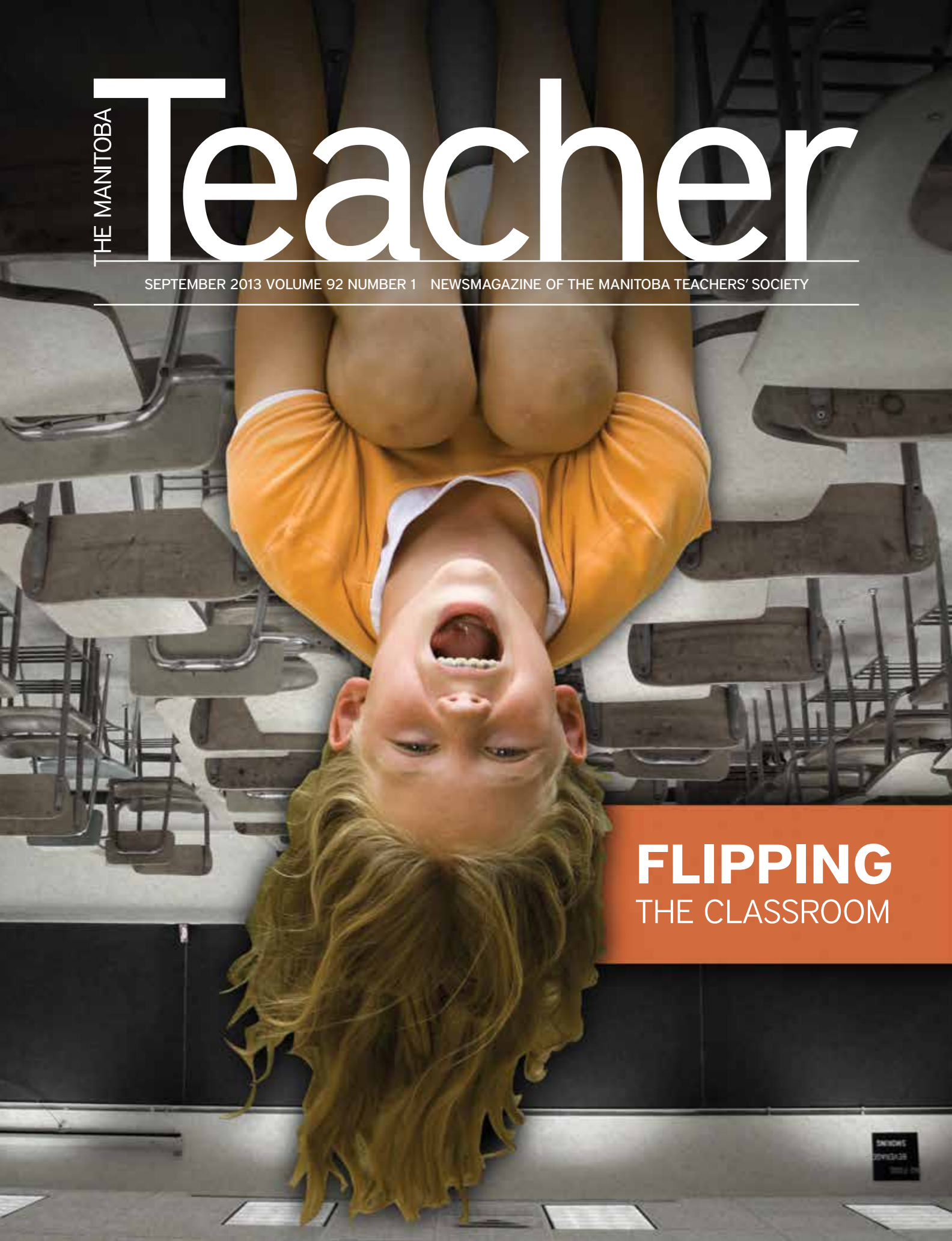


THE MANITOBA

Teacher

SEPTEMBER 2013 VOLUME 92 NUMBER 1 NEWSMAGAZINE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHERS' SOCIETY



FLIPPING
THE CLASSROOM

NO SMOKING
NO DRUGS

project overseas

A Gift to the Globe

Project Overseas is accepting applications from Manitoba educators wanting to assist colleagues in developing countries in the summer of 2014.

Application deadline: Wednesday, October 30, 2013.

This year, MTS, in conjunction with The Canadian Teachers' Federation, will be sponsoring five teachers.

Criteria include membership in MTS, an appropriate teachers' certificate, five-years teaching experience in Canada, Canadian citizenship and excellent health.

For more information and application forms,
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191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
204.831.3086
1.866.494.5747 ext. 216
or email nkerr@mbteach.org

THE MANITOBA Teacher

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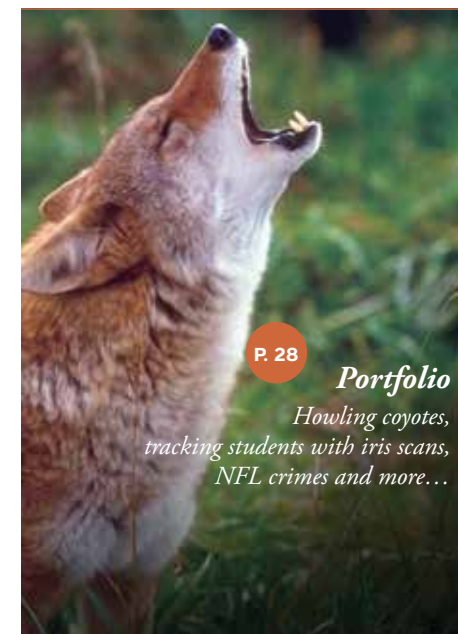
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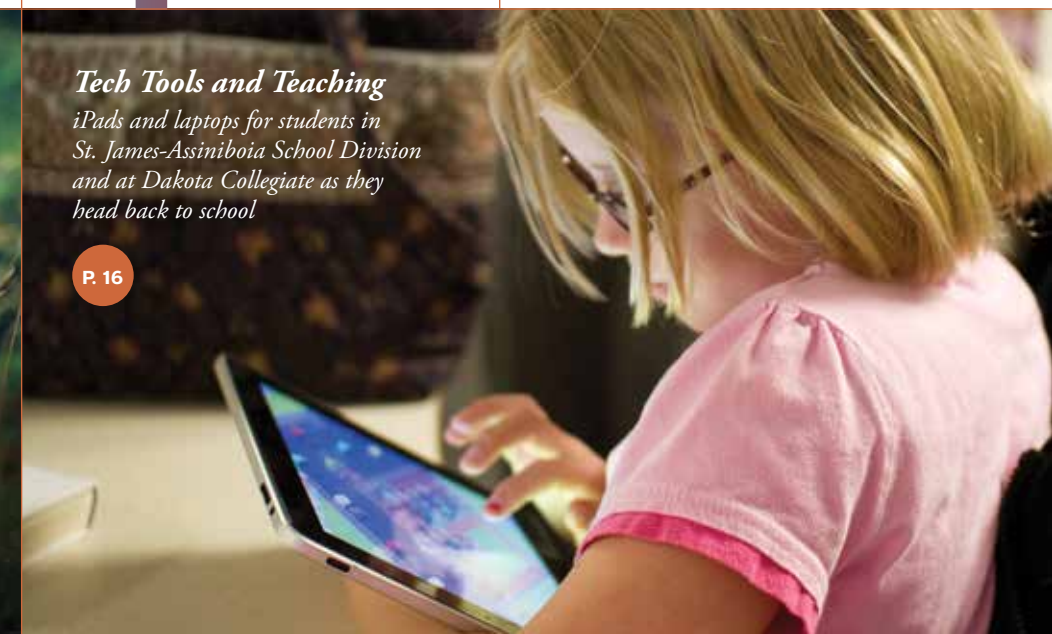
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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

PAUL OLSON

Happy New Year, everyone.

If you're a brand new teacher welcoming your first class(es), this is a time you'll never forget. Twenty-three years in, I can still remember the names and even some conversations with the kids in my first year of teaching.

For the more seasoned among us, there still are new positions, students, and challenges. Best friends and colleagues have transferred or retired, and so the new year brings a weird amalgam of both optimism and grieving. New colleagues will reshape the school teams, and new students will keep us up at night as we worry, and plan, and worry some more.

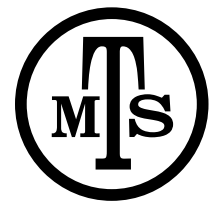
The work is often lonely. We're surrounded by students, but typically we're the only adult in the room. The responsibility is heavy, the duties endless, and the supports sometimes worse than sparse. Slumped over a pile of marking at midnight, it can feel like the worst career choice in the world. And then... the school "hard case" will find you after school to say thanks for something, or wish you a good weekend, and you'll "float" for days.

A great teaching partner, maybe a great principal, even a wonderful group of students, can make or break your year. So too can good—or bad—decisions at the school board, provincial, or even federal level.

Passion, professionalism, commitment, creativity, vision—these all help make good classrooms into great ones. In reality, though, schools run at least as much on a foundation of money, policy, curriculum, support services, professional development, and human resources. No amount of "commitment" is going to compensate for a system where you're waiting three years for a psych assessment, or poor management or a shrinking assessment base have drained the energy or available resources. Any "system" that's propped up on heroism or self-immolating teachers instead of sound management is no system at all. If you're up against the wall without the resources you need, then 1) Ask for them. 2) Document. 3) Repeat.

At the provincial level, MTS works with boards and governments to ensure that adequate supports and policy frameworks exist to allow teachers to do their best work. Our successes are many, our failures bitter. Your provincial executive and MTS staff come to work "hungry"—we know what's at stake, and we know for whom—and with whom—we struggle. It is my privilege to work with staff and elected teachers who know the importance of the work you do. Your teacher association president and executive do this work at the local level, with your trustees and superintendent(s). When the working relationship is positive, great things happen. When it's not, teachers and students suffer.

