

a fine **FACTA**



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THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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MADD About Town

President's Report

Peter McWhir

FAC/CSEA Conference 2005

The Fine Arts Council (FAC) and the Canadian Society for Education through Art (CSEA) joint conference was held in Edmonton in October. The feedback we received indicated that the conference was well done and that the sessions provided useful ideas and strategies for classroom application.

The number of attendees far exceeded our expectations. Although that made registration difficult, we were nonetheless pleased to see everyone. It would have been nice to have had a greater turnout to hear Minister of Education Gene Zwozdesky speak and to then attend the President's Reception. For those who were there, it was a good opportunity to share ideas.

The Friday sessions were well attended, and on Saturday we were once again surprised by the number of walk-in registrations and were sorry that we could not meet all their needs. Our Conference 2006 committee has decided to not allow walk-ins—a view shared by many who responded to the Quick Tick Survey.

The Saturday sessions at the Victoria School of Performing and Visual Arts were well attended. It was a wee bit chilly at lunchtime, but that only encouraged us to talk faster and move around more than usual. Had we been forewarned, we could have easily organized a warm-up dance activity. On behalf of the FAC, I thank the staff and administration of Victoria School for letting us use their facilities.

On Saturday evening we held our annual Fine Arts Blast, with good food, good company, good entertainment and some mighty fine footwork on the dance floor.

On behalf of the Conference 2005 committee, I thank you all for attending, and on behalf of the FAC, I thank the committee for a job well done.



Quick Tick Survey

The response to the Quick Tick Survey has been somewhat disappointing, with only 66 returns out of a possible 460 as of April 7.

The results of the survey were as follows.

General

- Most of you would like to receive an electronic newsletter.
- Most of you would prefer that MADD Dash workshops be held on Saturdays.
- Most of you would prefer that the annual conference be held on a Friday and Saturday.
- Most of you (95 per cent) had access to PD funding to attend Conference 2005.
- More than half of you would be willing to serve on a conference committee.
- Two-thirds of you would be willing to serve on the FAC executive.
- Two-thirds of you have visited the FAC website (www.fineartscouncil.ca).
- Most of you (80 per cent) are in favour of regional representation.
- Only 20 per cent of you would be willing to become a regional representative.
- Half of you are interested in receiving advocacy materials to support your position.

Conference 2006

- 60 per cent of you will probably attend the conference in Kananaskis in October.
- Most of you want a mixture of full-day and half-day sessions.
- 60 per cent of you would contribute a lesson plan to the Arts Market Exchange.
- 60 per cent of you would be willing to help out with future conferences.
- Opinions on the requirement for you to preregister for sessions were equally divided.
- 80 per cent of you would accept an earlier registration deadline.
- 75 per cent of you agree that walk-in registrations should not be accommodated.
- 80 per cent of you would prefer that registration be confirmed through e-mail.
- 75 per cent of you would prefer to get your receipt at the registration desk.
- 66 per cent of you would prefer to register by e-mail.

Taking the survey results into account, we will strive to provide you with more support in your discipline and ultimately inspire your students' education through the arts.

Conference 2006: “Masters of the Arts”

We already have many interesting presenters willing to share their expertise at the Kananaskis conference. Several suggestions for other presenters have been

proposed. I hope to contact those people in the near future to see if they are available and willing to present.

The workshops will be a mixture of full-day and half-day sessions, with the likelihood that the half-day sessions will be repeated to allow you to attend both of them.

For the Saturday-evening banquet we have in place a band, a world-famous a cappella group, prizes and some surprises!

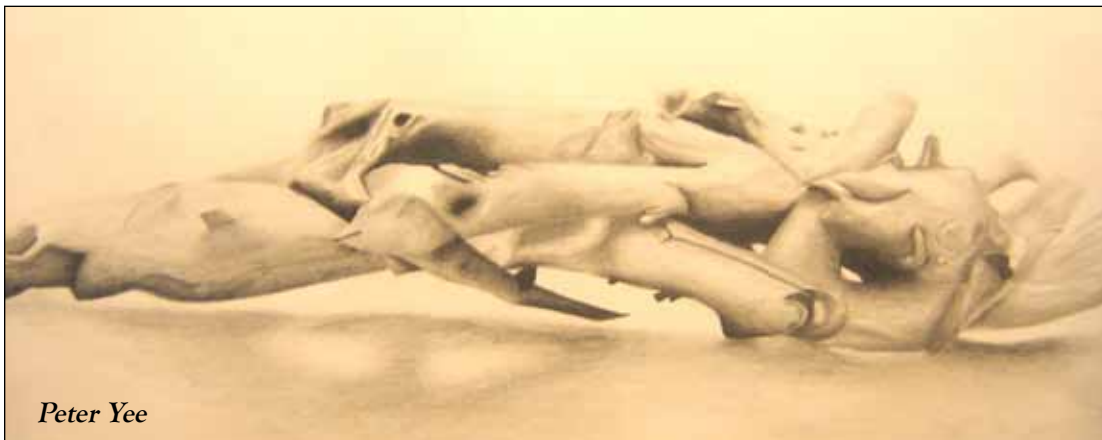
When you see the conference flyer included with this issue, you will no doubt be enthusiastic enough to send your registration form in right away. We look forward to having you join us in October at the relaxing mountain retreat at the Delta Lodge at Kananaskis.

Executive Meeting— May 11 and 12

By the time you read this, the executive will have met and discussed ways to better serve FAC members. We are at a crossroads and need to take a serious look at what we can do to support you. Many of your teaching situations and the educational climate have changed over the last few years. Other specialist councils are also having difficulty involving and supporting their members. We hope to come up with some strategies.

I hope this finds you all in good health, surrounded by happy families and enjoying your work situations. If the FAC can help you in any way, please do not hesitate to contact me or another executive member (see the inside back cover for contact information).

Enjoy your summer!



Peter Yee

Teacher to Teacher

Brush Up Your High School Painting Program

Kathleen Schmalz

Kathleen Schmalz grew up in Vancouver and has taught in Cranbrook, BC, in St Albert, Alberta, and in Ontario. She currently lectures for the University of Western Ontario in London and for York University in Toronto and has a working art studio. She has worked with people of all ages, from 2-year-olds to 80-year-olds, and the common thread has been her continual search for ways to allow each person's unique perception to develop.

Reprinted with permission from the Journal of the Ontario Society for Education Through Art, Volume 30, 2005, pp 14–19. Minor changes have been made to spelling and punctuation to fit ATA style.

Ask high school art teachers about their students' skills in video, computer graphics or photography, and hear how they often surpass those of their teachers. Painting skills, however, are sometimes another matter. How can this noble and historical art form be better nurtured in our students? The answer for each teacher is defined by his or her beliefs on the skills versus concepts continuum, as well as the previous experiences of the students. Do you as a teacher believe in growth from the inside out—an organic and facilitated approach—or a more structured infusion of knowledge and technique? If students have some experience with paint, high school teachers will be free to choose an entirely experimental approach or a more facilitated one as described here. Some students,

however, may lack real experience with paint and require the experimental approach often provided by elementary teachers.

If elementary teachers have created a successful art program, they will have allowed students to plan, organize and create works in a variety of media. For example, the Ontario curriculum states that students should “produce two- and three-dimensional works of art that communicate thoughts, feelings, and ideas for specific purposes and to specific audiences” at all levels Grades 1–8; however, according to the teachers I work with in Additional Qualifications Courses, due to lack of knowledge, materials and other supports, many elementary teachers have difficulty implementing the curriculum in their classrooms. High school teachers may actually be receiving students who are less experienced with media such as painting than in previous eras. So, students may need some experimental experience with paint to benefit from the brush-up described in this article.

What will likely be new to most high school painters is the opportunity to use acrylic paint rather than the elementary standard of tempera paint. Given the use of good materials, excellent peer and adult coaching, and a stretch of time to work, many students would organically improve in their ability to control, experiment and render with paint. Since most high school art curricula mandate the use of many different materials, however, we choose between allowing a brief period of organic growth with little emphasis on outcome and creating an intense learning cycle with greater expectation of student production.

A concentrated painting block benefits from 10–15 hours of class time. Initially, students will practise

structured hands-on exercises in paint organization, usage and manipulation, including colour mixing, before trying out several ideas of the students' choosing. This opportunity to innovate should be explained to students before the unit begins to ensure their cooperation during Phase 1. At least one of these pieces must successfully incorporate techniques learned. Other paintings may involve varying, manipulating or even ignoring the techniques studied. Students will reflect upon choices, and excellent application of techniques learned and creative modifications should receive equal approval.

Getting Started

Here is a suggested 10-period brush-up for a class that has had, at a minimum, some casual prior experience with painting. If you are satisfied that your students already possess sound skills in a certain area, feel free to skip it.

Materials Required

Each student will need a book of inexpensive watercolour paper (this is very often available at the dollar store) and student-quality ¼-inch and ¾-inch brushes. As many teachers have discovered, dollar store Styrofoam plates work very well as palettes. The class will need a 150-millilitre tub of each of the colours listed below. Golden brand paint has the truest colours, but teachers may decide to use a less expensive line of paint, such as Reeves, to save money.

Cool Blue

Anthraquinone Blue or Prussian Blue—midnight blue

Warm Blue

Cobalt Blue or Ultramarine Blue—sky overhead at noon

Cool Red

Quinacridone Red—cranberry

Warm Red

Pyrrrole Red or Cadmium Red—fire engine

Cool Yellow

CP Cadmium Yellow Light or Lemon Yellow—lemon

Warm Yellow

CP Cadmium Yellow Medium—golden yellow

Titanium White

Alternatively, Reeves sells individual starter sets for approximately 10 dollars, which would allow students to be responsible for their own materials.

Day 1: The Brush

Good brushwork, as well as the ability to work thin to thick, is a hallmark of good painters. Enjoy the brush marks of both Canadian painter David Milne and Vincent van Gogh. Then, students fold two pieces of watercolour paper or manila tag to form eight squares. On the first sheet, they will fill each space with one kind of brush mark, using the brush dry without water (see Figure 1). Use only one colour of paint, and teach students to spoon out only a fingernail-sized serving.

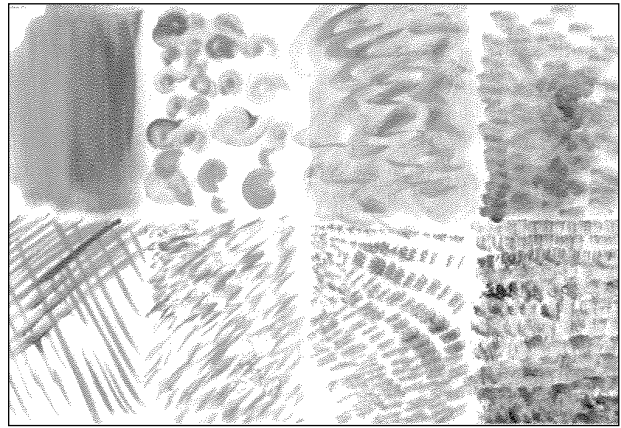


Figure 1: Dry Brush

On the second sheet, use water on the brush and see how differently the paint can be handled. Students should try varying thin and thick applications within the same square (see Figure 2). Share in a nonjudgmental critique, trying to learn from the ideas of others. Students who finish early can experiment with using creative brushwork both thick and thin to add a second, lighter colour. Examine historic works for evidence of brush handling.

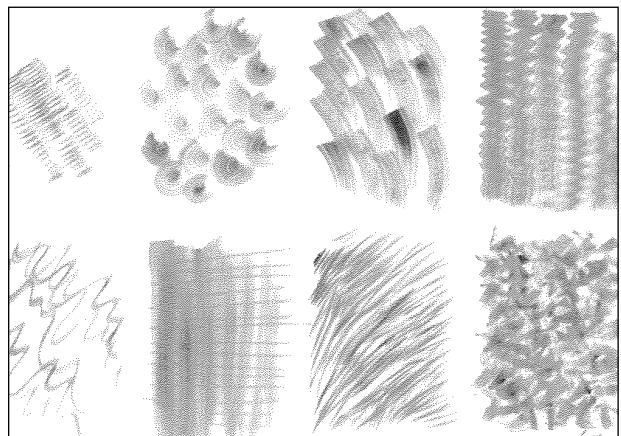


Figure 2: Wet Brush

Day 2: Pattern

Using the experiments from Day 1, examine them for lighter and darker colours resulting from thin and thick applications of paint. Discuss patterns that result, what they resemble and their emotional tone. Use scissors and glue to create a small collage, in an abstract or realistic style, from the different patterns created (see Figure 3). Do an enlarged painting, trying to replicate the thin and thick effects, as well as the types of brush marks used.

