presented as an inexorable march of democracy, or are the viewpoints of indigenous people considered? Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs, and Steel* can serve as a great resource.

Do your school's halls shout that people of every race achieve? I visited a school last week whose assembly space featured huge representations of Mahatma Gandhi, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King Jr. A mural in my school's hall depicts Maya Lin, Helen Keller, and Thurgood Marshall, among others. Displays like these make a statement about the values a school embraces.

What authors are assigned reading in your classrooms? Pre-20th-century British men have certainly produced enough stellar writing to fill libraries. But what's our message when dead white guys are the only sanctioned readings? Do Harriet Beecher Stowe, Amy Tan, and Margaret Atwood not count? What about Maya Angelou and Toni Morrison—or Alan Say for younger readers?

When students realize that the leaders a school values look both similar to and different from themselves, they get the message: All groups have value, and each individual is important.

...And Informal Curriculum:

The formal curriculum is easy to implement, relatively speaking. Just as important, however, is the degree to which a school's *informal* curriculum—its enrichment activities, the accomplishments that the school spotlights, and the manner in which people are treated—supports diversity. Indeed, the informal curriculum often communicates the most powerful messages.

We may talk in school about the fact that equality is the fundamental principle of the United States. But does our school promote a student diversity club? What about a gay/straight alliance? Our school motto may be “Where all children are smart,” but do we offer students diverse ways to learn and show what they know? Do students who excel in art or music receive the same accolades as students on the honour roll? Within our staff, are some employees called by their first names, whereas others are addressed by *Mr.*, *Mrs.*, or *Dr.*? Are parking spaces reserved for administrators? Students discern nuances quite well, and they know that what school leaders do is far more important than what we say.

Initiating Dialogue:

Engaging in dialogue with minority groups goes even further than shaping the curriculum in showing each student how much we value the group with which that student is affiliated. When is the last time you spoke with representatives of a group that is in the minority in your school, however that minority is defined? It's easy for those of us in the majority to assume that everyone sees things the same way. That's not likely to be the case. “How do we define minorities at our school” and “How should we define them?” would be great questions for a faculty meeting. One way to begin to identify such groups is to look at those who are not in the mainstream: Which kinds of students

don't participate in extracurricular activities? Of course, defining minorities is only the first step.

I've met with groups of staff members and parents who were racial minorities at my school and with a group of gay and lesbian parents. I came away from each meeting with new insights and a greater appreciation for what it is like to be a minority in the (Canada). I learned that where others perceive evenhanded treatment, minorities may believe that decisions are being made on the basis of other variables. It's natural for people from minority backgrounds to wonder whether their minority status played a role in education decisions, so open communication is key. The very fact that these meetings occurred and that I attended them sent a powerful, diversity-affirming message to everyone in our school community.

If you think your school doesn't have a minority group—or two or three—look again. Then start talking!

-Thomas R. Hoerr

Dreams Take Flight:

Dreams Take Flight is an organization which sends kids on a 24 hour all expense paid trip to Disney Land. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to experience something for students that would not have this opportunity due to hardships in which students live each and every day.

This year the selections for students was done in conjunction with Shelly Whynot (SSW for QC). In years past, 2 students have been selected. This year, with hard work, eight slots have been offered to students. I feel that this hard work helps validate the student support worker program is thriving in Liverpool and the connections made within the schools and communities are strong.

20 Years Since the BLAC Report:

I had the pleasure of going to a conference on the 14th and 15th of November. It was a conference on the BLAC Report. It has been 20 years since the report came out and this conference was a look at how our students of African descent are doing in Nova Scotia educationally. The first day was a great look at the data that the Department in conjunction with the African Canadian Services Division (ACSD) has been collecting and monitoring. This is their baseline data that will continue to be built off of over the coming years in order to provide our African Canadian students with a equitable education. The second day was a number of focus sessions that were provided. I attended three:

*-Racial Identity, Diversity, and Africentricity:
Courageous Conversations*

-Early Literacy, Numeracy and Technology

-Culturally Responsive Teaching: The Real Deal!

I have been working to set up sessions within the South Shore for our teachers to have some similar opportunities at some Professional Development around these areas as well as some parent sessions. I am more than willing to come in to schools to talk to staff about how we continue to work to create cultural classrooms and respond to some of the information that is coming out around our Aboriginal and African Canadian Student. As I continue to say, I look forward to working in buildings with admin, students, and teachers. If you would like for me to come into your school, please feel free to e-mail or call me so that we can work together to create these cultural communities in all of our classrooms and buildings.

ASK THE RCH COORDINATOR...

---Have you ever wondered, "Is he just sitting in his office?"

---Are you interested in what I do?

My goal is to be in school, classrooms, and meet students. I have been in our SSRSB schools this year and continue to share my vision of a culturally competent school/classroom. If you would like for me to come to your school and speak, please let me know. Please call me in to speak to individual classrooms/small groups, run teacher PD, or whatever mixture you can think of.

