


In The

MIDDLE

Volume 29, Number 2

December 2010


Thursday, October 20th • Friday, October 21st
Regina Inn



31st Annual Teachers Conference

MOTIVATE THE MIDDLE

2011



Presenting Keynote Speaker: Mark Macleod



The Journal of the
Saskatchewan Middle Years Association

We Believe



The Saskatchewan Middle Years Association believes middle years students require educators who understand and advocate for their students' physical, emotional, social and academic needs. The SMYA provides workshops, speakers for interested groups, resource materials, and an annual provincial conference.

Our organization has the following aims:

- To further understanding of the middle years student
- To further an understanding of programs and teaching approaches for the middle years
- To provide a means of communication for teachers about middle years students
- To develop a positive attitude toward middle years students
- To provide a vehicle for sharing information with all partners in education
- To advocate school experiences that are developmentally responsive to the needs of middle years students

JOURNAL EDITORS: CHANTEL KAUFMANN & TINA BLAKE

In the Middle is published three times yearly. It accepts articles that are practical, accessible, and of interest to teachers of Grades 6 through 9. Articles should be from 2 to 15 pages in length. They can concern curriculum or teaching methodologies, or they can concern middle years children and suggestions for working with them. Articles published by *In the Middle* reflect the views of their authors and are not necessarily those of the editors, the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association, or the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

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MIDDLE



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President's Message

Shiny Squirrel

By Mike Spicer



It is amazing how middle years teachers emulate the characteristics of middle years students. Of course I'm generalizing, but the more I teach, the more

I feel like I'm becoming more and more like the students in my class. Perhaps it is just me but check and see if any of you have noticed the same behaviors.

First off, I've noticed that middle years students seem to have short attention spans. The more I teach, the more I find that if I'm not completely engaged, my attention is as easily diverted as when the dog in the movie, "Up", sees a squirrel. In fact, as I write this I'm struggling against the urge to engage in the conversation happening around me instead of focusing on this document. Perhaps I have a little more self control since I'm still working on the completion of my assignment.

Along the lines of being easily distracted, I find myself finding more interesting things to do than work. I believe this may be referred to as procrastination which may be a characteristic of a few of my students. But, I don't necessarily think of it as a bad thing. Basically, putting off what must be done for something that you enjoy seems to be more of a human trait than a middle years trait. Oh look, something shiny. I mean, who wouldn't want to watch a full day marathon of the Jonas Brothers

instead of writing a 10 page report on the difference between igneous and metamorphic rock. Technically speaking, if I watch the Jonas Brothers, I might just be doing some "rock" research. At least that's how a middle years student might look at it.

But nevertheless, the work must be done despite the distractions and the procrastination. And it is this trait that we as teachers must focus on. Teaching responsibility and accountability should be instilled in our daily lives and should be at the core of our daily lessons. In between the fun and engaging activities that entice our students to learn, we must also make sure they leave our classes with the self discipline needed to survive and thrive when no one is looking. The ways you can do this in the classroom are as varied as the students you teach but look deep inside your teacher toolbox for something shiny or a spare squirrel to draw their attention back from the craziness of the world and back to responsibility and accountability. If you are able to do this, the rest should take care of itself.

Bridge the Middle Conference a Huge Success!

This year's conference, Bridge the Middle, in Saskatoon turned out to be a blast and a huge success. We kicked off our conference with some great preconference workshops facilitated by our keynotes, Dedra Stafford and Dr. Sharon Faber. Following the preconference

sessions we were treated to sandwiches and then Sharon kicked off the conference with an energetic general session where she shared the secrets to teaching middle level. The afternoon continued with our breakout sessions and we closed off the day with another new idea for our social.

Our social this year started off with an ice cream bar filled with numerous toppings and some great networking opportunities. Friends gathered, caught up on old times, and discussed the status of education in Saskatchewan. Following the ice cream social, those brave enough to join the festivities donned their Rider gear and set out on the town for the evening portion of our social. Great food was enjoyed at Beilly's and it was followed by some interesting dancing at Outlaws. The middle years teachers really showed how special they really are.

In the morning after our breakfast, Dedra took the stage as our opening keynote and gave the morning crowd some great ideas and energizing thoughts to bring back to the classroom. Teachers also had an opportunity to take part in breakout sessions and walk through our 28 displayers. After our lunch and our AGM, Sharon took the stage to close our conference. As she filled our energy levels and left us with some great



ideas, she shared with us that she and Dedra had a great time and enjoyed our well organized conference. Although our numbers were small, our energy was mighty.

Thank you to all those who participated in our conference this year. We appreciate all the displayers and

presenters who helped make it a success for those who were able to attend. Thank you also to the conference crew for all their hard work. Lastly, please check our website for Dedra and Sharon's handouts which they said we could post for all to use whether they were able to attend or not. They are filled

with great activities you can use in your classroom. Also take a moment to mark next year's conference on your calendar and apply for funding early so you can join us in Regina on October 20/21 for "Motivate the Middle" featuring Mark Mcleod. More information will be posted on our page and in our forum.

Editor's Corner

By Chantel Kaufmann

Another successful conference planned by the SMYA 2010 Conference Committee ... so much work after having only had one six months before in March. We all feel really good about our new date change, not only for ourselves as the organizers, but for teachers around the province who will now have something to look forward to at the start of the school year. Teachers can look forward to positive motivation and reinforcement as well as some great new ideas to get the new school year underway.

After having been on the committee for four years, we not only had some of our best keynote speakers, but

also enjoyed our first ice cream social, and one of our most fun social events at our supper afterwards. All of this was accomplished by ten people who a few years ago didn't even know each other. Then with the common goal of organizing the best conference possible, we came together as a team and each completed our responsibilities to the best of our abilities to help everything come together to provide teachers with a valuable experience. Of course, there are always things to be improved upon, but I think, as a committee, we should feel very proud of what we did, and we look forward to doing an even better

job in October 2011 in Regina for *Motivate the Middle*.

In this journal edition, you will find some reviews and handouts from the conference, *Bridge the Middle* as well as articles to get you thinking about how you'll handle the obstacles ahead of you in the new year, ways to meet the needs of your diverse students, and book reviews that will hopefully motivate you to get reading with your Middle years students.

We hope you enjoy ... don't forget to keep checking our website www.smya.ca for more ideas and discussion.

Contributors

We always appreciate our executive members fulfilling their responsibilities as SMYA exec members by contributing ideas, activities and reflections. Special thanks to **Mike, Karla, Jackie, Tina, Angela, Andrew and Ryan** for their activities and reflections that will make you smile ... to **Tamika P. from Elsie Mironuk School in Regina and Landon C. and Maddy K. from Delisle Elementary School** for their beautiful artwork. A special thanks to John MacCormack, Principal of Dorintosh Central School for his article, *Resiliency in Youth at Risk* and to **Alison Newman from Regina Public School Division** for providing this journal's Brain breaks. Rick Herrig of Consulting Services International and the Former NMSA North Region Trustee was kind enough to do a book review for us. And, a very special thanks you to **Meredith Cherland** for contributing her final contributions to *Good Book for Middle Years Kids*. Although we have thoroughly enjoyed Meredith's take on Middle Years books, we look forward to a new view on middle years books in the next journal.

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Mike has been teaching for 12 years and has served five years on the SMYA executive. Mike teaches technology at Pilot Butte School. Mike is a well-rounded middle years teacher who is known affectionately as the computer geek with a messy classroom.

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Andrew was born and raised in Regina with Post-Secondary Education completed at the U of R. He has used his education to travel some of Europe while teaching in London for a year and has seen much of Southern Saskatchewan in the past seven years. The majority of his career he has taught Middle Years and presently is the Grade 8 homeroom teacher at Robert Southey School. Andrew is proud to take on his most exciting role this summer when he becomes a father for the first time.

Ryan Whalley – Treasurer

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Ryan is one of those teachers that came to teaching later in life, having lived and worked abroad, he developed an understanding of global consequences for individual actions. He has spent time teaching science, math, health and English to middle years students and is about to take on technology for his new position at Grenfell High Community School.

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Tina has been teaching with the Regina Public School Board for 12 years and is serving her third year as a member of the SMYA

executive. Tina teaches grade 7/8 at Elsie Mironuck in Regina and loves middle level education. She believes in young people and the rights of children. She enjoys spending time with her husband and her two wonderful kids!



Angela Byrnes – Member-at-Large

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Angela is a teacher and vice principal at Montmartre School in Montmartre, SK. Though she has taught subjects at grades 2-11, her heart lies with middle level students and that is where I consider home. I love the spontaneity of a middle years' classroom and that no two days, or two students are ever the same.



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Brett lives in Saskatoon, where he went to both grade school and university. He is in his fifth year of teaching where he presently teaches a split grade 5/6 class in Delisle, Saskatchewan. He enjoys being a teacher because of the variety of challenges that each day brings.

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Jackie is currently a grade 7 homeroom teacher at Hepburn School, north of Saskatoon. Previously, she taught overseas in Seoul, South Korea, Istanbul, Turkey, and Leysin, Switzerland. She enjoys teaching "Middle Years" because she loves to encourage students and build their self-confidence as they prepare for the demands of high school.

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Karla teaches at the Weyburn Junior High in Weyburn. She is a grade 7 homeroom teacher who loves teaching "in the middle" because no day is ever the same and the kids have so much energy.

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BRIDGE THE MIDDLE

Saskatchewan Middle Years Conference
OCTOBER 21 & 22, 2010, Saskatoon, SK

**An action plan for the Music Teacher
- Teaching Dance within the
Curriculum – but I’m not a Dancer!**

Facilitator – Lenora Bells
lenora.bells@gmail.com

The objective of this Music-Dance Session is to offer teachers practical approaches and samples of class activities. A variety of instruction strategies will provide creative and structured movement skills to fit the K to 8 Curriculum. A review of available resources will be a key component.