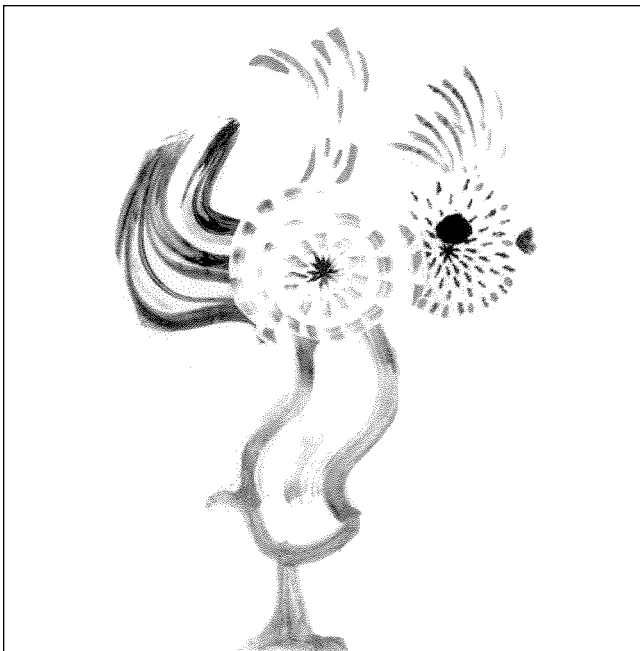


Figure 3: Pattern Collage

Day 3: Value

The patterning of values can serve as the backbone of a painting. Have students shade a sheet of paper with the side of a graphite pencil. Examine a simple object, such as a white mug. Have students use their erasers to subtract the light where they see highlights on the mug and darken the pencil shading where they see shadows (see Figure 4). Ask students to apply a medium colour, like a warm blue, then use a paper towel to subtract the light parts by rubbing out the paint and adding darker shadows with thicker paint.



Figure 4: Values Sketch in Pencil

Day 4: Value (Continued)

Using dry paintings from the previous day, ask students to re-examine the mug for areas of strongest dark and strongest highlight. Using cool blue for the shadows and a mixture of white and warm blue for the highlights, complete the painting (see Figure 5). Students can add a background colour. This technique is useful for both representational and abstract work.



Figure 5: First Attempt at Underpainting

Day 5: Colour

Students will create a warm and a cool colour wheel. Draw two circles and place a Y inside each, creating three areas for the primaries (see Figure 6). Draw a second circle around the outside of each, with overlapping lines encompassing two primaries to mix the secondaries. Label the first colour wheel Cool Colours (lemon yellow, dark aqua blue, cranberry red); the second will show the warm colours (bright primary red, golden yellow, bright basic blue). Examine the colour wheels. Which colours look farther away, closer, in shadow, sunlit? Ask students to bring a neutral object to the next class.

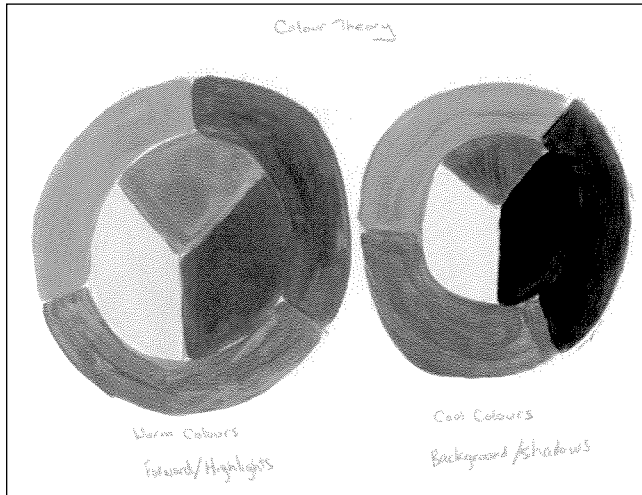


Figure 6: Warm and Cool Colour Wheels

Day 6: Unguided Painting

Students repeat the steps above, unguided, with objects of their own choice. Many will want to skip the pencil values sketch, but they should be encouraged to keep this step in the process because it will inform their vision of the object. The emphasis should be not on a finished painting but on active brushwork and confidence in the procedures taught. Students will also begin to plan their own painting, either using a technique they have learned or modifying it in some way. They will have three periods to work on this painting and on the rationale that explains the processes used.

Days 7, 8 and 9: Independent Painting

Students will plan and produce at least one painting of their own choosing. Their paintings will demonstrate mastery of the techniques learned, variations of these techniques or a complete abandonment of these techniques. Students will write a one-page paper to describe the rationale for their decisions and their analysis of the outcome.

Day 10

Students will hand in their final paintings, one of the practice pieces, and their rationale stating which techniques they adopted and which they changed, if any, and the thinking behind their ideas. If the studio climate is appropriate, another voluntary, nonjudgmental critique would be very useful as a wrap-up. Students benefit more from hearing about the things others think they did right than from all of our suggestions for change.

Happy painting!

Wire Sculpture and Projected Slides: Two Ways Visual Art Can Bring Disparate Students Together

Tracy Fewski

The slides are upside down, sideways and backward. We groan as we realize that someone has tipped over the projector's slide tray and replaced the slides haphazardly. My students wait patiently while I put the slides in the right order. They offer to help, and they speculate on who could have dropped the tray. They are rooting for me in my fumbling attempts to put our lesson right. They love to view art as well as make it.

As I reposition the slides, it occurs to me that my classroom is like the upended slide tray. My students have landed in this classroom from places all over the world for varied reasons: they are refugees, children of skilled workers, children of war, children of political strife, children of local people. Mixed up together in this microcosm of the world, their varied cultural and social backgrounds create a new culture that will venture beyond our classroom into the community at large as the students grow and develop together. They find new ways to cope with their religious and social differences. Common ground upon which to walk together becomes a must in their world.

We are looking at a series of slides that show how art has developed in Canada over time, through people influenced by the times and places in which they have lived. My students are surprised by some of the art they see. They do not hesitate to forthrightly remark on images that strike them as beautiful, or ugly, or just plain strange.



Teacher to Teacher

As we progress through the slides, the questions fly thick and fast from the curious minds around me. About Cornelius Kreighoff: “Why did that artist paint outside in the snow?” About Barnett Newman’s controversial painting *Voice of Fire*: “Why is that abstract considered art at all?” About a work by Emily Carr: “Who is the artist that did that painting?” About an A Y Jackson print: “I saw one like that in my aunt’s house. How come you have a picture of it?”

We talk about the influence of the Group of Seven and Emily Carr; we compare the realism of Alex Colville with the impressionism of Tom Thomson. Gradually the ideas form that art does not have to look realistic, that the underlying elements and principles of design are important and that every artist’s work shows his or her own personal view of the world. Many of the students begin to grasp the idea that art can take many different forms and that their art can and should look different from the art of the person next to them. They discover that, like them, art has many faces.

Grades 7 and 8 students contend with tremendous pressure to conform to set modes of speech, dress, thought and ideals. They expend great energy in conforming to the codes of the crowd. Trying to counteract this peer pressure seems an impossible task. The art classroom is the perfect place to show students why uniqueness is valuable and to give them clues to their own identity by having them watch their peers go through an art process.

Art class can be a tremendous unifier for a group in which many different cultures and ideas have been thrown together. Viewing and making art give students a perspective and a place to begin talking to each other about their own lives and the lives of their parents. The trick is to find a starting point that ensures common ground from the outset.

One art assignment we do that unifies our class is a wire sculpture assignment designed to get students looking carefully at the human figure engaged in dance or playing a sport. Most of my students like sports and dance, so the subject stimulates discussion automatically. As we talk, the students notice that they all have the same body parts (other than the differences between the male body and the female body). There is much excitement as they choose a dance or sports pose and then draw it using egg-and-sausage figure drawings. Demonstrating the pose for each other while they draw adds to the fun. Some students prefer to draw superheroes or fantasy figures.



Teacher to Teacher

We then review the elements and principles of design, with an emphasis on form (the 3-D nature of the sculpture) and line (using wire to create an armature). Plastic bags bulk out the sculpture and indicate musculature. My students giggle at the reminder that people have posteriors and breasts and that their sculptures must reflect the reality of the human form they all have in common. Students interact to consult with each other, demonstrate poses, discuss techniques for constructing their sculptures and share materials. They work together to solve the problems of what pose to choose and how to create the human shape without cutting the wire. We use masking tape to secure and cover the plastic bags, and tissue paper and glue for the

clothes, skin, face, hair and other details. We discuss skin colour and usually conclude that skin can be any colour. Some students even create multicoloured skin to illustrate what we have been discussing. Making realistic hands seems to be the biggest challenge. Students have solved this problem by using rolled-up tissue paper or a felt-tipped pen to simulate fingers.

My students often tell me that the figure sculpture is their best piece of work. In the process of creating the figure, they make friends and exchange ideas and methods, and they have a wonderful piece to show at the end of the assignment. An upside-down box of slides becomes an organized show of artistic pieces made by a newly cohesive community.



Professional Development: “Filling the Well” While Creating a Stronger Network of Teachers

Glen Christenson

Glen Christenson, the FAC’s art representative, is a teacher and artist who is currently studying drawing through Thompson Rivers University. He paints in watercolours and oils, and has recently discovered a passion for digital photography. For the past 10 years, he has taught art, design studies and communication technology at St Paul Regional High School in St Paul.

As the lone art teacher in a medium-sized rural high school, I often see myself as an advocate for the visual arts. I find myself promoting the arts within my school division, my community and even my recreational hockey team.

Being labelled “the specialist” in any area implies that you need to stay current and highly motivated in your field—both of which can be difficult during a hectic school year, and even more so if you are isolated geographically.

There are few scheduled professional development opportunities during the year through which we

teachers can hope to invigorate our work lives. Here, I will share a recent PD experience that helped rejuvenate my teaching. Then, I will introduce you to a way isolated art, dance, drama and music specialists can build a stronger network with each other.

ArtWorks 2005

One blustery afternoon in January 2005, I found myself sitting rather heavily at my desk (as teachers are prone to do when nearing the end of a long semester). My classroom seemed to give a long, painful exhale as the last of my students headed home for the day, leaving very little of their creative energy behind. As the room got quiet, I felt my own energy pool somewhere near the soles of my feet. My tired eyes were slowly scanning the classroom—past the chaos of the previous day’s mask-making projects, past the sink cluttered with unwashed paintbrushes, past my half-eaten lunch I’d had to abandon because of a Travel Club meeting the day before—when I focused on a photograph of some of my former students standing in front of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Seeing the scorching Egyptian sun almost made me forget what was awaiting me outside—

the frozen car seats of my Honda and the shower of ice crystals that would blow from its defroster. (I wasn't even sure my poor car would start that evening!) About then I began to daydream about my ideal art pick-me-up (because I'm not prone to drink).

Would I choose to go back in time and observe the creation of the magical prehistoric animal images on the cave walls in France and Spain, model one of the thousands of terra cotta figures guarding tombs in China or walk the streets of Florence with Leonardo da Vinci as he shared his dreams of human flight? Would I choose to canoe the backcountry and paint with Tom Thomson, or sit on one of the chairs Emily Carr had suspended from the ceiling of her studio and watch her bring the swirling energy of the rain forest to her canvas? Or would I transport myself to the Uffizi Gallery, the Louvre Museum or Vatican City (without the troublesome tourist crowds, of course)? How could I infuse my teaching life with that sense of wonder and excitement?

As teachers we all have great ideas and an undying desire to see our students flourish. But when we continually draw from our well of creativity and patience, we need to find ways to replenish that reserve. "Filling the well," as Julia Cameron (2002) phrases it in *The Artist's Way*, is important for artists and teachers alike. I find that, regardless of the success of recent units and lesson plans, there comes a time when I need a creative shot in the arm.

