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Embedding LGBTQ Topics in the Curriculum: Looking at the Need, Examining the Barriers, and Considering the Possibilities in the Secondary School Setting

Author: Carolyn Albanese

Ah, high schools, sites of so many things! If asked to recollect your secondary school years, what do you remember? A favourite class or teacher? Inspired learning? Intense socializing? Being bullied? For several people, the last question might be the first one that they would remember if asked about their high school experience. Students may be bullied and harassed for a variety of reasons, including their real and/or perceived sexual and/or gender identities that do not conform to heterosexist expectations in society.

Chesir-Teran defines heterosexism as a setting-level process that systematically privileges heterosexuality relative to homosexuality, based on the assumption that heterosexuality, as well as heterosexual power and privilege are the norm and the ideal. In other words, students who may identify or be perceived as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgendered, or any other sexual or gender identity that does not align with societal norms do not receive the same treatment as those who identify as heterosexual. These LGBTQ — lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer/questioning — students are therefore treated differently, negatively, especially by their peers, at school. There is plenty of research to support this (Meyer, 2011; Taylor et al., 2009; Presgraves, 2008; The Ontario Ministry of Education, 2008) and how chronic bullying negatively impacts those who are victimized in terms of attendance, academic success and social-emotional well-being

(Meyer, 2011; Schneider and Dimito, 2008). And while many schools but not all have Gay Straight Alliances, a student-run, staff-supervised after-school group that offers support to our LGBTQ students and their straight 'ally' friends, those students who may identify as LGBTQ or as an ally may not necessarily join a school GSA for a number of reasons such feeling vulnerable and/or stigmatized due to culture, religion and peers in the school. (Grossman et al., 2009; MacIntosh, 2007; McCready, 2004).

High School to College: The Journey of a Black Male with Developmental Delays

Author: Orlena Broomes with student Jefferson Broomes

This paper describes the school experiences of a young black, male, Canadian (second generation) student who is also differently-abled. The four attributes of being male, being Black, an immigrant, and differently-abled and their interactions are all major factors that can impact significantly on a student's progress through school and on his or her school outcome. This paper seeks to use stories from the school experiences of the student to illustrate factors that can promote successful school outcomes. The hope is that readers will glean practical knowledge they can use in and outside the classroom to support successful school outcomes for Black males. Strategies and helpful tips for teachers, school administrators, policymakers and parents are located at the end of the paper. The story is told by the student and his mother who is first a parent, then an academic and educational researcher.

Consciousness-Based Education: Unfolding the Inner Genius of Every Student

Author: Ashley Deans, Ph.D

Leaders in education are always searching for ways to improve academic outcomes and develop citizens who enjoy successful,

happy, productive lives while contributing to the well being of society as a whole. This high ideal is now realizable by supplying one missing ingredient to education-technologies to develop higher states of consciousness. Traditionally, education has focused primarily on what a student studies-mathematics, physics, art, literature etc. However, education has lacked a systematic means to unfold the full value of the consciousness of the student-qualities such as alertness, creativity, intelligence, receptivity, and breadth of comprehension. As a result, increasing academic demands on the student are not accompanied by an increase in the student's capacity to learn. This failure to expand the students container of knowledge- this failure to unlock the hidden reserves of the brain-not only restricts the full expression of the inner genius of the student but also leads to the accumulation of fatigue and stress, resulting in the epidemic of stress-related health and behavior problems prevalent in society today. Over 600 scientific studies performed at more than 250 universities and research institutes in 33 countries, and published in over 100 peer reviewed journals have confirmed that Consciousness-based education, which includes the Transcendental Meditation and TM-Sidhi program, develops higher states of consciousness, as evidenced by increased brain integration, growth of creativity and intelligence, improved academic outcomes, decreased stress and anxiety, lower levels of substance abuse, a decline in school bullying, and reduced crime and violence in society.

