



The Insider

The Official IPSF E-Bulletin



A Message from the Director, Dr. Ronnie Miller:

We live in interesting times in the field of private school education, and face many competing challenges.

Contents:

1. A Message from the Director of IPSF
2. IPSF Updates
3. Article Summaries
4. IPSF Meeting Details

Certainly, there are educational issues which, in my opinion, the unit of private schools at the Ministry of Education, should be considering and improving, in addition to, or even instead of, compliance issues and the integrity of the credit.

As an example, media has recently reported on some faith-based schools which are, allegedly, neglecting to teach core subjects; such as: English, Mathematics and Science, and are focused almost entirely on religious studies. I have observed this sort of tendency myself, while working as a consultant for private schools. I find this phenomenon very disturbing. It should be noted, that this practice is not limited to any particular religious community.

Upcoming Events

Next IPSF Meeting

The next meeting of the 2019/20 IPSF membership will be held on April 6, 2020

See back page for address and details

Summer Institute

August 2020
Details TBA

There is a case now being litigated in the province of Quebec, where individuals are suing a faith-based school for, allegedly, failing to teach core subjects, and, thus, not preparing them for further education or employment in the 21st century workplace. These individuals allege they are not fluent in English or French; are incapable of solving even the simplest arithmetic questions; and have no understanding of basic scientific concepts. For me this raises the urgent question of how this could happen in 2020, within a developed country like Canada. Isn't the Ministry of Education of every province responsible for all its citizens' education?

A Message from the Director, Dr. Ronnie Miller, cont'd:

The answer, of course, is not simple. The Education Act of Ontario requires that parents provide their children with education, it does not specify what kind of education. The school involved in the law suit described above argues that it provides additional services to home-schooled students, and, thus, is not required to teach the core subjects. Since the parents are the final decision-makers regarding their children's curriculum, does the government have a role to play or leverage in this case?

I believe a critical question to be asked is, "Is the Ministry of Education negligent in its mission to ensure an appropriate education to **all** its citizens, regardless of their religious or other individual practices or beliefs? Is there such a thing as a unified understanding of an appropriate education? Should the government legislate that all students must study certain identified core subjects alongside, according to parental wishes, religious or other studies? Is such legislation even possible or would it conflict with other legislations and rights that emphasize freedom of expression, religious freedom, and parental rights to choose the type of education their children receive?"

Should IPSF members discuss this contentious issue and seek to develop a clear statement in this regard? Let me know what your thoughts are.



*Ronnie Miller, M.Ed.; Ph.D.
IPSF Executive Director*

Summer Institute Update

Mr. Jason Krell and Dr. Ronnie Miller are working on a program for our Summer Institute. The Summer Institute will be held in late August, 2020. The topic which we are currently considering is Progressive Discipline. It is our hope to have all our teachers and principal in attendance. Further details will soon be shared with all school members.

PPM Review Schedule

We continue with our review of various PPMs of interest to private schools. The review is conducted online and prepared by IPSF Executive Members. The following is a list of reviews which have taken place and are scheduled to take place over the next few months. Please mark the dates on your calendar and connect with Mr. Christian Bayly regarding your online participation.

Date	Presenter	PPM	Title
December 6, 2019 at 10:00 am	Sara MacDonald	158	School Board Policies on Concussion
January 6, 2020 at 10:00 am	Emina Tikak	155	Diagnostic Assessment in Support of Student Learning
March 11, 2020 at 10:00 am	Christian Bayly	159	Collaborative Professionalism
April 6, 2020 at 10:00 am	Hugh McKeown	136	Education of Persons Unlawfully in Canada

IPSF would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Lynn-Rose Heights College and Lynn-Rose Heights Private School – Elementary for becoming the first IPSF member schools fully accredited with Cognia (previously AdvancED). The schools received the Accreditation Seal, which they can now use with their school diplomas. The schools' Continuous Improvement Plans were well received and enthusiastically approved by the Cognia Engagement Review Team. Congratulations to Ms. Marie Attard and Ms. Sara MacDonald for this achievement. We would also like to wish good luck to YIP's Collegiate on their upcoming Engagement Review with Cognia. It is our hope that YIP's Collegiate will soon successfully pass the review and become an Accredited school in early March, 2020.

