



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Manitoba ASCD continues to provide high quality professional learning opportunities for Manitoba educators. On October 12th, 2010 Dr. Robert Brooks challenged participants to become or continue to be a 'charismatic adult' to the students they come in contact with. What a compelling challenge for each one of us to consider!

Our next professional learning event features Canadian Damian Cooper on February 17, 2011. The session entitled, 'Talk About Assessment: Creating a Climate of Excellence' will focus on assessment at the high school level. Damian has extensive experience specializing in helping schools and school divisions improve their instructional and assessment skills. This session is already well subscribed, so you are encouraged to register in the near future!

Anthony Muhammad, the author of Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division, will be with us on May 5/11. His session is entitled 'Creating Powerful Learning Environments'.

The ASCD Annual Conference will be held in San Francisco from March 26 – 28/11. The conference is an excellent opportunity to hear many world class presenters and learn together with educators from around the world. If you have the opportunity to attend, please look for the Canadian Education Network, which is connecting Canadian educators from coast to coast to coast.

We value your membership and thank you for your continued interest and support of Manitoba ASCD. Please do not hesitate to contact a board member if you wish to become more involved. Thanks also to our current board and committee members for your energy, dedication, and commitment.

Barb Isaak
President, Manitoba ASCD

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"Voices from the Edge"

In our efforts to ensure that this newsletter meets the needs of all of our members, we anticipate including a section in the newsletter that focuses on information, initiatives, and celebrations from outside of the Winnipeg area. Entitled **"Voices from the Edge"**, we are looking forward to sharing with our readers some of the tremendous activities taking place around the province in the areas of teaching, learning, and leadership. We invite you to share what is happening in your classroom! Please contact a member of the Communications Committee for further information:

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2010 – 2011 submissions dates: March 3, 2011 and May 28, 2011.

Thank you for considering this opportunity.

S.S.M.I.L.E:

"Students and Seniors Mentoring in an Intergenerational Learning Environment"

Bob Kovachik, Principal, Walter Whyte School



Twenty two students between grades four and eight at Walter Whyte School - Lord Selkirk School Division have been involved in a partnership program with the Victoria Beach Seniors Scene - H.E.L.P. Centre. This rapidly growing seniors club services the Eastern Lake Winnipeg community located 100km northeast of Winnipeg along the shores of Lake Winnipeg. The S.S.M.I.L.E. program was originally designed 3 years ago by Mr. Bob Kovachik – Principal of Walter Whyte School, Mrs. Dee Rickner, and Mrs. Carol Draper and is currently being coordinated by Ms. Agatha Wren all associated with the Victoria Beach Seniors Club.

The S.S.M.I.L.E. program began with the realization that some students were growing up without the benefit of a grandparent or significant elder in their life. Many life lessons are passed on through storytelling or discussion with a senior. Seniors have a great wealth of knowledge and compassion that need to be experienced by our youth. Students bring knowledge and experience to the table that educates seniors as well. There are too many stereotypical assumptions made about our youth today that don't always portray the values of our youth in the most positive light. This side of the story needs to be told as well.

Once a comfort level and trust has developed, sharing through storytelling begins and activities such as perogie making, wood working, shuffle board, knitting, baking holiday treats using historic family recipes have provided our students with a wide range of opportunities for communication thru story-telling.

This partnership is designed as a two-way street as seniors involved learn from students in areas such as: computer skills, text messaging, surfing the internet, taking and saving digital photo's, Seniors learn about and connect with our students which has proven to be a very successful relationship building experience.

The breakdown of generational barriers and the creation of a more tolerant compassionate relationship are breaking down the walls of misunderstanding.

This program has opened many doors at the Seniors Scene at Victoria Beach and at Walter Whyte School as we have invited a group of twenty five seniors to participate in a computer technology course offered during the day and at the lead by students. Seniors involved in the program enjoy the energy students bring to this program, word is spreading quickly and the number of seniors getting involved is growing. This program has been recognized as an award winning program recognized by the Manitoba Council on Aging at an Ceremony hosted by Honorable - Jim Rondeau - M.L.A. for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors. This self-sustaining program will continue to thrive into the future. Each spring meetings take place to evaluate and plan for the following year and we look forward to bringing this program to a new group of students next year.



Professional Learning Opportunities

Damian Cooper - February 17, 2011

Talk About Assessment: Creating a Climate of Excellence

Damian Cooper specializes in helping schools and school districts improve their instructional and assessment skills. In this session he will concentrate on assessment in the high school.

