

INSIDE *inclusion*

The Council for Inclusive Education Newsletter

Volume 3, Number 2 | August 2018

Grief Boxes— A Much Needed Support for Students and Staff

After the unexpected death of a parent in a small rural community, a teacher found herself searching for ideas on how to manage the wave of grief that had just hit everyone in her tightly knit school community, including herself and all 13 of her students. Finding that there was no plan in place or resources ready to help, the teacher began to develop her own for her school ...

SEE PAGE 15



The cover art for this issue of *Inside Inclusion* was created by Meadow King, a Grade 11 student at Hunting Hills High School, Red Deer Public Schools, Red Deer, Alberta.

New Teaching
Quality
Standard

SEE PAGE 5

Meet Our
Executive
Members

SEE PAGE 8

Strategies to
Support
Inclusion

SEE PAGE 13

Augmentative
and Alternative
Communication

SEE PAGE 17

Celebrating the Challenges

October 11–13, 2018

Canmore, Alberta

Coast Canmore Hotel

Conference Keynote Speakers, October 12 and 13

Erik Carter

“Rethinking Prevailing Practice: What We Know Works for Fostering Inclusion, Relationships, and Belonging”

Erik Carter, PhD, is Cornelius Vanderbilt Professor of Special Education at Vanderbilt University. His research and teaching focuses on evidence-based strategies for supporting access to the general curriculum and promoting valued roles in school, work, community and congregational settings for children and adults with intellectual disability, autism and multiple disabilities.

Kristopher Wells

“Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity in Canadian Schools”

Kristopher Wells, PhD, is an assistant professor and faculty director with the Institute for Sexual Minority Students and Services, University of Alberta. Dr. Wells is one of the driving forces behind the creation of many ground-breaking initiatives, including Camp flyrefly, the Alberta GSA Network, PrideTape and NoHomophones.com, which has been featured across the world in more than 50 publications, including the *Economist*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *The Independent* and *The Guardian*.

Conference Session Speakers—October 12 and 13

Over 25 conference sessions, including the following topics and speakers:

“Preparing Students with ASD/Developmental Disabilities for Employment”

Chandra Lebenhagen and Wendy Mitchell

“To Behave or Not To Behave”

Darci Fulton and Myka Breymann

“First Nations, Metis and Inuit: Learning from Story”

Donna Ross

“Focused on Communication: AAC Tools in the Classroom”

Jasmine Travers-Charbonneau

“Classroom Strategies to Support Students with Executive Function Deficits”

Mardi Hardt-Bernard

Visit our website for info and to register—www.cieducation.ca

INSIDE *inclusion*

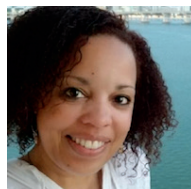
The Council for Inclusive Education Newsletter

WHAT'S INSIDE

Volume 3, Number 2 | August 2018

Editor's Message	4
Updated Teaching Quality Standard	5
Regional Updates	6
Strategic Planning Retreat	7
Meet Our Executive Members	8
Strategies to Support Inclusion	13
Grief Boxes	15
Augmentative and Alternative Communication	17
Shelley Moore—One Without the Other	19
Contact Information	22

President's Message



Another school year has come to an end, and I am always amazed at how quickly September became June and thankful for the time spent growing in my practice with other stakeholders. As I sit

back and reflect on the many things Council has been doing this year, I am reminded of the great work our executive and members have been involved in over the past several months. Our regionals organized professional development opportunities, varying from workshops on executive functioning and behaviour to time spent learning about apps for inclusive classrooms, and dinner meetings where members could network and engage in rich conversations about inclusive education.

This spring, the CIE executive met for another strategic planning retreat, having met our previous three-year objectives. We spent several days discussing many of the concerns identified across the province by teachers, planning for how we would meet the needs of our members, and re-examining the role of the council now that the new Teaching Quality Standard has been approved. What is inclusive education, and how can we help develop a shared understanding as it is defined in Alberta Education's inclusive education policy? How can we better reach our members and serve as resources in the months and years to come?

Summer vacation is under way, which means the beginning of the 2018 conference season. Registration opened in June, and teachers are planning for the upcoming school year. We are very excited to host this year's conference in Canmore; however, due to the size of the venue, members are encouraged to register early. We hope to have another successful year and look forward to meeting and learning from new presenters.

I hope you've had a wonderful summer. I hope to see you in October.

Michelle Dow

Editor's Message

The Benefits of Knowledge Sharing



Although knowledge sharing in any organization appears to be a valuable commodity, it is the one thing that often appears to be overlooked. A search on knowledge sharing brings up multiple benefits

to organizations, but it appears that it exists in somewhat of a gray area. A few of the top benefits of knowledge sharing appear to be that it

1. promotes employee input: sharing information allows everyone in an organization to offer suggestions, generate new ideas and provide valuable feedback;
2. builds accountability: being accountable to a team and to oneself from the top of the leadership team to everyone under the leadership team;
3. helps retain talent: sharing information puts employees in a position to succeed; knowing where and how to access information and resources supports greater success;
4. fosters creativity, providing avenues for employees to seek and receive feedback, which allows for increased creative thinking and differing opinions and ways to view solutions; and
5. eases growing pains: ensuring that employees, especially new employees, know how and where to access important information provides for easier transition and a sense of direction.

(Adapted from "Five Reasons Why Knowledge Sharing Is Good for Company Culture," available at www.business2community.com/strategy/5-reasons-knowledge-sharing-good-company-culture-01502579 [accessed July 20, 2018]).

Though written for business organizations, these benefits easily apply to the educational world.

