





English Practice provides you with the opportunity to write and be read. Your viewpoints, lessons, opinions, research (formal or informal) are welcomed in formats ranging from strategies, lesson plans and units, to more formal compositions and narratives exploring big ideas in teaching and learning, to creative writing. We have four sections with the following guidelines to assist you in preparing and submitting your writing:

- Teaching Ideas
- Investigating Our Practice
- Salon
- Check This Out

Submissions can be emailed to:

Pamela Richardson
pamela.richardson@ubc.ca

English Practice is the Journal of the BC Teachers of English Language Arts which also publishes the President's Newsletter and the Student Writing Journal. English Practice and other periodicals are distributed to BCTELA members throughout British Columbia and exchanged with other provincial specialist associations of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation. They are also distributed to other specialist associations across Canada. English Practice is a member of both the CCTELA and the NCTE Affiliate Information Exchange Agreement. English Practice is registered with the National Library of Canada under International Standard Serial Number ISSN 0315-2189.

Multiple Pathways, Diverse Texts:

Engaging All Learners through English Language Arts

Editorial

Welcome to the “Multiple Pathways, Diverse Texts” issue of English Practice, inspired by the theme of the BCTELA 2013 conference. This issue is a true embodiment of the theme in that it brings together wonderfully diverse voices and perspectives from throughout the educational community in service of a shared vision. We have contributions from:

- Teachers from across British Columbia, including classroom teachers, a literacy consultant, a teacher librarian, and a reading intervention teacher.
- Educational scholars and researchers from British Columbia, Alberta and Prince Edward Island, each representing diverse disciplines, including literacy education, curriculum studies, art education and exercise sciences, as well as, diverse positions within the academy, from graduate students to a Canada Research Chair.
- Poets (of course!)
- A poetry consultant (Yes, it’s a thing!)
- A lawyer specializing in anti-violence work (who is collaborating with an art educator -- cool!)

It is an exciting gathering of practitioner-scholars interested in exploring how to invite and support diversity within English language arts learning contexts. Each contribution makes a substantive difference to the issue and together the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. This is our vision for classrooms as well: that through offering diverse pathways and engaging with multiple texts that all students can find their ways to learn, are valued for who they are and what they bring, and that each is able to participate meaningfully and feel connected to the heart of the community. Our shared goal throughout this issue is to support educators to create vibrant learning environments where diversity of all kinds is understood as resources and a pathway to learning rather than an obstacle. We come together here in our diversity as educators and researchers to be the change we want to see.

I wish to sincerely thank all the members of our editorial circle (aka article reviewers) who took time to give insightful and constructive feedback to our authors for this issue. You are instrumental to the development of the issue and supporting the depth and breadth of the conversation. We are still looking for reviewers who would like to be part of growing this journal, and so drop me a note if you are interested.

Finally, last year we had a call for articles on the theme “Starting a Circle: Exploring Aboriginal Education.” We did not receive enough submissions at the time and so decided to delay the issue and plan for a better response. We are deeply committed to this thematic issue and so we revised and re-launched the call for articles, and it is now available on the BCTELA website with a deadline of January 2015. I am thrilled to announce that Sara Davidson has agreed to come on board as co-editor beginning with this next issue. Sara contributed a piece in this current issue, please go read it and find out more about her. Welcome Sara!

Thank you for reading English Practice. We would love to hear from you, read your work, and meet you in person at the upcoming BCTELA conference. We will be offering a session called “Get the Word Out” dedicated especially to writing for the journal. Come and join us!



Pamela Richardson

Pamela Richardson is on faculty at The University of British Columbia, Okanagan campus. Her main areas of teaching and research focus on exceptional learning and inclusion, and literary and arts-based ways of knowing. She has a special interest in advanced and creative learning and how to make sense of these in inclusive terms.

Table of Contents

Salon

Preferring Revolution	6
<i>Maya Travy E. Borhani</i>	
Prove Them Wrong: Why aboriginal content matters	7
<i>Sara Florence Davidson</i>	
Redefining Text and Chewing on Change	10
<i>Nicole Day</i>	
Parents and poetry: Youth during World War II	14
<i>Heather McLeod, Gisela Ruebsaat</i>	
The Lid, the Leggo, and the Super Leggo	21
<i>Sean Wiebe</i>	
The Metaphor of the Mirror Box:	22
<i>Sean Wiebe</i>	

Investigating our Practice

Practice in Front of a Mirror	23
<i>Celia Brogan</i>	
Developing your web wings:	26
Teacher professional development for Web 2.0 Tools	
<i>Jacqueline Filipek, Joanne Linden, Catherine Paul, Alanna Wasyliw</i>	
Changing results for young & adolescent readers	45
Why Action Research Matters	
<i>Ben Paré</i>	

Teaching Idea

Zooming in on Film in the English Classroom	49
<i>Claire Ahn</i>	
Chasing Adland: Teaching critical media health literacy	55
<i>Deborah Begoray, Joan Wharf Higgins, Robin Wilmot</i>	
Mindful Literacy	62
<i>Vicki Den Ouden</i>	
Raising Voices: Poetry and performance in the classroom	66
<i>Liisa House</i>	
Essential Questions	72
<i>Kelley Inden</i>	

Multiple Pathways, Diverse Texts

Salon 6-22

Investigating our Practice 23-48

Teaching Idea 49-75



Preferring Revolution

Salon

I can't watch the news
listen to the radio

read so many online updates,
without losing myself in the morass:

it's just more genocide
and politician's lies about

what I never agreed could be done
in my name.

And now it's election time
and they want to persuade me

the outright lies of one are worse
than the secrets the other never tells.

My friend who writes novels tells me,
Never watch Democracy Now.

It's too depressing and you'll never
write a thing. How can our small words

ever begin to approach
the weight of that boulder?

I know she's right, that my pen dries up
while my mind, my heart

try to make sense
of what's incomprehensible.

I want to chop wood again,
carry water, be grateful
for what I don't know.
I want to drink wine

my friend Zhenya pressed
by hand, ask her how it was

in Russia, when the people had
no voice, no bread, no hope

but stuck together,
knowing revolution would come.

Maya Tracy E. Borhani

Maya returns to the academy after raising two daughters on an island in the Salish Sea. There, she initiated a Poets-in-the-Schools program. She loves to chop wood and carry water (before, or after, writing poems).

Prove Them Wrong: Why Aboriginal Content Matters

Salon

When I was finishing my masters, I read the book *Monkey Beach* by Eden Robinson. I would like to say that when I reached the last page, I wept. It would likely be more poetic than the truth. I didn't actually weep, instead I just felt kind of sick and tremendously sad. I was sitting on the couch in my living room, and I remember being hit with the realization of the impact of my formal education upon my beliefs about myself and my own limitations as a person of Aboriginal ancestry. And worse, that many of my feelings of inadequacy could have been averted had I simply come into contact with the right educator.

In my early years, my mother and father would come to the school and do various presentations and activities about Haida culture for the students in my class. It was largely uneventful until I entered grade four. Then, I transferred to a much larger school and the presentations brought attention to my ancestry. Once the other students realized what I was, they taunted and teased me about being a chief and echoes of the ubiquitous war whoop would regularly follow me down the hallways. It was, perhaps, my first clue that being Aboriginal was not a good thing.

As I transitioned into secondary school, I surrounded myself with non-Aboriginal friends attempting to create a barrier between me and what I understood to be the Aboriginal identity. I assumed that my association with non-Aboriginal people would create a divide between me and the negative stereotypes that I associated with being Aboriginal, such as failure in school, issues with drug and alcohol addiction, and chronic behaviour problems. I did not want to be Aboriginal, so I simply wasn't.

I was in the French Immersion stream, so the focus was upon inclusion of French Canadian culture and, with the exception of the minor mandatory injections of Aboriginal content in social studies, my courses were entirely devoid of anything authentically Aboriginal. Of course, my world outside of school was overflowing with Aboriginal content. At the time, I was living with my father and my stepmother who were both Aboriginal artists. I was part of a Haida dance group. I frequently traveled to my father's home community to visit his Aboriginal family. I never once admitted to them that being Aboriginal was a source of shame for me. I simply tried to continue to separate myself from the aspects of the Aboriginal identity that I found most despicable.

At school, I made every attempt to maintain the illusion that I was not Aboriginal. I maintained my grades. I did not drink or do drugs. I was well behaved. In all that time, nothing happened at school to change my thinking. Not once did anyone challenge my negative beliefs about Aboriginal people or by extension, myself. I left the school system with my negative assumptions intact, and it took me a very long time to come to accept the Aboriginal part of my ancestry - to discover that being Aboriginal did not mean that I was unintelligent or prone to laziness. Eventually I began to cautiously accept my identity; however, the years of self-loathing did not simply fade into the background.



When I was adding the final words to my thesis, I read *Monkey Beach* and was spontaneously filled with devastation. Not because the book was anything less than brilliant, but actually because it was so amazing. Here was a book that was an example of quality literature that could easily have met many of the learning outcomes for any of my high school English classes. Though it had not yet been written, its 80s equivalent could have been held up in my class as an example of good literature that was written by an Aboriginal person (not to be confused with “good Aboriginal literature” which is decidedly different). Any one of my teachers could have told me about the important contributions to science or math that were made by Aboriginal people. I am not suggesting that it would have changed my thinking, but I believe I could have begun to question the validity of my assumptions that Aboriginal people were unintelligent or lazy (or whatever other negative stereotype I could think of) long before I had left the school system. And what could the implications have been for my non-Aboriginal classmates?

I suspect it was this kind of thinking that led to the introduction of English 10 First Peoples – a course that I never had when I went to school. But to be honest I would not have taken it voluntarily at the time either. It is a course that consists entirely of Aboriginal content. Stories, novels, poetry, films, non-fiction. All brilliant. All created by Aboriginal people. And though it may not be the silver bullet that its creators had anticipated, it has been successful in other ways. It has challenged peoples’ thinking about the capacities of Aboriginal people. For example, when the course was offered at our school the assumption was that because it was an Aboriginal course, it would be “easier” or “less academic,” and I delighted in informing my colleagues that this was not the case. That this course stood up to the proverbial bar set by the Ministry of Education for English Language Arts 10. Furthermore, all students who enroll in this course will never know what it is like to receive an education devoid of intelligent and meaningful contributions made by Aboriginal people. Regardless of whether they pass or fail the course, they are exposed to some of the incredible achievements of Aboriginal people, and this ensures that they never need to view Aboriginal ancestry as a barrier to academic success.

On a more personal level, when I taught this course, I was able to have the difficult conversations about what it means to be Aboriginal and pursuing formal education. I was able to talk about some of the discrimination I faced as a result of my desire to continue to with my own education. As a result, students started sharing with me some of their own challenges with trying to pursue education. I truly wanted to tell them that it has changed. The perfect ending to this story would be if I could tell you that by embracing my Aboriginal identity, I have become stronger and that the kind of teasing I faced in elementary school no longer exists or that when people grow up they become able to keep their negative opinions to themselves. But that simply isn’t true. Even today, I continue to endure the judgments and negative assumptions from people who fail to understand. What is worse, however, is that we as educators continue to make the same mistakes, even though we should know better.

Following my realization about the potential impact of including Aboriginal content in all courses, I had a conversation with a colleague about ways to include it into a “non-Aboriginal” course. I shared my epiphany about the impact that it could have had on my own life, but it was met with reluctance then resistance and then a barrage of questions regarding the ability of content written by Aboriginal people to meet the rigours of an academic course. As an educator of Aboriginal ancestry, I felt that my own intelligence and capacity had been questioned as well.

There are many factors that contributed to my decision to pursue further education, and that conversation was one of them. It forced me to realize how difficult it is to enact change in the educational system. Truthfully, I don’t know if more education will help me to change anything for Aboriginal students, particularly because it has taken me out of the classroom where we would have the difficult conversations. The conversations about what it is like to be Aboriginal and formally educated. The conversations about the resistance from my own community to the pursuit of higher education, but also the conversations about the encouragement I have received. However, one of the most important conversations we had was the one about how we can challenge the negative stereotypes associated with being Aboriginal. This is the conversation we had the most, likely because this was the most destructive for the students in my class, and sadly because it is the challenge that they face the most. And although no student has ever asked me for my advice about how to overcome such devastating assumptions, it inevitably comes up. And I never suggest that the answer is to hide who you are, as I did so many years ago. Instead, I always end this particular conversation with these three words: “Prove them wrong.”

Sara Davidson

Sara Davidson is a PhD student in the Department of Language and Literacy at the University of British Columbia. She has taught high school in the Yukon and rural British Columbia. Her research interests include adolescent literacy education, Aboriginal education, and culturally responsive teaching and research practices.



Redefining Text and Chewing on Change

Salon

I call myself an English teacher. Officially though, I teach English Language Arts (ELA). Why quibble over semantics, one may ask? In fact, semantics holds importance. Arguably, English teachers teach literature. They belong in university departments or schools that hold to more traditional curricula—the study of Shakespeare, Chaucer, Byron, and the like.

In Alberta, ELA teachers do not teach literature. We are assigned the task of teaching all six strands of Language Arts: reading and writing; speaking and listening; viewing and representing. Although literature has a place among the texts we are obligated to cover, a 1998 curriculum reform changed the course name (from English) to English Language Arts, and reorganized learning outcomes and curricular goals to include a more comprehensive picture of what teaching and learning English entailed. An important part of this reform also included a broader definition of “text.” This movement away from a study of literature and towards looking at, understanding, and responding to a “variety of texts” in a “variety of ways” (Alberta Learning, 2003) has forced me to think differently about my work with students.

The front matter of Alberta’s English Language Arts Program of Studies (2003) “defines the word ‘text’ broadly” and “includes works of literature and other texts in oral, print, visual and multimedia forms” (p. 4). This more inclusive definition has had important application both in the choice of text to be studied, and text to be created, by students. For the purposes of this paper, I wish to focus on the potential implications of broadening the texts that ELA teachers choose to assign (or allow) for study. My call is for a more accepting position of what material is “good,” a deeper consideration of what texts could be considered both valid and valuable for study, and a note about how to expand a study of text.

Hermeneutics, Text, and English Language Arts

My recent graduate work has helped me better understand the potential power of this shift. Tentative steps into the world of hermeneutics gave me a clearer understanding of the potentially rich exploration made possible by this expanded definition, as well as why expanding the definition of text is important. “Hermeneutics is derived from (a) the Greek verb *hermeneuein*, which means to say or interpret; (b) the noun *hermeneia*, which is the utterance or explication of thought; and (c) the name *hermeneus*, which refers to the playful, mischievous, ‘trickster’ Hermes” (Moules, 2002, p. 1), whose job was to deliver the messages of the gods. Hermeneutics is the process of interpreting textual information, and includes interpreting both linguistic and non-linguistic experiences, and that understanding cannot be objective and isolated, rather it must be contextualized.

Finding a simple description of what hermeneutics is is difficult; describing what it does is easier. Hermeneutics enables English teachers to engage students with textual choices that are meaningful to them. The beauty of hermeneutics as a method of inquiry is that it encourages us to find rich content in unexpected places. Understanding the power of unearthing and examining unusual texts allows us unique opportunities to make our subject area authentic, interesting, thought-provoking, and timely.

Sometimes powerful texts are found in surprising places. And, sometimes - with a little modeling - teachers may see how something that could be easily passed off as trivial and unworthy of "study" might be reconsidered. Take Anthony Bourdain, for example. I love his sassy, sarcastic, and "admittedly jaundiced worldview" (Bourdain, 2006, p. 163). Although he might not outwardly admit it, this jaded perspective, or the sometimes gooier inside that seeps out like molten chocolate oozing from a lava cake, offers his audience insight about life, humankind, and cultures around the world.

What follows is a small case study of mining material from an unorthodox text. It is a demonstration of a process and models the potential possibility for rethinking our traditional approaches to incorporating texts.

Modeling Possibilities - A Hermeneutical Exemplar

Anthony Bourdain's books, such as *The Nasty Bits: Collected Varietal Cuts, Usable Trim, Scraps, and Bones* (2006), and TV programs are a culinary research corpus. His hermeneutic is food. Using food as his key, he unlocks the door to cultural practice and describes the guile, desperation, and persistence of cultures to transform the unlovely into the beloved. And he does this, describes this, understands this- and teaches this-through food.

Bourdain has a show - *No Reservations*. This play on words links the restaurant/cooking/foodie theme with his zeal for exploring the unknowns of cultures and places. As he says in the introduction, "I write. I travel. I eat. And I'm hungry for more" (Bourdain & Leigh, 2005, n.p.). But his show is not really about food: Bourdain is addicted to the richness of human experience. He uses food as a key to the door of their homes. Although he proclaims that there are "precious few things ... believe[d] to be right and true and basically unimprovable by man or god" (Bourdain, 2006, p. 163), he knows the centrality of food is one of them. Food, travel, hanging out with people, and saying something about these is his livelihood and passion. And, there is a lot to say-and a lot to learn. Every body eats.

Like Marco Polo before him, Bourdain has made a career of food treks. Although he seems to struggle to define his work, he is a fascinating case study. He creates an interesting, living "text." When asked what he does for a living, he flounders. He realizes he is no longer a chef; he rejects the title of writer; and, he refuses to admit to being a television personality. As he says, "Whatever it is I do these days, whatever you might want to call it, I do get to travel all over the world, going anywhere I want, eating what I want, meeting admired chefs... doing a lot of cool stuff" (p. 131).

However, in that list, Bourdain doesn't include influencing how others see the world. He doesn't describe how his job, through his interest in food and travel, leads his audiences to chew on bigger-picture understandings of others' culture and life. He doesn't describe how his presence, interaction, conversation, and interest in food and travel impacts those he meets. These are his adventures, and he knows he has a "pretty good gig." Part of that gig comes with a powerful locus of influence. Food helps him shape individuals' understanding of themselves and others.



Bourdain does not equivocate. He calls us to a community table where humans can embrace the wisdom and experiences of others. He does this indirectly—modeling an adventurous spirit in travel while eating the most bizarre things a culture can think to make into food. Bemoaning the downside of having written a book about eating adventurously, Bourdain knows that people want to “see [him] nibbling on the nether regions of unusual beasts ... chawing on small woodland creatures ... dazzle [him] with turtle parts you didn’t know existed, chicken feet, hundred-year-old eggs, snake snacks, [and] fried bugs.” Yet, this somewhat stomach-turning list stems from his recognition that, in other cultures, “the driving engine is the need to transform the humble, the tough, the unlively into the delicate and sublime, or to figure out what was good about an ingredient all along” (p. 103). With an open mind and an iron stomach, he delves into the unknown, and respects the ingenuity, creativity, and uniqueness of what these places, and foods, have to offer. Through him, we do, too.

Sometimes his lessons on tolerance are not so subtle. A collection of scathing diatribes criticizing narrow-mindedness make up a solid foundation of his work. Fear of food—and fear of immersing oneself in the food of a culture while travelling—clearly connects to Bourdain’s “fear for the planet.” To him, reprehensible individuals use clout and celebrity to encourage others to turn “away from the fabulously diverse and marvelous planet” (p.170). For him, food is about welcoming the unfamiliar. Celebrating strangeness. Opening minds. Food allows us to learn the ugliness of hegemony, and the joy of diversity. Through food—and Bourdain—we see the potential power of hermeneutically studying new texts.

Application to ELA Classrooms

The process of developing a case study exemplar from something that simply interested me has reinforced the jammed-packed potential of redefining “text” in the classroom. The possibilities seem endless – examining Adam Levine’s celebrity status on *The Voice*, the lyrics to *Radioactive* by *Imagine Dragons*, or whatever else students might (appropriately) imagine. I am certain their meaningful “texts” have richer content than we realize, encouraging us to teach the “language arts” part of English. In fact, I believe my students are as interested in their texts as I am in my own. Perhaps it is not Anthony Bourdain, but something feeds their interests. I suppose there are young people interested in nothing; but, I have never met one in 17 years of teaching.

No matter where we teach, I am confident our collective teacher-conscience points us toward a shared vision of readying students to navigate amorphous tomorrows. Although we try to predict what patterns the tumbling kaleidoscope will reveal, commonsense tells us we serve our children better by preparing them with skills to decipher this world of possibilities and challenges that come with change. These changes demand that we alter the way we do business.

The hermeneutical process is historically linked with a Greek God who was sagacious and cunning, and lured humans to interpret the message of the gods. Hermes could be irreverent at times, and had a disdain for rules; however, he was “a master of creativity and invention. He had the capacity to see things anew and his power is change, prediction, and the solving of puzzles” (Moules, 2002). I suggest we take theses skills and, instead of teaching familiar aspects of familiar texts in familiar ways, we broaden our definition of “good” texts and model a process of exploring unfamiliar things using the skills we teach as English language arts teachers. We can begin by sharing that journey with our students and, by doing so, prepare them to continue their journey into the future. Redefining my job as an English teacher, discovering the world of hermeneutics, and my love of Anthony Bourdain gave me a lot to chew on. It’s all food for thought for a teacher of English Language Arts.

References

- Alberta Learning. (2003). English Language Arts (Senior High) Program of Studies. Alberta, Canada. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/media/645805/srhelapofs.pdf>
- Bourdain, A. (2006). *The Nasty Bits: Collected varietal cuts, usable trim, scraps, and bones*. New York, NY: Bloomsbury.
- Moules, N. J. (2002). Hermeneutic inquiry: Paying heed to history and Hermes — An ancestral, substantive, and methodological tale. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 1 (3), Article 1. Retrieved from <http://www.ualberta.ca/~ijqm/>
- Bourdain, A. (Writer), & Leigh, H. (Director). (2005). *No Reservations*. In J. Leigh (Producer). Travel Channel, USA. Zero Point Zero Productions Inc.

Nicole Day

Nicole Day is currently a PhD student in the Department of Secondary Education at the University of Alberta. She has 16 years of classroom experience teaching Senior High English Language Arts. Nicole now has the privilege of teaching an ELA Curriculum and Instruction class to pre-service teachers

Parents and poetry:

Youth during World War II

Salon

Heather is a former BC teacher, now an arts educator, in St. John's, Newfoundland, and Gisela is a legal analyst/poet in Victoria, British Columbia. We work in education, social justice and legal communities. We are involved in an ongoing project using poetic inquiry (Brady, 2009; Prendergast, 2009; Butler-Kisber, 2012) to learn more about our parents after their deaths and to reflect on our relationships with them (Leggo, 2010). Poetic inquiry is an emerging and arguably more direct approach to research: "Instead of writing through abstract concepts...poets write in and with the facts and frameworks of what they see in themselves in relation to others, in particular landscapes, emotional and social situations." (Brady, 2009, p. 15).

Heather's father, Donald McLeod, and Gisela's mother, Ursula Schumacher, were both teenagers during the Second World War, Donald in Canada and Ursula in Germany. Both voices were marginalized, Donald's through the operations of class and Ursula's through the inequities associated with gender. We believe that poetry corresponds with our intention to allow our parents' silenced voices and stories to be heard and that responding to this diversity shapes and benefits our teaching practices and social justice work.