*IPSF Article Review**What Are the Best Ways to Prevent Bullying in Schools?*

BY DIANA DIVECHA | OCTOBER 29, 2019 GREATER GOOD MAGAZINE

This was a very insightful and useful article, providing a quick overview of some of the important points of creating a school-wide, positive social-emotional climate. Amongst other useful information Divecha points out that not all Social/Emotional Learning (SEL) programs are useful. In its broadest sense SEL programs support students in learning to be self-aware of their and others' emotional state, and to exercise responsible self-management, relationship-management, and decision-making.

Evidence-based SEL approaches, such as PATH and RULER, have been shown to deliver cost-effective, solid results. Numerous studies of hundreds of thousands of K-12 students have shown that SEL programs, when properly implemented, can improve the emotional well-being, self-regulation, classroom relationships, and kind and helpful behaviors among students. These programs can also help to reduce a range of problems like anxiety and depression; reduce negative behaviors such as aggression and bullying, and improve academic achievement, creativity, and leadership. A very interesting statistic discussed indicated a cost-benefit analysis showing that well-structured SEL programs are a good investment; with \$11 saved for every \$1 spent.

There is also growing evidence that teachers benefit from SEL programming within a school. Those teachers who have acquired emotional and social skills training indicated having higher job satisfaction and less burnout, have more positive relationships with their students, managed their classrooms in a less adversarial or threatening fashion, and used more strategies to cultivate creativity, choice, and autonomy in their students.

Another fascinating aspect of this article was its attention to the role of families in deterring bullying behaviours at school. This article recognized that bullying in schools sometimes arises from harsh parenting practices or sibling bullying at home.

Some of the information regarding bullying in our broader society was particularly telling. According to this article adults experience bullying in their workplaces, including within schools, at about the same rate as children in schools. In other words, sadly, bullying is not just a childhood phenomenon; it is a pervasive human problem.

This article points out that we need a substantial shift in our mindsets about the importance of people, of course including children, and their feelings. The evidence is clear that we are all more likely to thrive when our humanity is recognized, and possess the language and strategies to identify, express, and, therefore, successfully regulate our feelings, so as to foster safe and supportive communities, in school and out.

IPSF Article Review

What Happens When We Listen to Teachers' Stories? Teachers of Oakland want to change the conversation about education by humanizing teachers

BY AMY L. EVA | MARCH 25, 2019 GREATER GOOD MAGAZINE

This American article begins by high-lighting that all too often teachers “get a bad rap” from the general public. This immediately struck a chord and increased my interest in reading the full article; particularly in thinking about the recent CBC podcast, which was generally negative regarding Ontario private schools.

This article discussed one jurisdiction’s novel sounding solution: tell teacher stories.

The author explains that the rationale behind this project was based on the notion that stories help us understand and relate better to each other. Further, the article describes the scientific under-pinning for this human response to each other’s stories; many of the same brain areas involved in story comprehension are similarly involved in the human ability of Theory of Mind (that every person has their own internal understanding of the world, which might be different from mine). It is believed that this overlap in brain

function results in greater empathy and connection between people who have shared personal stories.

The particular teacher group described, Teachers of Oakland, involves teachers from Oakland, California, where individual teachers submit personal stories which are then shared via social media platforms. The public can then respond to these stories through a vetted platform. The founder and director of this teacher group stated the following, “I found that the conversations around education and schools often dehumanized the actors within,” he says. “I wanted to bring the focus back to the adults most critical in our existing education system—the teachers—as community pillars, as whole people.”

