SEINE RIVER TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

December 2018
Volume 14.3

President's Message

Dear valued members of the association,

It is once again the end of another calendar year, and 2018 was full of twists and turns as the months went by. We were all able to take part in elections in October which saw changes in leadership across our province, both in rural municipalities and in the city of Winnipeg. More importantly for us working in Seine River, we saw changes to the complement of school board trustees.

Working in partnership with the Board of Trustees and with the senior administration of the Seine River School Division is something I value each and every day. Simply put, there is no better relationship in the province than the one our Local association has with the Division. In my five-plus years as your president, there hasn't been one time where I walked away from a conversation with a divisional counterpart feeling unheard, unvalued, or unappreciated. From day one on the job, I've been treated with respect, honesty, and empathy by anyone I've had the chance to discuss things with. I'll be very honest — while some of those conversations resulted in a difference of opinion, and some of the things discussed were tough topics to address, the tone and tenor of the conversations have never been adversarial or disrespectful.

There was no better display of this collaborative spirit than December 4, when your Local Executive met with the Board of trustees and senior administration at the SRSD board office for the annual meet-and-greet event. We were happy hosts for the event, and after enjoying a meal together, we set about on an activity which had everyone in the room answering four important questions related to public education. The last question, "What are you most proud about of our local autonomous relationships between our Association/Division/Board?" was designed as a 'snowball fight'. In this activity, everyone responds to the question on a piece of paper, then crumples it into a ball and launches it across the room. Each participant then grabs someone else's 'snowball' and has a chance to read it aloud. It turned out to be a very powerful activity, as Executive members read responses written by trustees/administrators, and vice-versa. Three of the responses really resonated with me:

- We are open to learn from each other and to participate in some critical discourse while we are at it. We have a two-way street where everyone is valued – students, teachers, parents, administration, and the community.
- I am most proud of our relationships the ability for us to get together like we did tonight. I so value hearing from staff about how they feel and think regarding programs. I love how excited teachers are about education.
- Proud of our relationships between board, SRTA; we are all focusing and working for all our students' success.

As we in Manitoba move towards the provincial government's review of public education, it is important that we all lend our voices to the consultation that is set to occur starting in January. We need to be staunch advocates of students in Manitoba, and speak from the heart as well as the mind on issues related to public education. I'm going to do my part whenever I can, wearing each of my many hats — as a teacher, as your president, as a member of the MTS Provincial Executive, as a parent of school-aged children, and as a community member. I encourage all Members to do the same, to speak up throughout the process, so the province hears loud and clear what is important for public education moving forward.

As I sign off for another calendar year, I'll get off the political soapbox for a minute to express my gratitude to all SRTA Members, but in particular, the Council Representatives and Executive Members. We have had a very busy four months so far, with many important decisions being made, and without these dedicated individuals, our operation would grind to a quick halt. If you see the Council Rep or an Executive Member in the hallway before the Winter Break begins, tell them how much you appreciate them, and wish them a happy holiday.

With that, I wish all Members a very happy, relaxing Winter Break, and I look forward to seeing you all early in 2019 during my annual tour of schools.

In solidarity, for each of you and for each other,

Jonathan Waite

Message from the Vice-President

by Dan Lagacé

There hasn't been much to announce as for Vice-President activities this time round. I want to send out to all our members a very Merry Christmas and Happy Holiday! Also, to have a very well-deserved winter break and a safe New Year!

Collective Bargaining Update

by Dan Lagacé, Collective Bargaining Chair

Since the last newsletter, the collective bargaining committee is still waiting for dates to meet with the school division senior administration and the school board. Now that the new board of trustees has been elected, we hope to continue negotiations in the near future.

Teacher Appreciation Night with the Blue Bombers

by Jonathan Waite, President

On September 21, 2018, the Winnipeg Blue Bombers hosted the Montreal Alouettes at Investors Group Field in Winnipeg. While it was certainly exciting to be in the crowd that evening, what made it more enjoyable was the celebration of teachers during the game.

The night was deemed Teacher Appreciation Night, and there was a special celebration of Manitoba teachers in the later stages of the game. Our Local association was honoured to have Amita Khandpur (Ecole Lorette Immersion) and Susanne Lee (College Lorette Collegiate) be invited to take part in the event. Thanks to Amita and Susanne for being great representatives of all of us!

A Social Justice Lens Checklist

submitted by Lisa Harder, SRTA Equity and Social Justice Chair

(source: https://bctf.ca/uploadedFiles/Public/SocialJustice/Publications/SJLens.pdf)

A social justice lens checklist

by Marianne Neill, CASJ—Peace and Global Education Action Group member

Here is a checklist that you can use to assess whether programs, resources, events, and so forth meet the criteria of the social justice lens. If not, you may want to identify alternatives that do satisfy these criteria. Note that some criteria may not apply to the specific item you are evaluating. A scenario using the social justice lens follows the checklist.