Students as choreographers

- 4. Develop ideas using the choreography process**
- Begin with dance phrases, explore images

Choreograph

- Start with theme, no music
- Repeated listening
 - Tempo, mood, rhythm, phrases
 - Teacher as guide.
 - Whole class, small groups – create a dance that relates to the music/instrumental track

What is dance?

- Communication
- Exploring different ways to make a shape, or learning a series of steps to music
- A way of moving the body as an instrument of expression and communication

Music and dance

Dance and movement songs:

- Action or movement songs, singing games, song dances
- Let’s try a few
 - YMCA,
 - Folk Dance - Hora
- Examples of singing games
 - Resource Music Builders K and 3

Educational objectives

- 1. Understanding the elements of dance:**
 - Body, actions, dynamics, space, relationships
 - Connecting movements (transitions), contrasts, repetition, sequencing, development, and variety

Movement

- 2. Develop movement skills**
 - Move purposefully and use their bodies expressively, with confidence

Creating

- 3. Begin to understand where ideas for dances come from**
 - Creative process
 - Decision making
 - Reflection

Reflection

- 5. Think and talk about their dance ideas and compositions**
 - Reflect on the meaning they communicate through their dance
 - Student responses
- 6. Develop an understanding of the diverse range of dance, dancers, and choreographers.**
- 7. Response to dances – interpret the meaning of the dance.**
- 8. Become aware of dance and dancers in the community**

Dance in the classroom

- Class size
- Equipment
- Facilities
- Class frequency and length

STRATEGIES:

Dance Class format

Creative Dance

- Beginning – Opening stillness
- Middle – Three actions ...
- End – Closing Stillness
- Bows
- Comments

Set Dance

Examples:

- Multi-cultural dance kit.
- Local community – support musicians – invitations to perform for our students – live music and musicians.
- Klezmer – Jewish (Hora)

Energizers and warm-ups

- Mirror
- No words
- Stretches to music
- Fantasy Journey

Concepts and elements

- Personal space
- Action word charts
 - Loco motor
 - Nonlocomotor
- Levels
- Adopt a dance
- Statues
- Throwing an object
- Trio Dances (concept)
- Arts Alive

Dynamics

Change size of body or movement according to the sound they hear

Dancing Stories

List movements that go with a story – use one that may be part of a history class, or English class...

- Example: Music Builders –
 - The Little Old Lady who lived in a vinegar bottle
 - The three little pigs

Create a folk dance

- Start with a story
- Example of Folk Dances: Folk Dance Kit available.

Share the dances

- Pairs choreograph a dance, exchange and another group performs
- Indicates how much information
- Choreographers must put into their creations.
- Chart paper, markers, crayons

Music Builders Kits:

- Practice acting and performing
 - Movement
 - Folk Dances
 - Singing for mood
 - Stories
 - Lesson plans included
 - May be used for performances

Curriculum encourages:

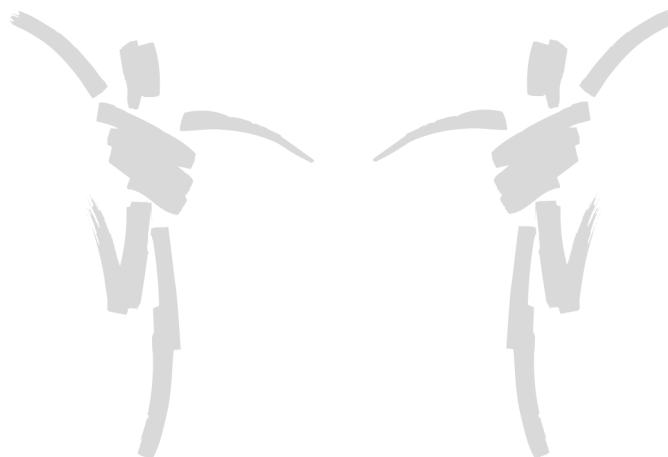
- Journals
- Singing daily
- Mood music
- Creating music
- History of music
- Teach elements and concepts
- Include music listening and making
- Use great children's literature

Your role as an arts educator - professional development thoughts:

- Learn how to be an advocate for the arts
- Continue to grow as an artist, actor/actress, dancer, and/or musician
- Keep tuned in to research in arts education
- Develop positive relationships with teachers, school board, provincial associations and across Canada.
- Keep up with technology that may enhance classroom learning
- Know what you do with students is important.

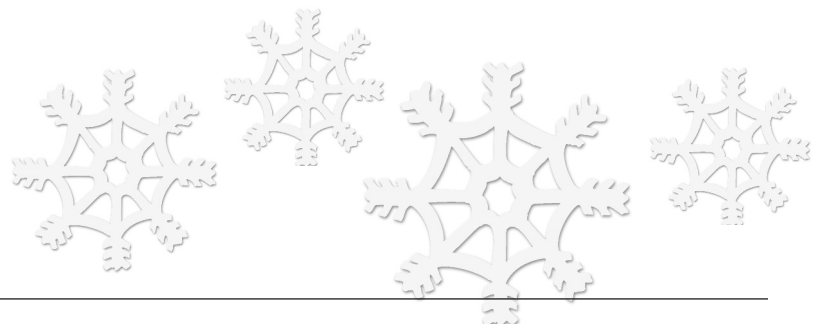
Thank-you!

Lenora Bells



Winter Blues?

By Ryan Whalley (A Crazy Middle Years Teacher)



Before I was a teacher, I spent five years in England. I enjoyed my time there but I learned something about myself while I was over there too. I need sun ... You know, the bright yellow ball up in the sky ... that thing you sneeze at when you look up ... that thing that we spend all summer hiding from in the shade. It took a couple of years in England to make me understand how much I need that brilliant little light bulb!

I arrived in England in late October 1999. I had gone over to spend time with a knock out English bird I met while travelling through Australia. I got a job pretty quickly and worked through the winter. I was having a great time but when spring arrived I was looking forward to coming home to Canada. April rolled around and I was back in Canada. I spent the summer here working outside, like all self respecting archaeologists do, and I was reborn with energy and enthusiasm. I missed my spectacular girlfriend and, as the fall approached and my work was starting to slow down, I found myself booking tickets to return to jolly old Blitey.

I returned to England as the snow started to fall in Saskatchewan. My girlfriend and I wasted no time in renting a great little place in the next town over from her family. I again started work and everything became sort of ... domestic. I felt great at first but slowly as the months passed by I started to feel more tired and less enthusiastic. I can even say I felt depressed. The English winter was a different kind of cold, a wetter and more bone chilling kind of cold. It didn't snow (much) but it did rain. It rained and

rained. In fact, it was a February afternoon, while walking home from work, that I was hit by a brilliant beam of yellow light. It seared the droplets off my raincoat. The light made me squint and wonder what could ever be so bright. It was so different, so alien to me, that I could only turn my body into its brilliance and soak up its warmth. I stood, along a very loud and busy motorway, with my arms outstretched and eyes closed, bathing in the joy that was sunlight. In that 15 second reprieve, I finally came to understand how much I needed the sun. I realised that I had gone three months without seeing it! I opened my eyes and enjoyed a wonderfully huge sneeze that erupted from my soul and almost brought me to my knees.

Having found the cause of my apathy and discontentment, I was able to cope better through the next four years. I made time to enjoy the sun whenever it popped out from behind a cloud bank. I was lucky, working outdoors allowed me to get each and every ray that fell in my direction. I found summers were glorious and even English winter, inland from the coast, was better too! As my life partner and I started a family, we decided to come to Canada. One of the selling points I used was the abundant sunshine in Saskatchewan. Oh, we have it in spades! In Saskatchewan, it's a given. People are oblivious to this beautiful gift. Never having gone without, they tend to take it for granted.

If you are anything like me, teaching consumes your time throughout the winter. There are

weeks on end, in the deep freeze of January and February, that I leave for work in the dark and come home in the dark. I tend to be better now at considering my need for sunlight. We are lucky here in Saskatchewan. We almost always have clear blue skies. Whether it's plus 40 or minus 40, the sun still shines. Whether the wind chill can or can't kill you, the sun still shines. Whether we take advantage of it or not, the sun still shines.

These days I know what I need to feel better and recharge my spirit. Often, when the opportunity arises, I find myself a nice big southern exposure window and just sit there. I sit there soaking in the sunlight; bathing in the heat that pours in through the glass. I find it helps me wash the sleep from my eyes, the apathy from my limbs and the anxiety in my soul.

If you are like me, this time of year can really be tough. If you need a pick me up or are feeling weary, take some time during your short lunch break ... get out of the staff room and just find a window. If you're really brave, or really desperate, pull on all of your winter gear (snow pants, parka, Sorrels, scarf, mitts and toque) and go for a lunch time walk. Even just taking 30 seconds to stare at that brilliant little light bulb can help to cleanse your soul and if nothing else ... clear your sinuses.

If you want to know a bit about SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) a great place to start is www.cmha.ca/bins/content_page.asp?cid=3-86-93, take a look.

Are you a Carrot, an Egg or Coffee Bean?

A Motivational Smile – Author Unknown

Submitted by Karla Warren (Weyburn Junior High School)

A young woman went to her mother and told her about her life, and how things were so hard for her. She did not know how she was going to make it, and wanted to give up. She was tired of fighting and struggling. It seemed as one problem was solved a new one arose.

Her mother took her to the kitchen. She filled three pots with water. In the first pot, she placed carrots, in the second she placed eggs and the last she placed ground coffee beans. She let them sit and boil without saying a word. In about twenty minutes she turned off the burners. She fished the carrots out and placed them in a bowl. She pulled the eggs out and placed them in a bowl. Then she ladled the coffee out and placed it in a bowl. Turning to her daughter, she asked, "Tell me, what do you see?"