There are a vast number of organizational structures that educators can access for information. From Alberta Education, the ATA, specific councils and education districts to schools, the pathways that exist and how to access this information can seem very daunting. It is especially important in the coming months, with our new Teaching Quality Standard, for new and existing teachers to know where and how to access specific information. In the context of the Council for Inclusive Education, our mandate is to share our collective knowledge in the field of inclusion with other educators across the province. At our recent strategic planning session for our new three-year plan, we discussed and created goals, both long and short term, to provide and perhaps streamline access to support in inclusive education. We have a number of ways to stay informed of new information sharing through our council. Please stay tuned to our website (<https://cieducation.ca/>), Facebook page (@ATAInclusiveEdCouncil), Twitter feed (@atainclusiveed), our newsletter and journal, and our local councils for up-to-date information. In this newsletter, our council executive members share a bit of their knowledge and ideas from their own professional experience. We hope you enjoy reading it. Please reach out to any of our executive members via e-mail if you have questions, need support in finding information or would like to offer feedback.

Thank you; enjoy your break!

Kelly Huck

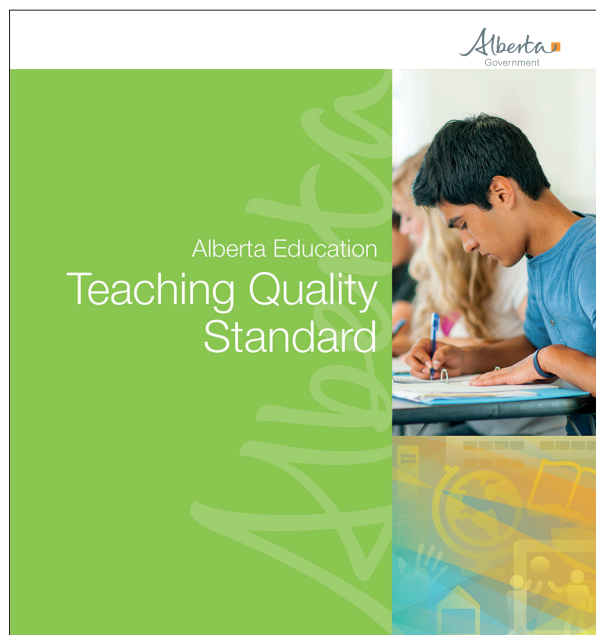
Updated Teaching Quality Standard

Alberta Education has updated the teacher, leadership and superintendent quality standards. They will come into effect in September 1, 2019. These new standards will apply to all certificated teachers in Alberta. They are available online at https://education.alberta.ca/media/3739620/standardsdoc-tqs-_fa-web-2018-01-17.pdf or <https://tinyurl.com/y899w69q>.

The standards identify six competencies that teachers are required to meet in order to hold and maintain an Alberta teaching certificate:

1. Fostering effective relationships
2. Engaging in career-long learning
3. Demonstrating a professional body of knowledge
4. Establishing inclusive learning environments
5. Applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit
6. Adhering to legal frameworks and policies

Teachers who already possess an Alberta teaching certificate will not need to recertify when the new and revised TQS comes into effect, in September 2019. They will, however, be expected to meet the new standards. Teachers who are applying for an Alberta teaching certificate after September 2019 will be evaluated and must meet the new TQS to be recommended for certification.



Watch for upcoming information from Alberta Education on ways to increase your awareness and understanding of the revised TQS standards this fall.

(Source: <https://education.alberta.ca/professional-practice-standards/teaching-quality-standard/everyone/teaching-quality-standard-faqs/>; accessed July 23, 2018)

Regional Updates

Calgary

The Calgary Regional Council for Inclusive Education put on one workshop during the 2017/18 school year, entitled Winning Strategies for the Inclusive Classroom. The workshop, presented by ATA association instructors, was well attended and supported participants in identifying a number of strategies that can be used in the inclusive classroom to support all learners. It was well received by the participants.

In May, we held our Calgary Regional annual general meeting (AGM) and welcomed our new executive for the 2018/19 school year. As of the AGM, my tenure as president of the Calgary Regional is over; the leadership has been handed over to Meghan Flynn, who was elected president-elect at the 2017 AGM. I'm excited to support her work with our new executive as past president and to see what the regional will offer next!

As always, we are looking for new and existing members to engage with us and let us know what sorts of PD opportunities you are looking for. If you have any topics/speakers/books that you would like us to focus on for the upcoming school year, please contact us any time at calgarypresident@cieducation.ca. We hope you all enjoy a wonderful summer and we look forward to connecting with you again in the fall.

Naomi Bell, President
calgarypresident@cieducation.ca

Northwest

This has been a very busy year for the Northwest Regional Council for Inclusive Education. We have had regular monthly meetings, for the most part, and they are all well attended by educators from a variety of districts. Our membership has grown substantially over the year. Many of our active members attended the annual ATA Celebrating the Challenges Conference in October 2017. The AGM was on April 30, 2018.

Our council shared the provincial's initiative of the Differing Abilities kit; it has been in active use all year by many schools that use it to help develop empathy and understanding with regard to students with a variety of challenges.

One of our main mandates is to provide quality professional development to our region. We had a very successful PD event in February 2018, in conjunction with NRLC, presented by Darci Fulton of the ATA on the BOATS program. We had about 100 participants, and there was very positive feedback on the contents and programming from the day. Through this effort, our provincial council gained more than 40 new members. We are currently working on presenting some exciting speakers in the fall.

Carmen Moore, President

Central

This has been an exciting year for the Central Region! We have really enjoyed bringing our members the workshops that you have been asking for.