Access

- ❑ values a welcoming and inclusive approach to all people equally
- ❑ values openness to the ideas and opinions of others as equal participants
- ❑ teaches the value of multiple perspectives
- ❑ demonstrates respect for democratic processes and civil society
- ❑ values community and co-operation
- ❑ responsive to all others equally

Agency

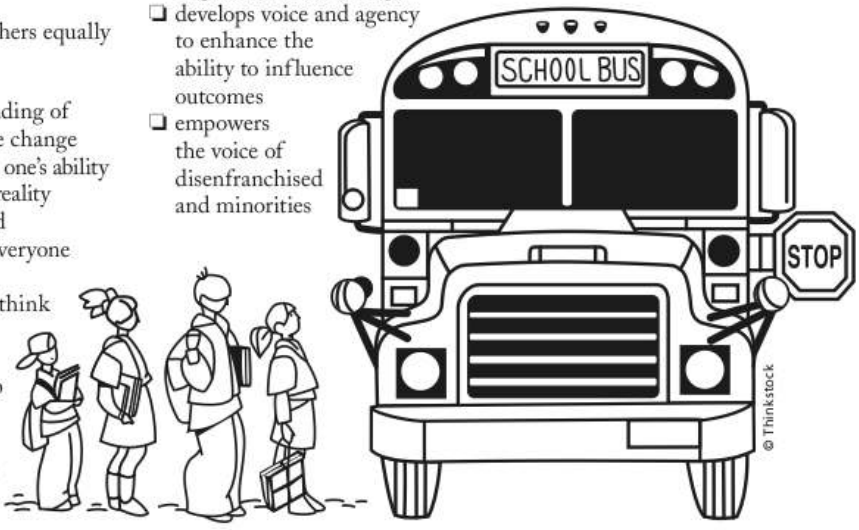
- ❑ develops understanding of one's right to create change
- ❑ encourages belief in one's ability to affect one's own reality
- ❑ nurtures action and empowerment of everyone equally
- ❑ develops ability to think critically about social problems
- ❑ develops leadership skills
- ❑ values recognition and respect for the agency of others
- ❑ actively encourages leadership in working towards positive change that benefits everyone
- ❑ encourages people to find their own voice
- ❑ empowers people
- ❑ values participatory democracy
- ❑ contributes to the development of ability to participate in the world
- ❑ contributes to the development of ability to change the world

Advocacy

- ❑ builds skills needed to effect systemic change using various strategies
- ❑ develops an understanding of one's position and privilege in society
- ❑ develops awareness of social realities
- ❑ develops analytical ability
- ❑ develops awareness of how to respond to make change
- ❑ develops voice and agency to enhance the ability to influence outcomes
- ❑ empowers the voice of disenfranchised and minorities

Solidarity action

- ❑ promotes transformative work for the betterment of others
- ❑ nurtures an understanding that an injury to one is an injury to all
- ❑ values co-operation and coalition-building
- ❑ works across differences to find common ground
- ❑ advocates broad interconnections and common goal-setting and actions
- ❑ shows recognition of the strength in unity
- ❑ shows effectiveness in mediating and resolving conflict to build alliances
- ❑ encourages collaboration with disenfranchised or minorities
- ❑ nurtures ability to take action with empathy



Growing Your Peace At Work©: A helpful tool for daily practice

by Marianne Farag, Sublimity: Pathways to Peace (www.sublimitypathways.com)

submitted by Paul Grosskopf, SRTA Wellness Chair

(Originally appeared in MTS Balance Magazine, October./November 2018 edition)

On a day to day basis, when the demands and pressures of work-life press in, you need something that can help you as a quick fix to get you marching to the beat of a calmer drummer. What to do when you are juggling many balls and feel like you are about to snap at someone or maybe you already did and now feel even more frustrated and out of control? With that in mind, I developed *Growing Your Peace At Work©* which is an easy to use tool with a set of guidelines and a checklist to help you manage the quality of your workday. Whether you are experiencing conflict in your interactions, or encountering negative behaviours, or find yourself working with people who are demoralized and cynical, or are having difficulty adjusting to organizational change, or face other obstacles and challenges in your work, *Growing Your Peace At Work©* offers you empowering ways to cope and thrive regardless of the environment in which you find yourself.

When you continue to be negatively impacted by the way in which others may interact with you at work, you put your morale, stress level, performance quality, and physical and mental health at risk. Instead of feeling helpless or victimized, you can take charge of your wellbeing by practicing some very straightforward strategies that reinforce that the only person whose thoughts, actions and words you can control are your own!

