MB Speaks

A Climate of Hope for Green Minds

Social Studies through a Social Justice Lens

Anything Else Would Just be Teaching Complacency

MB Speaks

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"The dialogue about sustainability
is about a change in the human
trajectory that will require us to
rethink old assumptions and
engage the large questions of the
human condition that some
presume to have been solved once
and for all. Genuine sustainability,
in other words, will come not from
superficial changes but from a
deeper process akin to humankind
growing up to a fuller stature."
-David W. Orr

President's Message

Over the past number of years, I can recall many collegial conversations around the social studies provincial indicator: "citizenship and critical thinking". As an early years teacher, my colleagues and I often wonder how fair it is to assess young children on their critical thinking skills when we know they have a lot of growing left to do before their prefrontal cortex is ready to make adult decisions and solve difficult problems. That is not to say it is a skill we should ignore, but it is certainly one that requires careful consideration when teaching and assessing. As a result, I have found that many teachers separate these two ideas, and focus assessment around citizenship in the sense of how children get along with each other and whether they understand what it means to be a Canadian citizen at an age-appropriate level. Citizenship is very clearly woven throughout the Social Studies curriculum at every grade level, and to be fair, critical thinking is too, but there are very few instances where the two concepts are explicitly linked. This may be a reason why many teachers think of them as two separate ideas to teach and assess, but in actuality, these two concepts are fundamentally interconnected and the related skills should be developed together rather than in isolation.

In the frequently asked questions portion of the Assessment and Evaluation section on the Education and Early Childhood Learning Website, is the question: "how do we evaluate citizenship? Critical thinking? What are the criteria?" The response is: Teachers may propose assessment tasks that engage the students in the application of their social studies learning, such as action-research projects, conducting interviews or surveys on a social question, participating in a debate or writing an informed critical reflection on diverse perspectives of a social issue related to the prescribed grade level content. Students may also present a critical analysis of the national or global repercussions of a local issue they have studied (Manitoba Education and Early Childhood Learning).

It is interesting that even in this question the two ideas are separated, yet the answer shows how linked the two concepts are. Citizenship requires critical thinking because it is not a passive skill; it requires action. Whether it is standing up for what you believe in, taking care of your community or casting a ballot in an election, citizenship involves completing a series of actions, and those actions require critical thought. As Social Studies teachers, it is of the utmost importance that we support our students to become both critical thinkers and active citizens. This requires teachers to consider how they might introduce topics or offer invitations for students to think critically about the world around them, and then provoke students to act in ways that both demonstrate their understanding of the issue and offer opportunities to foster the skills required to become an active democratic citizen.

In this issue of MB Speaks you will find a variety of articles examining the topics that are inspiring student action across the province, the wonderings and worries that action-oriented pedagogy evokes and the ways that educators are inviting student action. As usual, you will find that the journal contains a diverse range of content that targets practice, pedagogy, and professional development. Additionally, we are pleased to offer our first book review in the PD section! I hope that the forthcoming articles inspire you to reflect on your practice and the ways you currently inspire students to think critically about taking action, as well as the opportunities or questions you may be curious about exploring further.

On that note, I'd like to highlight our upcoming conference for MTS PD Day. This year's MSSTA MTS PD Day is being delivered in partnership with ERiM (Extremism and Radicalization to Violence Prevention in Manitoba). ERiM is an organization of Manitoba educators and education stakeholders funded by Public Safety Canada to develop a resource for teachers to recognize and counter radicalization within their schools before it occurs. We are pleased to launch this new resource at our October PD day and to welcome our keynote speaker Dr. Barbara Perry, one of the foremost Canadian experts in the areas of radicalization, right-wing extremism, and hate crime. In addition to being a professor in the Faculty of Social Science and Humanities at Carleton University, Dr. Perry is the Director of the Centre on Hate, Bias, and Extremism, and Co-Chair of the International Network for Hate Studies. Her work spans a variety of issues associated with diversity and justice. We also look forward to welcoming plenary panelists, Brad Galloway and Mubin Shaikh, two former extremists who now work as activists to prevent radicalization and extremism, who will share insights and personal stories about their trajectories into and out of violent extremism.

In addition to our keynote and panel, we have over 30 different sessions offered for members and guests, the large majority of which are being given by Manitoba educators. Please take a moment to check out our website for more information and to find the link to register.

On behalf of the MSSTA executive, I wish you the best of luck as you embark on a new year of teaching and learning and look forward to seeing you at our MTS PD Day on October 20th, 2023!

Sincerely,

AWaite

Angie Waite

A Climate of Hope for Green Minds

-SCOTT DURLING

When I was in my late teens and early 20s, I experienced an immense sense of grief. This growing weight of emotions spanned from hopelessness to sadness, fear to confusion, and rage to dread. These emotions came from learning about the environmental, economic, and social implications of the climate crisis. Chris Turner's (2011) book, *The Leap,* articulated imagery of society and climate change that read as a glaringly accurate indicator of my future. Our present way of life, he described, was like a coal-fired, gas guzzling, Mad-Max train; a brutal behemoth barreling down a rickety track through smog and smoke, with a desolate and barren landscape of extinct creatures alongside. For me, it felt like inevitably this train would derail and human life would cease. All that I had pictured and held close for my own future as a young person flowed away like sand through my fingers.

What was even more startling and confusing, climate change – this immense and global crisis that would define my future – had not been explained to me by my parents or within my K-12 education experience at all.

As a climate educator, I don't entirely blame my parents or teachers for this absence of learning. It could have been that they didn't have a full understanding of climate change and the injustices that surround it. Or it could have been they didn't know what to say, or how to say it. Or perhaps, like me in my 20s, they were stuck in a place of dread, fear, or sadness, and simply could not say it.

Eco-Distress

Not being able to speak about or act on climate change because of the emotional distress it causes, is a well known and studied phenomenon (Clayton, 2020; Ojala, 2015). Climate change, as a long-term, complex, existential threat, is incredibly difficult to navigate and process. It's really no wonder that more and more mental health practitioners are seeing clients who are emotionally dysregulated and paralyzed by climate change (Davenport, 2017). What's important to highlight as an educator, is that children are particularly susceptible to adverse mental health outcomes directly related to the climate crisis (Hickman et al., 2021).

The climate crisis is a disrupting and disturbing force that is difficult to respond to at the individual level. Britt Wray (2022), a psychologist and expert in mental health and climate change, states that these experiences "take what was once assumed and flips it on its head, affecting our relationships, beliefs, routines, institutions, and general ways of being" (p. 119). Understanding the climate crisis flipped my sense of our future on its head. My experience as a young person learning about the climate crisis and becoming emotionally distraught is a *common*, *normal*, and *important* experience. The experience I had is what is now termed, *eco-distress* or *eco-anxiety*.

The Zone of Tolerance

The challenge with eco-distress is that it often moves individuals into different states of arousal (Wray, 2022). Some people might experience hypo-arousal – things like withdrawal, zoning out, loss of energy, numbness, or dissociation (Figure 1). Others might experience hyper-arousal – high emotional responses such as rage, fear, or hypervigilance. These dysregulated states prevent individuals from existing in a window of tolerance where executive functioning in the prefrontal cortex can generate thoughtful, caring, justice-centered actions that challenge social norms, which have created and perpetuated the climate crisis (Wray, 2022).

Figure 1: The Zone of Tolerance

Experiencing stress or anxiety connected to climate change (ie. hearing or seeing news stories, experiencing extreme climate events first-hand, learning about environmental destruction, etc.) without emotional regulation can cause the window of tolerance to shrink (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Limited to no emotional regulation shrinks the zone of tolerance to take action.

Engaging in mindfulness, building emotional literacy, and developing tools of climate resilience, *expands the window of tolerance to take-action* and challenge the various social norms that have led to the climate crisis (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Emotional regulation using different tools (like mindfulness) <u>expands</u> the zone of tolerance to take action.

In climate action work, we need to take time to develop climate-emotion literacies in order to enable an expansion of the *window of tolerance.* This is not meant to individualize a systemic problem, by suggesting that students just need to learn to bear the weight of this knowledge "better"; rather, it recognizes that this knowledge does have understandable emotional implications. Students need time, space, and tools to process their anxiety and distress.

Climate-emotion Learning *is* Climate Action

My role as a climate educator involves supporting teachers and students in learning how to experience all kinds of emotions around climate change, to unpack these emotions in our mind and body, and to develop tools that help us to process the experiences we're having as the means to respond. When we only experience difficult emotions like fear, anger, or sadness, we can become emotionally destabilized, which can (and will) consume us (Wray, 2022).

My first-hand experience of being fully consumed by my climate emotions showed me that an unbalanced emotional experience is unsustainable and also is not a healthy human experience. When I have worked with colleagues on unpacking their climate emotions, many have not taken time to think about them or find it too difficult to explore. What I have now learned is that *all emotions* around climate change are important to feel, but if we only feel difficult or detached emotions, this can lead to some dark places in our mental health.

 When we speak about balancing climate emotions, our goal is to have individuals move throughout emotions in three general categories (Pihkala, 2022). *Difficult climate emotions* (i.e. sadness, overwhelmed, or resentment) are necessary because they illuminate our own values about the world – when we care so deeply about what is occurring in our world these emotions are a natural response.

Detached climate emotions are natural to feel as well – apathy, numbness or indifference can be defense mechanisms to avoid difficult emotions or be a conscious response to create the boundaries for what we can emotionally feel at one time. They might also illustrate a lack of knowledge about what an individual can do. *Positive climate emotions* can be more uncommon to experience and often require deliberate practice. Feeling motivated to plant a garden, expressing love for a nearby forest, or developing a curiosity about how compost works are all positive climate emotions.

