

## President's Message



As an affiliate of the international ASCD, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Manitoba ASCD has worked hard since its inception in 1995 to become a highly visible and respected educational organization that offers

Manitoba educators quality professional learning opportunities on teaching, learning and leadership issues. Over the past twelve years, our organization has been committed to this vision of quality professional learning.

In 2004 we initiated our Distinguished Lecturer Series that began with Thomas Sergiovanni as our first lecturer, followed by Andy Hargreaves, Carl Glickman, and last year, Ann Lieberman.

This year on May 15 we are very pleased to have Dr. Douglas Reeves as our Distinguished Lecturer. Douglas Reeves is the author of more than twenty books and a great number of articles. His 2006 publication: *The Learning Leader: How to Focus School Improvement for Better Results* received a lot of attention for its solid ideas on school change. Dr. Reeves' work appears in numerous national journals, magazines, and newspapers, including a monthly column entitled, *Leading to Change*, found in ASCD's *Educational Leadership*. If you haven't yet registered for Dr Reeves session on May 15, I encourage you to do so. He offers tremendous insight on the topics of leadership and change.

In particular, over the past two years, Manitoba ASCD has been dedicated to organizing workshops by presenters who are well-respected for their knowledge on learning and assessment; presenters such as Ken O'Connor, and Damian Cooper, along with our most recent presenters, Anne Davies, and our very own Sandra Herbst-Luedtke. Anne and

Sandra presented to a full house of very engaged learners. You will be able to read more about their session in this newsletter.

Manitoba ASCD is also very pleased to have Carol Ann Tomlinson join us this fall, on October 10, 2008. We know her presentation will be a great support to educators who are facing challenges each and every day in meeting the learning needs of the children in their classrooms. With over 35 years in the field of education, Carol Ann Tomlinson offers teachers many practical strategies to help create a differentiated classroom.

The topic of differentiation will continue to be our focus as we follow up on February 19 of 2009 with Rick Wormeli, author of the book *Fair Isn't Always Equal: Grading and Assessment in the Differentiated Classroom*, published in 2006. Rick is well-known for his work in this area and we are very pleased to have him as part of our professional learning offerings in the 2008-2009 school year.

Our committees of volunteers work hard on behalf of Manitoba educators to put together a solid slate of professional learning opportunities over the next year. We hope you will be able to participate in these excellent upcoming workshops. – Brenda Lanoway

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### **INSERTS:**

*Leading to Change* - Douglas Reeves  
*Differentiated Classroom: Practical Strategies for Making it Work* – Carol Ann Tomlinson

For more information visit <http://manitoba.ascd.org>; call Paulette Migie (204) 510-7271; or email us at [mbascd@shaw.ca](mailto:mbascd@shaw.ca)

## Anne Davies and Sandra Herbst-Luedke: “Making Classroom Assessment Work for Learners” - A Review

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What we as educators now know to be true about learners has huge implications for our methods of instruction and assessing. As Black and William found in their research, “Quality classroom assessment has the largest positive impact on student learning and achievement ever documented.”

On February 19, a large group of committed teachers and administrators spent the day with Anne Davies and Sandra Herbst-

Luedtke, both experts in the field of authentic assessment, exploring the dynamics of making this quality assessment work in practical ways within our schools.

Learning being a social activity, Anne and Sandra provided many opportunities to practice and discuss strategies, and to ask numerous questions. Audience participation was also a key aspect of the day as was a variety of video clips: many from classrooms within the River East Transcona School Division. This offered a welcome connection on a local level.

Primary among their beliefs is that assessment is not separate from teaching; it is just good teaching. As educators, we need to look at learning outcomes and think through our evidence that will demonstrate that students have reached these outcomes. We need to collect evidence over time using the process, as demonstrated in Anne’s book, of triangulation; using evidence from conversation, product and observation. This is not a way of working harder, but smarter, and serves to give us a more accurate view of what our students are able to do. As well, Anne and Sandra emphasized the practice of providing specific, descriptive feedback. This feedback is not only ours to provide but can be provided through the use of peer, as well as, self assessment. When students are able to have many voices reflecting on their work, they, in turn can better reach their goals.

Tantamount to the collection of evidence is the setting of criteria with students. Students need to know what is required in terms of expectations. They need to know where we are going and what they will be doing to



arrive. It is vital to share this information with students whether it be through co-constructing criteria or setting it ourselves. As Anne reiterated, “Our job has to change”. We need to move towards a gradual release of responsibility; starting small by talking with our students about what quality looks like, sounds like, and feels like. Once criteria have been established, it is essential that it be posted so students can check themselves as they move through their work. Vital to this all is that our evidence be reliable, that is, collected over time, and valid; that it assesses what it is supposed to assess and is collected from multiple sources.

Anne and Sandra's commitment to this topic was evident in their use of personal, as well as professional anecdotes and examples. This day gave us the tools to further build on our skill sets, and comfort levels in assessment practices. As educators we should view this as not just another responsibility to add to a growing pile, but a chance for professional renewal.

*Rosie Dudar is a teacher-librarian in the River East Transcona School Division.*

## The Power of Authentic Learning - Lisa Stamps

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A group of impassioned, budding environmentalists debates the pros and cons of clearing trees from the rain forest. They note the many resources that these massive forest areas provide to humans and discuss how cutting down the trees could affect the environment—the trees supply oxygen, for example. During the conversation, all group members are eager to share their opinions. The issue affects them and, indeed, all life on Earth. These students are engaging in what is known as “authentic learning.”

