

alternate Newsletter

The BC Alternate Education Association: A PSA of the BCTF

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Gratitude

Michele Genge

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When we planned our final Advantage Program overnight canoe trip to Strathcona Park Lodge, we didn't anticipate an atmospheric river arriving. Kim and I spent the day before stripping and waterproofing packs and gear with our students. I scrounged bomb proof rain gear from my paddling friends.

You never know just how tough and resilient our students can be until they face new challenges. When we arrived at SPL it was just starting to spit. By the time we met Seb, our guide, and completed our team building exercises, the drizzle had begun. While eating our bagels under the outdoor pavilion the skies opened up.

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President's Message

Tianay de Andrade



Ey swayel ~ Good day ~ Bonjour!
I have been on the BCAEA Executive for a few years now, first as treasurer, then as vice president, but since I'm new to the role of president, I'd like to share with you a little bit about myself. I'm a wife, mother, daughter, sister and friend. My family, culture and learning has always been important to me. I was drawn back to school as a mature student while raising a young family. I've been grateful to work in a variety of roles in education such as education assistant, youth care worker, Indigenous liaison and teacher in the K-12 system.

These days, it's challenging working in education, especially with our youth. I don't need to tell you this. You are the frontlines. You are the hello, good to see you smile, the first person they see at school, the person who drives them to school, the coach, the cook, the listening ear, the tough love and the caring adult who gives them a second (or fifth) chance. You're the fresh start and that's just what the youth need, and they depend on you. And I'm happy to work alongside you as we move forward to support the young people in today's world.

These days, I find myself choosing to focus where I spend my energy and how I spend it. I remember as a child, I always looked forward to the "big things" like birthdays, shopping trips, field trips and holidays. Yes, I still look forward to these "big things," but maybe not the shopping trips. Probably now because I'm a little older, I am celebrating more of the "little things." It's the moments each day, like showing kindness, finding laughter, caring for those around us. Our relationships with each other are most important. They impact everything we do. I'm choosing the "little things" that really matter in our day to day. You will see me doing a "happy dance" or breathing a sigh of a relief smile more often or taking the time to watch the world around me. I hope you find moments to celebrate every day in the work that you do as we walk in this world together.

We are excited to finally hold our Challenge & Change Conference again in February after a two year COVID hiatus. I look forward to meeting you then!

Kwetstlome ~ See you soon! ♦

Gratitude

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We loaded up the two war canoes and set out into the weather. My stroke, Bella, kept the rate going and Seb's gaggle of young boys kept the humour alive. Soon we were at Rainbow Island with nary a whine nor a whimper. Seb had a fire blazing in no time and once the tents were up play time was on. Brooklyn dove into the cold water and then Jack and Clyde joined in. This was not just a polar bear dip – but an hour long immersion. Jack, red as a lobster upon exiting, came up to the fire invigorated and exuberant. The other twelve students went off exploring the island, sans electronic devices which were locked in the bus back at the Lodge.

Seb, along with Mars and Connel, made yam curry and rice for dinner. A masterful outdoor leader, Seb gathered us all in a circle before a feeding frenzy ensued. "Pass your bowl to the left. When I dish up your food tell me from 1 to 5 how hungry you are and then say something you are grateful for". To a person students said," I spoke to people I never would've talked to". Joel Sample, our resident philosopher summed it up best," I had the deepest, most meaningful conversation with a group of people I would never have talked to and I didn't think about my

phone once. Now I get it Ms. Genge. Thank-you for bringing us out here".

Wow. "My work is done", I thought, "If I go home, get COVID and miss the last two weeks of school I will be okay. This is the best retirement gift I could hope for".

I was brought out of my reverie with "Can I say 6?" spouted by Bryson, a grade 8 boy with hollow legs. Then the crowd chowed down on food most had never eaten before. The s'mores were just the treat needed to boost the energy levels. Jet had four and then went back for more of the sticky, sweet delight. The heavens opened up again and, oblivious to the weather, Mars stoked our fire while the others huddled up like puppies to stay warm.

"What do we do now?" asked conscientious Lydia our Youth Care Worker once the students had headed off *...continued on page 16*



Say
something
you are
grateful
for

Creative Learner Engagement

Katy Bigsby

When you hear the word engagement, what do you think of? Engagement is often associated with participating, liking an activity, or following directions. Have you noticed that all these definitions are dichotomous? Either the learner participates, likes the activity, follows directions or they don't. What if engagement was an evolving, co-created process that exists on a spectrum?

Engagement on a spectrum

Through my master's research, engagement arose as key to supporting marginalized learners. For this reason, the REiL model I created includes engagement as one of the central building blocks to facilitating meaningful learning. REiL stands for Rapport, Engagement, imagination & creativity, and Learners. REiL is a play on words for what is "real" - infusing imagination and creativity into the experience of learning.