By navigating the different types of emotional categories, individuals are preparing themselves for the emotional challenges that climate change induces and will further generate in the future. As stated by Wray (2022), "the aim is to not get past climate trauma, but to learn to live with it while reducing its harms" (p. 131). If our goal as climate educators is to support the learning of climate action, we need to support the emotional capacities of young people so that they can harness many different emotions to do this action-work sustainably and without burnout. While anger is an emotion that is associated with strong pro-climate activism, I am unconvinced that young people should be guided to action — and sustained to act — through anger. Long-term action also requires consciously cultivated emotions like love (for others, land, or Indigenous knowledges) or numbness at times (to give us the space to recover, care for our emotional-selves, and prepare for the next event or action). It is this kind of complexity of emotional experiences that young people need to be able to navigate in our current state of crisis. No singular category of emotions are more important than another for action, but rather, they are all necessary to experience consciously together for long-term climate action and wellbeing.

What is challenging about this emotional work is that identifying, unpacking, sharing, and navigating these kinds of emotions is not yet the norm. Many adults still find it challenging to identify, share, or discuss their emotions, which makes it difficult to model adaptive emotional coping skills for children.

Even if my parents and teachers had known all of the science surrounding the climate crisis, they still may not have had the emotional literacy and regulation to talk about it. Katharine Hayhoe (2022), a renown climate scientist, identifies that the most important thing anyone can do is *talk about climate change.* To have meaningful conversations, we need to be emotionally grounded. To sustainably participate in long-term climate action, we need the skills and tools to manage all the emotions the climate crisis evokes. These reasons are why climate-emotion learning *is* climate action.

Green Minds

My work in unpacking climate-emotions as climate action originates through the group, Green Minds

Manitoba. Green Minds is a group of Winnipeg-based professionals interested in supporting youth in learning about climate change in a way that promotes well-being and action. Our team includes educators, mental health professionals and psychological researchers.

A growing number of adults are developing their abilities to share their emotions and model this literacy for young people. The goal of Green Minds is to support the development of emotional practices so that individuals can *balance* these emotional responses around the climate crisis. Furthermore, we hope to support educators and students with building their cognitive-emotional tools, like a practice of mindfulness, to self-regulate and be resilient to uncertainty, hardship, and difficult times ahead. As I have come to better understand mental health (particularly during the pandemic), climate-emotion research, and through my experience working as a teacher to support climate action and ecological justice, I see climate-emotion literacy work as critical to climate action.

In the fall of 2022, Green Minds launched an after-school pilot project at my school, H.C. Avery Middle School in the Seven Oaks School Division. The small pilot of around 12 students implemented a 6 session experience over 9 weeks to teach students about climate change, unpack their emotional responses, develop mindfulness and emotional literacy tools, and consider ways to take-action.

From this after-school pilot project, and with the financial contributions of the Teacher Idea Fund (TIF) grant from Manitoba Education, we developed and launched a whole-school <u>pilot program at H.C. Avery</u> in February, 2023. As the Green Minds Teacher-Coordinator, I supported ten classrooms of students between grades 6 to 8 in this whole-school pilot. Over the 5 month term, my portfolio included many items: co-designing and co-teaching climate change projects with classroom teachers, building climate change learning kits, finding resources, planning field experiences to learn from Indigenous knowledge keepers and Elders, deepen understandings of ecological injustices, connecting students and colleagues to nature, <u>developing and implementing climate action projects and events</u> and administering Green Minds curriculum as part of a research study with the University of St. Boniface.

The pilot culminated towards a significant sub-project, a nearly <u>80-page resource ebook</u>, entitled, *<u>Climate Hope: A Made-in-Manitoba Resource Ebook for Supporting the Teaching and Learning of Ecological Justice, Eco-Anxiety, & Climate Action</u>*. This labor-of-climate-love ebook intends to tackle the complex emotional landscape associated with the climate crisis. Further, the ebook is packed with practical strategies and hundreds of resources for educators to incorporate climate action into their curricula.

The intention of *Climate Hope* is to address the common concerns when teaching about the climate crisis such as where to start, how to integrate climate change into Manitoba curriculum, and how to support students who may feel overwhelmed or hopeless. By providing some amazing resources with an emphasis on encouraging small and tangible places to begin based on interest topics, the ebook aims to support action for educators and their students. To access the ebook or connect with Green Minds, visit www.greenmindsmb.com
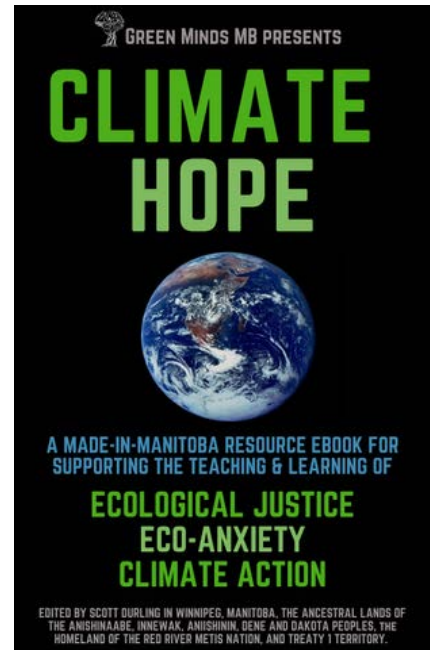

Conclusion

As I write this article, my wife and I are expecting our first child. I hope that our child will grow up in a world where the adults around them can provide the space and insight to unpack the climate crisis and all the emotions that it brings: sadness and love for the Earth, fear and motivation to take action as a climate warrior, as well as anger and hope to help make their world more just, caring, and peaceful for all manner of beings on our Earth. This is the kind of climate I hope for my child and our future green minds.

About the Author

Scott is a soon-to-be Dad, middle school teacher in the Seven Oaks School Division, and member of People for Public Ed, Educators for Climate Action, and Green Minds Manitoba. He is currently in the process of writing his M.Ed thesis (UManitoba) exploring decolonization and place-based learning in pedagogy.
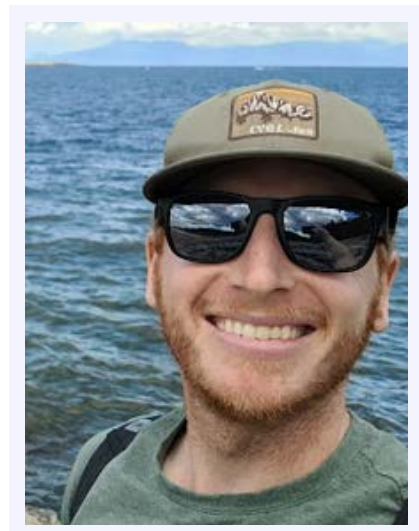
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Social Studies through a Social Justice Lens

-ELLEN BEES

When I was a teacher candidate, a student asked me a question that changed the course of my career. We were learning about poverty in less developed countries and how poverty affects quality of life. One of my grade seven students raised his hand to say, "This is good to know, but what are we going to do about it?" This question launched our class into a project where students designed and directed fundraisers, including bake sales, the opportunity to pie teachers, and more, in order to raise money for a village in Kenya. The students enjoyed the experience, particularly exercising agency and directing their own projects.

Undoubtedly, the project offered students the opportunity to demonstrate concern for the well-being of others and to take action aimed at improving their quality of life. However, looking back I can cast a critical eye on the experience. Once the fundraising element took hold, our study of ways of life in Kenya took a backseat. We put up a flashy looking poster from Free the Children to track the money raised for our adopted village, and our fundraising became the focus rather than the people of Kenya. We did not hear from local voices about life in a Kenyan village, for example. We failed to engage with bigger and deeper questions, like why does poverty exist in Kenya? We did not sufficiently examine the history of colonialism and its impacts on that region. We learned about the Maasai, an Indigenous group in Kenya, but we did not adequately engage with how colonial forces have impacted their ways of life. Our project skimmed the surface of a long history of colonialism, without asking how Western society was complicit in this history.

WE need to re-think our action projects

This project was consistent with many action-oriented projects that were common fifteen years ago and still are around today. The seed for this project originated with an MTS PD Day keynote speech I saw featuring Craig Kielberger. Kielberger was one of the founders of Free the Children, a charity that originally focused on raising money to improve the quality of life of children in less developed countries. Kielberger told his often-repeated story about being spurred to action at twelve years old when he heard about the murder of Iqbal Masih, a child who spoke out against child labour. While Kielberger and <u>Free the Children eventually fell from grace</u>, for many years their brand of student activism

dominated. This included We Day, a slickly packaged promotional event filled with corporate sponsorship and advertisement that prompted students to take action to help others by volunteering, fundraising, or taking part in a Free the Children volunteer trip.

While We Day has since faded from view, similar action campaigns organized by other charities are currently promoted in schools. Students are encouraged to book a 'hero holiday' and travel to another country where they meet the locals, help construct a school or well, and see the sights. These types of service learning projects have been criticized, since sending untrained teens to build infrastructure is both inefficient and ineffective, particularly when projects could instead focus on providing resources and training to local people. It has also been called exploitative of the local people, whose lives are put on display for tourists who will dabble in a few acts of charity before jetting back to their regular lives (Nutt, 2011). These projects are rooted in a white saviour mentality and it is necessary to question the colonial values and attitudes they promote in the students who participate. Moreover, charity is not justice. Charity allows the current system to persist, when the current system is what creates the need for charity in the first place. Can we imagine other kinds of projects that are based on principles of justice instead?

Conceptions of Citizenship

Service learning trips and fundraising projects are based on specific conceptions of what it means to be a good citizen. Joel Westheimer (2015) indicated that citizenship education often involves educating students to be personally responsible citizens or participatory citizens. Personally responsible citizens are responsible and law-abiding, taking responsibility to help out when needed, such as by recycling or donating to food drives. Participatory citizens are people who take an active role in improving their community, often by organizing community efforts and working within established systems. Many of the projects I have mentioned are firmly rooted in promoting these types of citizens and the skills associated with participatory or personally responsible citizenship. Fundraising drives or service learning trips encourage students to be personally responsible and help out. Student-directed projects where students organize fundraisers give them practice in being a participatory citizen who takes on a leadership role in improving quality of life. Both of these types of citizens are important for our society. However, there can be significant problems when people pursue citizenship projects without a critical understanding of the problem they are trying to solve, or regard for the necessary ethical questions required before taking action.