"Carrots, eggs, and coffee," she replied. She brought her closer and asked her to feel the carrots. She did and noted that they got soft. She then asked her to take the egg and break it. After pulling off the shell, she observed the hard-boiled egg. Finally, she asked her to smell and sip the coffee. The daughter smiled, as she smelled and tasted its rich aroma. The daughter then asked, "What's the point, mother?"

Her mother explained that each of these objects had faced the same adversity- boiling water-but each reacted differently. The carrot went in strong, hard and unrelenting. However, after being subjected to the boiling water, it softened and became weak. The egg had been fragile. Its thin outer shell had

protected its liquid interior. But, after sitting through the boiling water, its inside became hardened. The ground coffee beans were unique, however. After they were in the boiling water they had changed the water. "Which are you?" she asked her daughter. "When trials and adversity knock on your door, how do you respond? Are you a carrot, an egg, or a coffee bean?"

Think of this: Which am I?

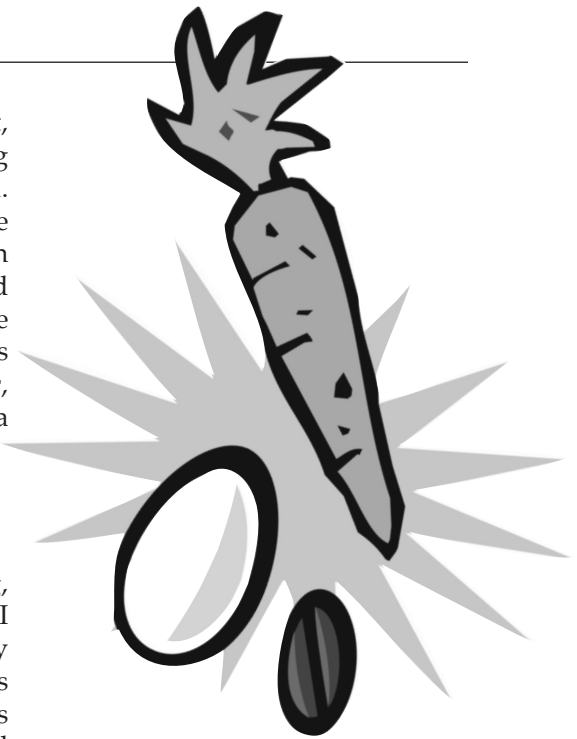
Am I the carrot that seems strong, but with pain and adversity, do I wilt and become soft and lose my strength? Am I the egg that starts with a passive heart, but changes with the heat? Did I have a fluid spirit, but after a death, a financial hardship or some other trial, have I become hardened and stiff? Does my shell look the same, but on the inside, am I bitter and tough with a stiff spirit and a hardened heart?

Or, am I like the coffee bean? The bean actually changes the hot water, the very circumstance that brings the pain. When the water gets hot, it releases the fragrance and flavor. If you are like the bean, when things are at their worst, you become better and change the situation around you. When the hours are the darkest and trials are their greatest do you elevate to another level?

How do you handle adversity?

Like the CARROT, the EGG, OR the COFFEE BEAN?

I use this as an opener in discussing how we handle adversity in our



own classroom. I have a carrot, egg and coffee bean there for a visual or sometimes even cook the carrot, boil the egg and make the coffee as I read the story depending on the time. I also have a silhouette of each on a piece of paper. After reading the story discuss the meaning of it with the class. Ask students to look at themselves and define if they are a carrot, egg or a coffee bean. After discussion students quietly come and get a paper signifying who they are. On the silhouette they have chosen they will state their name and define who they are and be thorough. One example you can use is to help students start their 'story of themselves' is: On the outside I am ... and on the inside I am ... Encourage students to be honest and open. In sharing 'who they are' this helps classmates to understand who they are. Students share their stories as well as share your own.

Teaching Tolerance

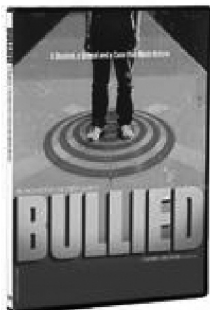
Bullied: A Student, a School and a Case That Made History

<http://www.tolerance.org/kit/bullied-student-school-and-case-made-history>

Bullied is a documentary film that chronicles one student's ordeal at the hands of anti-gay bullies and offers an inspiring message of hope to those fighting harassment today. It can become a cornerstone of anti-bullying efforts in middle and high schools.

Bullied includes:

- A 40-minute documentary film (DVD), with closed captioning and with Spanish subtitles
- A two-part **viewer's guide** with standards-aligned lesson plans



and activities for use in staff development

- Additional materials online

Bullied is designed to help administrators, teachers and counselors create a safer school environment for all students, not just those who are gay and lesbian.

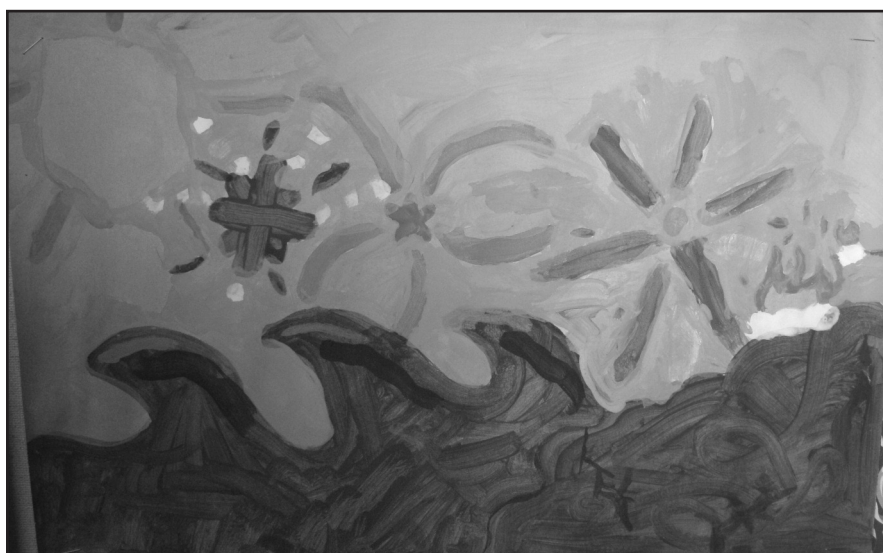
It is also intended to help all students understand the terrible toll bullying can take on its victims, and to encourage students to stand up for their classmates who are being harassed.

Bullied has been endorsed by the NEA.

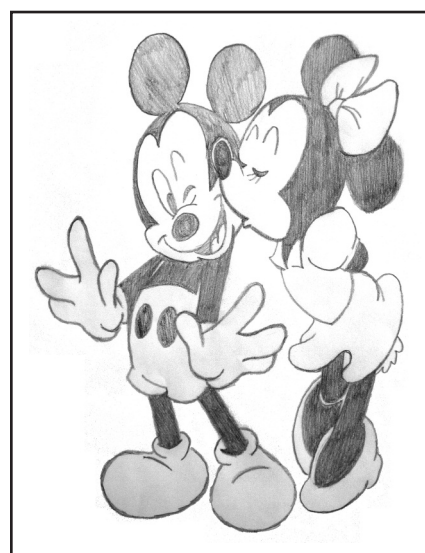
Note: Limit of one kit per school.

"This film is powerful, important and extremely realistic. It provides teachers with a rare opportunity to address bullying in a real and meaningful way." – Lee Cutler, Secretary/Treasurer, New York State United Teachers.

Order your free copy today!



"J2" by Maddy K., Delisle School



Tamika P.,
Elsie Mironuk School, Regina

Racing Against the Diverse Needs in a Middle Level Classroom

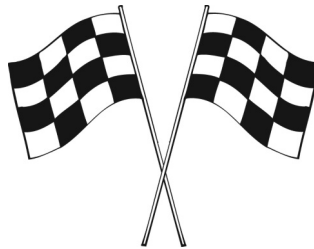
by Andrew Longstaff

Do you ever find yourself trying to plan lessons/units and you wonder if all the students will be able to perform at their best? With the way that middle level minds move a million miles an hour and the fact that each one travels in their own direction, how do we keep up?

With our profession, there is only one answer ... time. Modifying the ways that we instruct and assess for each individual student is the best way to manage their directions to a common finish line.

Time put into knowing what you want the students to learn is the first stage of the race in a Middle Years classroom. Identifying the outcome that is to be reached and matching different strategies is the next lap. Next, matching an evaluation method to assist you and your students to be successful is great. These approaches tend to take extra planning and hunting through resources but the attention pays off in the long run.

There are several ways to help students be successful. Providing a variety of graphic organizers assists in gathering ideas and sorting information. Offering a choice of presentation types can allow students to use strengths for expressing themselves. This could include presenting orally, written, recorded or via multimedia. Agreeing to alternative suggestions from students to display understanding is always a positive way and gives ownership.



Assessing student understanding is the second half of the battle. Knowing that students understand or not will help you determine if you need to revisit a concept or move on to further topics.

Don't think that there aren't short cuts on the way either. If another teacher has already been in the race that you are in before, take tips and ask for help. Steal their routes, take any activities and enjoy the finish.

Take the time, plan a winning year and you will arrive at the finish line with all your students. Provide the opportunity for victory and you will all reach the podium.

Here are some great websites to assist you in differentiating for your classroom:

- <http://www.technology.com/tutorials/teaching/differentiate/planning/>
- http://www.members.shaw.ca/priscillatheroux/differentiating_strategies.html
- <http://www.uhseport.net/published/k/sh/kshaw/collection/1/>
- <http://www.learnerslink.com/curriculum.htm>



Tamika P., Elsie Mironuk School, Regina

Teaching Study Skills: Ideas that Work Many Ways to Study

Submitted by Jackie Therres

Middle years teachers routinely are faced with the challenge of teaching study skills in conjunction with curriculum objectives. As students progress through middle year grades, the importance of preparing students for the demands of high become critical. Below is a list of various study skills ideas that work. When teaching these skills, teachers must emphasize that different study skills work for different students.