My definition of engagement is a flexible, co-created environment in which learners' ideas are incorporated, and opportunities to lead exist. When I'm facilitating a session with school staff, some teachers begin to twitch, and imagine I'm suggesting that learners lead all activities. I think this fear may relate to loss of control, and school systems continued overreliance on authoritarian ways of teaching and learning. In a system where teachers are expected to manage and maintain control, how do we offer learners voice and agency? Greater learner voice leads to greater agency, fueling the engagement cycle.

Before going further, let me clarify what I mean by voice and agency. Voice is learner contributions, both verbal and non-verbal including:

- questions,
- comments,
- interests,
- likes & dislikes,
- curiosities,
- prior knowledge, and
- family, cultural, and community connections.

By agency, I mean:

- the learner understands that their contributions are heard, and their voice is valued in the process

When learner voice and agency are activated, the learner has a direct impact on the learning experience and the learning process is engaged. Note how different this is from our initial discussion of a dichotomous engagement. One is fixed, the other fluid. One is dependent primarily on the learner, the other on a process that builds engagement.

Building engagement

Below, I describe the 4 steps along the spectrum. Note: movement along the spectrum happens in both directions.

Learner participates in teacher-led activity

We know that for some learners to simply participate in an activity can be significant. At this stage, rapport, that is the capacity to be interested and engaged with

*Engagement
is a flexible
co-created
environment*

the learner is key. This can get “tricky” and is even more important when the learner has notable behavioral, social, and emotional needs. Understanding that we do not need to like a learner to build rapport can help. Liking is a preferential choice; rapport is an ongoing practice that takes time and patience.

Learner enjoys teacher-led activity

The next step on the spectrum is for learners to enjoy the activity. This is different than simply participating in an activity. If we enjoy an activity, we’re more likely to be engaged. Knowing what your students love (and loathe!) helps in designing learning that is engaging.

Learner co-creates with teacher

Co-creation can begin in small ways by offering choice, such as students getting to choose what animal they want to research or being able to use pencil crayons instead of markers when creating a cover page for a report. Choice increases learner voice and engagement. Start small and offer a choice of 2 – 3 options. Learners can then move into co-creating activities, assessments, and learning plans. In any co-creation, there is a dialogue around interests, possibilities, and learners have an active say on what occurs. Greater involvement in decision making = greater engagement.

Learner leads activity

Finally, learners lead activities, make decisions, and have an active role in their own

learning. Leadership is a practiced skill. By providing students the opportunity to make decisions, solve problems, and communicate values, we support their social, emotional, creative, and academic development.

In closing, engagement has many definitions. For the creation of the REiL model, I was interested in engagement that exists beyond interest, enjoyment and participating in activities. This is not to say that these cannot be places to start, we simply don’t want to stop there. Engagement is youth having a voice in what learning activities happen, and in leading activities. Engagement involves co-creating activities. This idea of co-creating activities can be unsettling for some teachers. Many of us become used to being “the one” in charge. Co-creating involves consulting and integrating learners’ interests and suggestions into activities. This type of engagement offers learners a choice of activities, a flexible approach, opportunities to design the learning plan, and incorporates teaching and learning practices which include learners’ families and cultures. This is the type of engagement that empowers learners. ♦

Katy Bigsby is the founder of REiL Learning, an educational consultancy that supports schools and community organizations integrate Social Emotional Learning and build pro-active mental health programs for marginalized learners.

*Engagement
is youth
having a
voice*



3 Habits of Highly Effective Teacher Teams

Paige Tutt

There is
no need
to make
it overly
complicated

As schedules fill up in the new school year, the practice of meeting as teacher teams can be tough to fit into the day.

But there's tremendous value in establishing a consistent, structured routine of grade- or subject-focused meetings—especially when schools plan and carve out time for it. When teachers meet as teams, writes consultant Elisa B. MacDonald for ASCD, they learn to “cultivate diverse perspectives, ground disagreement in text-based ideas (not personal attacks), promote intentional data use, and focus team meetings on what collaboration is ultimately about—improving student learning.”

There's no need to make it overly complicated: By keeping the work lean and focused on just a few discrete areas, teachers can benefit in spite of time constraints. “It's enough to start with small, intentional moves to gradually build a culture of trust,” writes MacDonald, a former teacher and literacy coach. “In time your team will view reading together, observing one another teach, and looking at student work together not only as practices you do in meetings, but as healthy collaborative habits that transform learning.”