Our first workshop of the year was presented by Mardi Hardt (Bernard). Mardi is a school mental health nurse with a background in child and adolescent psychiatry. She works within schools as a "worry nurse" or "stress nurse" for all students, their parents and educators. She is involved in the creation of trauma-sensitive school settings in an area with high levels of poverty, community violence and complex traumatic experiences. Her community-based mental health work involves health promotion and illness prevention in school settings. Mardi is the author of the Edmonton Public Schools resource Non-Verbal Learning Disabilities: Teacher Resource. As well, she coauthored a chapter entitled "Children of Neglect" in Supporting and Educating Traumatized Students: A Guide for School-Based Professionals (Oxford University Press 2013) and created a teacher resource for supporting students with lagging skills in emotional regulation.

In November 2017, Mardi presented on executive functioning. Grade 1 teachers rate executive functions as some of the most important indicators of a child's potential to be successful in a school setting. Executive functions refers to the brain functions that regulate, control and manage other brain processes, such as planning, organizing and deciding what to pay attention to. Executive functions in children can be developed through fun, playful activities in the classroom. We reviewed what executive functions are, how they typically develop, and what educators and caregivers can do to support a positive developmental trajectory. Participants participated in games and activities to better understand this important brain development.

At the time of writing, we planned to hold our AGM in May and bring Mardi Hardt back to present. Our members asked for her again, so we planned to deliver—Mardi came back to present on Positive Mental Health to Prevent Burnout and Compassion Fatigue for

Caregivers. This workshop focuses on how the process of working with students and their families can result in a cycle of negative health outcomes for educators and caregivers. School staff may face increasing demands in the workplace and are often juggling family life, personal needs and caring for their own children or even elderly parents. This session reviews the processes, signs and symptoms of burnout, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma and discusses (with lots of fun practice) specific strategies to support school staff mental health.

We value your input and want to hear from you. Please share your ideas, wants or needs for the workshops that we bring in. We are also always looking for new executive members for our council. If you want to know more, please contact me at centralpresident@cieducation.ca. I look forward to hearing from you.

Nicole Hollman, President

Strategic Planning Retreat

Our council executive met this spring in Lake Louise to reflect on our vision and goals over the past few years and consider our future vision and goals for our new three-year plan. We were fortunate to have the opportunity to work with Stephen Murgatroyd, consultant with Innovation Expedition. He has worked extensively with the ATA and with councils on strategic planning. At our last meeting, we also had a follow-up session with J-C Couture, associate coordinator of research for the ATA. During this session, we were able to look at our new goals and decide on short- and long-term action items.

Our action items include ways to collectively use the strengths and knowledge of our council members to create a greater understanding and capacity of inclusion through the sharing of resources, strategies and networking.

Meet Our Executive Members

Michelle M Dow, President



Professional Occupation

Learning leader of a specialized program.

My go-to book for inclusion: inclusive education is an approach to meeting the needs of all students.

Inclusive education and Alberta Education's policy on inclusive education are identified in the Guide to Education. I highly recommend that educators develop an understanding of that policy and let go of the idea that there is one answer to minimize the challenges we face in our classrooms and schools.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is to reflect on the ways [I] have met the needs of students and how often [I] have stepped outside of traditional practices to do so. As educators, we need to identify what it is we are trying to assess.

Hayley Christen, Past President



Professional Occupation

Coordinator, First Nations, Métis and Inuit Learning Services, Red Deer Public Schools

My go-to book for inclusion is *Managing the Cycle of*

Acting-Out Behaviour in the Classroom, by George Colvin.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is a universal point of access for students, and to build on to the activity or lesson with challenges for students who are ready for more. Shelley Moore expands nicely on this strategy.

Patricia Schwandt, Secretary

Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to book for inclusion and effective inclusion strategies—probably my favourite resource is online: www.learnalberta.ca/content/inmdict/html/index.html; it's easy to use and gives succinct information and very good ideas. It provides a checklist-type format so that you can print off a sheet for each student and check off what you try with each of them. You can morph some of these suggestions into goals. I would start here first. Contact me for other suggestions!

Rhonda Kelly, Treasurer



Professional Occupation

Montessori kindergarten teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is *One Without the Other*, by Shelley Moore.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is

having an ordered and predictable routine, giving notice of any changes and being extremely flexible.

Nancy Grigg, University Liaison, and CIE Journal Coeditor



Professional Occupation

Associate Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Lethbridge

My go-to book for inclusion is *Design and Deliver—Planning and Teaching Using*

Universal Design for Learning (2014), by Loui Lord Nelson (Brookes 2014). Just about every teacher in Alberta has heard about Universal Design for Learning (UDL), but how can an overloaded teacher get started with UDL? This book is perfect for

teachers who want advice and information about implementing UDL at all levels of schooling.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is mindfulness. When I talk to teachers, I hear many stories of how they have addressed the stress and anxiety seen among their students, but I rarely hear them speak of strategies that can help them develop positive ways of coping with their own stress. Mindfulness is not only for the students—there is a growing body of literature that has found that when a teacher addresses personal well-being, emotional regulation and healthy social interactions, their effectiveness as a teacher improves and in turn, so does the performance of their students. There are many resources that explore different strategies, such as meditation, breathing exercises, mindful walking, yoga or other relaxation disciplines. According to the literature, it is not important what you do, but it does matter that you choose to do it habitually and with attention. If nothing else, just take three deep breaths.

Kelly Huck, Newsletter Editor, Journal Coeditor



Professional Occupation

Assistant principal, Rocky View Schools

My go-to book for inclusion is the Dawn Reithaug book series (1998 to present). Dawn Reithaug is an educational

consultant who created a series of books to support everything from reading success to positive behaviour plans to adapting programs. Her books include a wealth of strategies, templates and practical tips to support students and student programming. I have personally used many of her books in my practice as a learning support teacher, especially Supporting Adolescent Readers for middle school students. A link to an order form is http://engagingstudents.blackgold.ca/files/6713/7773/1419/Order_Form_for_Books_by_Dawn_Reithaug_-_2012_02_01.pdf or <https://tinyurl.com/ycq6hoxu>.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is visual strategies and graphic organizers for students.