As you'll likely read this after your first staff meeting, it may already be too late for me to say this, but I'll say it anyway: pace yourselves. Say no to more small things so you can say yes to some bigger ones. Look after yourself, and each other. However great the year ahead... it's still going to take a year.



The Manitoba Teachers' Society

Editor

George Stephenson,
gstephenson@mbteach.org

Send contributions to:

Editor

The Manitoba Teacher
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
Phone: (204) 831-3058
Fax: (204) 831-0877

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191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
email: mts-im@mbteach.org



INSIDE MTS

KEN PEARCE, GENERAL SECRETARY

As we prepare for the year's workshops, seminars and meetings, an additional task that shows real potential for stimulating greater interest in the Society is that of searching through various sources to locate hidden treasures that will create an historical picture of our past. Staff are currently working on a project to bring alive those dusty records and pictures of the foundational events that shaped The Manitoba Teachers' Society.

Where did we begin? What obstacles have our predecessors faced? How has the teaching profession changed over the years?

At AGM this past May, delegates raised such questions by asking what is being done to prepare for the historic 100th anniversary of the Society.

Here is a summary of what your staff has done to date and what lies ahead in the months to come.

Staff in the publications department have prepared an analysis of our building to assess display space potential; explored various fixed and transportable media options and looked at the potential for creating images that can serve multiple needs at such events as career fairs, Society meetings, workshops, conferences and other events. In addition, a neglected area of the Society, archiving, is being reviewed to see what exists in physical, video and other electronic format and to continue to capture material in an easily searchable form. We are examining what records and resources we have on hand, looking at those that have been transferred to Manitoba Archives and looking at other potential sources of information on Society history, such as universities, local and provincial newspapers and our own members' attics.

Digitally recording such material is next on the agenda and staff members have begun that process. You will shortly be able to

see some historical photographs appearing in McMaster House and will see changes to the layout and presentation of the lobby area and the foyer next to the Auditorium. We hope to revitalize that space and give visitors a chance to view ever changing displays of memorabilia. As part of the approach to our 100th in 2019, Society staff are searching for materials that will bring back memories for some and create for others an interesting view of the past.

We are interested in establishing as part of our website an area where we can post materials that we have located and ask for help in finding others. If you have ideas about sources for such historical records, can help us identify photographs from the past or can provide us with recollections from your history with the Society, please contact George Stephenson or Mireille Theriault at 1-800-262-8803 or 204-888-7961. Any assistance you can give us will be welcome!



MTS hands over symbolic cheque representing the amount the Society is contributing for naming rights to a classroom at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights. From left to right: MTS President Paul Olson, Gail Asper of Friends of the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, CMHR CEO Stuart Murray and MTS Vice-President Norm Gould.

Maternity & Parental Leave

Are you planning to take maternity and/or parental leave?

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The Manitoba Teachers' Society
Nancy Kerr, Staff Officer
Teacher Welfare Department
191 Harcourt Street
Winnipeg, MB R3J 3H2
PH: 831-3086/1-800-262-8803
FAX: 831-3077/1-866-799-5784
nkerr@mbteach.org

WTA members may also call:

The Winnipeg Teachers' Association
Glenda Shepherd,
Administrative Assistant
202-2639 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, MB R3J 0P7
PH: 831-7104
FAX: 837-9698
gshepherd@wta.mb.ca

Association or regional seminars are available through The Manitoba Teachers' Society. Please contact Nancy Kerr for more information.



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BRANDON STUDENTS AIM AT FORMULA 1 TITLE

BY TARA HAMILTON

A world class level engineering competition has made its way to Manitoba.

Six Brandon high school students will have a shot at \$1.6 million in scholarships where the difference between first place and runner up can come down to a hundredth of a second.

On May 9, six students from the Design Drafting Department of Crocus Plains in Brandon made the journey down to Brooklyn, Michigan to compete in the North American F1 in School Competition. With an extraordinary amount of drive and determination Justin Buhr, Daniel Van Heyst, Curtis Bauche, Lee Gorowski, Sabrina Slack and Tanner Fardoe worked diligently over several months to prepare for the moment their reduced scale F1 car would fly down the race track at the Michigan International Speedway.

The team, Vector One, produced phenomenal results, receiving the most awards given to any single team including Best Team Identity, Fastest Car, Best Engineered Car, and also being crowned Canadian National Champions.

F1 in Schools is a prestigious and highly valued global non-for-profit program that has reached over 40 countries and currently involves over 20 million student participants through the interest of F1 racing. The objective is to help change perceptions of engineering, science and technology, and to develop informed views

about careers in engineering, Formula One, science, marketing and technology. The challenge inspires students to use IT to learn about physics, aerodynamics, design, manufacture, branding, graphics, sponsorship, marketing, leadership/teamwork, media skills and financial strategy, and apply them in a practical, imaginative, competitive and exciting way.

F1 in Schools has been present in the Crocus Plains Drafting Department for several years.

Students have earned their place on the world stage traveling to destinations including Malaysia and Abu Dhabi. This year, F1 in Schools World Finals will be held in November, in conjunction with the F1 World Grand Prix at the Circuit of the Americas in Austin, Texas.

This venue will provide these students the opportunity to compete against other formidable teams from over 30 countries from around the world.

Competition will take place over the course of three days where the team will be showcasing their abilities and final engineered product. Over the three days, students will have their eyes on the prize: a first place finish and \$1.6 million dollars in engineering scholarships.

Vector One recognizes the potential life changing value of this opportunity, and are determined to stand at the top of the podium on the world stage this November.

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BEF – le Bureau de l'éducation française (Éducation, Citoyenneté et Jeunesse Manitoba)

COSL/CDCÉ – Council of School Leaders / Conseil des chefs d'école

SRSD – la Division scolaire Rivière Seine River School Division

DSFM – la Division scolaire franco-manitobaine

ÉFM – les Éducatrices et éducateurs francophones du Manitoba

Programme et calendrier

EDUA 5081 : Courants actuels en administration scolaire I :
Partenariat, communication et gestion :
au cœur du leadership scolaire

Dates	Thèmes/titres proposés
25 octobre 2013	L'école et les partenaires communautaires : gestion, communication et collaboration
26 octobre 2013	
7 février 2014	La gestion des ressources humaines : soutien et accompagnement vers la réussite
8 février 2014	
25 avril 2014	Les TIC en milieu scolaire : outil pédagogique et usage éthique
25 avril 2014	

« Le leadership : c'est l'art de faire faire à quelqu'un quelque chose que vous voulez voir fait, parce qu'il a envie de le faire. »

— Dwight D. Eisenhower

Brevets en administration scolaire

L'ensemble du programme peut compter envers l'obtention des brevets en administration scolaire.

Admission—dates limites de réception des demandes

Pour admission au programme de maîtrise en éducation : **1^{er} juin 2013.**

Pour admission au diplôme post-baccalauréat en éducation : **1^{er} août 2013.**

Pour toute question concernant l'admission, veuillez communiquer avec Johanne Boily, conseillère des programmes d'études supérieures, au (204) 237-1818, poste 708 ou au jboily@ustboniface.ca.

Renseignements additionnels

Pour obtenir de plus amples renseignements sur le programme, veuillez communiquer avec Jules Rocque, Ph.D., professeur en administration scolaire et responsable du programme CAP sur le leadership au (204) 237-1818, poste 490 ou au jroque@ustboniface.ca.

Un maximum de 9 heures crédits du programme CAP sur le leadership peuvent compter pour le postbac ou la M. Éd.





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C&C HBG382 (01/13)

FLIPPING THE CLASSROOM

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

FLIPPING THE CLASSROOM

Winnipeg teachers Chelsey Bernhard and Ellen Thompson have turned some of their classes upside down and they're both anxious to do it again this year.

They've both tried a new method of classroom teaching, rarely used in Canada, but gaining traction in the U.S.

Called the flipped classroom, at its most basic, sees students learn at home and do their homework at school.

As with any method, it has its supporters and detractors, but both Bernhard and Thompson so far see more upsides than down.

"I enjoy it a lot," says Bernhard, a teacher at Golden Gate Middle School. "It's been super exciting for me and the students."

Thompson, a teacher at College Sturgeon Heights Collegiate, agrees.

"The kids were much more excited about the material than they would have been. It's

not something I would do every day, but it is a good teaching tool."

In the flipped classroom, teachers record or find videos on the material they would normally teach in class. For many, it means recording the lesson themselves or finding equivalent videos online. Students are then expected to watch the videos at home, just as they would listen to a teacher in a classroom.

When they come to class at school, they would be expected to do assignments that might normally be homework or there would be activities that reinforce what they've learned.

There is no single model for the flipped classroom, which describes a variety of approaches that adopt the idea of at-home

learning through technology followed by in-class exercises. The at-home portion has become mostly tied in with video because it is now easy to access and watch and is now familiar to students.

In teaching math, Thompson and Bernhard took two slightly different approaches.

Thompson found Internet videos that covered material she wanted to teach, while Bernhard recorded her own videos that she provided to students.

"It was a little bit nerve wracking at the beginning," says Thompson of her decision to try the idea with her Grade 10 pre-cal math class. It also took a lot of planning and searching for videos that covered what the students needed.



Ellen Thompson with student



Chelsey Bernhard



Once she decided on the videos, the class watched one together and took notes to go along with it. Then they took the plunge.

Students took to the idea quickly and with enthusiasm.

“Some watched by themselves, some watched together. Kids were excited about it. They like watching videos.”

She discovered that students were accessing the videos at different times and different places. For example, one student had to be at an arena to watch a sibling’s hockey game, so she spent some of that time watching the video of that day’s lesson. Students who were home sick and others away from school for various reasons continued with their lessons. On the flip side, when teachers are away they can also leave their own video lessons.

“The kids found they could just take it with them if they had to and could watch anywhere.”