Slowly pulling myself back to reality on that January day, I began clearing away the day's clutter. A flyer from an art supplier fell from my desk, narrowly missing the garbage can. A single line jumped out at me: "See you in Burnaby for ArtWorks 2005." At that moment I knew that someone was trying to send me a message.

After some last-minute planning, I made my way to Burnaby, BC, for ArtWorks 2005—the British Columbia Art Teachers' Association (BCATA) annual conference. I arrived in Vancouver a few hours early, so I jumped on a bus and took a short side trip to the University of British Columbia (UBC) Museum of Anthropology. The museum is located on a cliff overlooking the Pacific and is housed in remarkable architecture. Its collection consists of a wide variety of global art, with a highlighting of First Nations art, including original totems and the sculptural work of Bill Reid. Within a short time, I could feel my creativity levels rising. This stop alone made the long journey from northeast Alberta worthwhile.

I found myself unprepared for what awaited me at the conference itself. How eye-opening it was to sit in a room with 450 other professionals who shared my passion for the visual arts and who seemed to understand my teaching reality! That moment—more than any other in my past 12 years of professional development—made me realize that I am not alone on my teaching journey, that although I may be the only visual arts teacher in my high school, countless others face what I face every day. I in no way mean to belittle what happens here in Alberta as far as organized PD is concerned. The work the FAC does on behalf of its members is outstanding. However, our reality is different from that of the teachers in the lower mainland of BC.

The format for ArtWorks 2005 consisted of a keynote speaker in the morning and afternoon on both Friday and Saturday. The breakout sessions were categorized into five levels (all, primary, intermediate, middle, secondary) and six topics (literacy, social responsibility, art processes, media, clay, art careers). The Thursday and Friday evenings concluded with a reception and open house at the Burnaby Art Gallery and the Vancouver Art Gallery, respectively. While in Burnaby, I distributed posters for the FAC/CSEA joint conference in Edmonton (which was to be held the following October).

The teachers who volunteered to organize ArtWorks 2005 are to be commended for their efforts. It was a rewarding PD experience and just the shot in the arm I was looking for.

As the conference wrapped up, I couldn't help but wonder how I could bring this sense of community to my colleagues back home. How could I reach out to other art teachers and begin to repay the debt I owed to the many teachers who had aided in my development? It was then I remembered that I had earlier participated in another PD program that could benefit not only art teachers but all teachers working in isolation.

Collegial Visits—Giving and Receiving

A few years ago I was involved in the collegial visits program offered through the Learning Network, which is based at the University of Alberta. The program was

Teacher to Teacher

designed to bring teachers in similar subject areas together to share ideas.

The format involved exchange visits whereby I spent part of a day visiting a colleague and her students in their classroom, and later she visited my classroom to observe how my program worked. During the exchange visits we compared our long-range plans and shared unit plans and successful lessons. We recommended to each other teaching resources (books, videos, classroom materials) and teaching techniques, and we discussed methods of advocating for the arts in our communities. We looked at timetabling and combined grade levels and their impact on students. Through spending time in another classroom, I was able to see how dramatically such things as light, sound and wallcovering affect the learning environment.

In short, collegial visits are an exciting way to get the PD you need while allowing you to share your own strengths with a grateful colleague. In the desire to make this experience possible for its members, the FAC has proposed establishing a registry and database on its website (www.fineartscouncil.ca) to allow teachers to find colleagues in the same subject areas and grade levels who possess specific strengths. Teachers will e-mail their selected colleagues to arrange visit times and dates, to decide between half-day and full-day visits, and to determine the materials they want to discuss or exchange. This format will minimize the red tape required to make these visits a reality. The website will contain a guide to walk teachers through the steps required for arranging collegial visits. As the

database grows, so will the opportunities for professional development.

Although collegial visits cannot replace the feeling of community brought about by attending a conference with 450 like-minded people, the practice of sharing ideas and energy with colleagues will undoubtedly help build a stronger network for teachers. I sincerely believe that participating in the collegial visits program will have many practical benefits for both new and experienced teachers. I also believe that becoming actively involved in determining what your PD needs are and what strengths and skills you can share with others is a positive step in making the most of your PD time.

I invite you to visit me any time in my art room. You will find me in the collegial visits database when it is up and running. Take the opportunity to “fill the well” so you can keep giving.

Reference

Cameron, J. 2002. *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*. 10th anniversary ed. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.



Grade 9 Art Project Evaluation: Still Life

Carmen Rodriguez

Name: _____

Date: _____

Quality of Work

Assess the quality of your work in the general criteria shown in the table below (5 = excellent evidence of, 4 = very good evidence of, 3 = good evidence of, 2 = some evidence of, 1 = very little evidence of, 0 = no evidence of).

	Student's Self-Assessment	Teacher's Assessment
Composition	/5	/5
Evidence of nine values	/5	/5
Evidence of effective use of lines (implied/contour)	/5	/5
Proper placement of angles	/5	/5
Pencil control	/5	/5
Evidence of bottle transparency, metal sheen, cloth folds, guitar/mandolin	/5	/5
Symmetry	/5	/5
Professionalism	/5	/5
Aesthetic value of drawing	/5	/5
Total score	/45	/45

Work Habits

Assess your work habits (E = excellent, VG = very good, S = satisfactory, NI = needs improvement).

Student's self-assessment: _____

Teacher's assessment: _____

Comments

Comment on the assignment—the process, the product and anything else related to the assignment.

Student's comment(s): _____

Teacher's comment(s): _____



Mini-Projects for Art 10: Abstract Portrait and Sun Symbol

Paul Zabos

Paul Zabos teaches art at Lester B Pearson High School in Calgary.

I have my art students work on a variety of projects that vary in complexity and time required. The following two sketchbook assignments do not require much time. They are part of a group of six mini-projects I use with my Art 10 students.

Inevitably some students will finish a major project before others. These students want to move on, but I want to give the other students more class time to work on the major project. Thus, I send the students who are finished to a tri-fold display panel I have set up. Information on how to complete six mini-projects is attached to the panel. Near each project's description are three samples of student work that give students an idea of what the final product might look like. I ask the students to select a mini-project to work on until I am ready to start the next major project with the whole class.

Students should spend 90 minutes to three hours on each mini-project. All the students are required to complete four of the six projects by the end of the semester. If they have not finished a mini-project before I introduce the next major project, they put it away and work on it again when they have free time. If they do

not find class time to work on these projects over the course of the semester, they must complete them at home and hand them in before the semester's end.



Abstract Portrait

In an abstract work of art, the artist does not try to render an exact likeness of the subject. Instead, the artist uses his or her creative imagination to create a piece of art in which the subject is altered in some way.

One approach to creating an abstract work is to closely study the subject, looking for the elements and principles of design contained within it. The elements of design include line, shape, texture, value, form, colour and space. The principles of design include balance, emphasis, movement, contrast, rhythm, pattern and unity. If you look carefully, you will discover the elements and principles of design in everything you see. After discovering the elements and principles of design in the subject, an artist can exaggerate, simplify, rearrange or emphasize them.



Assignment

Create an abstract drawing of a human face, using the method of abstraction described above. Base your drawing on a picture in a magazine or on someone you know, or create the face from your imagination.

Begin by studying the structure and facial features of a person's head and face. Look for the elements and principles of design. Try to focus on the major lines, planes, shapes, textures, forms and so on. As you draw your abstract portrait, exaggerate, simplify, rearrange or emphasize the features. Use your creative imagination.

Use a piece of cartridge paper (23 by 30 centimetres), and draw a 1½-centimetre border around its outer edges. Complete your assignment using pencil crayons.



Sun Symbol

The sun has provided the warmth and light necessary to develop and sustain life on this planet. It is essential to the survival of mankind. Our early ancestors did not overlook the sun's importance: the Egyptians worshipped it, as did the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of Peru, and many other cultures have created sculptures, jewellery, mosaics and paintings depicting the sun. The use of the sun as a subject of art continues today.

Assignment

Create a symbol that will remind the viewer of the sun. A symbol is something that stands for or suggests something else. It is impossible to re-create the real sun, so artists instead create images that represent the sun. The variety of sun images created throughout history is amazing.

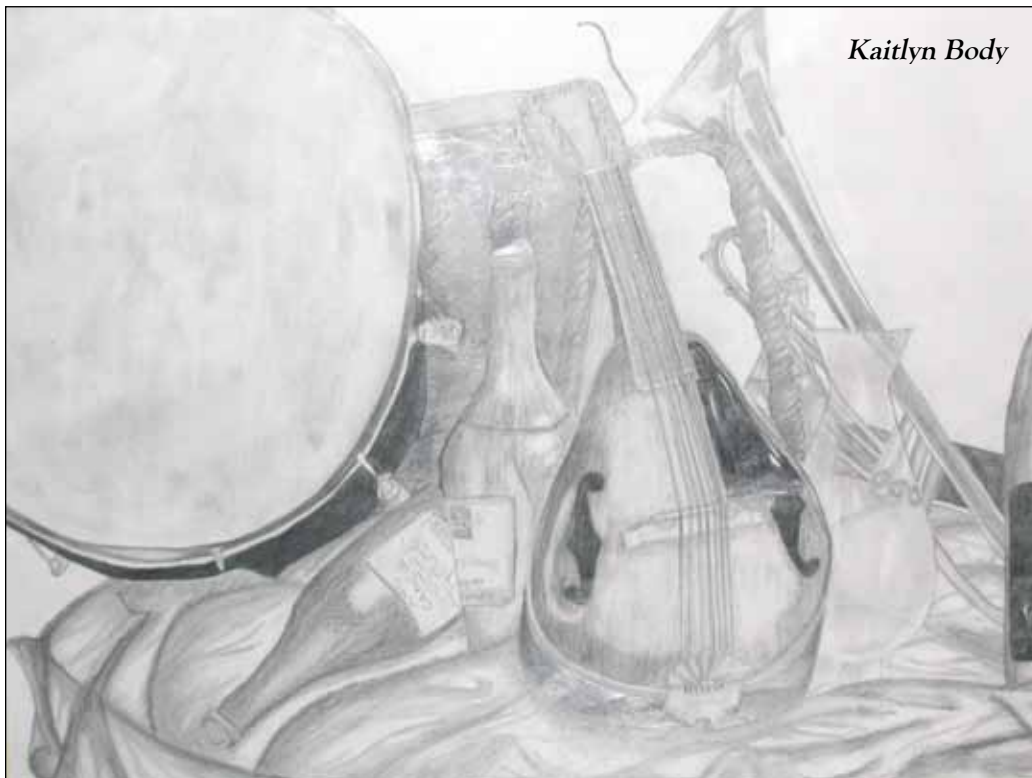
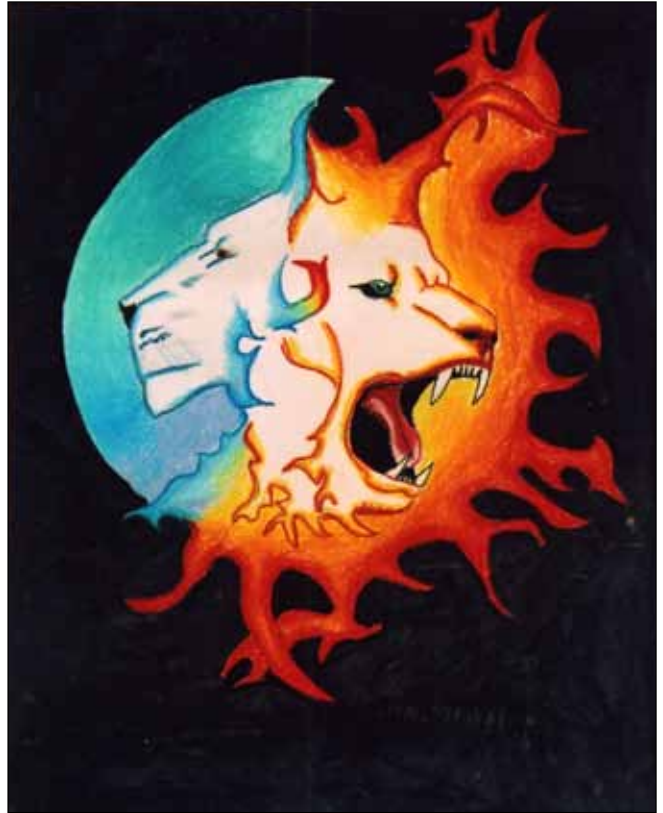
You can draw on many sources of creative inspiration as you begin this project. You can start by thinking of words and ideas that in some way relate to the sun.