As duoethnographers (Sawyer & Norris, 2013) we view life history as an informal curriculum and see meaning as something to be explored and created through dialogue. We argue that by juxtaposing narratives of difference we open new experiences and perspectives. Our dialogue is not only between the two of us as researchers, but also between the researchers and our perceptions of cultural artefacts from our lives. These include compositions, critical incidents, memories and stories. By examining such artefacts and engaging in collaborative critique, we explicate our assumptions and perspectives. Writing in the first person and avoiding the abstract authoritative voice, we invite readers into the discussion. Sections of our paper alternate between our voices.

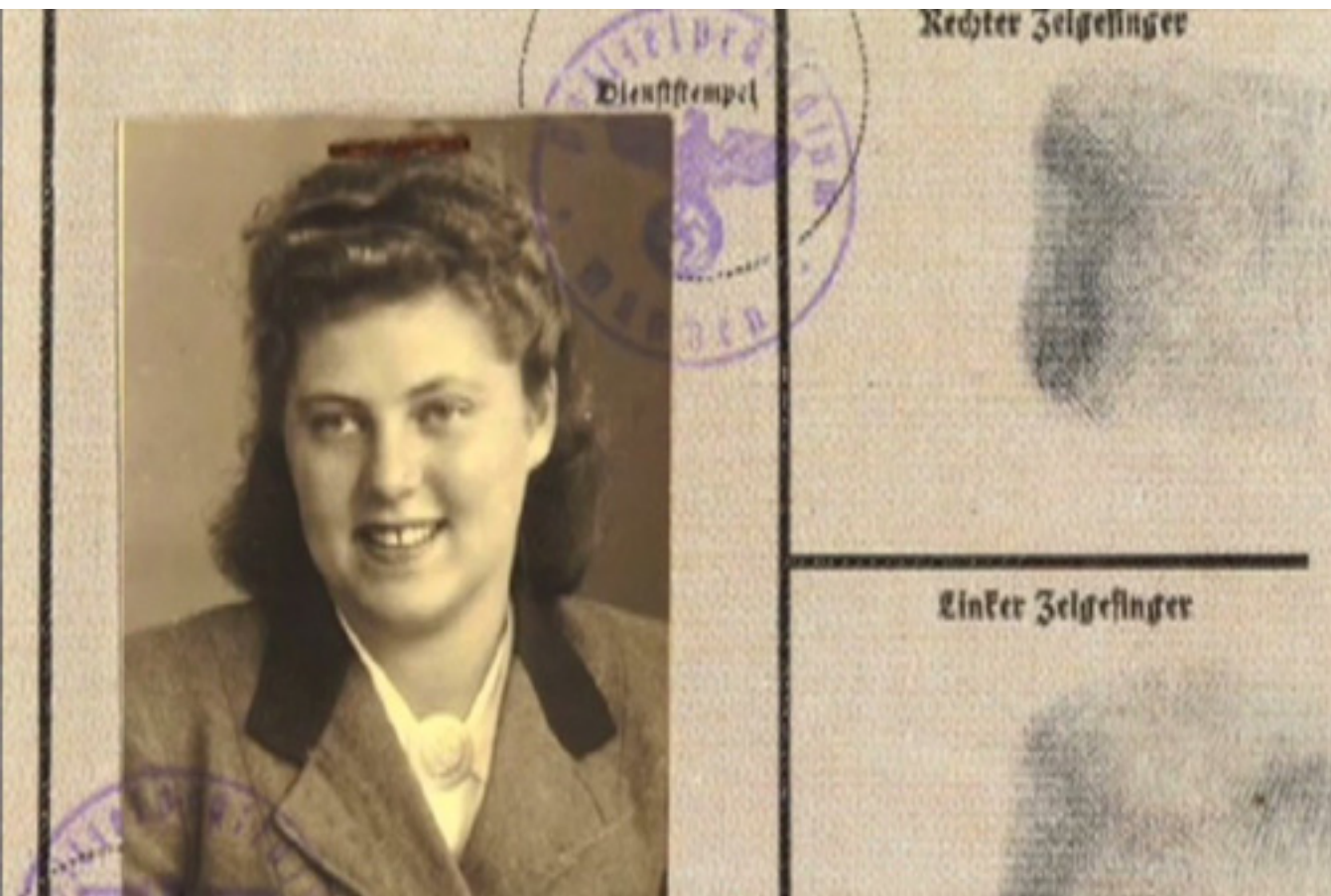
Additionally, as duoethnographers we note how narratives work within the broader culture (Sawyer & Norris, 2013). Educators working for social justice may engage in action at the expense of personal reflection and analysis and risk re-enacting oppressive narratives. Therefore our commitments to social justice necessitate critical self-analysis through personal reflection and analysis of our internalization of colonialism, domination and unjust discourses. In this way discourse may be reframed, language reconsidered and action informed.

Sources for our work include Heather's father's poetry which remains unpublished four decades after his early death at age 44. Throughout his life, he constantly wrote and it seems to have served as a way of "documenting, disentangling, reflecting on, and making sense of the complexities and dilemmas in life and experience" (Soutar-Hynes, 2012, p. 428). Other sources include Gisela's interviews with her mother and family friends and relatives, and anecdotes her mother told Gisela as she was growing up. These stories of war, death, migration and survival, are now interwoven with Gisela's memories of her mother and influence Gisela's work with victims of violence (Ruebsaat, 2009, 2013a, 2013b).

Through the layered lens of poetry we see beyond the family lore of who our parents were and get a more nuanced image not only of them, but also of the social forces that shaped them. War, gender and class were significant factors that moulded them in differing ways.

Rebellion/Bravery-Gisela

My mother's father was a math and phys-ed teacher at a boys' school in the small town of Rhineberg in Nazi Germany. Ursula was the oldest Schumacher daughter. There were no boys in the family. My grandfather taught my mother how to swim in the Rhine, to escape from treacherous whirlpools in the river. That was before he left to fight. Soon he was gone, during the war and long after, starving as a prisoner of war. My mother remembered her lessons by the river. Danger was always waiting in the wings and safety was something achieved through vigilance and individual acts of bravery. Too much thinking, a hesitation, and the opportune moment for action would be lost.



Schumi's Turn

The clock strikes in my Aunt Hedwig's house in Bonn
Gertrude and I, we drink dark afternoon coffee, eat
apricot torte.
My Aunt serves and Gertrude raises her cup from its
saucer,
tells me about my mother at school:

This nun would line us up, our palms open
as if to receive the communion wafer, then
whack us one by one with a stick.
We all pulled our hands back
when she stood before us, that black spectre,
it was just before the war.

Schumi's turn comes, your mother,
she is quick, she runs from the lineup
here, there everywhere
in and out of rows all around the classroom
knocks over desks as she turns

the nun must give chase, her dark habit askew
your mother's blond curls fly.
The rest of us stay in line
purse our lips, hold our breath to bursting.
bubbles of laughter escape our throats
to join Schumi in flight.

Gertude puts her coffee cup down on the saucer she still
holds,
that porcelain sound in this living room now.
My Aunt shakes her head slow, smiles
offers more torte.

A late sun bounces back from the hall mirror
I squint as rays hit my face
apricots sit on my tongue.

Anecdotes about my mother were always cryptic, with
very little political analysis or social context: a snapshot
without a frame. Her own storytelling voice was naive
if you like and not taken seriously in intellectual or
academic circles. Indeed she might say: "Don't think
so much, just let the image speak for itself." Ursula's
physical bravery, her capacity for immediate action and
embodied knowing in the face of threats, was her great
strength. In some ways though, it was also her greatest
vulnerability.

Insignia

Aryan
the teacher says it
and writes the word with chalk on a blackboard.
Her students sit at desks
eyes open but blank.
They must be taught.

"What does an Aryan girl look like?"
they ask. The teacher walks to my mother's desk
"Ursula please stand up."

My mother is tall, a blonde,
blue eyes look clear ahead.
She is a high jumper, long jumper, swimmer,
a winner of badges and ribbons. Prowess,
proud to stand at attention, a specimen
in a schoolroom with other children
and nuns who teach.

I see her,
already in uniform:
Pleated skirt, tailored jacket, wool stockings,
leather shoes laced tight
to feet that want to run, to leap high
wide over any closed gate.

Prowess.
It may have saved her
in the end,
in the hunger times when she was conscripted
to work on the assembly line in a factory that
made bombs.

I think I see her now in a classroom
still standing in this picture she has given me
an emblem without a frame,
a gift of honour
or of shame.

In some ways my mother embodied the Nazi
notion of womanhood—the classic amazon
available to serve the needs of the state-- but
in other ways she escaped from this stereotype
(Stibbe, 2003). After the war she emigrated
to Canada with my father, got her Masters in
Literature and a teaching degree. Nevertheless,
war and migration left scars: hyper-vigilance and
traumatic memories were a constant in her life.

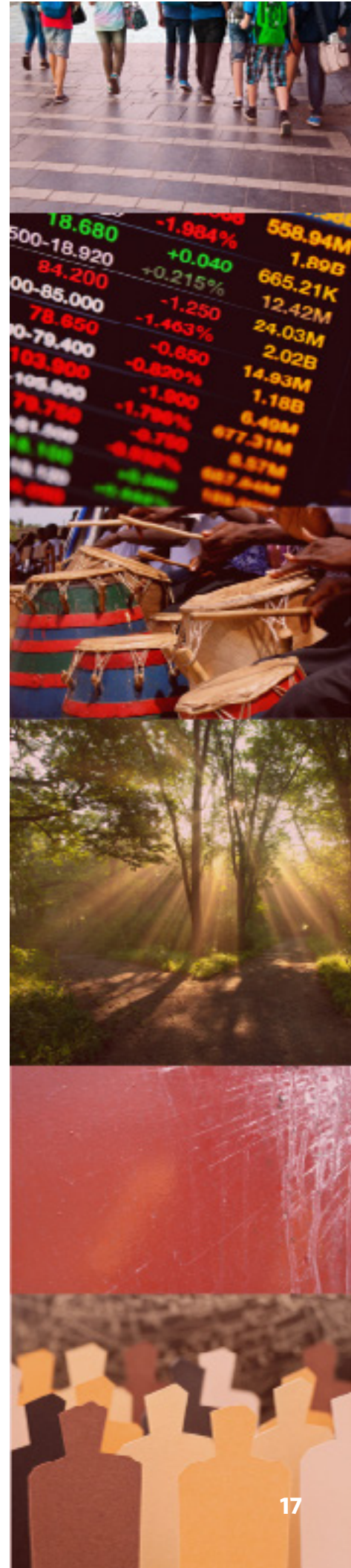
By listening and working with Ursula's poetic voice I have fine-tuned my ear for the coded messages embedded in the images she shared. Through this process of poetic inquiry I have learned that certain experiences—hunger, death on a massive scale, leaving the homeland, learning a new language—are best evoked through image or metaphor rather than through more traditional or more direct narrative forms. Direct descriptions of traumatic incidents would not be able to contain the associated grief and pain.

I have worked most of my professional life in the legal milieu dealing with violence against women. From hearing my mother's voice over many years, I have developed a love of images and the poetic voice. I have also learned about the ways people communicate trauma—with the traumatic moment perhaps embedded in an image or only implied. Poetic inquiry creates a space, a structure, where deeply emotional material can be collectively explored.

A Voice for Justice-Heather

In Canada, my father was a working class teenager predisposed to the literary arts. In the early 1940s, he was enthusiastic about moving from rural Manitoba to Victoria, BC. This was possible in wartime because my grandfather's skills as an electrician were suddenly in demand for shipbuilding. In contrast, during Donald's childhood his family had only barely survived the poverty of the great depression with the aid of a relief settlement plan which saw over 7000 city dwelling Canadian families scrabbling for survival on rural farms (Struthers, 1983). Perhaps because of these early experiences, my father was always attuned to injustice. In this he may have followed the lead of Janet, his mother, who had contested government policies on the steps of Manitoba's provincial legislature.

In BC, the transition from a rural one-room school to the much larger Esquimalt High School was no problem for Donald where he took a leadership role in the student newspaper. In 1945 as a Grade 9 student he wrote a poem chronicling a revolt against government corruption. Despite his mother's interest in social justice his parents were not explicitly political and it is unlikely that Donald would have been exposed to radical newspapers. Pencilled on lined paper with only a few edits it appears to have been written quickly and not as a school assignment. In this untitled history poem it seems that Donald begins at the end of First World War and concludes with the end of Second World War, collapsing the dire economic distress of the 1930s in Canada into a murderous, if somewhat understandable social rebellion. My father's strong emerging voice reflects the zeitgeist of the times and a feeling of what it was to be an outraged 15 year old fuelled by the momentous world events of 1945.



The summer and autumn had ended the war
And in the winter t'was no peace yet
It was a piteous sight to see all around
Men lie rotting the world around,

Every day the jobless poor
Crowded to the Premier's door
For he took of a nation's store
And all the people they could tell
His bank-book to be furnished well,

At last this crook appointed a way
To quiet the poor without delay
He bade ten thousand a ditch to dig
Whilst he washed down another swig.

They in Ottawa seen to do well
While a nation's people sank to hell.
To make more work this devil said
Ten thousand more the ditch to fill or else be
dead.

The bread line grew from day to day
And poor people's savings dwindled away
The devil then began to pray
The parliament to without delay
Build a police force

The people by this time had heard
He planned to drive them as a herd
To concentration camps.
And from there a pigs sty, make, them work
For bread and swill
A concentration camp!

And when the nation these things hear
It goes further than the ear
Down, Down with Premier.
The people to the cities swarmed
Before - He'd been warned
The pigs had on him descended.

And ere that Premier's corpse was cold
The nation in a bloody war was wrought
Down, came the order
And from this chaos what shall rise

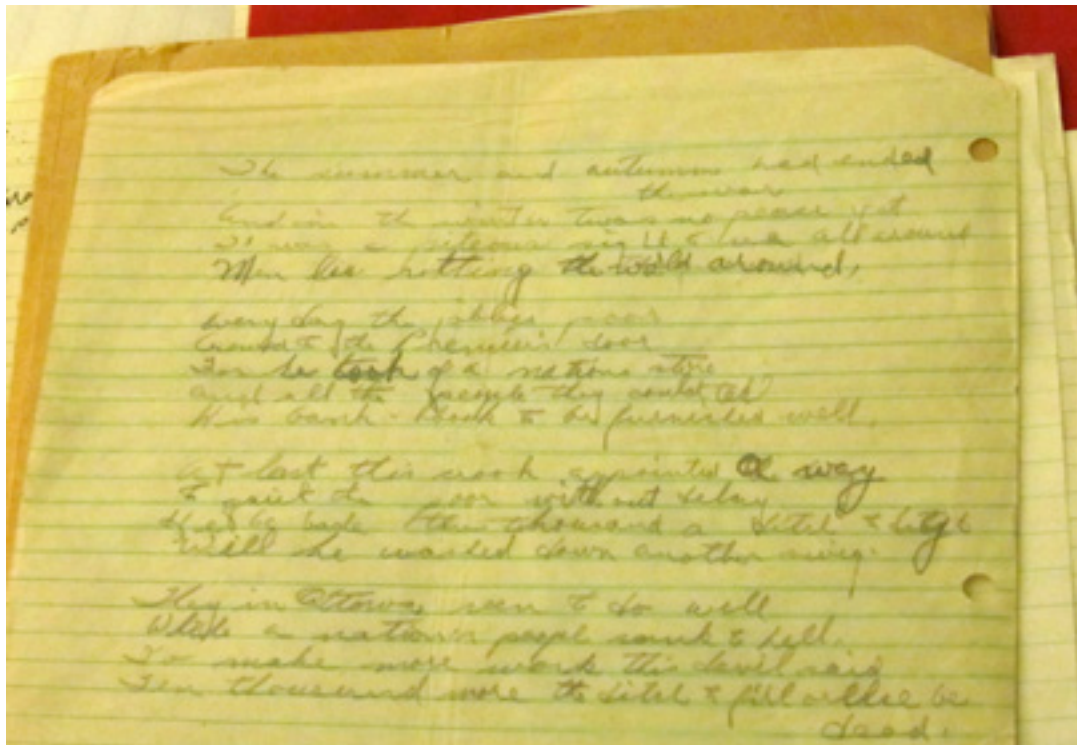
O for what cause have young men died
In World War No. II
That this should happen to them
Who tried law and order to defend
Down with the grafters.
Down to the End

O trust you not in politics
In parties or in men
For each is but for profit
To betray you in the end

The love of gold, the love of gains
And of worldly pleasures
Shall in time their morals rust
And toss you to the devil.

While Donald's high tone may have indicated his youth, the poetry that followed in later decades continued to express this strong voice. As Prendergast (2012) has noted, "Over the millennia, poets have spoken the truth as they have seen it about themselves and the world around them, and oftentimes those truths have been challenging to speak and in difficult times and places" (p. 489). Throughout his life my father was conscious of his poetic voice; in the 1960s he typed many of his poems and included in somewhat altered form the final two verses of the 1945 work, noting the year of creation and his school grade. Perhaps he saw them as the 'moral of the story'.

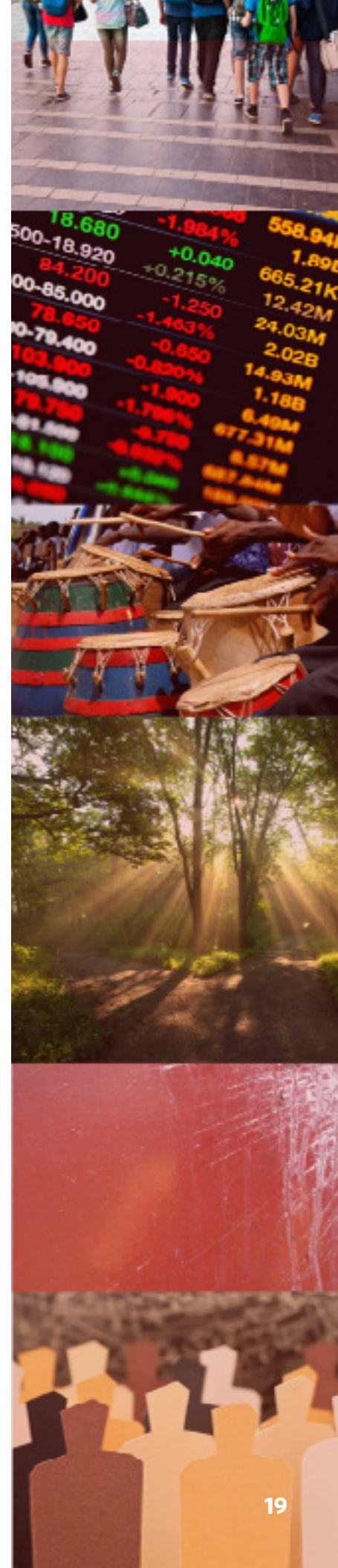
After high school my father was not able to study the arts at university because of the pressures of working and supporting a growing family, and for most of his adult life he lived in small towns in BC. It seems that he didn't have the support structures or knowledge about how to publish his work nevertheless it was clear that he valued publication and he wrote prolifically until his death in 1974. Afterwards for forty long years his aging and jumbled pages lay mute and untouched. The emotions involved in reading them kept me turning away from the task. As well, many are handwritten and his spidery script is hard to decipher. I valued his voice but I couldn't tune in. Finally, armed with a few intellectual tools, and because of my commitment to this duoethnographic project, I examined a portion of his poetry and essays. When I discovered 'Toss You to the Devil' (my title) it gave me new insights into the roots of my father's social and moral criticism. Also, the parallel in our ages stood out for me; he was 15 when he wrote it and I really only knew him for the first 15 years of my life before I left home. Two years later he was dead. Looking back I understand that in some ways, a generation apart, we shared a sense of moral outrage in response to social injustice. Although he was gone and couldn't hear me, my voice later echoed his-my adult work has long involved concerns for social justice. Yet I hadn't been consciously aware of my father's mutual sense that such concerns can be



powerfully presented through the arts. Now his poetry enables me to discern a faint sound across the years.

Implications

We are interested in how this project focusing on our parents' voices deepens our thinking about the nature of teaching and community work. As Wiebe and Snowber (2012) have noted, a notion of 'professionalism' implies that teachers have control in the classroom, that the personal should not interfere because it has nothing to add, and the personal and the professional cannot coexist. However in poetry there is a way to resist retreating to the security of our public roles, and with honesty contest paradigms of personal exclusion. Rather than relying on the authoritative voice of the dispassionate observer, poetic inquiry is informed by the personal voice speaking in its everyday cadence. It is both a tool of discovery and a unique mode of reporting research (Brady, 2009, p.14). In personal stories, a move to the poetic enables both the personal and professional at once, acknowledging the many possibilities and complexities of vulnerability and longing embedded within autobiographical exploration. "If one cannot hear the interior quakes of a life, it is very difficult to hear the quakes and questions of our students" (Wiebe & Snowber, 2012, p. 459).





References

- Brady, I. (2009). Forward. In M. Prendergast, C. Leggo, & P. Sameshima (Eds.). *Poetic Inquiry: Vibrant Voices in the Social Sciences* (pp. 12-17). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Butler-Kisber, L. (2012). Poetic inquiry. In S. Thomas, A. Cole & S. Stewart (Eds.). *The art of poetic inquiry* (pp. 142-176). Halifax, NS: Backalong Books.
- Isitt, B. (2011). *Militant minority: British Columbia workers and the rise of a new left, 1948-1972*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Leggo, C. (2010). Writing a life: Representation in language and image. *Transnational Curriculum Inquiry*, 7(2), 47-61. Retrieved from: <http://nitinat.library.ubc.ca/ojs/index.php/tci>
- Prendergast, M., (2009). Introduction: The phenomena of poetry in research. In C. Leggo & P. Sameshima (Eds.) *Poetic inquiry: Vibrant voices in the social sciences* (pp.xix-xlii). Boston, MA: Sense Publishers.
- Prendergast, M. (2012). Poetic inquiry and the social poet. In S. Thomas, A. Cole & S. Stewart (Eds.). *The art of poetic inquiry* (pp. 488- 502). Halifax, NS: Backalong Books.
- Ruebsaat, G. (2009). Constellation. *Island Writer Magazine*, 7(1), 35-38.
- Ruebsaat, G. (2013a). *Pathways Not Posted*. (3rd edition) J. Huebert (Ed). Victoria, BC: Quadra Books. (pp. 7-14)
- Ruebsaat, G. (2013b). Questions I always wanted to ask my mother. In P. Lane (Ed). *In That Wild Place*, (p.14). Lantzville, BC: Leaf Press.
- Soutar-Hynes, M. (2012). Points of articulation: A letting go and a reaching towards - a poet's journey. In S. Thomas, A. Cole & S. Stewart (Eds.). *The art of poetic inquiry* (pp. 427- 445). Halifax, NS: Backalong Books.
- Stibbe, M. (2003). *Women in the Third Reich*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Struthers, J. (1983). *No fault of their own: Unemployment and the Canadian welfare state 1914-1941*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Wiebe, S. & Snowber, C. (2012) *En/lived vulnere: A poetic of im/possible pedagogies*. In S. Thomas, A. Cole & S. Stewart (Eds.) *The art of poetic inquiry* (pp. 446-

Heather McLeod

Heather McLeod, an art educator at Memorial University, pursues an interpretive/critical research agenda. Besides her parents and poetry project her ongoing research includes an examination of teacher dress; an initiative to understand student experiential learning in an art museum setting and an inquiry into the process of becoming a researcher.