How to use Growing Your Peace At Work©

The way to use the Growing *Your Peace at Work©* checklist and guidelines is to review them daily until you feel that you have internalized them and that they are becoming second nature. The best time to review the guidelines and checklist is at the end of each work day. For added benefit, you can also start your workday by reviewing the guidelines and checklist as a way to reinforce them to yourself, and set the tone for the approach you want to take in order to cultivate your peace of mind in the workplace. Once you get into the daily habit of using *Growing Your Peace at Work©,* you can share your feedback on this tool via the on-line, short, anonymous survey at: https://www.surveymonkey.com/ r/2FVD8VR.

How you will benefit from Growing Your Peace At Work©

With daily use of the *Growing Your Peace at Work©* tool you will notice the following shifts:

- Improved quality of your interactions with others.
- Less time spent talking about your workplace distress.
- Greater ability to cope with negative behaviour of others at work.
- Reduced frustration levels with workplace challenges/obstacles.
- Less emotional charge around difficult work relationships.
- Greater ability to perform at your best.
- Increased focus on the job.

Daily guidelines and checklist

Principle 1: Presence

Focussing on one activity/task at a time, fully concentrating on it, giving it your undivided attention without distraction or multitasking, and being aware of your physical, mental and emotional states as you undertake an activity/task. This is known as practicing Mindfulness.

1. I did at least one activity today in a Mindful way. E.G. Maintaining complete focus on a conversation/ discussion, or maintaining single point attention to eating a snack/ your lunch, walking to a meeting.

2. If today you experienced tension, stress, anxiety, conflict, being offended or upset, etc., how did you handle it? Select as many as you attempted:

a) Practiced Mindful breathing?
b) Did a short Meditation?
c) Repeated an Affirmation to myself?
d) Reminded myself that everything is not always about me?
e) Decided to hold off on a response until I'd cooled down?
f) Redirected my focus to the work-related goal/outcome to help shape how I dealt with the situation? g) Other? (Specify)

Principle 2: Communication

Listening attentively with the intention of understanding before

(cont'd on page 5)

(Growing Your Peace At Work© continued from page 4)

responding, seeking clarification before assuming or jumping to conclusions. Choosing your words in written and oral communication to convey facts, ideas, instructions without editorializing, inflammatory or disrespectful language. Ensuring that your self-talk and line of thinking is based on fact rather than conjecture, fear, reactions to stress - in other words, having a correct view of self in a given context.

3. I practised seeking clarification in at least one of my interactions today by focussing on making sure I properly understood another's position even if I did not share their point of view. (i.e., Listening attentively to another without interrupting, without jumping in with anxiety or irritation because they don't see things my way.)

4. I practiced self-awareness by noticing when I had a negative or judgmental thought about someone or a situation and replaced it with a thought that focuses on how I can contribute to the achievement of workplace results.

5. If a situation arose today in which someone was being blamed for having said or done or not done something, I focussed on finding out the facts rather than making assumptions and jumping to conclusions.

Principle 3: Collaboration

Recognizing that the sum is greater than the parts and that to be effective at work depends on others in the organization as much as yourself. Whether it's the executives, the different functional area within the organization, support staff, maintenance staff, etc., it is through interdependence and cooperation that you and your organization achieve success.

6. I practiced respect for all who crossed my path. E.G., refraining from demeaning conversations or aggressiveness of tone, jokes or sarcasm at another's expense, or careless remarks.

7. Today I witnessed someone being disrespected, humiliated, or disregarded and I reached out to help them.

8. In regard to anything that went wrong or where quality expectations or deadlines were not met, I focussed on solutions, correcting the situation without blame or judgement of myself or others.

9. Today I acknowledged the contribution of at least one person who is employed by my organization. E.G., a colleague, someone I report to, someone who reports to me, a member of the maintenance staff.

Principle 4: Self-accountability

Your peace of mind depends on you. The quality of your work day depends on how you choose to interpret and respond to what comes your way each day. Daily self-monitoring without judgment, but rather, in the spirit of continuous improvement and life-long learning and growth, helps you shift to a *Growing Your Peace At Work©* mindset and behaviour as your new norm or default.

10. One behaviour/action I am proud of that I took today to show my commitment to my peace of mind in the workplace relates to the following *Growing Your Peace At Work©* Principles (select as many as apply):
a) Presence
b) Collaboration
c) Communication
d) Self-Accountability

11. Reflecting back on this day, my thoughts, words or actions were not always conducive to my peace of mind or supportive of peace in the workplace. Select as many as apply from the list below:

a) I engaged in a line of thinking that was disruptive to my peace of mind.
b) Words I said to another could have been communicated in a kinder, more neutral way or I could have demonstrated more patience.
c) A decision, action, or behaviour that I chose was needlessly disruptive to my peace of mind.
d) A decision, action, or behaviour that I chose created unnecessary friction in my workplace.
e) A decision which was going to cause uncertainty/distress in the workplace was made more difficult for those on the receiving end through my choice of words and/or strategy.