Westheimer talks about a third type of citizen

who is essential in a democratic society, namely the social justice-oriented citizen. This type of citizen focuses on addressing the root causes of problems and injustices by questioning and challenging established systems. While the personally responsible and participatory citizens are busy organizing and donating to a food drive, the social justice-oriented citizen asks why hunger and poverty exist and looks to address these root causes. While a participatory citizen might organize a river-side cleanup and a personally responsible citizen might pick up litter, the social justice-oriented citizen asks where the pollution is coming from and aims their actions at eliminating the source of the pollution. This type of citizenship requires greater attention within the social studies classroom.

Justice–Oriented Citizenship

Learning about these three types of citizens prompted a significant change in how I approached the social studies curriculum. With a social justice-oriented lens, I started to question the curriculum documents I was using. Overall, many outcomes in the grade seven social studies curriculum are geared towards promoting personally responsible and participatory citizens. For example, the curriculum indicates that students should "describe ways in which their personal actions may affect quality of life for people elsewhere in the world. Examples: consumer choices, conservation actions, sharing of resources, letters and petitions..." (Manitoba Education,

2006, p. 50). These actions are generally in line with personally responsible and participatory citizenship, but "consumer choices" do not lead to systemic change. Focusing on individual actions places burden and blame on citizens to make the "right" choice, which makes one wonder why the "wrong" choice exists. Moreover, some people do not have the luxury of choice. Certainly, writing letters and petitions could be social justice-oriented, but our actions to create change cannot be anchored to these acts alone; in particular, as they may not be the most appropriate action for a particular issue or particular student. Similarly, students are asked to "be willing to contribute to their groups and communities" and "be willing to take action to support quality of life for people around the world" (p. 50). The language of these outcomes is not framed in a way that encourages students to critique or change established systems, but rather focuses on building on and supporting systems that are already in place. However, teachers can opt to interpret these and other outcomes through a social justice-oriented lens, paving the way for social justice-oriented citizenship.

Although particular outcomes in the curriculum document lean towards participatory and personally responsible citizenship, the document invites all three conceptions of citizenship; the introductory pages state that citizenship is a ""fluid concept that changes over time: its meaning is often contested, and it is subject to interpretation and continuing

debate" (p. 6). In short, there is not one right way for our students to be citizens. Our role as educators is to invite all three conceptions and encourage students to recognize the pros and cons of enacting each, and to ask if it will achieve their goal. If the goal is to create systemic change, justice-oriented citizenship is required.

Justice-Oriented Citizenship in Social Studies

Interpreting content with a social justice lens is an important first step to encouraging social justice-oriented citizenship, particularly centering the study of injustice and the experiences of people affected by and responding to injustice. For instance, one outcome in grade seven social studies asks students to "value the contributions of international agencies and humanitarians to quality of life" (p. 54). On the face of it, this outcome promotes participatory citizenship, since the term humanitarian is commonly associated with philanthropists or people offering humanitarian aid. We should note here that inviting students to value these types of contributions reduces criticality of how humanitarian aid often does not challenge systemic problems. However, it is possible to reinterpret the outcome. Last year I chose to approach it with a more social justice-oriented lens by focusing on activists who question systems and endeavour to promote changes, such as Autumn Pelletier, Loujain Alhathloul, Marsha P. Johnson or Greta Thunberg. While

this outcome does not explicitly encourage a social justice-oriented lens, it is possible to center activists in instruction and promote the idea of questioning systems in the pursuit of justice.

Courtesy AP Photo/Richard Drew/CP14560596

There are other opportunities in grade seven social studies to examine topics through a social justice lens. Although some of the curricular outcomes and actions may not align with justice-oriented citizenship, the topics and themes within the curriculum demand a justice-oriented lens. Last year we spent time learning about how access to water affects quality of life and ways of life in different societies. In Canada, we discussed the lack of access to drinking water in Indigenous communities. We learned about how the diversion of drinking water to Winnipeg via aqueduct had devastating impacts for Shoal Lake 40 First Nation and how their advocacy pressured the government to fund infrastructure projects to address these negative impacts a century later. We also learned how droughts are affecting people in Kenya. The droughts are caused by climate change, which is predominantly driven

by more developed nations, and exacerbated by land use patterns previously imposed by Europeans. While a more participatory-oriented lens would talk about the need to donate money and build wells in these regions, I chose to highlight the work of Wangari Maathai, a Kenyan activist who founded the Green Belt Movement. This movement enlisted rural women in planting trees and eventually grew into a movement that protested government corruption and environmental degradation. In this unit, I tried to focus not only on the effects of a lack of access to water, but also the causes that are largely rooted in colonialism. As well, instead of focusing on quick fixes that emerge from a white saviour mentality, I emphasized the work of activists who organized their communities in protest against injustice.

A missing piece in this unit is a more explicit focus on student action that is oriented towards opposing systemic injustice and other problems. This type of action is more challenging within a school context than organizing a fundraiser. I am still exploring how to allow opportunity for authentic student driven action. Knowing that many problems we discuss in social studies are caused or worsened by climate change, I have explored how to help students take action on this issue. In the past, we have written letters to politicians explaining the impacts of climate change and advocating for greater government action. Other times we have worked closer to

home, writing essays to principals or trustees that focus on specific ways our school division can act more sustainably. There is certainly room for other types of student action, such as climate marches and other forms of protest. This is an area in my pedagogy that continues to grow.

Overall, social studies teachers need to consider what kind of citizenship we are promoting, both in how we teach about various topics and in what kinds of action projects we pursue. Many traditional action projects are steeped in a saviour mentality that fails to critically consider the problems they purport to solve and our complicity in these problems. Similarly, the curriculum documents that guide our teaching often encourage participatory and personally responsible conceptions of citizenship, but they also recognize that citizenship is open to interpretation and continued debate. While we do need citizens who participate and are personally responsible, we also need citizens who will challenge injustice and advocate for change. This is a challenging task, as it requires social studies teachers to critically consider curriculum topics, find and promote the voices of community activists, help students engage with difficult histories, and seek out authentic and student-driven, action-oriented tasks. I know that social justice-oriented educators are up to this challenge.

About the Author

Ellen Bees is a middle school teacher who is engaged with teaching for social justice, sustainability and media literacy. She has a blog at https://teacherbees.ca/. Follow her on twitter: @EllenBees

MEDIA LITERACY

Analyzing News Media

Learning how to critically analyze the media we see is an essential skill for students to learn and practice. In my grade seven class, we start our study of media literacy by learning

Read more

CANADIAN

How to Change Everything

How to Change Everything: The Young Human's Guide to Protecting the Planet and Each Other, by Naomi Klein with Rebecca Stefoff, is essential reading for young people who want to better understand the

Read more

COURAGE

Moonflower

Sometimes the best way to approach and engage with a serious topic is through stories. Genre fiction does this particularly well. For instance, consider A Monster Calls, by Patrick Ness, or The Ghost

Read more

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Teaching Sustainability in a Changing World

-AMANDA BENSON

How can we educate our students about sustainability topics such as climate change without increasing their eco-anxiety? This is a challenge that many educators face. How can we find the balance of learning about and understanding global issues while still feeling inspired to make change?

At the Manitoba Council for International Cooperation (MCIC), our education team aims to provide educators with information, educational resources, and other supports to help engage our youth to support sustainable development and inspire them to take action!

There are many free resources available on the MCIC website, including a downloadable version of Sustainable Foundations: A Guide for Teaching the Sustainable Development Goals.

Find the resources here: https://www.mcic.ca/educators-and-youth/lesson-plans-and-resources

Climate Justice, for grades 7-10, teaches students about climate change, its consequences, and unjust impacts through simulating community impacts. SDG13

With a focus on sustainability and inclusive communities, students work together to problem-solve and come up with solutions for designing sustainable structures, protecting heritage & culture, and tackling the effects of climate change. SDG11

If you have students enrolled in Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability (40S), MCIC wants to hear about their inspiring action projects! All students that complete a Take Action Project as part of their course are encouraged to apply for MCIC's Outstanding Take Action Project Award! Each year, up to four winning projects will be selected to be awarded with a cash prize, a certificate, and public recognition at MCIC's Annual General Meeting and your school's award celebration night.

From left to right: Jelsie Saul & Maye Adanzo from St. James Collegiate; Ryan Malabanan from Sisler High School; and Sophia Loubardias, Manveet Panesar, & Clea Gallego (Jaylene Mudge not pictured) from Westwood Collegiate.

MCIC also awards Manitoba teachers and administrators who have been leaders in promoting global citizenship!

From left to right: Chris Todd (Vice Principal at Bairdmore School), Kathleen Elgar (High School Teacher at Lord Selkirk Regional Comprehensive Secondary School), and Jessica Condo & Amanda Tétrault (Middle School Teachers at École River Heights)

For more information, see MCIC's website:

https://www.mcic.ca/educators-and-youth/educator-student-awards

If you would like to sign up for the MCIC Newsletter: https://www.mcic.ca/signup

Making the Water Visible:
Critical Discourse Analysis For, and As, Action

-CHELSEA JALLOH

There is an anecdote I use often in my teaching practice. Two young fish are swimming along in the river when they bump into a grandmother fish. "How's the water, you two?" the grandmother fish asks. The two young fish are perplexed; "What water??" they reply. Similar to the young fish, we humans have differing degrees of awareness about the "waters", or the contexts, in which we are immersed. These "contextual waters" can include the cultural, social, racial, economic, and political environments and systems in which we exist and operate. People and groups who benefit from the systems, structures, and dominant beliefs and ways of knowing in the "water" that surrounds us may be unaware of the ways in which these contexts and systems privilege some while disadvantaging others (Nixon, 2019). Power maintains its position when it is invisibilized—when it becomes the water. A growing awareness and understanding of these "contextual waters" can be useful, if not essential, in effecting meaningful change.