Here are three strategies MacDonald recommends for getting the most out of teacher teams:

1. Read and Listen Together

While reading by yourself is beneficial, discussing articles, videos, and podcasts with colleagues provides a rich opportunity for team members to broaden their thinking and deepen their understanding of the content as they hear new ideas and challenge their own perspectives.

If your school doesn't set time aside for PD or collaborative team reading, start off with “short, engaging texts”—MacDonald suggests a relatable cartoon, a controversial quote, or an inspirational excerpt from a podcast—then build up to longer texts and book studies as the year progresses and teachers' schedules allow. “Soon your colleagues will expect to engage in text-based discussions in your meetings,” she says.

In lieu of using text-based discussion protocols, such as the four A's or the final word, which MacDonald notes can feel “time-consuming or restrictive,” a well-formulated prompt can help structure a thoughtful conversation and encourage quality, relevant responses. When school DEI director Osamagbe Osagie's team read the article “Growing up Black in All the Wrong Places,” for example, she asked her team: “Given this article's provocative title, what will it take for us to create a world that is comfortable and safe for individuals who are Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Asian, and multiracial to grow and thrive in?” MacDonald writes.

2. Observe Colleagues in Classrooms

In high-performing schools, teachers often visit colleagues' classrooms for peer observation, a practice MacDonald compares to the difference between "seeing a movie with friends, catching a bite afterwards, and talking about what you saw together" versus seeing the same movie alone.

When team leaders establish clear goals for classroom visit, it helps keep the process streamlined and prevents team members from being overwhelmed by the variety of ideas they encounter.

- Establish a clear objective for each observation: First visits can be unstructured, but subsequent visits should include clear guidance about what to look out for, and should connect to whatever the team is learning about, MacDonald says.
- Be specific about goals: Though your team may collaboratively write or review an entire lesson plan together, it's fine to demo just a portion of it for the team to examine together, MacDonald explains.
- Identify how to gather data: "Guided by your purpose, decide what data your team will collect to help your team debrief afterward," MacDonald writes. You might agree to record audio of student group discus-

sions or take photos of completed student work.

- Mix it up: Plan to observe both live and pre-recorded lessons as well as "dry demos," where a teacher presents a lesson to colleagues without students in the room. This exercise reduces stress for the presenting teacher—they can start over or stop at any point in the process—while providing an opportunity to practice strategies before bringing them into the classroom.

3. Examine Student Work

If you can't routinely visit other teachers' classrooms, regularly evaluating student work as a team is a valuable exercise. On a rotating basis, each member can bring in student work samples that are:

- Authentic: Sample work should reflect a genuine issue or challenge for the presenting teacher(s).
- Relevant: Submitting samples that are relevant to team inquiry and study goals ensures that the team benefits from the analysis.
- Current: Use recent samples—from formative assessments, for instance—so that teachers can "re-teach, intervene, or enrich when students need it," MacDonald advises.

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Evaluating student work as a team is a valuable exercise

Trauma-Informed Teaching Strategies

Jessica Minahan

Put
students'
reactions
into
context

Small changes in classroom interactions can make a big difference for traumatized students.

Up to two-thirds of U.S. children have experienced at least one type of serious childhood trauma, such as abuse, neglect, natural disaster, or experiencing or witnessing violence. Trauma is possibly the largest public health issue facing our children today. Traumatized students are especially prone to difficulty in self-regulation, negative thinking, being on high alert, difficulty trusting adults, and inappropriate social interactions. They often haven't learned to express emotions healthily and instead show their distress through aggression, avoidance, shutting down, or other off-putting behaviors. These actions can feel antagonistic to teachers who don't understand the root cause of the student's behavior, which can lead to misunderstandings, ineffective interventions, and missed learning time.

Neurobiologically, students can't learn if they don't feel safe, known, and cared for within their schools. When teachers are proactive and responsive to the needs of students suffering from traumatic stress and make small changes in the classroom that foster a feeling of safety, it makes a huge difference in their ability to learn. Here are some examples.

1. Expect Unexpected Responses

First, teachers must learn to put students' reactions into context—and not to take them personally. Students with trauma histories can react and behave in seemingly unexpected ways, such as having a sudden outburst during a favorite activity or crying out of the blue one second after laughing. Teachers may be taken by surprise. They say things like, “But he was fine this morning, I didn't see that coming!” or “She normally loves playing the drums in music class. I have no idea where her reaction came from.” This uncertainty leaves the teacher in a constant state of hyper-alertness when interacting with the student. This in turn can result in fatigue, as the teacher is guarded and unable to predict what will happen from one moment to another.