Danece Workman, Webmaster

Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is Behavior Management, by Bill Rogers and William A Rogers.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is that I try to treat each child as the most important child in the class. Make them feel they are a part of a special community, yet each one of them has different needs. Each has different learning styles, and I try to explain this to my kids who are in elementary. They need to understand that some need more time on an assignment, some need special pens and some need computers, and we all achieve in a different way.

Naomi Bell—President, Calgary Regional, and Conference Director 2018



Professional Occupation

Complex needs strategist with the Calgary Board of Education

My go-to book for inclusion is Peer Buddy Programs for Successful Secondary School

Inclusion, by Carolyn Hughes and Erik W Carter

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is visuals. Using visuals with learners who have challenges with verbal comprehension, working memory, or expressive and/or receptive language supports independence, comprehension and communication. Visual schedules, first/then, choice boards and help cards are just some of the visuals that could be created for student use. Visuals don't have to be fancy, either—they can be taken from BoardMaker or LessonPix, created from photographs of real-life people or objects, or hand drawn or written down.

Tamia Richardson, Conference Codirector 2017

Professional Occupation

School counsellor/Inclusive education coordinator

My go-to book for inclusion is *One Without the Other*, by Shelley Moore.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use for English is to teach students a variety of sentence starters for different pieces of writing. This gives them a structure they can adapt depending on the type of writing assigned.

Carol Knott, Past Chair, Edmonton Conference



Professional Occupation

Teacher consultant, inclusive learning, Elk Island Public Schools

My go-to book for inclusion is *The Autism Discussion Page on the Core Challenges of*

Autism. It's a toolbox for helping children with autism feel safe, accepted and competent.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is always planning ahead and preparing the student.

Meghan Flynn, President, Calgary Regional



Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is currently *One Without the Other: Stories of Unity Through Diversity and Inclusion*, by Shelley Moore—an easy-to-

read book by an amazing storyteller and educator that will challenge the way you think about inclusion.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is incorporating student interests. Using students' special interests—such as trains, vacuum cleaners or frogs—can increase engagement and motivation and

make learning meaningful. Motivation is a key tool for wanting to attend to a task and acquire new information. We are more likely to pursue or stay with something that interests us. We can motivate our reluctant learners by including their fascinations to teach literacy, numeracy, social skills and communication.

Janis Bekar, Copresident, Canadian Rockies Regional



Professional Occupation

Learning support teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is *Self Reg: How to Help Your Child (and You) Break the Stress Cycle and Successfully Engage with Life*, by Stuart Shanker.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is the Bill Nason discussion page on Facebook.

Myka Breymann-Piekenbrock, Copresident, Canadian Rockies

Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is *To Behave or Not to Behave—A Proactive Approach to Behaviour Management*, which I coauthored with Darci Fulton.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is behavioural strategies found in *To Behave or Not to Behave*.

Nicole Hollman, President, Central Regional

Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to books for inclusion are my RTI at Work manual from a CARC session, and *Understanding by Design*, by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is that I try to infuse a responsive curriculum and focus on the RTI model.

Debbie Bale, President, Edmonton Regional



Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is *A 5 Is Against the Law*, by Kari Dunn Buron.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is

peer tutoring, modifying assignments, providing notes and so on.

Carmen Moore, President, Northwest Regional



Professional Occupation

Teacher

My go-to book for inclusion is *Socially Savvy: An Assessment and Curriculum Guide for Young Children*, by James T Ellis and Christine Almeida.

An effective inclusion strategy I

have used or currently use is mindful breathing techniques after recess, to settle in and begin work.

Joanne Stockman, President, South East Regional



Professional Occupation

Early learning coordinator

My go-to book for inclusion is *Classrooms That Work: They Can All Read and Write*, by Patricia M Cunningham and Richard L Allington. This is an

easy read that reinforces the importance of a balanced approach to literacy instruction based on assessment that takes into account the differentiation needed in today's diverse classrooms. It is not a how-to book, but rather a discussion of the essential conditions that are present in classrooms that work to support literacy for all learners.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is the Post-it note IPP, with a team comprising the teacher, parents, the student, if appropriate, and any other key members from the school team involved with the child's program.

Divide a large sheet of chart paper into four with the following labels: strengths, challenges, goals, strategies. Provide each member of the team with four different colors of Post-it notes. Give everyone time to brainstorm, write ideas on Post-it notes and place them under the appropriate headings on the chart. Categorize similar ideas. Prioritize goals and strategies using consensus. This strategy allows for equal voice around the table and provides priorities for an IPP that includes input from all team members involved—most important, the parents and the student.

Sandy Gillis, ATA Staff Liaison



Professional Occupation

Sandy has had the privilege of being in many and varied roles in education. His graduate education and experience in special education, counselling and religious education have

opened doors to district work as a consultant in several positions. He has been fortunate to have extensive experience as a school principal and served Edmonton Catholic Local 54 as president for four years. In his present position, he, along with his fellow staff officers, provides assistance to educators throughout the province.

My go-to book for inclusion is *Who Has Seen the Wind*, by W O Mitchel. This classic is not a specific story dealing with inclusion. Through the eyes of Brian, whose dad has died, and Ben, who is disenfranchised, one is able to provide a forum for a conversation that reveals the feelings associated with loss of connection to community.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is understanding that grief and loss are things to be mindful of as parents bring their children to us as teachers—this is essential. Connecting with parents at the beginning of the child's entry into school and spending as much time as possible listening to alleviate their apprehensions about their

child's future creates the building blocks for conversations throughout the child's time with us. Knowing life's hopes and dreams of parents for their children, when acknowledged in a safe place, provides vital information when deciding on programming.