Gisela Ruebsaat

Gisela Ruebsaat is Legal Analyst for the Ending Violence Association and also a poet based in Victoria BC. Her work explores personal and collective histories and how these shape the development of our professional and more lyrical, poetic voices. Her poems have appeared in literary magazines, anthologies and academic journals.

The Lid, the Leggo, and the Super Leggo

A Troubling Account of Positivism

Salon

In "Imagining Futures: The Public School and Possibility" Maxine Greene (2000) writes that "For all the talk of global citizenship, multiculturalism, social justice and the rest" what we have instead is "Distancing, abstractness, [and] wishful acceptance" (p. 271). Greene has no trouble identifying the cause. It is "untroubled positivism" (p. 272), and she explains that in the last decade there has been an unexamined split between facts and values that has taken over.

Bringing forward the Deweyan ideal of democracy, Greene calls us to avoid the formulaic, the sound bite, the already named, and she instead imagines a public where there is a speculation beyond mere facts. Noting Greene's call for speculation beyond the facts, Freud's influence on psychoanalytic theory, and Leggo's influence on me, what follows is a poem that attempts to trouble untroubled positivism.

The Lid, the Leggo, and the Super Leggo

Your clothes, your toothpaste,
and your car all have names,

obedient to the exacting
promise of history: but it is forgetfulness
that preserves, a parachute that opens
when you stop struggling
against the how or why of this,
called hegemony, or that,
counter hegemony, this Kafkaesque,
that the Beatles--so exhaustible
this naming of things, theories.

In the genealogy of first names,
a son Wayne wonders
if his name names his father's fetish for hockey
or if who he is or has been is better
than who he is held to be?

Why do you name your dog freedom,
so you can run around the neighbourhood
late at night calling for him?
How you wish you would, like a hat
forgotten on a train
sleep through the night
and wake with no regard
for whose head you must shield
from the weather, the news,
from strange things that might happen.

Is not forgetting better than naming
free of yourself, your worries,
the ritual and circumference of your world?
When you disappear into the unnamed,
it is a gentle descent into a lagoon,
at first sky blue, then navy,
then dark, bluedark, like an old closet
where a little light filters through
a slatted door ajar to the world of sotto voce,
where low purring voices pretend to know
the name game: meow, meow, meow.
I am the prettiest, meow, meow, meow.

You almost hear the wind
in its poem, each line forgetting itself
even as the evidence of its passing
stirs up the waves overhead, I keep
forgetting you are asleep, underwater,
because after everything
everyone says there is only water
in your ears, plans spoken in another room
music in a foreign language.

References

Greene, M. (2000). Imagining futures: The public school and possibility. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 32(2), 267-280.



The Metaphor of the Mirror Box:

Poetic Reflections on Contemplation in Creative Analytical Practices Salon

In a recent essay, Walsh (2012) examines “being present to the artifacts derived from research” (p. 271). Instead of analyzing or interpreting as she might have done earlier in her research career, Walsh’s intention is to dwell: She says, “I sit with, listen to, write from particular moments of the research process” (p. 274).

In writing the poem below I have noticed how Walsh’s process is similar to my own. Along the way I have wondered: what is this self that I seem to be experiencing when I feel like I am more present than when I am less so? How is it that in trying to listen, or in becoming absorbed in waiting or sitting, that when I expel effort I am often giving it too much effort? How might I combine acting and being in my thought-world?

After writing this poem I am now wondering about writing, and how it can be both an act of listening and speaking. I seem to be recognizing that I am not a person who is always the same, while there seem to also be moments where I am being more than I am presently.

Mirror Box

With his right hand, he writes his name
over and over, precisely

in the center of the page, four letters evenly spaced,
looking as if they have been type set

his name featured in black against a sea of white,
page after page the perfect forgetfulness of self

absorption. In his left hand, or what he sees
as his left hand, he holds her name

scrawled at the bottom of a list of explanations.
Absent a limb—is that what she was?

The pain is real. So much for the empirical
eye that says what is not there

cannot be felt. If loving is historical,
then what is it to remove oneself from love,

recorded and erased the same way history slips
out of relevance, fading to white, even written over,

as if all it takes is a careless stroke, yet he—
there is no doubt—is not careless.

There is surety of who he is in these moments
writing himself into reality, how in the execution

of each letter he is self contained, a mirror box,
nothing more to be done than see himself,

an assemblage of phantom limbs, the child
writing
lines composed of the refusal to give himself
over to others,

their language, their forms, their hopes and
dreams,
their expectations. In his name and his name
only

he experiences himself. It is the first
commandment,
to have no others before thee.

This is writing most pure—the process cleanses,
and the product contains not a jot of
exaggeration,

is simply all that can be said, no more or less,
his name, his name, his name, his name, his
name.

References

Susan W. (2012). Contemplation, artful writing: Research with internationally educated female teachers. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 18, 273-285. DOI: 10.1177/1077800411431553

Sean Wiebe

Sean Wiebe is an assistant professor at the University of Prince Edward Island, teaching courses in language and literacy, curriculum theory, critical pedagogy and foundations. His research interests are in writing pedagogy, digital literacies, and arts-based methodologies. His career has spanned 20 years in education. A more complete bibliography is available at <http://upei.academia.edu/SeanWiebe>

Practice in Front of a Mirror

Investigating our Practice

There are countless attractive options people do not pursue because they judge they lack the capacities for them.” (Bandura 1993)

Teachers are an interesting group people. We have many strengths: we are confident in our content and pedagogical knowledge; we are courageous in our ability to get up every day and stand in front of a group of people who may or may not want to hear what we have to say; and we have faith that by our commitment to standing there, helping that group understand the content, we are making a positive difference in the world. We are an interesting group because all these attributes seem to fade when we are asked to share our practice with our colleagues: people who have chosen the same profession as us and for all intents and purposes have the same goals, hopes, and fears as we do. All of a sudden, our confidence in the program we have built is shaky (or we become desperately protective of it), our public-speaking fears assert themselves, and the faith that our voice can make a difference all but evaporates.


This phenomenon has been the subject of professional conversations and research studies alike. In their book *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*, Andy Hargreaves and Michael Fullan point to the combined triad of humility (bordering on self-effacement), pride, and fear of incompetence as a major barrier to teachers sharing their practice (pp. 107-108). They report that a teacher can exist in these states simultaneously, driving teachers to retreat to their classroom and away from opportunities that might expose them to collegial scrutiny. One of the big ideas of *Professional Capital* is that if these feelings can be acknowledged and assuaged, teachers will be able to grow and flourish in their practice and their professional communities.

As I see it, a key is for each of us to acknowledge these feelings within ourselves and take basic steps to start to mitigate them. One such step is to consider presenting, or sharing, our teaching practice with our colleagues. There is research showing that active participation in a community, such as formally sharing one's practice with colleagues, increases an individual's sense of efficacy, or belief in one's capacity for success (Beck 1999; Cantrel & Hughes 2008). In addition, Cantrel & Hughes identify that “changes in efficacy and implementation are cyclical and reciprocal” (p.26), meaning that the more we step out of our comfort zone and take the risk of sharing with our colleagues, the more positive impact that choice will have on our teaching and future professional sharing.

I believe quite strongly that sharing our practice—our process, products, questions, etc—is one of the most transformational actions we can take as professionals, whether it be presenting to a group of educators at a conference or sitting down to attempt a collaborative project with colleagues at school. I was extremely lucky at the beginning of my career to fall in with a band of teachers who held this belief. They fostered in me the values associated with a community of practice long before I was introduced to that term.

I have followed a slightly different path than many early career teachers. My practicum was longer than average and I found a place in the professional community of BCTELA long before I successfully won a continuing contract and found a school community to call my own. I have often felt that my professional development Self has outpaced my classroom teaching Self and when I completed my Master of Education degree a few years ago my perception of the disparity increased. I certainly continue to battle some of the emotional states mentioned above by Hargreaves and Fullan but I am working to recognize that my identity as an educator and as a contributing member of my professional communities need not follow a pre-determined path.

I want to share my evolution as a workshop presenter with the hope that it may de-mystify and remove some of the obstacles other teachers feel stand between them and this kind of professional growth. In Albert Bandura's (1993) words, “there are countless attractive options people do not pursue because the judge they lack the capacities for them” (p130).



I facilitated my first workshop as a pre-service teacher. My English sponsor, David Ellison, saw something insightful in a series of poetry lessons I had taught and he convinced me to present at the Vernon school district professional development conference. I was so very green: a brand new teacher, had never presented to a professional group outside of class presentations in teacher-school. I was nervous and spent hours preparing an interactive workshop for teachers to explore, use, and critique a graphic organizer I had designed for poetry analysis. I tried to figure out what experiences teachers would want. On the morning of the conference, I had to put aside my anxiety and assume the “confident teacher” persona to which I had become accustomed over the previous six months of my internship practicum. In the end, only two people attended my session; one was retiring in four months and was friends with my sponsor, the other was part of the district pro-d committee and had been assigned to open my session and to thank me at the end. The lack of interest in my session and low attendance was at once disappointing and a huge relief.

This experience was important in two ways. First, I learned that it’s not so horrible or humiliating if no one registers for your workshop—that I won’t be run out of the profession if it happens. Second, and arguably most importantly, I was now a member of a sub-community within the larger community of educators: I had offered to share my practice with my colleagues and had been prepared to do so. This was now a part of my identity as a teacher. The conference presentation had occurred in tandem with the publication of the same poetry analysis graphic organizer in BCTELA’s professional journal, *Update* (the journal has since changed its name to *English Practice*). This was also thanks to Dave’s confidence in me and his persistent encouragement. Perhaps due to my willingness to participate in his community of practice, the following year Dave orchestrated my being asked to join the BCTELA executive to fill in a suddenly vacated position. My decision to join the BCTELA executive has been the single biggest influence on my teaching career, but that can be a story for another time.

Once I joined the BCTELA executive I successfully avoided presenting at conferences for a handful of years. Now that I met regularly with such talented and experienced educators (I was still a new teacher and, as such, did not have a school community of my own) I felt completely inferior and figured—a little irrationally, I’ll admit—that if I agreed to present at the October provincial conference that I would dispel the mirage which had formed around me that I could be counted among the others who sat at the executive table and that I would illustrate why I shouldn’t be there at all. Every year, as we prepared the October conference program, I would deftly avoid any identification of a possible session I could lead. Partly, this was because since I did not have a steady teaching contract, I really didn’t have a forum to explore my pedagogical ideas and hone them into what I felt might be shareable practice. Every year, though, I felt a little like a fraud, holding an office but unable to step up and fulfill the expectation of leadership the executive embodied.

At this time I was also working at Vancouver Kidsbooks with a woman named Susan Ma. As we became friends, her passion and extensive knowledge of graphic texts, story-telling, and alternative media inspired me to see practical pedagogical implications of comics and graphic novels. She taught me much of what I know today about graphic texts. Then came 2008, and the release of an updated ELA 8-12 IRP with an expanded definition of “text” to include graphic forms. BCTELA was supporting teachers in its implementation and was co-hosting a district conference in Courtenay. I could avoid attention no longer, but now I had a collaborator: Susan and I prepared a workshop introducing the academic applications of graphic texts which we would go on to present numerous times over the next few years. I was consistently surprised at how many people were interested in what we had to say, and that we regularly had participants who were well versed in our topic already but who told us how much they got out of our session. After a few years I started presenting our workshop on my own (a bit nerve-wracking the first times) but now I had a workshop I could share when I felt called upon to contribute something.

Whenever I felt that my material was stale—I still didn’t have a continuing contract—I could tap into one of the many educators with whom I had made connections through my workshops. I had built a mini-network, a community of practice specific to teachers interested in teaching graphic texts, who had gone and used in their classrooms what I had shown them in my workshop, and were often willing to share bits of their experiences.

Here reveals my next hurdle: no matter how successful my sessions, there was always a palpable imbalance of experience. I could often claim to know more about my session topic than my audience, but my audience practically always had more classroom experience than I did. In the beginning, the difference was often in double digits. This is still sometimes the case.

Something I continue to learn is that my growth as an educator is most substantial when I collaborate. Collaboration is rooted in social-constructivist beliefs which dictate that I learn better when I share, absorb and reject ideas. I believe my ideas and practice will be stronger if they are put under scrutiny. Collaboration happens when I build a workshop with a colleague, but it can also occur when I present alone. My interaction with the other educators in front of me as I share a piece of my practice becomes a mutual exploration and reflection.

As I write this, I am preparing for my first workshop presentation at an international conference. It is the next step along my path as I add to my community of practice, reaching across borders. Since my first disastrous but formative session in Vernon before, even, the official start of my career, I have presented at local events in seven school districts and regions, and at six provincial conferences. I have added to my collection of workshop topics on which I feel well versed enough to stand up and share. I think it's worth noting, too, that I have always presented with someone the first time I have presented on a topic at a major conference. I don't see this as a weakness, but as part of my process of growth.

I will always share my practice in some form or another, whether it be conference presentations, journal articles, engaging in discussion on the BCTELA executive, or through a venue I have yet to find. I believe this is how our professional system must work: we share and give back and transform ourselves and each other in the process. I still feel like a bit of a fraud at times. I may very well feel that way as I open my session in Portland, Oregon, in a few weeks. The best way I've learned to interrupt that feeling is to continue stepping into the spotlight—the preparation I do for a workshop helps me reflect on my practice and recognize my strengths and my stretches. The moments during a presentation feeds my need for collectiveness, and strengthens my community. The time immediately after a workshop allows me to experience some recognition for the work I do as an educator, something which I believe every teacher should experience. Growth can be uncomfortable and scary but should be inevitable for us as educators.

Celia Brogan

Celia Brogan is a teacher-librarian in Vancouver. She completed her MEd at UBC in 2012 where she focused on teacher collaboration and ecological metaphors in learning communities. She has served on the BCTELA executive for almost nine years and is grateful for the opportunities for growth and community BCTELA has afforded her.



Developing Your Web Wings:

Teacher Professional Development for Using Web 2.0 Tools in Elementary Language Arts

Investigating our Practice

Introduction

Remember when you were a child, swinging on a swing? You went so high that it frightened you a little, while at the same time, it felt like you could fly. You knew that pumping your legs, something that came almost automatically, made you soar. We are four women from Alberta and Manitoba who are working on graduate degrees in either Elementary Education, Library, or Educational Psychology. Although we have never met face to face, we came together through an online graduate course at the University of Alberta on Web 2.0 and Emerging Technologies. We arrived at the course with varying experiences and understanding of the social and interactive nature of the online tools and applications to which we were introduced through the course. Our major assignment, which inspired this paper, was to create a training series or seminar for elementary teachers. We were grouped together because of our interests and experiences with young learners and together created a website, called Web Wings, to help elementary teachers learn how to incorporate, or better incorporate, Web 2.0 into their classroom practices.

Imagine now settling onto your favourite childhood swing. Soar with us as we discuss our experiences in learning a few Web 2.0 tools, what those experiences taught us, and what we learned about using online training modules for individualized professional development.

Flying 101: What is Web 2.0?

Before we begin, we should clarify what we mean when we say Web 2.0. Web 2.0 is often referred to as the new wave, or the second generation, of the Internet. Although the term Internet is still commonly used, it is important to understand that the internet of the past, Web 1.0 differs significantly from the internet of today, Web 2.0. According to O'Reilly (2005, 2009), who coined the term in 2004, Web 2.0 is a platform for cost effective computer applications and services in which users control their own data through the use of a specific collection of approaches or techniques. It is built upon the premise of user participation and collective intelligence to create most of what is found online. It also involves re-mixable and transformable data sources which can be used among multiple devices. Because its social and interactive nature transcend physical and time boundaries, Web 2.0 is also considered a culture changing phenomenon. Successful Web 2.0 companies are those that have many users and learn from them to build upon their contributions. A good example of this is Wikipedia - a site where users can create encyclopedia-like pages as well as edit existing ones. It is as if all people using that site or application are a connected community using and building the space together.

The web is no longer a collection of static pages that describe or tell about something. The information on Web 2.0 is being created collectively and is taking on multiple forms and genres, such as videos, podcasts, multimodal (Kress, 2003) text webpages, cartoons and comics, music, photos, online books, advertising, and many types of apps and games as ways to communicate information. A major difference between Web 1.0 and Web 2.0 is that today the web is very collaborative and can be created by multiple users who may or may not even know each other. Web 2.0 offers a platform for social networking and personal and professional expression and sharing of knowledge and ideas. For people of all ages, it is a place to connect with others who have similar interests, find and corroborate information, and receive feedback or help from a wide and varied audience. With its open software and interactive sharing model, creating your online identity (Blowers, 2010) and personal learning networks (PLNs) have become significant in Web 2.0 use.

To begin our own Web 2.0 assignment, we arranged our first meeting using Google Hangouts, an online video chat application. As we discussed our task to create a professional development training website for online tools, we discovered that we not only had to create a comprehensive website for teachers of all skill levels, but we needed to learn the tools for ourselves as well. We found that learning to use Web 2.0 tools requires learning by doing; however, we know that it is beneficial to learn the basics to get started, as well as to learn some tips and tricks along the way.

Fear of Flying: Finding Support within Theory and Experience

Our website, this paper, and the research on which it is based, is situated within a constructivist paradigm, meaning we believe that knowledge is constructed and not simply acquired. Our work also reflects sociocultural perspectives of literacy, that is, that the construction of knowledge occurs in social and cultural experiences (Vygotsky, 1978). Web 2.0 experiences whereby users collaborate to create material online are excellent examples of socially constructing knowledge. For example, posting and viewing videos on a site such as You Tube or Vimeo, involves sharing information but also has the added element of user comments, likes, or votes. This type of feedback contributes to how and what other users might post and might influence changes to or revising of current videos.

We also support the belief that literacy is no longer considered to be a singular entity but that multiliteracies exist that are linked to the context in which they occur (Gee, 1996; Street, 1984). We consider reading as making meaning based on information given by the text, the reader's funds of knowledge, and through interactions with others in social circumstances. An online environment exposes readers to many literacy experiences, often synchronously. Web 2.0 is not about acquiring information; Web 2.0 is about working with others to form understandings through multiliteracy experiences from online production to evaluation and feedback.

From current research, our own experiences, and from talking with other teachers, we found that educators, especially in the elementary grades, tend to approach using the Internet, or Web 2.0, in their classrooms with caution. We recently asked a group of Master's students, who are also full-time teachers, their thoughts on using Web 2.0 with their students. They were quick to share their fears and reservations. They worry about what little eyes may accidentally see online. They worry that the applications may be too sophisticated for young children. They worry that by adopting Web 2.0 into their teaching that they need to "let go" of other best practices. They are concerned that they do not know enough about technology to teach it. Those worries seem likely to grow, even though new teachers and many veterans appreciate the teaching potential of the Internet and digital devices. Furthermore, educational technology advocates insist the teacher is still essential to any technology-based effort to improve schools but many teachers do not feel equipped to try (Quillen, 2012, p. 4, para 3). In a recent study by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (2012) it was reported that 62% of teachers stated that personal comfort level was one of their biggest barriers to incorporating technology into their classrooms (p. 2). Teo (2006) is also of the view that learning with computers depends principally on the learners' mindset and readiness to take hold of the equipment suggesting that teacher confidence can be a large roadblock to Web 2.0 use in classrooms.



Prior to our learning of a few Web 2.0 tools and applications, we felt the reason for our own lack of confidence and willingness to pursue a classroom more fully immersed in technology was our fear that using the Internet was not pedagogically sound. In the past we felt discomfort in not knowing how to properly integrate certain tools to reach learning outcomes, and we not only wanted the students to have “fun” but to truly learn as well. We feel that our comfort levels would have been much higher with more technology integration training during our university undergraduate studies, along with more individualized professional development opportunities during our teaching. Teachers who are uncomfortable teaching with the Internet at school are often reluctant to stray from the tried and true even though they might see that Web 2.0 has the potential for good learning opportunities.

The fear factor has been undermining the process of progress in using a variety of technology tools in the educational classroom. The fear is of the unknown or what the media projects as potential danger has been hyped up to a greater degree than is actually the case (De Abreu, 2010, p. 29, para 2).

We were afraid to swing too high, too fast, and too soon. We felt a little out of control, when good teaching practice dictates being in control; being the classroom expert does not lend itself to the unpredictability that an unfamiliar technology might present.

Aside from concerns, worries, apprehensions, and personal reasons, we know that teachers, including ourselves, are curious about how to bring Web 2.0 into classroom teaching. In a study by the Pew Research Centre (2013), a reputable polling centre in the United States, researchers found that 92% of teachers feel that the Internet and digital technologies give students more access to material, content, and resources in the classroom and 69% of teachers feel that, for themselves, the Internet allows them to share ideas with other educators (p. 52).

It seems that teachers generally want to understand more about what is available online so they can be effective users and teachers of web tools; however, when compared with studies of teachers’ confidence, only 56% of teachers say they are very confident in their ability to learn to use new digital tools and technologies (p. 29). Reflecting on our own experiences and those described in research and public polling, we began to wonder why there is discrepancy between teachers wanting to engage in technology use in their classrooms and actually using technology. This is particularly curious to us, as those teachers have stated that they understand that technology should be infused into the curriculum, in light of current world-wide trends. Specifically, our purpose in this writing is to share insight into the following questions: If teacher confidence and apprehension plays a role in Web 2.0 use in school, how can teachers find the professional development support they need to meet the literacy needs of their students? And, why should teachers use Web 2.0 in elementary classrooms to support language arts development and what are some good tools with which to start?

Earning Our Wings: How We Began Our Own Journeys of Professional Self-Development

Historically, the nature of literacies change in response to advancements in technology and has done so for thousands of years (Wolf, 2008). We are currently experiencing rapidly advancing technology that is transforming our personal and social lives but it is also affecting how children learn and interact socially. Williams (2008) suggests that the convergence of work and leisure through information and communications technology (ICT) and

Web 2.0 had begun to generate profound implications for formal schooling (p. 218). Technology use, especially use of Web 2.0, its tools and applications, is filtering into daily curriculums in schools and teachers need straightforward resources to help them use and teach these tools. Using Web 2.0 does not mean that there is less time for other activities; it means approaching language arts learning in a different way. Our best response to provide training for elementary teachers to learn Web 2.0 tools was to create an open access and free website. Our website, Web Wings, can be found at (<https://sites.google.com/a/ualberta.ca/webwings/>). This website contains a series of training modules geared towards teachers wanting to explore new tools but can also be used directly with students by omitting some sections such as those that explain processes such as how to set up virtual classrooms. We discovered through creating this website how simple it is to tie many web tools and applications into curricular goals, not just in language arts but across all curricular disciplines. For example, even if a website is geared toward a particular school subject, a math games site for instance, students are often still required to read, write, listen, view, and represent information, developing both their mathematics and literacy together.