This paper describes an opportunity for students to engage with critical discourse analysis (CDA) as, and for, action (Fairclough, 1992; 2003). In this context, discourses are the stories, narratives, and framings we use,

consciously and unconsciously, to make social meanings in our world (Fortchner, 2013). More than superficial words or sentiments, discourses can both reflect and also create our social contexts (Macias, 2015). As one example, Donald Trump's repeated allegations of a stolen presidential election resulted in an insurrection at the White House—his discourse, his framing and narration of events, created "real world" impacts with very serious consequences. The "critical" orientation of CDA aligns with other critical approaches to teaching and research which seek to explore ways in which power, and the dominant discourses and systems that uphold those distributions of power, impact individual and collective ways of knowing, understanding, and experiencing the world (Hesse-Biber, 2017). Shah's (n.d.) work on educational leadership requires educators to "make strange the constructed logics" (para. 2) that perpetuate ongoing systems of oppression both within and outside of educational settings. How can educators support students in becoming (more fully) aware of the contextual waters in which we are collectively swimming? And, beyond awareness, how can educators facilitate experiences in which students critically question, or "make strange", these waters and

take action to address inequities and injustices that exist and persist?

Justice–Oriented Citizenship in Social Studies

This visual model [Figure 1] is one approach to helping students critically question the waters in which we all swim. I developed this model as a component of my doctoral research in Education in which I used CDA to explore ways in which people experiencing homelessness were framed, and responded to, in a collection of government and media texts during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic (Jalloh, 2022). Beyond narrative analysis, I wanted to represent the thematic connections and differences I found in a visual way. Using transmediation to translate and interpret one sign system (my written analysis) into another sign system (a visual representation) (Suhor, 1984), I developed a visual model that can be used as a guide for students to critically analyze a text or collection of texts. In doing so, students can identify and explore existing discourses about a particular topic; this richer understanding of the ways in which issues are framed, problematized, and represented can provide a springboard for meaningful student action.

While I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) through my graduate work, it is not a method that is exclusive to academia. It is an important practice that can be employed throughout K-12 in order to enhance student understanding of the way power operates, the way normative understandings are constructed, and the way issues are framed. Like me, students in Senior Years Social Studies, for example, could employ CDA on a set of current articles regarding homelessness. They could interrogate the way the issue of homelessness is framed and the ways people experiencing homelessness are described. Using the visual model as a guide, students can question how the discourse used throughout the articles encourages readers to view an issue, or a group of people, in a particular way. And, furthermore, how viewing an issue and/or group of people in a particular way invites certain types of responses or actions (and limits or rules out other types of responses or actions). A deeper awareness of the presence and implications of the discourses in a collection of texts offers an opportunity for students to think through how their possible actions and responses might align with, or challenge, the dominant discourses they explore.

This model would be suitable to analyze a range of written texts such as (online) newspaper/magazine articles, website content, social media posts, press releases, and blogs. This model could also be used to analyze other modalities of text such as video/audio media clips, advertisements, podcasts, photographs, song lyrics, music videos, and speeches. Multi-modal texts could invite analysis of both narrative and visual components (e.g., the written text and accompanying photos in a

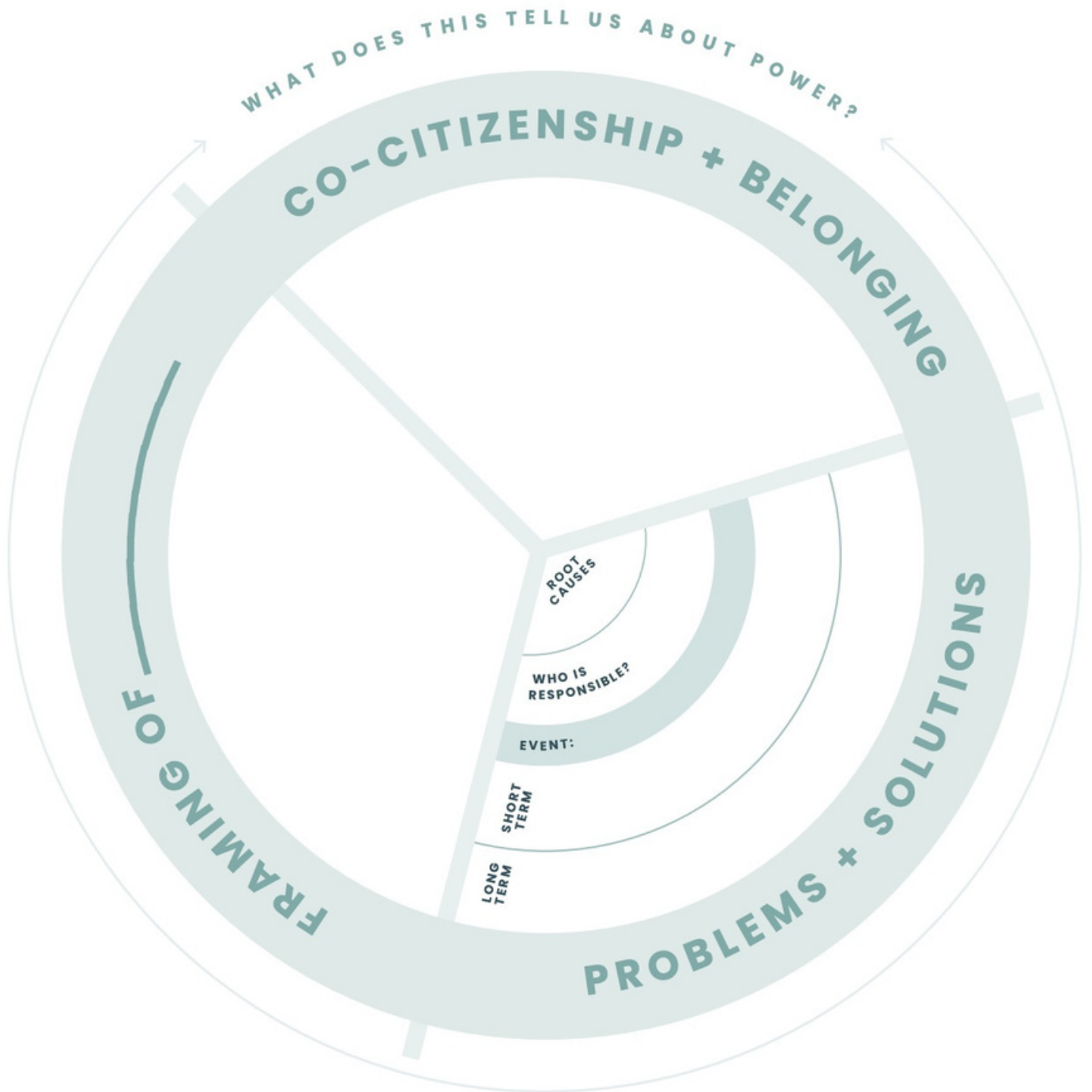magazine article). A brief description of each respective section follows the model itself.

Figure 1: Original source: Jalloh, 2022, p. 307
You are welcome to duplicate and use with attribution

Section Descriptions

1 Framing of _____:

This section identifies the area of focus; this could be a specific topic/issue, or a group/community. Here, students can collect information about ways in which this topic is being framed and described in the text(s) (i.e., the "discourses" about this topic/group).

- *Example: Framing of Homelessness (e.g., exploring ways in which people experiencing homelessness are framed in local tv news coverage)*
- *Example: Framing of Environmental Issues (e.g., exploring how the websites of various political parties frame environmental issues leading up an election)*
- *Example: Framing of Nurses (e.g., exploring how local online newspapers describe nurses working in the Manitoba healthcare system)*

2 Problems and solutions:

Following Bacchi (2009; 2016), it is important to recognize which aspects of a topic are framed as "problems" and to reflect on the discourses around how those "problems" should be addressed or "solved." In this section, the rings include specific prompts to help students explore the discourses around the "problem(s)", the "solution(s)", and the broader "contextual waters" surrounding the topic of focus.

Root causes: Inspired by social determinants of

health frameworks (Mikkonen & Raphael, 2010; Raphael, 2016; Reading & Wien, 2009), this explores the "causes of the causes" that underpin a particular topic or event (McGibbon, 2012). While a specific event may mark a significant shift or turning point, it is rarely the starting point of a particular topic/issue.

- *Example: Scarcity of affordable housing in Winnipeg as one driver of homelessness.*
- *Example: Colonization and racism as root causes of residential schools.*
- *Example: Homophobia and transphobia as root causes of banning books that include identities/experiences of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.*

Who is responsible: In the text(s), do the authors identify who is responsible for addressing this particular issue? There may be multiple people/parties identified, and there may be opposing views (even within a single text).

- *Example: Often individual-level behaviours are framed as primary causes of homelessness (e.g., the result of a person's series of "bad choices" or bad luck) (Baiocchi & Argüello, 2019). Does the text emphasize individual level responsibilities (e.g., the person should "go get a job" to change their circumstances) or broader societal factors or systems (e.g., insufficient minimum wages in Manitoba create financial barriers for people to afford*

housing)? A combination? If the latter, who is responsible for setting minimum wage?