Don Brookwell, PEC Representative, Central South



Professional Occupation

Teacher, Red Deer Public School District

My go-to book for inclusion is *The Out-of-Sync Child*, revised edition, by Carol Stock Kranowitz.

An effective inclusion strategy I have used or currently use is the ATA library. Teachers can search library materials, which will be sent out to schools. Also, ATA librarians are happy to do research to support teacher professional development or course work. Contact information is available under My ATA on the Alberta Teachers' Association website, www.teachers.ab.ca/.

Darci Fulton



Professional Occupation

Behaviour strategist with the Calgary Board of Education

My go-to books for inclusion include

Supporting Positive Behaviour in Alberta Schools (Alberta

Education); *BOATS—Behaviour, Observation, Assessment, Teaching, Strategies* (4th edition); and *Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behaviour in the Classroom*, by George Colvin.

Effective inclusion strategies I have used or currently use are found in *BOATS—Behaviour, Observation, Assessment, Teaching and Strategies*, and *Supporting Positive Behaviours in Alberta Schools*, for both of which I was a contributing writer, and *To Behave or Not to Behave—A Proactive Approach to Behaviour Management*, of which I was coauthor. I present at a number of different conferences and workshops all over Alberta and British Columbia, using strategies found in these books.

Strategies to Support Inclusion

Using Behaviourism to Facilitate Inclusion

There is a lot of support for making inclusion a crucial part of educational policy, but figuring out how to make it happen is often a different story. At times, it can seem as though students are doing everything they can to segregate themselves from the class. It can often be challenging to find ways to reconnect them. One of the most valuable things I have learned to do is to use data to predict behaviour. Big behavioural changes, like the way students act in gym class as opposed to in their homeroom, are easy to notice, but smaller changes are much more nuanced. Approaching behaviour like a scientist and manipulating variables like tasks, environments, instructors and internal states can reveal precise circumstances where struggling students can be successful and included—however that is defined.

Ten years ago, the British government adopted a very similar strategy, to study the specific circumstances that predicted successful behaviour of its citizens. They called it the Nudge Unit. Canada now has its own Impact and Innovations Unit, which has been tasked with altering these variables to promote positive societal changes. “One nudge was a sentence on their tax assessment, telling recipients that a majority of people in their community had already paid their taxes. Another said that most people who owe a similar amount of tax had paid” (www.nytimes.com/2013/12/08/business/international/britains-ministry-of-nudges.html). In the same way that these small situational changes can predict the success or failure of a government policy, nudging struggling students towards success may also be useful in classrooms.

Carlin Olynyk

Carlin Olynyk is a behaviour strategist at C W Perry School, Rocky View Schools.

First/Then Chart

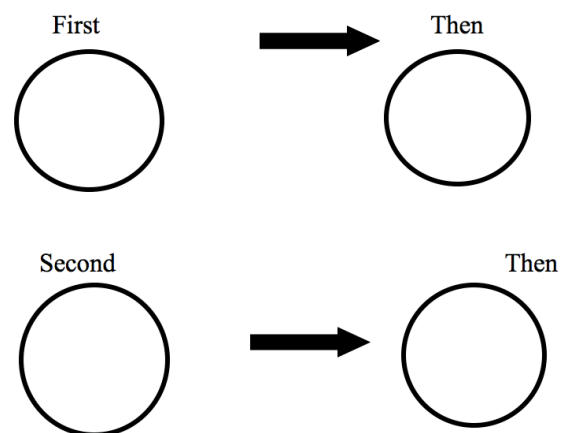
A first/then chart can be used in a number of different ways. It can be used with students who have difficulty understanding that certain tasks must be completed before they can do another task. For example, Jeremy loves to work on the computer but is required to finish an academic task first. He needs to complete his journal for the morning and also his math activity. It is important with some students to actually see what it is they need to do. “Jeremy, first you finish your journal activity, then you may have computer time for ___ minutes. Second, you will complete your math activity, and then you may have computer time for ___ minutes.”

The first/then chart could be used as a reward system for a child who is reluctant to do his academics, or other tasks that are required of him. The first/then chart could also be used as a visual representation to organize a student. Any time a student is having difficulty with transitioning from one activity to the next, the first/then chart will be beneficial.

It is important to use a visual representation (picture) of what you are asking the student to do. If the child can read, then a written request as well as the visual representation could be used.

Laminate the original so it can be used over again. In the example above, this will allow you to write the number of minutes of computer time Jeremy is going to get. This may change from time to time depending on what you want the student to do first.

A tip—laminating can be your best friend!



Darci Fulton

Darci Fulton is a behaviour consultant with the Calgary Board of Education.

Inclusive Education: Strategies That Work on a Day-to-Day Basis

The classroom layout begins with clear visuals to set up the boundaries, the expectations and alternate work spaces. Children sometimes need to have a quiet space to get their work done; each class can provide several options for these times. Using visuals to illustrate what the day will look like is key to a smooth day. This can be done with a visual schedule. Expectations also need to be established for the class to be successful, so set up the rules and the rewards for being on task. Talk about what it looks like, what it sounds like and how we all can benefit.

Some students may benefit from using a first/then board. This chunks up the tasks to understand and follow what the rest of the class is doing. The visuals are set on a board showing what is first and what the next task will be. Children often require time to process this information. It works well if it is scheduled to alternate a preferred task and a nonpreferred task. Each task can then be broken down on a job card into steps of what to do. These are chunked into four steps for the task, with a box beside each step to check when completed. The job cards can then be used as currency

toward an incentive for the students to complete these tasks throughout the day.