Although this project began as a class assignment aimed at learning some new tools ourselves, we additionally learned a vast deal about teacher professional development, how to use various web applications with young children, and how Web 2.0 might fit into regular classroom practices. The website we created is but one of many available training sites, and our aim here is not to promote our site, but to draw teachers' attention to ways they can independently seek Web 2.0 training and specific professional development to meet their needs. We want to share our process of creating the website because doing so caused us to research, reflect upon our teaching practices, and think of ways to use such tools or applications safely and efficiently in the classroom. We also took into consideration whether the websites we recommended had additional costs or classroom options to maintain the privacy of the students using those online spaces. In sharing our thoughts, processes, and objectives for our teacher professional development for elementary teachers, we hope that you might benefit from our research and experiences as you seek out your own Web 2.0 development. We also hope that the tools that we have chosen within our modules help students develop literacies both within and outside of school and that teachers can see that there are benefits of using the Internet that extend beyond just developing computer skills.

Learning to Fly: Our Process and Understandings

Objectives of Web Wings for Educators

As we began our process of determining the objectives for our website we thought deeply about what we and other elementary teachers might expect from training in Web 2.0. We expected that our training modules could be used individually or as a whole staff. The following objectives guided our website development.

- 1) Creating an awareness of the usability of various Web 2.0 Tools in the classroom
- 2) Gaining a basic understanding of the twelve tools we have presented
- 3) Using any of these twelve tools straightaway, with the support of our modules using the text and screencasts
- 4) Accessing additional information and resources for any of our tools in our modules should they require further help
- 5) Implementing chosen Web 2.0 in the classroom resulting in learning from students by reaching curricular outcomes through the use of the tools
- 6) Offering Professional Development for staff
- 7) Assessing: The ability educators will have to use these web 2.0 tools as assessment tools
- 8) Enjoying using the tools, by both teachers and students; fun!



Our top priority for Web Wings was that it be user-friendly and straightforward. Our design of this site was built based on the premise that the user is able to navigate with ease and comfort in order to create a smooth and exciting learning experience. Our primary goal for this site is teacher learning and professional development.

For the layout, we decided to use tabs to separate information into meaningful chunks so as to not overwhelm the user. Weinschenk (2011) supports this by stating that people process information better when it is presented in bite-sized chunks (p. 62). In addition, within the slides of our modules we were mindful of Miller's Information Processing Theory (Kearsley, 2013a as cited in Miller, 1956) taking into consideration a person's short term memory of seven plus or minus two items. No slide in our modules will contain more than nine chunks of information. This also takes into account instructional design to reduce the cognitive load put on the reader (Wikipedia, 2013). Moreover, we made sure not to take away important content, rather, to present it in a simple way (Culatta, 2013). Along with minimal text on each page (less than 150 words), our use of screencasts within individual learning modules supports the incorporation of auditory and visual methods of communicating information to the learner (Wikipedia, 2013).

We learned from this research that teachers looking for professional development websites should seek training sites with an appropriate amount of text and information so that they may easily process the new information. For many new learners of Web 2.0, the amount of information can be overwhelming and sites that divided into smaller steps or stages may be more appropriate. This is also something very important to keep in mind while teaching children to use the sites as well, because they too will better process the learning in smaller and less overwhelming pieces.

A key theory we kept in mind with our site creation was that of Adult Learning (Cross, 1981 as cited in Kearsley, 2013b). Our audience targets adults, specifically educators of varying ages and skill levels. With that in mind, the design of our site had to account for the range of potential users within this category. For that reason, four principles from Cross' Adult Learning Theory that we felt matched the objectives of our site were taken into consideration:

1. Adult learning programs should capitalize on the experience of participants.
2. Adult learning programs should adapt to the aging limitations of the participants.
3. Adults should be challenged to move to increasingly advanced stages of personal development.
4. Adults should have as much choice as possible in the availability and organization of learning programs.

In our website we offered tools divided into novice, intermediate, and expert skill levels. We considered the vast selection of Web 2.0 tools available online and, as we explored them, discovered that some are much easier to use than others. The more advanced tools require expert digital literacy skills, such as knowing keyboard shortcuts, understanding HTML coding, and techniques such as graphic layering. As teachers look for Web 2.0 tools and applications for use in their classrooms, they might also consider that just as teachers have varying web experience, so do students. There are many tools available that can meet similar learning objectives but offer different levels of challenge as determined by the amount of experience required to use them. Not everyone needs to use the same tool at the same time; individual needs can be more easily met by offering a range of Web 2.0 sites.

Flying Gear: Our Tools

In addition to considering skill level required for the tools, not just for teachers to learn, but for elementary students to use, we also considered four major uses of Web 2.0 tools and applications. We divided the tools into the categories of communication, collaboration, creation, and curation. We believe that these categories also reflect common objectives in elementary curriculums, especially those for literacy development and language arts. To understand which category some tools fit into, we needed to think very broadly about not only the specific digital or computer skills the students would be learning but also what they would learn from interactive nature of being online.

The Web 2.0 tools we have chosen for modules in our site are as follows:

	Tools for Communication	Tools for Collaboration	Tools for Creation	Tools for Curation
Novice	Blogger	Diigo	Vimeo	Feedly
Intermediate	Ning	Survey Monkey	Voicethread	Zite
Expert	Bitstrips	Google Maps	Storybird	Pinterest

We chose these tools deliberately so that users would have a wide variety of options to suit their needs and interests. We wanted to cover all areas of communication, collaboration, creation, and curation equally across all skill levels. This also allows educators to start with a more basic tool in a target area and then progress to the intermediate and expert levels once they are comfortable; or simply begin with a more expert tool if they wish.

Packing Your Parachute: Pedagogy of Web Wings and Online Tutorial Websites

Parachutes and using a swing? Trying something new in the classroom requires a leap of faith. You want to know that your choices are supported, especially if you are the first in your school to try it. On a swing, the soft landing material, be it grass, sand, or something else, is your parachute. It is comforting to know that there is something supporting you. From a pedagogical standpoint we took into account Bloom's taxonomy to support our choices of tools. Churches (n.d.) categorized classroom activities in each level of Bloom's Taxonomy on the wiki educational origami and according to the definitions, keywords, and examples given, we have categorized our modules into the following levels of Bloom's Taxonomy. Some Web 2.0 tools can serve more than one function, thus, have the possibility of belonging in more than one category.

6	Creating	Voicethread	Storybird	Blogger
5	Evaluating		Google Maps	Diigo
4	Analysing	Survey Monkey	Google Maps	
3	Applying	Vimeo		
2	Understanding	Blogger	Ning	Diigo

1	Remembering	Diigo	Feedly	Zite
---	-------------	-------	--------	------

Next, our pedagogical knowledge of scaffolding as an aid in the learning process also helped shape the creation of the modules. We realize that learners will be more successful if they can build on prior knowledge. With this in mind, we created a series of shorter screencasts for each module, in which individuals can build upon previous steps and go at their own pace. This is in line with what Lajoie (2005) says about extending the idea of scaffolding beyond how it has traditionally been presented in an educational context: through the use of technology, scaffolding can be used appropriately for not only a community of learners but also for individuals, as the educator sees fit. Our site allows for educators to proceed comfortably at their own pace with the necessary supports in place. Web 2.0 offers plenty of opportunity for scaffolding. Interestingly though, because the Internet has many users who do collaborate and contribute, it does not need to be the teacher who scaffolds learning. Students can find support from each other within the classroom or from the wider Internet community. Discussion forums, help pages, or tutorial sites like Web Wings, can all support learning and growth.

Supporting the aspect of independence regarding learning with technology, Weinschenk (2011) says that people are motivated by autonomy and like to do things the way they want, when they want, with minimal help from others (p. 142). She alludes to examples such as online banking websites and renewing your driver's license online (p.142). We believe that professional development which can be achieved independently with online support when needed and will in turn benefit the learning of students in these educators' classrooms.

Achieving Take Off: Examples of Web Wings Website Pages for Language Arts Elementary Teachers

On a swing, to truly feel like you are flying requires imagination; otherwise swinging would just be moving back and forth. By tapping into your creativity, or connecting with the imagination of those around you, you can experience the thrill of flying.

We know young children today are drawn to colourful and multimodal web pages but overstimulation can cause them to miss important information. With advancements in graphics and video, it is possible to create a simple, yet interesting and engaging training session. We found that short and concise sites that use graphics and/or video were most useful in our own learning and tried to bring that into our website. We learned that when teachers seeking sites for teacher professional development to learn new tools to teach students, or to help them find sites themselves, look for engaging but simple training sites. Keep in mind that the help pages of the Web 2.0 tool itself might not be the best place for support. You can seek help from brief tutorials found on video hosting websites such as YouTube or Teacher Tube. Below are a few examples of design choices we made for our Web Wings website to keep it simple, clear and consistent.



Example of How Tools are Organized: Each group of tools has direct links to the training modules as well as their home sites.

Diigo, Using Diigo - Step 1: Introduction/Create an account




Diigo, Using Diigo - Step 1: Introduction/Create an account:



Storybird, Using Storybird - Dropping Artwork and Adding Text: We have added tips on how to use the specific features that will help teachers to use the tool in their classrooms.

Blogger, Winging it: Personal & Educational Use



Blogger Module

Winging it: Personal & educational use


Ideas for Blogging in Schools:

- **Student writing:** students can have an authentic audience for their work, and can develop a personal learning network that will comment on what they have posted.
- **e-portfolio:** a place for students to share their best work, including links to digital media they have produced.
- **Collaborative space:** a space where students can collaborate with other people online.
- **Class website:** a place to communicate information about the class and hold course materials.
- **Professional development:** share best practices with colleagues to develop your professional learning network.

Richardson (2010)

Slide 11 | Google Drive

Blogger, Winging It: Personal & Educational Use: Included are various ways each tool can be used practically and efficiently in the classroom as well as for personal and professional development.



Bitstrips slideshare

Additional Wingtips: Purchasing a subscription

Plans & Pricing

1,000 teachers join Bitstrips for Schools each week!

Teachers <small>For individual teacher accounts</small>	Schools & Districts <small>For 1-year volume licenses</small>
\$9.95/month for your first classroom	Price Calculator
\$4.95/month for additional classrooms	Number of Students: 200
Each classroom includes space for up to 40 students	\$300/year
Save 25% when you subscribe for the whole year!	\$1.50 per student/year
Next ➔	Lowest Rates when you subscribe for the year

Next ➔

Once your trial is up
you can purchase a
subscription for
your class or the
whole school.
Check out their
prices

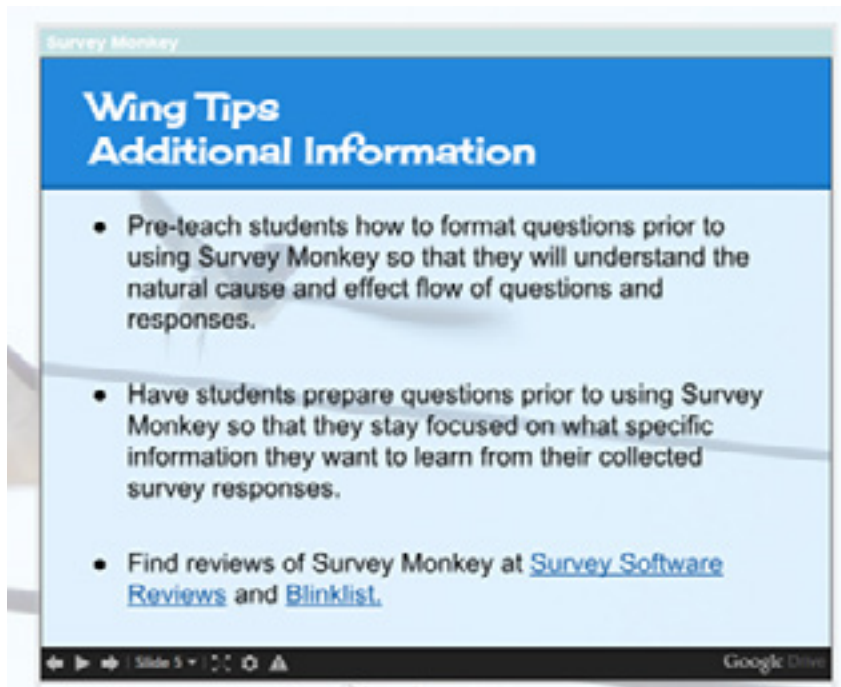
http://www.bitstripsforschools.com/pricing/

Slide 13 | Google Drive

Bitstrips, Additional Wingtips: Purchasing a subscription.

Wingtips include additional information such as how much money it costs for schools to subscribe, how to find the tool using different devices, such as smartphone or tablet apps, or give specific information that will make it easier to use the tool.

Survey Monkey, Additional Information



Survey Monkey, Additional Information: This includes tips to make integration of the tool smooth and meaningful. You will also find additional links for helpful information such as reviews of the tool.

Flight Plan: Planning for Web 2.0 Users in Your Classroom

There are a few variations to consider when approaching swings on a playground; you may have to wait for a free swing, you can take turns, or you can come back later. In any event, you have an idea of what to expect and what you hope the final result will be. The field of media literacy is divided among educators who are protectionists versus those educators who support the use of media to empower students. The protectionist seeks to inoculate students from the world of media (De Abreu, 2010). A secondary goal of this paper, and our website, is to affirm that using Web 2.0 is not just something else added to your already full teaching plate, but is a way to expand the good activities you do as a teacher to better meet the multimodal and digital literacy needs and strengths of your students. Even as early as kindergarten, most children enter school with some exposure to or experience with computers, tablets, phones, and even with basic keyboard and mouse skills. Research shows that many young students have access, either at home, in public places, or at school, to all kinds of digital media, and are spending more time during the day with them than ever before. Statistics show that children aged 0 to 5 are already using the Internet for at least one hour a day and most have some experiences with media and technology long before they begin formal school (Gutnick, Robb, Takeuchi, & Kotler, 2011, p. 14). The Internet is not just a place to search for information as it once was; it is a place where students can develop essential learning skills and can find others with similar interests with whom to interact.

We have found that because Web 2.0 presents so many options in terms of tools and applications, it is an excellent way to differentiate learning experiences in language arts classrooms. Students can learn to use tools that may be different from their classmates to suit their needs and interests or can use the same tools as their classmates but to a different level of sophistication. We have offered learning tools for novice, intermediate, and expert skill levels, as we recognize that students and teachers begin their experiences with technology at various places in their understanding (Browne, 1999; Marsh & Thompson, 2001).



Students in 2014, who likely have used computers and digital devices their whole lives, see Web 2.0 tools differently than adults learning for the first time. Observing the way that students navigate media can inform the practice of educators, possibly providing cross-curricular resources (De Abreu, 2010). Students can be a great resource to help you find the tools in which they are interested. Many Web 2.0 technologies and programs are student-centered, support collaborative learning, offer multiple opportunities for differentiated learning, and are aligned with constructivist views of learning.

Web 2.0 provides many opportunities to read, write, listen, speak, view, and represent knowledge, most often multimodally. There are various genres of text available online in which students can both read and contribute to easily. The tools with which we have created learning modules are geared towards elementary users, specifically children ages five and beyond and encourage literacy development across curricular subjects. Many of these tools can also offer choices about where to publish information, that is, either within a designated and controlled virtual classroom or to a more public audience on the web. Web 2.0 is becoming an integral part of our personal and professional lives, thus making it part of children's school lives all the more important.

Flying Basics: Useful Terms to Know to Better Understand Web 2.0

Among scholarly work relevant to education and technology exist terms that will help you to understand Web 2.0 from an educational standpoint. Of most relevance to educators beginning to explore Web 2.0 are the terms New Literacies, Digital Literacy, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The following significant terms and understandings can provide insight into what Web 2.0 means in relation to learning. Knowing the concepts and understandings behind these terms will help you to gain a better understanding of the skills and processes involved when engaging with the web.

The first definition is that of New Literacies and is provided by Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, and Cammack (2004) all of whom have done extensive research in education and technology. They suggest that the new literacies of the Internet and other ICTs include the skills, strategies, and dispositions necessary to successfully use and adapt to the rapidly changing information and communication technologies and contexts that continuously emerge in our world and influence all areas of our personal and professional lives. These new literacies allow us to use the Internet and other ICTs to identify important questions, locate information, critically evaluate the usefulness of that information, synthesize information to answer those questions, and then communicate the answers to others (p. 421).

Web 2.0 is considered to be a major contributor to new literacies development. As stated in the definition, new literacies are not bound to simple skill development but include using strategies and higher level thinking skills such as identifying, locating, evaluating, synthesizing, and communicating all of which can be done with careful selection of Web 2.0 tools.

The term, Information and Communication Technology/Technologies (ICT) is often used to refer to technologies that provide access to information through telecommunications, or communications technologies (<http://www.techterms.com/definition/ict>). These technologies include the Internet, wireless networks, cellular phones, and other devices such as tablets. One key characteristic of ICTs is that they involve worldwide communication in real time. ICTs also involve social networking on sites such as Facebook and Ning where people can connect with each other on a regular and almost instant basis. ICTs have

the potential to bring about radical change in teaching and learning in schools. According to Williams (2008), ICT has made possible an informal, flexible, and personalized provision of learning where users can get support at a global level through a variety of networks whereby individualized learning drives the agenda. The focus is on knowing how to learn and not just on subject matter (p. 222).

Digital literacy refers to how children and people are reading and writing on the web. The following definitions from <http://www.library.illinois.edu/diglit/definition.html> highlight how digital literacy includes both the skills required to critically search and navigate online as well as the skills required to create online data. Digital literacy is

- The ability to use digital technology, communication tools or networks to locate, evaluate, use and create information.
- The ability to understand and use information in multiple formats from a wide range of sources when it is presented via computers.
- A person's ability to perform tasks effectively in a digital environment... Literacy includes the ability to read and interpret media, to reproduce data and images through digital manipulation, and to evaluate and apply new knowledge gained from digital environments.

Digital literacy is using, creating, understanding, and performing tasks using Web 2.0 and other digital media. It can include knowing how to move the screen in your Internet browser up and down or how to write HTML code when designing a website. Digital literacy is about being able to effectively use Web 2.0 for your varied purposes.

Choosing the Right Swing: Why it is Important for Teachers and Children to Learn How to Use Web 2.0 Tools and Applications

21st century classrooms are diverse as ever and technological advances in education constantly keep educators and administrators on their toes. "There is near-universal agreement that schools must find ways to transform older teaching practices in order to harness the tools that students have at their disposal today" (Lehmann & Mcleod, 2012, p.1). We have previously discussed our observations that children, even the very young, are spending more and more time interacting with and using digital media but we want to illustrate how much time and access young children actually have to the Internet.

Comprehensive Canadian statistics on young children's use of technology and digital media do not exist or are limited; therefore, we must rely on our presumptions made from American or European studies. A research study conducted by Commonsense Media (2013), which is a reputable American non-partisan, not-for-profit organization, was carried out in both 2011 and 2013 on the media use of children ages zero to eight. Commonsense Media used probability sampling by randomly selecting participants with children ages zero to eight across the United States creating more generalizable results. 1,463 families completed the survey and included both listed and unlisted telephone numbers, cell-phone-only households, telephone and non-telephone households, and households with and without Internet access. The survey was also offered in both English and Spanish. Some of the significant results from this study suggest that of children ages zero to eight

- 96% have watched TV
- 90% have used a computer
- 81% have played console video games,
- 72% have played games or used apps on a portable device (cell phone, handheld gaming system, iPod, or tablet)
- 38% of children under age two have used a mobile device



Commonsense Media (2013) also suggest that 65% of lower income families (income less than \$30,000 per year) now have access to mobile and digital devices compared to only 22% in 2011. In addition, among lower income families, 20% own a tablet and 40% have high speed Internet access compared to higher income families (income greater than \$75,000 per year) where 63% own a tablet and 86% have high speed Internet access. Although the digital divide seems to persist, it appears that digital and mobile access to the Internet is increasing for lower income families.

This study can provide insight into how young children in Canada might use digital media and devices. Although we recognize that there are differences between Canada and the United States, we presume that both countries have similar access to and use of digital media. The Commonsense Media (2013) study suggests to us that many children are arriving at our classrooms with some previous experience with not just digital media like television but with digital devices and the Internet.

On average, children ages zero to eight spend one hour and 55 minutes a day using mobile media (Commonsense Media, 2013) but appear to shift their digital media habits around age eight when they increasingly open their eyes to the wide world of media beyond just television (Gutnick, Robb, Takeuchi, & Kotler, 2011). It has been reported that children ages eight and older can spend up to seven and a half hours a day consuming and using media (Rideout, Foer, & Roberts, 2010).

Children using and engaging with digital media and technologies do so because technology is embedded in our social interactions and daily life. Options to be online are becoming more readily available to those who live where Internet service is provided, as Internet browsers and apps are now built into mobile devices, such as phones and tablets, and wireless Internet (Wi-Fi) can be accessed in most locations. With ease of access, we as adults have become more reliant on technology to assist with our scheduling, finding information, communicating with others, and also for relaxation and pleasure. Thus, children become more aware of the role of technology in our lives and also use it for some, or all, of the reasons that we do. Many have grown up with ample access to digital media and use it on a regular basis.

Current research is beginning to question if children who have used digital technologies all their lives have differences in learning styles and preferences at school. An international large scale study called the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2011) examined students online, specifically their use of information technologies to learn. The PISA study highlighted that students who used information technologies and digital devices at home were more likely to be successful with higher level digital tasks at school. Because online and technology related experiences at home are more likely to be self-directed, students learned through experimentation in order to achieve their objectives (p. 210). PISA suggests that for schools to enable the effective use of ICT at school, teachers "could offer more project-based activities using ICT - particularly those that do not impose constraints on how to accomplish tasks but, rather, allow students to explore various approaches to problem-solving using ICT, much as they do when they use ICT at home" (p. 211). This, however, does not address the difficulty such an ICT assignment would pose for those students who have no internet access at home, or those who may require time at public computers, where screen time may be limited, to complete their expected class work. We do see accessibility to the Internet as a potential roadblock in using Web 2.0 tools; however, the most recent Statistics Canada student conducted in 2004 reported that less than 3% of schools in Canada did not have Internet access.