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Words such as *heat, light, burning, star, energy, flames, glowing, melting, radiating* and *life-giving* may come to mind. You may visualize a friendly, warm sun on a pleasant summer afternoon, or an angry, merciless sun beating down on a desert. You may want to portray the sun as a great, godlike spirit, as some ancient cultures have. The sun is the centre of our solar system; perhaps you can think about what is central to your life (hobbies, interests, religion) and incorporate that into your sun symbol. For example, if you are interested in sports, your sun symbol can incorporate a soccer ball. If you choose to do a sun symbol that includes a face, think about the expression on the face. Think of the various ways you can represent the sun's rays. Think about the colours you will use. What do various colours symbolically communicate? Be as original as you possibly can. Really use your creative imagination.

Your project should be completed on a piece of paper (21 by 28 centimetres) with a 1-centimetre border around the outside. Use pencil crayons.



Basic Criteria for a Good Dramatic Scene

Peter McWhir

To effectively portray a character—which is what compels people to watch a scene—you should follow some basic guidelines.

1. Deliver your character's speech slowly and clearly.
 - Projection—speak loudly enough for the person the furthest away from you to comfortably hear you
 - Intonation—emphasize certain words to give your speech added meaning and effect
 - Pause—use pauses between words and phrases to give your speech special effect and meaning
2. Use effective facial expressions that reveal or support your character's thoughts and feelings. For example, using an angry voice supported by an angry face makes the character's anger more believable for the viewer.
3. Use subtle or bold gestures to emphasize your character's thoughts and feelings. For example,

using an angry gesture, combined with an angry face and an angry voice, has a greater impact on the viewer.

4. Use just enough bodily movement to clearly show your character's purpose in the scene. For example, the character is entering the room to answer the phone.
5. Live the moment as it actually happens for the first time, and proceed from there. For example, as the character goes to answer the phone, he is interrupted by the sound of a gunshot. He leaves the phone ringing as he dives for cover or goes to investigate.
6. Use only props and costumes that support your character and are essential to the scene. For example, an angry hunter wearing an orange cap and a hunting jacket and waving a shotgun is a credible character.

All of the above will establish and support the role you are playing.

Good Character + Good Story = Success

The Trilogy

Peter McWhir

The great value of doing the following trilogy exercise is the teaching of cause and effect. It clearly exemplifies the influence of the past on the present, and the future consequences of current actions. Doing this activity will result in deeper understanding of a character and provide the audience with a much more interesting play. It is also possible to develop the trilogy into a school play.

A trilogy is a group of three dramatic or literary works related by subject, theme or characters. For example, a trilogy could focus on three stages in the life of one character. Each stage would form a complete play in itself, and the character's development would be the common thread between the three parts. A trilogy could also depict the courtship, the raising of a family and the separation of a couple. Taking a broader scope, a trilogy could focus on the rise to power, the maintenance of power and the fall from power of a family, a political party, a regime or a country.

Suggested Procedure

1. By lottery, divide the class into groups of four to six students.
2. Each group develops a play or an improvisation on one of the following topics:
 - The Graduation
 - The Job Interview
 - The Great Adventure
 - The Great Escape
 - The Family Picnic
 - On Board a Sinking Boat
 - Going on a First Date
3. Each group presents its play or improvisation to the class. On a flip chart, list one good thing about each presentation, as identified by the students (establishing good criteria).
4. The students then return to their groups and develop another play that takes place *before* the one they just presented. Whatever happens in this play must be seen to directly affect the other one. Possible ideas include the following:
 - The Graduation—studying for diploma exams, peer pressure to party, memory loss
 - The Job Interview—shopping for new clothes, preparing a portfolio, finding references
 - The Great Adventure—getting the group together, preparing the equipment, mapping the route
 - The Great Escape—why and where you are being held, who or what is holding you
 - The Family Picnic—getting the whole family to agree to go, selecting a location, preparing the food and drinks
 - On Board a Sinking Boat—the purpose of the voyage, the land preparations, the departure
 - Going on a First Date—setting up the date, dressing for the date, leaving the house
5. Each group presents its play or improvisation. Again, list on a flip chart one good thing about each presentation, as identified by the students (establishing more good criteria).
6. The students return to their groups and develop another play or improvisation that takes place *after* the first one they presented. Whatever happens in this play must be seen as a result of what happened in the first two plays. Possible ideas include the following:
 - The Graduation—the graduation party, leaving the teachers, looking for a job

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- The Job Interview—getting the job, the first day of work, quitting the job
 - The Great Adventure—arriving at the location, dealing with problems, returning home
 - The Great Escape—where to go next (if the escape was successful), what to do now (if the escape was not successful)
 - The Family Picnic—the next family get-together, conflicts arising from the picnic
 - On Board a Sinking Boat—surviving on location, liability and legal proceedings
 - Going on a First Date—returning home to the parents, meeting with friends the next day
7. Each group presents its play or improvisation. List on a flip chart one good thing about each presentation, as identified by the students (establishing even more good criteria).

Brief Notes

The plot of each play should be developed and substantial so as to allow it to stand as a complete entity

on its own. Each play should flow naturally into the next, and the audience should be given a good reason to watch the next play.

Characterization is also important. Each play should have at least two strong characters with whom the audience can identify. When developing the trilogy, it helps to draw a schematic diagram of developments from the first to the last play, clearly tracing the path of each character's tasks, goals and relationships. All the actors should know why their characters are on stage and their immediate purpose at any given time.

Checklist for Students

Rehearse each play in the trilogy at least three times.

1. Clarify entrances and exits.
2. Identify blocking and movement.
3. Go over the speeches and their purpose.
4. Ask questions about the characters.
5. Offer suggestions for improvement.
6. Take notes so as not to forget ideas and direction.



Assessment: *Not a Dirty Word*

Sherry Martens

Sherry Martens is the fine and performing arts curriculum specialist for the Calgary Board of Education and a frequent contributor to A Fine FACTA. She is always delighted to talk about assessment—one of her favourite topics in teaching and learning.

With Grade Level of Achievement (GLA) reporting making a splash in our K-9 classrooms across the province, it seems appropriate for fine arts teachers to take a moment to consider their own assessment beliefs and practices.

In his keynote address—“Assessment for Learning: Putting It into Practice”—at the Alberta Assessment Consortium (AAC) conference last fall, Dylan Wiliam reported on key problems he and other researchers have found when looking at student achievement:

- The assessment methods that teachers use are not effective in promoting good learning.
- Grading practices tend to emphasize competition rather than personal improvement.
- Assessment feedback often has a negative impact on learners. (Black et al 2004, 9)

Wiliam and others (Black et al 2004) set out to discover what made a difference. The five key strategies they looked at were questioning, feedback, sharing learning expectations, self-assessment and peer assessment. They found that teachers spent more time

marking than planning and that teachers rarely planned how they would assess the outcome prior to instruction. Teachers did not always consider what kind of assessment strategies would be used, and the marking they were doing often had no effect on student achievement.

Wiliam quoted a research study conducted by Boulet, Simard and De Melo in 1990. The researchers looked at 80 Grade 8 students in Canada who were learning to write major scales in music. Students who were given oral feedback, shown the nature of their errors and given an opportunity to correct the errors achieved significantly higher than students who were given written praise, a list of weaknesses, a work plan or no feedback at all (p 125).

Wiliam also shared strategies to help teachers better articulate learning intentions to students. He suggested that the outcomes should be clear at the beginning of any work and be communicated in language that students and parents can understand. He has seen success for students when they are asked to design their own tests, because that forces them to think about what they have been learning.

Wiliam addressed how teachers use questioning with students. In his research, when teachers employed good questioning strategies in their oral feedback as assessment for learning, student achievement improved. Teachers should also help students consider what they are being asked to assess of themselves and their peers. Students need to be shown how to self-assess for the work to have any meaning.

Canadian assessment guru Anne Davies (2000) would concur with this research. She asks teachers to consider triangulation when assessing students. What

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does that mean? When deciding if a student can meet the outcomes of the program of studies, a teacher should look at the student's self-assessment, the teacher's own observations of the student's classwork and the work the student produces. She also advocates that teachers use exemplars with students so that they know the expectations before they engage in the task.

Davies says that making mistakes is essential for learning. The first time a student does something, the student is demonstrating what he or she knows. The second time the student does something, the student is demonstrating what he or she has learned. Davies emphasizes that students understand descriptive feedback better than evaluative feedback. She suggests asking a student for "more of this" (descriptive) rather than comparing the student's performance with that of others. Also, peer and self-assessment are more effective when students are given adequate time to process the learning and know what success in meeting a particular outcome looks like. Davies includes parents in this loop, giving them a place in the assessment process by having them comment on the student's work based on the outcomes.

What implications does this research have for fine arts teachers? First, consider your own assessment beliefs and where you might grow as a teacher in this area. An excellent tool in this regard is the Alberta Assessment Consortium's (AAC 2005) *Refocus: Looking at Assessment for Learning* (available at www.aac.ab.ca). Most school jurisdictions are members of the consortium, and teachers can access wonderful assessment documents, tools and rubrics online.

Second, consider your own practice in the key areas defined by the research:

- How much time do you spend planning for good questions to use with your students? Do your questions solicit only literal responses, or are you

asking students to think more deeply about the subject matter? Do you ask closed- or open-ended questions? What is the intent of your questions?

- Do you provide feedback that gives learners an opportunity to understand what is missing, wrongly interpreted and so on, as opposed to merely telling them, "Good work"? Do you give them an opportunity to use the feedback to make corrections and then resubmit the assignment?
- Do students have a clear idea of what you are expecting them to do? How do you know?
- Do you allow students the opportunity to assess themselves and their peers according to the outcomes you will also be assessing? What feedback from this assessment is used to improve learning?

We are living in a great age for assessment. Consider doing some professional reading of your own in this area, talk about your assessment practices with your colleagues and attend the next AAC conference. It is through examining our own assessment work that we will become better teachers and, as a result, students will grow as learners. Isn't that what it is all about?

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Affective Education: A Socio-Cultural Approach for Problem Solving Through Drama

Alkistis Kondoyianni

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Her PhD is in the promotion of social competence through drama in education with students with learning disabilities. She is the author of 37 books for children and 8 guide books for teachers about drama, puppetry and museum education.

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At the dawn of the new millennium, we find ourselves living in a complex society of incredible achievements and perplexing problems. The industrial society of the last century has turned into a technological and mass-media-centred one. The full impact of these profound changes has not yet been felt. Without doubt, many problems have been imposed on

us that demand urgent acquisition of new problem-solving skills.

On the other hand, from birth we are involved in continuous and challenging problem solving as we struggle to master our physical, social and educational worlds; our environment; and the people who surround us, with their demands, desires, fears, dreams, goals, thoughts and behaviours. We experience thousands of events that require problem-solving skills.

This article links the practical challenges of problem solving with socio-cultural beliefs and theory as proposed by Vygotsky (1962) and Bruner (1996). An examination of some Greek myths assists us in understanding how cultural context influences solutions to current problems. Through engaging in dramatic activities with children, we can use this cultural heritage to help children become more proficient problem solvers.

In a socio-cultural approach to problem solving, we must take into account Vygotsky's (1962) socio-cultural and historical theory of development, in which the role of language and culture is significant in the functioning of mind. Additionally, we adopt Bruner's (1996) beliefs about culture and how it provides the tools for organizing and understanding our world in communicable ways.

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According to Bruner (1996), the evolution of the hominid mind is linked to the development of a way of life in which reality is represented by a symbolism shared by members of a cultural community. This technical-social way of life is organized and construed in terms of that symbolism. The symbolic mode is shared by a community, and conserved, elaborated and passed on to succeeding generations, which, by virtue of this transmission, continue to maintain the culture's identity and way of life. The distinctive feature of human evolution is that the mind has evolved in a fashion that has enabled human beings to use the tools of culture.

A key facet of becoming a mature problem solver is learning the shared assumptions and meanings of our culture as well as learning about what is regarded as a good solution to a problem and what is not (Light and Perret-Clermont 1989).