Anthony Muhammad - May 5, 2011

Creating Powerful Learning Environments

Anthony Muhammad is a contributing author to the book *The Collaborative Administrator: Working Together as a Professional Learning Community* published in 2008. He also authored *Transforming School Culture: How to Overcome Staff Division*.

My classroom has no walls

Cheryl Herauf-Heaman
Basic French Specialist K—8
Fort La Bosse School Division

I love helping students learn to SPEAK French. I was ecstatic when I was hired with a specific goal in mind, that being to implement more oral French in the French program at the school where I work. Thanks to the amazing methodology of AIM (Accelerated Integration Method) by Wendy Maxwell, oral production of French increased dramatically in my classroom. I found myself, however, wanting more; more time for students to actually practice speaking in French. Three thirty minute classes every other day does not give enough time for my students to speak as much French as I'd like to hear. And given the usual interruptions in a regular school week/year, I found that my thirty minutes every other day is often interrupted or reduced to a lot less time than what I'd like in the classroom.

I've spent a considerable amount of time trying to figure out how I could get more French time with my students. More class contact time it is just not possible. There are so many other options offered at our school that we end up with more programming than time. Our school provides amazing opportunities to the students. Figuring out how to slip more French within those opportunities is the ongoing challenge. Then the idea hit me! Why not extend my French classes outside onto the playground while I am doing my recess supervision duty? The students are there. I'm there. Isn't that all that's needed? Who needs walls?

Since students already enjoy coming to visit with me during their recess the new challenge became how to convert this into teachable moments à la français. At this early stage, speaking only French usually ends up either very one-sided (me doing all the talking) or very boring with me randomly assigning names to objects and they repeating after me. It is not an authentic conversation. It reminded me of a scene in Helen Keller's biography where she suddenly realized that all things had "labels". She couldn't learn them fast enough. Although, this worked wonderfully for Helen my students did not seem so motivated. There *had* to be a way to create an authentic communication activity with my students. There *had* to be a real need to actually speak. And this had to be matched to their ability to do so in French. And all this had to happen while we strolled about the playground. The challenge never seemed so unattainable. However, the need was too great. The opportunities too valuable

So through perseverance a workable activity finally crystallized. We could play Twenty Questions. I had already taught basic questioning techniques earlier in the year for a different activity. This could work. And it did!

To this point, students in grades 2 to 8 are comfortable asking questions to guess an object I have in mind, or more specifically, the magazine picture cut out of an object that I have in my pocket. *Est-ce que tu peux me donner une indice?* (Can you give me a clue?) and *Comment est-ce qu'on dit:« _____ », en français?* (How do we say....in French?) are common expressions that are now heard on our playground during recess as students try to guess what picture I have in my pocket. The end result: I now have students approaching me on many occasions asking, in French, to play "Vingt Questions". There are times, of course, when I have to say "Ah, excuses-moi. Je suis pressé, mais on peut essayer une autre fois plus tard." – and they understand to try again later and they do!!

In closing this has been a great motivator for my students and it has extended my teaching times outside the classroom. The authentic use of French and the excitement students have displayed has exceeded my expectations. The time invested in preparing the activity has been well worth it.

The Power of Mindsets: Nurturing Motivation, Learning, and Resilience in Students

By Dr. Robert Brooks, Conference Speaker
Manitoba ASCD October 12, 2010

A review by Andrea Loepp

From the moment he decided not to take the stage, but to stay on ground level with us, Dr. Robert Brooks was a compelling presence. His presentation on “The Power of Mindsets: Nurturing Motivation, Learning and Resilience in Students”, provided a thoughtful outlook on his journey into the challenging process of working with struggling children. For the better part of a day, Dr. Brooks regaled us with stories about many of the students he has worked with over the years - both the successes and failures along the way. Over 160 people attended the conferences, ranging from teachers and teacher assistants to counsellors, administrators and assistant superintendents. One entire school staff came together as their professional development so that everyone could share in the same information and I would suspect, work through what they learned together later.

Dr. Brooks began the day by defining mindsets for us as being the assumptions and expectations we have for ourselves and others that guide our behaviour. He shared his website with us. The website includes a monthly article with over 120 articles posted. Readers are welcome to copy articles to share his ideas. He spoke about how imperative it was to touch the heart and mind of your audience in order to make a difference in their lives. He then proceeded to do just that. His presentation was sprinkled generously with humour and the stories he shared about the challenging students with whom he had worked certainly touched our lives. One story about an eight year old boy who, when asked to describe his teacher, stated “she is chronically depressed.” When Dr. Brooks asked what the words meant the child responded, “Don’t you know? She is crabby and she can’t smile. I know because my brother had her and she couldn’t smile back then either!”