12. If at any time today you practiced any of the activities listed below, indicate the extent to which they helped you manage your general state of wellbeing at work.

Marianne Farag is an Inner-Peace Specialist at Sublimity: Pathways to Peace who works with people seeking to increase their peace of mind and joy in their lives. Marianne holds a Certificate in Applied Counselling from the University of Manitoba and has trained in meditation and Reiki. She can be reached at: info@sblimitypathways.com

Benefit Plans

by Leslie Buffie, Employee Benefits Chair and Jonathan Waite, President

The next time you are poking around on the internet, swing over to this website **www.mpsebp.ca.**

It is full of timely and relevant information related to Group Life Insurance, Dental Benefits and Extended Health Benefits.

YOUR BENEFITS NEWS

Teachers

December 2018

Welcome to your 2018 winter benefits news

This newsletter keeps you up to date with your main plan features, provides plan changes, and reminds you of the various benefits, resources and programs available to you as a member to help support your health and well-being.

Travel Health benefit changes for members age 65 and older and retired members

Enhancements

Are you age 65 or older and still working? Are you retired? If so, and you're taking off on a winter getaway to escape the cold, your trip just got more satisfying!

Effective January 1, 2019, the enhancements being introduced to the Travel Health benefit will keep you feeling worry-free and safe longer abroad. Your Travel Health coverage will now be:

- Longer – with coverage for 90 days (previously 60 days), starting from the first day that you're away.

With this enhancement, Travel Health coverage will be the same for everyone in the Manitoba Public School Employees Benefit Plans. There aren't any other changes to Travel Health coverage for 2019.

Remember to pack your benefit card for your trips or visit the Blue Cross site at www.mb.bluecross.ca to access a copy of your card, so that you have your plan number handy if you require assistance while travelling.

Change in premium rates

Plan members age 65 or older and retired plan members will see a slight rise in monthly premium rates as a result of this increased coverage. Monthly rates will increase by $2.75 for single coverage and $5.50 for family coverage starting in January 2019.

Legalization of recreational cannabis

On October 17, 2018, the federal government legalized recreational (non-medicinal) cannabis in Canada. With this legalization, provincial governments are required to take action to regulate, permit or prohibit aspects of recreational cannabis use as appropriate, as well as promote public education and safety. To learn more about cannabis laws in Manitoba, visit www.gov.mb.ca/cannabis

Cannabis and the workplace

- The legalization of cannabis doesn't change or affect the use of medicinal cannabis.
- Neither recreational or medical cannabis is covered under your Health plan.

Benefits of the preferred pharmacy network

The Express Scripts Canada (ESC) Pharmacy® and Costco Pharmacy in Winnipeg make up your preferred pharmacy network. When you use these two pharmacies for your prescription needs, you'll:

- Only pay 10% of the drug cost instead of 20% (if your current reimbursement level is 80%),
- Experience lower dispensing fees, and
- Be able to have prescription drugs conveniently delivered to your home.

You can use these two pharmacies for different prescription drug needs:

- For long term prescriptions, such as maintenance drugs used to treat chronic conditions (e.g., asthma, diabetes, and high blood pressure), you can use ESC, which manages refills and prescription transfers.
- For your short-term prescriptions (e.g., antibiotics), you can use the Costco Pharmacy, even without a

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Tax facts

With tax season just around the corner, here's a reminder on whether or not you can claim the premiums paid for Health and Dental benefits.

If you're a full-time teacher, you can't claim the premiums for your Health and Dental coverage (the medical expense tax credit) because your employer pays these for you. Since your employer pays the premiums, you don't pay any income tax on them. Your salary is adjusted to a lower salary scale to account for the payment of Health and Dental premiums on your behalf.

If you're a part-time teacher, you pay a portion of the premiums for your Health and Dental coverage and as a result, you can claim any premium that you pay. Box 85 of your T4 slip provides the amount you paid, so when adding up your medical expenses include this amount to see if you qualify for the medical expense tax credit.

The Manitoba Teachers' Society

Manitoba Teachers' Society 10 and 25 Year Recognition

10 Year Pins

Janelle Bernier	ESAI	Natalie Moore	DTS/ELI
Graham Bodnar	RCH	Gregory Parent	EIDCS
Keith Carpenter	DTS	Shannon Philippe	ESAS
Jennifer Catellier	ESNI	Shawn Sadler	SAC
Lesa-Jade Chapman	RCH	Amy Scherbain	CSNC
Suzanne Dunwoody	CLC	Andrew Slade	DTS
Michelle Eyolfson	DTS	Nicole Staniforth	RCH
Jeff Gusdal	LBC	Myra Tillett	SAC
Michelle Hancock	EIDCS	Amy Vanderhooft	ST SV
Crystal Markusson	CLC	Alissa Vivian	SAC
Cindy Mason	SAC	Brandi Wait	SAE

25 Year Pins

Lynn Davidson-Young	LSS
Gord Epp	SAC
Joanne Fraser	CLC
Nathalie Houle	CLC/ELI
Paul Lanthier	CSNC
Norm Mackin	ESAS
Marvin Namaka	CSNC

Pins were distributed at the Divisional PD day in November.
Congratulations to all pin recipients!