One way to understand these reactions is to think of the student as a soda can, and events that may trigger their trauma stress as shaking that can. We can't tell by looking if the can was recently shaken, but if it was, opening the can results in an unexpected explosive, messy reaction. If a student is triggered and experiencing heightened emotion, even a benign direction such as, “Please move over to make room for Jenny” could result in an “explosion” that the teacher never saw coming. By using trauma-sensitive strategies in the classroom, we can help reduce the times our students are “shaken.”

2. Employ Thoughtful Interactions

Traumatized students often behave in ways that may interfere with teaching and learning, which can be frustrating. Teachers are in a position of power, and these students may be overly defensive, anticipating adult criticism, or defiant, as a way to assert control. Yet for traumatized students, the ability to learn and behave appropriately can be person-dependent. When they are with a safe and supportive adult, their behavior reflects that.

Consider this scenario drawn from schools I've worked with: Trevor, a 6th grader whose father overdosed on heroin two years ago and who has witnessed ongoing domestic abuse throughout his childhood, was in Ms. Carlton's class for part of the day and Ms. Finch's class for the other part. Ms. Carlton had a reputation of working well with hard-to-reach kids, and sure enough, Trevor behaved in a stellar way in her class. When he was with Ms. Finch, however, he was sent to the office nearly three times a week for explosive behaviour.

The teacher is fifty percent of every interaction with a student: By changing the way we give a direction or respond, we can reduce problematic behavior. Ms. Carlton had taken the time to build a trusting relationship with Trevor and learned to give directions in a way that he would respond well to. Interaction strategies are a type

of accommodation that typically go unnamed and unwritten, but they were the reason that Trevor could feel safe and access the curriculum.

If Ms. Carlton had written down the successful strategies she used with Trevor, the list might have started with avoiding authoritative directives such as, "Pick that up." To give Trevor a sense of control, Ms. Carlton always embedded choice in her directions, asking, "Do you want to be in the front of the line or the back of the line?" instead of simply telling him to "line up." This helped prevent a poor reaction.

Ms. Carlton also conveyed respect and transparency by providing the reason behind each direction. Instead of saying, "No backpacks on the floor. I don't want to trip and fall!" Ms. Carlton would say, "Oh dear, I hope I don't fall. I have a bad knee! Could you please move your backpack?" Stating the reason first assured that Trevor knew the context (and necessity) of the demand.

Conversely, Ms. Finch would often go up close to Trevor, tower over him, and say in front of his peers, "Stop tapping your pencil!" This typically ended in a power struggle and Trevor's escalating behavior. Trevor, like many traumatized students, had experienced a loss of control in his life, and power struggles with an authoritative figure were particularly triggering. Ms. Carlton instinc- *...continued on page 10*

*Teachers
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position
of power*

Teaching Strategies

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The
impact
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tively knew that a more private nonverbal direction could be less confrontational for a student in “fight or flight” mode. She would write, “Please stop tapping” on a piece of paper, put it gently on Trevor’s desk without his peers noticing, and then give him space by walking away quickly. When possible, she also gave Trevor extended time to comply with directions to avoid power struggles, asking, for example, “Can you please pick that up before lunch?” rather than, “Pick that up now”. This allowed Trevor time to decompress and respond rationally.

3. Be Specific About Relationship Building

At one point in the year, Ms. Carlton told Ms. Finch that building a relationship with Trevor was key to her success with him, and she suggested that Ms. Finch do the same. Unfortunately, saying, “Build a relationship” is too vague and leaves too much up to the teacher’s instincts. Instead, Ms. Carlton could have told Ms. Finch that she greeted Trevor every day at the classroom door and asked him about the Avengers or basketball. She could have told Ms. Finch how she used the “two by ten” rule; she talked to him for two minutes a day for ten days in a row about topics unrelated to academics or behavior.

Whenever Ms. Carlton could see she wouldn’t have time for this in the 10-day period, she asked the counselor or special education teacher to cover her class for two minutes so she could go for a walk

with Trevor. She repeated this trust-building strategy several times throughout the year, especially after he exhibited anger or frustration and after school vacations and long weekends.

Ms. Carlton skillfully used relationship-building and interaction strategies to work with Trevor. Yet the impact could have been greater had she written and shared those strategies with Ms. Finch and the rest of Trevor’s team via a shared document, behavior plan, or student success plan. Likewise, if counselors, school nurses, and psychologists write and share such techniques with each classroom teacher, kids like Trevor, when triggered, wouldn’t always have to leave class to find a safe adult.

4. Promote Predictability and Consistency

Not knowing what is coming next can put anyone on high alert, especially traumatized students. Providing predictability through visual schedules of the class agenda or school day can help. Ms. Carlton was adamant about previewing any changes to the normal routine ahead of time [saying, “We are going to have indoor recess today because of the snow,” or “The DVD player isn’t working so we can’t watch a science video at the end of class today”]. This prepared Trevor and thus elicited a calmer response.