In addition to the skills, strategies, and concepts students learn through their use of Web 2.0, the Web also offers space for teachers to develop students' critical thinking skills. Besides its educational uses, Web 2.0 is a place where anyone can create fictitious content, consumers can shop online, businesses can advertise, and people can access entertainment; therefore, students are exposed to a plethora of information that may or may not be relevant to what they are learning. Critical thinking, according to Doddington (2007) is broadly seen as "the kind of logical thinking that helps us to analyze and make sense of, or interpret, all forms of situations or information so that the conclusions we draw from our interpretations are sound" (p. 449). By teaching students to think critically about what they are reading, viewing, and listening to online, we can help them to decide whether a claim is true, partially true, or false. We can teach them how to determine if the credentials and the suffix on the website will lead them to a genuine source of information. We can use online material to help students learn to study texts, images, and words from multiple perspectives in order to examine how power structures and inequalities are reflected in what others contribute, as well as to understand their own biases or opinions (Tsai, Chen, Chang, & Chang, 2013). Critical thinking through the use of Web 2.0 tools can lead students to see ways they can take action to promote social justice in our world and to see whose voices are heard and whose are missing from the conversations in which they read and contribute. Moreover, Bohley (2010) states that "Web 2.0 tools help people build online communities for creativity, collaboration, and sharing" (para. 2). As educators, we know this aspect is critical in Language Arts instruction as well as the big picture of developing students into contributing members of society. Also, Buffington (2008) states that "what differentiates these technologies from previous aspects of the Web is the social interaction that is involved, the ability of users to create and disseminate content, the ability of the users to rate and "tag" content, and the free availability to anyone with Internet access" (para. 1 as cited in Freedman, 2006).

We have come to understand that Web 2.0 in its very nature is user created and is built upon the contributions and feedback given by those who participate. This focus on social interaction and collaboration in our classrooms today make us feel even more inclined to utilize these very collaborative and worthwhile Web 2.0 tools available to us. All in all, if we can strengthen our class morale and community by way of these online resources, we are positively engaging our students in becoming lifelong learners. Web 2.0 programs, such as the ones we selected for our professional development website offer plenty of opportunity for students to create and communicate in self-directed ways through tools that encourage user input to create something original.

Choosing the Right Swing Seat: Web 2.0 & Curriculum Connections

Feeling comfortable in the seat of your swing is essential; if the seat is too loose, you may feel unsafe, too snug and you are uncomfortably confined. We feel that engaging in teacher professional development, especially for elementary language arts teachers, through training websites such as Web Wings will help teachers engage students in ways that meet their curricular, interest, and technology needs and encourage them to become excited to explore these Web 2.0 tools, all the while strengthening their Language Arts abilities. Web 2.0 can be connected to the curriculums of school and the curriculums of life (Aoki, 1993). Curriculums of school involve understandings typically associated with school, such as



knowledge and skills in specific subject areas. Curriculums of life involve what actually happens in classrooms, and can be defined as “curriculum that is grounded in the immediate daily world of students as well as in the larger social, political contexts of their lives” (Portelli & Vibert, 2001, p. 63). Students, even in their elementary school years are developing an online presence and identity, or digital footprint, in our society; therefore, it seems reasonable that they are taught in school how to manage this while being responsible and honest about it. To support this, in Manage Your Digital Footprint, Kuehn states that “many of our students’ lives are being lived online” (2010). As teachers, we can begin teaching this to students as young as possible and act as role models, demonstrating how best be a responsible digital citizen.

To illustrate the importance of directly teaching students what it means to be a digital citizen consider this example of ours that was learned the hard way. A classroom project that we assigned included the use of GoAnimate, where students were to create and share animated videos. The assignment incorporated science and language arts; specifically, it was to tell the process of photosynthesis through a story by creating characters and scenes with this cloud-based Web 2.0 tool. Students had the ability to watch others’ work and comment. Unfortunately, there were comments made that were unkind and distasteful. Later, we realized that the students were not given enough direction on what digital citizenship means and the permanency and impact your digital footprint leaves. A series of lessons after this incident were given that included various exercises to help students grasp the idea of digital citizenship and being responsible for what you say through posts or comments online. Some activities included students searching their names as well as their parents on various search engines, brainstorming what they “stand for” in the outline of a footprint, watching impactful videos on the meaning of your digital dossier, practicing creating safe passwords, role playing cause and effect scenarios, and simply talking about how they want others to view them now and in their future. Continuing work with GoAnimate after all of this proved to be successful in terms of appropriate and respectful use of Web 2.0 by students. It also created a stronger community in the class where students increased positive and encouraging comments online to peers. We learned that if we teach students what is right and what is wrong, they will practice what they have learned. Students want to act appropriately, but if we do not directly model how this is done, they will not have the skills to do so.

Web 2.0 includes participating in conversations online by contributing thoughts, ideas, products such as comics or books, and feedback to others. In Publishers, Participants All, Richardson (2011) suggests a few other activities such as blog posts, VoiceThread stories, YouTube videos, or photo montages, which teachers can use to encourage students to recognize and consider the value of an audience, not just in a social sense but in a participatory learning sense. We are living in a participatory culture whereby all are welcome and encouraged to share what they know and think; Web 2.0 tools not only help students express who they are through a variety of mediums, but also increase their awareness of others’ lives and opinions.

Web 2.0 can be used to help students develop skills and knowledge that are related to mandated curriculums, such as programs of studies. Teachers can seek information pertaining to topics of study through online sources such as websites, online encyclopedia, informational videos and podcasts, and associated lesson plans and activities. In addition to being a source of information, Web 2.0 can provide a platform for students to create, collaboration, curate, and communicate which are common outcomes in

most language arts curriculums across Canada. The tools we have chosen offer opportunities for students to engage in both content area and literary reading and writing, and to participate in activities around chosen topics.

It is widely recognized that for development of overall language, communication abilities, and literacy, students engage in the six dimensions of language arts. The receptive dimensions are reading, listening, and viewing and the expressive dimensions include writing, speaking, and representing. Web 2.0 tools are much more than just reading and writing and include experiences in which students can also develop their listening, speaking, viewing, and representing skills, such as creating and listening to/viewing podcasts, videos, webpages, comics, and many other multimodal opportunities.

One intention of Web 2.0 is to allow users to choose from a variety of experiences to develop their whole selves, both in and out of school. Experiences can be individualized and differentiated based on students' needs and interests which makes learning very student centred and student led. Web 2.0 also allows students to work together in collaboration, locally and globally, on the Web, and encourages constructivist learning. Paily (2013) writes that in constructivist learning environments learners bring their own prior experiences and beliefs in order to construct knowledge in multiple ways, using a variety of tools, resources, and contexts (p. 39). He continues to note that "the Web is where constructivist learning can take place. The Web provides access to rich sources of information, encourages meaningful interactions with content, and brings people together to challenge, support, or respond to each other" (Khine, 2003, p. 22-23, as cited in Paily, 2013) and suggests that Web 2.0 facilitates knowledge creation through open communication and collaboration.

Landing Gear: Conclusion

Web Wings, and other online Web 2.0 training websites or tutorials, can be the gentle, helping push to get you started swinging on your own. When you have experienced the thrill of soaring with supported Web 2.0 tools, you will feel confident in exploring other online learning opportunities. Let learning our sampling of tools be like your landing gear, the surface under the swing. Once you have experienced soaring, it is nice to have a soft landing where you can reflect on the whole experience, recharge and dream about your next adventure. We believe that a shift towards teaching and learning with Web 2.0 will no doubt change the way teachers teach and students learn. To illustrate this, Richardson (2010) says that "in many ways, these technologies are demanding that we re-examine the way we think about content and curriculum, and they are nurturing new, important shifts in how to best teach students" (p. 149). Through engagement in Web 2.0, students are not only learning skills and strategies, they are becoming part of a participatory culture. Richardson concludes that "we need to help students understand more than just the safety and ethics of participating online; we also have to give them opportunities throughout the curriculum to find and follow their passions and publish meaningful, quality work for real global audiences to interact with" (2011).

In our classrooms, when we implemented and incorporated Web 2.0 tools into our elementary grades teaching, we saw an increase in student engagement. Students were motivated to try something new, experimenting with all of the settings and options to create their own



personal, unique learning experience. At times, they even surprised us by pointing out different ways to navigate the tools. For example, using Survey Monkey, a combined grade 3/4 class was able to see a class snapshot using the graphing tool, to show their reading preferences. Within the same class, they were able to turn an informal survey, about what students would want to have in their school library in the future, into oral and written presentations with 3D models.

In order to keep the best interests of students at the core of our teaching principles, we as educators must approach teaching willingly and passionately. This requires us to be lifelong learners in order to better the future of our students, and consequently, the world. There is no denying that professional development involving Web 2.0 is essential in today's teaching models. Web Wings is but one example of the many training websites available to teachers to learn how to use Web 2.0 in classrooms. We have taken the basic training and coaching that is often available on the tools' main sites and applied the tool to classroom application. Nonetheless, this is just an example of a place to start or continue your exploration of what Web 2.0 can offer in terms of your language arts planning and teaching. Let's push our comfort zone and open our minds to helping our students achieve great things by expanding the boundaries of our classrooms to the world. Web 2.0 has allowed students to connect and collaborate with others across the globe and make a difference in the world. This is both revolutionary and powerful. Regardless of your skill level with Web 2.0 there is always a comfortable place to start and limitless opportunities to soar!

References

- Aoki, T. (1993). Legitimizing lived curriculum: Towards a curricular landscape of multiplicity. *Journal of Curriculum and Supervision*, 8(3), 255-268.
- Beattie, D. & Plante, J. (2004). Connectivity and ICT integration in Canadian elementary and secondary schools: First results from the information and communications technologies in schools survey, 2003-2004. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada.
- Bohley, K. A. (2010). Web 2.0: What is it and is it for me? *American Journal of Business Education*, 3(7), 7-9. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/734109917?accountid=14474>
- Blowers, H. (2010). From realities to values. Retrieved from <http://www.infotoday.com/cilmag/may10/Blowers.shtml>
- Bozarth, J. (2002). No time to panic. *Training*, (8), 44.
- Browne, N. (1999). *Young children's literacy development and the role of televisual texts*. London: Falmer Press.
- Buffington, M. L. (2008). What is web 2.0 and how can it further art education? *Art Education*, 61(3), 36-41. Retrieved from <http://login.ezproxy.library.ualberta.ca/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/199329128?accountid=14474>
- Churches, A. (n.d.). Retrieved November 5, 2013 from the Educational Origami Wiki: <http://edorigami.wikispaces.com/>
- Culatta, R. (2013). *Instructional Design*. Retrieved from <http://instructionaldesign.org/>
- De Abreu, B. (2010). Changing Technology = Empowering Students through Media Literacy Education. *New Horizons In Education*, 58(3), 26-33.
- Doddington, C. (2007). Critical Thinking as a Source of Respect for Persons: A critique. *Educational Philosophy & Theory*, 39(4), 449-459. doi:10.1111/j.1469-5812.2007.00350.x
- Leu, D. J. Jr., Kinzer, C., Coiro, J., & Cammack, D. (2004). *Toward a Theory of New Literacies Emerging From the Internet and Other Information and Communication Technologies*. From Theoretical Models and Processes of Reading. International Reading Association.

- Gee, J.P. (1996). *Social linguistics and literacies* (2nd ed.). London: Taylor and Francis.
- Gujjar, A., Naeemullah, M., & Tabassum, R. (2013). A Study of the Attitudes of Student Teachers toward Use of Computer. *Pakistan Journal Of Commerce & Social Sciences*, 7(2), 346-353.
- Gutnick, A. L., Robb, M., Takeuchi, L., & Kotler, J. (2010). *Always connected: The new digital media habits of young children*. New York: The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop. Retrieved from http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/jgcc_alwaysconnected.pdf http://www.joanganzcooneycenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/11/jgcc_
- Instructional design. (n.d.). In Wikipedia. Retrieved November 5, 2013, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Instructional_design
- Kearsley, G. (2013b). *Adult Learning* (K.P. Cross). Retrieved from <http://www.instructionaldesign.org/theories/adult-learning.html>
- Kress, G. (2003). *Literacy in the new media age*. London, UK: Routledge.
- Kuehn, L. (2010, November/December). *Manage your digital footprint*. Retrieved from <http://bctf.ca/publications/NewsMagArticle.aspx?id=21794>
- Lajoie, S. P. (2005). Extending the scaffolding metaphor. *Instructional Science*, 33(5-6), 541-557. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11251-005-1279-2>
- Lehmann, C., & McLeod, S. (2012). *What school leaders need to know about digital technologies and social media*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.
- Marsh, J & Thompson, P. (2001). Parental development in literacy development: Using media texts. *Journal of Research in Reading*, 24, 266-278.
- O'Reilly, T. (2005). *What is web 2.0 design patterns and business models for the next generation of software* Blog. Retrieved from <http://oreilly.com/web2/archive/what-is-web-20.html>
- O'Reilly, T. & Battelle, J., (2009) Retrieved from <http://www.web2summit.com/web2009/public/schedule/detail/10194>
- OECD (2011). *PISA 2009 Results: Students on Line: Digital Technologies and Performance* (Volume VI) <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264112995-en>
- Paily, M. U. (2013). *Creating constructivist learning environment: Role of "Web 2.0: technology*. *International forum of teaching and studies*, 9(1) 39-50.
- Portelli, J. & Vibert, A. (2001). *Beyond common educational standards: Toward a Curriculum of Life*. In Portelli, J. & Solomon, P. (eds.) *The Erosion of Democracy in Education*. Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
- Prensky, M. (2001). *Digital natives, digital immigrants*. From *On the horizon*. 9(5). MCB University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.marcprensky.com/writing/Prensky%20-%20Digital%20Natives,%20Digital%20Immigrants%20-%20Part1.pdf>
- Quillen, I. (2012). *When Technology Tools Trump Teachers*. *Education Week*, 31(37), 1.
- Richardson, W. (2010). *Blogs, wikis, podcasts, and other powerful web tools for classrooms*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin.
- Richardson, W. (2011, February). *Educational Leadership: Teaching Screenagers: Publishers, Participants All*. Retrieved October 29, 2013, Retrieved from <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/feb11/vol68/num05/Publishers,-Participants-All.aspx>



- Rideout, V.J., Foehr, U.G., & Roberts, D.F. (2010). Generation M2: Media in the lives of 8 -18 year olds. Menio Park, CA: Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation. <http://kaiserfamilyfoundation.files.wordpress.com/2013/01/8010.pdf>
- Street, B. (1984). Literacy in theory and practice. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Tsai, P., Chen, S., Chang, H., & Chang, W. (2013). Effects of Prompting Critical Reading of Science News on Seventh Graders' Cognitive Achievement. *International Journal of Environmental and Science Education*, 8(1), 85-107.
- Vygotsky, L. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher mental processes*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Weinschenk, S. (2011). 100 things every designer needs to know about people. Berkeley, CA: New Riders.
- Williams, P. (2008). Leading schools in the digital age: a clash of cultures. *School Leadership and Management*, 28(3) 213 - 228. doi 10.1080/136324308021455779
- Wolf, M. (2008). *Proust and the squid*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Jacqueline Filipek

Jacqueline Filipek is a PhD student at the University of Alberta exploring language and literacy development. She is curious about how Web 2.0 affects children's learning. jfilipek@ualberta.ca

Joanne Linden

Joanne Linden is an elementary music specialist in Edmonton, is webmaster for Carl Orff Canada, and sings with Edmonton Opera. A passionate lifelong learner, she is taking her Masters of Education at the University of Alberta. joanne.linden@epsb.ca

Catherine Paul

Catherine Paul is a teacher-librarian at a Winnipeg elementary school. She is working toward her Masters of Education at the University of Alberta. Her passions include family, dogs, learning, and good bread with real butter. cpaul@retsd.mb.ca

Alanna Wasylikiw

Alanna Wasylikiw is a student at the University of Alberta completing her graduate degree in Educational Psychology, Technology in Education Specialization. Previous to that, Alanna enjoyed teaching in the Ukrainian Bilingual Program for Edmonton Catholic schools. awasylki@ualberta.ca

Changing Results for Young & Adolescent Readers: Why Action Research Matters

Investigating our Practice

"Fine. Whatever," she muttered as her eyes rolled back.

"This is important," her exasperated teacher explained.

"This sucks," she retorted under her breath.

We have all been there.

We have all been that teacher trying to connect with a student we know is disengaged.

By the time our disengaged students reach their senior years in high-school, the chasm between us, the teachers, and them, the disengaged, feels insurmountable. For much of the year, the curriculum is negotiated, as if it were a commodity to be bartered.

"Okay, how about you just do this part of the assignment by the end of class?"

"Fine," she replied. "Are you sure I need this class to graduate?"

We know that early-years intervention is the most effective way to change the trajectory of students who are on the path toward frustration and eventual disengagement. It is extremely challenging to intervene once these students are in their high-school years.

And, yet, late intervention is surely better than no intervention. We are in this profession because we believe our efforts can make a difference; not because we give up on kids.

The challenge, however, is how do we do intervene?

The temptation is to implement a program. Something that we can take from somewhere else; then, implement to "fix" the problem. However, this is much too simplistic - we know that this does not work.

Yet, we see it time after time. Someone, often with the most noble of intentions, develops the great panacea that will cure education of its woes.

We saw this in Britain when Prime Minister Tony Blair introduced the British National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and when President George W. Bush introduced No Child Left Behind (NCLB). In both programs, government held schools accountable to the test results of their students. Such accountability measures, they assumed, would ensure schools raise the achievement of students. In the end, neither of these reforms resulted in significantly changing the trajectory of students who were struggling.



The fallacy in thinking in both Britain and the United States is that neo-liberal programs such as theirs could be parachuted into schools and then improved results would follow. Such thinking can be described as Newtonian where a stimuli is introduced into an environment producing predictable and consistent results. While this may happen in a strongly controlled, sterile laboratory, it will not happen so easily in places as diverse as school communities.

Young, Levin, & Wallin (2008) explain it this way:

We may hear a proposal about educational reform, find it appealing, and think It would really work. But in practice it turns out that the problems are multiple, complex, and inter-related, and that the solutions are more difficult to implement and less effective that they seemed when first described (323).

Education does not need another program that promises to fix students (or teachers). Instead it needs an approach that is nuanced, respectful, and honours the complexities that compose school environments. Such an approach is often known as action-research (or sometimes as teacher-inquiry).

Action-research is a much more authentic form of educational-knowledge creation because it “is being generated in new and emergent settings, settings that are more democratic and characterized by (great) epistemic and social diversity” (p. 1218). Furthermore, action research can precipitate social change: “[Action Research] has the potential to become a truly grassroots, democratic movement of knowledge production and education and social change” (Anderson, Herr, Nihlen, 1994, as cited in Harris & Hickey, 2005). The power of action research is that it builds teacher capacity and, at the same time, responds acutely to the unique needs of the students in their school communities. It is a both a long-term investment in that it builds teacher capacity and, yet, also is an investment that yields positive results from the students we work with today.

British Columbia’s Changing Results for Young Readers (CR4YR) project, and its recent splinter, Changing Results for Adolescent Readers (CR4AR), use the principles of action-research to make a difference for vulnerable readers.

This project was designed through the leadership of Superintendent of Reading, Maureen Dockendorf and her team of educational leaders throughout the province, including Faye Brownlie, Sharon Jeroski, Judith King, and Deb Butler, among other remarkable thinkers involved in education in British Columbia. The over-arching goal of the project is “to increase the number of BC children who are engaged, competent readers, and experience the joy of reading”.

Some of its intellectual underpinnings include:

- selecting a case-study student and learning more about their strengths as a student and a person;
- reflecting on the needs of the case-study student and the CR4YR/ CR4AR’s goal and then creating an inquiry-question to support the case-student e.g. “How will providing more choice for “Maria” affect the level of engagement she has with text materials?”;
- collaboration between classroom-based teacher and resource-based teacher so support can be provided inclusively i.e. in the student’s classroom with their peers;
- built in time for on-going and intra-district teacher collaboration.

The structure of the project looks like:

- a school team composed of two to three teachers (classroom and resource);
- each school team meeting with other teams, from across their district, six or seven times over the course of the school year for a half day session each time;
- each session is facilitated by either a provincial CR4YR / CR4AR advocate or district-based advocate;
- at each meeting, teams reflect on their work with the case-study student and create a next-steps plan;

During the 2012-2013 school-year, there were 66 CR4YR teams from 59 school districts across the province. This involved 600 educators, over 9,000 students, and resulted in 419 case studies. The results were very encouraging. There was a very positive effect in terms of reading for all students and on teacher capacity.

At an August 2013 session, researcher Sharon Jeroski celebrated the fact that this project had made more of a positive difference for vulnerable students than any other British Columbia initiative she has analyzed over her career.

Teachers also learned that their work with the case-study student benefited all the students in their classroom. As well, they learned that there is not a one-size fits all program; instead it's about paying attention to each and every child.

This year, Burnaby's CR4AR team, has so far yielded results that are consistent with these positive results. At our first session in September 2013, one school teacher-team noted that her senior secondary student "was hostile at times and pushes away help".

The school teacher-team then decided that their inquiry question would be: "If we create a classroom environment where students feel valued and capable will this positively impact student motivation and engagement in reading and writing?"

At our November session, the teachers observed that her enthusiasm and attendance had improved. In their reflections, the teachers wrote that "No matter how tough the exterior there is a need and desire to succeed".

In January 2014, the teachers then wrote of this same student, who was "hostile" and pushed away help in September, now "showed agitation when [the] Resource Teacher was busy". They rightly reflect that this shows the remarkable "connection that was made between teacher and student".



As in any good story, we hope, as the plot unravels, that the characters will change and learn; and, we hope that there is a touch of irony, along the way, to give us a little smile.

In this case, we have both - the hostile student who resisted help in September is now the agitated student who is annoyed when her caring teacher cannot respond immediately.

We also have the added satisfaction of knowing that this story shows the remarkable true difference teachers make in the lives of students when we work together in a thoughtful way and focus on strengthening the lives of our students. There is no program that can ever replace strong, caring teachers.

Reference

- Anderson, G. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A.S. (2007). *Studying Your Own School: An Educator's Guide to Practitioner Research* (2nd Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Harris, S. & Hickey, W. (2005). Improved professional development through teacher leadership. *Rural Educator*. Retrieved May 25, 2009, from <http://findarticles.com>
- Young, J., Levin, B., and Wallin, D. (2008). *Understanding Canadian schools: an introduction to educational administration* (4th ed.). Toronto: Nelson Education, Ltd.

Ben Paré

Ben Paré is the Literacy Program Consultant (K-12) for Burnaby School District (#41) and was an English teacher and Department Head for many years. He deeply believes that the most powerful educational changes happen through teacher collaboration.

Zooming in on Film in the English Classroom

Teaching Idea

'Ruining Film' for Students ...

Jane1: Miss Ahn, I would just like you to know, you've totally ruined movie watching for me.

Me: What do you mean?