- *Example: Rising bus fares are inaccessibly expensive for people experiencing low income. Who are the individuals/groups responsible for ensuring that public transportation is financially accessible?*

- *Example: Despite providing drinking water to Winnipeg, from 1915-2021 Shoal Lake 40 First Nation had to import bottled drinking water for their residents (Hobson, 2023). Who are the individuals/groups responsible for this inequitable access to clean water from 1915-2021? Who are the individuals/groups responsible for successfully advocating for change?*

Event: Has a specific event occurred that has brought particular attention to this topic and/or has impacted the ways in which this topic is being discussed/addressed?

- *Example: Release of the 2022 Winnipeg Street Census Report (Brandon, 2022) as an opportunity to learn more about homelessness in Winnipeg.*

- *Example: Orange Shirt Day as an opportunity to learn more about the history and ongoing impacts of residential schools in Canada.*

- *Example: The Freedom Convoy as an opportunity to learn more about divergent perspectives regarding COVID-19 vaccination and public health guidelines.*

Short Term: Does the text propose an immediate solution to help address any "problems" identified as part of this topic? Importantly, the responses proposed will directly relate to how the "problem" is framed; a single topic will likely have multiple discourses identifying what "problems" need to be addressed. This short term response may mitigate a challenge but likely will not provide a sustainable solution.

- *Topic/"Problem" Example: People experiencing homelessness using bus shelters as temporary accommodations in the wintertime.*
  - *Short Term Example: Removing the doors so bus shelters will be less effective to use as temporary shelters (here, the "problem" being addressed is public spaces being monopolized/not used for their intended purpose)*
  - *Short Term Example: Religious and community centers allowing people to warm up in their facilities/sleep in their facilities in wintertime (in this case, the "problem" to address is the safety and well-being of people who may be precariously/un-housed)*

Long Term: Does the text propose a longer-term solution that can address this topic? This response likely will take some time to come into effect and also likely will involve systemic or structural change.

- *Example: The provincial government conducting community consultations to inform the development and implementation of their Manitoba Homeless Strategy (Government of Manitoba, n.d.).*
- *Example: Dedicated government funding to establish a safe injection site to address the rising number of overdoses in Manitoba.*
- *Example: Harsher punishments for youth who commit crimes to deter future criminal activity.*

Again, the proposed responses/"solutions" will depend on how the "problems" have been framed in a text or collection of texts. Throughout this exercise, as readers/interpreters, students may agree and/or disagree with the framings presented in the text(s); this includes agreeing/disagreeing with how topics are problematized and addressed, and reflecting upon the credibility and subjectivity of the information provided to support various framings.

3   Co-citizenship and belonging:

Citizenship is a core concept in the Manitoba Social Studies curriculum (Government of Manitoba, 2003); in exploring discourses around a particular topic, the ways in which the authors frame the individuals/groups connected to an issue can be an important source of insight on the ways in which society constructs, interprets, and narrates an issue. In this section, questions to consider include: In the text(s), do the authors represent the topic

of focus with a unified approach in which all people involved are described as "on the same team" and/or "working together"? Or, is there a sense of division among different individuals/groups involved? If there is an "us" versus "them", who is included in the "us" (and who is excluded or "othered")? What sorts of language choices and/or visual representations in the text signal this? And, how do these framings and discourses about the people/groups involved with a topic connect to broader themes of citizenship and belonging? For example, in a text, are people experiencing homelessness described as fellow citizens (e.g., in media quotes, the former Mayor of Vancouver regularly described people experiencing homelessness as "neighbours" [Crawford, 2020]). Or, do the authors/people quoted advance broad and harmful stereotypes, or use "othering" language that does not acknowledge the full personhood, agency, and co-citizenship of people experiencing homelessness (e.g., consistently describing people experiencing homelessness as passive recipients of charity)?

4   What does this tell us about power?:

Drawing on the "critical" lens of critical discourse analysis, when considering the model as a whole, who are the people/groups who have power about this topic? What are the ways in which they have power and how are they using it (e.g., are they able to make the decisions? Control the resources/money? Exercise physical authority? Hold a

demonstration or protest?)?

- *Example: In 2019, the City of Winnipeg hired a private contractor to dismantle tent encampment shelters/structures and displace encampment residents. In response, protesters convened at City Hall to advocate to halt the destruction of the encampments and to increase supports for people experiencing homelessness (Brohman, 2019).*

And finally, moving towards action as the culmination of this reflection and analysis, do the discourses in the analyzed text(s) invite a re-imagining or re-distribution of power? What could that look like, and what would need to happen to move towards that re-imagining? What specific actions could students take to move towards this re-imagining of power to effect positive change—in the short term? In the long term?

Discussion & Conclusion

In many cases, people who are experiencing the outcomes of unequal and unjust systems may be the focus of action under broad umbrellas of "addressing social needs" and "social justice responses." Inspired by Strega and Brown (2015), this model aims to shift the "gaze up" to engage with the discourses, systems, and structures that underlie and drive many social issues—factors that are often left under-explored. While in some cases student action focused on short-term initiatives can provide meaningful opportunities to address

emergent and/or immediate needs (e.g., sandbagging in the event of a flood; a clothing drive to collect warm clothes to donate in the winter months), this model creates an opportunity to extend and build upon short term actions by supporting students in asking broader, critical questions about these "contextual waters." These deeper understandings of root causes, the systems/structures and distributions of power that underpin social inequities and injustices, and how we are positioned within those systems, can help to reconsider and build upon short-term, unsustainable charity and/or benevolence approaches to respond to social inequities and injustices. Using this model to analyze text(s) about a particular topic can assist students in unearthing some of the ways in which dominant discourses in our "contextual waters" construct and narrate the experiences, needs, problems, and solutions of a particular issue—and the people most impacted by this issue. Rather than an end point, the analysis and enriched understandings facilitated through this critical discourse analysis invite further student reflection and action related to a specific topic. The insights gained through "making strange" or "making visible" the contextual waters are opportunities for students to extend their analysis to meaningful action or praxis (Freire, 2007) as they contemplate what can I do, and what can we do together, to be agents of systemic change and reform.

About the Author

Since training as a middle years teacher, Chelsea (she/her) has been fortunate to work in a range of educational contexts. In particular, she is drawn to work that explores relationships between the fields of education and health. She is inspired by the transformative potential of education to effect systemic change for social justice aims. Currently, Chelsea works in health professions education at the University of Manitoba.
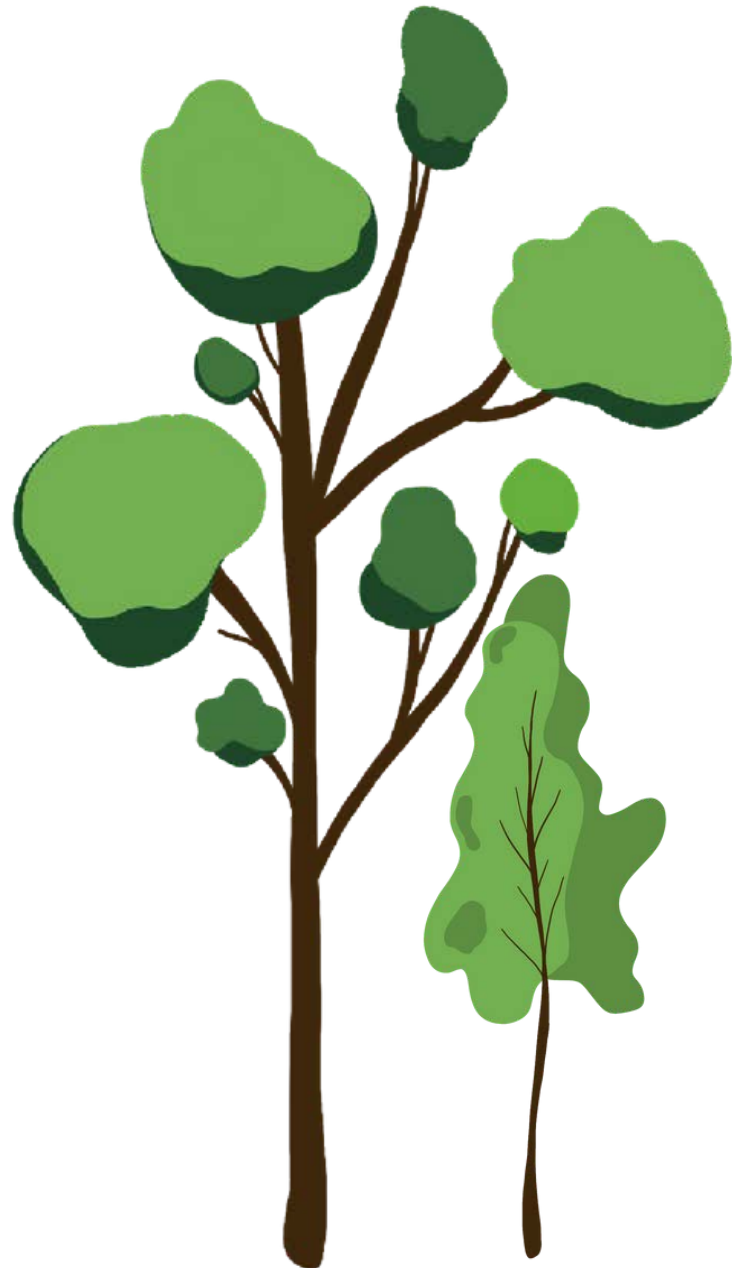
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Anything Else Would Just be Teaching Complacency

-SHANNON D.M. MOORE

Against a numbing indifference, despair or withdrawal into the private orbits of the isolated self, there is a need to support educational institutions that enable students to exhibit civic courage, foster the capacity to listen to others, sustain complex thoughts and engage social problems.