A teacher’s behavior can also feel unpredictable to traumatized students. When students are working independently and

quietly—doing what they are supposed to be doing—they don't know when they will get the teacher's attention. But when students are doing the wrong thing—like drumming on the desk with a pencil in each hand or swearing—teachers are more predictable and react quickly! Because predictability is comforting to students with anxiety and trauma histories, they may resort to getting the teacher's attention through inappropriate means. Trevor could get Ms. Finch to react immediately by flipping his water bottle noisily, but could go twenty minutes without so much as eye contact from her when he was quietly reading.

To counter this imbalance and create an overall feeling of safety, teachers can use predictable positive attention. During independent work time, if a teacher says to a student "Great work! I'll be back to check on you," the student has no way of predicting how long they need to wait—and from past experience they know that the teacher may forget to return altogether.

Using predictable positive attention, however, the teacher can say, "I am going to check on you in ten minutes," put a timer on the student's desk, and add, "Come tap me on the shoulder when the timer goes off." If the teacher has many students in the class that could benefit from this, she could transfer the strategy to small groups: "I will check on this desk group at X time."

Another strategy for providing predictable attention, especially for middle and high school students, is to hand an anxious or traumatized student a sticky note with a time on it as they walk into class each day. The first time, the note will need to be explained: "If you don't understand something in class, please don't worry—I am going to check on you during independent work time at 11:45, and I will answer any questions you have then." Ms. Carlton found this strategy comforting to Trevor.

This predictable check-in pairs the negative thoughts the student may have ["I don't know how to do this"] with a reassuring thought ["But my teacher will be here in seven minutes!"]. The student can better tolerate uncomfortable feelings when they know help and a positive interaction are coming. Telling the student what will happen and when and always following through establishes the teacher as a consistent, reliable adult.

5. Teach Strategies to "Change the Channel"

Traumatized students often engage in inaccurate thinking, tending to focus on the negative. Common classroom management strategies often only exacerbate this tendency. How many of us have seen frequent movement breaks on a student's IEP or student success plan? It is one of the most common accommodations that we offer to students *...continued on page 12*

*Predictability
is comforting
to students
with anxiety*

Teaching Strategies

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who seem dysregulated. Unfortunately, during these breaks, students can ruminate on negative memories, current stressors, angry thoughts, or worries. If we ask a high school student who is getting angry and becoming agitated to take a walk, he may ruminate the whole time and return just as angry. Sending a 1st grader to a “calming chair” can leave her to persevere on worrying thoughts. Instead, we need to help them “change the channel.” Both Ms. Carlton and Ms. Finch used breaks with Trevor, but in vastly different ways.

When adults can’t sleep, we often read a book or watch TV, which distracts us from uncomfortable thoughts so we can fall back asleep. Teachers can use the same principle for kids with trauma and anxiety: Teach students that their brain is like a remote control that they can use to “switch the channel” to help them calm down.

These switching activities are called cognitive distractions or thought breaks and are incompatible with negative thinking. A listening center or “find the picture” activity can be helpful to young children. For older students, you might try Mad Libs, trivia, or more abstract strategies such as counting all the green items in the room, saying the alphabet backwards, or thinking of the first 10 lines of a favorite movie. Ms. Carlton taught Trevor to do Star Wars

trivia when he was upset, which helped him calm down quickly. Conversely when Ms. Finch had Trevor go for a walk, his negative thinking would escalate, and he would often not return to class.

6. Give Supportive Feedback to Reduce Negative Thinking

Many traumatized students interpret information through a negativity amplifier. When a teacher says, “Please correct the first problem,” the student might hear, “You are stupid.” Or a student might report that the teacher screamed at her when the teacher was really using a calm tone, as even neutral facial expressions can be misinterpreted. It is helpful to smile and explicitly say when you are happy with the student, a strategy Ms. Carlton utilized. When giving negative feedback, teachers can use the positive sandwich approach—starting and ending with a positive comment: [1] “I love how you remembered the formula,” [2] “You made a small calculation error there,” [3] “Great job getting problem #3 correct.”

7. Create Islands of Competence

Recognizing areas of strength in students is a powerful way to combat the poor self-concept and negative thinking associated with trauma. To support a more accurate self-concept, teachers can provide what Robert Brooks calls “islands of competence” for students swimming in a sea of inadequacy. When a student thinks

Traumatized students interpret information through a negativity amplifier

negatively, the negative moments during the day tend to weigh more heavily than the positive moments. We need to counter this effect with positive experiences. Educator teams need to ask themselves, “Does the student feel competent during the day?” If the answer is no, contriving an island of competence for the student is in order. Ms. Carlton often asked Trevor to help a younger student or a peer who was struggling in an academic area Trevor was strong in, or had him fix the stapler when it was malfunctioning. She would also point out in a written note to Trevor that he was the first student to finish a math activity. In high school, educators may want to foster students’ talents by never letting them drop electives (which might require creativity in scheduling academic support in core classes).