Jane: Well, before I used to love watching horror movies, but now that I now all the stuff that makes it happens, I don't get scared anymore. (Laced with heavy sarcasm) thanks a lot...

Me: Then my job here is done.

This is the power of film. Well, more specifically, the power of visual literacy. Once students are given the opportunity to analyze visuals they are able to view images through a critical lens and come to understand the meaning behind the message. As Martin Scorsese (2013) notes:

[Today] we're face to face with images all the time in a way that we never have been before.... Young people need to understand that not all images are there to be consumed like fast food and then forgotten--we need to educate them to understand the moving images that engage their humanity and their intelligence.

Therefore, it becomes imperative to provide students with the skills to read and understand images. While traditional print literacy is still required and significant in the secondary English Language Arts (ELA) curriculum, 'multiliteracies' have infiltrated the educational paradigm. Coined by the New London Group (1996), this broader reading of texts is often more sophisticated, and to create meaning from reading today frequently requires the analysis of visual patterns and images. However, there appears to be a lack of attention to the development of visual literacy in the ELA classrooms. Part of this may be due to the assumption that students will just 'get it', that because young people live in such a visually dense society they will "obtain an implicit understanding of these other 'literacies' as they unavoidably encounter them outside of school" (Gilbert, 2013, p.89). However, this assumption is greatly problematic. Although students may in fact be engaged with a visual dominant society, they need the critical skills to interpret the images bombarding their lives.

This notion that visual literacy is 'easy' was also inherent in my students. Early in my teaching career when introducing a film unit most students would proclaim: "YEEEEES! We're just watching movies." This of course stems for the fact that as audience members, we become passive viewers, becoming engaged in the plot of the movie and engrossed in the visual, cinematic effects. But also, how many of us teachers (I include myself as being guilty here as well) have or have been tempted to 'just pop in a movie', have used films as a 'babysitter' or as a 'reward'? Or perhaps we have used it merely as a 'popular culture lure' to hook students in before reading a dense text? Or the classic choice: viewing the adapted film version of a literary text. These practices further reinforce the notion of 'just watching a movie' rather than becoming active viewers.

Also, a strong belief that still exists is that "students should be reading in the [English] classroom, not watching films" (Vetrie, 2004, p.40), where the stigma is that reading belongs to a higher, more valued culture, but viewing movies is for the 'mere masses' and is dismissed as being 'just entertainment' (Teasley & Wilder, 1997). However, integrating film into the classroom can challenge students to become critical viewers:



to notice details of visual images, to discover patterns in these images, to talk with each other about what they've noticed, to develop hypotheses and make predictions, to form opinions and evaluations, and to communicate their ideas about films. And when they engage with film in these active ways, they continue to develop many of the same skills we value in our literature curriculum. (Teasley & Wilder, 1997, p.2)

Thus, slowly over time, I began to realize the value of 'film as film' (Muller, 2006) and shifted my approach to teaching film in my classes. First, I instilled in my students that we were no longer conducting a 'film study' as this was normally associated with 'just watching a film'. Instead, I introduced the unit as a 'film analysis'-heavy on the notion of 'analysis'-where even in that small change, students groaned at the thought of 'doing more work'. However, I, as well as my students, quickly came to realize they knew 'all the stuff' but were lacking the metalanguage and the critical analytical skills to read the images. It had come to my attention that because my students were immersed in such a media saturated (Muller, 2006), visual (Callow, 2006) and popular cultured world (Vetrie, 2004), films had become an inherent part of their culture where it seemed as though my students innately understood the visual grammar of film, where what "they know about film [is what] children know about language: they have been immersed in it and so learn from that immersion" (Anderson & Jefferson, 2009, p.6). It was after introducing the basic film terminology (resources on terms, worksheets and assignments referred to in this paper are on my website: <http://film4elaclases.yolasite.com/>) to one of my grade 10 English classes where the conversation with Jane, seen above, occurred.

During the opening lessons, informal assessments occur naturally during daily review of concepts and monitoring class discussions. Once I have introduced all the necessary film terms and concepts I conduct simple forms of assessments such as quizzes on terminology and short scene analyses to ensure students not only understand the film terms but are able to apply them as well. After viewing a film, I have my students complete worksheets examining not only the plot and literary devices evident in the film, but to analyze how, for example, film techniques help amplify mood and character or display motifs and juxtapositions. Some of these worksheets can be very short while others can be quite lengthy and complex; with the latter, I take the time to go through the questions and analysis with students, as they are usually eager to discuss and re-view some scenes in order to answer the questions effectively. It is not until the next stage, a mise-en-scene analysis, where students are expected to deeply and critically analyze a scene.

Film & Mise-en-Scene Analysis

The idea of introducing film can be intimidating, as there are a vast number of terms, theories and approaches a teacher may choose to employ in their classroom. However, upon teaching the basic terms, one accessible approach to integrating 'film as film' and enhancing visual literacy is the use of a mise-en-scene analysis.

'Mise-en-scene' is a French term meaning 'to put on stage'. For film, it considers the elements of content and organization of a frame or shot. For example, examining the lighting, costumes, décor, properties and the actor's positions, while also considering the actor's relationship with other aspects in the scene such as with other actors, the camera, and thus, the audience (Gibbs, 2002). Mise-en-scene is the examination of visual

design, as a result, it involves what the viewers see and their experience(s) of the viewing process: "it refers to many of the major elements of communication in the cinema, and the combinations through which they operate expressively" (Gibbs, 2002, p.5). This includes not only examining the cinematic elements on their own, but also the interaction - how the parts create the whole and develop meaning. The concept of mise-en-scene "enable[s] [viewers] to understand film as a visual and sensory experience rather than just a literary one, to engage with film as a medium in its own right, and to consider the determining influence of style upon meaning" (Gibbs, 2002, p.66). As a result, a mise-en-scene analysis provides an opportunity for students to develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, a mise-en-scene analysis can be used as an accessible resource to introduce students to the complex nature of the visual medium and allow students to practice methods of visual analysis where "students welcome being taught how images are structured and designed, and that we do them a distinct favour by making some compositional principles intelligible and available to them at an early stage in their thinking about motion pictures" (Welsh, 1997, p.103).

Integrating Mise-en-Scene Analysis

The elements to examining a mise-en-scene are vast and an ELA teacher may be unsure of where to begin. However, Louis Giannetti (2011) has developed a workable list of fifteen elements to consider when composing a mise-en-scene analysis from his book, *Understanding Movies*. They are as follows:

Mise-En-Scene Analysis: Giannetti's Fifteen Elements

1. Shot and camera proxemics. What type of shot? How far away from the action is the camera?
2. Angle. Are we looking up or down on the subject, or is the camera neutral (eye-level)?
3. Lens/filter/stock. How do these distort or comment on the photographed material?
4. Lighting Style. High or low key? High contrast? Some combination of these?
5. Dominant. Where is our eye attracted first? Why?
6. Subsidiary contrasts. Where does our eye travel after taking in the dominant?
7. Composition. How is the two-dimensional space segmented and organized? What is the underlying design?
8. Texture. How clearly can we discern the details? Is the surface texture smooth, rough, glassy, fuzzy, etc.?
9. Form. Open or closed? Does the image suggest a window that arbitrarily isolates a fragment of the scene? Or a proscenium arch, in which the visual elements are carefully arranged and held in balance?
10. Framing. Tight or loose? Do the characters have no room to move around in, or can they move freely without impediments?
11. Density. How much visual information is packed into the image? Is the texture stark, moderate, or highly detailed?
12. Depth. On how many planes is the image composed? Does the background or foreground comment in any way on the midground?
13. Staging positions and proxemics. Which way do the characters look vis-à-vis the camera?
14. Character proxemics. How much space is there between the characters and objects?
15. Color values. What is the dominant color? Are there contrasting foils? Is there color symbolism? What mood do the colors invoke?



From: Giannetti, L. (2011). Understanding movies. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
At this point I must note that the delivery of the visual images from a film can be either in the form of a still shot or from a three to five minute scene. For the sake of this paper, I will use examples of still shots, but some scenes that have provided effective mise-en-scene analysis include the opening scene to Akeelah and the Bee or the opening battle scene in Saving Private Ryan. Also to keep in mind, students are not required to have viewed the film in its entirety to complete a thorough analysis. Rather, it becomes an interesting event when students are able to come to the same conclusions of a single shot or scene had they viewed the entire film.

I had grown accustomed to including an animated film (time permitting) into at least one of my film analysis units, usually with my grade 10s, as a method to demonstrate the skill and cinematic techniques also utilized in animation. One of the films I taught was Pixar's 2009 film Up!. We had completed a viewing of the film and proceeded to the analysis. (Another quick note here, I have always shown a film twice to my class, once so students could enjoy the film as a passive viewer. It is during the second viewing where students would become active viewers, analyzing the movie utilizing the terminology and concepts, such as mise-en-scene. And it is after the first viewing where I distribute any worksheets.)

This shot from Up! is seen near the beginning of the film, where a beautiful musical montage shows the life of a loving couple, Carl and Ellie. In connection to Giannetti's elements, when asked about the frame and where one's eye goes to first, one of my students noted how it was a tight shot, 'forcing the viewer to zoom in on their love', where this student's eye first went to Carl and Ellie's hands. Other students chimed in to notice elements such as the bright colours during their youth and before Ellie's death, while afterwards, Carl's life is dull and the colours appear to be 'grainy'. One student also noticed how there appears to be 'sunshine coming in on Ellie's side, which foreshadows scenes after her death of the sun beams shining on where she would have sat at the dining table with Carl or slept in their bed, symbolizing how she would always be with Carl'.

My students continued to observe how the objects on Carl's side are all 'squarish in nature' - the lamp, the table, the chair, even his glasses and perhaps even to some degree his mug, while in contrast, the objects on Ellie's side are more circular or curvy. All of which, students noted, are characteristics of Carl and Ellie's personalities- Carl being someone who prefers structure and rules, whereas Ellie being more carefree, and of a 'bubbly' personality. Further, another student, Sandy, connected the squarish nature to the 'older Carl' - his grumpy, stubborn personality and his firm, rigid stance on refusing to sell his home- where even his liver spots are square (something I had not noticed before). My students were able to reflect and discuss the relevance of such creative and directorial choices and the intricacies of the process(es) to create meaning for the audience.

Another significant moment in the film occurs towards the end: after Carl settles his house near Paradise Falls, and after an argument with his uninvited, side kick, Russell, Carl enters his home and re-arranges the furniture. After a short while, setting the two chairs side-by-side again, Carl sits in his chair and reaches for Ellie's childhood book of 'Stuff to Do' and the camera angle shifts. This is an example of a film technique called 'angle of destiny', where it is a high angle shot, at a diagonal position ('corner of the room'), focusing on one particular character, symbolizing a significant change in the character's life. This is one of the first new terms my students learn and are themselves amazed at how they are able to pick out the technique and have an idea of

what may or may not happen in any film. In this instance, during the first viewing, Sandy yelled out: "ANGLE OF DESTINY!?!?!". And while I proceeded to pause the film and redirect my students' attention, they themselves began discussing the significance of this angle to Carl. In this instance, after reading through Ellie's book and her inscription of "Thanks for the adventure- now go have a new one!", Carl realizes his ignorance and leaves his home to make amends with Russell to continue their unexpected adventure together; this signifies a turn of events for Carl, and more significantly, a deeper epiphany on his outlook on life where it is at this moment his life changes.

While the above examples demonstrate a mere glimpse into the discussion one may have employing a mise-en-scene analysis, this activity is easily adaptable. The assignments can vary where a teacher may choose to focus on a few elements at a time or all of them at once and in other forms, such as classroom discussions, long answer written responses or even an essay, and can occur as often as the teacher feels necessary. Once students become familiar with the expectations of such an assignment, at one point they can also choose their own still shot or scene to analyze.

Concluding Thoughts

Teaching 'film as film' needs to move to the forefront of the secondary ELA classrooms. To end, I turn to Oakes (2011), a high school English teacher, who discusses the significance of film and visual literacy and provides the following comment from a former student who, at the time, was working in the film industry:

The vocabulary a person learns from watching films is not just film vocabulary; it's a visual vocabulary. As new forms of visual media emerge all around us, this language has become more vital than ever. While films will always retain their aspect of entertainment, we have reached a point in our society where visual language is no longer reserved for just entertainment but for communication. But as with any language, it must be learned. Yes, by just watching films there's a lot a person can learn about visual aesthetics and storytelling - but it's not enough. To really understand that aesthetic, a person must interact with film, deconstruct it, all the time asking, "Why, why, why?" Why did the director shoot the film using wide angle lenses? Why does the lighting in one scene have more contrast than in others? Why is a certain color palette used throughout the film? Much communication is rooted in the visual, and integrating the teaching of film into a school's curriculum allows students to develop a robust visual vocabulary, on which they will become increasingly reliant as they develop their own voice. (O'Flinn, 2011)

This statement encapsulates the significance and the urgent need for more ELA teachers to integrate an extensive film unit in their classes; as ignoring the study of film is not only a disservice to the genre, but also a disservice to the student.



References

- Anderson, M., & Jefferson, M. (2009). Teaching the screen: Film education for generation next. Australia: Allen & Unwin.
- Callow, J. (2006). Images, politics and multiliteracies: Using a visual metalanguage. *Australian Journal of Language and Literacy*, 29(1), 7-23.
- Cazden, C., Cope, B., Fairclough, N., & Gee, J. (1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Designing social futures. *Harvard Educational Review*, 66(1), 60-92.
- Giannetti, L. D. (2011). *Understanding movies*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Gibbs, J. (2002). *Mise-en-scène: Film style and interpretation*. New York: Wallflower.
- Gilbert, C. "Changing the Lens: The Necessity of Visual Literacy in the ELA Classroom." *English Journal* 102.4 (2013): 89. Print.
- Muller, V. (2006). Film as film: Using movies to help students visualize literary theory. *The English Journal*, 95(3), 32-38.
- Oakes, A. (2011). Teaching film with high school students. Message posted to <http://www.dacha.com/?p=1024>
- Rivera, J. (Producer), & Docter, P. (Director). (2009). *Up!* [Motion picture]. United States: Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures
- Scorsese, M. (2013). The persisting vision: Reading the language of cinema. *The New York Review of Books*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2013/aug/15/persisting-vision-reading-language-cinema/?pagination=false>
- Teasley, A. B., & Wilder, A. (1997). *Reel conversations: Reading films with young adults*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Vetrie, M. (2004). Using film to increase literacy skills. *The English Journal*, 93(3), 39-45.
- Welsch, T. (1997). Teaching mise-en-scène analysis as a critical tool. *Cinema Journal*, 36(2), 101-106.

Claire Ahn

Claire Ahn is a seasoned high school English teacher from Alberta, an avid reader and a film nerd. She is currently a second year PhD student in the Department of Language and Literacy Education at UBC.



Chasing Adland:

Teaching critical media health literacy

Investigating our Practice

"Advertisers spend billions of dollars researching teenagers - so we know you very well." Celebrity Girl in *Chasing Adland* (Tran-Nguyen, Van Acken, Haberman, Coe & Dunn-Krahn, 2013, p. 16)

"Having a set of skills to interpret and critique media messages such as advertisements is essential to both teachers and their students." (Harste & Albers, 2013, p. 381)

"Hey, we need a guy called Adman! He can lure them into shopping..." In a project room at the Central Branch of the Greater Victoria Public Library in the summer of 2012, a group of five 13 and 14 year olds gathered for a week long workshop on writing a graphic novel. Facilitated by a graduate student who is also an experienced teacher and a photographer/youth worker, they spent time creating a narrative, drawing storyboards and acting out their vision of panels/frames. They became friends, workmates, and media producers. This workshop was an intense multimodal, multiliterate experience, and for the participants a journey into understanding the influence of advertising in their lives. At the end of the week, the students' work went on to an adult illustrator. The duplicitous Adman, changeable Celebrity Girl, and the teenagers, Chase and Luke, come to life on the page.

Chasing Adland (Tran-Nguyen, Van Acken, Haberman, Coe, & Dunn-Krahn, 2014), the resulting twenty four page comic, is not just a graphic novel however. It is also a narrative with integrated messages about critical literacy, advertising, health and media literacy. *Chasing Adland* is written by adolescents, for adolescents. It arose from a request by a middle years' teacher who wanted reading/viewing material for her students to teach literacy, media and health education. This teaching resource is downloadable, free of charge from the Greater Victoria Public Library (see reference list). In this article, we outline basic principles of critical media health literacy education and ideas for teaching about the aggressive techniques of advertisers while integrating BC curricular standards.

Chasing Adland was piloted in a grade 7/8 classroom in March/April 2014 by the teacher who originally requested such a resource. She was provided with a draft copy of this article including many of the activities described below, several of which she adopted/adapted for her own classroom. In an interview after the pilot, the teacher remarked that *Chasing Adland* was very useful as a "touchstone" or "anchor text" for her media unit: "the package with the article you sent was awesome!". We offer these sample activities for teaching Grade 7 students by using this graphic novel; however, we acknowledge that time available and other classroom complexities (some of which are noted in activity descriptions) will likely necessitate adaptations—all part of the creative enterprise of teaching English language arts.

Chasing Adland: Plot summary

Chase is tormented by other girls about her clothes and becomes convinced that a new wardrobe will change her life. Her mother declines to give her money. Adman appears to Chase in a dream and lures her to Adland, a mall with everything Chase wants. There she meets Celebrity Girl, who also urges her to buy, and Luke, a boy who joins Chase in her shopping spree. However, Chase's curiosity about a trapdoor introduces them to a darker land. A more realistic looking, less photo shopped version of Celebrity Girl tells them they have entered 'Real' Adland, where there are grim factories and imitation products dressed up for commercials. Chase awakes from her dream determined to be herself and on her way to school rejects the comments of the girls on her clothes. Chase then meets Luke who wants to be her friend. As the novel ends we see Adman luring Chase's tormentors to the mall.



What is critical media health literacy and why is it important?

Access to media has never been as effortless and portable as it is today, inviting youth to engage with it anywhere, anyway, and anytime (MediaSmarts, 2014; Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Much of this exposure bombards them with messages trying to persuade them that a better, healthier, stronger or sexier version of themselves is just a purchase away. Through depicting unhealthy body types, social behaviours, and risky health practices, these messages shape both impressionable young minds (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2011), and general societal norms (Bosacki, Elliott, Bajovic, & Akseer, 2009; Potter, 2013), during a time when they are forming their own identity (Rich, 2013). Corporations are increasingly targeting younger markets through sophisticated multi-media sources, so it is no surprise that youth report high levels of engagement with media (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). While adults fall prey to media's lure as well, we are concerned about the ability of youth to sensibly discern corporate interests and decode advertisements before lifelong habits are created. Because our lifestyle choices and decision making strategies originate during this developmental stage, we think it is an educational responsibility to empower our students to become astute and informed consumers for their healthy physical and emotional growth and development, and lifelong health. Advertisers use multiple modes (e.g. linguistic, visual) to create norms around what it means to be a healthy young female or, male youth that in some cases have damaging effects on the developing health behaviours, attitudes and beliefs of young people. For example, the ultra-thin images of women may have influenced the prevalence of eating disorders (Strasburger et al., 2011).

Critical media health literacy (CMHL) is defined "as a right of citizenship and empowers individuals and groups, in a risky consumer society, to critically interpret and use media as a means to engage in decision-making processes and dialogues; exert control over their health and everyday events; and make healthy changes for themselves and their communities" (Wharf Higgins & Begoray, 2012). Knowing that for learning to be relevant it must reflect students' worlds (Gee, 2008), including their reliance on and trust in technology that delivers commercial media messages 24/7, teaching students to critically consider these messages improves their understanding of their world (Begoray, Wharf Higgins, Harrison, & Collins-Emery, 2013). Studies investigating the impact of media literacy curricula have demonstrated improvements in students' understanding and interpretation of the media's influence on a range of health issues (Potter, 2013), including sex (Pinkleton, Weintraub Austin, Chen, & Cohen, 2013), smoking (Primack, Douglas, Land, Miller, & Fine, 2014), as well as their attitudes toward civic engagement (Hobbs, Donnelly, Friesem, & Moen, 2013).

Concepts of Critical Media Health Literacy

All of the following concepts of critical media health literacy are integrated into *Chasing Adland*. Teachers can also use examples of advertisements online or in magazines, or in field trips to shopping areas.

- **Concept 1.** Advertisements are ubiquitous, aggressive and intent on controlling the purchasing habits of adolescents to benefit corporations. Students learn to ask: What does this ad want me to do?
- **Concept 2.** Advertisements often create false reflections of reality particularly related to health, beauty, fitness, popularity and happiness. Students learn to ask: Is this depiction realistic?

▪**Concept 3.** Advertisements attract adolescents using “hooks”. Students learn to ask: What is this ad promising in order to attract my attention?

▪**Concept 4.** Adolescents can learn to recognize, and then accept or reject media-perpetuated identities and values. Students learn to ask: What kind of person does this ad want me to be? Do I want to be that person? What does this advertisement value? Do I share those values?

While each of the above mentioned concepts is represented in *Chasing Adland*, it has also been designed as a discussion prompt that invites students to question and debate the relevance of the messages presented, and in so doing, begin to form the habit of viewing advertisements critically. Far from being a tool to be used didactically, it is meant to engage diverse students with a forum to examine advertising and health from multiple perspectives.

The growing popularity of the graphic novel as a genre that connects life and school provides teachers with a useful pedagogical tool for media literacies (Schwarz & Crenshaw, 2011). Below we present ideas for using the graphic novel *Chasing Adland* and other advertisements to introduce Grade 7 students to concepts of critical media health literacy.

Connections to BC’s Learning Standards for Grade 7

The ten activities below help students to address a number of learning standards from the new British Columbia draft curricula in English language arts (ELA) (BC Ministry of Education, 2013a), social studies (SS) (BC Ministry of Education, 2013b), and physical and health education (PHE) (BC Ministry of Education, 2013c) for Grade 7 students. Middle years’ teachers in our research projects frequently work in interdisciplinary units and use standards from different subject areas. In each activity we also address one or more of the four CMHL concepts. In addition, activities have been divided into those best done Before, During, and After engaging with *Chasing Adland* (or with a variety of advertisements). These activities are intended to be ideas for lessons rather than complete lessons and can be adapted to other grades.

Before the Reading

1. Values. (Discussing personal values can be a sensitive activity. Individual teachers will know best how to adapt or whether to use at all with their students.)

CMHL Concept 4 Adolescents can learn to recognize, and then accept or reject media-perpetuated identities and values.

BC Learning Standards

- **•ELA** - Consider multiple perspectives, voices, values, beliefs and bias in texts.
- **•SS** - Recognize and classify different value judgments, including ethical judgments, in a variety of sources.
- **•PHE** - Understand influences on individual identities, including sexual identity, gender, values, and beliefs.