Communication with parents is important to share the wonderful things their child did that day. The concept of Three Stars and a Wish is one strategy to support this. This is set up with the top half of the page being filled out by the teacher and student, and the bottom completed at home by the family. This focuses only on three great things done that day and one wish to work harder on the next day. It is wonderful to start the day reading the great things the student did at home and celebrating that to start the day! It really is a “bucket filler” for everyone.

Zones of regulation, or the five-point scale, is a great tool for understanding our feelings and what we can do to manage them. Relaxing exercises are a key part of this process. This helps to learn the steps to regulate ourselves. Movement breaks will also be a part of this learning opportunity. This teaches us how to get the wiggles out and also wake up our brains.

Celebrations and praise go farther than negatives and nagging! It is so contagious and works like a charm.

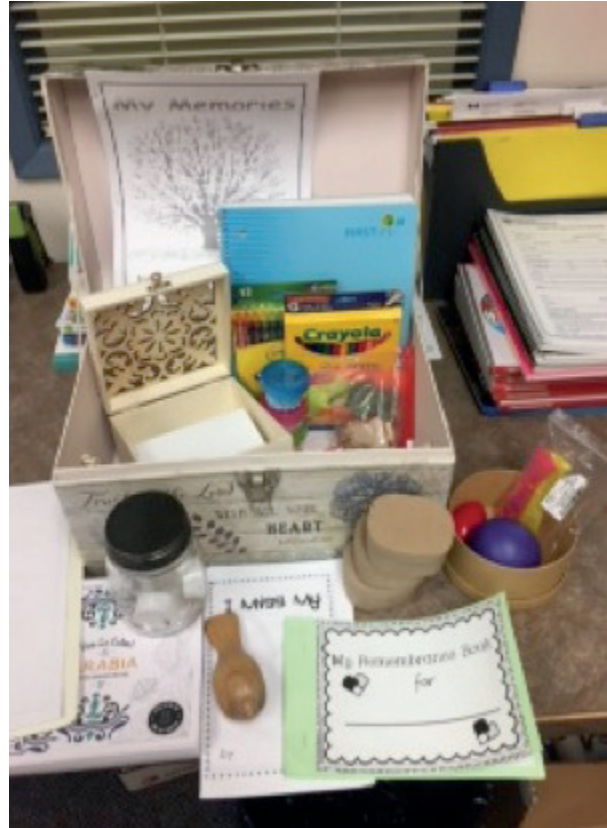
Kim Brown

Kim Brown is an education assistant with the Calgary Board of Education.

Grief Boxes—A Much-Needed Support for Students and Staff

After the unexpected death of a parent in a small rural community, a teacher found herself searching for ideas on how to manage the wave of grief that had just hit everyone in her tightly knit school community, including herself and all 13 of her students. Finding that there was no plan in place or resources ready to help, the teacher began to develop her own for her school, collecting ideas and items and reading until the middle of the night, learning how to help support those around her. She then made contact with one of the district inclusive learning coaches, who provided a supply of children's books and resources, and shared the teacher's concerns about supporting the school community. With the thought "This should be everywhere—all of our teachers should have this within their reach and not have to wonder what to do next," the teacher collected books, suggestions, practical information, art/writing opportunities, phone numbers, and support ideas for the family, the students and herself for immediate use and for continued family support. This need was the impetus for the creation of the grief box, started in Peace Wapiti School Division 76, which has now spread throughout the entire division. Using the box that the first teacher and coach made as a model, the inclusive education coaches gathered as a team to assemble and finalize the contents for the boxes that would be distributed through the district. Currently, there are two grief boxes in most PWSD 76 schools for staff to access at a moment's notice.

Sadly, this initial incident was not the last tragedy to strike a classroom, school or broader district community. Because many of the district schools are located in smaller towns, hamlets or colonies, the larger portion of the broader community often experiences the pain of grief. Large schools can feel the effects as well and need the supports. Schools sometimes dealt both directly and indirectly with death/suicides, house fires, illness, divorce, incarcerations or other life situations that cause grief. All of these things can greatly affect the social and emotional fragility of all involved, especially children or teenagers, making academics seem secondary. Our schools needed something concrete to begin to bridge that gap for our grieving school members and students.



Since grief knowledge, resources and materials was a growing area of concern, based on the first teachers' experience, different partners in the district began to look at creating a thoughtful resource box to provide a teacher with some immediate and ongoing support for the student(s) as needed. The inclusive education coaches dedicated much time and effort to the creation of the resource. The district school board supported the effort completely. The boxes were jointly funded by a Comprehensive School Health and Wellness grant, the local ATA, and discounts by local Michaels and STAPLES stores. This work was broad and intense but culminated in a beautiful resource, both aesthetically and functionally, for staff to use immediately as a need may arise, for preteaching and for ongoing grief support.

Each box (purposely described as a box as opposed to a kit) is in a uniquely attractive box with an appealing

but muted design. Inside is an assortment of items specifically chosen to help soothe and comfort students from a variety of chosen resources. The grief boxes are comprehensively designed, including resources for

1. preteaching,
2. immediate crisis,
3. ongoing grief support,
4. whole-class and individual activities,
5. important grief development information for adults to know, and
6. information about local resources.

Each box includes

- an assortment of art supplies (for students who may wish to make a card for a classmate or family member[s] in grief),
- related picture books (dealing with various topics on death/change/loss),
- supplies for a student to create small memorials,
- a leather-bound journal to record thoughts and feelings,
- various fidgets, playdough and sensory items,
- small boxes for holding special pictures or other items, and
- a handcrafted wooden “comfort bird.”