Keywords: transcendental meditation, improve academic outcomes**[Creating Inclusive School Environments for LGBTQ Students: Implications for Educators](#)**

Author: Clelia Della-Rovere

The discrimination and persecution of people because of their sexual orientation is as unjust as the crime of racism. Homophobia is a crime against humanity. Archbishop Desmond Tutu (2007). All students have the right to feel valued,

respected, and safe. There are a variety of approaches teachers and principals can take to effect positive change for students who are marginalized or disenfranchised (Glaze, Mattingley, & Levin, 2012; Ryan, 2006). For students who differ from the norm be it by reason of race, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, or physical or intellectual ability" school environments may be less than safe or welcoming. Many of these students are burdened with daily injustices and barriers to their academic achievement; however, schools can be vehicles for the redress of the inequities that define their school experiences by creating and sustaining inclusive school environments (Glaze et al., 2012). Ryan (2012) describes the process of increasing inclusion in the educational context as one that:

1. Targets exclusive systemic practices, such as ableism, classism, sexism, racism, homophobia, and so on;
2. Emphasizes the importance of access, participation, and achievement of all students; and
3. Advocates for the meaningful participation of all members of school communities in the decision- and policy-making activities of schools and school systems. (p. 7).

Leading and Learning in Networks

Author: Robert Dunn, Brian Harrison, Greg McClelland

Meaningful learning for children and adults almost always happens in collaborative context. Schools in the York Region District School Board, just north of Toronto in Ontario, Canada have spent a better part of the past decade working to ensure that collaborative, networked learning through joint work will become the structure and the norm at every level of the system. Drawing upon the wisdom, expertise and support of researchers like Stephen Katz and Lorna Earl (2007), Richard Elmore (2009), along with Michael Fullan and Australian, Peter

Hill and Carmel Crevola (2006), district leaders have led schools within the district towards the formation of small, robust learning networks, comprised of system support staff, school administrators and teacher leaders. Learning networks are professional learning communities in school networked together. In this model, the classroom is the locus of improved student achievement and the learning network is the locus of capacity building of the teachers and administrators to change classroom practice resulting in enhanced student achievement. In our vision, we learn with, from and on-behalf of each other, and are focused on knowledge creation and sharing.

This article recounts the experiences of two school networks that used evidence-based decision making processes, being conscious of the strongest form of collaboration being joint work to respond to a problem of practice to utilize targeted funding from the Ontario Ministry of Education to design a structure and process that would attempt to bring the risks and rewards of networked learning right into the classroom. In the fall months, data was gathered from each school in the networks around the impact of the current improvement focus on student achievement. As well, data was collected on classroom practice, especially as it related to the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Cycle (TLC) planning model. While some of the schools in the network were identified as improving schools (i.e. achievement exceeded the Board's improvement trajectory), our analysis of the implementation of the TLC suggested that schools were at the early implementation of this model with little evidence of a focus on students to watch or little evidence of differentiated instruction.

[A Student's Journey to Excellence, Through Personal, Social and Moral Awareness](#)

Author: Amy Evans

The Journey to Excellence is a toolkit for successful living in the 21st century. This transformative program consists of 7 Life Skills, uniqueness, intuition, reflection, visualizing, goal-setting, mentors and community service, that, until now, have been absent from school curriculums, workplace wellness programs, parenting workshops and books and community programs. When the 7 Life Skills are explicitly taught and practiced, transformation follows.

They equip the individual with essential knowledge and skills that lead to emotional wellness and a strong sense of self. Good character is a natural outcome of these teachings. Social issues such as peer pressure, exclusion and bullying are replaced with respect and emotional issues such as low self-esteem, depression and anxiety are replaced with self-appreciation, self-acceptance and a general sense of well-being.

Keywords: life skills, wellness, well-being, emotional wellness, character, social issues in education**[Education as Regeneration: Process of Decolonizing Literature Review](#)**

Author: Christina Franz

In the past, the Canadian government tried to assimilate Canada's Indigenous people into mainstream culture be forcing Western ideologies onto Aboriginal children through the use of residential schools. These residential schools taught Western principles and Catholicism to Aboriginal children, while, at the same time, attempting to erase the 'Indian out of the Indian. Children attending these schools were not allowed to speak their native languages, nor were they permitted to display any cultural artifacts in the school setting, or severe punishment would follow. It has been argued by several education and history scholars that much of the Aboriginal language, culture and heritage has been lost as a result of the residential school era (Haig Brown, 1988; Barman, Hebert & McCaskill 1986).