A few blocks down the street at Golden Gate, Bernhard was looking at ways to get her middle-years students more excited about math and decided to give the flipped classroom a try.

Extremely comfortable with technology, she made some videos and informed parents of the way the class would be taught.

She had positive results, as well.

“Parents loved it,” she said. “They felt their kids were more engaged and more

They felt their kids were more engaged and more confident. Kids learn things they never would have learned with just sitting at the front of the class.

confident. Kids learn things they never would have learned with just sitting at the front of the class.”

Overall, videos can be provided online through YouTube or through web tools such as Edmodo or as DVDs.

Bernhard and Thompson found that almost all students had the ability to access videos through any number of devices, but there were a couple who didn’t. They ensured that those students would have access to computers at school to watch the lessons.

Both also found that once students were in the classroom, the two had much more time to spend with students who were having trouble.

“Once you get past the videos, the rest is just as important,” says Bernhard. “Some people feel the whole method is just the videos. In class you connect the learning with the real world through activities and in-class games etc.

“You have more time to help kids catch up or you can spend more time with kids for various reasons.”

Thompson also found that the in-class work, which she did in groups, resulted in her having more time with students, but she also found stronger students helping those who might not have understood parts of the lessons.

Both said one of the main advantages that students discovered was that they could pause and rewind those parts of the lessons they didn’t immediately understand.

“A lot of kids said that was one of their favourite things,” says Thompson.

Bernhard has now found when she teaches those kids in a regular way, they will sometimes ask if she can pause and rewind.

While both have had mostly positive experiences, it is not all balloons and unicorns or a good fit for all teachers or all classes.

Whether creating videos or finding videos that fit, preparation for flipping a classroom is, according to all accounts, extremely time consuming and must be done with care.

Videos have to be done with some level of professionalism (not, for example, some

UPSIDE

- More one-on-one time with teacher as students have access to teachers during class time that in traditional models is largely taken up through lectures.
- Students learn at their own pace because they can watch videos more than once and pause and rewind sections they may not understand.
- It helps students who have less support at home in that they don’t have to rely on parents or others to help with at-home work.
- Videos can be available to students who miss school or are ill.
- Parents can be more involved because they too can watch the videos and see what their children are learning.

DOWNSIDE

- Students could end up having to watch hours of video if all their classes adopted the flipped model.
- Not all students have access to devices on which to watch videos.
- It adds to the time students already spend in front of computer and other screens.
- It relies on lecture-based learning which may or may not help students assess and question what they are learning.
- It puts an added burden on already-busy teachers in the early stages of preparing for a flipped classroom.

recording of a white board presentation) and they must integrate smoothly with in-class activities.

“It took a ton of time,” says Bernhard.

“It did take a lot of preparation,” says Thompson, “but once it’s done you have it for next time.” And both say it’s not something every teacher would be comfortable with.

“It’s definitely outside a lot of comfort zones,” says Thompson.

Bernhard says it goes against the role some teachers see themselves playing in the classroom and against experiences of teachers who have been in the classroom many years.

“Some teachers have trouble leaving the position of being the centre of learning in

the classroom; being the one dispensing all the knowledge,” she says. “It is also non-stop. You have to have the right kind of personality for it.”

She suggests it would probably be easier if it was implemented by a team, rather than individual teachers. In that way, those using it could support each other and exchange ideas about video creation and in-class work.

There is also a major problem if many teachers in a school adopt the idea. If that happened, students might be expected to watch hours of video every night, in effect putting in another full day of classes at

home. Parents might not be so supportive of that.

For now, though, it has been an intriguing way for teachers like Thompson and Bernhard to try a new way to get students more involved in their own learning, especially with the technologies, such as iPads and laptops, coming into schools in greater and greater numbers.

For students, Bernhard says it has made a difference in many ways.

“When they watch a video and they get a concept, they have a great sense of accomplishment. They felt they got it on their own, that they did it themselves.”

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P: (204) 324-9901
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Reg Helwer
MLA for Brandon West
P: (204) 728-2410
E: reghelwer@wcgwave.ca



Leanne Rowat
MLA for Riding Mountain
P: (204) 867-2297
E: ridingmountainmla@hotmail.ca

Cameron Friesen
MLA for Morden-Winkler
P: (204) 822-1088
E: info@cameronfriesen.ca

Larry Maguire
MLA for Arthur-Virden
P: (204) 748-6443
E: larry.maguire@leg.gov.mb.ca

Ron Schuler
MLA for St. Paul
P: (204) 945-4321
E: Ron@RonSchuler.com



Blaine Pedersen
MLA for Midland
P: (204) 745-2203
E: midlandmla@mymts.net

Dennis Smook
MLA for La Verendrye
P: (204) 424-5406
E: dennis.smook@leg.gov.mb.ca

Kelvin Goertzen
MLA for Steinbach
P: (204) 326-5763
E: stbchmla@mts.net

Ian Wishart
MLA for Portage la Prairie
P: (204) 857-9267
E: ptgemla@mymts.net

READ, RUN, REMEMBER

BY CARLY PETERS

Anyone who knew Ted Swain would most likely say he loved R & R: reading and running. Swain was passionate about promoting the importance and overall benefits of literacy, a passion that was pivotal in the creation of Ted's Run for Literacy, a Winnipeg-based race named in his honour.

Swain, who passed away in 2009 from heart complications after completing the Winnipeg Police Half Marathon, dedicated his teaching career to making the English word accessible and exciting to his students at Vincent Massey Collegiate, and by doing so preparing them for success in whatever path they chose.

"Teaching appealed to him because of his passion for literature, which he wanted to pass on to others," said Joan Swain, Ted's wife. "Certainly, a student or a classroom that engaged in his enthusiasm for literature, especially Canadian literature, which he loved, was a major highlight for him. One thing which Ted found very rewarding was working with students who struggled academically, but through hard work and perseverance improved, not just their grades, but their understanding of literature."

He applied the same vigour to his other "job" of clinic leader at The Running Room where he was the guy, that if you

were new to the sport, would take you under his wing, make you feel comfortable, and send you on your way to achieve your goals—even if it meant you were running past him.

"He was loved as a running clinic leader and this was, in part, because he applied many of the skills he had developed as a teacher to his running clinics. This included his organization skills, his enthusiasm, his goal to help each student achieve their personal best and self-discipline. Certainly, his love for running couldn't help but come through, but it was exactly this blending of the two passions which made him so successful, I think."

A year after Swain passed, a group of runners gathered to pay tribute the best way they knew how—by running. The first official Ted's Run for Literacy had about 135 runners, 2012 about 235, and Michael Bennett, race director, is hoping to exceed 300 runners at the October 20, 2013 event which is both a 2 and 4K fun run, and a certified 10K race.

They are also hoping to exceed their fundraising goals. Money from Ted's

Run is donated to Start2Finish's Running & Reading Club after-school program at William Whyte Community School and Sister MacNamara School in Winnipeg, Abbalak Thunderswift Memorial School in Little Grand Rapids, and Joe A. Ross School in Opaskwayak (OCN).

The 32-week program addresses the need for enhanced literacy and physical activity among economically challenged children in the communities it services by taking children on an "adventure" that improves their physical, mental, emotional, and social health, fostering discipline, goal-setting, and literacy.

"These are all areas that statistics have continually shown to be lacking amongst high needs elementary-aged children," states Roger Berrington, Regional Coordinator, for Start2Finish, adding The Running & Reading Club program is currently operating within multiple inner-city schools, servicing over 1,600 children across Canada.

Each week, children build their strength and endurance through running and fitness activities, receive individualized assistance in both reading and writing, and are given a balanced, energy-filled snack—completing the circle of nourishing mind, body, and spirit.

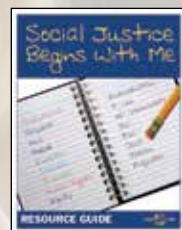
Each year, S2F makes the commitment to provide every child involved in the Running & Reading programs with a brand-new pair of running shoes prior to the year-end 5km run. To date, Ted's Run has generated \$10,000 for the program, placing over 200 pairs of shoes on kids in 2013 alone.

If you'd like more information on Ted's Run, or for school group rates on race registration please visit tedsrun.com.



Ted with his daughter Valerie (left) and his wife, Joan.

Classroom-ready ETFO Curriculum Resources



Social Justice Begins With Me

Social Justice Begins with Me is a new resource that addresses issues of equity and social justice. It was created to help students and teachers develop awareness and understanding around these issues. The complete kit includes lessons and resources designed for early years to grade 8 and includes the teacher resource *More Than A Play*. **\$65***
*Available on CD for \$45



Thinking It Through

The new ETFO comprehensive resource, **Thinking It Through: Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten Classroom** is designed to provide early learning educators with a single book that addresses the whole kindergarten program. **\$75**



Primarily Play

Primarily Play: Engaging Primary Learners through Play provides practical tips and strategies for using play-based learning to develop the skills and knowledge necessary for children to succeed in life, while showing where play fits into the primary classroom. **\$17**

New law to cover international students

“Nearly 7,000 international students choose Manitoba as the place to study each year. Those students bring more than \$150 million annually into our economy, but more importantly, they enrich our classrooms and our society.”

Those were the words of Erin Selby, minister of advanced education and literacy, introducing legislation to cover the recruitment and education of international students in Manitoba.

While the majority of international students in the province are enrolled in post-secondary institutions, 15 Manitoba public school divisions are actively involved in recruiting those students for their schools.

Bill 44, the International Education Act, will govern all education providers, including school divisions that recruit and enrol international students.

“We are very proud of the International Education Act, a first-of-its kind in

Canada that will better protect international students,” Selby said. “When people come to Manitoba from abroad to pursue their studies, they further enhance our educational, social, cultural and economic fabric.”

According to the Act, any institution recruiting and educating international students must comply with a code of practice and conduct that will provide consistent standards for education providers and their recruiters.

Under the legislation, penalties will range from the recruitment agent being blacklisted to fines being levied against the educational institution. The government can also revoke an institution’s ability to recruit international students.