The grief box also comes with a comprehensive folder that includes instructions on how to use the grief box if needed, a list of short possible activities, information on how to support a grieving child and the developmental stages of children’s grief, local resources, what not to say, web-based resources, sample memory books to help students process and remember their loved one, and various outlines and masters to give the child(ren) that may help them cope at school. All of the folder resources and links are accessible on a Google drive, as well is list of all the resources (in case some of the contents are consumed or permanently removed).

Although officially launched in December of 2017(that is, during this school year), seven schools had previously requested them (even partially finished) as student loss arose within the district.

Teachers (and families) were grateful to have such a resource available to them in their own classroom. They could easily sign them out from the library and keep them as long as necessary. Local school councils were grateful for this type of support for the students in the school as well.

How has this resource been used by teachers in our district this year?

In December, before the Christmas break, a Grade 2 classroom teacher guided her students through making a memory box to honour someone they mourned or someone who has been important to them. They took them home as part of their Christmas celebration.

Students at another school created a display board based on the GriefBox book “The Tenth Good Thing About Barney,” in memory of a Grade 3 classmate who died.

One father, at parent-teacher interviews, thanked his son’s teacher for creating a memory book about his wife. He reported that he and his son sat on the couch together, read the book and wept together.

The grief boxes are a part of an overall focus on the social and emotional health of children in our schools. We continually strive to find ways to meet the needs of the whole child in order to bring each child to a better place in order to succeed in the other facets of student life. As we look to support a child academically, we know that we may need to meet other needs before we can do that effectively. By working in partnerships with others and sharing our stories and needs, we all grow both as professionals and as people sharing life’s joys and struggles. It is in that journey, although sometimes hard and painful, that we move together to help develop our students and school communities with understanding and compassion.

Carmen Moore

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Augmentative and Alternative Communication

Where can I start in supporting my students who aren't able to meet their communication needs with speech alone?

Many of us communicate with each other using our voices, gestures, text messages, doodles and the like. We share our dreams, our rants and little tidbits about subjects we have learned, and ask questions so we can understand new ideas or situations better. We gain others' attention and can advocate for ourselves so we can access what we want or need. This is only a small list of the reasons why we communicate.

There are many students in our schools who are not able to use their physical voices to meet all of their communication needs. Augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) includes all forms of communication other than oral speech that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, social connection, information sharing and ideas. People with severe speech or expressive language difficulties can rely on AAC to supplement existing speech or replace speech that is not functional. People who may benefit from using AAC include those with autism spectrum disorders, cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, Down syndrome and other genetic or metabolic conditions.

There is a misconception that using AAC will inhibit the development of verbal communication; however, a recent meta-analysis found that no individual demonstrated decreases in speech production as a result of AAC intervention, 11 per cent showed no change, and the majority (89 per cent) demonstrated gains in speech (Miller et al 2006). Sometimes, students who need AAC are communicating with us through physical means. In this way, what we may consider behaviour is truly communication. For example, a student may hit someone to gain their attention or to communicate "Can I play?" We need to support these students by interpreting the intent of their actions or sounds as communication. We need to provide access and support for AAC systems that can be used by our

students who have difficulty speaking to meet their expressive communication needs.

Here are a few ideas to consider as you include the students who use AAC in your classrooms:

- If the student is unable to communicate to meet their daily needs, we need to consider an AAC system or strategies. An AAC assessment is important in order to ensure a good fit between the student, the environment, the activities they need or want to participate in, and the best tools to meet these needs. There is no one best AAC system. The best system is the one that works for the individual and their environments and communication partners.
- Our students do not learn to use an AAC system or strategy on their own. We, as their communication partners, need to model how to use that student's system so our students can learn to use their system. This is called aided language stimulation (ALgS). To do this, we point to pictures on the student's system while we talk. We don't need to point to every word in our sentence—challenge yourself to start out by pointing to one or two key words in your message. This modelling is also helpful because it slows down the rate of our interaction.
- Some of our students who use AAC are still learning to read and understand the meaning of text. As fully literate adults, we look at communication boards and read the words written above each symbol, but our students do not necessarily read the text. We need to help them understand what the symbol means, where it is located, what the word means and when they can use it, and connect this with the text for the word.
- Students need access to many, many words, and these words need to be able to be used across a variety of environments, from library to gym, from shared reading to recess. Giving students who need AAC a system that is rich in core vocabulary helps them learn these key words and how to combine

them. Core vocabulary is made up of pronouns, verbs, prepositions, conjunctions and the like that make up 80 per cent of what we say each day. Words like I, you, it, go, stop, like, make, put, take, get, in, out, on, and up are all core words and we can use them everywhere we go.

- Consider adding some personalized vocabulary to the student's communication board or book so they can communicate with others about important topics, places and people—our unique interests often serve as a jumping-off point for conversations and connections with others.
- Remember to keep the arrangement of your student's words in the same place on their low-tech or electronic communication system. Students learn where words are located with time and practice, just as we learn where different keys are on our keyboards.
- All students who may end up using an electronic communication system need a low-tech paper-based backup communication system. Batteries may run out or the electronic communication device may need to be repaired, but your students still need to be able to communicate.
- Start with the end in mind. Ultimately, we want all of our students to be able to use language to communicate with everyone in their environments, about any subject they wish. This means that students should have access to communication systems with as many icons as they are able to point to (this usually means 40-plus symbols on a regular sized sheet of paper). This may sound like a lot, but when we look at each student's ability to discriminate and locate desired icons on a tablet, this is often reasonable.
- There are students who have significant difficulty using their hands to access communication boards/devices. Working as a team with your speech language pathologist, occupational therapist and physical therapist will lead to the best results in understanding how that student is using and can use different body parts for communication.
- Students need to have their AAC systems out and available all the time. We miss communication opportunities and we are not able to model if their communication board or device is in their

backpack or locker. By ensuring consistent access to the student's communication device, we are also valuing the tool and the importance of what our students have to say.