After centuries of subjugation, Aboriginal people have finally reclaimed some control over their education system and other educational facilities. However, despite the fact that they obtained control over certain aspects of their lives, the current education system within Canada is still failing to serve Aboriginal students; as the school systems often employs predominately Western pedagogy methods that are very diverse from the Aboriginal teaching system. Michael Mendelson (2008) reports that there has been a continuing failure to educate Aboriginal students, even after the conclusion of the residential school era. Furthermore, his findings indicate that, on average, only twenty-nine percent of Aboriginal students actually graduate from high school in Canada. Thus, Aboriginal students are not succeeding in the school system and are in fact falling behind academically because they are being educated in ways that do not necessarily correspond with the traditional education values of their family and community.

Keywords: first nations, aboriginal education, human rights**[Multicultural Education for Teachers with a Focus on the Factors that Influence the Achievement of Minority Students in North American Schools: A Literature Review](#)**

Author: Rose Gibbs

This literature review will highlight significant issues that have been raised by researchers and teacher educators in the field of Multicultural Education. Many of those researchers and teacher educators have been working in this field for several years and it is interesting to note that while the terminology may have evolved, the need for work on equity issues has not really changed. In this article, the cultural issues that may affect the level of achievement and the level of engagement of some minority students will be discussed. The implications and suggestions for teacher education and professional development will be explored.

Collaboration for Inclusive Learning in Every School

Author: Tony Glover

In terms of seeking to provide the best possible education for each individual student it would be unrealistic to assume that any individual school will have all the answers. It would also be reasonable to assume that answers can be found or created somewhere. Further basic principles, which lie at the heart of this paper, include a moral imperative for schools to operate within a broader system in serving the needs of students and a commitment to the value of action research, which can transcend political structures and geographical boundaries. Genuine action research can allow theory to derive from actual practice. In terms of definition, a system is taken as not just an organizational group of schools but indeed any two or more schools coming together for a shared purpose. While geographical proximity brings obvious benefits in terms of opportunities to collaborate, modern communications technology can enable schools in different countries to form a 'system.' As an illustration of this, live conferencing through Skype has offered an easy, effective and inexpensive means of dialogue between schools in England and Ontario, with action points arising for both schools. Comparisons of strategies for inclusive learning and student engagement have supported the development of both schools as professional learning communities and led to improvements in both.

Knowledge Network for Applied Education Research (KNAER) Demographic Data and Student Equity

Author: Louise Gormley and Student Equity Project Team Members

We present some initial findings from a university/school board collaboration which examines how demographic data may be taken into consideration when planning for student achievement

in order to identify opportunity gaps and to monitor progress in addressing these gaps. Four key questions have been identified in the project, and are on issues related to a) the rationale for collecting the data, b) concerns arising from the collection of student data, c) successful methodological approaches, and d) dissemination and reporting of data analysis to school and community stakeholders for informed decision-making. Future knowledge mobilization activities will continue to co-create and share knowledge and understandings on the collection, analysis, and reporting of demographic data, with the aim of supporting school boards in their goals of equity and inclusivity within their particular school communities.

Keywords: demographic data, student achievement**Engaging the 21st – Century Learner: Using Augmented Reality to Increase Student Engagement and Student Achievement in an Inquiry – Based Learning Environment**

Author: Roxanne Hibberd, Alton Johnson, David To and Swati Vora-Patel

Sutton Public School is a rural school located in the northern York Region community of Sutton, Ontario. The school has a population of 283 students, of which 17 students will be entering Grade 6 in September 2012 (York Region District School Board, 2011). Theschool was selected for the Future Navigators project because of its EQAO performance. According to the Fraser Institute, Sutton Public School ranked last amongst all other schools within the York Region District School Board when it came to the Grade 3 and Grade 6 provincial assessments (The Fraser Institute, 2012). The social and emotional aim of the four-week Future Navigators project was to provide additional resources and support to help engage the students of Sutton Public School, while the academic aim was to increase student achievement. Both project priorities fall under the Board's Equity and Inclusive Education policy (York Region District School Board, 2011).

