



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As we move towards the spring season, we are able to celebrate the hard work and dedication of educators in Manitoba.

On February 17/11 Damian Cooper engaged a group of 350 educators in thought provoking conversation around student assessment focusing on reflective classroom practice. Participants indicated that the presentation and conversation provided opportunities to engage in forward planning which will impact classroom practice.

We invite you to attend our next professional learning opportunity on May 5, 2011 at CanadInn Club Regent when Anthony Muhammad, author of *Creating Powerful Learning Environments* will be with us. This opportunity will be of interest to anyone engaged in educational leadership.

For those who have the opportunity to attend the annual ASCD Conference in San Francisco from March 26 – 28, 2011, please consider attending one or more opportunities facilitated by the Canadian Education Network.

In conclusion, thank you to the Manitoba educators who have been willing to share a part of their educational journey with us through the newsletter.

Barb Isaak  
President, Manitoba ASCD

### *In This Issue:*

<i>"Voices from the edge"</i> - <i>Social Justice facing First Nations</i>	2
<i>"Voices from the edge"</i> - <i>Engaging Families in Learning</i>	3 - 4
A Message from Manitoba ASCD	4
Talk about Assessment - <i>Review of Damian Cooper's recent seminar</i>	5 - 7
Canadian Education Network	8
Upcoming Speakers	9
ASCD Board & Committee Members	10

## "Voices from the Edge"

### Social Justice facing First Nations

Anne-Marie Rochford  
Fontier Collegiate Institute

The social justice issues facing First Nations and Metis people continue to affect the lives of many in numerous communities throughout the province.

As a teacher of Aboriginal students, I am concerned with making my ELA curriculum relevant and with preparing them to become active citizens. In order to maintain and improve the authenticity of the curriculum, I explored how the Manitoba ELA program could better serve Aboriginal students.

My research addressed the disparity between the reality of social injustices and students' basic skills and attitudes necessary to face these challenges, by examining the potential of the representing strand of the ELA curriculum for providing opportunities and creating an environment where skills and attitudes can be acquired, practiced and fostered. This research critically examined the relevance of curriculum implementation to Aboriginal students, and the effectiveness of curriculum in the development of active citizens through a qualitative study comprised of survey, journaling, interviews and focus group sessions with 60 high school students in northern Manitoba.

The key findings of my research were as follows: students have an inherent understanding of social justice issues and teachers need to build on this understanding; teaching for social justice requires students to bring what they know and address it in a public forum; participatory and experiential activities are foundations for teaching social justice; students make meaning for themselves and there is an expectation that they will apply their learning, and finally schools are not neutral and have a responsibility to prepare students to live in and change their society. These findings are important in the larger context of Aboriginal and transformative education. They are valuable not only as fodder for reflection but also as a resource for educators seeking to empower and make curriculum relevant to their Aboriginal students.

With the emphasis on Language Across the Curriculum (LAC) initiatives and practices, my research findings can provide strategies that will support and enhance students' literacy but also provide teachers with practical programming for supporting LAC, that transcend the English Language Arts curriculum.

**Please join us for the  
Manitoba ASCD Annual General Meeting**

**Thursday, May 5, 2011  
3:45 – 5:15 p.m.  
Club Regent Hotel**

**Immediately following  
Professional Learning Workshop  
With**

**Anthony Muhammad**

*Visit the Manitoba ASCD  
webpage for updates to our  
Constitution or join us at the  
Manitoba ASCD AGM, May 5th.*

## "Voices from the Edge"

### Engaging Families in Learning

Janice Leroux  
Centennial School, Sunrise School Division

Three and a half years ago, Centennial School embarked on a journey to create a greater web of support for our children in response to changing demographics in our community, an increase in "at risk" students in our school, and concerning EDI results. Our staff used an *Appreciative Inquiry* approach for long term goal-setting and developed three foundational beliefs which underlined each of the initiatives that eventually followed. These beliefs included:

- Early intervention is the key to success in school
- Supporting families to support their kids is foundational to all learning.
- Networking to create a "community brain" gets kids ready for school and school ready for kids.