Mythology, ancient literature and folk traditions all include concrete assumptions, meanings and symbolism that can be the cultural tools that will lead us to new-millennium problem solving. For example, Heracles is a well-known hero of Greek mythology who completed many feats that required him to solve problems. For example, Augeas, the king of Elis, had 3,000 bulls. His stables as well as the whole district were extremely dirty because they hadn't been cleaned for 30 years. As one of the labours he was compelled to complete as punishment for the murder of his own children, Heracles had to clean the stables. To accomplish his task, he diverted the flow of the Peneius and Alpheus rivers so that the waters would pass through the stables.

At present, a Greek government program recalls the feat of Heracles: the flow of the Achelous River has been turned to supply water to Athens. This solution has a basis in mythological technology, which can be universal and diachronical (Homer, *Iliad* 2.615-630, Pindar, *Olympian* 10.23-63, Pausanias 5.1.9).

Similar solutions to problems feature in the Minoan civilization. Daedalus was a famous architect from Greek mythology who built palaces, baths, statues and the famous labyrinth for King Minos in Crete. His achievements represent the height of the technological and cultural development of Minoan civilization. Unfortunately, King Minos's wife, Pasiphaë, fell in love with a bull and asked Daedalus to help her consummate her love with it. Daedalus constructed a wooden cow, which he covered with leather. Pasiphaë hid inside

the cow's belly. The bull was attracted by the odour of the cow, one thing led to another, and after some months a little black baby was born, half-boy, half-bull (taurus). This was the Minotaur (Herodotus 7, Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 4.2.33, Pausanias 7.4.4-5). King Minos was furious at this turn of events and pursued Daedalus with his army. Daedalus had to escape from Crete but couldn't because of a giant bronze guard, named Talus, who had been created by Hephaestus. Talus can be considered the world's first live robot and the problem solver of Minoan security. He was responsible for controlling the people of Crete and compelling them to obey the laws. Talus had plates made of bronze in his shoulder, much like the computer disks we have today. Talus's disks concerned law and justice. Every year he would run three times around the island of Crete, throwing rocks at ships to deter enemies from approaching. In addition, nobody could escape from Crete if he or she had done something wrong. Talus's method of control was to jump into the fire and superheat his body, which he would then press against the enemy or the person who had done something wrong (Plato, *Minos* 320 c-d, *Republic* 1.337a).

Daedalus was also faced with the need to find a solution to survive. He got an idea from looking at the birds. He collected feathers and attached them to his body with wax so that they imitated birds' wings. Thus the idea of the airplane came from mythology. Daedalus demonstrated that through the study of nature we can discover many models for solutions, and we can explain many phenomena in our society. These discoveries are the basis of sociobiology.

We can find thousands of inventive solutions not only in mythology but also in Greek literature. Homer's epic poems, as interpreted by his descendants, are characterized by extremely creative solutions to problems. For example, let's consider the story of the *Odyssey*, in which the hero, Odysseus, blinded the Cyclops, Polyphemus. Nevertheless, Polyphemus managed to enclose Odysseus and his companions inside his cave, which sheltered his sheep. The door of the cave was a large rock. Every morning he pulled the rock back and let his sheep out to graze in the fields, and every night they came back.

The blind Polyphemus couldn't see his sheep, so he needed to devise a method of keeping track of them. His solution, even though he didn't know how to count, was very inventive. For every sheep that went

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out, he placed a stone in a vessel and, at the same time, he caressed this sheep. In the afternoon he did just the opposite—he took one stone out of the vessel for every sheep that came back in a one-to-one correspondence. If some stones were left, he searched for the lost sheep.

Odysseus observed Polyphemos as he pondered how to escape the cave. The solution was unique. He tied his companions one by one under the sheeps' bellies, and they escaped from the cave without being detected (Homer, *Odyssey* 9.425–460).

Solution and inventiveness are related to circumstances. If somebody is in real danger and has to survive, then it is probable that a solution will spring out of his or her subconscious.

In everyday life, we must face different problems that are not usually a matter of survival but rather the managing of situations. We need to acquire knowledge and attain experience. Education has to provide the child with such knowledge. The quality of an education can be based on life experiences, as it was in ancient Greece. At that time, education was not a mere collection of information and knowledge of facts, but an active, social and interactive education gained through everyday life. Philosophy, mathematics, physics, chemistry, environmental education, law, justice, moral education and linguistics had to do with real life, people, theatre, gymnasium, music, city and community, where everybody was an acting subject.

According to Thornton (1995, 123), “change and growth in problem-solving skills reflect the combination of increasing information and experience. Given the right opportunities and experiences, quite striking changes can occur in a relatively short time.”

It is very possible, comments de Bono (1967), to look at all the old information and come up with a new and worthwhile way of putting it together. De Bono initiated the term *lateral thinking*, as distinct from vertical thinking. Vertical thinking traditionally has been the only respectable type of thinking. Lateral thinking is not a new, magic formula but simply a different and more creative way of using the mind. It concerns not only problem solving but also new ways of looking at things and new ideas of every sort. Lateral thinking is a matter of awareness and practice (de Bono 1967). Some influential theories (cf Piaget 1968) assert that logic is the critical element in problem solving. According to de Bono, the difference between lateral and vertical thinking is that with vertical thinking, logic

is in control of the mind, whereas with lateral thinking, logic is at the service of the mind.

It is well known that problem solving involves processes over and above basic cognitive competence. Piaget has been criticized for using unfamiliar tasks in designing problem-solving tasks, and Donaldson (1978) argues that he underestimated the young child's ability to draw inferences. Gelman (1980) showed that children can often solve problems when these problems are couched in concrete, familiar, everyday terms, while they fail when the same problems are expressed abstractly or in an unfamiliar way. Furthermore, children's success in problem solving varies from one situation to another, related to the context and the emotional environment (Alkistis 1998). So other factors besides logic must relate to success or failure in problem solving. Some general skills play a crucial role in the problem-solving process.

Children's experiences in a task and the feedback they get from their actions are significant to what they do or do not discover. Every problem they face urges them to evaluate themselves and their efforts, to discover new concepts and to invent new strategies. Problem solving involves change and moving from one idea to another. By this process children usually invent a new solution to a problem, which is a highly creative task (Thornton 1995).

In general, problem solving involves psychological processes related to the information a child has about the world. As children gain new experiences, they invent new strategies, develop deeper understanding of concepts, draw inferences and learn to combine problems (Thornton 1995). The child's increasing success in problem solving is also a social process, much more bound up with feelings than we used to think. Goleman (1997), in his theory of emotional intelligence, points out how social and emotional skills can lead to inventive problem solving and to a satisfying and successful life.

Vygotsky (1962) proposed that problem solving is a social skill learned in social interactions in the context of everyday activities. Children learn a lot from watching other people, from listening and even from simply solving problems in a social setting (Light and Perret-Clermont 1989). Working collaboratively with someone else makes a powerful contribution to a child's skill development. Pairs of children can be more successful in solving a problem than a child working alone (Doise and Mugny 1984). The reason for this is

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that many children may have different levels of understanding of the problem itself, as well as different background knowledge and assumptions (Doise and Hanselmann 1991). The conflicts between children, as Doise and his collaborators suggest, should put powerful pressure on children to change their conceptions and develop new strategies.

Glachan and Light (1982) studied pairs of children who collaborated with one another in problem solving and concluded that each child brings a different strategy to the problem and that children working together can learn more sophisticated strategies than an individual can devise alone. Glachan and Light even supported the *two wrong—one right* term, which means that two wrong strategies can bring about the discovery of a right one.

Does our education system give all these opportunities to children? It is possible that education reflects our native predispositions and interprets the world in a particular way. Pedagogy has to empower children to go beyond that endowment. A path that leads to that could be Vygotsky's (1978) "zone of proximal development" and Bruner's (1974) "scaffolding" through drama in education. The exploration of Greek myths through drama can be a historical and psychosocial education based on experiences in the safe environment of the classroom, which leads to the acquisition of problem-solving competence.

The uniqueness, the plurality, the variety, the complexity and the strong connection of Greek mythology, as well as the transmission of the myths by the Romans, made the myths well known not only to Europe but to the rest of the world influencing the evolution of the human spirit (Kakrides 1986). A myth is a story that tries to give an answer to serious questions about the creation of the world, life, man and his problems. A myth includes the wisdom of many years of life and provides symbolic meanings and concepts that were developed in a concrete place, time and civilization.

Nigel Dodd (Johnson and O'Neill 1985, 29) points out the role of drama in education concerning problem solving:

It extends the work of learning and maturation. It is the capacity to act as if an act were carried out before in fact it is undertaken. It uses past experience, products of prior learning, to predict what may happen if and when certain acts are carried out in conditions given: it multiplies interlocking

learnings; seeks their conscious integration; provides a ground for more sustaining action.

Drama, more than any other process, involves experience. In drama, a whole group is trying or acting out a solution, which is a vital learning experience. How can we promote drama if we want to follow Vygotsky? We can do it through exercises and drama techniques, such as role playing, frozen pictures, hot seating, monologues and group dialogues, improvisation, mirrors, interviews, mime, rituals, wearing the mantle of the expert, dramatization, happenings, improvised performances, forum theatre (Augusto Boal) and many others. During the development of acting—playing—living, we can problematize the plot. In this way we succeed in pushing the story or theme forward, while we put a question toward a theme that will be answered through action by the members of the group.

Apart from the problem inside the plot, there is another problem to be solved. In the process of drama in education, the main problems are communication, organization and function of the group. They provide excellent practice in two kinds of language—giving/receiving instructions and comment/criticism— both of which are indispensable for drama work. Also involved are interaction—persuasion, offering and rejecting, agreement and disagreement. Not only imagination or ingenuity but controversy and discussion are based on tangible evidence (Maley and Duff 1982).

As Booth (1985) notes, a problem in drama is called "the conflict." It is the struggle to solve the conflict that gives drama its power. Conflict is not necessarily a physical struggle. It may be what happens in a situation where a consensus has to be established within a group. It may be what happens between two groups as each group struggles to hold on to what it believes and values. Or, it may be an individual's inner struggle as he or she tries to determine a direction that should be taken, or a goal that should be achieved. Greek myths can offer many ideas in this regard because conflict is their main element. The children can explore a myth and be inspired by it, not only to create their own myth based on conflict but also to invent a creative solution.

Drama allows participants to invent a solution collaboratively and safely as well as to check if the solution works or not. In addition it allows for success. Strong feelings arise from the common experience for all the participants, and self-esteem and confidence are simultaneously enhanced for every member.

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Drama means cooperation, sharing, discovery, experience, learning and problem solving. Furthermore, it means enjoying life through creativity. Creativity requires informality, because its essence is breaking rules. By taking a role and acting a myth, we can feel our past and the wisdom that our culture can provide; we can influence our future; we can understand and explore nature, others, the whole world and ourselves. We can live our world, remake it, learn through our experiences and solve problems. Education reveals its essence in combining culture, experience and creativity. In the new millennium, the school has to become healthier and safer, which means that every student must feel happy and self-confident, exploring himself and the environment in the safe, approving climate of the classroom. Collaboration with colleagues and teachers is essential for students to engage in the dramatic activities suggested here. Education has to be communicative and creative, and to achieve that it has to break rules.

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Arts-Infused Education

Linda Langager

Linda Langager currently teaches music at the Third Academy in Lethbridge and is president of the South East Alberta Regional of the FAC.

An increasing number of studies over the past 15 years have concluded that arts education enhances student learning. However, data alone is not what has convinced me of the immense value of arts-infused education.

In my own classroom, I have found that when a lesson involves musical, dramatic or artistic interpretation, the students are the most engaged and the curricular content is the most meaningful to them. This is especially true for students with a variety of learning disabilities that make focus, memory and cognition of the written word challenging.