The key to his talk, of course, was what creates resiliency. He stated that besides having a mindset that fills us with a sense of self efficacy, we need to understand our “islands of competence” or areas of strength. Resilient people, according to Dr. Brooks, always ask, “What is it that I can change in a situation?” They do not wait for others to change their circumstances. This is what will help some people to overcome situations that are untenable and conversely why some people are unable to overcome adversity. He gave us the features of a positive mindset. Dr. Brooks challenged administrators to think about what the mindset of their schools were like and how they could influence mindsets in staff meetings and daily activities.

He ended the morning by telling us that people who are resilient always say that they had one person who believed in them wholeheartedly. They had a “charismatic adult” in their lives- and not surprisingly, a large number of those charismatic adults turn out to be teachers. A charismatic adult does not write off difficult children but believes in them, disciplines them

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(or “disciples/teaches”) and maintains a great relationship with them. He ended the morning with the story of a teacher who had the “class from hell.” In figuring out how to reach her students, she realized they needed dignified things for them to do. She connected with a nearby nursing home and asked if they would like to be pen pals with her grade 5 students. After several months of writing, often to seniors with no visitors, the nursing home decided to invite the class to the home for lunch. They were embraced by these seniors who delighted in them and were enthralled with the charming students in this teacher’s care. They had changed from being the class from hell to a class who made a difference in people’s lives when they had an opportunity to make a positive contribution. Not only had they changed, but both the students’ and the teacher’s mindsets changed about the kinds of students that they were.

The afternoon was spent on an in-depth study of empathy. But beginning the session, Dr. Brooks had connected with a woman over lunch who wanted to share about her charismatic adult. She shared the story of a professor who believed in her when she was at her most distraught. She wanted to not only acknowledge him, but to ask him to come forward as he happened to be in the audience. This sparked an interesting discussion in why teachers don’t get more letters from students for whom they have made a difference in their lives. Dr. Brooks challenged us. We too need to send the letters to the people who have been our charismatic adults!

He continued to challenge us to create environments that are empathic, to not allow the naysayers in our worlds to have more influence than the positive folks. He suggested we ask for and expect real and honest feedback from both our students and our staff. He inspired us to practice being empathic by being “we” minded, creating environments where people work together and cooperatively for solutions especially when working together with challenging students. Our jobs are to create schools for students to feel safe and secure, where they can feel connected, competent and have a sense of autonomy. Motivating environments are places where resilient mindsets are nurtured.

Dr. Brooks completed our thought-provoking day by stating that every classroom has a raging elephant in it; that raging elephant is the fear of making mistakes and being humiliated. The best way, according to Dr. Brooks, to get rid of the raging elephant, is to discuss and address it. Acknowledging your own mistakes allows students to understand that it is alright for them to also make mistakes. His advice to us at the beginning of the day was enough - that it is critical to capture the hearts and souls of people to make a difference in their lives. His teachings and writing proved that he is capable of practicing what he preaches- he captured our hearts with his stories and his message is definitely one worth reflecting upon.



ASCD Canadian Education Network

Canadian Perspectives: Education Coast to Coast to Coast, our online journal will be launched on January 1, 2011. Our journal will combine the accessibility of a magazine with the rigour and depth of a scholarly journal. With that in mind, authors will be encouraged to write in an informal style and to include relevant visuals that elaborate the text. Articles on research, grounded theory, opinion pieces, program descriptions (school, district, or province), stories, and illustrations are welcome. Articles will be peer-reviewed and once accepted will be uploaded to the journal site as soon as they are publication-ready.



ASCD-CEN will be well represented at the **ASCD Annual Conference** (March 25-28, 2011) in San Francisco. We will kick off the conference at the Welcome Reception on Friday evening from 5:00-7:00 pm with a display table festooned with the Canadian flag. Visitors to the table will meet other Canadians, receive a guide to Canadian presenters at the conference, and learn about network activities, such as the network forum on Sunday morning from 8:00 am to 9:30.



This forum entitled *Using Powerful Conversations to Change High School Assessment* will draw from cross-Canada online conversations on formative assessment. Participants will engage in discussions and activities on integrating formative assessment in high school classrooms. The Annual General Meeting (AGM) will be held following the forum at 9:30 am.