Our journey focused on creating opportunities for parents to actively engage in their children's learning starting with pre-schoolers and developing strong community partnerships to help support families in our school and beyond.

At the pre-school/early years level, these initiatives included: the development of two ten week after school readiness programs for four to six year olds and their parents; parent workshops on early literacy, numeracy, and oral language; a *Parent Lending Library* with quality learning games, big books, and interactive materials for families to borrow and use at home; and Literacy Workshops for our day care and pre-school partners to create a common understanding and language of early literacy across our community.

For the many foster children in our school, we started a school-based program called *Kids in Care* that is facilitated by our school counselor and divisional social worker. This program focuses on the unique challenges that foster children experience and offers activities that support building family bonds. Celebration is an important part of this program and an annual family field trip is a very powerful part of the *Kids in Care* experience

For all families, we have implemented *Smooth Start Conferences* – two days of parent/teacher/ student "get-to-know-you" meetings at the start of the year to promote a welcoming atmosphere, create a smooth transition, set goals, and facilitate relationship building between school and home. We also host a *Family Learning Fair* in October supported by a *Literacy for Life Grant*. This event brings parents, children, and our community partners together for an evening of inter-active activities that focus on literacy, numeracy, nutrition, and well-being. Like our pre-school/early years programs, a gradual release model is used to introduce parents and their children to learning games and strategies, and everyone goes home with a learning bag filled with materials.

One of our initial projects for bringing the community on board was the creation of a school hosted community book study for staff, PAC, and various community partners based on Gordon Neufeld's *Hold on to Your Kids*. This was followed last year with a presentation by Pamela Whyte of the Neufeld Institute. What a powerful learning experience having all stakeholders represented as we developed common school and community understandings.

As our family-based goal has unfolded, our community partners have played an important role in supporting and promoting our programs with all families. As such, we have created two key committees in our school that focus on family learning. The first is the *Pre-school Networking Committee* made up of staff and members of our community who have a vested interest in pre-schoolers and their parents. This committee has been particularly instrumental in partnering with the school to obtain grants, support initiatives, and to help facilitate the school's connection with young families and future students.

The second is the development of a *Family/Community Committee* made up of twenty-two stakeholders representing our school and eleven community partners/agencies. This committee is in its second year and its mandate is to create opportunities for families in our school and community to engage in activities that promote social/emotional and physical well-being. A true community experience.

Our school goals continue to focus on building success for all students through family and our programs continue to evolve and grow from the feedback we have gathered following each project. We believe that opening the school doors to learning beyond the classroom, building strong community partnerships, and inviting parents to actively engage in their children's learning at all ages, have benefited the child, family, and community at large.

Dear members of Manitoba ASCD,

To date, ASCD Canadian Education Network (ASCD-CEN) has focused its energies on creating our Professional Interest Community, sharing information about events across Canada, launching a peer-reviewed continuous online journal (*Canadian Perspectives: Education Coast to Coast to Coast*), presenting a cross-Canada webinar, and developing Network Forums for the 2010 and 2011 Annual ASCD Conferences.

We want to continue to offer exciting and relevant professional learning opportunities and to share up-to-date information on developments in Canadian education. With this in mind, we ask that you click on <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ascd-ceninterestsurvey> and complete our survey before March 15. Your responses will enable us to make informed decisions at our Annual General Meeting being held on March 26, 2011 at the ASCD Annual Conference in San Francisco.

Thank you very much for considering this request and for completing the survey.