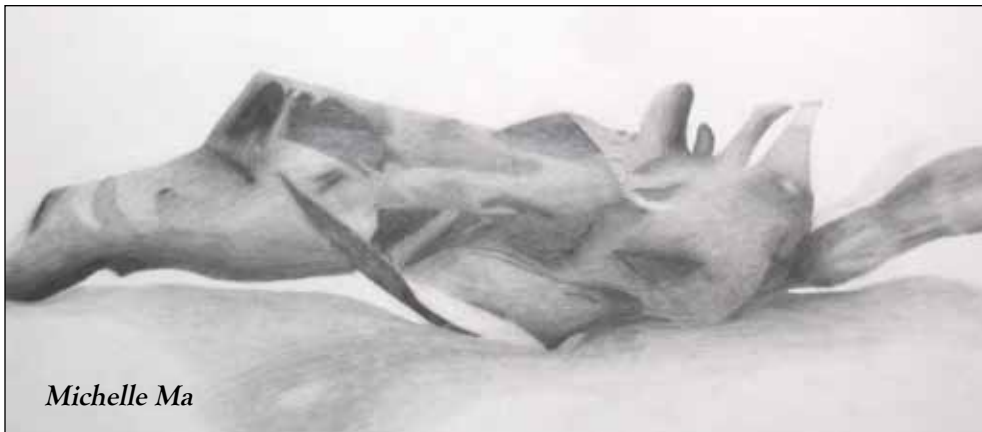
Our knowledge of multiple intelligences allows us to recognize that students absorb and internalize concepts differently. The arts provide a variety of paths for learning. A bonus is that the creative arts make learning and teaching fun!

It would be difficult to prove that my students' academic marks would be lower had I not integrated art, music and drama into the core subjects. I certainly would not want to teach a year devoid of the arts for the sake of collecting such data!

The fascinating book *Arts with the Brain in Mind*, by Eric Jensen (2001), builds a strong case for arts education. Jensen criticizes the current emphasis on higher test scores and the demand for quick results. He writes, "The arts develop neural systems that often take months and years to fine-tune. The benefits, when they appear, will range from fine motor skills to creativity to improved emotional balance."

He also asserts that we should value the many non-academic benefits of the arts: "Why be sheepish about the possibility that the arts may promote self-discipline and motivation?" One of the highlights for me each year is

witnessing my students' decorum and self-control while they present an inspirational Remembrance Day program in pageantry, image and song!



Michelle Ma

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Music for the Mind!

David Rideout

David Rideout is superintendent of schools for the Livingstone Range School Division.

Reprinted with permission from The New Schoolhouse, a publication of the Livingstone Range School Division, November 2001. Minor changes have been made to spelling and punctuation to fit ATA style.

Down through the ages, music has been acknowledged for its soothing effect on the spirit, but scientists are now discovering that it has a powerful influence on the mind as well.

All of us have seen the calming influence of a lullaby on an upset baby, the ease with which children learn their ABCs when they are set to music and the deep expression of human emotions found in a love song.

In fact, countries teach patriotism through national anthems, armies march to the beat of choral chants, churches seek to inspire faith and teach doctrine with their hymns, movies are infused with life through musical accompaniment, and teachers seek to create a sense of spirit and corporate identity through school songs. Even our school division has its own song, talking about “a feeling of both hope and pride”!

The quest for music is found in the earliest cultures, as seen by the 53,000-year-old flute recently discovered, which was carved from the thigh bone of a bear.

Music also spans all of nature, with modern technology documenting that animals such as birds, whales and apes create and listen to music. Some birds will sing hundreds of songs, using the same mathematical precision, rhythms and combinations of notes as modern composers. Many birds join in duets and choruses, comparable to group singing among humans. Whale songs are very structured, with an opening theme, a section in which the theme is expanded and then a return to the original theme with a slight modification—in a manner similar to the A-B-A structure of much Western music.

Now we are discovering that music has a profound influence on intellectual development. Studies are proving that musical exposure can increase reading comprehension, mathematical ability and reasoning skills because it expands the capacity of the brain to process other types of information. Learning to play a musical instrument helps a student develop faster physically, emotionally, mentally and socially, while the study of music improves listening skills, self-esteem, academic scores, self-perception, physical coordination and communication skills.

Apparently, music activates the same area of the brain used in analytical and mathematical thinking. It is interesting to note that the foremost technical designers and engineers in Silicon Valley are almost all musicians.

Music is universal and found in every culture, all of nature and throughout all of time. It is too important to lose in our schools during times of budget restraint or program reviews. It’s good for the soul, but also for the mind.

Dancing Is for Boys!

Marian Rose

Marian Rose is a dance educator and musician from Vancouver. She is the creator of the popular Step Lively series of dance books. For the past two decades she has been bringing the joy of traditional dance into schools and communities and back into the lives of people across Canada and beyond. In 1995 she created the Community Dance Project as a tool to preserve and revive the tradition of community family dances and the rich musical traditions that surround them. Visit her website at www.marianrose.com.

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Many generalizations can be made about the different ways boys and girls learn and the activities that naturally attract them. Theories abound about brain function, genetic propensities, parenting styles and the influence of consumer entertainment, but the fact remains that boys and girls very quickly learn that they are different and that it is in their best interest to gravitate toward the activities “appropriate” for their gender.

Nowhere is this phenomenon more exaggerated than in the dance class. By the time they are in the upper elementary grades, many girls have been attending dance classes for most of their lives, usually in several different genres and often at a very high level. Those who do not have formal training are generally comfortable with dancing and are eager to participate. At the very least, dancing is an acceptable activity in a girl’s life. Boys, on the other hand, learn from an

early age that dancing “is for girls” and they would be better off to play sports or Lego. The sad reality is that in Canada in 2005 it is unusual to find boys in upper elementary who have had any significant exposure to dance in any form. As a result, they not only face social barriers to participating in dance but are also far less skilled than are the girls, all of which combines to make the dance unit a fearsome experience for them.

“We hate dancing!” “Dancing is for girls!” “Why do we have to miss floor hockey this week?” “Are you really going to make us dance with girls?” Half hopeful, half horrified.

The good news is that at the end of a week of dancing, they sing a different tune. These are actual quotes from intermediate-level boys:

“That was the most fun I’ve ever had!” “When can we dance again?” “I got to dance with all the girls in my class.” “I didn’t know dancing was so much fun!”

How We Got Here

How did we get into this situation where half the population is unwilling to dance? What are the mechanisms and beliefs that cause boys to shun dancing? How do boys acquire these attitudes?

1. Role models

Boys don’t see their fathers, or other boys or men, dancing. Instead they see the whole world take a holiday for the Olympics and six months of nonstop media coverage of the NHL labour dispute. Can you imagine such a hoopla surrounding the World Square Dance Convention, or a whole country mourning if the Royal Winnipeg Ballet had to cancel its season?

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Just think a minute about how much TV time is devoted to hockey and how much acclaim is awarded to the players. Think about the number of police shows or other shows with macho men, and then think about how many times you see a male dancer on TV. No contest!

—June Cannon¹

2. *Societal changes*

Dance as a form of community celebration is an endangered species, usurped by television, the Internet and consumer sports. Children have little opportunity to see adults of any kind dance and, therefore, miss the opportunity of learning it in a natural setting.

3. *Competitiveness, fear of failure, perfectionism*

When I ask men why they are reluctant to dance, the answer is always some variation of “I don’t want to look stupid.” Boys learn very early that they are supposed to “know,” to be right, to be the best. They want to be noticed, to shine, and they don’t want to be upstaged by women at any age.

4. *Parental influence and peer pressure*

At the beginning of a dance camp recently, seven-year-old Max’s father told me, “You won’t get Max to dance—he’s into sports!” I’m happy to report that Dad was wrong—by the end of the week, Max was a diehard dancer, screaming at the top of his lungs for his favourite dance. He has attended every year since and has proven to be one of the most creative kids in the camp.

Anne Green Gilbert (2003), of the Creative Dance Center in Seattle, says that up to about age four, boys and girls come to her classes in equal numbers, but when they get to kindergarten age, the boys disappear. When her performing group does a show, young boys in the audience always come up afterward and say that they want to join, but this rarely translates into registration. This can only mean that the parents discourage them. Could the reasons be the parents’ own fear of dancing, concerns that their boys will be teased about being gay or the fact that dancing (or any arts, for that matter) rarely leads to a high-paying job later in life?

When my son was five, he told us he’d like to learn to tap dance. Before we could find him a class, he told us he didn’t want to take it, because the other boys had told him that only girls danced. He’d had five years of seeing me dance, of being brought to dances and seeing as many men as women at them,

and yet he was ready to believe his friends instead of his own eyes!

—Jacob Bloom

5. *Sexual immaturity*

By the time they are in school, children have figured out that dance is connected to that mysterious world of romance, dating and sex. Terms like *couple* and *holding hands* are now electrically charged. Boys are acutely aware of and confused by the feelings they get when they watch girls dance, and they don’t want people to watch them the same way.

6. *Homophobia*

There’s something about dancing that threatens masculinity and inspires such epithets as “a bunch of poofters in tights.” If boys are taught that “girls dance, boys do sports,” as Elizabeth Burchenal said in 1904, then a boy who wants to dance must be girlish (heinous damnation!). There is a fear that they will be perceived to be gay, or even that they may discover an attraction to the same gender. This image is more likely to be connected to more expressive dance forms such as ballet, modern, tap and jazz, perhaps related to the perception that one has to wear tights. Folk dancing is (somewhat) less afflicted with this attitude since the tradition is usually a man/woman couple.

Because of this, when boys do dance, they gravitate to macho, competitive dance styles and tend to shun styles that require grace, subtlety and expressiveness.

What to Do?

As dance educators and advocates, we are faced with the complex challenge of ensuring that both boys and girls have a positive experience in the dance class. If we succeed, we increase their chances of being enthusiastic recreational dancers all their lives. Based on two decades of teaching dance in schools across my country and the US, and the collective wisdom of many people who have been good enough to send me tips and tricks, here are a few things to keep in mind as you face your next group of dancers.

1. *Be positive and proactive.*

The best thing we can do is offer children the world of dance with our full confidence that they will love it. Many of the men to whom I have spoken attribute their love of dance to a skilled and charismatic teacher.

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Create a school and atmosphere where it's natural and expected to see male dancers, and you open a door for boys to experience the joy that dance has to offer.

—Rhee Gold (2003)

Getting all children involved in dance takes a commitment from you, the teacher. You must be or become interested in dance. You must believe in it, and you must see it as an essential part of children's growth and development.

—Sam Baumgarten (2003)

When I get . . . a few sullen guys determined not to have a good time, I simply do not worry about them. I know that they will love to dance. And I believe that this unflappably positive attitude of mine is one of the reasons that I have been pretty successful getting boys to enjoy dancing, sometimes in spite of themselves.

—Peter Amidon

When I go in assuming that we are all going to just love this, we all do—even the most avoidant boys. Often the boys who get the troublemaker label are the ones with the best sense of rhythm and movement.

—Karen Kaufman

I've found that when boys get into the dancing, they *really* get into it and become even more enthusiastic than the girls. I love their energy!

—Laraine Miner

2. *Know the potential trouble spots.*

Know the potential trouble spots, such as holding hands or choosing partners, and work to minimize their traumatic effects. It is important to address these issues, talk about them and defuse their power with skill, persistence and humour. I always let the children know that I understand their discomfort, because I have been there and have felt the same way. In fact, I still do on occasion. However, it is worth the effort to get past it, because the rewards are so plentiful.

I never insist on any particular type of partnering. In schools, I find that boys dance willingly with boys to a much older age than I would predict.

—Karen Kaufman

3. *Give them role models.*

Whenever possible, use male teachers to demonstrate, and show videos of boys and men dancing. Take

them to see Stomp, or Barrage, or a Ukrainian or African dance performance featuring strong men dancing.

The [male] teacher's participation was absolutely key to how willing the boys were to try.

—Rachelle Ackerman

4. *Use the sports connection to our advantage.*

One day as I was watching a basketball coach work on offensive plays with his team, it struck me how similar it was to what I was doing with the students in dance class. Both are very physical and require a high level of skill with hands and feet, and each participant must be aware of the position of everyone else on the floor. If you replace the basketball with some dance music, the two become variations on a theme.

Look for every opportunity to compare dance and sports.

- The grapevine step is an important skill of the offensive linemen in football.
- The buzz step swing uses elements from skateboarding and figure skating.
- Many high-level sports teams use ballet as training for strength and flexibility.
- Have the children take their pulse before dancing, after a particularly strenuous dance and at the end of the session.
- When boys realize how physically demanding dance is, they gain new respect for it.
- If you are doing creative dance, suggest that they use skills they already know from sports.

5. *Be aware of different learning styles.*

As a rule, boys are more kinesthetic learners than girls. Get them moving and worry about the fine details and expression later.

What seems to engage them is a really athletic dance or something that's like a puzzle or contest.