- practice with flashcards;
- ask someone to quiz you;
- read;
- reread;
- highlight your notes;
- summarize;
- read your notes;
- read your notes aloud;
- organize your papers so you are working with everything you need;
- outline or make a graphic version of written work (lists, columns, Venn diagrams, etc.);
- do a project;
- quiz yourself;
- write memory work over and over until you feel confident;
- use a worksheet as a quiz by covering over the answers and re-doing it;
- look over old quizzes and try to figure out why you're making mistakes;
- look over the returned assignments for the unit;
- answer study guide questions;
- tell someone else what the topic is about;

- look up the parts of the assignments that you didn't understand the first time

Article by Cara Bafile
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Keeping Students Accountable

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<https://saskmiddleyears.wikispaces.com/Keep+Students+Accountable>

Giving Clear Instructions

1. Give precise directions.
2. Describe the quality of work.
3. After giving instructions, have students repeat or paraphrase.
4. Positively accept students' questions about directions.
5. Place directions where they can be seen and referred to by students.
6. Have students write out instructions before beginning an activity.
7. Give directions immediately prior to the activity they describe.
8. Model the correct behavior.

Beginning a Lesson

1. Select and teach a cue for getting students' attention.
2. Do not begin until everyone is paying attention.

3. Begin the lesson by removing distractions.
4. Clearly describe the goals, activities, and evaluation procedures associated with the lesson being presented.
5. Stimulate interest by relating the lesson to the students' lives or a previous lesson.
6. Hand out an outline, definitions, or study guide to help students organize their thoughts and focus their attention.

Maintaining Attention

1. Arrange the classroom to facilitate the instructional activity you have selected.
2. Use random selection in calling on students.
3. Ask the question before calling on a student.
4. Wait at least five seconds before answering a question or calling on another student.
5. Ask students to respond to their classmates' answer.
6. Do not consistently repeat students' answers.
7. Model listening skills by paying close attention when students speak.
8. Be animated.
9. Vary instructional media and methods.
10. Create anticipation.
11. Ask questions that relate to students' own lives.
12. Provide work of appropriate difficulty.

Pacing

1. Develop awareness of your own teaching tempo.
2. Watch for nonverbal cues indicating that students are becoming confused, bored, or restless.
3. Break activities up into short segments.
4. Vary the style as well as the content of instruction.
5. Do not bury students in paperwork.

Using Seatwork Effectively

1. Make seatwork diagnostic and prescriptive.
2. Develop a specific procedure for obtaining assistance.
3. Establish clear procedures about what to do when finished.
4. Add interest to seatwork.
5. Work through the first several seatwork problems.

6. Monitor students' seatwork and make needed adjustments.
7. Monitor seatwork by moving around the room systematically.
8. Spend considerable time in presentation and discussion before assigning seatwork.
9. Keep contacts with individual students relatively short.
10. Have students work together during seatwork.

Summarizing

1. At the end of a lesson, ask students to write or state in a journal one thing they have learned.
2. Have students play the role of a reporter and summarize learning.
3. Have students create a skit to act out what they have learned.
4. Ask students to create learning displays.
5. Encourage students to present their learning to others.

6. Display students' work.
7. Provide frequent review sessions.

Making Smooth Transitions

1. Arrange the classroom for efficient movement.
2. Create and post a daily schedule and discuss any changes in schedule each morning.
3. Have material ready for the next lesson.
4. Maintain students' attention until you have given clear instructions for the activity.
5. Do not do tasks that can be done by the students.
6. Move around the room and attend to individual needs.
7. Provide students with step-by-step directions.
8. Remind students of key procedures associated with the upcoming lesson.
9. Use group competition to stimulate more orderly transitions.

Journal Information

Forward all journal articles and information to Chantel Kaufmann at chantel@smya.ca

What would you like to see in the next issue?

We need your input to make the journal useful and relevant to our teachers. In addition to regular subject specific articles, we need to know what you would like featured in the next journal. Please send an email to chantel@smya.ca with your suggestions. Some ideas include PLCs, teaming, evaluation, differentiated instruction, discipline, dealing with parents, student conferences, authentic assessment, etc. The topic is up to you!

Book Review

(Rick Herrig, Consulting Services International, Former NMSA North Region Trustee)

What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know

By Trudy Knowles and David Brown

If there is any middle school “know how” book out there that captures the multiple complexities of working with middle years students and puts it into layman’s terms, *What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know* IS that book. So sure am I about this easy read, I used it in my college classes for three years as the class text for teachers seeking middle grades certification in Iowa and Illinois.

Written to allow for self-reflection, the first three chapters deal with the decision to become a middle years teacher, adolescent development, and a foray into the history of how we got to where we are now and where we should be as educators. While the temptation here is to move past this section since “I know all about adolescents and I don’t want to be bored with history,” a true learner needs to validate or confront their belief system while gaining a sense of the challenges middle level leaders have faced over the years. Perhaps then the subsequent chapters have greater meaning and the need to implement recommended

educationally sound practices, perhaps quite different from what we know and do, becomes more pressing.

The next five chapters deal with the soul purpose of why this and other books challenging our teaching practices were written ... to enhance the learning environment that promotes academic success for each student. Even the difficult topics of curriculum design and assessment that promotes student achievement is written so that an individual teacher can implement necessary

changes despite the inertia that may exist in their building among their colleagues and leadership teams. Research supports that teaching practices have the greatest impact on learning and perhaps this is why I believe this book to be a powerful tool for teachers.

The last chapter challenges us to be advocates for the adolescents we serve. To do so requires implementing with fidelity the recommendations made. Reading this book is the first step. Make a difference; take the first step.



Twitter as Professional Development?

By Angela Byrnes

Twitter, isn't that what celebrities use to bash each other and plead their cases when things go wrong in their lives? Isn't it all about celebrity gossip and trash talking? These are things I thought about Twitter before embarking on my own Twitter adventure this year.

I teach in a K-12 school with 13 teachers. We help each other out as much as possible, but sometimes I have questions that no one at my school is able to help me with. I was a little frustrated at the beginning of the year and feeling a little overwhelmed as I was teaching brand new grades and subjects. My principal, Mr. B, suggested starting a Twitter account. Knowing what I did about Twitter, I had no intention of doing that, but I listened to his explanation of Twitter as a networking opportunity.

Teachers often talk about networking and how there are limited opportunities to do so. That's how I was feeling so when Mr. B explained how Twitter could be used as a networking device for educators, I decided to give him the benefit of the doubt and had him help me set up a Twitter account (@byrnesa). He showed me the ins and outs of Twitter, how to tweet, how to follow people and even how to ask for help. I will not get into the technical side of Twitter. There are YouTube videos and web pages that can help you with those aspects. I have also found, the more time you spend using Twitter, the more you learn (hands-on learning).

At first, I was not at all impressed with Twitter. I did not have many followers and did not follow many people so I had a limited network. However, my excitement grew each time I got a new follower or read a

blog by a fellow educator who faced the same problems I faced in my own classroom. By connecting with one educator, I had access to all of the people in their network and thus my PLN (personal learning network) began to grow. I had access to educators who taught the same things I did, or had faced the same issues that I was facing and I was able to get advice and support from them.

I have found that there are three main reasons why Twitter has been effective professional development for me.

1. I wanted my grade seven students to have their own blogs this year. I tweeted out to my PLN asking for suggestions of what site to use. From that tweet, I was introduced to www.kidblog.org. This site offers ad-free and cost-free blogs for students that are controlled and monitored by the teacher. With that knowledge in hand, I set up blogs for the students (www.kidblog.org/missbyrnesclass). When the first blog posting was complete, I knew I had to encourage them in some way to continue blogging and I believe that to encourage students to blog, they have to know that someone cares enough to read their posts. I tweeted out to my PLN and asked them to read and comment on my students' posts. The next day, when my students logged into their blogs, they were amazed to find comments from Thailand, Hawaii and various other locations around the world. Impressed and energized with the response my students now not only enjoy writing their blogs, but enjoy

reading blogs from other students and leaving comments.

2. Through Twitter, I have access to blogs from educators across the globe. I am able to read about the issues they face in their own schools as well as about research they are doing. Almost everyone in my network is an educator, so I learn a lot from reading their thoughts. I also find articles and websites related to education that I can incorporate into my own teaching.
3. If I am struggling with a particular issue or have a question I need answered, I can tweet it out and within minutes, I have responses from educators around the globe. Within my PLN, I have university professors, administrators, teachers and parents who all value education and offer their own advice and expertise, or point me in the right direction to find the research I need.

The majority of the people that I follow or that follow me are educators from around the globe. By using Twitter, I have expanded my personal learning network beyond the walls of my school and even beyond the boundaries of my school division and province.

I will admit, I do follow a few celebrities. The silliness of celebrity gossip can make me laugh and feel a tad better about myself after a bad day. Let's call it a guilty pleasure. ☺

I would encourage you to start your own Twitter account. The professional development opportunities are endless, but remember, you will only get out of it what you put in!

Twitter account: @byrnesa

SMYA President's Award is ... Mr. Dean Leach

By Karla Warren

The SMYA strives to promote an understanding of Middle Years Education within the province of Saskatchewan. *The Presidents Award* is used to recognize individual excellence in middle years education. This year's nominee, Dean Leach, is a proven example as someone who has made a lifetime commitment to middle years education.

"Loyal, energetic, fun, a great singer, cultured, enthusiastic, like a dad, positive, driven, simply awesome, a fantastic coach, negotiator." ... these are only some of the words and phrases that colleagues and students used to describe this year's recipient.

