

President's Message



Manitoba ASCD continues to offer high quality professional learning experiences and our members and friends are responding enthusiastically as a result. There were 350 educators at the Carol Ann Tomlinson session on October 10 at the Caboto Centre and we

were sorry to have to turn another 100 away! Our next professional learning event features Rick Wormeli who will be presenting at the Caboto Centre on February 19, 2009. Rick is a popular presenter with a dynamic presentation style and a passionate commitment to fair assessment and differentiation. We have capped the audience at 300 to make the room more comfortable and since 270 educators have already registered, I urge you to register now to avoid disappointment.

Manitoba ASCD has established a successful Distinguished Lecturer series in which we honour a highly respected educator each spring. Beginning with Thomas Sergiovanni in 2004, we have hosted Andy Hargreaves, Carl Glickman, Ann Lieberman, and most recently, Douglas Reeves. In May 2009, we will be honouring Lloyd Axworthy as our 6th Annual Manitoba ASCD Distinguished Lecturer. Because of the timing of the national Canadian Association of Principals (CAP) *Pillars of Leadership* conference, (May 13-16, 2009 in Winnipeg) Manitoba ASCD has agreed to partner with the hosts, COSL, and make our Distinguished Lecturer session part of this conference. We are also delighted to be able to sponsor a session at the conference on the Whole Child Compact with Molly McCluskey, who is our ASCD constituent services director. We plan to hold our MB ASCD AGM on May 14 at 4:00 pm.

Now is the time to register for the ASCD Annual Conference, *Learning Beyond Boundaries*, being held in Orlando from March 13-16. Apart from the hundreds of exciting sessions, I know I will be looking

forward to hearing keynote speakers, Greg Mortenson, author of the inspiring book, *3 Cups of Tea*, and Sir Kenneth Robinson, whose Ted Talk (*Do Schools Kill Creativity?*) reveals him to be an entertaining and provocative speaker.

If you do attend the Annual Conference, you will notice there is a new kid on the block. Manitoba ASCD has been instrumental in the formation of the **Canadian Educational Issues Network (CEI)**. The purpose of this ASCD Network is to bring Canadian ASCD members together, promote Canadian presenters, and build a stronger voice for Canadians in the larger organization. If you are interested in participating in the cross-Canada conversation about education, please visit <http://ascdnetwork.pbwiki.com> and ask to be added to the WIKI. CEI members will also be meeting at the CAP conference in Winnipeg in May.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and will continue to support the efforts of Manitoba ASCD to enhance professional learning opportunities for Manitoba educators. We value your membership and your continued interest in our organization. Why not contact one of the Board members and find out how you can become more involved?

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

President's Message	1
Differentiated Instruction	2
The Grail of Teaching	4
Book Review: What's Worth Fighting For in the Principalship	3
In Memory of John Rennie	3
Upcoming Professional Learning	2

INSERTS:

Differentiated Assessment and Grading – Rick Wormelli

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

Carol Ann Tomlinson on Differentiated Instruction - A Review

On October 10, we had the privilege of attending the sold-out crowd to hear Carol Ann Tomlinson speak about the Differentiated Classroom. Carol Ann is a pleasure to listen to and, having taught all levels, she brings a wealth of experience and practical examples to the table. Her down-to-earth style made us wish there was more time to hear her speak.

Carol Ann started her presentation with a bowling analogy, "Who are the kids in your class or school who are missed when the ball rolls right down the middle?" Tomlinson's message is very clear; one of the most important components to being successful with differentiated instruction is: *Know your students.*

"Differentiation is classroom practice that looks eyeball to eyeball with the reality that kids differ, and the most effective teachers do whatever it takes to hook the whole range of kids on learning." (Tomlinson, 2001).

In order for teachers to differentiate their teaching, they must be proactive in their planning rather than reactive. To be a pro-active teacher, you must know what students need to learn, plan how they will learn it, and plan how they will demonstrate learning has taken place.

Tomlinson calls these your "essential KUDs" - What do you want students to know? (facts, dates, names) What do you *want* students to understand? (multiplication is another form of addition, people *migrate* to meet basic needs) and What do you want your students to be able to do? (analyze, solve, evaluate).

Another important component in a successful DI classroom according to Carol Ann is to have: *On-going assessment and adjustment in your teaching.* The prior knowledge each student brings to a class can range anywhere from "starting from scratch" to being proficient in any given topic. Tomlinson strongly encourages teachers to conduct pre-assessments. Pre-assessments allow teachers to design activities appropriate to their learners and know where the strengths and needs fall. Without good pre-assessments and ongoing assessments - so instruction can be adjusted - a teacher is only being reactive in their teaching.

A differentiated classroom can look very different than a traditional model. It is noisy, but engaging. It has movement, with teamwork. It has challenges, but students are being successful! Teachers are participants with their students; providing immediate and informative feedback. In order for teachers to be effective with differentiation, Carol Ann emphasizes that a strong community within the classroom must be established. We must know and believe that our students can learn and do whatever it takes to get them there!