Shelley Hasinoff, Co-facilitator  
Darcy Sander, Co-facilitator

## Talk About Assessment: Creating a Climate of Excellence- Damian Cooper

By Andrea Loepp

From the moment Damian Cooper took to the stage he engaged his audience of approximately 350 educators. With both hands over his head and one leg out as the signal to return our focus from table talk, we understood that he was a teacher who was a practitioner, not solely a philosopher of education. Damian Cooper began the day by stating that he spends a lot of time in classrooms and he has noticed that teachers are working much harder than the students are and that is not the way it should be. He connected with his audience from the beginning by asking for a show of hands as to what type of school audience members were from; two thirds of the respondents indicated they were representing high schools. This indicates a fundamental shift in the way educators are thinking about assessment and the potential impact that it could have on education all the way up to the graduate level.

Damian wanted to know where Manitobans stood on the most critical factor which teachers and administrators complained about concerning assessment. Numerous answers were dialogued about, yet oddly none of the audience members stated what he was looking for; time! Ideas such as valid assessment, flexibility, striving for excellence and more efficient assessment were mentioned by the audience members. According to Damian, most teachers and administrators state that they struggle most to balance their time in the educational workplace because of varying demands.

Damian quickly shifted us into a full six hour day of thinking about assessment. He asked us, do you show kids where they have made mistakes, and also do you correct the errors? He stated that we need to examine the purpose of our marking; who is trying to get better at the work- the teacher or the student? The most imperative assessment practice to consider is that we are demanding that our kids think. He felt that we make too many decisions around what kids are doing, that kids need to be more actively involved in the agenda for their learning. He got a small chuckle when declared that teachers are control freaks. The real issue, he continued, is that the result means that kids become disengaged because it is someone else's agenda (the teacher's) and not their own that they are working towards.

Damian then launched into the foundational principles that he wanted to impart into us that day. Six conditions for excellence:

1. A classroom climate that demands and promotes excellence for ALL students.
2. Strategic program planning- with the end in mind- **uncovering learning** for students (not all kids need to have the same material "covered" for them so what is it critical for ALL kids to know) Is the message we want to give that we want kids to be able to memorize facts? Consider **essential enduring content** when planning for students (backwards design). Consider a. identify targeted understandings b. determine appropriate assessment of those understandings c. plan learning experiences and instruction that make such understanding/skills possible
3. A belief in and commitment to differentiated instruction (he prefers the term **responsive teaching**). Responsive teaching is about efficient ways to respond to the differing needs within the classroom. His latest book to be published this summer is called *Responsive Teaching*. Teachers have to find out what kids know and can do in order to group them and teach them appropriately. Then you need to consider- where do we want them to get

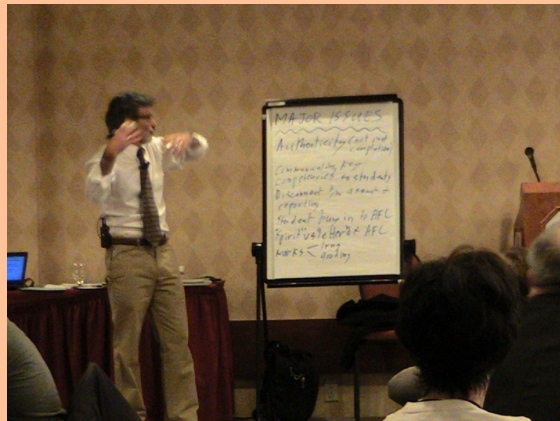


to? Teachers need to know how big the gap is between what they know and can do and where you want them to get to. He emphasized that *there always is a gap*. Lev Vygotsky said- how do I ensure the gap is just right to challenge students in a way that maximizes learning? Zone of Proximal development) Simply giving kids choices is not good differentiation. A teacher's challenge is to ensure that the work is challenging enough without being frustrating. (Always using learning styles in just a part of this- it has to be responding to kids' needs in terms of the gap). Differentiated Instruction- a. teachers need to fully understand accommodation



(adaptation), modification and substitution (alternate programming) b. to develop skills, simplify the content c. to master content present using a different mode suited to the student's strengths- graphics, video, manipulative, etc. Purposeful groupings of student- heterogeneous for support and to consolidate learning, homogeneous to deepen learning and provide specific instruction to struggling learners, flexible groupings to ensure zone of proximal development. He then explained tiered assessments-design the task at grade level to demonstrate proficiency, independently, adapt or modify task to increase challenge; less structure, more choice, greater sophistication etc., adapt or modify task to reduce challenge; more structure, less choice, less sophistication etc. Design with your class in mind this will meet the needs of ALL of the kids in the class.