It is important that students experience competence to develop a more accurate self-narrative and to begin to create a positive future picture of themselves. We want them to say, “I really helped that student with her artwork. When I grow up, I could work with kids.” Or “I am good at fixing things. I could be a mechanic someday.”

8. Limit Exclusionary Practices

Behavior is communication, and we’ve looked at how traumatized students often communicate feelings through their behavior. Teachers’ behavior is also com-

munication—and it may not be communicating the message we are striving to send. Common teacher practices such as ignoring inappropriate behavior, sending students to the office, or sending younger kids to sit alone at a back table or in the hallway can unintentionally trigger students who have experienced abandonment or neglect. We need to remember that when some of our students were young and cried, no one came. Ignoring them can trigger a trauma response and make them feel the teacher doesn’t like them or is even happy that they are upset.

Ms. Finch would ignore Trevor when he was expressing anger, such as by crumpling up a paper, growling, or slinging a book from his desk onto the floor. On the other hand, Ms. Carlton responded to such moments at the beginning of the year by validating Trevor’s feelings (“I am sorry you are upset” or “I see that you are angry”). This is a much more empathetic approach, will preserve the relationship, and will avoid triggering a trauma response in the student.

Another practice to be cautious about is using time with a preferred adult as an incentive. For example, a principal might say, “If you get all your homework done this week, you and I will have lunch together!” The problem with this is that if the student doesn’t get all their homework done, then the principal withholds their attention and time. This *...continued on page 15*

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In-Person Learning is Better For Me

Ayvree Dewar

People have been learning since the beginning of time. The internet is still very new and back in the day there wasn't even internet. Before the pandemic most learning was done in person and it wasn't until COVID that we all started online. Also, only 63% of the world has access to the internet. In person learning is better than online learning because of the cost, internet issues, and lack of face-to-face support.

As previously stated, only 63% of the world has access to the internet. This is largely because of the high cost. In the United States alone, the average price of the internet is \$61 a month. That does not even include the other things one must purchase, like a laptop or a tablet. A laptop computer can range anywhere from \$200-\$1000, but unless you want a cheap one from a garage sale or thrift store, you are looking at paying about \$700 on average. Even if you can afford a computer and access to the internet, there is also a ton of other internet issues that act as a barrier.

The internet is not always a reliable tool and when it goes down it can be a huge block to your learning. On top of that, there are often mix ups with online classes, Zoom codes, hand-in folders, and numerous other online issues. Like sometimes your Zoom would shut down, or not let you into a class, or when you are trying to listen to your teacher, or try to explain something sometimes your internet would glitch in and

out, and your teacher would glitch out and you would not understand what she was saying. Also, sometimes your microphone wouldn't work or your sound would cut out. When you are in a Zoom class, there are so many people asking questions, it is hard to get one-on-one support. Even if you do, all the above issues make it way less effective than face to face learning.

In my experience, when you receive one-on-one support in an online setting, it is very short and ineffective because the teacher always has someone else to help or another class to get to. It is hard for a teacher to show you how to do something or explain a problem through a screen. Most of the time, the teachers try and explain something and then give you a task without any one-on-one support at all.

As you can see, because of the online mix-ups, lack of one-on-one support, and high cost of internet, in-person learning is far superior to online learning. In the world today, with the amazing tools we have, online learning is definitely an option that will work for some, but it is not as good of an option for most students. That's why I am so glad to have a classroom and don't have to do online learning. ♦

Ayvree Dewar is a student at the Rutland Learning Centre in School District 23. She wrote this essay at the beginning of the school year to celebrate her return to in-person learning.

I am so
glad to
have a
classroom

3 Habits

[continued from page 7]

While it may be tempting to “go big or go home” with team meetings, the realities of crammed teacher schedules can interrupt even the best intentions. Starting small—consider picking just one strategy to start—is worth the effort, MacDonald concludes. Strong teacher teams can sustain teachers, helping them connect to colleagues and feel supported—ulti-

mately keeping educators engaged in the work and learning from each other. ♦

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Teaching Strategies

[continued from page 13]

implies the relationship is conditional and can trigger an abandonment trauma response for some students. It is better to use one-to-one time with students in a noncontingent way. This way adults are communicating, “I like you for who you are,” not “I like you when you behave the right way.”