“Our government also recognizes that competition for international students is growing. We are confident this legislation will further strengthen our province’s reputation as a destination of choice for international students,” Selby said.

“Indeed, we have already received positive feedback from international stu-

dents themselves, as well as from other jurisdictions that are interested in what we are doing in Manitoba.”

Two years ago, The Manitoba Teachers’ Society raised concerns with the minister of education about the recruitment of international students by school divisions. It has had ongoing discussions on the issue.

MTS Policy stipulates four key conditions for such programs and students:

- Tuition paid by international students should be sufficient to cover all costs associated with educating such students in the public school system.
- That these students be provided with the supports and programs to properly address their educational needs.
- That the provision of such supports and programs shall not increase the workload of teachers.
- That the Society opposes the recruitment of international students as sources of revenue for school divisions.

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Tech Tools AND Teaching

BY MIREILLE THERIAULT

As students go back to class, those in grades six to eight in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division will be equipped with iPads.

While many Manitoba schools, from elementary to senior high, have introduced a variety of devices in the classroom, the St. James effort is a first among Manitoba school divisions and possibly the first division-wide initiative in Canada.

"We held eight parent sessions over several weeks and there was an overwhelming majority of positive feedback from the parents in attendance because they got the information," says Chief Superintendent Ron Weston. "We still had parents with questions and concerns, generally around students' safety and what expectations there will be to ensure that the device makes it to and from school. We were able to address those. Where we did see a lot of pushback was from the media responses that really didn't have a lot of information on what the project was about."

Far from being an attempt to simply dazzle students with the latest gadgets, Weston says "I can't stress enough, that it's not about the piece of technology we chose. It's about how we can best deliver the curriculum content and engage students into higher learning activities."

"There may be a desire among some people for it not to be so, but you can't ignore that students are engaged with this technology. We have to go where they are. We can't continue to teach as we did during the 20th century. Our goal is to use the digital media and the digital classroom where appropriate and make the move to a 'low-paper' not a 'no-paper' environment because we know that paper is not going to go away tomorrow. We want to focus on the skills that are digitally based as opposed to text-based."

Planning and research began over two years ago by asking teachers what they



wanted in their classrooms and looking at different platforms to see what would work and what needed to change with their current system. A committee including administration, IT professionals and teachers who were running pilot programs at early, middle and senior years met several times to evaluate the best options. They are looking at getting some third-party evaluation as the initiative progresses.

"With the resources we're dedicating to it, we want to ensure that we're getting the best bang for our buck."

In the U.S., the Los Angeles Unified School District recently voted to provide its 660,000 students with iPads.

The cost here for some 1,000, 16 Gig, Wifi, iPad Minis, leased at \$100 each per year for the next three years, will come out of the SJASD's annual technology budget,

phasing out desktop and laptop computers used in classrooms and labs. The iPad came out on top because of its long battery life, overall value and ease-of-use for both students and teachers. The learning curve will be much steeper for some than others.

"We have a fairly comprehensive professional development plan that goes along with this initiative, both to give teachers the practical knowledge they need to operate an iPad and for all the different apps. We've chosen a fairly narrow, selective suite of applications that have proven in the pilot to be the most effective for teaching literacy and numeracy skills and also making sure that the skills for collaboration, engagement and communication develop."

As part of the initiative, Apple is also providing a number of training sessions.

The iPad lease includes eight to 10 units allocated to early-years classrooms across the division. Although middle school students will not be able to bring their own iPads, Weston says they are looking at phasing in a "Bring your own Device" model at the high school level.

"We're going to move cautiously in that area because we don't want to overwhelm our network. That's No 1. We also want to make sure we have some training in place for staff so they know what to expect when a student walks in with their own device.

"What we found with most of our senior high students is that they already have a device. It's a device they prefer to use so why would we want to replace that device at great cost when students are walking through the door with the technology already in their backpack or pocket? The other practical side of this is that they are already familiar with their device so we don't have to put in a lot of time and resources for student training on how to use them. We can concentrate on integrating them into the teaching."

Both administrators and teachers are bound to field a new volley of questions from parents as the school year gets underway so SJASD has prepared a guidebook for parents.

"We've done all the background policy stuff to protect everyone legally and ensure the teachers aren't in any way compromised by inappropriate use of the device," says Weston. "It's very important for both students and parents that they've read these policies and understand their responsibilities."



In 2011, Dakota Collegiate led the charge for technology in Manitoba classrooms by introducing a mandatory, one-to-one device initiative. Beginning in Grade 9, students were expected to provide their own laptop for school work. It expanded to Grade 10 last year and this year will include Grade 11.

As more individual schools and other divisions launch their own in-school technology projects, Dakota Collegiate remains an example of what seems to work

Despite naysayers predicting the utter erosion of education, the kids are engaged and learning, teachers are broadening their own technological skills and parents are fully on-board.

"On parent nights in the spring we're hearing from parents outside our catchment area interested in enrolling their teen here because of the program. The technology piece is something they want their children to be a part of," says Principal, Jill Mathez.

Clarke Hagan, Director of Information Systems for the Louis Riel School Division explains why they chose to go with laptops.

"Specifically, we have a shared environment so we wanted to make sure that the kids brought a device that they would be able to leverage fully. Tablets, whether iPad or Android versions, don't have full functionality in our environment.

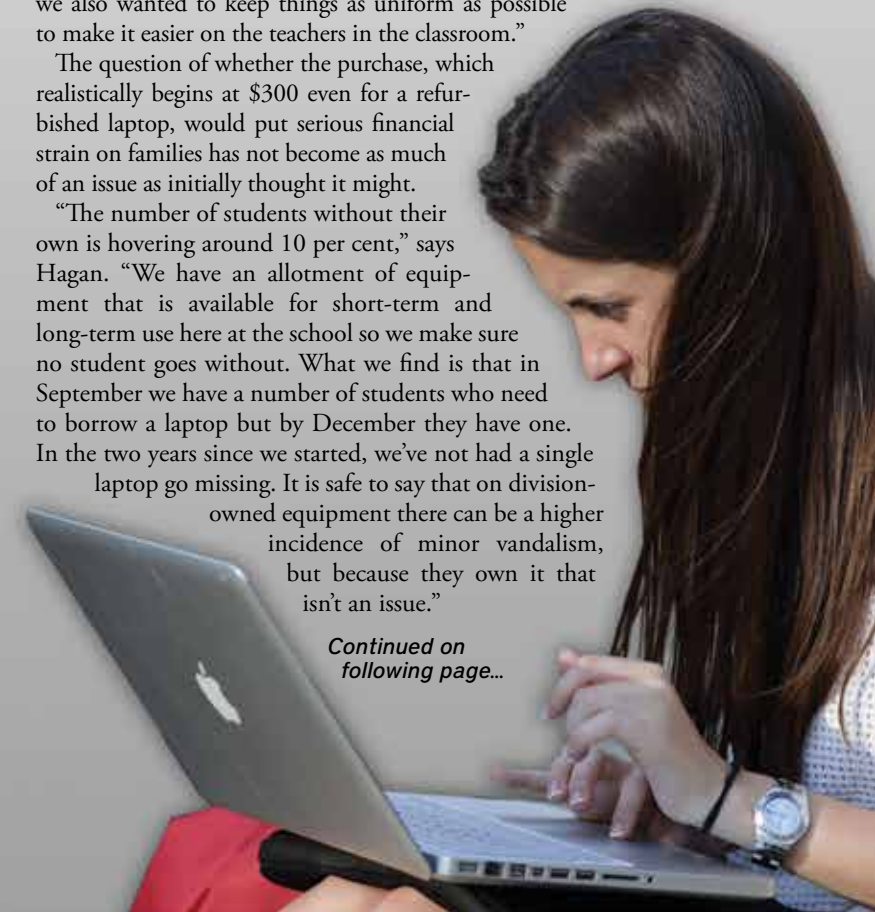
"We would have felt really badly if a parent invested \$600 or more and found it could do 60 per cent of the things that a laptop could do. Then we also wanted to keep things as uniform as possible to make it easier on the teachers in the classroom."

The question of whether the purchase, which realistically begins at \$300 even for a refurbished laptop, would put serious financial strain on families has not become as much of an issue as initially thought it might.

"The number of students without their own is hovering around 10 per cent," says Hagan. "We have an allotment of equipment that is available for short-term and long-term use here at the school so we make sure no student goes without. What we find is that in September we have a number of students who need to borrow a laptop but by December they have one.

In the two years since we started, we've not had a single laptop go missing. It is safe to say that on division-owned equipment there can be a higher incidence of minor vandalism, but because they own it that isn't an issue."

Continued on following page...



“They’ve taken ownership of their learning....

I think this is something they have mastered that automatically brings them a sense of confidence.”

Similarly, fears about student safety both on their way to school and in the internet jungle, have been unfounded. Mathez and Hagan say that teaching digital citizenship goes hand in hand with how to use the internet effectively and judiciously from research to mastering specific assignments. With so much more information and variety of tools at their fingertips does that mean that kids are learning better and turning in superior work?

“I don’t know about that question. Have we ever asked that of a calculator?” says Hagan. “A tool helps students express their learning and I think that’s what we really want these devices to be as well. So is it allowing kid to express their learning in different ways? Absolutely. Can a student still give you an essay? Sure. They can also give you an online presentation or digital story. It’s still about the learning outcome.”

There is plenty of evidence that connects student engagement to higher learning and Mathez says that she’s seen a definite shift in that direction.

“I’ve been here four years and I’ve seen a subtle change in culture. They’ve taken ownership of their learning. I see calmer kids, and pardon me because this is entirely anecdotal, but I think this is something they have mastered that automatically brings them a sense of confidence. It is absolutely their world.”

While some detractors claim technology is isolating and leads kids to retreat to an online world, that hasn’t be evident at Dakota.