4. Clarity of learning and performance targets for students (Rick Stiggins says most student can hit the target if they can see it and it stays still for them) Two strategies: post the learning goal/at the end of the lesson ask what did they learn that day; fewer but higher quality rubrics to describe what quality looks like, anchors (samples of students work which are shown as level 1, 2, 3, and 4 examples the highest being the level 4 exemplar example of a bump it up wall) show the students what quality looks like, checklists to enable students to monitor their own progress. The checklist will allow students to self assess and perhaps decide that they have not met the standards of the rubric.



5. Separation of Achievement Data from learning skills data: He gave an example of Rebecca who could not make it into school on time for first period art in high school and ended up quitting school because she received a failing mark in her favourite subject at which she was a master. Reporting the consequences separately of achievement and learning skills does not mean there should be no consequences; but learning skills must be assessed. They must be seen as being of equal value to achievement example- organization, responsibility, independent work, collaboration, initiative, self regulations- need a minimum of four samples of behaviours which demonstrate these learning skills

6. Emphasis on assessment that improves learning: Assessment for learning; teachers are the coaches (provide feedback, listen and coach for improvement), the kids are the athletes; assessment of learning- example is game day. Provide tons of feedback- oral and written/ establish classroom routines that create opportunities for teacher and peer feedback/provide feedback alone on formative assessments without including marks. The goal for teachers is to put themselves out of work so kids don't need them to know whether or not their work meets the expectations they have set out with them. How do teachers ensure that there is enough evidence??- Evidence must not be diagnostic, including a variety of modes; write, do, say- and including a **minimum** of three pieces of evidence is critical.



"We (educators) are in a state of flux right now in terms of assessment and we need to clearly align what we are teaching and what the kids are learning." (Cooper, 2011). Damian explained the difference between the model used at the university level (the Goldilocks principle- not too hard, not too easy; just right) and the criterion referenced model. The criterion referenced model is a belief that all students can be successful. This means teachers have to be clearer than ever before around excellence. This model has come under scrutiny as some people believe it is the wrong message for students to allow them to revise and redo their work until it is excellent. The example of a criterion referenced model he gave us was that of the airline pilot who gets to learn how to land a plane over and over and over again until they can do it perfectly. The key is that the pilot can demonstrate proficiency in critical competencies. Relating the airplane landing example back to education is that the classroom is the simulator, not the test run. Students don't have to know how land the plane until they are there is an assessment OF their learning, and it should demonstrate that they have understood and mastered the task at hand.



Finally, Damian spoke of the importance for students to have buy-in of what they are learning and he used the inquiry method as an excellent example of how to engage students in higher level learning. The day was full of challenging and thought provoking ideas. The sense from the audience was that we were ready to make some changes but unsure how to make them in isolation from other parts of education- provincial exams, university expectations, even independent schools. It was a full day, a thoughtful day; a day in which educators were thinking about assessment whether in a new way or a deeper way, but we were thinking, and that was what Damian Cooper said good assessment was all about.





## Upcoming Speakers - please mark your calendars

# MANITOBA ASCD PRESENTS

For more information visit our web site at <http://www.mbascd.ca> or contact Paulette by email at [mbascd@shaw.ca](mailto:mbascd@shaw.ca) or by phone at 204-510-7271.