Save the Dates!

The Seine River Teachers' Association will be hosting a number of fun social events in 2019!

Friday, February 22 - Bowling Night
Alpine Bowling Lanes (Travelodge Winnipeg East)

Friday, April 5—Paint Night
Location to be announced

Colleen Kachur-Reico Memorial Golf Tournament
Southside Golf Course, Grande Pointe

Be on the lookout for posters with registration information in advance of the events!

Professional Development Fund

At the December meeting of the SRTA Council, Professional Development Chair Mark Eismendi notified those in attendance that the categories for in-area and out-of-area have been 99% allocated, and university coursework has been fully allocated for the year. We still encourage members to apply for professional development opportunities, so that they can go on a waitlist in case surplus or unspent funds become available.

There are still significant funds available for group projects, as well as for classroom visits. For more information, please visit our PD page at http://www.srteach.org/PD.

2018-2019 Funds

	Total Used	Remaining	Percentage Used
In Area	$12,510.82	$703.80	99%
Out of Area	$36,785.38		
University	$15,000.00	$0.00	100%
Group	$1,300.00	$3,700.00	26%
Classroom Visits	2.00	38.00	5%

Editor's note: *On behalf of the rest of the SRTA Executive, I'd like to thank Mark Eismendi for stepping into the role of Professional Development Chair while Kaitlan Fisher was on leave. Mark did an admirable job, and has kept the boat afloat over the course of the last twelve months. Thanks Mark!*

They're kids with a cause – compassionate, creative and courageous. You see them at every grade level, students who love serving in their schools and communities.

Thank them for their goodness with a Young Humanitarian Award nomination. They could win one of four $1,000 prizes. Deadline for submissions is Thursday February 28, 2019 at 4:00 pm.

Join us at our MTS YHA Awards April 16, 2019, 7:00 PM at the Manitoba Theatre for Young People.

MTS General Secretary Leaves

The Manitoba Teachers' Society General Secretary Bobbi Taillefer announced she is resigning after 21 years of service to Manitoba teachers.

During her tenure, Taillefer has been an inspiration to MTS members, staff, and colleagues in Manitoba's education community and across Canada. The Society will miss her service and her leadership. Her last day at MTS will be January 16, 2019.

100TH ON ICE

Carpentry, machine and welding technology students at Tec Voc High School are hard at work building a one-room schoolhouse to help commemorate the MTS centennial.

The schoolhouse, designed by students in the design and drafting program, will spend the winter on The Red River Mutual Trail (river trail) at the Forks.

The design, based on a generic schoolhouse, uses a few modifications to fulfill its main function as a warming hut e.g., there will be benches to allow for greater seating capacity as opposed to individual desks.

As part of our ongoing commitment to literacy, a little free library, stocked with a variety of books will be included in the hut.

We encourage you to visit the warming hut, take a photo and share with us through one of our social media networks, and join us in celebrating 100 years of standing up for public education.

Goertzen Begins

by George Stephenson and Samantha Turenne, Manitoba Teachers' Society

When Kelvin Goertzen was the province's health minister he recalls how many people working in the field were reluctant to make suggestions on how to improve the system.

"It took me awhile to realize people were scared to bring forward ideas," he said in an interview with The Teacher. "People had a learned experience that it wasn't appreciated when they brought ideas forward. It took a while to get that message in the system that we may not accept all of your ideas but we don't want you to stop bringing ideas forward."

Now, as education minister in charge of the upcoming once-in-a-generation review of K-12 education, he says he wants that message heard.

"So, very early now, as minister of education, I'm trying to send a message that, listen, bring forward ideas that you might feel are outside the box or that you brought forward before and they weren't accepted. We accepted a lot of ideas in health that had been kicking around for 20 years.

"If you have an experience with education, whether you're a teacher, a parent, a superintendent, a trustee, a janitor, whatever, bring forward an idea."

READ THE ENTIRE ARTICLE IN THE DECEMBER 2018 ISSUE OF THE MANITOBA TEACHER MAGAZINE OR AT THE MTS WEBSITE: http://www.mbteach.org/mtscms/2018/12/03/goertzen-begins/

Career Development Course
University of Manitoba
by Kayleigh Sieffert, SAC

Throughout this course, I have had the pleasure of learning about several theories and their application to career development. In my current position as a grade 10 Student Support Teacher where I am both a Resource Teacher and Guidance counsellor, I have been able to immediately apply much of the content that we have learned. Throughout this course, I found the following theory to be the most impactful on my learning, Social Cognitive Theory along with Motivational Interviewing.