Through authentic learning tasks, I have seen students of all ages become critical and creative thinkers, risk takers, and problem finders. They tackle large problems—problems that, like real-world issues, are messy and have more than one solution. Such genuine scenarios require that students use analytical decision-making processes and justify their choices.

Through these activities, students also learned citizenship skills by taking responsibility for being productive members of our society.

Throughout the years, my students completed many authentic learning projects, exploring topics that range from aviation to zoology. They participated in many service projects to help solve community-based and worldwide problems. Students organized efforts to send money, food, and clothing to the poor in Honduras. They tutored students and participated in community beautification and clean-up efforts.

At a young age, students enter school with a desire to learn. Authentic learning experiences fuel that motivation. What students learn, therefore, becomes all the more meaningful. Through authentic learning experiences, students don't simply receive knowledge; they attain it.

Excerpt from an ASCD Archive article posted in October 2004. Volume 8, Number 2 *Teaching for Meaning*

## From Blasé to Hooray! - Thwarting Student Boredom

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"Boredom hurts!" noted Richard Strong. He was referring to the origin of the word "boredom" from the 18th century medical practice of boring holes in the heads of those deemed mentally ill. But his declaration resonates with teachers as well. Reducing boredom is about increasing student effort, he said. When you're bored, you're not having fun, but you're not doing anything about it. In a session that was anything but dull, consultants Harvey Silver and Richard Strong shared their "window notes" strategy for tapping student motivation and reducing boredom.

To get started using window notes, draw a large box and divide it into four quadrants, labeling one quadrant "facts," another "feelings," another "questions," and the last quadrant "ideas." When students are working on a piece of text ask them to organize their notes in the shape of a window and use this graphic organizer to collect facts, feelings, questions, and ideas about what they are reading. Then ask students to read their notes and discuss or write about what they noticed.

Why does this strategy increase achievement and decrease boredom? Reluctant learners believe

"Why is it my responsibility to hold your attention?" Silver asked. "Because if there's no attention, there's no engagement, and that means no learning."

no one is interested in what they think, said Strong. This strategy asks them what they think and lets them have their own opinions. Kids get bored when what they're learning doesn't relate to their lives or isn't deep enough, he asserted. Window notes challenge kids to go beyond the basic facts of what they're learning and push further, into self-discovery. The window-shaped structure explicitly lays out what they need to share. Strong and Silver contend that people lean toward one of four different motivational styles, or ways to show interest in the world - fact finders, feeling watchers, question seekers, and idea makers. Our responsibility is to build lessons with elements catering to each of these four types.

Review of article by Richard Strong, Harvey Silver, Matthew Perini, and Greg Tuculescu "Boredom and its Opposite" [http://www.ascd.org/affiliates/articles/eu200501\\_3.html](http://www.ascd.org/affiliates/articles/eu200501_3.html)

## MB ASCD AGM

The MB ASCD AGM will take place immediately after the Douglas Reeves presentation on May 15, 2008 at noon in the Caboto Centre. There will be annual reports and elections for Board members whose terms end this year. Following is the current list of Directors and honorary members of MB ASCD.

### **MB ASCD Board of Directors**

Brenda Lanoway, President  
Bill Burns, Past President  
Shelley Hasinoff, President Elect  
Michel Chartrand, Secretary-Treasurer  
Stephen Dudar, Director  
Lori Tighe, Director  
Tom Code, Director  
Jayesh Maniar, Director  
Barb Isaak, Director  
Donna Nentwig, Director  
Paulette Migie, Executive Secretary

### **MB ASCD Communication Committee**

Stephen Dudar, Co-chair  
Jayesh Maniar, Co-chair  
Rosie Dudar  
Tim Dittrick  
Karen Kroft  
Janet Dent  
Sandra Herbst-Luedtke

### **2007–2008 MB ASCD Honorary Members**

Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister MECY  
Ede Fast, Executive Director of MASBO

## Assessment can be fun! – Douglas Reeves

The same kid who can't focus and can't pay attention can turn on an electronic game and sit. Transfixed. Immovable. Without a follicle of hair out of place, because they're getting something that they're not getting from me. What do these electronic games give them? Feedback that is immediate. Feedback that is incremental. Feedback that lets them end every session knowing they're a little bit better than when they started. When you think about it, that's what great music teachers do. When you think about it, that's what great coaches do. They don't pull out grade books and give feedback nine weeks later; they have children leaving their presence knowing they're better than when they walked in. I aspire to have a math class, or a writing class, or a leadership class, or a statistics class as good as a great music teacher, or for that matter, as Nintendo. - Transcribed from an audio clip on the ASCD Archives.

### **MARK YOUR CALENDARS**

#### **Manitoba ASCD**

#### **5<sup>th</sup> Annual Distinguished Lecturer**

**Dr. Doug Reeves – May 15, 2008 9:00 am – 12:00 pm**

*Leading to Change*

**Carol Ann Tomlinson - October 10, 2008**

*The Differentiated Classroom: Practical Strategies for Making it Work*

**Rick Wormeli – February 2009**

*Differentiated Assessment and Grading*