—Giroux, 2019

Social justice and citizenship are woven throughout the Manitoba social studies curricula. In case you think I am speaking abstractly, the specific term "social justice" appears 65 times in the Grade 9 curriculum, 16 in the Grade 10, and 28 in the Grade 11. These curricula also engage many themes connected to social justice: identity, culture and race; democracy; human rights; global responsibility; sustainable development; and respect for the earth--to name a few. Social justice recognizes that there are systemic and institutional inequities in our society, and that every citizen has an ethical responsibility to contribute to a more just, caring, and democratic society (Kelly, 2012). A social justice classroom equips students with the knowledge and skills to maneuver in and, where required, to change the current system (Bigelow et al., 1994; Westheimer & Kahne, 2004).

The word "citizenship" is used 331 times in the Grade 9 document, 102 in Grade 10, 100 in Grade 11, and is the core concept for all social studies courses in the province. Within the core concept section in the curriculum it states: "To identify the knowledge, values, and skills that students will need as active democratic citizens, social studies must take into account the society in which students live and anticipate the challenges they will face in the future" (Manitoba Education, 2006). As such, it is a teacher's professional responsibility to invite and incite discussions about our current context and potential future, and to teach students about the varied ways they can respond as citizens.

For many students, taking action may be the only reasonable response to issues in current society. For some students this may involve volunteering within their community, for others it may involve constructing a display aimed at raising awareness about the climate crisis, for others it may involve marching, or letter writing, or staging a sit in. Regardless of the form, it is imperative that students are

provided the opportunity to contribute to, advocate, and act toward social change in their schools and communities.

Classrooms risk becoming "factories for cynicism" when students are invited to critically engage with their worlds, but never given the space to respond (Au et al., 2007). Students need to recognize themselves as change-makers. Moreover, they have a right to express opinions on matters and decisions that affect them (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, n.d.). Making space for young people to take political and civic actions in school leads to greater participation and political agency in the future (Kahne & Sporte, 2008).

The curricular and scholarly rationale for inviting student action is clear; however, supporting student action requires thoughtful pedagogical planning and reflection.

Communities of Action

Student action projects should not be the imposed end of an otherwise action less classroom; communities of action need to be fostered throughout the year.

Fostering student citizenship requires engaging critical and creative thinking throughout our courses; this includes analysis, evaluation, judgment, problem solving, conflict resolution, and collaboration. In this way, students are encouraged to develop their own

informed opinions about topics and issues in social studies. Moreover, students should be introduced to historical and current acts of protest and resistance in order to understand the varied actions that can be taken by citizens. By introducing current and previous citizen actions, students can also analyze the underlying causes, choice of action, consequences, and impacts. Students can evaluate whether the forms of action were effective, considering both the intended target audience and the overall objective. Social justice is focused on root causes and improving systems that contribute to inequity. If justice is the objective, students can consider whether the citizen action tends to the root. Students can also consider the risks, complexities, and ethical considerations connected to these varied actions. Moreover, they can also come to see that the rights citizens hold today were not automatic, they emerged through citizen action. This does not necessitate that students engage in protest and resistance, at all or in any particular way, rather it introduces them to the possibility and the salient interrogations required before actions are taken.

Steps to Action

As we make space for students to actively engage in their worlds through action, we need to be thoughtful about the steps students take along the way. Developing thoughtful steps to action will help ensure that students are well-informed about their topic, about actions previously taken, and about the potential

impact of their in/action. The steps outlined below help ensure that student actions emanate from student concerns and that actions are only taken after students have considered the ethical questions, complexities, and risks.

1 Begin action projects with **student inquiry**. In this way, the topics students choose will represent their own concerns. Teachers remain deeply involved in the process, but they do not dictate the issues selected or the actions taken.

2 Once students have settled on a topic, it is imperative that students **narrow their topic** to a manageable size. That is, if a student is interested in poverty, they could narrow this to a specific demographic, geographic location, and particular issue related to poverty. If topics are left too broad, students are set up for failure. As a result, students may feel that citizen action does not make a difference. However, if they narrow their topics and create clear and manageable objectives, their actions have a better chance of making a difference.

3 **Research** is a necessary element of social justice education, especially action-oriented projects. Before any action is planned, students must become very knowledgeable about their topic. In turn, the actions students plan will be informed.

Research The Topic

1. What is the issue? How would you explain the issue that your awareness/action project is trying to expose/fix?

2. What are the causes/contributing factors related to this issue?

3. What are the complexities?

- Consider any ethical, economic, environmental, political or social nuances surrounding this issue. Issues in society are not simple.
- And/or consider the way tending to this issue may raise other issues or cause unintended consequences.
- And/or consider how intersectionality impacts this issue. That is, how are different people impacted differently based on multiple factors of identity.

4. Who are the stakeholders involved? Which stakeholders might be interested in improving the issue & which might be barriers to your actions?

5. Who/what are organizations that could help inform your understanding of this issue? Include at least two people and/or organizations whose work is connected to your topic. Include at least two things you learned about your topic from speaking to and/or researching these organizations.

6. What if anything has already been tried to alleviate this issue? Consider actions taken by the people/organizations mentioned above, or actions taken more broadly.

4 In addition to researching the topic, students should **research individual and collective actions already taken by others**. For example, if students are concerned about disposable cups, they should explore the actions that have already been taken to stop the production and use of these products. This will help students make informed choices about their own actions.

Research The Actions Taken

After students have explored the actions previously taken in relation to their topic, they should consider the following questions about these actions.

- Did it reach the intended target audience?
- Did it raise awareness, provide temporary help, or tend to the root causes? Is it an example of charity or justice?
- Did it cause any harm or have unintended consequences?

5 Once students have a research informed understanding of their topic, they should **create their own plan of action**. This plan needs to take into consideration their specific objectives, their target audience, their research, and the actions that have already been taken. Consider generating a class list of possible actions to help students as they develop their own action plan. As you generate ideas as a classroom community, get students to think about whether the possible

actions will raise awareness, meet a temporary need, or tend to root causes. Certainly students can focus their actions on awareness or charity, but if a students' objective is to create systemic change, they want to be sure their action is aimed at the root.

6 As student plans develop, it is imperative that they seek **critical feedback** from their peers and the teacher. The point of these exchanges is not to discourage student action; rather, it is to raise any practical or ethical concerns, and to ensure effective and safe actions. Throughout these critical friend meetings, their peers are asking questions and offering suggestions.

Critical Friend Meetings

- What are your specific objectives?
- Does your action align with your objectives? Will your action serve the community (charity), raise awareness, or tend to the root causes?
  - This step is particularly important. Students tend to choose charitable actions (service or fundraising) or awareness campaigns. Students can certainly proceed with such actions, but they need to understand the potential limits of their chosen actions. While classroom communities cannot force students to undertake justice-oriented actions, it is crucial that students recognize the potential of their actions before proceeding.

Critical Friend Meetings

- Is your action appropriate for your target audience?
- Could your action cause unintended consequences? Could your "help" hurt?
  - That is, could your "help" prolong the problem or create a new problem. If you determine that your help may have unintended consequences, you need to decide whether you should still proceed with your action. For example, if your goal is to eliminate disposable cups in your local community, this could lead to job losses for people who produce disposable cups. You may recognize this as a consequence, but still decide to go ahead with your action. The importance is recognizing the positive and negative economic, environment, social and political consequences of your in/action.
- What safety issues could arise?
- What permissions might I need?

7 At this point, the teacher can also ensure that students have **secured any necessary permissions.** For example, some students create materials to share with elementary classes and will require necessary permissions in order to visit. Other students may choose to create a public service announcement related to their topic; in order to do this, they will need consent forms for the students they are filming. Each school/division will have its own policies that teachers need to take into consideration as they are determining permissions students will need to obtain.

8 Take Action!

9 After students have taken their action, it is important that they meet with their critical friend groups again. These final meetings are important to **encourage reflection** about the actions they took, the way they felt throughout the process, and what they have learned.

Conclusion

As educators we know that there is no plan that will account for every possibility that could arise. Our plans must adapt to the specific needs of each community of students. By creating classroom communities that encourage critical and creative thinking, invite student inquiry, recognize citizen action throughout history, and make space for students to take action, the real plan is for students to see themselves as active citizens. Anything else would just be teaching complacency.

About the Author

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Review of *Teaching in the Anthropocene:*
Education in the face of environmental crisis

-WILL BURTON
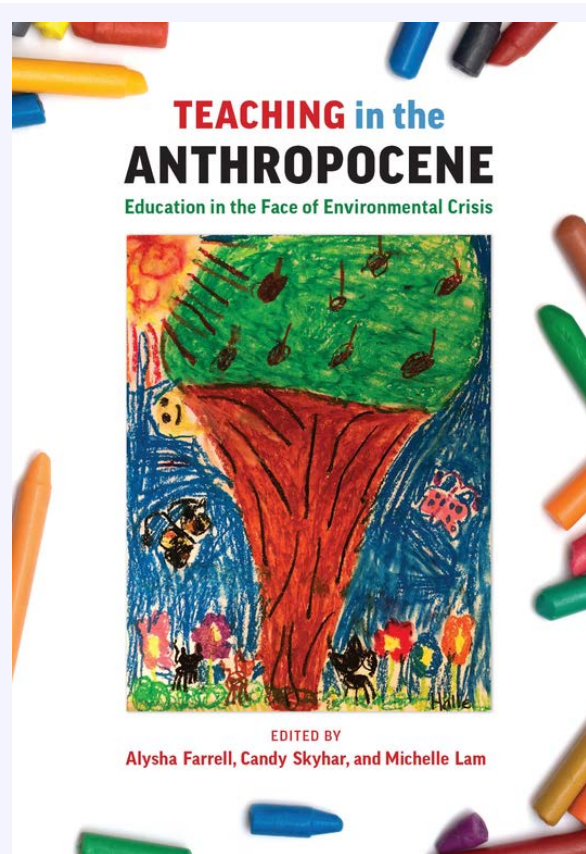
Farrell, A. J., Skyhar, C., & Lam, M. (2022). *Teaching in the Anthropocene: Education in the face of environmental crisis.* Canadian Scholars.

