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## **EDITOR'S MESSAGE**

### **Transformations in Leadership and Curriculum**

How do educators in Manitoba transform leadership and curriculum to address the needs of students today? If you are looking for one right way or a formula to follow, it will not be found in this journal. Instead, we offer a number of interesting articles whose authors have struggled with big questions and reached a variety of interesting and plausible conclusions.

According to Michael Fullan, reforms flourish in professional learning communities through a culture of sharing, trust, and support. As Fullan explains, one way to nurture that culture is through assessment literacy which includes:

- A) examining and making sense of students data,
- B) using the data to make changes in teaching and schools,
- c) administrators and teachers engaging in assessment discussions.

The lead article by Bruce Wellman & Laura Lipton expresses views similar to those of Michael Fullan. They explain a three-phase process for making decisions regarding school change based on the analysis of student assessment data.

David Manzuk explains an interesting way to implement the new English Language Arts Curriculum by conducting Socratic Seminars that satisfy the social-emotional needs of students in the Middle Years.

A second article about curriculum implementation by Brenda Hill-Yaschyshyn and Marjorie Millman discusses a rationale and procedure for conducting Literature Circles with grade eight students. Innovative teaching strategies such Literature Circles may impact on the whole school when changes such changes in the timetable are required to facilitate student meetings. However, as Oakes et al have observed, teachers who are committed to ideas and grapple with questions such as, how and why does an idea or strategy work? and what changes are required to make it work? are likely to make lasting improvements.

The article by Noni Classen incorporates several of the conditions that Oakes claims must be met in order to make lasting improvements: commitment to an ideal, commitment from teachers and educational leaders, and commitment from the community. Classen recounts her experiences as a teacher in an Alternative Program. Administrators will understand the need to support and encourage these programs.

Vikie Norris explains curriculum development based on current research, observation, and reflection in her article. She describes how a team of specialists developed methods for working with students who have Fetal Alcohol Disorders.

Plagiarism has been a concern of educators for a long time. Margaret Stimson discusses the implications of the Internet on plagiarism. She challenges educators to teach young students to document the sources they have used in their assignments as a way of avoiding the problem.

Early Intervention Programs have been a topic of controversy throughout the 1990s. Prystupa-Cyr analyzes Reading Recovery acknowledging strengths in the program, but suggesting that the inquiring voice she found in graduate classes was silenced in Reading Recovery training. Froehlich and McCreath analyze five programs including Reading Recovery to glean the salient components of each intervention. They stress that there is no single program that fits all students. Therefore, solutions based on current research need to be developed locally.

The article by Nick-Johnson, Redekop, and Wall discusses the challenges and rewards of integrating the curriculum in middle years. They share their award winning program noting that such initiatives require total commitment from administration and staff. Debate the issues and enjoy the read!

#### **References**

- Michael Fullan, "Leading Change in Professional Learning Communities": General Session Presentation. ASCD Conference on Teaching and Learning, Oct. 11-13, 1999.
- Oakes, J., Quartz, J. H. Ryan, S., & Lipton, M. (2000) *Becoming good American Schools: The struggle for civic virtue in education reform*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.