Growing up on a farm near the teeny tiny town of Colfax Saskatchewan, Dean attended a two-room schoolhouse until grade 7. In 1966 he was in the first class to attend the Weyburn Junior High and then was a part of the last class to graduate from the Weyburn Collegiate High School before it came a comprehensive school.

After doing some travelling, he worked at the BMO and then accepted his first teaching job in Valmarie, Saskatchewan over the telephone and headed for cowboy country where they had run the last teacher out of town.

After coaching four volleyball teams, three fastball teams, curling, track & field, basketball, badminton, and fundraising ski trips to the states, this educator always made sure the students had every opportunity to be involved and excel in their passions.

After a year of teaching he had to move on to teach in Keneston for two years and then left to travel through Australia. He later married and returned home to farm in Colfax and spent the following winter as a Sue Chef in Panarama with a six month old baby.

After coming home to farm again, he took a position in the Weyburn Junior High, the school he once was a student in himself. With the exception of the one year when his family of three beautiful daughters and wife toured New Zealand, he taught for a solid 25 years at the Weyburn Junior High.

In Weyburn, this educator made a huge impact on students, staff, families and friends for 29 years. His enthusiasm and ability to create positive and rewarding experiences made him a well respected teacher and community member. After talking with those who knew him best, he is described as

A driving force for all tasks ... He was rather impatient with the time delays and bureaucracy especially when it came to causes for the students. Most notable in this area was when just about single handedly raised funds to replace the Junior High linoleum gym floor with hardwood. He took on the responsibility to oversee all aspects of talking to sponsors and contractors and in 3 months raised \$45,000 to build a new gym floor ... all to create the best environment that he could for his students and staff.

He is a "do'er" and negotiator ... gets an idea in his head and does it! He was the one that always looked at

the glass half full rather than half empty. An example of this is when a Czech family moved to town and one of their sons was in his class. The youngest sibling was at the elementary school and was having difficulties with the move and changes of environment and was refusing to speak. The school division would not provide an educational assistant for his younger siblings, so our candidate organized fund raising and donations to hire another Czech immigrant who was also in town whom was highly educated and needed a job. Our candidate raised enough funds to hire her an EA for the rest of the year – win/win – student got extra support and adapted to our culture and a new job was created.

Coach ... He was an exceptional fundamental coach that understood the meaning of a TEAM. Coaching volleyball, basketball, minor ball, silver seals swim team and track and field at the local and provincial levels for years this candidate enjoyed every victorious moment whether it was a gold medal or a great play made by the athlete. Whether he was coaching club or a traveling A team, this coach treated all programs with equal intensity regardless of its "ranking". He also always went beyond what was expected of him. For example in the last years of coaching he picked up the "left overs" program where he created four teams of kids who just wanted to play volleyball. He got them team shirts and found them games to play. One of these students commented "I would have never got to play volleyball if it wasn't for him! And even though I had to wear the pink jerseys ... he

assured me that I made pink a macho color and wear it with pride ... he always made us laugh."

Male role model ... when making class lists at the junior high age the "tough kids" would be pointed out... these kids were always purposely put in his classroom because he could handle whatever came his way in the classroom. Upon talking to one of his former students he commented "if it wasn't for him... who knows where I would be. I was going through a tough time at home and he made me feel accepted and that our classroom was home away from home. He reminded me that making the right choices wasn't always easy but would pay off in the end."

Made learning fun ... he kept the forefront of all activities and lessons what was best for the kids – there was no road block too big to stop him from getting middle years kids what they needed. And when he couldn't make you smile or needed to calm your spirits he would break in a song and you couldn't help but join in.

Involved ... aside from his exceptional coaching and teaching styles, he

always made sure every student was helped. For example, at the beginning of his career he developed and started one of the first pull out enrichment programs. He also started a counseling pull out program. This was a long term program to get in-school counsellors. With no funding allowed for this, this educator talked to staff and found help so that staff could be trained to assist youth in these counseling sessions. His hard work and efforts has lead to in school counselors in which we have today.

If you were to talk to any of his previous students or colleagues they would say that we couldn't find a more deserving candidate. According to his former principal, "He was someone who he had utmost respect for. His ability to develop a caring culture in his classroom was something to be desired. He just has a way with middle year kids. He always has a safe, positive, caring culture in his classroom and teams and that is not always easy to do when working with that age of kids."

Dean Leach always kept the same foundation ... **students come first.**

He believed his classroom was a place where if you could save one kid you would save others in the process. He believed and preached that it is a chain reaction and that every kid should be given the opportunity and taught how to help others, see the good in others, develop feelings and see how others feel because to survive in life we need empathy. It is important to see and understand how others think, see and feel. This lesson could not be taught through a text book but rather through his role modeling of kindness. His belief that everyone is good at something carried him through his years of teaching. He would find what each of his students was good at and use it for the good ... so kids would develop confidence in their abilities. He believed that your weakest link can be your strongest when you work as a team ... and when working with middle years you need to be a team. Upon discussing and reminiscing with our candidate he stated that he never once got tired of teaching in the middle and stated that he "Had a darn good staff that all had a good heart and loved to teach ... and he loved being part of their team."

Call for Artwork

We are looking for student artwork to showcase in the journal. Please send artwork (preferably black and white) to:

Chantel Kaufmann
5148 Genereux Drive
Regina SK S4X 4P2

Please include the student's name, grade and school on the back of work.

Resiliency in Youth At Risk

John MacCormack (B.A.; B.Ed.; M.Ed). Principal – Dorintosh Central School

On a recent Sunday afternoon, I was playing shinny on our local outdoor rink when I was struck, not with a wayward puck, but by a comment. The phrase came from a former student of mine who was also out for a game of pickup. Kurt, as I remember, fit the classic profile of a youth at risk of dropping out of school. His mom was a single parent collecting social assistance, he was substance abuser and he had few, if any, supports in place to aid his success in a high school environment. When I saw him it was the first time in about seven years and we had a great chat. It turns out he had indeed dropped out of school and bounced from location to location for a couple of years, incapable of holding onto any employment positions for more than a couple of weeks. Now, here he was grown up, holding down a job and mature in his manners. It was during this exchange Kurt stated matter-of-factly that during his time in high school he: “was a wreck”. I have always been curious why some kids in our schools make it and why others stumble and fall through the cracks. What makes a kid like Kurt durable enough to put the shattered pieces of the wreck back together? Resiliency may provide some answers.

Resilient people are proficient at adapting to change when called upon to do so. They are capable of bouncing back from traumas, risks, tragedies and stressors that a person may face at times in their lives. Resilient people are capable of bouncing back because they have

definite systems of support and resources which make achievement possible. Those with few resources exhibit many high risk behaviours, such as school failure, substance abuse, reckless sexuality, emotional problems and delinquency.

Many of the support systems that elude youth at risk are out of reach because there may not be adult role models to provide the bedrock of support. Resilient people are supported by relationships with adults who contribute directly to their overall well being. Children grow in many embedded systems [and need] supportive relationships. These include significant, caring people who proffer high expectations and establish clear and consistent boundaries. People who provide opportunities for meaningful participation in their community or school while establishing positive bonds and providing life skills. When a person has made these connections, they have better opportunities to become resilient

It takes time to develop resiliency skills. While physical growth is readily apparent and attainable with the proper nutrients, resilient, emotional and social growth needs a different kind of diet. Just like a person who is deprived of their vitamins and minerals may not reach their fullest physical potential, someone who has been neglected by caring adults may not fully develop at the prescribed time. In some cases, people do not attain their resiliency skills until the third

decade of life. It is, therefore, vital for those of us who work in the field of education to identify those students who may be at risk and take action to support and guide them into avenues of success.

As I consider my chance meeting with Kurt, I realise he may not have had the systems in place in his younger years and consequently spiraled into his “wreck” persona. He eventually found the supports, boundaries and bonds he needed to creep out of his disconnected existence to evolve into the adult I met on the rink. With luck, we can identify youth at risk and get them the supports they need so they can avoid the worthless “wreck” feelings and develop their resilient skills set as they morph into contributing members of society. We will all be the beneficiaries of these changes.

6 Components to Help Develop Resiliency

1. Caring and Support
2. High Expectations
3. Clear and Consistent Boundaries
4. Opportunities for Meaningful Participation
5. Positive Bonds
6. Life Skills

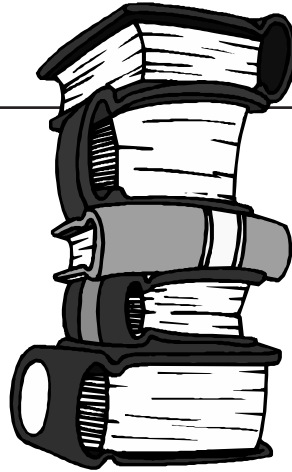
Good Books For Middle Years Kids

By Meredith Cherland

Winter is a fine time for reading, and in this issue, it's my pleasure to recommend four wonderful novels for middle years kids. They were suggested to me by Dr. Barbara McNeil, the Children's Literature professor at the University of Regina. Barbara told me they were all engaging stories: One is funny, one is sad and nostalgic, one is science fiction, and one is historical fiction. Two of them have boys as main characters, and two of them have girls. Three are Canadian. All of them are beautifully written. They have certainly contributed to my own pleasure in reading this winter, and I hope you teachers will enjoy them too.

Fruit: A Novel About a Boy and His Nipples by Brian Francis. 2004. Toronto: ECW Press. ISBN 978-1-55022-620-1 (pbk).

Our first novel was a "Canada Reads" selection for 2009. Yes, the title is outrageous, but it's the perfect title for this outrageously funny story. Peter Paddington is a 13-year-old boy with two selfish and annoying older sisters, a nice father who works too much, and a controlling, rather selfish mother. But Peter has other problems too. He's overweight, having fantasies about his male gym teacher, and very interested in trying on his sisters' clothes. Worst of all, his nipples keep threatening and teasing him, *out loud* (or so he thinks).