—Laraine Miner

There's never been a problem getting fifth grade boys to dance morris—that's simply part of what fifth graders do in that school, and, yes, they enjoy smashing sticks. (Stick dances are far more appealing than handkerchief dances at that age.)

—David Millstone

6. *Give them dances they can succeed at.*

One of the great things about dancing is that it can be fun and fulfilling at every level of skill, and there are

Arts-ful Features

many good dance resources with great, fun dances. Our job as educators is to help students feel comfortable in the role of beginner.

7. *We're all in this together.*

In my dance residencies I insist that the whole school participate and that no one is allowed in the gym unless he or she is dancing, and I have a zero-tolerance policy on teasing. In British Columbia, dance is part of the curriculum in both phys ed and fine arts, so we are able to insist that they participate. After all, no one is allowed to opt out of math because they don't like it, right?

8. *Remind boys that dancing will make them popular with girls.*

I recently read a wonderful article by a young woman in Whistler, a popular ski resort close to Vancouver. She was tired of hearing young men moan about the high ratio of boys to girls in ski resorts, and her article offered them suggestions on how to get a date. Her number one recommendation? Dance! If you're willing to get up on the dance floor, she says, you'll have your pick of the women in the room.

I saw some really good male dancers on the floor in college, noticed that the women really dug it and that was all the encouragement I needed.

—Kevin McMullin

9. *Keep it light.*

Remember that fun is a more worthy goal than precision.

Tension begets tension. As long as everyone is laughing and having a good time, it keeps the sexual anxiety down to a dull roar.

—Victor Smith

Conclusion

I have an immense soft spot for the boys in my dance classes. Sure, they can be rowdy, clumsy, resistant and rude. But they can also be enthusiastic, mischievous, graceful and creative. And their conversion is so much more

dramatic for their initial reluctance. As they relax and gain skill, they fairly explode with the joy of it all.

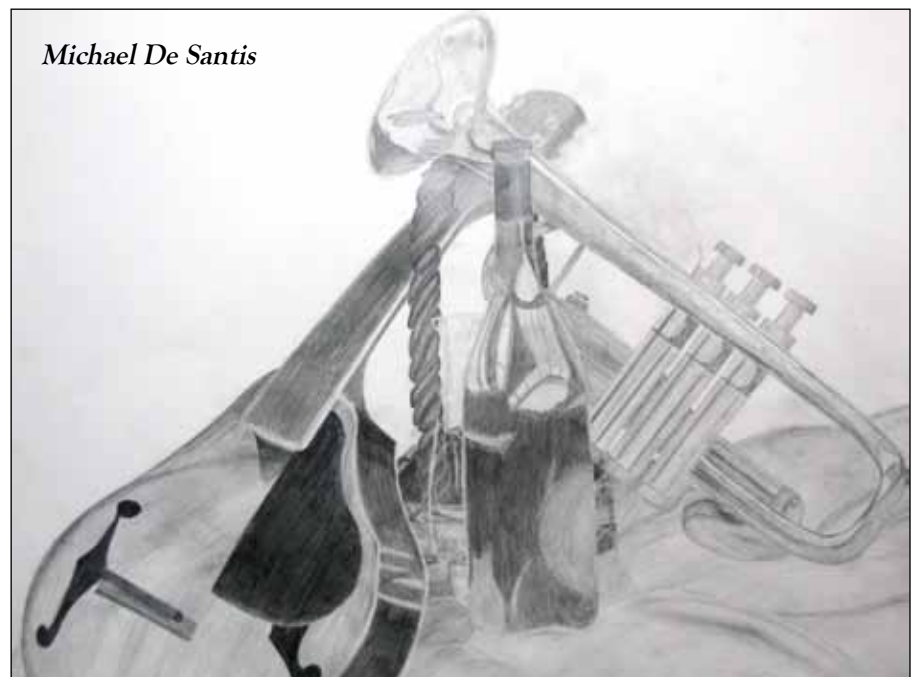
There is enough room in the spectrum of dance activities for boys and men to find a place of comfort and belonging. It takes persistence, dedication and skill on the part of those of us teaching them, but most of all, it requires a firm belief in the value of dance and its potential to promote cooperation, civility and community.

Note

1. I thank the folks on the Pourparler e-mail list who contributed ideas and statements, in particular Peter Amidon, Denise Weiss, Laraine Miner, Jacob Bloom, Sue Hulsether, Marianne Taylor, Katherine St John, Rachelle Ackerman, June Cannon, David Millstone, Karen Kaufman and Kevin McMullin.

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The Power of Music in the Classroom

Ron Erskine

Ron Erskine has taught in Manitoba and British Columbia. He taught for 19 years with the Calgary Board of Education.

The following article originally appeared in The ATA Magazine, Volume 82, Number 3, Spring 2002.

A knock on the door. The door opens and the principal enters, accompanied by the director of education. Three or four kids look up briefly but immediately return to their math problems. The director, visibly impressed, looks around, smiles and inquires about the soft, soothing strains of the Pachelbel Canon that are permeating the classroom. I reply that it is a favourite of the students, a baroque piece that relaxes them by regulating their heartbeat, breathing and concentration.

We talk a little more about the effects of this and other baroque pieces, and to my surprise she says, “I did not know this. I’m going to a meeting, and I’d like to quote you.”

I am still not sure what she was referring to—the music or the fact that these 10- and 12-year-old kids, diagnosed as learning disabled, were all working diligently on their school work without interruption. These students had bombed out in the regular classroom for various reasons: hyperactivity, poor progress, low self-esteem, inattention and a general dislike of school.

How were these kids able to work so well and make such excellent progress that year when they had so much stacked against them? It was mainly the music. The music allowed them to relax, concentrate and apply themselves to their work. Along with this, they were assured daily that there was nothing they could not do if they put their minds to it, and with each success and their new-found self-esteem, they began to thrive as they never had done before.

How could this be? According to research, music influences brain activity, blood pressure, breathing, heartbeat, pulse rate, digestion, skin sensitivity and emotions. Many Olympic athletes, after receiving a gold medal on the podium, have had difficulty fighting back their tears during the playing of their national anthem. After years of sacrifice, sweat and iron discipline, they have reached the pinnacle of physical excellence, and justifiably bursting with pride and patriotism, the tears flow freely to the strains of their country’s anthem.

Back to the learning-disabled kids: they were able to concentrate and achieve because of the effects of the music. The Pachelbel Canon is an unforgettable, calming composition that is performed at a largo cadence—60 beats per minute. My students, on a trip to the Royal Tyrrell Museum in Drumheller, were delighted to hear, when approaching the gigantic world globe in the hallway entrance, the soothing sounds of their favourite musical arrangement as the magnificent sphere rotated slowly in sync to its glorious melody.

Two of my students called out simultaneously, “Wow! Pachelbel Canon! They’re playing our music!”

Many adults, impressed, turned around and asked me, “Who are these kids?”

Arts-ful Features

That was one of my proudest moments!

Even a person who is agitated will find that his heart automatically slows down in sync with the music. Also, breathing becomes deeper, especially when one is studying, and brain activity slows from the beta to the alpha level, the level of most heightened awareness. In this relaxed state, a student becomes more mentally aware, his concentration increases and, as a result, he learns faster, has greater retention of information and can assess data quickly and easily.

Georgi Lozanov, a researcher in Sofia, Bulgaria, was the founder of suggestology, the science of liberating and stimulating the personality, and suggestopedy, the application of suggestology in instruction. Lozanov presented his findings to UNESCO in 1978, the same year during which he published *Suggestology and Outlines of Suggestopedy*. Lozanov studied the effect of music on a person's whole being and, with the use of visualization techniques, positive suggestion and mnemonic aids, developed an educational method in which students excelled far beyond their previous best. According to Lozanov, human memory has almost no limits. As an example, students using Lozanov's method and studying a foreign language learned up to 1,000 words or phrases and had a 97 per cent retention rate in just one day.

I studied Lozanov's method under Charles Schmid at the LIND (Learning in New Dimensions) Institute in San Francisco. Schmid had travelled to Bulgaria and was taught by colleagues of Lozanov. He then lectured throughout North America and tailored Lozanov's methodology to suit his university and private students. His system, which he called Learning Dimensions, incorporated baroque music, mnemonic aids, relaxation, visualization techniques and positive suggestion.

Today, this technique is well documented and practised in many universities throughout the world, and numerous books have been written about it. Probably the most famous is *Superlearning 2000*, by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder (1994). Many courses using similar procedures under different names have been devised for teachers and students.

I had great success using this procedure to teach math to a group of 10-year-old learning-disabled students. Not only did these students make great gains in math, but their self-esteem increased dramatically. In 1986, I published the results of this project in the *Journal of the Society for Accelerative Learning and Teaching*

(SALT), a journal dedicated to promoting accelerated learning.

Music, or primitive forms of music, goes back to the Neanderthals, who carved whistles from bone about 45,000 years ago. These early hominids probably enjoyed making music by clapping their hands, beating their chests and pounding rocks together, or banging on tree trunks with sticks or stones. These sounds would have enhanced their simple lives by entertaining the group, communicating with each other and, as a result, developing the right side of the brain—the intuitive, creative hemisphere.

The early Chinese emperors believed that the fate of the kingdom depended on the music played throughout the land, so they sent their emissaries to the far corners of the kingdom to listen to the music being played. If the melody was in perfect pitch with the five notes of the musical scale, peace and order were assured, people would prosper and learning would flourish.

Twenty-five hundred years ago, Confucius, distrusting certain types of music, appealed to his emperor to prevent a group of foreign female musicians from performing, because they would corrupt the court and, in doing so, halt progress in the arts, sciences and government. (Today, we are experiencing the sometimes negative effects of hard rock, heavy metal and rap.)

Around 1200 BC, Joshua marched his army around the city of Jericho and, combining the shouting of his troops with the blowing of trumpets, caused the walls to collapse and defeated his enemy. In 1 Samuel 16:16–23, Saul, troubled by an evil spirit from God, sends for David, an accomplished harpist. David plays his harp, and “Saul was refreshed and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

In the 18th century, Bach completed the Goldberg Variations for his pupil J G Goldberg. In turn, Goldberg presented the music to his patron, Count von Kayserling, who suffered from insomnia. The Variations, a series of tranquil variations on a simple melody, were so successful in helping the count that Bach was rewarded with a purse of gold, and the count was able to perform duties that had been neglected.

Many music therapists prescribe music rather than drugs as a cure for insomniacs. (Think of mothers singing simple lullabies to their babies.) Today, there are countless recordings designed to reduce stress and offer a good night's repose. Many baroque and other

Arts-ful Features

therapeutic classics, such as Steven Halpern's *Dawn* and *Eastern Peace* or Kitaro's *Silk Road* and *Oasis*, can be purchased in music stores.

Don Campbell, author of *The Mozart Effect* (2001), has produced many recordings, including three volumes for children that help them to relax, daydream and learn. Campbell's are only a few of the hundreds of such items available in music stores. They could be used in the classroom, not only to enhance learning but also to reduce stress and introduce children to the most beautiful music on the planet.

Many experiments have been performed on plants and animals. Bach's Brandenburg Concertos have been found to stimulate the growth of geraniums and other plants. Experiments with bacteria have shown that growth is influenced by the type of music played. Conversely, philodendrons, squash plants and corn, in controlled scientific experiments, were subjected to three hours a day of acid rock. In less than four weeks, all the plants became stunted and unhealthy. Plants tend to move toward loudspeakers that emit classical music, but will turn away from speakers that play hard rock and will, within weeks, show distress and die. Farmers have increased their milk and egg production by treating their livestock to classical music.

Hospitals, clinics and dental offices often pipe in soft, soothing music to put their patients at ease. Many doctors claim that music accelerates the healing process after an operation. I experienced a speedier recuperation following a gallbladder operation after listening to the soft strains of Vivaldi as I was being put under. Recently, my anxiety was greatly diminished while listening to Bach's Air for the G String during an eye operation.

One has only to turn off the sound on a horror movie to experience the difference music makes. The film pales significantly without the musical director's input. Music has the power to make us cry, laugh and

reminisce; it can change our moods and comfort us in distress, and it can heal.