Our project team decided to work with students who will be entering Grade 6 in order to help prepare them for the upcoming EQAO assessments in Spring 2013. Our team has worked on numerous student engagement and technology projects and we embarked on Future Navigators in order to answer the following questions:

1. Can the use of iPad-enabled augmented reality increase student engagement?
2. Can the use of iPad-enabled augmented reality increase student achievement?

Keywords: augmented reality, qualitative assessment tools**[SES - "ism" – Recognizing and Naming the Multiple Impacts of Low Socio-Economic Status on Our Students](#)**

Author: Yvonne Kelly, Camille Logan and Linda Aihoshi

The focus of this Paper is to assist participants in understanding, identifying and working together to eliminate the biases, barriers and power dynamics specific to poverty, that severely limit students' prospects for learning, growing and fully contributing to society.

SESism or Socio Economic Status ISM is bias or discrimination against individuals who are living in poverty. SES ism is not just words that are spoken; it is about the embedded nature of bias in our systems, policies and the ways in which people are thought of, limited and/or excluded in society.

To understand and challenge the dynamics which underlie and threaten students' well-being, academic achievement and future potential, we must examine the broader systemic realities of marginalized groups. SESism, prevents those marginalized by poverty from moving ahead and it persists mainly because of lack of understanding and knowledge. We need to confront SES ism and eliminate its stranglehold on our learners and their families. The First Step is acknowledging its existence within our schools, our communities and beyond. We need to believe

SESism exists and realize its impact — then and only then we can begin to take action.

Critical Literacy through the Eyes of a White Teacher

Author: Denise Mabee

Literacy has taken on a new perspective in the twenty-first century. It is no longer about the spoken word or written text, but goes far beyond this realm to include an acceptance of others ethnicity, race, and culture. Known as Critical Literacy, it enables people to view a situation or text through a social justice perspective; an avenue to open lines of cultural communication which may otherwise remain silent. In doing so, students and teachers alike understand and learn to respect others underlying cultural beliefs and attitudes while giving individuals the opportunity to challenge the norm and simultaneously deepen an understanding of differing cultures.

Parent Engagement: School Councils Are Not Enough

Author: Dan McRae

Ontario's Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy (Ministry, 2009) reaffirms the provincial government's commitment to increasing student achievement, reducing achievement gaps, and bolstering confidence in our publicly funded education system. The Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy has eight areas of focus. This paper will discuss one of these areas, school-community relationships, and specifically, the role of the school council in publicly funded schools.

This paper argues that school councils are inadequate structures that minimally support parent engagement policies. In fact, it will be demonstrated that school councils, in their current form, may actually retard the development of

inclusive and equitable parent engagement practice. Parent engagement policies need to be reimagined to include structures beyond school councils that support parental involvement in schools.

The paper will begin by providing a brief historical context for the presence of school councils in publicly funded schools and then proceed by describing the role of the school council in contemporary schools. The discussion will then shift to an examination of current parent engagement research. I will conclude by presenting recommendations for improved parent engagement mechanisms in schools, and speculate about the future of school councils in our publicly funded education system.

Keywords: school councils, parent engagement**[“Age Appropriate”, One of the Keys to Success](#)**

Author: Paul Meeuwsen

For decades in the Netherlands, youth with intellectual disabilities had no obligations to participate in society. All they had were rights: the right to receive an allowance; the right of being taken care of; and the right of some day care. They had no social appreciated role in society which prevented their integration.

Previously, students with intellectual disabilities went to a special education school by taxi. When they finished school at 20 years old, they went to daycare or to social workplaces. In daycare, they participated in creative and relaxing activities. In the social workplace, they participated in simple activities such as putting screws in plastic bags, folding cardboard boxes, etc. In their free time they went to special sporting clubs only for individuals with intellectual disabilities. In summary, it was impossible for them to integrate into society. The world of the individual with intellectual disabilities was kept strictly separate from the

world of others.

The Imperative of Integrated Learning

Author: Beate Planche, Ed.D.