There is increasing research to bolster this idea of stories, rather than just facts, as a means to increase empathy and connection between individuals and groups. In one recent study, participants reading a narrative account responded more empathically toward both the individual featured and the group they represented, when compared to those who had read a strictly factual account. Also of note, after reading the narrative, participants also reported more positive intentions toward the individual featured. Researcher Paul Zak explains that character driven stories, in other words, personal stories, cause synthesis of the hormone oxytocin, and oxytocin is a hormone which enhances bonding and a sense of connection.

Many readers responded to the stories written by the Teachers of Oakland with great compassion, gratitude, and respect, for instance, “It was a breath of fresh air to read about your philosophy on teaching and a good reminder to take a step back and remember the humanity of it all, thank you for all you do.”

In what many are calling very divisive times, it is interesting to consider if this might be a project of benefit to members of IPSF; to remind our parent bodies, colleagues, students, and wider community of our common humanity and the rewards to be gained by working together toward common goals. Our personal stories might be an important tool in this endeavour.

*IPSF Article Review**The Art of Slow Looking in the Classroom**The cross-disciplinary learning benefits of paying close attention*

BY EMILY BOUDREAU | JANUARY 16, 2020 HARVARD GRADUATE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

This article explores the startling information that the average human attention span is only 8 seconds. This is especially pertinent when educators contemplate the teaching of critical thinking skills, which research shows requires extended exposure and attention to content to allow for reflection, analysis, and synthesis of ideas. Many educators struggle with holding the attention of their students, particularly in an era of rapid information exchange.

Project Zero has some ideas and activities to help support improved student attention and reflection. Shari Tishman, a Project Zero researcher, has developed programming around the practice of “slow looking”. Tishman describes “slow looking” as observing detail over time so as to move past first impressions, and move to a deeper experience of an idea, piece of text, piece of art, or any object.

Tishman argues that “slow looking” helps students appreciate complex ideas and systems and to build connections between ideas, current learning, past learning, and others’ perspectives.

Here is one suggested activity: *Activity: Take something apart, whether it’s a physical object or an idea like “family.” What are the different components and how do they function together?*

The article provides this quote from Tishman, “Looking at physical or conceptual systems and how they’re put together and how they can be taken apart is a powerful strategy for close looking”. As an example, Tishman has her graduate students take apart everyday objects in small groups, and then think about the purpose of the different parts,

and make an inventory of the pieces they find. Such an activity, she claims, helps students develop an appreciation for complexity and how small pieces can come together to form a larger whole. Tishman also argues that use of “slow looking” activities contributes to self-awareness and the development of empathy.

Here is a suggested activity to promote changing of perspective. *Activity: Change your vantage point. That might mean looking with the naked eye and then through a microscope, asking students to think about what a glass of water might look like to an ant, or examining eating utensils from around the world.*

Through such an activity as described above Tishman argues that students acquire an appreciation of how an object or event or concept might be experienced by somebody else. She further postulates that this then helps a student become aware of their own lens or lenses. As Tishman states, “students come to an understanding of the multi-perspectival nature of knowing things in our world.”

Project Zero has developed many different tools to support “slow looking” and many other “routines” for thinking that can deepen the learning experience for students. On their website their Thinking Routine Tools are presented in the format below, and each area has many different activity suggestions for fostering deeper student thinking and learning. The following link will let you check some of these out to see if they might be of value for your teachers and students: [https:// pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines](https://pz.harvard.edu/thinking-routines)



IPSF Meeting Reminder

Date: April 6, 10:00

Time: 10:00 AM – 1:00PM

212 Eglinton Avenue East

2nd Floor Multipurpose Room

Toronto, ON, M4P 1K2



Contact the Editor

If members have articles, news, events or any other ideas to share and be included in the e-bulletin, please send them for consideration to the editor at info@ipsf.ca

Please let us know if there are particular topics you would like covered in future bulletins.

Thank you!!