Fostering a Feeling of Safety

Students can't learn unless they feel safe. When it comes to student trauma, there

is much that is beyond educators' power, but there is also a great deal they can do to build a supportive and sensitive environment where students feel safe, comfortable, take risks, learn, and even heal. ♦

Jessica Minahan is a licensed and board-certified behaviour analyst, special educator, and consultant to schools internationally. Originally published in vol 77 of *Educational Leadership* on www.ascd.org, October 1, 2019.

The BCAEA Challenge & Change Conference
is February 16/17, 2023!

Gratitude

(continued from page 3)

to their tents. “No electronic devices and we’re on an island. I’m going to bed”, was my reply. I awoke a few times thinking they must all be asleep but then heard Jet’s voice and then Connel’s laughter. Turns out eleven students crowded into Clyde and Jack’s tent to play Cards Against Humanity. Jack was never so proud to play host making this the best field trip ever in his mind.

Despite the late-night activities, they were all up by 7:00. They knew that they would only get breakfast once their gear was packed and brought to the beach. To a student they did this. You could’ve knocked me over with a feather. The sun came out, so paddling back was a dream. Bella was even stronger at setting a slow steady pace,

so we breezed back enjoying the times we came up in stealth mode alongside the other canoe and passed, leaving the boys erupting with frenetic energy and whoops and hollers. They got it together coming into the bay picking up Bryson’s chant “Buf-fet, Buf-fet”. They finished the trip feasting at a buffet of healthy locally sourced food.

Thanks to the generous BCAEA Student Activity Grant we were awarded, we did all enjoy the best field trip ever. ♦

Michele Genge *retired from the Advantage Program at Highland Secondary in Comox last June. She continues to serve as the Secretary of the BCAEA.*

PROActive CURRICULUM

For nearly twenty-five years, ProActive Curriculum has produced self-paced, mastery-based courses which follow BC Curriculum and are used with great success in classrooms throughout BC and the Yukon.

We have dozens of newly written or newly revised courses available for the new BC Curriculum, including First Peoples English 11 and 12. Under development and available in early 2023 is Contemporary Indigenous Studies 12. We offer generous discounts for those wanting to update previously purchased courses.

Visit www.proactivecurriculum.com for more, or contact me directly: mike@proactivecurriculum.com.

2022-2023 Budget

Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

Income Accounts

BCTF GL	Sub-Code	Description	Proposed Budget
901000	9921	2021-22 Ending Surplus	\$ 75,532.61
904000	9930	BCTF Members (20@\$30)	\$ 600.00
904000	9930	Students/Retirees (1@\$15)	\$ 15.00
904000	9930	Subscribers (0)	\$ -
904000	9931	BCTF Member Grant	\$ 6,000.00
904000	9934	Interest Income	\$ 1,000.00
905000	9940	Conference Fees	\$ 90,000.00
905000	9943	Exhibitors Fees	\$ 3,000.00
Total Income and Surplus Available			\$ 176,147.61

Expense Accounts

906000	9950	Meetings - PSA Executive	\$ 20,000.00
906000	9953	Meetings - Subcommittee	\$ 2,000.00
906000	9954	Meetings - AGM	\$ 2,000.00
906500	9950	TTOC - PSA Executive Meetings	\$ 4,000.00
906500	9966	TTOC - PSA Conference	\$ 6,000.00
907000	9961	Publication - Newsletter	\$ 2,500.00
908000	9970	Operating	\$ 2,000.00
908000	9971	Equipment Purchase	\$ 3,500.00
908000	9972	Chapter Support	\$ 1,000.00
908000	9978	Scholarships	\$ 16,000.00
909000	9980	Conference - Operating	\$ 15,000.00
909000	9981	Conference - Facilities	\$ 3,500.00
909000	9982	Conference - Catering	\$ 25,000.00
909000	9983	Conference - Printing	\$ 4,000.00
909000	9984	Conference - Promotions	\$ 500.00
909000	9985	Conference - Committees	\$ 5,000.00
909000	9986	Conference - Entertainment	\$ 20,000.00
909000	9987	Conference - Equipment Rental	\$ 10,000.00
909000	9988	Conference - Speakers	\$ 30,000.00
Total Expenditures			\$ 172,000.00
Expected Year End Surplus			\$ 4,147.61

June 2022 Financial Statement



BCTF

British Columbia Teachers' Federation A Union of Professionals
 100-550 West 6th Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Z 4P2 bctf.ca
 604-871-2283 1-800-663-9163

BC ALTERNATE EDUCATION ASSOCIATION Y700

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND DISBURSEMENTS (Note 1)
 FOR THE YEAR ENDED June 30, 2022

Balance, July 1, 2021 \$ 83,975.09

Receipts

BCTF grant	6,000.00	
Membership/subscription fees	890.00	
Interest	1,363.83	
Conference fees	(1,522.50)	
		6,731.33

Disbursements

Publication-newsletter	1,462.41	
Operating expenses	2,004.63	
Furniture/Equipment Purchase	3,426.08	
Scholarships	6,570.00	
Miscellaneous	50.00	
Conference-operating	1,309.58	
Conference-committee costs	223.28	
Conference-speakers	127.83	
		(15,173.81)

Balance, June 30, 2022 \$ 75,532.61

Notes:

1. This statement reflects only funds held by the BC Teachers' Federation on behalf of the BC Teachers of Alternate Education.