As a part of seeking to engage students more deeply, York Region District School Board's (Y.R.D.S.B.) refreshed Literacy Frame (Appendix A) suggests that today's students must become partners in learning, be actively engaged in the development of digital knowledge, skills and attitudes, and be immersed in a connected curriculum using real world content and processes. Our system equity goals include students being able to see themselves in the curricula enhancing relevance and learning as well as having curricular delivery differentiated and personalized to meet specific student strengths and needs. As well, students need to be involved in co-constructing the criteria of success and in the assessment of their progress towards specific learning goals. Higher – order questions and intentional thinking challenges need to be strategically woven into this generation's programming to provide opportunity and practice in the development of multiple and critical literacy skills. All of these system goals support the development of creative and critical thinking skills as well as skills of collaboration and strong communication. Our Literacy Frame also incorporates many of the tenets of the Ontario Ministry of Education-Secretariat's Capacity Building Series in regard to building integration and inquiry into planning and instruction (Sept, 2010, Sept. 2011).

I AM – A Resource that Transforms Student Attitudes Toward "the Other"

Author: Beth Porter

Four years ago, the L'Arche community in Cape Breton asked Cheryl Zinyk, founder of the Sol Express Creative Arts group

in Toronto, to lead them in a community weekend. Cheryl invited the community members each to complete with a partner the sentences: I am, I love, I hate, and I dream. The exercise allowed the community members, who consist of roughly equal numbers of people with and without intellectual disabilities, to share about themselves, and it generated much enjoyment. Subsequently, inspired by this experience, L'Arche Cape Breton's community leader, Jenn Power, and six members of its drama group who have intellectual disabilities created the I AM video to celebrate the International Day of People with Disabilities (December 3rd). The video consists only of the six individuals with disabilities completing the four sentences. There is no mediation. Each person completes the sentences however they are inclined, and in several ways. While in most cases the speech of individuals is clear, English subtitles are provided. Transitions consist of music by Natalie McMaster, a friend of the L'Arche Cape Breton community.

Keywords: L'Arche community, developmental disabilities, voice**[The Ontario Leadership Framework: A Tool for Equitable & Inclusive Schools](#)**

Author: Dr. Richard Williamson

In December 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Education issued a mini discussion paper outlining a series of new supports for principals and vice-principals in Ontario publicly funded schools. One of the five goals outlined in the discussion paper was to better define the role, powers, responsibilities and obligations of principals and vice-principals to ensure coherent and consistent expectations. Following this, the Ministry of Education introduced The Ontario Leadership Strategy in 2006, which included the Ontario Leadership Framework. The Framework outlines the specific competencies and practices of school leaders. It is the intent of this paper to examine and analyze the direction provided in the Ontario Leadership Framework in terms of whether or not the

Framework can be used as a vehicle by educational administrators who wish to further an agenda for equitable and inclusive schools.

The Framework is a detailed and thorough presentation of what the province believes educational leadership should look like in Ontario schools. Through an examination of social justice literature, this paper will present a collection of perspectives that outline the themes of a social justice agenda. With a clarification of the perspectives and the broad themes, one can examine the Framework to determine if it is a helpful vehicle or a hindrance in addressing the greater good of the students in Ontario schools.

Keywords: Ontario Leadership Strategy, equity, diversity, leadership, authentic participation, community involvement, student achievement, high expectations, inclusion, collaborative cultures, ongoing professional learning**[Culture Matters: Developing an Appreciation for the ELL's Cultural Background and Its Potential Impact on Your Classroom](#)**

Author: Dr. Peter Zsebik

The teaching of a second language has always been a part of our society's education patterns. We teach it for various reasons. It could be to prepare for travel, or for work, or sometimes to facilitate acculturation into the target society. Whatever the reason, second language acquisition has always been a curricular focus for different educational systems, and this is particularly evident in our contemporary society by the numbers of individuals who will travel half the world to acquire the global lingua franca – the English language. They will selflessly sacrifice family and comfort just to acquire this perceived magical key to their success in our postmodernist global village.

Keywords: culture, second language learning