Lori Edwards and Tanya Kubrakovich are Coordinators of Instruction in the St. James-Assiniboia School Division.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

Manitoba ASCD

Rick Wormeli – February 2009

Differentiated Assessment and Grading

CAP conference on May 13-15, 2009

Featuring Lloyd Axworthy, the 6th annual MB ASCD Distinguished Lecturer, on **May 13** and Molly McCluskey, Constituent Services Director, on **May 14**.

Manitoba ASCD

Annual General Meeting on May 14 at 4:00 pm.

In Memory of John Rennie (1953-2008)



The Board of Manitoba ASCD is saddened to share news of the untimely death of John Rennie on November 15, 2008. John worked for Portage La Prairie School Division as Curriculum Coordinator, and served as a member of the Board of MBASCD from 2003-2006. A gentleman who was passionate about teaching and learning, John brought a much-appreciated perspective on education to our ASCD affiliate. We will be forever grateful for his contributions. Our deepest sympathy is extended to his wife, Sharon, and his sons, Christopher and Eric.

Book Review: What's Worth Fighting For in the Principalship? by Michael Fullan

"These are exciting, difficult, and contentious times, and the principal is at dead center in all of it." (Michael Fullan)

The role of principal is much more "complex" than it was three years ago, let alone a decade ago. In his writing, Fullan urges principals "to take charge and to assume that on any given day the system may not know what it is doing." The "good news" he says, "is that, finally the principalship is being recognized by politicians and policymakers as key to student learning... The bad news is that these policymakers have overloaded the ship ... only to hinder deep action." The "essential themes" of Fullan's thesis are developed with no-nonsense guidelines and specific research-based data to support what he says.

Fullan opens by looking at the role of the *Vise Principal*, an individual "shackled", while at the same time expected to be "the lead change agent" in an ever-changing, often chaotic environment. He explains the eight "high-magnitude change forces at play" - Initiatives; High-stakes vulnerability; Managerial diversions; Unfit for purpose; Strategies with potential; Recruitment and succession; Clusters, networks, and partnerships; and International benchmarks.

Fullan then sets the stage for his "four interrelated learning webs and their associated actions" - Leading Legacies; Leading Knowledgeably; Leading Learning Communities;

and Leading Systems: effective models for supporting schools and educational systems undergoing change. These learning webs have significantly impacted on schools and educational systems world wide. They are "alive" and organic, not "inanimate" and controlling like *vices*, and their related actions are powerful change agents.

For example, in the First Learning Web - Leading Legacies - Fullan states that school principals create "conditions for teachers ... to zero in on effective instructional practices, and to use data on student learning both as a lever for improvement and as a source of external accountability." By tending to both the "internal culture" of the school and paying attention to the system as a whole through an understanding of the bigger picture, the principal supports *both* internal and wide-scale reform.

Fullan's main message in *What's Worth Fighting For in the Principalship?* is: "lead the change you want to see"; don't believe someone else will do it. Work systematically in your own school, in relation to other schools, and in relation to the system as a whole – always with *the bigger picture* in mind. Fullan's message is specific, realistic, and timely. His citation from George Bernard Shaw's *Man and Superman*, on page 15, sums it all up when he says: "Life is no 'brief candle' to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment, and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations."

D. L. Nentwig is the ELA and Social Studies Curriculum Consultant in St. James-Assiniboia School Division

The Grail of Teaching: Four thoughts to Engage the Bored Student

The following is an excerpt from Sam Intrator's article *The Engaged Classroom* (Educational Leadership, Sept 2004, Volume 62, Number 1, pages 20-25) To read the full article go to the ASCD web site: <http://www.ascd.org>

Manipulate Classroom Pace

One teacher veered between a frenetically paced question-and-answer discussion and long spans of quiet journal time. She told me that her model for pace was MTV: I try and jar students into paying attention with lots of transitions, quick back-and-forth followed by some slow times. ...

Teachers also broke routines to get students' attention. Taking students outside for class, introducing a subject with dramatic video footage, or dressing up in costume were all strategies teachers used to be novel and garner attention.

Feed the Need to Create

Students were most vibrant when creating or thinking about something new. I can't emphasize enough how invigorating it was for them to be part of a discussion or project that allowed them to express their originality. Students tuned in when they felt ownership over ideas expressed in class.

SHARE YOUR PERSONAL PRESENCE

Energy and passion matter. Energized, expressive teaching fosters energized learning; sedentary, monotonous teaching sabotages attention. Personal presence does not need to be boisterous, but it must be authentic. Teachers who connected with students told poignant personal stories, conveyed their passions, and expressed emotion and vulnerability.

KNOW STUDENTS AS PEOPLE

The young people I spent time with wanted their teachers to know them as people. They wanted teachers to understand their experiences, interests, aspirations, needs, fears, and idiosyncrasies.

The teachers I observed ... were kid-savvy and created opportunities to get to know their students beyond the classroom... [they] used this knowledge of the personal to create bridges between their students and course content.

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