2022-23 Goals and Objectives

PSA Member Grant—Form 1: Proposed PSA Program Statement		Year: 2022-2023	
PSA: Y700 – Alternate Education			
GOAL	OBJECTIVES	ACTIVITIES	EVALUATION (method & criteria)
Promote alternate education.	Network with other PSA's and programs that support the association's goals.	Send Newsletter to interest groups. Maintain website.	PSAC receives Newsletter. Web page updated.
	Network with organizations that deal with alternative education programs and students.	Liaise with Indigenous Ed and DL PSAs. Invite to contribute articles for Newsletter.	Indigenous Ed and related articles in Newsletter.
	Dialogue with Ministry Staff as appropriate.	Invite relevant Ministry staff to contribute information and/or articles for Newsletter.	Information and/or from Ministry staff in Newsletter.
Support and promote PSA membership, networking, and professional growth.	Promote membership.	Include membership in conference registration. Encourage non-members to join the PSA.	Membership increased or maintained.
	Support regional development and promote local chapters of BCAEA.	Provide expertise and financial support for regional conferences and activities. Provide start up grants and maintenance grants for LSAs.	Representatives at regional and other conferences. LSAs established and maintained.
	Support professional growth.	Provide release time and expenses for mentorship, capacity building, training, and succession.	Budget includes funds for mentorship, and training for succession (subcommittee meetings and TTOC).
Communicate and engage with members.	To communicate with members	Maintain website and ListServ, publish newsletter, Tweet.	Website visited, ListServ used, newsletter read, Twitter account active.
	To engage with members	Send welcome letter to new members. Invite to join ListServ.	ListServ membership active.
		Send communications to members three times per year.	Monitor response rate from each campaign and how often communications are read.
Provide services to members.	Maintain provincial directory of Alternate Programs	Maintain a directory of all Alternate Education Programs in province. Provide to members on website.	Directory accessed by members.
	Provide Student Activity Grants	Provide Student Activity Grants	Student Activity Grants awarded. Winners highlighted in newsletter.
	Recognize contributions to BCAEA.	Provide Innovative Programming Award. Provide Anita Chapman Award.	Awards granted. Winners provide a write-up for the newsletter.

BCAEA Executive Contact Information

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Vice President

Currently Vacant

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The Last Word

Sean Blake



As I'm writing this, we have just received our first snowfall here in Kelowna and I cannot help but start daydreaming of winter and all the joy it brings. Spending the holidays with friends and family, hitting the slopes for some fresh turns, or curling up by the fire with a good book and a strong glass of eggnog.

One of the other joys is it means we are getting closer and closer to the first BCAEA Conference we have held in two years! It has been far too long since we have had the opportunity to connect, and I cannot wait for you all to see what we have in store for you in 2023. As always, we have strived to put together a myriad of offerings that will speak to the diverse teachers in the alternate field. Some familiar faces are back and new ones are making their first appearance.

One thing I have been pondering a lot over the past year is the Indigenization of the curriculum and how best to honour this process. In my reading into this I have come across a lot of answers, and even more questions. A line in the book *Resurgence* edited by Christine M'Lot describes the word resurgence as the regeneration of dignity and cultural integrity and directly contrasts it with reconciliation, which it de-

scribes as for the colonizers. This came as a shock to me as reconciliation and truth is what I thought we were working towards, and this perspective really opened my eyes. One thing I have concluded is that this work is not easy, but it is very meaningful. With the upcoming graduation requirement, one of my fears is that it, like so many other things, will become a box to check rather than an intrinsic change in how we teach and learn.

Although I have these questions, I cannot say I have any answers, so I look to you, my colleagues for any insight you might have. Have you found success in this endeavour? Can you share what has worked or what has not? Maybe you are just starting down this path and you are just looking for like minded educators to travel it with you?

Please feel free to drop me a line at editor@bcaea.com if there is anything you would like to share. We are always looking for new submissions for the newsletter and it is so much more powerful when they come from our own members.

I hope you all had wonderful starts to your school year and I wish you all the best heading into the holiday season. ♦