Procedure

Show 10 large slips of paper with 10 people/things you value. Ask students: What makes something valuable? Choose for your list a variety of more and less commercial items to encourage students to be honest about what they value: e.g. my family, my dog, my old yellow toque, my job, my friends, my cross trainers, my iPad, my new hockey stick, my flower garden, my long blonde hair. Then show students how you would rank order these to show what you value most.

Give students 10 slips of paper. Ask them to put the name of one person, place, thing, ability they value on each piece of paper. Then ask students to rank order their values by gluing to sheet of paper (or use sticky notes) with the most valuable at the top. Do a gallery walk. Discuss what values are the most common in the top three spots? Why do students think most of them valued these people, places, and things the most? What was most common in the bottom three spots? Initiate a discussion around the societal influences on our values and how these shape how we know ourselves as females/males and youth in general.

Next connect to advertising. Ask students: What do advertisers value? Are their values the same as yours? How do advertisers use your values to get you to buy their products? Is this fair?

2. Accessing and building background knowledge

CMHL Concept 1 – Advertisements are ubiquitous, aggressive and intent on controlling the purchasing habits of adolescents to benefit corporations.

BC Learning Standards

- ELA - Examine the ways in which people manipulate language for specific purposes, including to invoke emotional responses.
- ELA - Use a variety of communication forms including oral, written, visual and digital.
- PHE - Understand factors that influence personal health decisions, including the media and peers.

Procedure

Ask students to examine their possessions such as clothes, games, electronic devices and their dietary habits. Share some of the ways in which you believe you have been influenced by advertising. Ask students to write a private statement, share with a partner and finally with the whole class ways in which they think that adolescents are influenced by advertisements and why.

Then ask students to sketch an ad they can remember. As a whole class, discuss responses. Ask for the range of emotions evoked by the ads (e.g., excitement, envy, amusement) that made them memorable and how they influence buying habits and health habits (such as eating and drinking).

During the Reading

1. Cover of *Chasing Adland*

BC Learning Standards

- ELA - Use reading and metacognitive strategies before, during, and after reading to improve understanding and thinking.
- ELA - Read, view and listen to a variety of text types and genres.

Procedure

Introduce the graphic novel *Chasing Adland* by showing students just the cover. Discuss the idea that communication is multimodal; that is, delivered through words and images/pictures. In small groups, ask them to create a two column table: Column One—List several predictions concerning *Chasing Adland*. Column Two—For each prediction, provide a reason. Discuss as whole class.

2.Adman

CMHL Concept 2 - Advertisements often create false reflections of reality particularly related to health, beauty, fitness, popularity and happiness.

BC Learning Standards

- ELA - Think critically about the accuracy, reliability and relevance of information.
- ELA - Examine the ways in which people manipulate language for specific purposes, including to invoke emotional responses.
- PHE - Understand influences on individual identities, including sexual identity, gender, values, and beliefs.

Procedure

Distribute several ads to students which contain fine print 'conditions'. Ask them to discuss and record in small groups reasons for conditions in advertising. Discuss as a class. Next, re-read the section with Adman. Who or what does he represent? Discuss his interactions with Chase. What do students think is Adman's intent in the final frame of the novel? Then examine Adman's words and appearance in *Chasing Adland*. Discuss his words or his 'pitch' to Chase. What does it mean to have the note "Some conditions may apply"? Why is Adman shown wearing dark glasses and a hat?

3.Celebrity Girl

CMHL Concept 2 & 3 - Advertisements often create false reflections of reality particularly related to health, beauty, fitness, popularity and happiness. Advertisements attract adolescents using "hooks".

BC Learning Standards

- ELA - Think critically about the accuracy, reliability and relevance of information.
- ELA - Explore and express ideas, opinions, and perspectives to communicate clearly through oral language.
- PHE - Understand factors that influence personal health decisions, including the media and peers.

Procedure

Ask students to share their understanding of photo shopping: how it works and why it is used. Then view a video showing the effects of photo shopping (e.g., Dove's Evolution of Beauty, n.d.). Have students write down what changes they saw and play the video again to encourage closer viewing. Then use G.O.S.S.I.P. (Close, 2011) to allow students to go out and selectively search for important points by talking with others about what they noticed and record new ideas.



Discuss the language and appearance of Celebrity Girl. Contrast the language and appearance of Celebrity Girl in Adland Mall and later in Real Adland. What do students notice? What do they think is the purpose of photo shopping in advertising?



Explain that Celebrity Girl is a way to hook audience attention. Celebrities in general such as actors/models/famous people in ads are “in role”, and do not necessarily give their personal preferences or habits. What examples of celebrities in ads do students know? Have students read the articles at <http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/athletes-in-junk-food-ads-send-kids-mixed-messages-1.1913330> and <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/study-slams-athletes-promoting-junk-food/article14698232/>



What do students think are the responsibilities of celebrities in advertising, if any? Ask students to develop a small group opinion and share with class. Then ask students to compare these athletes to Celebrity Girl. What influence did she have on Chase as she entered Adland Mall? How is Celebrity Girl different in Real Adland? Ask students to support their opinions with evidence from the novel.

4. Real Adland (This activity includes photos of tragic event. Discussing tragedies may be challenging for some students).

CMHL Concept 2, 4 – Advertisements often create false reflections of reality particularly related to health, beauty, fitness, popularity and happiness. Adolescents can learn to recognize, and then accept or reject media-perpetuated identities and values.



BC Learning Standards

- o ELA - Read, view and listen to a variety of text types and genres.
- o ELA - Think critically about the accuracy, reliability and relevance of information.
- o SS - Recognize and classify different value judgments, including ethical judgments, in a variety of sources.



In small groups, ask students to discuss and record visual contrasts between Adland Mall and Real Adland. Debrief as a whole class. Then show photographs of clothing factories in Bangladesh including fires and images of famous brands (see Joe Fresh clothing) in the wreckage. Examples of photographs can be retrieved from https://www.google.ca/search?q=bangladesh+clothing+factory+collapse&espv=210&es_

In *Chasing Adland*, review Chase and Luke’s discovery of the hamburger assembly line in Real Adland. What do they discover? Show a video on food styling of hamburgers (http://youtu.be/fUjz_eilX8k). (If time allows, bring in a real hamburger and compare to magazine photo or online advertisement for that product. Ask what students notice.)



5. Relationships: Chase, Luke and the other girls

CMHL Concept 4 – Adolescents can learn to recognize, and then accept or reject media-perpetuated identities and values.

BC Learning Standards

- o ELA - Make meaningful personal connections with a variety of texts to increase understanding of self and others.
- o PHE - Understand characteristics of, and influences on, healthy and unhealthy relationships.



Procedure

Ask students to discuss in small groups: How do people become friends? Why are friends important? How do advertisements use the idea of 'friends' to make you buy? Discuss as a whole class. Ask one half of the class in pairs to describe Chase's relationship with the other girls at beginning of book and at the end. What changes do they see? What evidence is there in her clothing, behaviour, and words? Ask the other half of the class to describe her relationship with Luke when they first meet in the mall and then at the end of the story. What changes do they see? What evidence is there in her clothing, behaviour, and words? Discuss as a whole class by having two or three pairs of students report from each half of class.

6.Close Observation

CMHL Concepts 1-4 - Advertisements are ubiquitous, aggressive and intent on controlling the purchasing habits of adolescents to benefit corporations. Advertisements often create false reflections of reality particularly related to health, beauty, fitness, popularity and happiness. Advertisements attract adolescents using "hooks". Adolescents can learn to recognize, and then accept or reject media-perpetuated identities and values.

BC Learning Standards

- o ELA - Read, view and listen to a variety of text types and genres. Ask students to look carefully at all the print and visual text on every page of the novel. What messages do they see beyond the story's main plot? One verbal example is the names of the stores: Mirage, PAG, Canadian Pigeon. A visual example is the appearance of a bull's eye target on Chase's t-shirt. Give students time in small groups to identify as many as they can in one column on paper. Then complete a second column by discussing as an entire class why each one has been added. How does it contribute to the novel's main message about the four concepts of critical media health literacy?

After the Reading

1. Community Walk (Field trips are now time-consuming and logistically challenging in many communities. Teachers may want to try using Google Street View as a substitute.)

CMHL Concept 1 - Advertisements are ubiquitous, aggressive and intent on controlling the purchasing habits of adolescents to benefit corporations.

BC Learning Standards

- o ELA - Read, view and listen to a variety of text types and genres.
- o ELA - Examine the ways in which people manipulate language for specific purposes, including to invoke emotional responses.
- o PHE - Understand factors that influence personal health decisions, including the media and peers.

Procedure

In the community where you teach, ask students to choose one commercial area such as a mall or several blocks of a shopping street and arrange a field trip. Ask students to list/describe/photograph the visible advertisements in these establishments. Look at and beyond the obvious advertisements to the other visible ways in which commercial establishments display their goods (e.g., logos on cups, placemats in food court).

What do students notice about number, location, repetition of advertisements? Why would advertisers pay to have all these advertisements in a mall? Once students have brought observations back to the classroom, discuss concept 1, especially the question 'What do these advertisers want me to do?' Can students determine the effect they have on adolescent health-related behaviours or attitudes such as self-confidence? Eating habits? Then connect these experiences with *Chasing Adland* (e.g., what Chase and Luke learned during their experience at Adland Mall and in Real Adland). Are ads in local malls/streets more obvious, less obvious or about the same as the Adland Mall?



2. Comic Creation

CMHL Concepts 1-4 - Advertisements are ubiquitous, aggressive and intent on controlling the purchasing habits of adolescents to benefit corporations. Advertisements often create false reflections of reality particularly related to health, beauty, fitness, popularity and happiness. Advertisements attract adolescents using “hooks”. Adolescents can learn to recognize, and then accept or reject media-perpetuated identities and values.

BC Learning Standards

- o ELA - Use a variety of communication forms including oral, written, visual and digital.
- o ELA - Read, view and listen to a variety of text types and genres.
- o PHE - Understand influences on individual identities, including sexual identity, gender, values, and beliefs.

Reveal to students that this novel was written by five Canadian teenagers as a way to present ideas about advertising and its targeting of adolescents. Ask students: Is this authorship important? Why or why not?

At the end of *Chasing Adland*, Luke says ‘Life is so much better now that I’m not branded’. Discuss with students the purpose of ‘branding’ cattle (for example). How do advertisers brand teenagers? Which advertisers do students know who seek to brand their customers? Why do they do this? Have groups create two characters, a villain with a satirical name (Swooshman or Nikey for example) and a teenager who meets this person. What happens? Does the teenager outsmart the villain or does s/he wear the brand in the end? Free online comic creating software can get students started creating their own electronic comic book: Comic Creator (<http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/comic/>); Strip Generator (<http://www.stripgenerator.com>); and Make Beliefs Comix (<http://www.makebeliefscomix.com>).

Share all presentations in class. Have a Gallery Walk. Each student can peer assess by recording ‘two stars and a wish’ for each of the comics by other groups. Discuss with the whole class what they learned about advertising and about comic creation process. (*Chasing Adland* was written by adolescents but illustrated by an adult artist. Teachers may want students to critique the novel’s story and illustrations, and how they would have written or illustrated it in a different way.)

Conclusion

Adolescents need hands-on and minds-on activities to help them learn to actively question the media messages that surreptitiously surround them every day. Advertisements are highly motivating and engaging texts for most middle school students who are familiar with them yet may never have considered the influence advertising has on their eating, drinking and purchasing habits, self-confidence and so on. Using the four concepts of critical media health literacy and BC Learning Standards, teachers can engage students in focused lessons that provide one way to learn how to interrogate the aggressively subtle messages from advertisers. As our piloting teacher pointed out “you can take those four concepts and frame them as the four big ideas... we’re moving towards that framework [of a few big ideas] now in other areas of the curriculum.”

Whether using *Chasing Adland* or advertisements from a variety of sources, adolescents can begin to learn to be more independent thinkers and users of critical literacy skills. These abilities are ones which are immediately useful in a variety of subject areas and will also accompany them beyond classrooms walls and into adulthood. As *Celebrity Girl* reminds Chase, advertisers know teenagers very well. It seems only fair that we also equip our students to know advertisers too!

References

- Begoray, D., Wharf Higgins, J., Harrison, J., & Collins-Emery, A. (2013). Adolescent reading/viewing of advertisements: Understandings from transactional and positioning theory. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 57(2), 121-130.
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (2013a). English Language Arts, Grade 7. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/English%20Language%20Arts/7>
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (2013b). Physical and Health Education, Grade 7. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/Physical%20and%20Health%20Education/7>
- British Columbia Ministry of Education (2013c). Social Studies, Grade 7. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/Social%20Studies/7>
- Bosacki, S., Elliot, A., Bajovic, M., & Akseer, S. (2009). Preadolescents' self-concept and popular magazine preferences. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 23(3), 340-350.
- Close, S. (2011). BrainSmart Tools: Powerful pathways for personalizing 21st century learning. Vancouver: Susan Close Learning. Retrieved from http://www.smartreading.ca/pdfs/brainsmart_tools_sept72012.pdf
- Dove's Evolution of Beauty. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IHqzlxGGJFo>
- Gee, J. P. (2008). Video games and embodiment. *Games and Culture*, 3(3-4), 253-263. doi: 10.1177/1555412008317309
- Harste, J., & Albers, P. (2013). "I'm riskin' it": Teachers take on consumerism. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 56(5), 381-390.
- Hobbs, R., Donnelly, K., Friesem, J., & Moen, M. (2013). Learning to engage: How positive attitudes about the news, media literacy, and video production contribute to adolescent civic engagement. *Educational Media International*, 50(4), 231-246.
- MediaSmarts. (2014). Young Canadians in a wired world: Phase III. Retrieved from http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/YCWWIII_Life_Online_FullReport.pdf
- Pinkleton, B., Weintraub Austin, E., Chen, Y., & Cohen, M. (2013). Assessing effects of a media literacy-based intervention on US adolescents' responses to and interpretations of sexual media messages. *Journal of Children and Media*, 7(4), 463-479.
- Potter, J. (2013). Review of literature on media literacy. *Sociology Compass*, 7(6), 417-435.
- Primack, B.A., Douglas, E.L., Land, S.R., Miller, E., & Fine, M.J. (2014). Comparison of media literacy and usual education to prevent tobacco use: A cluster-randomized trial. *Journal of School Health*, 84(2), 106-115.
- Rich, M. (2013). The medical community in the U.S.: Treating media as an influence on health and development. In D. Lemish (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Children, Adolescents and the Media*, (pp. 451-458). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Rideout, V., Foehr, U., & Roberts, D. (2010). Generation M2. Media in the lives of 8-18 year olds. Retrieved from <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED527859.pdf>
- Schwarz, G., & Crenshaw, C. (2011). Old media, new media: The graphic novel as bildungsroman. *Journal of Media Literacy Education*, 3(1), 47-53.
- Strasburger, V., Jordan, A., & Donnerstein, E. (2010). Health effects of media on children and adolescents. *Pediatrics*, 125(4), 756-67.

Deborah L. Begoray

Deborah L. Begoray, PhD is a Professor of Literacy in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria. She works regularly in the schools, partnering with teachers and students to conduct research and create health literacy curricular materials to aid adolescents' development of critical thinking in response to advertising.

Joan Wharf Higgins

Joan Wharf Higgins is a Professor and Canada Research Chair (2004-2014) in the School of Exercise Science, Physical & Health Education. Her teaching and research interests include health literacy, social marketing, chronic disease prevention and health promotion, and community-based research methodologies. Robin Wilmot is a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria in British Columbia,

Robin Wilmot

Canada. She is an experienced middle and elementary school educator with a particular interest in how adolescents acquire, express and utilize critical literacy



Mindful Literacy

Teaching idea

The “secrets” of good teaching are the same as the secrets of good living: seeing one’s self without blinking, offering hospitality to the alien other, having compassion for suffering, speaking truth to power, being present and real.

- Parker J. Palmer (O’Reilly, 1998, p. ix)

Have you ever been out with friends discussing a movie and no one can remember that actor’s name? No problem - smart phones suddenly appear and within seconds we have the answer. We live in a world where expect to find answers quickly and easily.

Sometimes we have the same expectations in our work as teachers. Which courses should I take to prepare me for a career as a middle school teacher? Which district should I work for? Which books should I buy?

In the quote above, Parker Palmer gives an answer as to which ingredients are necessary in order to be a good teacher. He equates good teaching with good living: being “real” with yourself and others; accepting diversity within our schools, classrooms and staffrooms; believing in an inclusive society and thereby inclusive schools; showing knowledge that is supported with wisdom and love; and making a stand for important issues.

The quote above can be restated this way: “Good teaching cannot be reduced to technique; good teaching comes from the identity and integrity of the teacher” (Palmer, 2007, p. 10). I believe that Palmer’s statements are foundational to the movement towards mindfulness in education today.

What is mindfulness?

Recently, a Time magazine (February 3, 2014) cover featured the caption “The Mindful Revolution: The science of finding focus in a stressed-out, multitasking culture.” We are becoming increasingly aware of how our fast-paced lifestyle is affecting us.

For some, the term “mindfulness” may have certain connotations. To be sure, mindfulness is not a new idea. However, it runs deeper than a resurgence of a back-to-nature lifestyle or a means for alleviating stress.

Ellen Langer, a psychology professor at Harvard University, defines mindfulness as “a flexible state of mind in which we are actively engaged in the present, noticing new things and sensitive to context” (Langer, 2000, p. 220). According to her research, which has been conducted over the period of 25 years, the benefits of mindfulness include increased competence, memory, creativity, health and positive affect (Langer, 2000, p. 220).

The role of mindfulness in education

Mindfulness in education is a holistic stance. Just as we teach to the whole child (intellectual, emotional, physical and spiritual), teachers must also allow their inner and outer self to develop and be present within their reflective teaching practice.

For instance, a teacher who has worked in an inner-city school may be very active in promoting lunch programs, taking students to help out at a local street mission or coordinating fundraisers for the food bank. Her experiences have shaped who she has become and this influences her actions as a teacher. Two cautions are in order though. If we set up parameters for ourselves as teachers and do not allow our authentic selves to “come out and play,” we could be setting ourselves up for feelings of frustration and dissatisfaction with our work. This is common in many workplaces, not just schools. We may name it “burn out” when, in fact, it may be that we are simply not being true to ourselves. Teachers must be mindful of their context, who they are, and what they believe in (both pedagogically and personally).

Also, keep in mind that mindfulness invites liminality – a waiting space between our instruction and the development and acceptance of the students' own ideas, choices and values. Without this space, we risk indoctrination.

Mindful literacy

So, how do we take the concept of mindfulness and weave that into our literacy instruction? Is it possible for my identity and integrity to show up when I have a prescribed curriculum to cover and learning outcomes to achieve? To this I would answer wholeheartedly, yes! Is it always easy? No, but we must try to do so if we wish to be engaged, present and sensitive educators, and foster these traits in our students. Let me offer a few ways to cultivate mindfulness within our teaching practice and classrooms.

- Become a detective – I teach my students to be word detectives. “How is this word like that one? Which chunk is in the middle of this longer word? If you can spell pan, how would you spell plan?” When they make discoveries like this, we help them to look for and see connections in other words and varied texts. As a reading teacher, I must be a detective too; I need to carefully observe my students, notice how they are learning, take notes of these clues, and fit the puzzle pieces together. Years ago, a Grade 2 student once replied to my question, “I don’t know that yet.” That was a powerful and insightful lesson for me. His response told me that he saw himself as a learner and that his self-confidence was indeed growing.
- Reflect and respond – In literacy lessons, we often ask our students to reflect and respond to a text. I suggest that, to teach literacy in a mindful way, we must also reflect and respond; or rather, adapt and adjust. As I notice new things about my students and the way in which they learn, I make adaptations within the materials and assignments for them and I adjust my teaching strategies to meet the needs of my students. For example, at our school, we teach spelling using the Words Their Way framework. We screen all of the primary students and place them in ability groupings. The students in my groups really struggle with spelling and we could not keep pace with the prescribed sequence of the sorts. So, I had to adapt it to suit their needs and promote success in learning. Many of the other Grade 3 students are sorting and learning words with long vowel patterns and syllables, but I had to make my own sort cards to continue work on short vowels, consonant blends and suffixes. Are they “behind?” No, they are where they are, and are learning what they need in order to become more proficient spellers and independent writers. It was up to me to respond correctly to my students’ needs, rather than them trying to fit into my timeline or teaching style.
- Provide differentiated instruction, tasks and assessment – Personally, I buy a size medium in just about everything and have done so for many years. Truthfully, one-size-fits-all usually fits like a baggy, old sack. So, it is with our teaching too. Within any classroom today, there could easily be a range of 3-6 grade levels. I love the quote, “We teach the children we have; not the ones we used to have or wish we had.” If we allow our inner (values, beliefs, sensitivities) and outer (present reality) landscapes to be intertwined, there is no other choice than to provide options for students of all abilities and backgrounds. We might do this by varying our methods of presentation, incorporating think-tac-toes or choice boards in our classroom to provide student choice, including text sets in our classroom libraries or to supplement a unit study (cross-curricular reading), or organizing guided reading groups. Mindful literacy teachers are “sensitive to their context” and accept that teaching cannot be one-size-fits-all since students come in various “sizes” (stages of development).



- Create an inclusive environment – The motto for an inclusive education advocacy group is: “Inclusion means being part of the class, not just in the classroom.” Mindfulness in the classroom might look like creating clear, wide pathways for students with mobility issues, or collaborating with the special education assistant or learning assistance teacher to adapt reading materials (related to that of the rest of the class) that are suitable for a student’s cognitive level, for instance. Inclusion means thinking and planning ahead so that all students can participate in the learning activities and social interactions of the day. By focusing on the physical and affective environment, we are in fact developing the ecology of the classroom. We see each child as a valued learner, participant and contributor. At a former workplace, we posted copies of sports articles with enlarged font on the walls of the hallway. We were also conscious of posting them at various heights. Several teachers commented that some children took a while getting back from the washroom, but at least they were “caught” reading. One student, with spina bifida, often exited the school via that hallway to catch up on the news. He was super excited to read about sledge hockey during the Paralympics. The reading wall told him (and his family) implicitly that he belonged, that he was part of our school’s ecology. (As an aside, this spurred the Grade 7 teachers on to coordinate a sledge hockey tournament in the gym with A. in his chair and the able-bodied students on scooters. It was awesome!)

- Acknowledge the power of words – Lovers of literature are keenly aware of the impact of a well chosen word or a finely crafted sentence. Mindful literacy teachers design writing assignments that allow their students to express themselves succinctly and creatively. They use storytelling as a tool to create conversations, teach a life lesson or encourage deeper thinking. They carefully select text that challenges, informs or transforms the reader. This is true of literature in any language. A mindful teacher plans with intention, and is fully cognizant of the fact that a book or a piece of writing has the potential to be heart changing and life changing.