Although reflective statements are only a small portion of motivational interviewing, it continues to be the strategy that I choose to "test out" with my students. At times, I find myself stuck in my head hoping that I do not ask too many questions or sound judgemental, fearful that my student may clam up. In my current teaching position, I do not have many conversations regarding Career Development, as those conversations usually begin during their grade 11 year. However, I do meet with students regularly to discuss sensitive topics, making use of reflective statements is essential.

Social Cognitive Theory has always been an interest of mine. Last year I had the pleasure of taking a Special Ed class that focused on Social Role Valorization. I believe that it is important for career counsellors to recognize the value in each career. Although students may choose careers that differ from what we value, it is necessary to refrain from judgement and explore the student's choice. It is also essential that when meeting with students that we avoid the typical careers that society values. For example, we should not only steer students in the direction of professional careers such as doctors, teachers, lawyers etc. Instead, we should be talking with students about their interests and values in order to determine the careers that best suit the student.

As my students get older and I follow them from grade 9 through to graduation, I will begin having conversations regarding their careers. Currently, my students and I discuss course selections and ensure their choices align with their values and potential career goals. At this time, I incorporate these theories in my more traditional guidance sessions but have learned that they are essential when meeting with students/clients to discuss career development. Using motivational interviewing and the theory mentioned above, I plan to guide my students to ensure they are knowledgeable about their career choices and feel comfortable and confident with their decisions.

Theories and Issues in School Counselling
University of Manitoba
by Kayleigh Sieffert, SAC

A common link throughout this course was the importance of self and the idea that individuals have control over the way in which we live our lives. Although there are many external factors that can contribute to our decisions, we ultimately make the final choice.

Chapter 3, in Counseling and Psychotherapy Theories in Context and Practice, focuses on Individual Psychology and Adlerian Therapy. Alfred Adler believed that an individual's conflicts were not due to biological/physiological factors. Unlike Freud, Adler believed in holism and that it is "impossible to understand an individual in parts" (Sommers-Flanagan, 2018. pg 61). This led to his belief that achieving and "maintaining healthy social relationships was an ultimate therapy goal" (Sommers-Flanagan, 2018. pg 61). Adler also believed that individuals continuously strive for superiority, not in the sense of being superior to others, but rather in a sense of completeness. Essentially, he believed that regardless of external factors we all have choices and decisions to make which will lead to our "Style of Life". "We are what we make ourselves, we have within us the potential for good and evil" (Sommers-Flanagan, 2018. pg 63).

In Chapter 4 of Family Ties that Bind it identifies and discusses the demand for sameness and roles, which individuals take when seeking "sameness". According to the book, individuals take on four roles: Comply, Rebel, Attack or Cut off. The class text identifies eight lifestyle types of which Alfred Adler recognizes four, while the others were added from other individuals that followed Adler's approach. The following are the lifestyle types that are identified: Ruling, Getting, Avoiding, Driving, Controlling, Victimized, Being Good and Socially Useful.

I wonder whether it is possible for an individual to fit in different life style types in different life tasks. Is it possible to cycle through the four ways in which we deal with change in the search for sameness? I believe that depending on our life experiences we are more likely to choose either the life style or the role we take when dealing with our search for sameness. As for myself, although certain lifestyles types are more dominant, I do have a tendency to incorporate all lifestyle types. There will be situations in life that we cannot possibly be prepared for and until we face them who really knows which lifestyle type or role that we will take on in our search for sameness.

ASCD Conference- Nashville, Tennessee

by Ria Pirie, & Jeff Gusdal, LBC

We went to an ASCD Conference on Educational Leadership in Nashville. The range of topics included teaching intentionally, fostering self regulation, reducing anxiety and disruptive behaviour, increasing engagement and using design thinking for growth mindset.

Our favorite session was run by Stephen Boyd "I'm not Bad, I'm just Bored! Increase Engagement, Increase Achievement" His lecture was themed around his essential five; capturing attention, peaking curiosity, building interest, creating optimism and igniting passion. He stated that being intentional is important and that you need to attempt to catch the student's attention at the beginning of each lesson. This will lead them to ask questions and become attracted to the material you are about to teach. It is imperative to provide the students with hope and inspiration, so that they believe that they can do it. Using the five essentials will allow you to create a recipe where students say "Mmm, I can't wait to learn".

Another good session was "Practical Strategies for Reducing Anxiety and Disruptive Behaviour in the Classroom" by Jessica Minahan. She referenced that students with anxiety are like a shaken up coke can; on the outside they look like any other student but the inside they may be ready to explode. She suggested that you support them using redirection and help coax them through strategies. Using predictable positive intention, and praising these students privately can help reduce the anxiety. Providing brain breaks throughout the day is positive redirection that will help them complete work or focus on the task at hand.