Before you decide you could never give your students a novel about a fat gay cross-dresser, **please read this book yourself!** It's an absurd and thoroughly charming book, and it will be very difficult for you not to like Peter. This is a novel about emerging sexuality, but it's also a novel about growing up. The story presents us with Peter's thoughts, his inner life, as he goes to school, copes with bullies, longs for the friends he doesn't have, and is kind to a very funny loser girl named Daniela, who lives across the street.

Peter uses his imagination and his fantasies to manage from day to day. He's a good person who tries to help his sisters lose weight and survive their relationships with boys. He tries to deny the fact that he's gay, but he can't fool himself with a cover-up for long. He wraps up his nipples with masking tape every morning before school so that they'll be quiet during the day, and turns to religion for help (which doesn't work at all). He tries to keep Daniela (who swears an awful lot and uses the f--- word

frequently) from losing her virginity. And he comes to understand that his mother's adult brother is gay. Peter's life is sad, bizarre, and lovely, as well as amazingly funny. Brian Francis has written a fine book.

You may read this book and decide that it's too much for your students, even if the main character is in Grade 8. But I think that gay teens, too, have a right to read about themselves. And every Grade 8 student can benefit from this book's message: Life is a struggle, even crazy at times, but love will find a way to get us through adolescence, if we give it a chance.

My Name Is Seepetza by Shirley Sterling. 1992 (fifteenth printing 2010). Toronto: Groundwood Books. ISBN 978-0-88899-165-2 (pbk).

This is not a new novel, but I want to be sure that every middle years teacher knows about it. Every person needs to know that residential schools for First Nations children existed not so long ago, and everyone needs to know what they were like. This novel, which begins in 1958, is the story of a twelve-year-old girl whose name is Seepetza when she is at home with her parents, but who is called "Martha Stone" while in Grade Six and Seven at the Kalamak Indian Residential School near Kalamak, B. C. The story is told in the first person, written as a series of journal entries, and is based on the author's own life experiences.

There is a map of the residential school at the beginning of the book, and we can use it to help us follow and imagine Seepetza's life at school. We can see where she sleeps in the dormitory, where she works in the school laundry, and where she is disciplined by strict and unhappy nuns who punish her for breaking the unfair and

arbitrary rules. Seepetza is never sexually abused, and she does have a few adults in her life at school who help and care for her, but life at residential school is mostly sad and oppressive. "Martha" is taught to forget everything that is Indian about her, her language, her customs, her values. She is forced to learn Irish folk dances to perform at competitions for the school. She rarely sees her younger sisters, and finds it hard to help her friends.

But this novel isn't all unremitting unhappiness. We also get the story of Seepetza's times at home on her parents' place, Joyaska Ranch. We have a map of the ranch and the surrounding hills to follow, and heart-warming stories of family life and summertime adventures there. Seepetza's parents and aunts and uncles aren't perfect, but they are loving adults who create a home and a "true life" for her and her sisters. We read about the games they play, the food they eat on feast days, the berry-picking times with their grandmother, the funeral gatherings and the beautiful natural landscape. We gain a sense of her Indian life and identity that helps her survive the misery and the terrible racism at school.

Shirley Sterling is a member of the interior Salish First Nation of British Columbia, and I think she must be about my own age. I appreciate the fact that in this book her descriptions of life at school are not all bad, and her descriptions of life at home are not all good. After reading this book, I feel as if I know her, and as if I knew her in childhood. Shirley has dedicated her book to all those who went to residential schools, wishing them laughter and freedom, and the recovery of their lost treasures of the past. She says she celebrates survival. I believe all your middle years students will understand Canada and its racist past and present much better after they have read this book.

***Among the Hidden* by Margaret Peterson Haddix. 1998. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster. ISBN 978-0-689-82475-3 (pbk).**

Luke is a "shadow child." In the society he lives in, people are forbidden to have more than two children, and the Population Police are entitled to shoot third children on sight. Luke is eleven-years-old, and has two older brothers, so he must remain hidden at home. He's never been to a grocery store, or to a birthday party. He's never had a friend. When his father is forced to sell the woods next to their family farm so that a new housing development can be built, Luke is no longer allowed to go outside at all.

Luke finds it very hard to remain hidden, even though he knows his life depends upon it. His father farms, his mother works in a factory, and his older brothers go to high school and help with the farm work. He is always alone in his bedroom in the attic. He reads and thinks about the Government, and why there are such terrible laws about the shadow children. Luke knows there must be others just like him, but he has never seen another shadow child.

Then one day Luke looks out through a vent near his attic's ceiling and sees a girl's face in the window of a house where he knows two other children already live. It takes all the courage he has to leave his own house and sneak into the housing development to meet her. Her name is Jen, and she too is a third child. But she's a member of the upper class, called "The Barons." Luke's family is poor, but Jen has a computer, stylish clothes, and pop and potato chips to eat. She's even been to the mall: Her father works for the Government, and has been able to buy a false identity card for Jen. Her mother poses as her aunt, and takes her shopping. It seems that people with money are able to bend the laws.

Jen and Luke become friends, and he learns that she is a rebel, working hard through her computer to inspire other shadow children to resist the government and its population laws. She organizes a rally where a thousand third children will meet to confront the Government and come out of the shadows. But Luke finds he doesn't have the courage to go with her. He knows her plan is dangerous, and he doesn't want to die.

Among the Hidden is the first book in the Shadow Children series (there are six more books), and has been named an ALA Notable Book. It's a very good read, full of suspense and shocking events. We do learn something about the history of this society and its population laws, and we do find some hope at the end. I won't spoil it for you. This book is science fiction at its best, and I recommend it to you highly.

***An Ocean Apart: The Gold Mountain Diary of Chin Mei-ling* by Gillian Chan. 2004. Toronto: Scholastic Canada Ltd. ISBN-10 0-7791-1353-5 (hardcover).**

I have reviewed several excellent books by Gillian Chan in this novel, and here is another one, based on many true stories of immigration to Canada. Mei-ling, the main character, is nearly twelve years old. The year is 1922, and although Mei-ling was born in China, she now lives with her father in Vancouver, B.C. She goes to school, but she also works as hard as she can to help her father save money to bring her mother and her younger brother to Canada. They must have enough to pay for two head taxes and two boat fares before Ma and Younger Brother can come. In 1922 the Chinese are not welcome in Canada, and because male labourers often cannot afford to bring their families with them, there are very few women in Vancouver's Chinatown.

Mei-ling likes school and has a kind teacher who gives her a diary for

her birthday. Her diary becomes the record of her daily life, and forms the pages of this novel. Mei-ling is a bright and diligent student, but there are bullies at school who frighten her and try to make her miserable. Her Irish friend Bess, living in poverty, has troubles of her own. Mei-ling has her father and several of his friends to protect and love her, but life is very hard.

Mei-ling finds jobs that will help her add to the passage money. She babysits before school, and washes dishes at night in a restaurant where her father also works. And she studies. Miss MacDonald, who wants to be a missionary to China, helps Mei-ling do extra study after school so that she can perhaps go on to high school. But when Parliament passes the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1923, Mei-ling's hopes for reuniting her family are crushed. She and her father resolve not to give up, and

Mei-ling decides she will leave the last pages of her diary to record the day when her family is united again.

This moving story is followed by an historical epilogue I think middle years readers will love. First, we are told about what happens to the fictional Mei-ling and her family in later years. With help from Canadian friends, Mei-ling grows up to be a doctor and a medical missionary to China. And in 1935 she does see her mother and brother again. Eventually, after World War II is over, Ma and Younger Brother do immigrate to Canada to join Mei-ling and her father. Mei-ling never marries, but Younger Brother does, and his grandchildren are adult Canadian citizens today. I found this ending to the story quite believable and satisfying.

The epilogue also provides readers with an interesting history of

Chinese immigration to Canada, complete with historical photographs. The epilogue contextualizes the racism that Mei-ling and her father experience in Canada. It also includes a glossary of Chinese names and other Chinese words used in the book, and some information about the author.

Conclusion

These four novels are the kinds of books that help middle years students understand themselves and the society they live in. They are the kinds of books that help young people learn to think deeply about the social issues of our time, and the legacies of Canadian history. They are the kind of books that help teachers educate the imaginations of young readers. I hope you will read and enjoy them all.

Bank on Books



This is an incentive program designed to help get you reading! For every book that you read and every book talk that you do, you will earn "Book Bucks" that you can then use to bid on fabulous prizes at our classroom auction. Get ready to make some money and read some books!

PROCESS

1. Select a novel that is appropriate for your reading level and interest.
2. Enjoy!
3. Find a time to come and tell me about the novel you have

read. What was it about? Did you enjoy it? Why or why not? What did you find most interesting?

4. Receive your payment and enter it into your check book
5. If you decide to do a book talk based on your novel, then additional money can be earned.
6. You can move through this process as many times as you want and earn as much money as you can. The more money you earn, the more money you will have to spend at our auction.

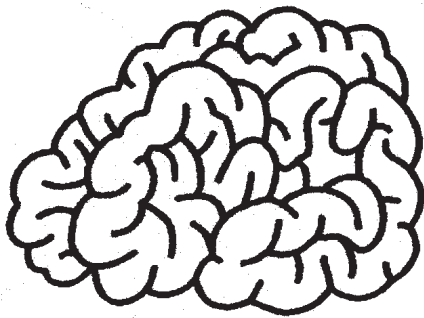
GOOD LUCK AND HAPPY READING!!