“Kids in the back of the room who never speak in class now have a voice. They are the ones who would never raise their hand but as a teacher asking for comments on my weblog, those kids will post their opinions.

They will participate in the discussion,” adds Hagan.

Mathez says it is about preparing students for when they leave school.

“We’re doing project-based learning where kids have to work in groups, identifying real issues and doing presentations in various media. When I was a kid I would have died to stand in front of the classroom by myself. These days we’re seeing kids really shine where it’s a collaborative presentation.”

And that spirit of collaboration and environment of shared learning isn’t just for the kids.

“Teachers have gotten out of a Social Studies silo for example to do a collaborative project with the Art department, or with Phys Ed and Math doing a project together. We are seeing more cross-curriculum work and with way more professional learning going on from one to another,” says Mathez.

Hagan is quick to point out that trying to master technology skills is like “chasing a rainbow” because it’s changing just too fast.

“I wouldn’t ask a teacher to do it. Some have an interest and that’s great. Not to paint with too broad a brush here, but you may have some new teachers graduating with very strong technology skills, who may not be the best at using that technology in the classroom because they haven’t mastered the pedagogy.

“When you have a teacher with 20 years in the field and they embrace it you have a very powerful experience.”

While some teachers expressed some hesitation in the beginning, Mathez says the most common comment from teachers is “I can’t imagine going back”.

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BY EDNA BROWN

“He’s gay anyway, so it don’t matter.”

It was a typical Friday in class. My students were working at their desks when I overheard one of them, Steven, make this remark. I had to speak up. “So you have a problem with that?”

“Why?” he responded. “Are you gay?” I’m not sure if he was being straightforward or trying to get a rise out of me, but he certainly wasn’t expecting the answer I gave him.

For five years, a determined group of teachers, students, counselors and community members had been working to persuade our school board to include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy. This year, they finally had. I was, for the first time in my career as a teacher, able to be out as a lesbian at school without fear that I could be fired for revealing my sexual orientation. I was finally free—sort of.

It’s one thing to know that a policy protects you and a completely different thing to put that policy to the test. This year, though, I decided enough was enough. If a student asked me, “Who are you going on spring break with?” I would muster up the courage to say “my partner” and not “oh, just some friends” as I had so many times before.

People who are not LGBT may wonder why gay men and lesbians need to announce their sexual orientation to the world. I can only answer that I don’t necessarily want to announce my sexual orientation; I just don’t want to have to hide it.

So there I was—Steven’s question hanging in the dead air. All eyes were on me. I took a deep breath and answered.

“As a matter of fact, Steven, I am.”

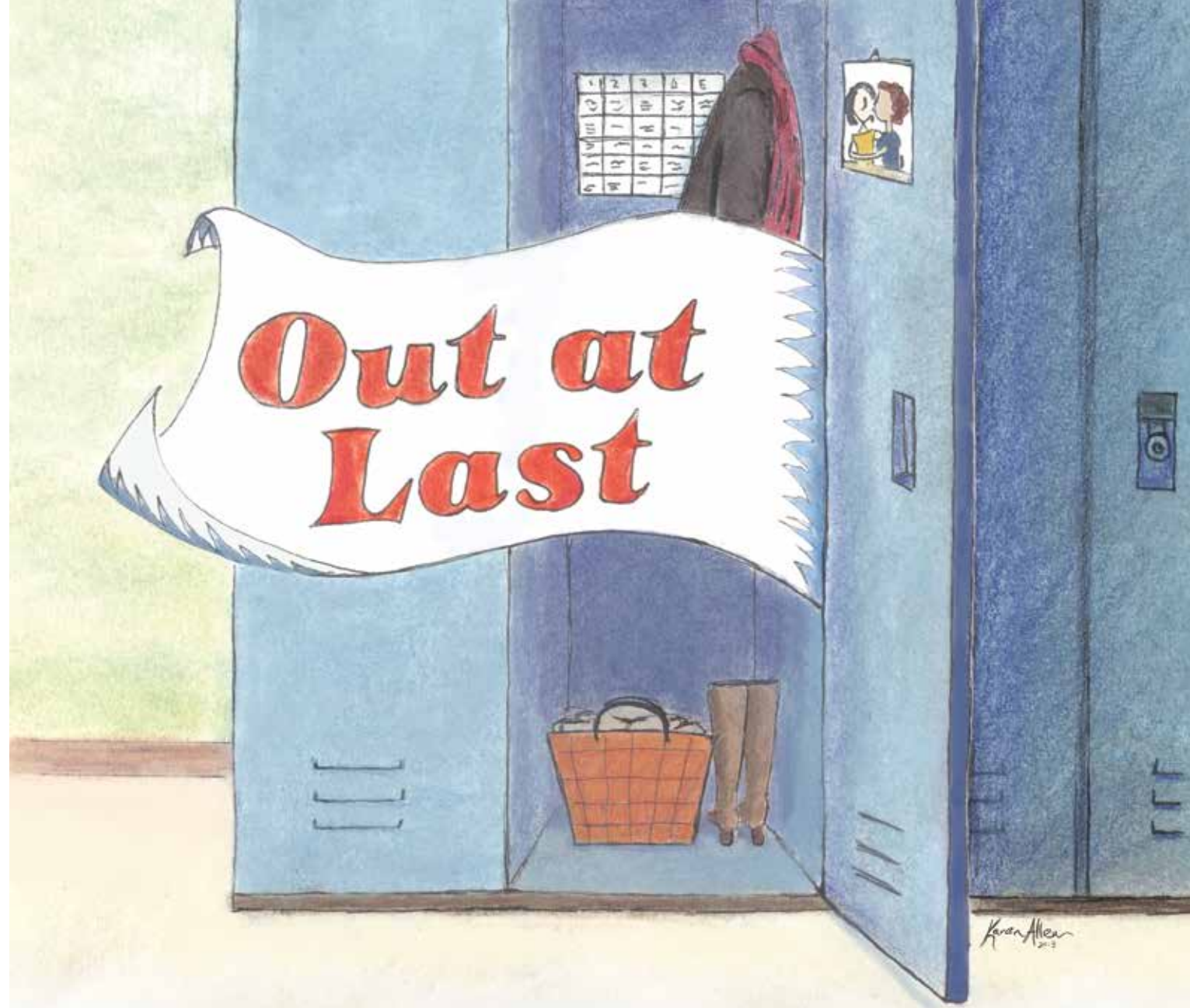
For years I had agonized over how students might respond if they knew for certain I was gay. Would they fear me? Hate me? Ask to be removed from my class? Homophobia had painted some ugly scenarios in my head, but never did I imagine the response Steven gave me—disbelief.

“You are not! You’re just saying that to teach me a lesson,” he shot back, grinning like he was on to my wily teacher ways.

“No, Steven, I’m for real. I’m not just saying this to teach you a lesson. Well, I am trying to teach you a lesson, but I’m not just saying I’m gay. I really am.”

“Oh, man, no way!”

For the remainder of the class, Steven asked questions that ranged from naively



curious to grossly inappropriate. It occurs to me that some might think I was inviting Steven to delve into my sex life by revealing my sexual orientation. For the record, I wasn’t. Of course sexual orientation is about sex, but first and foremost it’s about love.

That’s why I propose we use the term affectional orientation to place the emphasis on the emotional part of being gay. After all, sexual activity accounts for only a small percentage of time in any relationship—gay or straight.

At the end of the hour, I told my class I would answer any school-appropriate questions they might have. One by one, students spoke up:

“We still love you, Ms. Brown.”

“I gotta give you a hug, Ms. Brown.”

“That was cool.”

As the hallways cleared and students scurried off to their Friday night dates and football games, I ran down the hall to tell my department head what I had done. I half expected the worst. Students would tell their parents. Parents would call the superintendent. The media would cover the story—“Teacher Comes Out to Her Classes: Your Tax Dollars Supporting Gay Rights!”

Yet, retelling the story to my colleagues, I felt like a giddy eighth-grader after her first dance. Other teachers circled around me listening, laughing and assuaging my fears about the consequences of coming out to my students. “Ah, they’ll probably forget all about it by Monday,” said one colleague.

And for the most part, they did. I don’t think the students actually forgot. I think it just didn’t really matter that much to them. It was just another fact they knew about

me, like knowing I have a Labradoodle or that I go biking on weekends. I wasn’t fired or made into a tabloid headline.

In fact, the subject of my affectional orientation didn’t come up again in that class, and I am OK with that. I don’t need to talk about my partner or my life outside of school in class every day. We have important work to do and not enough time to get it done as is.

It is just nice to know students can know me, the real me, and still respect and learn from me.

LGBT educators enjoy more openness and acceptance than ever before, but many still feel they must teach from the closet.

Reprinted with permission from Teaching Tolerance. Read more at tolerance.org/class-outing-story.