Alyssa Gallagher and Kami Thordarson did a session on "Empower Your Team and Design Your Mindset Using Design Thinking". They focused on the growth mindset in students. One of the things they said was to empower students by giving them self-reflecting strategies. One suggestion was to use a "Bug List". In this activity students write a list of things that bug them. Teachers can ask them "How would you fix that?" This will entice them to think about how they can make it better, rather, or instead of, just complaining. Another suggestion was to focus on implementing an overall plan and then "tweak" it where necessary, rather than waste a lot of time on over planning (trying to make it perfect) before implementing.

Another session we found helpful was "Reaching the Unreachable Student" by Basil Marin. He provided a great quote; "No matter how dirty your past is, your future is still spotless" His goal was to try and foster hope and belief within students, which should lead to a better chance of achievement. He talked about when students say "I can't do that", to simply add the word "yet". Show the students they can do it. He spoke volumes on ensuring that you treat your "good" and your "bad" students the same, and provide the same level of consequences for both. Another suggestion was to ask your "bad" students to do something you would normally ask your "good" students to do to allow them to be successful.

Overall, there were many positive suggestions and ideas that we were able to take back with us. We have some intriguing new tasks to try in the classroom to help us with these strategies, and we also have some new insight into how to view each student and the different types of behaviour in the classroom.

The Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention (CASP) Annual Conference

St. John's Newfoundland, Oct 31-Nov 2, 2018.

by Trevor Zetaruk, ARB

I have been the guidance counsellor at Arborgate School since the 2010-11 school year. Over the last number of years I have been surprised at the number of children in a K-8 school that are addressed for thoughts of suicide during a school year. I ignorantly had assumed that, while there are exceptions to every rule, that the bulk of these situations would be reserved for a senior high environment. My numbers simply don't support that belief. I have had an increase of students looking for support in this area every year.

The ASSIST training program for suicide intervention has been the go to tool for our school division since I have been in the guidance counsellor's role. While I enjoy what the program has to offer, I could not help but wonder what other cutting edge new information was out there. I looked at this conference as a method to see and hear what experts in the field, and professionals in other settings are using as their intervention tools. I wanted to hear what current study was indicating in all areas of suicide. In an ever changing profession like ours, it simply struck me that with regards to suicide, I simply hadn't seen anything current come across my desk in close to a decade.

The two day event was broken into a combination of keynote addresses and break out sessions. Because this conference had close to 750 registered, the options available during the breakout sessions were limitless. Three breakouts a day, with likely 20 sessions available to choose from per breakout. The only frustration came in having to choose only one!

I really enjoyed a number of the breakouts. The very best in my eyes were Hope in Action: A Solution Focussed Approach to Suicide Intervention, Resiliency Training in Youth, Suicide Crisis Intervention: Back to Basics, Who Leaves Suicide Notes and Suicide as an Unconscious Wellness Tool. Like many teachers, I love sessions that you walk out of with something you can use or implement. All of these above sessions did so.

Without a doubt, this was the best PD conference I have been involved in. To be able to focus without distraction on this topic for two full days was wonderful. I now have a network of professionals country wide that I can access at any time and really feel that the two days spent focussed on the topic of suicide, has improved my understanding far more than I would have ever thought two days could offer. It was exceptionally well run. I would recommend it to anyone in my field. They would not be disappointed. The conference is in Oct next year in Edmonton ALB, and while I know I will not be eligible, I will certainly be speaking to some of my counsellor colleagues about the opportunity.

Thank you again for the opportunity to do some focussed learning on a topic deserving of it.

BringIT, Together Conference 2018

Niagara Falls, ON, November 6-8, 2018

by Jonathan Waite, Division Office

Thanks to funding from the SRTA Professional Development Fund, I was able to attend the 2018 "BringIT, Together" conference in Niagara Falls. This is the second time I have been to this conference, the first occurring in 2014. As a technology integration support teacher, I find a conference like this to be the most efficient type of professional learning, as I was able to take in more than a dozen individual presentations and sessions over the course of three days.

On Tuesday, the pre-conference session I attended was called "Minds on Media", which was a type of unconference event. In a large ballroom at the Scotiabank Conference Centre, eleven stations were established. Participants were able to drop in and out of sessions as they saw fit. I was able to take part in a VR experience exploring the International Space Station, as well as use Scratch code to program a simple robot. Using a Raspberry Pi laptop, I was even able to code in the Python programming language, while simultaneously wiring a breadboard interface with an LED light and speaker. The presenters were primarily focused on coding and robotics, but I also had the opportunity to engage with a presenter looking at the convergence of technology and the arts. For all my music teacher colleagues, I can recommend http://musiclab.chromeexperiments.com/ as a neat resource available through browsers, including Safari on the iPad.