If you take the 401 highway heading south out of Toronto, and detour south-east after you pass Milton, you will arrive at what might first register as an unremarkable lake. Known by its original inhabitants, the Iroqouis, as Kionywarihwaen, translated from Wyandot to

English as "where we have a story to tell", this pool of water, no larger than 24 square meters, but 24 meters deep, was recently determined as the location of the anthropocene's golden spike. Golden spikes, or Global Boundary Stratotype Section and Points (GSSP), are large brass nails, hammered into the surface of the earth and used by geologists to mark places on the planet which demarcate transitions from one geologic epoch to the next. Crawford Lake (Kionywarihwaen), with its unique physical characteristics, possesses the story of recent human history; a story in which the Anthropocene Working Group has determined that humankind through natural resource extraction, fossil fuel emission, and economic growth through production and discarding, has changed the geologic record of the earth's surface. Detailed in its core samples, Crawford Lake (Kionywarihwaen), tells us a visual narrative of the anthropocene.

Farrell, Skyhar and Lam, editors of *Teaching in the Anthropocene: Education in the Face of Environmental Crisis* (2022), are intentional about situating the immense human impact on

the planet, and the implications of this action in their text. The anthropocene they write, "acknowledges the anthropogenic contributions to the climate crisis" and in doing so, "opens space to discuss the emotional responses to adverse climate events, and bring the exertion of human dominance within the wider web of relations into sharper relief" (p. xiv). Through over twenty chapters, a diverse array of Canadian scholars and classroom practitioners outline stories of work that moves away from an education full of "anthropogenic hubris" (p. xvi) with technocratic and standardized approaches to learning which reproduce and perpetuate cycles of violence against the planet (Bowers, 1997). The authors cover ground as vast as settler-colonialism, refugees, gender, visual arts, poetry and STEM, yet remain collectively committed to engaging classroom practice that connects youth to the climate emergency. The following review will briefly map out the key themes that link the texts, highlight important chapters, and close with implications for public educators.

Key Themes

At times, an incoherent thread fails to link together edited works in education, however *Teaching in the Anthropocene* effectively returns to three key themes. Firstly, there is a welcome presence for Indigenous ways of knowing and the connecting threads that surface the role of settler-colonialism in ecological violence. Ecosophy - a portmanteau

of ecology and philosophy - is noted by Indigenous scholar Greg Cajete (1999) as a way to integrate "environmental knowledge with physical, social, mythological, psychological and spiritual characteristics of Indigenous societies" (p. 199). It is this foundational approach that Farrell, Skyhar and Lam seek to connect the chapters, towards "new theoretical eco-orientations...and innovative pedagogies that open space for students and teachers to live in greater harmony with the more than human world" (p. xvii).

Anchoring the book are Indigenous authors Stan Wilson (Chapter 5), Gail Brandt-Terry and Kiera Brant-Birioukov (Chapter 11) who provide a much needed voice to the project. Wilson's holistic approach to learning, Wahkohtowin, is where "being, doing and living" intersect (p. 59) as both a relational and action-oriented pedagogy. Wahkohtowin moves beyond the individual, learning community and family to all living beings - in essence a holistic vision of the world and human participation in it. Wilson outlines a sharing circle as a pedagogical tool for deepening relationality within a learning community through oral narrative. Brandt-Terry and Brant-Birioukov call for an Indigenous approach to education which is lived through relational ceremony. The authors outline the three types of story: sacred (strict protocols), legends (publicly shared) and personal, and offer four personal stories of relational dialogue between the natural world

as examples. The authors target school leaders as key to instigating this shift in schools, encouraging them to "reflect on what you hold sacred as a leader, and how you can slow down to engage in these practices" (p. 137). With a deficit of Indigenous ways of knowing in the Manitoba curriculum (Kairos, 2018), support from school leaders remains critical for settler educators to bring these perspectives into their classrooms.

The concept of storytelling is one that seeks to shift the narrative of how teachers and students think about the purposes of education and social/cultural constructs, particularly in how Indigenous knowledge can work in tandem with unsettling traditional colonial approaches to learning; what Farrell, Skyhar and Lam call the 'new story' of education (p. xvii). For example, McGregor, Jackson and Pind's (Chapter 6) work effectively bridges Eurocentric and Indigenous pedagogy. Each author shares a story of place in Canada, digging into the histories of a locale to unpack settler narratives and resituate Indigenous voices. But this work demands an understanding of the links between capitalism, settler-colonialism and climate change, to which Kerr and Amsler (Chapter 13) effectively pull on the excellent work of the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective (Stein, et. al., 2017) and their notion of the 'House of Modernity'. These stories are often not present in classrooms, and calls on critical K-12 educators to be mindful of how to ground

the environmental crisis as part of a historical narrative.

To paraphrase Andreas Malm (2020), the target reader for this text does not need a million footnotes to explain the climate emergency, but what many educators are looking for are ways to turn their hopelessness into climate justice action. Three chapters recall Joanna Macy's work on Active Hope (2022) which suggests initiating climate justice beginning with the efforts of inner resolution of human responsibility prior to individuals and groups action towards mitigation and adaptation. "Hope", Lawrence, Skuce and Hudson Breen (Chapter 9) advise, "compels motivation, momentum and ultimately action" (p. 108) and works against feelings of eco-paralysis. To this, Vamalis (Chapter 10) adds, action can also look to mitigate some of the worst impacts of eco-anxiety. Whereas "anxiety, mixed with guilt, lack of understanding and an inability to act, can create sensations of disempowerment" (Sanford, et. al., Chapter 21), 'hope', writes Homer Dixon (2022) mobilizes minds, spirits, imagination and values - without it the work of climate justice is undermined.

A third key theme surrounds the implementation of a place-based pedagogy. Place-based education (PBE) is defined as a localized approach to problem-solving, asserting that we need to narrow our focus from the macro to the micro and towards

community, a practice defined as shifting from residents to inhabitants (Gruenwald, 2003). It is a practice that cultivates hope through understanding and acting on community development. PBE necessitates learning in, with and for the community. Places are pedagogical, "as centers of experience, places teach us about how the world works, and how our lives fit into the spaces we occupy… places make us" (Somerville, 2007, p. 151). Changing the narrative of how education could look in schools is part of an effort by a number of authors in this book to "see the connection between head, heart and hands" (p. 35), which Ireland (Chapter 3) argues can happen through locally relevant, community-based learning that uses the principles of experiential learning. Place-based education is documented as an effective approach to localizing how the anthropocene is currently impacting people and the natural world, but crucially it also offers a canvas for learners to engage in action towards mitigation and adaptation efforts.

Often missing from climate change education research is analysis of rural schooling. In Manitoba, 37% of the population lives outside of an urban center with a higher proportion in K-12 demographic than in Manitoban cities (Government of Manitoba, 2021). With this in mind, a significant contribution to the text is Skyhar's (Chapter 15) consideration of the unique challenges facing rural schools. Skyhar notes that rural communities are highly reliant on natural resource extraction, are impacted

by geographic and demographic obstacles, and lack economic resources to mitigate and adapt to climate change. Skyhar identifies the potential of natural environments, tight-knit communities, and the ability to partner with local organizations as latent potential for rural schools. While tensions can exist between the efforts of educators to orient inquiry towards mitigating and adapting to economic driven environmental damage, Smith and Sobel (2010) claim that PBE can offer a balanced approach to balancing economic survival for rural communities and ecological restoration.

Critical Practice

A critique that can be leveled at this text is a deficit of critical perspectives that effectively ground teacher practice in histories of ecological violence and structures of power that maintain their reproduction. Rarely do authors articulate how educators might approach exploring, analyzing and taking action on the root causes of climate change. Burkholder (Chapter 20) rightly points to pre-service education as a vital area for restructuring education for the anthropocene, and offers one of the few examples in the text of a deeply critical approach to education. Burkholder orients her focus for the post-secondary course on critical geographies on three themes: settler colonialism and purposeful forgetting, human responsibility for the anthropocene, and Nixon's (2011) notion of 'slow violence', as a map for students to engage through arts-based approaches (zine,

photovoice and video). In doing so, Burkholder effectively proposes a model for pre-service teachers to bring critical pedagogy into K-12 classrooms. If readers are looking for a deeper theoretical perspective for K-12, they might be advised to look towards Klein and Stefoff's How to Change Everything (2020) or Malm's Fighting a World on Fire (2023), which do drill down into the historical and contemporary actors and actions that reproduce climate violence and advise on how youth can mobilize.

Implications for the Manitoba Educator

As explored elsewhere (Link and Burton, In Press), a deficit of leadership at the Provincial level has led to the erosion of capacity and focus on environmental education in Manitoba over the last decade. Where once Manitoba was a global leader in education for sustainable development (ESD), with resources, professional learning, grants, and an established consultant position at the Ministry for this work (a detailed outline of excellence in ESD education can be found in Buckler and MacDiarmid, 2013), School Divisions and schools have not been supported in moving on from 'islands of excellence' (Jacques, 2012; Mogren, Gericke and Scherp, 2019) to the work of environmentalism permeating the school.

In 2019 the Association for Canadian Deans of Education published a position paper acknowledging that education was "complicit" in the climate crisis and environmental emergency and was committed in "supporting each other within ACDE to transform our practices in ways that add to the equitable and sustainable future of the planet, through reporting and sharing challenges and good practices" (p. 3). While a number of Faculties of Education across Canada have successfully situated decolonization and the climate crisis at the center of their course design and instruction, there is work to do (Huang and Asghar, In Karrow and Giuseppe, 2022). Once assigned to instructional positions, barriers remain for educators bringing some of the approaches outlined in Teaching in the Anthropocene into their practice, namely time, resources, support and an overly restrictive curriculum, which is particularly evident at the senior years in Manitoba where classes are separated by discipline preventing interdisciplinary learning (Burton, 2019; Hart, 2002; Metz et. al., 2010; Jacques, 2012; Eckton, 2015; Belton, 2013; Michalos, et. al., 2015; Babiuk & Falkenberg, 2011). Ensuring that governmental policy and post-secondary training is commensurate with the climate emergency can provide the focus and resources to increase the capacity for youth to navigate future realities of the anthropocene.