Homophobia and Heterosexism 10 Top Teacher Resources: K–12

Suggested by the British Columbia Teachers’ Federation

- **Imagine a world that is Free from fear: A Kindergarten to Grade 8 Resource Addressing Issues Relating to Homophobia and Heterosexism** by Elementary Teachers’ Federation of Ontario (2004). This Canadian teaching resource presents 32 lessons, eight of each based on four interrelated themes: Pride and Self-Respect, Safe schools and Safe Communities, Anti-Bullying and Conflict Resolution and Relationships. Contact: www.etfo.ca
- **Gay-Straight Student Alliance Handbook: A Comprehensive Resource for Canadian K–12 Teachers, Administrators and School Counsellors** Canadian Teachers’ Federation (2006). This resource is the latest in a series of Canadian Teachers’ Federation publications aiming to help teachers, school administrators and counselors understand the educational, health and safety needs of bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgendered and two-spirited (BGLTT) students. Contact: www.ctf-fce.ca
- **Rainbows and Triangles: A Curriculum Document for Challenging Homophobia and Heterosexism in the K–6 Classroom** by Toronto District School Board (2003). This compilation of lesson plans, definitions, FAQs, resource lists and community contacts. Age-appropriate teaching strategies are given to present concepts of diverse family structures, human rights, discrimination, homophobia and how to challenge discrimination. Contact: curriculumdocs@tdsb.on.ca
- **Challenging Homophobia in Schools: A K–12 resource for educators, counselors and administrators to aid in the support of, and education about lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth and families** by Gay and Lesbian Educators of BC (GALE), 2nd Edition, 2004. This resource includes many new and revised practical lesson plans from K–12 as well as a rationale on why schools need to teach about sexual orientation. Contact: www.galebc.org
- **Against Common Sense: Teaching and Learning Towards Social Justice** (2004) by Kevin Kumashiro. Full of original insights and cutting-edge ideas, Against Common Sense presents a compelling case and a clear moral vision for anti-oppressive education.
- **Gay-Straight Student Alliance Handbook: A Comprehensive Resource for Canadian K–12 Teachers, Administrators and School Counsellors** Canadian Teachers’ Federation (2006). This resource is the latest in a series of Canadian Teachers’ Federation publications aiming to help teachers, school administrators and counselors understand the educational, health and safety needs of bisexual, gay, lesbian, transgendered and two-spirited (BGLTT) students. Contact: www.ctf-fce.ca
- **Creating Safer Schools for Lesbian, Gay, and Bisexual Youth: A Resource for Educators Concerned with Equity** by Joanne Bacon (1999). This teaching resource, published by Education Wife Assault of Ontario, encourages students to make links between homophobia and other forms of oppression. Contact: publications@womanabuseprevention.com
- **The Laramie Project** by Moises Kaufman. Play (text) or DVD. For a year and a half following the murder of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, Moises Kaufman and his Tectonic Theater Project conducted hundreds of interviews with the citizens of Laramie, Wyoming, to create this portrait of a town struggling with a horrific event. The Laramie Project allows those most deeply affected to speak, and the result is a brilliantly moving theatrical creation. Obtain copies at www.amazon.ca
- **Sticks and Stones**. (2001) DVD or VHS. From the National Film Board. Filmed partially at Dickens Elementary School in Vancouver, this resource features students ages 5 to 12 describing how they feel when they hear put-downs of themselves or their families in this video for kids, their educators, and parents. Appropriate for grades 4–12. NFB also has several other excellent videos including “In Other Words” and “One Of Them”, both of which are suitable for Grades 6 to 12. Contact: www.nfb.ca



SEVEN going on 17

BY MATTHEW JOHNSON, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MEDIASMARTS

There's a well-known saying in the media business that "sex sells." Like a lot of conventional wisdom, this turns out to be a truism that's not entirely true: neither nudity nor sexual content actually increases the revenues of movies or other media and sexual content in TV ads may make viewers like them less.

In fact, there's evidence that girls react negatively to what they recognize as sexual content: a 2008 study done at Canterbury University in New Zealand found that tweens considered Miley Cyrus' highly sexualized *Vanity Fair* photos "gross" and "uncool." But the idea of sex—in particular, the promise of adult sexuality—is at the heart of a tremendous amount of what's marketed to kids, young girls in particular.

Marketers call it KGOY: Kids Getting Older Younger. That's the phenomenon of children abandoning, earlier and earlier, the trappings of childhood and becoming wannabe teenagers. Perhaps the most disturbing example of this phenomenon is the increasingly early sexualization found in products aimed at girls, from clubwear-garbed Bratz and Monster High dolls to thong underwear aimed at preteens.

Most recently, retailers have created new brands aimed at children. A 2012 study done at Kenyon College in Ohio found that a quarter of the girls' clothes on display at 15 popular children's retailers had sexualizing characteristics such as lingerie-like colours, fabrics and patterns.

One reason for this is the tremendous amount of spending children, especially "tweens" (eight- to 12-year-olds), now control: roughly \$40 billion a year of their own money, in addition to \$150 billion of their parents'. But it's also because kids are now much more receptive to advertising messages traditionally aimed at teens.

Though we generally put considerable effort into protecting young children from sexualized imagery, it's actually tweens and young teens that are the most vulnerable, with 13 to 14-year-old girls the most likely to be influenced by media representations. All of this can be mystifying for parents whose daughters are just getting over their Disney princess obsession, but the line between Belle or Ariel and Britney—or between Hannah Montana Miley Cyrus and *Vanity Fair* Miley Cyrus—is less clear than it might appear.

In fact, as Sharon Lamb, co-author of the book *Packaging Girlhood*, points out, "the natural progression from pale, inno-

cent pink is not to other colors. It's to hot, sexy pink." In each case girls are being presented with an extremely narrow definition of femininity, one which is largely focused on how you are seen by others.

That progression can even be seen when comparing female Disney characters in movies to how they appear in merchandising. Probably the most striking case was Merida from the Pixar movie *Brave*, who underwent a transformation from the tomboy archer of the film—who is never seen without her bow and arrow—to a prettified, sexualized and unarmed "Disney princess." The film's co-director Brenda Chapman responded to the change by saying, "When little girls say they like it because it's more sparkly, that's all fine and good but, subconsciously, they are soaking in the sexy 'come hither' look and the skinny aspect of the new version."

This isn't an issue that's under the radar: a 2013 survey commissioned by the Canadian Women's Foundation found that nine in 10 Canadians agree that sexualized media images are a problem for girls growing up in Canada.

What's less clear, though, is what to do about it. A good first step can be to check our own attitudes: research has shown that media effects are much more power-



Merida before (left) and after her princess transformation

ful when they reinforce messages kids are already getting from their parents. We can talk to our children about why this clothing is problematic. We can point out how they have many sides to their personalities—they may be artistic, athletic, compassionate, involved and a dozen other things which are all steamrollered by these clothes into a single image of "sexy". We can encourage girls to take part in sports and other physical activities, which have been shown to reduce the impact of media messages about sex and femininity. And with older children, it's important to be open with them in talking about healthy sexuality so that the messages they get through advertising and other media don't define their ideas of sex or of gender roles.

It can be tempting to limit kids' exposure to media, and this can be a good choice for younger children. But as kids get older—particularly as they reach those most vulnerable tween and early-teen years—this becomes increasingly difficult.

Moreover, there's significant evidence that parents critically co-viewing media with their kids is more effective than banning or controlling what they watch: using media as an opportunity to discuss sexualization and related issues reduces the association of sexiness with popularity.

These topics can also be addressed through media education in schools and kids can be encouraged to advocate for media portrayals that reflect who they are—like the 200,000 people who signed the petition that convinced Disney to let Merida keep her messy hair and her bow and arrow.



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MTS UPGRADES ONLINE SERVICES

All MTS members are being asked to register into the Society's new online portal.

The MyProfile site, accessed from the home page of www.mbteach.org, has been totally redone and all members must register in the new system.

The new system contains a number of new features as well as the ones that were available in the past.

New features include:

- Event registration; a list of MTS events, online payment and other elements.
- Member log-in using membership card numbers rather than email.
- Instant updates in the MTS system when changes are made to contact information.
- The posting of information for members from MTS staff.

Continuing features include:

- Signing up for an electronic version of *The Manitoba Teacher*.
- The ability for MTS and EFM reps to update school information.
- The ability for association executives to update association information.

To register, members need only:

- Enter the site from the MTS home page.
- Enter their first and last name.
- Create a password.
- And, either:
 - Enter their membership number (preferable), or
 - Enter a complete mailing address and the system will attempt to match with MTS records.



Once a member has registered their membership number will be their username to enter the system.



Fifty-hour weeks common in Manitoba

More than 40 per cent of full-time public school teachers in Manitoba work more than 50 hours a week, according to the latest MTS workload survey.

The survey, conducted early in 2013, found that 89 per cent of full-time teachers worked more than 40 hours a week, with most spending 10 to 14 hours weekly on school-related activities outside the regular day.

The survey was filled out by half of MTS members, more than 7,700. The results are used in a variety of Society work.

The survey also found:

- That 58 per cent of respondents feel their workload is less manageable this year, with about the same numbers feeling that the workload is too heavy to do the job well.
- More than 60 per cent say the wide variation of student needs hinders performance.

- That 46 per cent say stress on the job affects their health.
- One in three classroom teachers have seen larger class sizes than the year before.
- Seventeen per cent have class sizes of more than 30 students.
- Just over 20 per cent feel reductions in class size would make the biggest difference in workload, followed by more supports to deal with behaviourally-challenged students and increases in prep time.
- More than 90 per cent (93) said they had at least one special needs student in their classroom, with the median being two to three and 66 per cent have at least one EA in their classrooms.
- Sixty-five per cent of classroom teachers are responsible for at least five different subjects.
- 21 per cent of classroom teachers put in at least 100 hours a year of extra-curricular activity and about the same

number found extra-curricular activity is excessive.

- Only nine per cent of classroom teachers perform no extra-curricular activities.
- Two per cent of teachers had no workload issues.

The last MTS workload survey was done in 2009 and its use dates back to 1991.

Full results of the survey will be shared with local teachers' associations to aid in collective bargaining and in arbitration hearings. While the survey is voluntary, all full-time and part-time teachers were encouraged to fill out the survey.

Results came from a wide range of teachers, from early years to high school and with a variety of experience. More than 85 per cent of respondents were full-time teachers, indicating 14 per cent of MTS members work part-time.

Fall Travel Fair

Open to Retired and Active Teachers • Free Admission

The Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba Travel Committee will be hosting a

Travel Fair
at McMaster House
191 Harcourt Street in Wpg
on Wednesday Oct. 16, 2013
from 1PM-9PM

For further information or to pre-register contact Norman Wiebe at 204-857-9613 or 204-856-9607 or email mwiebe@mymts.net

Teach Your Students to Care



This school year, teach your students to be change makers in their community with a program developed by the Children's Hospital Foundation of Manitoba. From a dance marathon to a bake sale, the Children's Hospital Foundation can help your students understand the value of philanthropy.