On Wednesday, keynote speaker Dave Cormier spoke passionately about how we, as teachers, can facilitate real change in our world by leading students towards the creation of a prosocial web. His presentation focused on the evolution of technology over the ages, and included the statement, "If you walk into class, and start a project knowing what's going to happen, you've missed the point." His message centered around 21st century learning, but also touched on some misgivings about project-based learning and personalization.

From there I attended sessions on coding, tools for French language teachers, and tools for 21st century learning. Of note were the following, FREE resources:

- Flipgrid (www.flipgrid.com) - this might be my favourite resource I took away from the conference. I will be looking at ways to utilize this resource with the teachers in the iPad project, as well as show them how they might use it with their students.
- Quizlet (www.quizlet.com) - another great resource for focusing students on specific content. This was presented to me in the session on a paperless French learning environment, but would provide all teachers in SRSD with a way to engage students in interactive and collaborative content learning.

On Thursday, my day began with a session on digital storytelling. This session is a bit difficult to summarize, as the concept (ds106, www.ds106.us) revolves around a Massively Open Online Course (MOOC), except that it doesn't. It does rely on sharing, and in the examples given, social media was a part of that. That being said, I can already envision teachers utilizing parts of the structure into their classrooms (and some already have).

Next up was a session called "Going Gradeless with Technology" and focused on assessment, evaluation, and best practices with learning intentions. The presenter, Jonathan So, was amazing and I highly encourage fellow teachers to follow him on Twitter where he is very active (@MrSoClassroom). His passion for authentic student assessment and goal-setting through project based learning was evident and energizing.

Speaking of Project Based Learning (PBL), my penultimate session was focused on that.

(cont'd on page 17)

(BringIT, Together Conference 2018 continued from page 16)

The presenters took the participants through a series of slides on the nuts and bolts of PBL, but where the presentation really hooked me in was when they gave real world examples of PBL occurring in their schools. This included an amazing example of an opportunity extended to high school students where they were paired with an elder from a nearby Indigenous community, with the end result being an "elder yearbook" full of their stories.

One of the downsides of this conference is that it is very Ontario-centric at times, which is understandable as it is put on by an Ontario edutech organization and sponsored by OASBO. My final session selection was a bit of a misfire on my part, as I was hoping to learn more about the Brightspace portfolio platform that is part of the D2L learning management system (LMS). It turned out to be a walk through of how the presenters use Brightspace, which is a neat way to create digital portfolios that follow the students, but given that D2L is mandated by the Ontario Ministry of Education, the presenters also made a lot of assumptions about their audience.

Overall, I left Niagara Falls with many more strategies and tools in my toolbox that I am ready to share with teachers in Seine River. I'd like to thank the SRTA PD committee for allowing me the funding to attend this conference.

Education of Exceptional Children

by Kathryn Reuter, EIDCS

This Fall, with the assistance of the SRTA PD fund, I was able to complete a course called "Education of Exceptional Children I". In this course, we focused on Disability Studies in Education and its perspective of Inclusion.

Disability Studies in Education challenges the medical model's definition of disability. This perspective asks society to see disability as a construct that is placed upon people who do not fit the societal definition of "normal". Disability is no longer seen as a problem to be fixed but rather a social construct that is placed on people who do not conform to the majority's definition of normal. Instead, 'disability' is placed on a person from their outside environment; it is not seen as something that they were born with or comes from within them. When this definition of disability is fully understood, the barrier of disability no longer lies within a person but outside the person. Inclusion is an environmental issue that must be addressed. This is illustrated in the example of a sighted person attempting to live in a non-sighted environment. A non-sighted environment would be designed to support non-sighted people. Items such as lights, environmental print, televisions etc... would not be deemed important or relevant. The environment would not be accommodating to the sighted person and consequently the sighted person would be seen as "having" the disability. Disability becomes the inaccessibility of the social and physical environment in which we live. Since our society is built on the majority's needs and wants from the surrounding environment, Disabilty Studies in Education focuses on bringing the experiences and needs of non-normative persons to the forefront of the discussion.

I would highly recommend this course to all teachers, as it provided valuable and important information, which helped me better understand the Inclusion philosophy.

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Upcoming Dates

SRTA Council meeting:
February 5, 2019 @ SNAC, 4:30 pm

SRTA Executive meeting:
January 22, 2019 , 4:30 pm

MTS Provincial Executive:
January 17-18, February 14-15, 2019
McMaster House

SRSD Board Meetings:
January 22, February 5 & 26, 2019
SRSD Boardroom

MTS Presidents' Council:
January 19, 2019
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ESJ Chairs Winter Seminar:
March 11-12, 2019
Holiday Inn Airport West

MTS Workplace Safety & Health Seminar:
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PD Chairs Winter Seminar:
February 8-9 2019
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HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM SRTA