ASCD-CEN will be hosting its first **cross-Canada webinar with Damian Cooper** on December 9, 2010 called *Assessment for Learning: Are We Losing Ground?* The webinar is designed to consider thorny assessment questions such as:

- What do recent changes to provincial policies on assessment mean for students, teachers, and schools in Canada?
- What does recent media coverage of assessment practices reveal about popular support for assessment for learning?
- Should we deduct marks or award zeroes for handing in assignments late or plagiarizing in order to prepare students for the real world?
- Which are better-percentages or letter grades on report cards?

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) or Darcy Sander (dsander@rsrd119.ca).

Building Leadership Capacity: To ASCD Chicago...and Beyond!

By Ryan Land

Last spring at one of our Leadership Team meetings (comprised of principal, vice principals, department heads), I pitched the idea of a trip to Chicago to attend ASCD's 2010 Teaching and Learning Conference. The conference theme was "Closing the Learning Gap" and the emphasis on teaching and learning in high stakes times, while working with at-risk learners in their many forms, seemed like it would be useful and engaging for the instructional leaders in our school. I am the principal of R.D. Parker Collegiate in Thompson, Manitoba. In my second year as principal, I know both the legend and the reality of our context for teaching and learning, and I truly felt this would be an opportunity worth getting excited about. We have been working with the Manitoba School Improvement Program for a number of years, and this was to be the catalyst for building leadership capacity within our recently reinvigorated department head structure. Add to the mix the fact that it was looking like the bulk of the funding would come from outside the school-based budget, and it was starting to feel like an ever-elusive win-win.

I suppose I should admit to being a constructivist, an optimist and a sometimes-poet, before I confess that my big idea went over like a concrete hang-glider when I first floated it off the cliff edge. I was hit with questions like "Do we have to go?" "Why Chicago?" and "When do we have to let you know by?" when I was hoping for something more along the lines of "When do we leave?" or "Wow, you really do care about us, Mr. Principal!" Okay, relentless optimism aside, I can honestly say I was not *that* surprised that I got what I did, partly because people need time to process and to ask questions. That said, some days I felt a little like the interim coach of someone else's team where our Department Heads were concerned. The structure was finalized and the team was picked after I was hired, but without my input, and while I was asking for a role description that included instructional leadership for the 21st century, critical reflection, social justice activism, strategic vision and data-driven, continuous school improvement, I got one that mentioned budget, timetable, curriculum, meetings, and school planning, and I was soon faced with defenders of their respective departments and curricula. I am not saying that the team was not open to some of these ideas, but introducing them after the fact made for yet another change, thus, another challenge. The reality of the situation was that in a school with a somewhat turbulent past, influential pockets of deeply committed opposition, and a relatively tenuous climate with a silent, downtrodden majority, we could not afford to have a leadership team bogged down only in administration. My attitude from the start has been—in the words I once heard from Wayne Hulley—"I don't have to like it, but it is." The catalyst for moving our team forward, closer to a shared understanding of roles and responsibilities, has been the work of Linda Lambert in the area of building leadership capacity. ASCD Chicago was to have been our pilgrimage—at least as much about the journey as the destination.

Late last year I bought our Leadership Team Lambert's (1998) book *Building Leadership Capacity in Schools* as it was manageable, accessible, and I felt we would be able to see ourselves in the case studies. It also included a "Leadership Capacity Survey" that proved to be a good leaping off point for introspection and a more open, non-threatening dialogue. One of the things I had heard from some of the Department Heads—in various ways and venues—was that they were unsure about the instructional leadership aspects of the position, and they did not feel that they had the training or expertise to lead in such a manner. Thus, Lambert provided a theoretical framework for our needs, and Chicago provided the opportunity to move forward and build capacity through team-based professional development and shared experience. Despite the early resistance—which was more about climate, fiscal responsibility, and uncertainty than about subversion—it was not too long before every member of the team responded and expressed an interest in going to Chicago. As we met to plan the trip and register, our administrative team chose a couple of sessions for the whole team based on school goals, the vision, and a desire to have some common professional development and dialogue, and we also made room for small group selections and individual choices (these became small group anyway, for the most part). We struck up a social committee and I daresay a little excitement began to build.

The trip was inevitably intense but we managed to work in a team meal at one of America's most renowned steak houses, a hockey game that saw the Oilers trounce the Blackhawks and a reasonable amount of shopping in between and around some of the best PD sessions any of us had ever been to. This "teaching and learning" conference was rich with teachers and classroom based consultants and their experiences resounded with us despite the geographical distances between us. Our group

sessions were meaningful, practical, data-driven and authentic, and each offered us a glimpse of possible direction for R.D. Parker Collegiate. When we de-briefed back in Thompson with Scott Hill from the Manitoba School Improvement Program, the conversation of the team was open, hopeful and improvement-oriented, and our leaders could now articulate exactly the kind of support they needed. While the work is honestly just beginning, I can hardly express how encouraged I am that we are beginning. It would seem that we managed to build some shared capacity for leadership, and that was our simple, yet lofty, goal for the trip. Now it becomes a matter of momentum, support and motivation.