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ROOM

for improvement

BY MIREILLE THERIAULT



It was the kind of golden moment educators dream of: a child's ability to read suddenly coming to light when it was uncertain he even knew the alphabet.

Just a few months into the 2012–13 school year, the second grader at Austin Elementary School proved he had indeed been learning all along, but who knows when or if that would have been discovered if it weren't for the school's new Sensory Room.

Used for individuals with special needs, and in particular autism spectrum disorder, a sensory room offers a variety of ways in which a person can re-balance their ability to cope with stimulus.

Over stimulation can result in meltdowns, agitation and anxiety. Under stimulation can lead to withdrawal and unresponsiveness. Neither is conducive to a healthy learning state and past Principal Winnie Ferguson simply wanted to offer all students the best possible educational environment.

"I've taught here for 15 years and seen a huge increase with our at-risk and special needs students. For September (2012) we were facing 12 funded students out of a population of 125 with ten kids on the spectrum disorder as well as of social and emotional needs," said Ferguson.

With the writing on the wall, she and resource teacher, Kim Young had already begun research the previous school year.

"I consulted with team members who work with our students. I talked to the Autism Society. I talked to other agencies about what they had. We toured the Manitoba Development Centre in Portage la Prairie and observed their sensory room. Then I consulted with an agency in the

United States that builds these rooms. When I found out the dollar figure I was blown away," said Ferguson.

With the help of the local Lions Club and Norfolk Foundation and a little money from their student services budget, they were able to pull together \$2,500. The relaxation room came first as many students suffered from extreme anxiety that led to disruptive behavior and distress for everyone.

"The last week of school I painted the room black. We went to Mennonite Central Committee and found some things on blow out and in off-season deals like the rope lights from Christmas. We made a lot of it." They put \$1,000 of the grant money towards a five-foot tall bubble tube, but built their own base which would have cost another \$500–\$700, out of plywood.

Their resourcefulness is evident in numerous other common items repurposed as sensory aids that fill a cabinet. From rain tubes to 'smelling pots', variety is the key. It's all about trial and error since an item or activity is effective with one but not another. "We found that some children were understimulated and so we had to find a way to bring them up. "With the relaxation room a hit, Ferguson turned her attention to an activity room.

In this room a few desks run along two of the walls, there's a white board in front and cupboards again filled with a variety of supplies and activity materials. There's a TV and Wii for coordination and interactive activities as well as a few other pieces of low-tech gym equipment like sturdy foam tubes. But the first thing you notice is the colourful fabric swing hanging from the ceiling from a reinforced crossbar. The swing provides both deep pressure and movement which allows children to concentrate on the lesson at hand. For Ferguson and other teachers at Austin Elementary, the results have been overwhelmingly positive.

"Academically, the growth has been significant. All of our children have increased their time in the regular classroom," said Ferguson. "They're not requiring that pull-out, one-on-one outside of the classroom nearly as much, strictly because they can regulate themselves, then return to the classroom or make use of classroom time in here.

"For example, that little boy in Grade 2. He wouldn't read in front of anyone, wouldn't speak because he was so understimulated. But as soon as we put him in the swing he started reading aloud. It was like unlocking a secret treasure. The parents have been super. Other parents have come by to see the room and one family even started to put together a sensory room in their own house because of the positive results they've seen."

Grade 4 and 5 teacher, Naomi Froese said the room was like "their haven" for her special needs students.

"I had a little guy who had a hard time controlling his physiological responses but he would settle himself in the swing and his whole body would just go still. He would become so calm. He'd stay in there for five minutes and be able to go back to work."

Staff soon realized the amount of time each student needed could differ greatly not only between each child but from day to day. At the beginning of the year, they tried imposing a time limit of 15 minutes, but as the year progressed, they gave children the option of determining for themselves the time they needed.

There was some concern children might view the space as a playroom or an escape from class, but that worry proved unfounded.

Froese says she has seen considerable improvement with another of her students who began the school year with frequent visits to the Sensory Room.

"Now he uses it once or twice a month. It helped him figure out where his balance was. Because of what he does in the (sensory) room, he started doing similar things in the classroom and simply doesn't need it as much. When he feels the need to step away now he asks 'Can I have a body break?' At the beginning of the year, he didn't have that skill."

For many of the special needs students and to some extent the staff as well, just

knowing the sensory rooms were there has contributed greatly to a sense of reduced stress and anxiety on a day-to-day basis. On a few occasions, the relaxation room has been used by students other than special needs as a soothing refuge if only for a short while. "We've even had some students take tests in there," said Ferguson.

Among the other children and staff, having the room has also raised awareness and understanding of autism spectrum disorder. "In my class for sure, the other children have come to simply understand and accept, "that's just what he needs" as a learning tool. It's not a big deal. Many times he's come back (from a short break) and there is no sense of disconnect with the rest of the class," said Froese.

Since the local radio station, CFRY produced a news story for Portage On-line and then posted the video on YouTube, Ferguson said the school has received several requests for information on their costs and results.

"That has really paid off for us because people can see what can be done to help children. As far as we know, there is no other public school in Manitoba with a sensory room."

Personally, she says she has connected with "helping these little people" as her passion now. In the fall of 2013, she will be moving on to Gladstone to be a resource teacher.

PORTFOLIO



Why Microsoft is where it is today

The guy who gave the OK to the Zune and Windows Vista is taking another shot at building a better teacher, this time by putting monitors on students.

The Microsoft founder has put up \$1.4 million into researching student-worn wrist bracelets that would monitor a student's "excitement, stress, fear, engagement, boredom and relaxation through the skin," says the Sydney Morning Herald.

The monitors will supposedly collect data that will show which teachers and teaching styles are most effective. Next, classes taught by Clippy the paperclip.



Who knew?

A Canadian teacher is helping out the main U.S. organization against marriage equality with scare stories about what has happened in this country.

Apparently in Canada now schools can force elementary school boys to "marry" other boys in mock-weddings and there are school math textbooks showing "cross-dressing carpenters," according to a video distributed by the National Organization for Marriage.

In the video, former Ontario teacher Phil Lees says the same thing will happen in the U.S. if it adopts marriage equality or, as he calls it, same-sex marriage.

Mercy, me!

BY GEORGE STEPHENSON

It's sometimes hard to believe the media are suffering through such terrible times, that never-ending cuts are decimating great journalism.

It is hard to believe because they still seem to have enough resources and time to spend on meaningless crap.

Howling coyotes.

Ron Lemieux, the province's local government minister, used those words in a later heated, noisy debate in the House to describe some of the presenters at legislative hearings on the one point increase in the provincial sales tax.

Well, that led to all sorts of outrage stories, with the Opposition demanding an apology and an editorial writer at the *Free Press* clutching their chest and getting the vapours, calling on the minister to account for his apocalyptic indiscretion.

Before fainting dead away, the flustered writer said an apology was necessary for "the apparent swipe he took at ordinary Manitobans who protested the government's PST hike. Taxpayers deserve better than to be dismissed as baying brats in their Legislative Building."

Oh, please. Get out the smelling salts.

Is so much ink and air time really necessary to scold a minister who, in the heat of a debate, makes some offhand comment about the tenor of some public presentations the legislative committee has heard?

Really, who cares?

What's really important is

how thoroughly the media covered those public presentations about this important legislation. Oh, wait, they didn't actually do that, outside of a couple

We have a large immigrant population right now. I'm not opposed to them; they're great people, I love the Filipino people.

of general, perfunctory stories. So, the editorial writer might have missed what was said at the hearings that might have just pushed Lemieux slightly over the edge. Here is just a taste of what some of these "ordinary" Manitobans told Lemieux and his colleagues:

- We all think you're a joke.
- Just the arrogance in regards to how you choose to work with the public is absolutely unacceptable.
- You are bullying us in regards to the increase in the PST.
- Absolute arrogance and disrespect this government has for the people.
- I heard the Premier (Mr. Selinger) say in the last election that he would not raise taxes. Another lie.
- The mismanagement and ignorance of our standing government.
- There's nobody left here; they're all going. You know, it's—we have a large immigrant population right now. I'm not opposed to them; they're great people, I love the Filipino people.
- Why should our money be shipped out of the province to go to some Third World country to help out some kids somewhere else?
- I know how to balance a budget. I've done it for car clubs. It's just the same thing.
- Nowadays we keep increasing the loans while the students fly to destination holidays, texting and doing who knows what.

- The new drunken pirates that are illegally stealing from us.
- We don't like being gouged when we don't have to. That's why I buy my beer in the States.
- I've already told my family Christmas and birthdays are all cancelled this year because I'm going to spend as little as possible to make sure you get the least amount of it as I can make sure you get.
- Why do you hate us so much?
- I think maybe you should go and take a few accounting courses, because I manage my house a lot better than you manage your house.
- Greg Selinger's a liar.
- If you're too lazy to fundraise on yourself, stay out of my pocket.
- I moved out of Winnipeg years ago because crime was getting out of hand. Now I'm looking at leaving the province because the crimes of government are getting out of hand.
- I encourage young people to leave because the dictatorship here cares not about you or your family.
- Our welfare/social programs are so generous and tax exempt that persons have no incentive to go to work and pay taxes on their earnings. A Métis descent youth in high school, for example, may receive well over \$500 a month, just because.
- After 2,000 pages of reading, that's my conclusion. Socialism doesn't work—doesn't work.
- I don't see much difference from a household to a small business to the government.

- The NDP government is all about wasting our money on frivolous-ass shit that nobody wants to—that nobody can afford anymore. A brand new convention centre. A brand new stadium. A brand new Human Rights Museum. This, this, this, and this. Howling coyotes? Baying brats?

Certainly there were serious and thoughtful presentations on both sides of the issue, but a majority failed to exceed the level of knowledge contained in a typical comment on the Internet. Too many were simply insults with a generous helpings of disrespect and rudeness—all because it will cost five cents more for a cup of coffee and a muffin.