- ◆ **Anthony Muhammad** **Thursday, May 5, 2011**  
*Creating Powerful Learning Environments*  
 This workshop will shed new light on the age-old battle of getting staff "buy-in" on school improvement initiatives. Participants will be introduced to the root causes of staff resistance to change. In addition, they will leave with a clear understanding of the problem and concrete strategies that will improve their school culture and lay the foundation for the creation of a powerful learning environment.
- ◆ **Pat Wolfe** **Thursday, October 6, 2011**  
 Pat will be presenting the most recent research on the relationship between the brain and learning for your students. She will also present the implication of this research to school wide programming.
- ◆ **Heidi Hayes Jacobs** **Thursday, February 16, 2012**  
 Her focus will be on current interdisciplinary focus areas such as sustainability, media literacy, and globalization. She will also address how to modernize each discipline area. Dr. Jacobs will demonstrate how to revise your current units and mapping lessons. She will help you document your plans. Join Dr. Jacobs for a provocative, timely, and engaging session on how to integrate contemporary curriculum into your school and move out of 19th and 20th century classroom practice.
- ◆ **Avis Glaze** **Thursday May 3, 2012**  
 Avis will build capacity among educators to improve instructional effectiveness, improve student learning and achievement, focus on excellence and equality, share research-informed strategies, emphasize diversity, human rights and inclusive education practices, ensure that schools serve the needs of all students, and help education systems deliver on their promise to educate all children successfully.



## ASCD Canadian Education Network March 2011 Newsletter

1. **Members of ASCD-CEN\*** will have a number of exciting opportunities to meet other Canadians at the Annual Conference in San Francisco:
  - **Friday, March 25, 2011**—ASCD-CEN display table at the **Welcome Reception** 5:00-7:00 pm *Moscone Center, Exhibit Level, Gateway Ballroom*
  - **Saturday, March 26, 2011**
    - ◆ **Annual General Meeting (AGM)** 11:30 am—1:00 pm *Club Room Marriott Marquis Hotel* (Sponsored by Pearson Canada) RSVP [craigwhite@gov.nl.ca](mailto:craigwhite@gov.nl.ca)
    - ◆ **Wine and Cheese Social** 6:00—9:00 pm. *Marriott Marquis Hotel* (sponsored by Nelson Education) RSVP [craigwhite@gov.nl.ca](mailto:craigwhite@gov.nl.ca)
  - **Sunday, March 27, 2011**—Network Forum *Using Powerful Online Conversations to Change High School Assessment*, 8:00-9:30 am *Yerba Buena 4, Marriott Marquis Hotel*.
2. A list of all Canadian presenters and ASCD-CEN events at the ASCD Annual Conference is available on our web site: <http://ca.ascd.ca> under *Professional Learning >ASCD Annual Conference* and on our **ASCD Edge Group** page under *Shared Documents*.
3. We ask all members to complete a survey on what topics would be of interest for future webinars and Network Forums and how members prefer to be contacted. The survey can be accessed at: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/ascd-ceninterestsurvey>. Although we welcome responses anytime, we hope that most members will respond before March 15, 2011 to allow us to process the results before the AGM.
4. Members and non-members are invited to submit articles of interest to Canadian K-12 educators to our new online peer-reviewed journal, *Canadian Perspectives: Education Coast to Coast to Coast*. Submissions guidelines are available from the ASCD-CEN web site or directly from the journal web site: <http://canadianperspectivesjournal.ca>.

**ASCD Canadian Education Network (ASCD-CEN)** is a Professional Interest Community (PIC) of ASCD. Membership is free to members of provincial affiliates and Connected Communities as a valued-added part of membership. For more information, visit our web site (<http://ca.ascd.ca>) or the Canadian Education Network group on the ASCD Edge (<http://groups.ascd.org/groups/detail/112951/canadian-education-network/>) or email one of the co-facilitators, Shelley Hasinoff ([Shelley\\_Hasinoff@shaw.ca](mailto:Shelley_Hasinoff@shaw.ca)) or Darcy Sander ([dsander@srsd119.ca](mailto:dsander@srsd119.ca)).



MANITOBA ASCD

Winter 2011

## ASCD Manitoba Executive

2010-2011

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