Think about these questions:

- Are there students in my class who would benefit from AAC?
- Do they have AAC systems in place for them to communicate? If not, when can I connect with my school team, including the speech language pathologist, occupational therapist and other professionals to bring this up?
- If there is an AAC system in place, do I know how to use it?
- Is a referral to a speech language pathologist in place to support me and my student?

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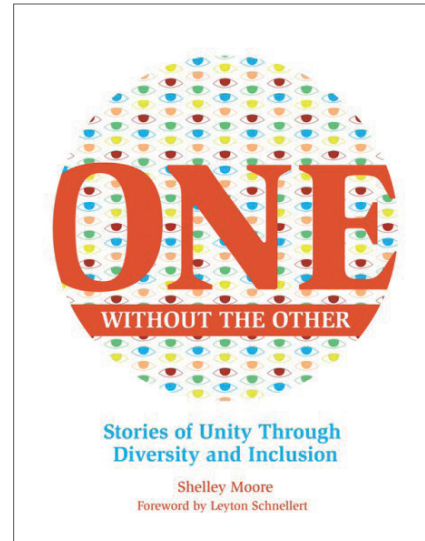
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Shelley Moore—One Without the Other

We were fortunate to have Shelley Moore, an inclusion consultant from British Columbia, as our preconference presenter last October during our Celebrating the Challenges conference. Her presentation, “Who Are Our Pilots?” challenges educators to think of inclusion not as places of integration but as communities of inclusion. Shelley created the visual below to show different models of school inclusion. It illustrates a stark difference in how we include students in the places that they learn. A shows exclusion, D shows segregation, B shows integration and C shows inclusion. Everyone in bubble C is a representation of all students in a classroom, each a diverse learner in their own right. In this model, each student has their own strengths and deficits; each has their own purpose to learn, thrive and engage in that community of learners. This is where integration and inclusion are different. Where Integration shows groups of students housed together, inclusion is a voluntary community where all students have opportunities to contribute and learn from each other.

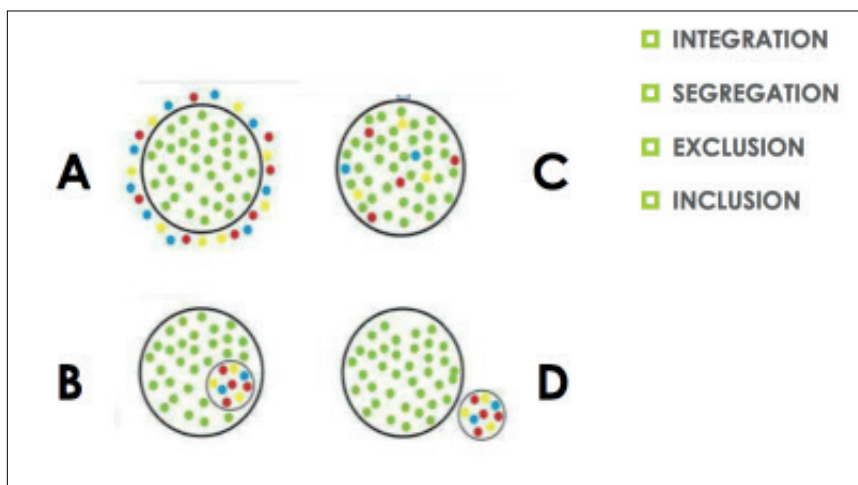
Shelley also launched her book, *One Without the Other*, at her conference session. This empowering session and her book are very inspiring on how we view inclusion. Part one of her book goes into detail about the models of inclusion listed above. She also invites educators to view inclusion from the lens of purpose and place. Individuals have access to multiple



physical places: hallways, classrooms, playground and so forth. In each of these places are multiple purposes for individuals to negotiate. Some students do not understand the purpose of being in a particular place, which can lead to confusion and frustration. As adults, we understand the purpose of the places that we visit—for example, we go to a grocery store to buy groceries. Sometimes we assume that all students understand their purpose for being in a particular place. From this viewpoint, if a student does not

understand his or her purpose for physically being in a place, it becomes more of an integration model. Once the student understands his or her purpose for being in that space, it becomes an inclusion model.

Places are made purposeful by reflecting on the place we expect an individual to be, and what we want him or her to do in that space. Questions that need to be considered are Does the student know the purpose of being in that space? Does the student have the skill to carry



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out the purpose? Was the student involved in the decision-making process? Inclusion in a place includes personal, social and intellectual purposes, each contributing to attaching meaning to the place. Personal purpose can include self-regulation and personal awareness. Social purpose can include social engagement and communication with others. Intellectual purpose includes goals of enabling a person to have a role in the learning community of the classroom. These include curricular and process goals and expectations of learning. Examples of places and purposes make up the first part of Shelley's book.

Part two of the book include stories of inclusion and memories of Shelley's own journey of inclusion, both personal and professional. These stories make connections and support the ideas and concepts from the first part of the book. Many of these stories come

alive in the TedTalks that she made over the past few years.

Shelley also has a blog, [blogsomemoore](https://blogsomemoore.com/) (<https://blogsomemoore.com/>), which is dedicated to teaching and empowering all students. The site contains a wealth of information, including handouts from sessions, resources and curricular templates. Shelley Moore is a sought-after inclusion speaker and comes highly recommended as a presenter for school districts on creating inclusive school communities.

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