But those amounts aren't part of the narrative. The media would rather focus on the sturm und drang, the easy to understand sideshows rather than the more complex main event. Even CBC had a long interview with a hairdresser who expected their business would drop because of the increase. The interviewer never mentioned that the increase would amount to 50 cents on a \$50 haircut or challenge the assertion that customers would leave to save two quarters.

Why even have interviewers? Just have an open line. It would save the media money that they could use to cover more important issues—like the opening of the Target store or a tour of the new IKEA.

Or maybe they could go down to the legislative hearings and listen to some of those people who they consider to be "ordinary" Manitobans.

The *Free Press* should consider apologizing for that.

We don't like being gouged when we don't have to. That's why I buy my beer in the States.

It's 2013, do you know where your students are?



A Florida school district had to put a supposed security program on hold after outraged parents learned their children had their irises scanned without their permission.

The school district installed eye-scanning cameras on school buses to be able to track all students.

Last year a Texas school district was criticized for embedding technology in student cards that allowed schools to track them. It was the same technology used by the department of agriculture to track livestock.

Put your eye to the scanner, then mooove to the back of the bus, you kids.

Concussions aren't their only problem



In the first six months of this year 30 active players in the National Football League have been arrested for various crimes from murder and attempted murder to drunk driving and drug possession. In the past dozen years there have been almost 650 charges laid against NFL players.

I've already told my family Christmas and birthdays are all cancelled this year because I'm going to spend as little as possible to make sure you get the least amount of it as I can make sure you get.

Back-to-School Time for Transgender Youth

BY RIZI XAVIER TIMANE



Speaking as an adult transgender individual, I can tell you: it isn't always easy. I can also tell you from experience that trying to navigate the world as a teenager when you're unsure of your sexual orientation and even your own body can seem nearly impossible at times. I grew up in a time and place when the word "transgender" did not even really exist—not in public discourse anyway. These days, thanks to the Internet and the ever-present social media, it is fairly well known. But that doesn't mean it is any more understood or accepted.

According to a Harris Interactive survey, most kids know they have lesbian, gay, and/or transgender classmates, as do about one-third of teachers, who also say they are committed to keeping all children safe regardless of orientation, gender, or any other factor. Still, bullying happens. A 2009 survey conducted by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network of New York found that among seven thousand LGBTQ students between the ages of thirteen and twenty-one, eighty percent had been verbally harassed at school in the past year; four out of ten had been physically harassed. Sixty percent said they felt unsafe, and one in five was the victim of a physical assault.

Those are sobering statistics, and the difficulties do not stop there. More than twenty-five percent of LGBTQ kids have reported missing classes because they felt unsafe at school. A national study published in *The American Journal of Public Health* showed that lesbian, gay, and transgender kids in the seventh through twelfth grades were more than twice as likely as their straight classmates to attempt suicide. Add in a lack of parental understanding and support, as is often the case with transgender youth, and that figure jumps to eight times more likely. Trans youth who are rejected at home are also more prone to depression, drug use, and risky sexual behaviors.

So what makes the transgender young person's experience different from his or her heterosexual peers? Think about it

this way: adolescence is the time when we build our own identities. We branch off from our parents more than we ever have before, and we establish our likes and dislikes. Then, of course, there are all those hormones raging through our bodies. This is just nature taking its course, and it leads us to search for relationships that will give us the emotional intimacy we crave and, for many, sexual intimacy as well. This is all well and good for straight youth who can follow the path society has laid out for them: dress a certain way, act a certain way, and the boyfriend or girlfriend of your dreams will come along and validate your existence.

But imagine you are on that path and something feels not quite right about it. Maybe you are a boy but you don't want a girlfriend; maybe you appear to be a girl on the outside, but inside you have always felt like a boy. Whatever it may be, this issue is a bump that keeps you from progressing down the culture-mandated road like all your friends are doing, thus leaving you an outcast, and we all know how they fare in teen life. On top of that, add in the hostility you might face from family or friends, the discomfort you feel in your own body, and the confusion you feel between what is expected of you and what you know is right for you, and there is no way you can ever see yourself fitting in. Still, you try. Because you want to be accepted for whom you are. And you deserve that just like everyone else does, no matter who says you don't.

And that's exactly what bullies don't want. These are individuals who have learned to hate people who are different from what is considered the "norm." They learn from their families, from the media, from our national environment in which politicians and religious leaders devalue the lives of lesbian, gay, and transgender people by denying us the same rights our heterosexual counterparts enjoy.

As parents, students, and teachers begin to prepare for the upcoming school year, it's important for everyone to un-

derstand the role bullying can play in the life of transgender youth and how it can be prevented. Toward that end there are a number of things educators and caregivers can do to ensure their children have access to the safest learning environment possible:

- Identify safe spaces for LGBTQ youth. These can be administrators' offices, student organizations and clubs, or any place they can go when they need to be in an accepting environment—someplace they will not be judged or harassed.
- Include transgender and gay students as well as those who are questioning their identities in all school curricula. Use inclusive language and terminology, and when teaching about health issues such as STDs or pregnancy, be sure to include materials that are relevant to LGBTQ youth.
- Offer counseling within the school for those who need it and facilitate access to outside resources when the school's resources are not enough.
- Contact, contact, contact. The educator-student bond should be strong. Keep the lines of communication open and ensure that the LGBTQ child knows that he or she is not alone and that they too are valued and respected. This is especially important for those who do not get the support they need at home.
- Monitor bullying hotspots. Bullying happens mostly when there are no adults around. Keep things as supervised as possible, even in bathrooms, on playgrounds, and in cafeterias. These measures, along with a zero-tolerance policy enacted in every case of bullying that occurs, may not completely stem the tide, but they are a start. And as Chinese philosopher Lao Tzu said, the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.

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Greg Selinger
MLA for St. Boniface
Premier of Manitoba
204-237-9247
GregSelinger.ca



Stan Struthers
MLA for Dauphin
204-622-7630
StanStruthers.ca



Ron Lemieux
MLA for Dawson Trail
204-878-4644
Ron-Lemieux.ca



Jim Rondeau
MLA for Assiniboia
204-888-7722
JimRondeau.mb.ca



Kerri Irvin-Ross
MLA for Fort Richmond
204-475-9433
KerriIrvinRoss.ca



Kevin Chief
MLA for Point Douglas
204-421-9126
KevinChief.ca



Jennifer Howard
MLA for Fort Rouge
204-946-0272
JenniferHoward.ca



Peter Bjornson
MLA for Gimli
204-642-4977
1-866-253-0255
PeterBjornson.ca



Eric Robinson
MLA for Kewatinook
204-943-2274
Eric-Robinson.ca



Dave Chomiak
MLA for Kildonan
204-334-5060
DaveChomiak.ca



Flor Marcelino
MLA for Logan
204-788-0800
FlorMarcelino.ca



Andrew Swan
MLA for Minto
204-783-9860
AndrewSwan.ca



Dave Gaudreau
MLA for St. Norbert
204-261-1794
DaveGaudreau.ca



Christine Melnick
MLA for Riel
204-253-5162
ChristineMelnick.ca



Erna Braun
MLA for Rossmere
204-667-7244
ErnaBraun.ca



Theresa Oswald
MLA for Seine River
204-255-7840
TheresaOswald.ca



Greg Dewar
MLA for Selkirk
204-482-7066
1-855-695-1361
GregDewar.ca



Erin Selby
MLA for Southdale
204-253-3918
ErinSelby.ca



Sharon Blady
MLA for Kirkfield Park
204-832-2318
SharonBlady.ca



Ron Kostyshyn
MLA for Swan River
204-734-4900
RonKostyshyn.ca



Frank Whitehead
MLA for The Pas
204-623-3358
FrankWhitehead.ca



Deanne Crothers
MLA for St. James
204-415-0883
DeanneCrothers.ca



Gord Mackintosh
MLA for St. Johns
204-582-1550
GordMackintosh.ca



Nancy Allan
MLA for St. Vital
204-237-8771
NancyAllan.ca

NEXT STEPS

PD OPPORTUNITIES 2013–2014



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DATE	WORKSHOP NAME	PRESENTER
October 3–5, 2013	FAB5: A conference for teachers in their first five years (Brandon)	Various presenters
October 17–19, 2013	FAB5: A conference for teachers in their first five years (Winnipeg)	Various presenters
October 7–8, 2013	Teaching to Diversity: Universal Design for Learning (UDL)	Tricia Glass, M.Ed. and Arlene Beresford, M.Ed.
November 4–5, 2013	The Changing Role of the Resource Teacher	Dr. Joan Zaretsky and Glenda McKim
November 7–8, 2013	Teaching About Human Rights	Roland Dion and MARL
November 28–29, 2013	Gifts of Our Own: Aboriginal Literature in our Classrooms and Schools	Niigaawewidam James Sinclair
December 2–3, 2013	The Language Rich Classroom – EAL Learners	Dr. Persida Himmele
December 12–13, 2013	Teaching to Diversity: Universal Design for Learning and Implementation for Aboriginal Education	Dr. Jennifer Katz
January 13–14, 2014	Gender Identity and Expression	Dr. Reece Malone
January 20–21, 2014	Successfully Bridging the Generation Gap	Eddie Calisto-Tavares
January 23–24, 2014	Making Equity Work in Schools	Enid Lee
February 10–11, 2014	Learning is Sharing: Social Media in the Classroom	Andy McKiel and Darren Kuropatwa
February 27–28, 2014	Supervision and Evaluation, Part 2	MTS Staff and COSL
March 6–7, 2014	The 3Rs of Successful School Counselling	Carolynne Piturra
March 20–21, 2014	Universal Design for Learning – Literacy and Numeracy in the UDL Classroom: Developing Students' Love for Language and Mathematical Thinking	Dr. Jennifer Katz

More detailed information on all events will be posted on the MTS website at www.mbteach.org