Lambert (1998) suggests that there are seven essential actions for building leadership capacity. I list each one here with a brief reflection on where our Leadership Team is at in R.D. Parker Collegiate.

1. *Hire personnel with the capacity to do leadership work:* This was initially out of my hands, though I have since hired one Department Head, but I am not alone in my belief that all teachers have significant capacity for leadership. These professionals have been proving this theory to be correct!
2. *Get to know one another:* There is nothing like shared experience and the breaking of bread to build a team. While surviving a disaster together is especially effective for team-building, a trip to Chicago with a bunch of people who have (mostly) never been is also a decent way to get to know one another. We deepened our understanding of one another as people and as fellow travellers, and relational trust grew by at least a few increments. We grew our identities in each other's eyes beyond the work we do in school, and we were able to recognize strengths and commonalities amongst our peers.
3. *Assess staff and school capacity for leadership:* We have collected data in many forms—through Appreciate Inquiry, the Leadership Capacity School Survey, our School Effectiveness Review, etc.—to support the need for and value of leadership in our school. We are still working on de-privatizing the teaching practice in our building to open up doors for creativity, improvement, innovation, peer observation and reflection, but that will come with time and trust.
4. *Develop a Culture of Inquiry:* We are beginning to ask the big questions about topics such as inclusion, differentiated instruction, assessment, Aboriginal perspectives and cultural proficiency, and we are also starting to identify specific needs. When we registered for the conference, we bought memberships to ASCD for everyone, so now they have access to articles and resources online. Our skilfulness has increased and I have seen our leaders sharing what they learned within and across their departments. We reported back to staff on take-aways, challenges and opportunities that were stimulated at the conference.
5. *Organize the school community for leadership work:* We did schedule common prep time for our Leadership Team this year so we meet weekly in the new Leadership and Learning Centre (a not-so-fancy, smaller classroom with a fancy title). We deal with administration on alternating weeks, interspersed with extended, focused discussions or presentations on a single topic (this came from a suggestion of one of the Department Heads). Some of our great work left to do for this year is to clearly define roles and responsibilities and to develop a model for shared decision-making. A few of us saw long-time principal Thomas Hoerr at the conference and his caution against the lure of consensus-seeking (also featured in his Principal Matters column in a recent issue of *Educational Leadership*) over clearly delineating which decisions are *mine*, *ours*, and *yours*, really resonated with me. One concrete strategy we have yet to perfect is the art of the school calendar.
6. *Implement your plans for building leadership capacity:* We have been in implementation mode for several months now, dating back to the final quarter of last year. Departments have created their own growth plans in keeping with the school's plan and the priorities identified by the Department Heads, and each will have up to two days to build capacity and improvement within their departments. We are seriously considering bringing in DI coaches (ideally from ASCD) to work with our leaders to build capacity on site, in their classrooms. One of the greatest challenges will be for our team to remain persistent, especially in the face of resistance.
7. *Develop district policies and practices that support leadership capacity building:* Without making excuses, this is currently out of our hands to a large extent, as our district is yet again in a period of significant transition. We are already talking about making presentations and pitches to the board that will seek to support teachers where they need it most—in the classroom. We continue to advocate for a strong voice in the current strategic-planning process that will see new long and short term goals emerge for the district.

We have come a long way, that is certain, but there is much left to do and teachers only have so much to give. I continually remind myself that the human resource budget—like the fiscal one—is fixed and when it is gone, it is gone. I also live by the ideal that truly creative thinking and purposeful, sustainable design happens “inside the box” rather than outside of it, once we know what the walls—that is to say the constraints, possibilities, resources, opportunities and limitations—look like. When it comes to building leadership capacity, we are also on our way, and ASCD Chicago quickened our hearts and our minds towards a shared vision for an even brighter future at R.D. Parker Collegiate. As Lambert (1998) suggests, “the greatest of all understandings will emerge in true constructivist fashion when you and your colleagues undertake this work together—and reflect collaboratively on what you experience and learn” (p. 90). Thank-you Dr. Lambert.

References:

Lambert, L. (1998). *Building leadership capacity in schools*. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.



MANITOBA ASCD

Fall 2010

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2010-2011

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