Shakespeare's Macbeth, hearing of Lady Macbeth's deteriorating condition, asks her physician if there is, perhaps, some music that might cure her insanity:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? (5.3.50-55)

The value of having the right music in the classroom has been thoroughly researched, well documented and proven, and should be investigated by all those who teach. As more research data becomes available, who knows what tomorrow will bring?

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Introducing Music to Young Children

Sandra Reid

Sandra Reid has more than 30 years' experience teaching vocal and instrumental music at grade school and university, as well as private music lessons. Currently, she is the director of the education program at Wilfrid Laurier University in Waterloo, Ontario. Her book for parents—How to Develop Your Child's Musical Gift and Talents (McGraw-Hill, 2001)—is available at Amazon.ca.

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It is never too early to introduce music to children, and it is never too late to start. Music lessons are important because involvement in music can improve relaxation, cognitive development, spatial intelligence, language and development, reading readiness, physical coordination, self-discipline, social interaction, self-concept, work skills and personal enjoyment.

Even before we are born, we connect with the outer world and with our families through sound. Sound is the first sense to develop when a baby is growing in the womb. It is well known that a familiar voice can soothe a baby. For centuries, and in all cultures, caring parents have sung to soothe their babies. In fact, when medication does not calm a sick toddler, a lullaby can provide solace. As the abundance of relaxation CDs and their availability increase, many people are incorporating the

soothing effects of music into their daily lives. Many of us also find playing an instrument or singing to be a great stress reliever.

Researchers now understand that brain development is most crucial in the first three years of life. Just as parents support muscle development by taking babies to early swim lessons, listening to music can stimulate brainwave development. An interesting video from the Robert R McCormick Tribune Foundation (1997), *Ten Things Every Child Needs*, identifies music as one of the 10 important factors. Eisner (1995) identifies key competencies of cognitive growth that are developed through music:

- Nothing stands alone, such as the perception of relationships.
- Small differences can have large effects.
- Problems can have multiple solutions, and good things can be done in different ways.
- Ends often develop from means, and means are derived from ends.
- One can assess what feels right and determine when a task is well done.
- Imagination is a source of content, and one must visualize the rightness of planned action.
- The constraints of a medium help students invent ways to exploit constraints constructively.
- One can frame the world from an aesthetic perspective and reveal the world in a fresh way.

Spatial intelligence, the ability to visualize the world accurately, is necessary in complex mathematics and engineering. Rauscher et al (1997) continue researching the effects of music lessons and music-making on spatial intelligence, and are currently studying the

Arts-ful Features

long-term effects of music lessons on spatial intelligence scores over a four-year period (Rauscher 2002). In producing sounds on Orff instruments one must be aware of the spacing between pitches. This spatial awareness is translated into distances and finger placements. To reproduce a single tone with one's own voice also requires the ability to process the sound as to whether to position the voice higher or lower. It is also through songs, especially learned in the preschool years, that the flow of language and feel for language is maintained (Kodaly 1999). A Grade 1 study in the United Kingdom (Lamb and Gregory 1993) demonstrated the relationship between how well children read and how well they discriminate pitch. There is a high relationship between pitch discrimination and phonetic learning of words in reading.

Physical coordination is improved by the use of both large and small muscles in music-making. Large muscles are exercised when children move to the beat or rhythms of songs. Fine muscles are developed through the use of mallets and playing instruments. Diaphragm muscles are strengthened through singing.

Accomplishment in music is a result of planned and focused practice. Learning to sing or play an instrument requires daily practice. It requires much patience to sit down and work at a difficult task until the task becomes easy. Focused planning and practice develop self-discipline and focus.

Music by its very nature is shared, either with a listening audience or by participating with other musicians. Babies and preschool children learn how to respond to an adult and how to interact positively with each other. Making a circle, singing together in tune or playing instruments in a satisfying blend requires awareness of and sensitivity toward others. Not only is social interaction fostered through music lessons, but self-confidence is also boosted (Whitwell 1977). Music provides the opportunity for self-performance, which can improve self-knowledge and assist in fostering a positive self-concept.

The personal enjoyment of music is often the magnet that draws children. Music helps us to understand other cultures and times. By making music, we learn to communicate ideas, emotions and values. Music gives us both a medium for and a cause for celebration. Children need music to be educated and well rounded.

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Learning Through the Arts Vision Statement

Maureen Elder

The following vision statement can be found on the Learning Through the Arts website (www.ltta.ca).

Once we told stories.
We sang our joys and sorrows together,
Looked, touched, and listened;
Learning was inseparable from living.
We were active learners in an active universe.

What if we brought back these more experiential ways
of learning
To make today's sophisticated curriculum come to life?
We teach math through dance,
Language through storytelling,
Science through music,
Social studies through visual arts.
We develop the whole child.
We give teachers a broader range of creative tools.
Our students are imaginative.
They love to solve problems and share ideas.
Learning Through the Arts.
No child is left behind.
Our schools Boom!



Young Voices

The Still-Life Process

Clennon Aranha

Clennon Aranha is a Grade 9 student at St Margaret School in Calgary.

In the past 500 years of the history of art, the still life has been one of the most admired of all the painting/drawing genres. Artists use everyday objects to draw and paint, turning simple objects into masterpieces.

When an artist wants to make a masterpiece of a still-life painting or drawing, the artist must first write down his or her objectives. In the still-life painting, the essential elements are colour, form and space. In terms of colour, there are three aspects to consider: tone, saturation and value. Tone is the quality of a colour, saturation defines the intensity of the colour and value defines the degree of luminosity. Darkening and neutralizing colours make the still life look three-dimensional. Adding black to any colour, or the colour's complement, neutralizes the still life and, as a result, significantly improves its three-dimensionality. In rendering the three-dimensional aspect of the still life, the artist must also consider form, which includes mass and volume.

Proportion is a relation of mass among two or more parts. When we say that something is in or out of proportion, we are referring to the bond of the parts to each other or to the whole. If that relationship is right, we will say that the picture is well proportioned and, as a result, it will more closely look like the real object. The mastery of proportion and representation

is important for working on a realistic still life, and observation is the only way to accomplish it. The goal, therefore, is to develop a keen sense of observation to be able to identify the objects proportionately.

Lighting of the still life helps awareness of the volume of the objects in the still life. Aspects of light that can be represented include the following:

- Background or spatial lighting, by area of greater or lesser definition
- Modelling the object (light and shadow)
- The shadows projected by the object
- Light effects derived from the surface of the object and its surroundings (if it is shiny, matte or transparent)

All these aspects are translated onto the drawing or painting in terms of areas, blocks of colour, hatching notation or lines with concrete ideals of light, ranging from pure white to the darkest black, with intermediate values in between.

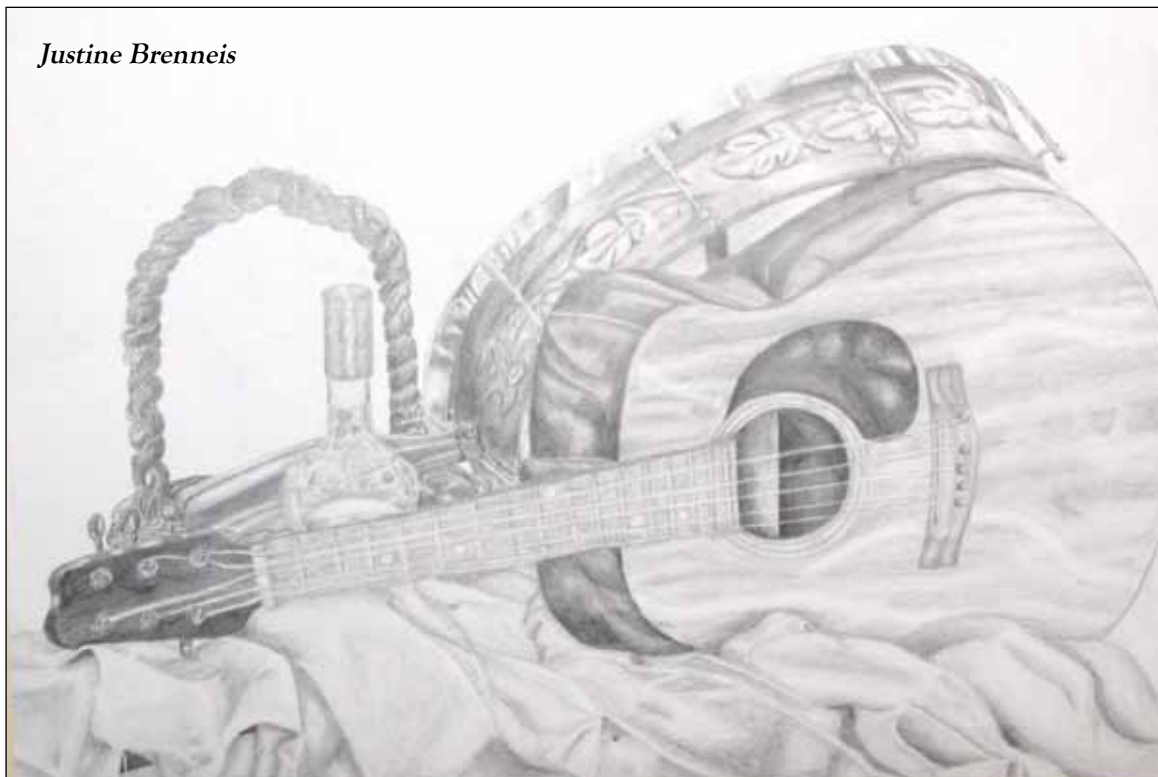
When an object has a dull surface or is made of a material that absorbs light, its volume is defined with a diffused gradation, more or less subtle, according to the texture. However, when an object is polished or is made of a more reflective material, new elements will be in its representation, new forms that are the reflections. There are two types of surface reflections from the items that are next to the object and in the main area. The reflections adapt to the same object, distorting the image and maintaining the right colour of the reflected object.

The textural quality differs for every object on its surface. To evoke the tactile experience of that material, you need a visual representation—an important factor in making a realistic representation of the

still life. Observation is a main point in successfully representing materials and textures, because the artist has to carefully view if there are soft diffused areas or hard contrasts. The artist also has to view marks made by mistake, dirty places or areas, and worn-out marks, and incorporate all these as effects of the still-life process. It is also good practice to do the same effects on a piece of scrap paper, using different kinds of tools, such as one's fingers, kneaded erasers, sponges, chamois or anything else that would assist in creating the effects required.

For More Information

- Still-Life Painting: Arranging Nature (lesson plan)
www.getty.edu/education/for_teachers/curricula/arranging_nature/arranging_nature_lesson01.html
- Contour Drawing Shells (lesson plan)
www.princetonol.com/groups/iad/lessons/high/kenshading.htm
- Cézanne, Paul (biography and more)
www.ibiblio.org/wm/paint/auth/cezanne
- *Still Life* (book from The Painter's Corner series, Barron's, 2004)



Submitting to A Fine FACTA

Add the goal of being published to your teacher professional growth plan and submit something to *A Fine FACTA*! Submissions may include the following:

- Practical classroom tips, lesson plans and rubrics
- Resource reviews
- Movie and book reviews
- Personal reflections on classroom experiences
- Stories and poems by teachers, students and student teachers
- Student artwork

Please include a short (three- to five-sentence) biography and your address so that a copy of the issue in which your work appears can be sent to you.

Submit signed permission forms for student work or photographs of students.

Send submissions to Peter McWhir, PO Box 6085 Station A, Calgary, AB T2H 2L3; e-mail mcwhir@telus.net.

Permission to Print Photograph/Student Work

Your child has submitted a piece of work or appears in a photograph that we would like to print in the next issue of *A Fine FACTA*. *A Fine FACTA* is a journal that goes to teachers across Alberta who are members of the Fine Arts Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association.

By signing below, I give permission for my child's work or photograph to be considered for publication in an upcoming issue of *A Fine FACTA*. This permission form will be forwarded to the journal editor.

Parent/guardian name _____ Signature _____
Student name _____ Signature _____
Teacher _____ Signature _____
School _____ School location _____

Notes to teachers:

- When submitting student work, please include the Permission to Print form with all signatures completed. Send the student work/photograph and the permission form to the interim editor of *A Fine FACTA*, Peter McWhir, PO Box 6085 Station A, Calgary, AB T2H 2L3; e-mail mcwhir@telus.net.
- Work may be submitted electronically to mcwhir@telus.net. Please ensure that the permission form is mailed to the address above.

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