This is a new reading program I am developing for my grade 7/8 class. I am willing to share the rest of what I have put together. Email tina.blake@rbe.sk.ca



BRAIN BREAKS

Brain Boosters for Teachers



Compiled by: Alison Newman

Brain breaks are mental breaks designed to:

- Help students keep focused and manage attention
- Get students moving to carry blood and oxygen to the brain
- Energize or relax
- “Provide processing time after teaching for students to solidify learning” (Jensen)

The following are examples of brain breaks for middle years students:

- When the middle of your body, or midline, is crossed over, you are helping connect the hemispheres in your brain. The following activities can be used to help students connect those hemispheres and improve brain power:
 - ✓ Give yourself a hug
 - ✓ Juggling with scarves or balls
 - ✓ Have them play a hand clapping game, such as “Miss Mary Mack”.

They could do with without singing the tune as some students may find it very primary. Instead, you can use that pattern to challenge them to start slow and build up speed to go as fast as they can.

Have students touch their left earlobe with their right hand and

the tip of their nose with their left hand. Then switch the two as fast as they can.

The following examples are energizing or relaxing:

- With your forefinger and thumb on each hand pinched together, extend your hands out in front of your face and trace large circles in the same direction. Keep your lips and teeth together. Now trace circles in the other direction. Now try with one hand going clockwise and the other counter-clockwise.
- With your writing hand, hold an imaginary pencil in front of your face and write the keywords from the lesson in the air. Say the letters of the word as you write. Try to write the words backwards. Then try to write the letters in the air with your nose. Partner up, watch your partner and try to guess what the word is. Then try it with your ear.
- Do finger aerobics. With a partner, sit alongside each other on either side of your desk/table. Take turns lifting different fingers without taking any other fingers off the desk. Do it together in a sequence. Start with simple lifts with each finger in turn, then taps, then bends, then big stretches. Now one of you can

be the aerobics instructor and the other has to do exactly the exercise the instructor demonstrates.

- Have students do quick stretches or shoulder shrugs.
- Have students stand up. "When I say 'go', walk to touch 2 opposite walls, greet two people with a high five (or hand shake) and return to your desk."
- Thumb wrestle with a partner. Thank your partner when finished (or have them thank them with a guided affirmation).
- Use an affirmation as a brain break. In the middle of an assignment or lesson, have students turn to a partner and say, "You are a powerful learner". Or, at the beginning or middle of an exam, have the students turn to a partner and say, "you are a genius".
- Reach your right arm above your head and then your left. Bring them down slowly and give yourself a brain massage.
- While teaching an interesting fact, ask the students for an "Ooooo" or an "Ahhhhh". Other ideas include, "Hmmm:", "Cha Ching" and "Oh Yeah". This will get them moving the oxygen to their brain and may bring a little laughter into the room.
- Jump up and down, as many times as there are letters in your first, middle and last names.
- Mystery challenge: blow up several balloons and inside each, put pieces of paper with messages. Organize students into small groups and give each group a balloon. The group should place the balloon on the floor; sit back to back on it until it bursts. Then, they read the message and undertake the activity or challenge, which may link to the topic they are learning about. This way, you are giving them the assignment creatively so they are invigorat-

ed and ready to complete the challenge.

- Frog Math Game: Have students start with this rhythm: Pat the table with two hands, then clap, and then snap with right hand then left hand. To this beat, have students play the following mental Math game: In groups of three or four, have students sit in a circle and start the rhythm. Then the first person will start by saying, on the third and fourth beat(or on the snaps), "One frog" Then wait until the next third and fourth beat(snaps) to say "two eyes" then "four legs", then "in the pond", and finally "kerplunk." The next person begins, "Two frogs, four eyes, eight legs, in the pond, kerplunk, kerplunk". The number of "kerplunks" represents the number of frogs. This game continues until someone makes a mistake. Students can see how high they can get up to. You can start out slowly by having the entire group speaking at the same time.
- Math Walk. Have students take a walk around the library or part of the school in partners as they discuss a specific topic. This can

be done in any subject. Specify how many times you want them to walk around the school or how long you want them to walk. When they return, they will be ready to settle into their work.

- Speed Ball: Have all students in the class stand up by their desk. The teacher starts with a small ball. When you pass the ball to the first student, begin timing. Without talking, the students have to pass the ball to every person in the class as fast as they can. The goal is to keep improving the time it takes to pass it to the entire class. The last student passes the ball back to the teacher and the timing ends. Two rules: You can't pass it to the person right beside you and when you have had your turn with the ball, you sit down and can't be passed to again.

Websites:

<http://school.discovery.com/brainboosters/>

http://www.alite.co.uk/information/brain_breaks.htm

http://www.acceleratedlearning.co.uk/brain_breaks3.htm



"Fire" by Landon C., Delisle School



Everyone knows a teacher who does an outstanding job in the middle. Please give that person the recognition they deserve. Fill out the attached information, and send it to the address below or email the information to chantel@smya.ca.

Teacher's Name: _____

School: _____

Teaching Assignment: _____

Three words describing the teacher's personality:

A sentence or two describing the teacher's relationship with:

a) Students:

b) Colleagues:

c) Community:

Anything else you would like mentioned?

Application for Membership



WHAT CAN THE SMYA DO FOR YOU???

Members receive:

- Three issues of *In the Middle* – the only professional middle years journal published in Canada
- Three issues of *President's News* – keeping you up-to-date on middle years news
- Inservice up-dates across the province

- I hereby apply for membership in the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association. Membership for one year is \$25.00
- I hereby apply for membership renewal in the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association. Renewal for one year is \$25.00

Name _____

Mailing Address _____

Employed By _____

Present Position _____

Are you an STF member? Yes No Teaching Certificate Number: _____

I have enclosed a cheque or money order for \$25.00 I understand this is my membership fee for one year.

I hereby consent to the collection, storage and use of personal information by and for the executive of the SMYA for purposes of receiving "In The Middle", the journal of the Association, the "President's Newsletter" and periodic notification of upcoming professional development opportunities. Information is processed and maintained in a confidential database by the STF.

DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____

Please mail this application form when completed to:

Chantel Kaufmann
Saskatchewan Middle Years Association
5148 Genereux Drive
Regina SK S4X 4P2

SMYA/NMSA Resources

Title	Quantity	Price	Total
Academic Success Through Empowering Students		\$15.00	
Authentic Assessment From A-Z		\$20.00	
A Vision of Excellence		\$10.00	
Connecting The Curriculum Through Interdisciplinary Instruction		\$20.00	
Day One and Beyond		\$25.00	
Drumming To The Beat of Different Marchers		\$25.00	
Dynamite In The Classroom: How-To Handbook For Teachers		\$25.00	
Essential Questions- With Answers- for Middle Level Teachers		\$9.00	
Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing and Grading In A Differentiated Classroom		\$30.00	
For the Love of Books		\$16.00	
Grounded For Life		\$22.00	
H.E.L.P. For Teachers		\$1.00	
H.E.L.P. How to Enjoy Living With A Preadolescent		\$1.00	
How To Become An Exemplary Middle School Principal		\$12.00	
If You Don't Feed The Teachers The Eat The Students		\$20.00	
Implementing and Improving Teaming		\$30.00	
"In The Middle: Writing, Reading, and Learning with Adolescents"		\$24.00	
Inside-Outside in the Middle		\$30.00	
Integrated Studies in The Middle Grades		\$25.00	
Integrating Instruction In Language Arts		\$20.00	
Integrating Instruction In Math		\$20.00	
Integrating Instruction In Science		\$20.00	
Integrating Instruction In Social Studies		\$20.00	
Interdisciplinary Units and Projects for Thematic Instruction		\$30.00	
Living With A Work In Progress		\$15.00	
Middle Level Education in Small Rural Schools		\$12.00	
The Middle Years: A Parent's Handbook		\$1.00	
Mr. DeVore's Do-Over		\$12.00	
More H.E.L.P.		\$1.00	
Not Much Just Chillin': The Hidden Lives of Middle Schoolers		\$20.00	
Parenting 911		\$25.00	
Prescriptions For Success in Heterogeneous Classrooms		\$25.00	
Reading Don't Fix No Chevys: Literacy in the Lives of Young Men		\$24.00	
The Rebooting of a Teacher's Mind		\$21.00	
Reflections From A Teacher's Heart		\$6.00	
Research and Resources in Support of This We Believe		\$10.00	
The Roller Coaster Years		\$22.00	
A School-Wide Approach to Student-Led Conferences		\$20.00	
Service Learning In The Middle School: Building A Culture of Service		\$12.00	
Staff Development Kit: Implementing The Middle School Concept		\$24.00	
Starting Points: How To Set Up And Run A Writer's Workshop		\$22.00	
Student-Oriented Curriculum: Asking The Right Questions		\$20.00	
Teacher's Teaming Handbook: A Middle Level Planning Guide		\$30.00	
Teaching 10-14 Year Olds		\$30.00	
Team Organization: Promise-Practices and Possibilities		\$15.00	
The Team Process		\$22.00	
This I Believe Flyer		\$1.00	

Title	Quantity	Price	Total
This We Believe: Successful Schools for Young Adolescents		\$8.00	
This We Believe In Action		\$25.00	
Tools for Teaching Content Literacy		\$14.00	
Treasure Chest: A Teacher Advisory Source Book		\$30.00	
Turning Points 2000: Educationg Adolescents in the 21st Century		\$25.00	
Using Portfolios Across the Curriculum		\$20.00	
Watershed: A Successful Voyage Into Integrative Learning		\$25.00	
Watershed: Whole Learning Activities Book		\$27.00	
What Every Middle School Teacher Should Know		\$30.00	
Writing For Real: Strategies for Engaging Adolescent Writers		\$25.00	
To Order: Lana Steiner RR 2 9-77 Canora, SK S0A 0L0 email: lana@smya.ca		TOTAL	

Plus shipping and handling.