- Provide strategy training – To teach in a mindful way, we must understand the difference between skill building and strategy training, as well as their respective place within literacy instruction. Phonics lessons, sight word recognition and fluency practice are ways in which teachers build reading skills within their students. Skill building is important but it cannot stop there. Langer states that “there are two ways mindlessness comes about: repetition and single exposure” (2000, p. 220). She goes on to say that “when information is processed mindlessly, we essentially make a commitment to a single way of understanding it” (Langer, 2000, p. 220). Going over and over sight word flashcards, when it is clear that the student does not learn in this way, is an obvious example of mindless learning. On the other hand, many educational researchers and theorists suggest that strategies training will enable students to become more mindful learners, since it facilitates engaged, thoughtful reading. Strategies training means to teach text structure, questioning, reciprocal teaching and making connections, for example, in an embedded model (Rhoder, 2002, pp.500-501). Strategies training does not occur as a stand-alone lesson or just during our “reading block.” Mindful teaching means that we are using every encounter with text as an opportunity to teach and develop these strategies for sense-making. We are also using text that is authentic and within the students’ zone of proximal development.

Recently, I watched a YouTube video about mindful writing. On it, Alexandria Peary, a professor at the University of Iowa, spoke of attaining a state of mindfulness as natural as our breath – inhale (here), exhale (now) (Peary, 2014). Clearly, this is not easy, but it is definitely a worthwhile goal. To be so present would change the way we teach, learn and live our lives.

Becoming a mindful teacher and helping our students to become mindful learners is a process. We must surrender to the fact that we will never be able to say we have “arrived.” Throughout this process, we must maintain a flexible state of mind, be engaged, maintain focus and be sensitive to our context. Cultivating mindfulness means to allow the inner and outer teacher to make thoughtful choices regarding planning, teaching strategies, materials and classroom structures. It means encouraging our students to notice the world they are learning about in a fresh way. Indeed, it means to find meaning in our craft.

References

- Langer, E. (2000). Mindful learning. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 9(6), 220-223.
- O'Reilly, M.R. (1998). *Radical Presence: Teaching as Contemplative Practice*. Portsmouth, NH: Boynton/Cook.
- Palmer, P.J. (2007). *The Courage to Teach* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Palmer, P.J. (1997). The heart of a teacher: Identity and integrity in teaching. *Change: The Magazine of Higher Learning*, 29(6), 14-21.
- Peary, A. (2014). Mindful Writing video: University of Iowa MOOC. Retrieved 07/08/2014 from <https://www.youtube.com/embed/gH1VKDyFsOU>
- Rhoder, C. (2002). Mindful reading: Strategy training that facilitates transfer. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 45(6), 498-516.

Vicki Den Ouden

Vicki Den Ouden, M.Ed., is a Learning Disabilities & Reading Intervention Teacher in Kelowna, BC (SD23). She has taught reading instruction courses at the Summer Institute of Education at UBC - Okanagan, and has served as a mentor for the Supporting Diverse Learners graduate diploma program at Simon Fraser University.



Raising Voices:

Poetry and Performance in the Classroom

Teaching idea

"You're the man, Aaron, you're the MAN!" Ben shouted as Aaron stood there, his last lines of Carl Sandburg's "Chicago" still hanging in the air. The rest of the class followed Ben's lead with hoots and applause. Aaron soaked it up; it was the first time in the nine months he'd been in Canada that he had felt like himself and his peers had approved.

Poet and educator Christina Braid writes, "Poetry In Voice [poetry recitation] is revolutionary: it asks people to be present -- to experience a work of poetry in the moment." In recitation, the poem and the performer work together to give the audience an experience, a new way of hearing the poem. Without knowing, Aaron had also asked people to be present and to experience him in the moment. Self-conscious about his accent, homesick for his school life back home where he wrote for the local paper, he'd become "that shy new kid" who listened in class, wrote with his head down during free writing, but shared little. Sandburg's poetry changed that. Aaron chose "Chicago", a roaring, breathing, machine of a poem. He set to work memorizing it for the class recitation assignment. Back home, he'd memorized lots of things; math facts, lines for school theatre productions, his Student Council election speech. He knew he could do this. What he didn't anticipate was how his classmates might experience it.

* * *

Oral language is an integral component of both BC's English Language Arts 8 to 12: Integrated Resource Package (2007) and the current draft of BC's English Language Arts Curriculum (2013). Poetry In Voice, a national, poetry recitation contest for high schools, is one way to have students engage with literature and respond to it through an oral interpretation of the written word. As Margaret Atwood suggested at a Q and A with Poetry In Voice teachers and students last year, "Poetry is condensed life... it is deeply engraved in our DNA". To find, memorize, and interpret a poem for performance makes students engage with poetry deeply and lastingly.

We also know that being able to speak with confidence is a life skill that takes a lot practice. The Integrated Resource Package (2007) cites Jones' *Lipservice: The Story of Talk in Schools* (1988) in emphasizing the importance of teaching speaking and listening:

The primacy of the spoken word in human intercourse cannot be too strongly emphasized. Important though the written word is, most communication takes place in speech; and those who do not listen with attention and cannot speak with clarity, articulateness and confidence are at a disadvantage in almost every aspect of their personal, social, and working lives (p.98)

Since 2011 when I left the classroom to become the educational consultant for this project, I've lost myself inside poems and found myself inside secondary schools across the Lower Mainland working with teachers and students on poetry recitation. Aaron's triumph is the reward: when students find the confidence to perform for their peers while their peers truly listen, then the challenge of finding, memorizing, and performing a poem is well worth it. As student Sadie Anne Hirschfield, a 2012 Poetry In Voice finalist explains, "I made sure I chose poems that I could really deliver in a unique way and poems that interested me and that I could make a connection with so that [...] I could perform them with meaning."

In "Introduction to Poetry," Billy Collins writes:

I say drop a mouse into a poem
and watch him probe his way out,

or walk inside the poem's room
and feel the walls for a light switch.

But how can we expect our students to want to "walk inside a poem's room" when even the most adept students can find poetry intimidating? Its rhythms can be unpredictable, its forms negotiable, and its

diction difficult. To dispel the notion of poetry being impenetrable or curious, I introduce students to a wide array of poets and poems and challenge them to rethink what poetry is (and isn't) so they can find the light switch on their own.

Teaching Poetry and Performance in the Classroom

The following three activities are the ways in which I've presented poetry and performance in the classroom.

Activity 1: What Poetry Is

Recitation is a balancing act between the poem, the poet and the performer. I begin by exposing students to the sight and sound of poetry. I choose pieces written in varying forms, by a variety of dead and living poets, on a wide range of topics.

Suggested activities for beginning to look at poetry and performance with your students:

- Read a poem a day aloud to your class.
- Ask groups to choose a poem and perform a choral recitation.
- Play Poetry in Voice student recitation video for the class: www.poetryinvoice.com/videos
- Book the computer lab and ask students to explore the Poetry In Voice anthology for poems they connect with based on theme, time period, or author.

A list of favourite anchor poems for discussion, all available online at Poetryinvoice.com:

- "The Powwow at the End of the World" by Sherman Alexie
- "Fire Watch" by Ken Babstock
- "don't worry yr hair" by bill bissett
- from "Chapter I" by Christian Bök
- from "Summer Grass" by Roo Borson
- "The New Experience" by Suzanne Buffam
- "Blank Sonnet" by George Elliott Clarke
- "Plenty" by Kevin Connolly
- "Saguaro" by Brenda Hillman
- "Danse Russe" by William Carlos Williams

Activity 2: Knowing Your Tone

Knowing the overall tone and tone shift points in a poem dramatically affects how a reciter performs a poem. To demonstrate this, I select four or five contrasting tones such as: joyful, melancholy, frightened, sarcastic and questioning, from the tone list on page 70:

Suggested sequence for introducing the concept of tone and tone shifts in poetry:

- Divide students into groups and distribute a copy of a poem like Kevin Connolly's "Plenty."
- Ask students to divide the poem into equal sections so that each group member can recite their section in one of the chosen tones.
- Invite group members to perform for each other. Let the audience guess the tones of each section.
- Discuss the importance of tone in a recitation. What feeling did you get when the poem was recited in a melancholic tone? Sarcastic tone? Frightened tone?
- Ask students, with the help of the Poetry In Voice tone list, to code their own poem for tone and tone shifts, paying attention to the words, line breaks, and roles these elements play in determining the tones of the poem.

The Tone List

abashed	abrasive	abusive	accepting
acerbic	acquiescent	admiring	adoring
affectionate	aghast	allusive	amused
angry	anxious	apologetic	apprehensive
approving	arch	ardent	argumentative
audacious	awe-struck	bantering	begrudging
bemused	benevolent	biting	bitter
blithe	boastful	bored	bristling
brusque	calm	candid	caressing
caustic	cavalier	childish	child-like
clipped	cold	complimentary	condescending
contemptuous	conversational	coy	critical
curt	cutting	cynical defamatory	denunciatory
despairing	detached	devil-may-care	didactic
disbelieving	discouraged	disdainful	disparaging
disrespectful	distracted	doubtful	dramatic
dreamy	dry	ecstatic	entranced
enthusiastic	eulogistic	exhilarated	exultant
facetious	fanciful	fearful	flippant
fond	forceful	frightened	ghoulish
giddy	gleeful	glum	grim
guarded	guilty	happy	harsh
haughty	heavy-hearted	hollow	horrificed
humorous	hypercritical	indifferent	indulgent
ironic	irreverent	joking	joyful
languorous	languid	laudatory	light-hearted
lingering	loving	marveling	melancholy
mistrustful	mocking	mysterious	naïve
neutral	nostalgic	objective	peaceful
pessimistic	pitiful	playful	poignant
pragmatic	proud	provocative	questioning

Activity 3: Using the Rubric as Formative and Peer Assessment

Once your students know their poems by heart and understand their meaning and tone, they are ready to work on their performance. Use the following Poetry In Voice rubric to prepare for recitation:

Suggested sequence for using the scoring rubric as a formative assessment tool with individual students and small groups:

- Review the rubric criteria as a class.
- Familiarize students with the use of the rubric by watching and evaluating student recitation videos from the Poetry In Voice website together.
- Divide students into groups and distribute highlighters and rubrics.
- Ask groups to choose one criterion to focus on for evaluation such as: physical presence, voice and articulation, appropriateness of dramatization, or evidence of understanding.
- Have students recite for their groups. Audience members highlight the reciter's progress for the criterion on the rubric and provide oral feedback.
- Repeat this process often, allowing for peer feedback to performers many times before your recitation finals.
- Prepare follow up lessons based on the feedback from the rubrics. Make use of the "Performance Tips" videos series on the Poetry In Voice website for specific models of recitation strategies.

Scoring Rubric

Accuracy: Students should be assigned an accuracy score for each recitation. Please refer to our Accuracy Score Sheet.

	VERY WEAK	WEAK	AVERAGE	GOOD	EXCELLENT	OUTSTANDING
PHYSICAL PRESENCE	Stiff or agitated; lacks eye contact with audience; appears uncomfortable	Timid; unsure; eye contact and body language reflect nervousness	Body language and eye contact are at times unsure, at times confident	Comfortable; steady eye contact and confident body language	Poised; body language and eye contact reveal strong stage presence	Authoritative; body language and eye contact show compelling stage presence
VOICE AND ARTICULATION	Inaudible; slow; distracting rhythm; singsong; hurried; mispronunciations	Audible, but quiet; too loud; monotone; unevenly paced; affected tone	Clear; adequate intonation; even pacing	Clear; appropriate intonation and pacing	Very clear; crisp; effective use of volume, intonation, rhythm, and pacing	Very clear; crisp; mastery of rhythm and pace; skilful use of volume and intonation
EVIDENCE OF UNDERSTANDING	Obscures meaning of poem	Doesn't sufficiently communicate meaning of poem	Satisfactorily communicates meaning of poem	Conveys meaning of poem well	Interprets poem very well for audience; nuanced	Masterfully interprets poem for audience, deftly revealing poem's meaning
INTERPRETATION	Poem is overshadowed by significant distracting gestures, facial expressions, inflections, or accents; acting out of poem; singing; over-emoting; inappropriate tone	Poem is secondary to style of delivery; includes instances of distracting gestures, facial expressions, and vocal inflections; inappropriate tone	Poem is neither overwhelmed nor enhanced by style of delivery	Poem is enhanced by style of delivery; any gestures, facial expressions, and movements are appropriate to poem	Style of delivery reflects precedence of poem; poem's voice is well conveyed	Style of delivery reflects internalization of poem; all gestures and movements feel essential to poem's success
OVERALL PERFORMANCE	Ineffective or inappropriate recitation; does disservice to poem	Inadequate recitation; does disservice to poem	Sufficient recitation; lacks meaningful impact on audience	Enjoyable recitation; successfully delivers poem	Inspired performance shows grasp of recitation skills and enhances audience's experience of the poem	Captivating performance that is more than the sum of its parts; shows mastery of recitation skills



Seeing the Bigger Picture

National poetry recitation contests such as Poetry In Voice, Poetry Outloud in the United States, and Poetry by Heart in the United Kingdom are not only bringing poetry back to its oral roots but they are also creating new opportunities for students to share their understanding of literary texts, develop oral speaking skills, and experience poetry together.

As Pierre Nepveu, poet and editor of the Poetry In Voice anthology in French explains, "It's very simple [...] a well-pitched voice, good rhythm and phrasing, clearly articulated language; that already expresses a lot of emotion. Poems speak for themselves. One should simply let them speak." Choosing, memorizing, and performing a poem is one way we can invite students to "walk inside a poem's room", making the light switch that much easier to find.

Poetry Resources:

All poems are available for download here: <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/poems>

For student recitation videos: <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/videos>

For performance tips videos: <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/poems/tips/recite-it>

Evaluation tools and scoring rubrics:

<http://www.poetryinvoice.com/downloads/scoring-rubric.pdf>

<http://www.poetryinvoice.com/competitions/planning>

Lesson ideas: <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/teachers/lesson-plans>

Other websites for teaching poetry and recitation:

www.poetryfoundation.org/learning/

www.poetryoutloud.org


www.poetrybyheart.org.uk

References:

- Atwood, Margaret (2013). Part three: Margaret Atwood [video]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5T-sC1juczK>
- BC Ministry of Education (2013). English Language Arts Curriculum [draft]. Retrieved from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/curriculum/English%20Language%20Arts/9>
- BC Ministry of Education (2007). English language arts 8 to 12: integrated resourcepackage. Victoria, BC: Author.
- Collins, Billy (2001). Introduction to Poetry. Retrieved from <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/poems/introduction-poetry>
- Connolly, Kevin (2008). Plenty. Retrieved from <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/poems/plenty>
- Hirschfield, Sadie Anne (2012). Poetry in voice 2012 [video]. Retrieved from <http://www.poetryinvoice.com/videos/poetry-voice-2012>
- Jones, P. (1988). Lipservice: The story of talk in schools, 26. Philadelphia, PA: Open University Press.

Liisa House

Liisa House has been teaching since 1996. She is the Educational Consultant for Poetry In Voice and currently teaches Resource at Edith Cavell in Vancouver. She holds an MA in Language and Literacy from UBC where she studied how to build community through literacy practices in the classroom.



Essential Questions

Teaching idea

Humanities 8

Essential questions have become, well, an essential part of my classroom over the last several years. The impetus for this change in my practice came slowly, first through a desire to differentiate instruction, as outlined by Carol Ann Tomlinson in her many books, such as *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed Ability Classrooms*, (2001).

Next, I began to take in the work of McTighe and Wiggins *Designing curriculum through backward design and Universal Design for Learning* made immediate sense to me. Somewhere along the line, as my thinking and practice began to gel, I focused more and more attention on the idea of essential understandings and questions. Most recently, I have been reading McTighe and Wiggins' book, *Essential Questions; Opening Doors to Student Understanding*, (2013).

Context:

I teach in a small rural Grades 8-12 school in Central BC. We recently put all our in-coming Grade 8 students into linear classes of English/Social Studies and Math/Science. Because two teachers share the students, collaboration is enhanced. Teachers build deeper relationships than are typically possible in a semester system. Finally, curriculum mapping allows focused instruction on skill development.

Our goal is to increase the number of students moving into mainstream core Grade 10 courses and to increase graduation rates. Student success is at the forefront of this change.

The Unit:

For the duration of my Humanities 8 full-year course, we dealt with a few main essential questions. The first, which is where we started and then ended the course, was, What is the impact of technology on society? The second question, and the focus for this piece, was, How does our world view shape our actions? The goal is to provide multiple approaches to an essential question through a variety of texts and historical situations. Students then represent their understanding through the skills we work on over the length of the full-year course.

I used the definition of world view I found in the text, *Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations* (2011). They define world view as "a collection of beliefs, values, and assumptions held by an individual or group about life, people and the universe, and the interrelationships among them" (p. 6).

We took a careful look at the concept of world view, and how our religion, experiences, gender, cultural traditions, roles, and such impact how we see the world.

We had just finished some research and other work on world religions when I began this unit. Because of the ongoing prejudices and misunderstandings of Islam, I decided to use the movie, *My Name is Khan* (2010), as an anchor text. It gave us a great launching point grounded in the student's present-day realities, and would also extend the learning that had already taken place.

When constructing a unit, I always try to find a text that has high impact, is quick, and that is accessible to all learners. This movie fits the bill; the students were utterly engaged. I had initial concerns that the subtitles would cause insurmountable challenge to a few students with learning disabilities, but my check-ins made it clear they were following without difficulty. With a different class composition, subtitles would not work and a different anchor text would need to be chosen.

As students watched, I asked them to look for examples of world view and hold their thinking on a graphic organizer I created. How did the world view of the characters shape their actions and what were the consequences of those actions? We stopped and I modeled answering the question throughout the film.

An anchor text exposes students to the essential question, but it also provides an opportunity to model the skill we are working on at the time. In this case, I was teaching writing a paragraph with a topic sentence and evidence that would prove the argument being made. We were learning paragraph writing in response to literature, but also in writing about history. My goal was to move students through several cycles of writing paragraphs.


I use the gradual release model in my classroom. This method is outlined in McTighe and Wiggins as, "I do; you watch. I do; you help. You do; I help. You do; I watch" (p. 60).

Using the anchor text, I modeled the writing skill I wanted them to develop. First we practiced writing topic sentences they could use. We used the essential questions to help us.

- How did Zakir's world view shape his actions?
- Zakir's religious beliefs made it difficult for him to accept Mandira as his sister-in-law.
- How did Razia's world view shape her actions?
- Razia had a very open mind about differences, which allowed her to raise Rizwan to believe he could do anything.

Then I picked a topic sentence and modeled the strategy, writing in front of the class, and printed the model out for everyone to use. Next, they picked a character of their own and wrote a paragraph, following the model, and with my assistance. I gave feedback individually and as a class, using a short rubric focused on the development of a topic sentence and supporting evidence.

From the anchor text, we moved into literature circles. Students chose from novels set in the Middle Ages. One of the tasks students were engaged in was figuring out how the world view of a character in the novel impacted their decisions, and how these decisions influenced the events in the story. Again, the product was to demonstrate an understanding of the essential question and the skill being learned.



The next topic we approached in the Social Studies curriculum was the Bubonic plague that occurred in Europe during the Middle Ages. It fits beautifully with the essential question guiding the unit. I repeated the anchor text model, using The History Channel's, The Plague (2006), before moving them into the textbook and other resources. In order to write a topic sentence, they answered the question, How did the world view of individuals or society impact behaviour during the plague?

By this time, students had written several paragraphs, and dealt with the essential question in three different contexts. The students also wrote another paragraph related to the impact of the plague, transferring their skill with writing topic sentences and choosing supportive evidence independent of the essential question.

World view continued to arise as we moved into the Age of Exploration and Conquest, obviously, but the main question during that unit was, What is the impact of technology on society?, as I wanted to end the year with a project on that topic.

Why use essential questions?

McTighe and Wiggins (p. 17) outline several reasons why essential questions are so powerful. They:

- Signal that inquiry is a key goal of education.
- Make it more likely that the unit will be intellectually engaging
- Help to clarify and prioritize standards for teachers.
- Provide transparency for students.
- Encourage and model metacognition for students.
- Provide opportunities for intra and interdisciplinary connections.
- Support meaningful differentiation.

All of the above have been apparent in my classroom where and when my practice engages in this cycle. Many years ago, I started my inquiry trying to figure out how to differentiate instruction. More than any other change to my practice, assessment for learning in the context of essential questions has had a profound impact. Students work at all levels of challenge in my classroom, from independent to highly scaffolded. But they are all doing the same thing, and grappling with the same challenging curriculum.

Ongoing Challenge

It is not always readily apparent to me what essential questions will work with any given unit of study. Often, the questions come to me only as I am teaching. Sometimes, I have selected a question, only to realize that a different question, or set of questions, takes over. It is not simple, but it does become more fluid the more I practice.

Ultimately, the "long term goal of using essential questions is that students eventually become the askers and pursuers of such questions without being directed by the teacher" (p. 59). This is not to say that I will no longer be designing units like this; however, the students should be writing questions themselves. I can see incredible power that will come through having the students to think through what the essential questions are as we work through the material. They can work with the ones that speak the most strongly to them. We don't all have to be answering the same questions.

Essential and existential

I tell my students that essential questions are ones we cannot afford to not answer. That is what makes them essential. We must answer these questions as a community in order to make sense of the world in which we live. Recently, I picked up the book, *Teaching Literacy for Love and Wisdom* (Wilhelm and Novak, 2011), and read about the idea of “‘existential’ questions - questions about how each one of us should best live given the unique conditions of life given to each and every one of us....questions each of us can only answer for ourselves” (p. 11). Examples include, “‘Why am I so heartless to so many people?’ Why do I feel scared and confused about becoming an adult?’” (p. 12).

Here is some rich fodder for me to extend my questions. How does my world view shape my actions and what are the consequences? I also plan to work with students to write their own existential questions.

I am excited about where my work with students will go next. That is the beauty of powerful questions!

References

- Filion, Barbara, and Grafton Antone. *Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations*. Toronto: Pearson Canada, 2011. Print.
- McTighe, Jay, and Grant P. Wiggins. *Essential Questions: Opening Doors to Student Understanding*. Alexandria: ASCD, 2013. Print.
- My Name Is Khan. Dir. Karan Johar. Perf. Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol. Dharma Productions, 2010. DVD.
- The Plague. A&E Home Video, 2006. DVD.
- Tomlinson, Carol A. *How to Differentiate Instruction in Mixed-ability Classrooms*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2001. Print.
- Wilhelm, Jeffrey D., and Bruce Novak. *Teaching Literacy for Love and Wisdom: Being the Book and Being the Change*. New York: Teachers College, 2011. Print.

Kelley Inden

Kelley Inden (B.Ed, M.Sped) has been teaching in School District #91 (Nechako-Lakes) for over 15 years. She has taught in a variety of settings, including alternate, one-room school house, and classroom. She teaches many different courses in the humanities from Grades 8-12.



BCTELA

BC Teachers of English Language Arts