

President's Message

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In schools, at this point in the year, we are solidly immersed in our work as educators. Refining our learning and programming plans for individual students, and classrooms has been our number one priority. We have worked to align student needs with grade level

outcomes, and personalized learning goals. Most importantly, by now, we have invested a great deal of energy in understanding our students and building caring relationships.

As I work with fellow educators to make sense of how to move forward with these plans in the best interest of children, I am reminded of the powerful message that ASCD's position on educating the whole child sets forth. Found in it are many of the values and approaches we take in our Manitoba schools, but with it comes a clarity as to what children really need to experience each and every day in school in order to succeed and what we as educators need to professionally commit to in order to make it happen.

The research tells us that to do well academically, students must be healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. In our work to help students achieve academically we understand the importance of:

- helping them to learn about and live a healthy lifestyle;
- creating and sustaining a physically and emotionally safe environment;
- motivating children to achieve through active learning opportunities in the classroom, the school and the broader school community;
- understanding children's social and emotional development, and thereby supporting their

- personal learning needs; and
- providing them with challenging and engaging curriculum that nurtures creativity and strengthens their capacity for critical thinking.

This is a time of year when educators are reminded that we can and do make a difference in the lives of children. I wish everyone a challenging and satisfying year as we share in the responsibility of educating the whole child.

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INSERTS:

Reflections Journal: Call for Submissions 2008
Involving Students in Assessment: What does it look like, sound like and feel like? Information and registration.
Leading to Change Information and registration.

Rick Smith: “Conscious Classroom Management: Bringing Out the Best in Students and Teachers - A Review

by Jenness Moffatt with reflections by Rosie Dudar



This full day event hosted by MASCD was a valuable and interactive professional learning experience that provided practical strategies for managing life in the classroom. Using his book as a reference, “Conscious Classroom Management- Unlocking the Secrets of Great Teaching”, the author and presenter Rick Smith unpacked some key elements of effective classroom management.

Designed as a reference for new teachers, the material

presented was of interest to all educators with a range of experience. Mr. Smith offered nurturing ways to bring fun and challenge in to education by giving teachers tools for surfing the challenging waves of the classroom experience.

Starting with the key phrase of “assume the best about kids”, Smith elaborated on the importance of believing that all children want to come to school to find success and behave well. They just require the roadmap for what success at school looks like.

Procedures can take the form of rubrics. One elementary strategy for getting a straight line is to have students make “the worst line ever” then digitally take a picture of it, then work backwards taking pictures until they form a perfect line. When the teacher asks students to “line up” she or he can point to the posted pictures and say, “that line looks like a 3 can we make a 1” the students can easily refer to the 1 picture and form up appropriately.

Mr. Smith encourages all teachers to map the road to success by planning procedures carefully and proactively engaging students in frequent and careful practice of procedures that is supported in the classroom environment. A strategy as simple as taking photos of students successfully completing procedures such as lining up, organizing bookshelves and supplies, and later posting these photos in the classroom for easy reference can assist both students and teachers in clarifying what success looks like using visual cues.



Rick offered a unique way to host a question and answer session to mix it up a bit. Launch foam Frisbees in the air and students who catch the Frisbee answer the questions. This aerobic demonstration adds a degree of fun to the lesson and further engages students.

By implementing more non-verbal procedures, Smith contends that communication can effectively proceed between teacher and student using pre-established sign language, music, visuals, and sound signals to gain attention, thus cutting down on interruption that often derails instruction and learning.



Rick also spoke about the important ability to hold our ground; be firm without being mean. The important rule for this strategy is to allow students to save face in a potentially volatile situation. As educators we should know the value of inviting our students to behave, as opposed to challenging them to comply.

Valuing the importance of building connections with students, Smith presented the 2x10 strategy for building a relationship with a student who may appear disengaged in class. Simply spending approximately two minutes a day with this student in a meaningful conversation for ten days in a row will see a reported 85% improvement in the student's attitude towards school and learning.

According to Smith, an "Inner authority" is the necessary inner belief that a successful teacher needs to have of oneself - they are in charge, comfortable with the content, and capable of connecting and engaging students in learning. Seen on a continuum of "inner authority", new teachers especially may see themselves further from the

authority and more towards the "inner apology"; a sense that their authority is questionable and they are unsure of their decisions. How we as teachers hold ourselves internally and thus how we come across to our students is an invisible element in teaching, but one that Smith argues makes a big difference in our interactions with students.

Opportunities to role-play throughout the workshop - practicing tone of voice, carefully crafting instructions, and simply practicing saying "no" and avoiding the 'land of reasons' provided a pragmatic and valuable method of applying the theories Smith presented.