Saskatchewan Middle Years Association

Harold Schultz Middle Years Development Fund

Introduction

The need exists in Saskatchewan to encourage continued development in the Middle Years area. The SMYA is the logical organization to initiate and encourage such development.

This development fund was established to encourage Saskatchewan based projects and/or programs related to the Middle Years child. The fund is named in honour of Mr. Harold Schultz who was a driving force in starting the Middle Years concept in Saskatchewan. It was through his research, his encouragement and his dedication that the philosophy of Middle Years Education took hold and continues to grow today.

Objectives of the Fund

The monies of the fund are to assist, financially, individuals, groups and/or schools in developing programs or research projects that increase the understanding and awareness of the Middle Years child in Saskatchewan.

The monies of the fund may be awarded to those projects, ideas or programs that help to increase the understanding and awareness of the Middle Years child and/or promote effectiveness of the Middle Years teacher.



PLEASE NOTE:

There is no application form for this award. Candidates must submit a written application meeting the guidelines below.

General Guidelines for Selection

1. The results of such projects, programs, or practices supported by this fund must be made available for the use of the SMYA and its members.
2. The recipient(s) of monies from the fund must submit a comprehensive typewritten report to the SMYA executive upon completion of the projects.
3. The SMYA journal, *In the Middle*, must be provided with a synopsis of useful and relevant results of the funded project(s) for publishing purposes.
4. The recipients must acknowledge the financial assistance of the SMYA in the text of the comprehensive typewritten report.
5. The executive of the SMYA has the right to change, delete, or add any conditions related to the awarding of monies related to the fund.

Conditions

1. Payment of the monies of the fund will be 50 per cent when the project is approved by the SMYA Selection Committee and 50 per cent upon completion of the project and the submission of an article suitable for publication in our journal.
2. The allocation of the monies granted will be made at the discretion of the SMYA Selection Committee.
3. Applications for the 2010 award can be made any time prior to October 1, 2011.
4. Each application will be acknowledged and recipients will be notified of decisions immediately following the Selection Committee's meeting.
5. The amount of the monies of the fund to be allocated at the discretion of the Selection Committee shall not exceed \$1000.00.
6. Applications will be received in a format approved by the SMYA Selection Committee. Interested persons should forward inquiries to:

Harold Schultz Middle Years Development Fund

ATTENTION:

Chantel Kaufmann

Pilot Butte School, 5148 Genereux Drive, Regina SK S4X 4P2

(S) 781-4488 email: chantel@smya.ca

President's Award

The Saskatchewan Middle Years Association strives to promote an understanding of Middle Years Education within the province of Saskatchewan. Therefore, the President, on behalf of the Association, annually presents "The President's Award" to recognize individual excellence in middle years education.

Members of SMYA are invited to nominate an individual to be considered as a recipient of this award.

Criteria

1. The award will be presented to an educator who has made meritorious contribution to middle years education both locally and provincially.
2. Nomination must be made by a current member of SMYA.



Timeline

Applications for the 2010 award must be submitted to the President by October 1, 2011.

Nomination Form

A. NOMINEE INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____
Work Address _____
Position Held _____
Telephone – Home _____ Office _____

B. NOMINATOR INFORMATION

Name _____
Address _____
Work Address _____
Position Held _____
Telephone – Home _____ Office _____

C. POINT FORM OUTLINE OF THE CANDIDATE'S CONTRIBUTIONS:

D. ATTACH A STATEMENT SUPPORTING YOUR NOMINATION (MAXIMUM 1,000 WORDS)

Mail all submissions to: Mike Spicer, 343 Fairview Road, Regina SK S4R 6W2
Email: mike@smya.ca

Saskatchewan Middle Years Association

Youth Grant

The SMYA supports and encourages special projects, initiatives, and student conferences. Because of this, SMYA has established a grant fund, which will allow our organization to support such ventures. Money will be awarded in two installments. Fifty per cent of the grant will be paid up front while the remaining 50 per cent will be awarded on submission of a written report that can be published in *In the Middle*, the SMYA journal. Applications should show how the project, initiative, or conference would enhance the education of the middle level students involved. Priority will be given to those applicants which are organized by students, for students, or that go beyond regular classroom excursions/trips.

1. Applications for funds must be made BEFORE the project, initiative, or conference takes place AND before an SMYA executive meeting. The deadlines for consideration at an executive meeting are:
 - a. April 30
 - b. June 30
 - c. December 30
2. Applicants must fill in the form and include a half to one-page summary or outline of the project, initiative, or conference on a separate piece of paper.
3. Applicants must be SMYA members.
4. Funds for grants will be set aside by the executive in the annual budget.
5. The maximum amount available for the grants is \$1000 per year. Amounts awarded are at the discretion of the SMYA executive.
6. All special projects receiving the initial SMYA financial support will be required to provide SMYA with a written report suitable for publication in the SMYA journal in order to receive their second installment.



Application for Financial Assistance for SMYA Youth Grant

Saskatchewan Middle Years Association
c/o Chantel Kaufmann
Pilot Butte School
5148 Genereux Drive, Regina SK S4X 4P2
(S) 781-4488
email: chantel@smya.ca

Deadlines for applications are: June 30, December 30, April 30

School Name/Group Name

School Address

School Phone Number

Postal Code

Teacher Contact

Type of Event

Date

Location

Number of Participants

For Students and/or Teachers

Anticipated Costs

Sources of Funding

Food

Amount

Speakers

Source

Accommodation

Travel

Other (specify)

Total

Outline of Event

Please include a brief description of the project including rationale for the project, format and anticipated activities.

Do you have an active SMYA membership? Yes No

Have you received SMYA funding before? Yes No

Are you willing to:

a) Provide a report suitable for publication in the SMYA journal? Yes No

b) Make a presentation at our Annual Conference? Yes No

Please provide any additional information that will assist us in processing your request and attach it to the form.

Date

Signature

Thursday, October 20th • Friday, October 21st
Regina Inn



31st Annual Teachers Conference

MOTIVATE THE MIDDLE

2 0 1 1



Presenting Keynote Speaker: Mark Macleod

Please print clearly all information so your registration can be processed.
RECEIPTS WILL BE EMAILED TO YOU

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/Town: _____ Postal Code: _____

Phone: (w) _____ Email: _____

School: _____

Are you an STF member? Yes - Teachers certificate number: _____ No

Early bird Fee - \$200.00 until Sept. 9, 2011 Regular Fee - \$225.00 after Sept. 9, 2011
Payment MUST accompany registration form and be postmarked on or before Sept. 10, 2010

Student - \$100.00 (includes membership and GST) Presenter - No charge

Make cheques payable to SMYA and mail to Chantel Kaufmann at
5148 Genereux Drive, Regina Sask, S4X 4P2, Fax 781-4530, email chantel@smya.ca



Check for schedule, conference info, and updates at www.smya.ca

SMYA Privacy Policy

From time to time, the Saskatchewan Middle Years Association (SMYA) will gather, maintain, and use personal information about its members. This policy outlines the steps that the SMYA will undertake to safeguard the privacy of this information.

1. Accountability

- a. The Executive shall appoint one of its members as the SMYA Privacy Compliance Officer.
- b. The Executive may appoint other members of the Executive to be responsible for collecting personal information subject to the terms set out in this policy.
- c. Complaints and/or inquiries arising from the collection of personal information shall be directed to the Privacy Compliance Officer of the organization.
- d. Personal information of the membership shall be shared with and maintained by the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) for grant purposes.
- e. Personal information shall not be shared with any other third parties.

2. Purposes

- a. Personal information will be used for communication purposes only. These communication vehicles will include the SMYA journal, the President's newsletter, and periodic mail outs, which may advise the membership of upcoming professional development opportunities.

3. Consent

- a. Consent to gather personal information shall be obtained annually from the membership at conference.
- b. Registration forms for new or renewed memberships shall contain a "Consent for Release of Personal Information" section.

- c. This policy shall be made available to all members.

- d. Information collected by the SMYA may be disclosed to the STF for grant purposes and/or to the members of the SMYA Executive only.

4. Limiting Collection

- a. The information collected shall be limited to:
 - i. Name
 - ii. Address
 - iii. Postal Code
 - iv. Teaching Certificate Number
 - v. Telephone Number
- b. Name, Address, and Postal Code information are needed to send communication to the member
- c. A teaching certificate number is required by the STF for grant purposes.
- d. Telephone numbers are required to communicate with members quickly (i.e. in the event of a program cancellation).

5. Limiting Use, Disclosure and Retention

- a. Membership information shall be retained for as long as a person is a member of the organization.
- b. Lapsed membership information will be retained for a maximum of one year.
- c. Lapsed information in electronic or "hard copy" form shall be securely destroyed.

6. Accuracy

- a. Membership renewal information will be checked for accuracy with the individual member.
- b. Individual members of the SMYA shall be responsible for informing the organization's Privacy Compliance Officer with appropriate updates to their personal information.

7. Safeguards

- a. All reasonable measures shall be taken to protect members' personal information against loss or theft.
- b. Access to electronically stored information shall be limited to members of the organization's Executive only.
- c. Executive members shall annually be made aware of the need to protect the privacy of members' personal information.
- d. This policy shall be reviewed annually.

8. Openness

- a. This policy shall be published on the organization's website.
- b. This policy shall be published annually in the Association journal.

9. Individual Access

- a. Upon a request by a member, the President shall confirm the existence of a member's personal information and shall provide a copy of this policy to the member.
- b. If a member deems her/his personal information to be inaccurate, the member shall be given the opportunity to correct any inaccuracy.

10. Challenging Compliance

- a. Complaints and/or inquires regarding this policy shall be directed to the Privacy Compliance Officer of the organization.
- b. Upon receiving a complaint and/or inquiry, the Privacy Compliance Officer shall attempt to resolve the issue as expeditiously as possible.