Many of the bigger questions facing humankind do not neatly fit within the arbitrary discipline lines of the common school. The dynamic and broad reaches of climate

change mean that the topic does not have a 'home' discipline in the Manitoba curriculum. But social studies educators are uniquely placed to engage in the interdisciplinary approaches to learning that can cross curricula boundaries. This is in no small part to its potential to "move beyond Indigenizing existing ecological justice frameworks and instead seeking to develop distinct frameworks that are informed by Indigenous intellectual traditions, knowledge systems and laws" (Dhillon, 2022, p. 11), to which social studies can take the lead. It might begin with looking for the big ideas that will permit scaffolded inquiry, taking inspiration from a local issue or initiative, or it could mean connecting with like-minded colleagues in your building. Those lucky enough to teach social studies today have important work to do, and with *Teaching in the Anthropocene* the editors have strove to braid decolonial approaches to the climatic realities of our time, offering many opportunities for the reader to pull ideas directly or adapt to their context.

While Crawford Lake (*Kionywarihwaen)* has a 'story to tell us', we do not need to visit the site to understand our complicitness as individuals and as reproducers of an education system that has brought our climate to the brink of sustaining life. Indeed, our communities and their inhabitants also have stories to tell. Making space for the story of how we got here, and for youth to create their own story to navigate - socially, emotionally,

economically - the future years ahead is the present and future imperative of education. In that sense, *Teaching in the Anthropocene* has important stories to share.

About the Author

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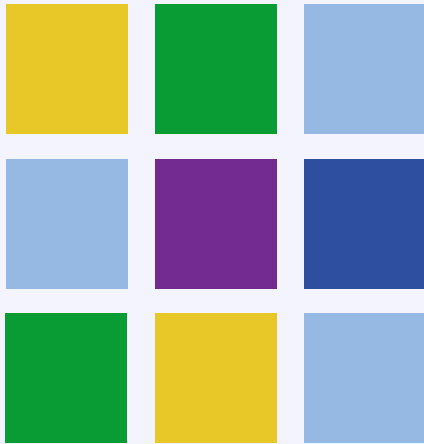
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Corbin's Corner
Professional Resources

-CORBIN STEINKE

Project of Heart

Project of the Heart is an initiative dedicated to advancing reconciliation through education and social-action. It is focused primarily on helping Canadians confront the horrors of residential schools, and the systemic oppression that created them. The website contains an extensive list of resources including: a variety of primary sources, lesson plans, links to other websites, and a suggested reading list, and a selection of achievable social-actions that you can experience with your students.

Learn more: https://projectofheart.ca/

Democratic Knowledge Project

The Democratic Knowledge Project, backed by Harvard University, is a platform where teachers can find resources and guiding questions to help students dig deep into advancing social justice. On this website you find The 10 Questions - guiding questions for students that structure thought, build awareness, analyze intentions and impact, build community, and induce meaningful action. Resources are available to support teachers who are new to inquiry and action projects, and there are many links to Facing History and Ourselves which has many resources that reveal the historical roots of modern problems.

Learn more: https://yppactionframe.fas.harvard.edu/

Learning for a Sustainable Future
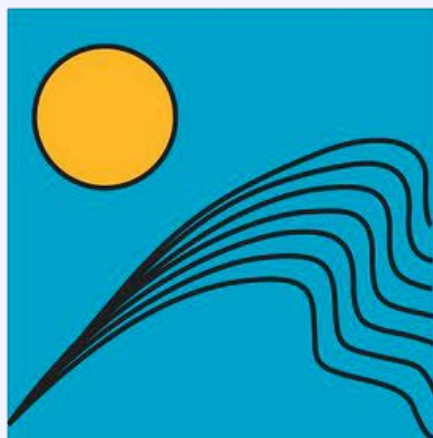
Learning for a Sustainable Future (LSF) is an online database filled with examples of student-action projects, PD and community-building programs (including funding opportunities!), lesson plans and resources, and pedagogical strategies. Everything is directed towards building capacity for environmental awareness and sustainability in both thought and action.

Learn more: https://lsf-lst.ca/resources/engaging-students-in-sustainable-action-projects/

Ocean School

Ocean School is an organization dedicated to spreading awareness about the health of our oceans, and the impacts of unsustainable action. On this website you will find Grade appropriate content organized by topic (including underwater videos!), the Ocean School Take Action Tool Kit, and the Take Action Educator Guide.

Learn more: https://oceanschool.nfb.ca/media/take-action-toolkit

Canadian Museum for Human Rights

Canadian Museum for Human Rights website you will find an overview and full PDF guide for Be an Upstander - a complete unit that guides students through the steps of: deep questioning, what it means to be an upstander (with real examples of youth leaders), choosing a topic to study, reflection, inquiry, and action. The complete unit plan is intended for Grades 5-8, but could easily be adapted for older and younger students.

Learn more: https://humanrights.ca/school-program/be-upstander

Critical Thinking Consortium

The Critical Thinking Consortium has partnered with the Canadian Teachers' Federation to produce a handbook for social action projects (SAPs) Grades 5-8 and 9-12. The documents contain information about what SAPs are, types of SAPs, the logistics of planning and student-engagement, assessment and the role of the teacher in SAPs, and a brief example to use as a template.

Learn more:

https://tc2.ca/uploads/PDFs/Social%20Action%20Projects/IA_Handbook_9-12_EN_FINAL.pdf
https://tc2.ca/uploads/PDFs/Social%20Action%20Projects/IA_Handbook_5-8_EN_FINAL.pdf

Call for Submissions

MB Speaks

SPRING 2024 ISSUE

"…..decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future."

-Tuck & Yang, 2012

Call for Submissions

MB Speaks

You are invited to submit to the Spring 2024 Issue of the Manitoba Social Science Teachers' Association (MSSTA) Journal.

.....decolonization is not a metaphor. When metaphor invades decolonization, it kills the very possibility of decolonization; it recenters whiteness, it resettles theory, it extends innocence to the settler, it entertains a settler future.
--Tuck & Yang, 2012

The Truth & Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action (2015) demand an educational response. Recognizing this, Social Science educators have been altering their pedagogy to meet these demands. Yet, the foundations of Social Science are colonial. As a result, many educators have ethical, practical and personal questions about their role in advancing reconciliation, and decolonizing their practice. As Tuck and Yang (2012) remind, "decolonization is not a metaphor", it is not something that can be superficially adopted, combined with other social justice themes, or relegated to discussions of history--colonialism persists. While Social Science educators recognize that they are professionally and ethically called to respond, questions remain about how they can respond without reducing decolonization to a method. Decolonization is a process of unsettling the primacy of colonial practices, ways of knowing, and ways of being, educators--many who have only ever been educated in a colonial mindset--are struggling with their role in this process. Through this issue we invite Social Science educators to submit pieces connected to decolonization. These can be submissions that engage the broader theme, or that focus on specific topics (extractivism, land back, settler narrative frameworks, privileging of Western thought, Indigenous ways of knowing, resistance and restorying) and/or colonizing practices within schools (assessment, disciplines, official curriculum, grading, classroom practices, approaches to history).

Call for Submissions
MB Speaks

Through this issue, we hope to explore the ways in which social studies educators in Manitoba are working to challenge colonial mindsets, colonizing practices, and settler national narratives.

Educators can submit to any section of the journal:

1. Pedagogy: scholarly writing connected to the issue theme. Writers should aim for 5-7 double-spaced pages..

2. Practice: class activities, lessons and/or unit plans.

3. Professional Development: events, organizations, learning resources, books, podcasts, or book/podcast/resource reviews.

4. Photos: If you have any photographs of Manitoba that you would like featured in the issue, we would love to include them.

Submissions should be sent to msstajournal@gmail.com no later than February 1st, 2024. We hope to publish this issue in March, 2024. Please send your submissions as word documents.

For immediate response to any journal inquiries, please reach out to shannon.moore@umanitoba.ca.

If you are interested in advertising in our journal, please contact us directly; we are in the process of developing protocols and policies around advertising.

MSSTA MTS PD Day
"Teaching in an Age of Polarization and Extremism"

The MSSTA MTS PD Day will be held on Friday, October 20, 2023 at Valley Gardens Middle School in Winnipeg. This year's theme is "Teaching in an Age of Polarization and Extremism".

Keynote: Dr. Barbara Perry, Director of the Centre on Hate, Bias and Extremism
Panel Discussion Guests: Brad Galloway and Mubin Shaikh, two former extremists who now work as activists to prevent radicalization and extremism, will share insights and personal stories about their trajectories into and out of violent extremism.

Canada and other countries across the globe are currently facing challenges related to growing polarization in their communities. Political, socio-economic, environmental, and other issues incite strong and opposing views, further entrenched by manipulative algorithms and the echo chambers created by social media. Recently–and particularly during the pandemic–this polarization has led to an increase in extremism and radicalism. Research suggests radicalization can take place as early as adolescence, particularly in marginalized youth. However, the roots of extreme behaviour can be established in the Early Years making this issue important to all educators from Kindergarten to Grade 12. As social science teachers, we have a professional duty to help our students understand and develop the skills needed to resist this growing phenomenon.

This year's MSSTA MTS PD Day is being delivered in partnership with ERiM (Extremism and Radicalization to Violence Prevention in Manitoba). ERiM is an organization of Manitoba educators and education stakeholders funded by Public Safety Canada to develop a resource for teachers to recognize and counter radicalization within their schools before it occurs.

Registration open as of September 5, 2023 at mbteach.org

MB Speaks