Final thoughts on teaching were heartfelt as Smith explained teaching as the opportunity to make choices that touch a child's heart. As I left this inspiring professional learning experience, I felt a renewed sense of the importance of modeling what it means to be kind and the value of connecting with and accepting students for who they are. I gained powerful new strategies to ensure that I teach them well.

Participants at the Rick Smith professional learning session *Conscious Classroom Management: Bringing Out the Best in Students and Teachers* received his book, *Conscious Classroom Management: Unlocking the Secrets of Great Teaching*.

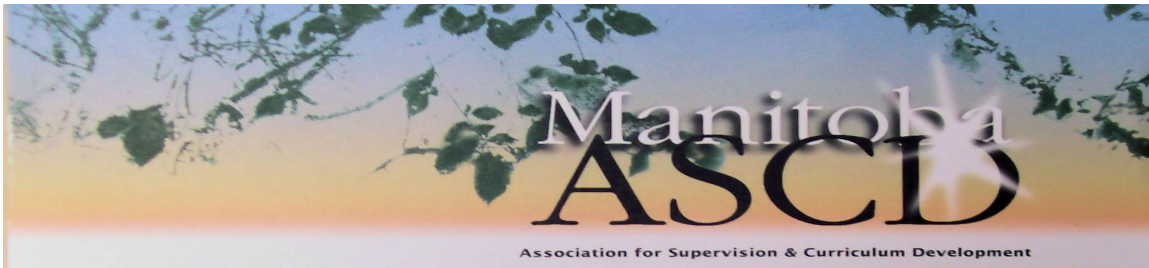
Manitoba ASCD has a limited number of copies available and these can be purchased by contacting Paulette at 510-7271.



Jeness Moffat is Coordinator of Instruction at St. James Assiniboine School Division. Rosie Dudar is a teacher-librarian in the River East Transcona School Division.



Attention Manitoba ASCD members – If you have changed schools for the 2007 – 2008 school year, or if you are retiring, please contact Paulette Migie (mbascd@shaw.ca) so our learning community can stay connected.



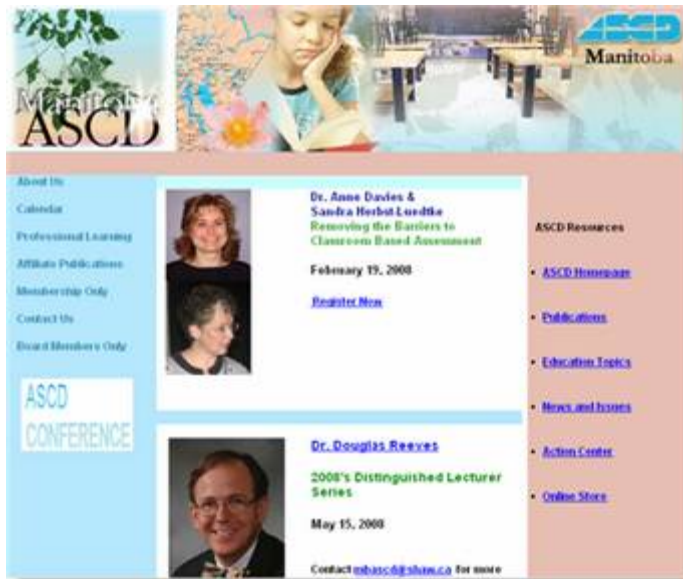
NEW Manitoba ASCD Website Under Construction

Manitoba ASCD has its own website that it highlights upcoming professional learning opportunities, information about the organization, important contacts; as well as links to news, issues, and other, international ASCD resources.

Exciting things are happening with our website design to include more interactivity and multimedia-based information for members.

Manitoba ASCD's strategic plan calls for value added enhancements that provide members with opportunities to reflect, collaborate, and

communicate with each other via blogs or forums. Members will be able to consider alternative methods of professional learning through podcasts and video clips. Manitoba ASCD is also exploring ways to better serve Manitoba educators through online needs assessment surveys. We look forward to the launch of this enhanced website in 2008 and hope colleagues will check back often to see what is new and upcoming at <http://manitoba.ascd.org>.



Mark Your Calendars Manitoba ASCD

Anne Davies and Sandra Herbst-Luedke – February 19, 2008

Involving Students in Assessment: What Does it Look Like, Sound Like, and Feel Like?

Dr. Doug Reeves – May 15, 2008

Leading to Change

Carol Ann Tomlinson - October 10, 2008

The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners

Rick Wormeli February 2009

Author of *Fair isn't Always Equal: Assessment Grading in Differentiated Classrooms*