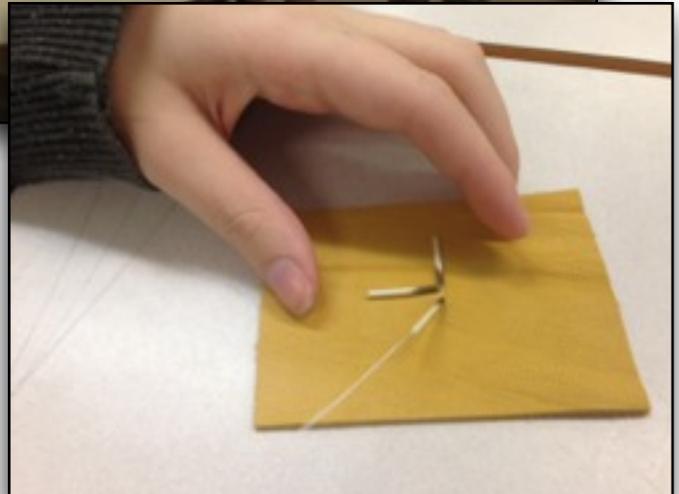
I will come in and talk about: culture; race/diversity in classrooms; culture in curriculum; embedded data focus; my teaching in Africa; what we see and how we see it; Cultural Proficiency; creating a culture of acceptance in the classroom; and more.

---If you have an idea, ask. We can see how to get it done.

QUILL WORK AT NEW GERMANY RURAL H.S.: I was

happy to get an e-mail from a teacher at New Germany, Tammy Gaudet, asking for some help in order to provide some help around a module she was working on. The pictures below are some pictures from that work that was done with her grade 9's and

Sheila Porter (Student Support Worker). Sheila is skilled in quill jewelry, quill embroidery, beading of different sorts including but not limited to earrings, bracelets, brooches, necklaces, jewelry. In addition, Sheila makes antler jewelry, earrings, necklaces, key chains, leather pouches, wallets, leather mini drums, raw hide rattles, mini drums and talking sticks. All of her work is done using traditional materials.



WE DAY:

Youth coming together to make the world a better place is the global movement of our time. We Day is a time for youth to come together in order to push students to be global and socially just citizens. Last year, we sent 7 schools. This year SSRSB sent 14 schools. I look forward to working with these schools to be active citizens!

Krista Longard (PVEC)



We Day is not a one off for us. We have had a Me to We group at Park View for 7 years now and have been making a difference globally and locally. Before our Me to We group, we had Kids for Kids which also raised funds for Free the Children Work.

You can't buy a ticket to We Day as you know, you earn them, and we will continue to be dedicated to serving others and not thinking only of ourselves.

Sandra Himmelman (H.A.)



Our Students for Social Justice have been working at Hebbville Academy for over 6 years. We have annually sponsored World Vision Children; supported the Bridgewater Inter Church Food Bank; Raised funds for third world countries and the Red Cross International Relief for Haiti and Asia. Over two years we raised over \$2,000. for Childhood Leukemia and Lymphoma research. We have held 4 Annual Social Justice Coffee House Celebrations and a full school Social Justice Day for all students and staff participating. We have supported the Canadian MADD organization and the Be The Peace Committee.

Zack Saulnier (Student at LRHS)



We Day was a great experience they have tons of people speaking from, people overcoming cancer, to a person that was a slave for over a year in a foreign country, to bands, to the guy who started the pink shirt no bullying day, to sponsors. We Day helps motivate people to get involved in school and out of school activities to help our community and our planet. If I never went to we day I wouldn't be the same guy I am today, it taught me things such as by purchasing a goat for a woman in Africa for fifty dollars it helps that woman start a farm and let's her provide for her family. So if you ever get a chance to go to we day, do it because experiences like this only come once in a life time, but don't just take my word for it ask some of the 8000 people that were at we day Friday November 28th 2014.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH APPROACHES... DON'T WAIT



PASSAGES CANADA

Black History Month is coming up!

Invite a [Passages Canada speaker](#) to share his or her personal story of Black Canadian heritage & identity, FREE of charge!



Topics include:

**Black Canadian History | African Heritage | Racism & Discrimination |
Human Rights & Social Justice | and more!**

Please [submit your request online](#) by **January 15, 2015**. Requests are processed on a first-come, first-served basis.
If a speaker is not available in your area, speakers may be available via videoconference (Skype).

PLEASE GO TO: <http://passagestocanada.com/invite-a-speaker/>

RESOURCES:

BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA

BELOW IS A LINK TO SOME VERY GOOD INFORMATION AROUND BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA. PLEASE CLICK AND TAKE A LOOK.

<http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/collection/black-history-in-canada/>

STORY ARCHIVE:

AT THE SITE BELOW YOU WILL FIND AN ARCHIVE OF STORIES THAT COME FROM THE AFRICAN DESCENT PERSPECTIVE:

<http://passagestocanada.com/story-archive/>

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GLOOSCAP
Heritage Centre & Mi'kmaw Museum

HAND-DRUM MAKING WORKSHOP



Where: Glooscap Heritage Centre & Mi'kmaw Museum

When: December 4, 2014 from 6:30pm-9:30pm
&
December 11, 2014 from 6:30-9:30 for painting

Cost: \$100.00 for 12" Elk Drum
\$120.00 for 16" Elk Drum

Instructed By Garrett Gloade

To register or for more information please contact the
Glooscap Heritage Centre & Mi'kmaw Museum at
(902)843-3493 or by email
garrett@glooscapheritagecentre.com
(Only limited seats available)

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