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newsletter.scsbc.net

Contributing to the Common Good

by Martin Hanscamp

How do we speak with confidence into the public square? What contribution does Christianity make? Why should secular society listen to what they see as a dusty old manuscript? These are very topical matters in Australia and probably in Canada also. The relationship between Christian schools and broader society is caught up in the same questions.

Author Vishal Mangalwadi, an Indian Christian, tells a wonderful story in *The Book that Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization*.

He was heading to a conference in Holland, and on the plane he had a conversation with a man from India who bragged about his success as a businessman in Great Britain. Mangalwadi was perplexed by the comment that "business in England is easy because everyone trusts you there."

He landed in Holland, and his host, Jan, invited him to go for a walk. They headed down the neatly organized lanes until Jan took a detour into a milking shed. Mangalwadi followed and watched Jan dip into the storage vat to draw out a beautiful mug of milk, then pay into the money jar on the ledge. He couldn't believe his eyes; the *honour pay* system was non-existent in his homeland. In that instant, Mangalwadi understood what the businessman had been trying to say. In India, you'd need a cashier to ensure the customer paid, an inspector to check the milk wasn't watered down, another bureaucrat to ensure the inspector wasn't being bribed, and so on. Frustratingly and inefficiently, all the extra costs would have to be paid by the consumer.

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Contributing to the Common Good

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So why the contrast between Holland and India? Why can a Dutch farmer leave his money jar out and get a fair return for his product? Mangalwadi points to the Global Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) that ranks 175 countries from the least corrupt to the most. In 2014, Canada came in at tenth, just topping Australia at eleventh. Mangalwadi goes on to say, “An important finding of the CPI is that the least corrupt countries are the Protestant countries – that is, secular nations whose cultures were shaped decisively by the Bible.” (p. 253)

Why is this form of honesty so easy within some societies? My heritage, in the Christian Reformed Church, will be familiar to some involved in SCSBC schools. As a child, I’d hear my dad preach from the Heidelberg Catechism each Sunday night. This type of instruction has been going on for over four centuries in Holland and has had a profound influence. It has reached into the DNA of the country.

In the Heidelberg Catechism’s Lord’s Day 42,¹ you’ll see an extended explanation that goes beyond theft. It goes so much further, covering areas like tricks, sneakiness, exorbitant interest, coveting, waste, and then on the positive side, seeking the betterment of your neighbour and caring for the needy. The Heidelberg illustrates the breadth of “thou shalt not steal” and explains it in the light of the rest of Scripture.

Throughout his brilliant book, Mangalwadi explores the idea that the Bible is the single most powerful force that has influenced the unique vision of western thought, western values and western institutions.

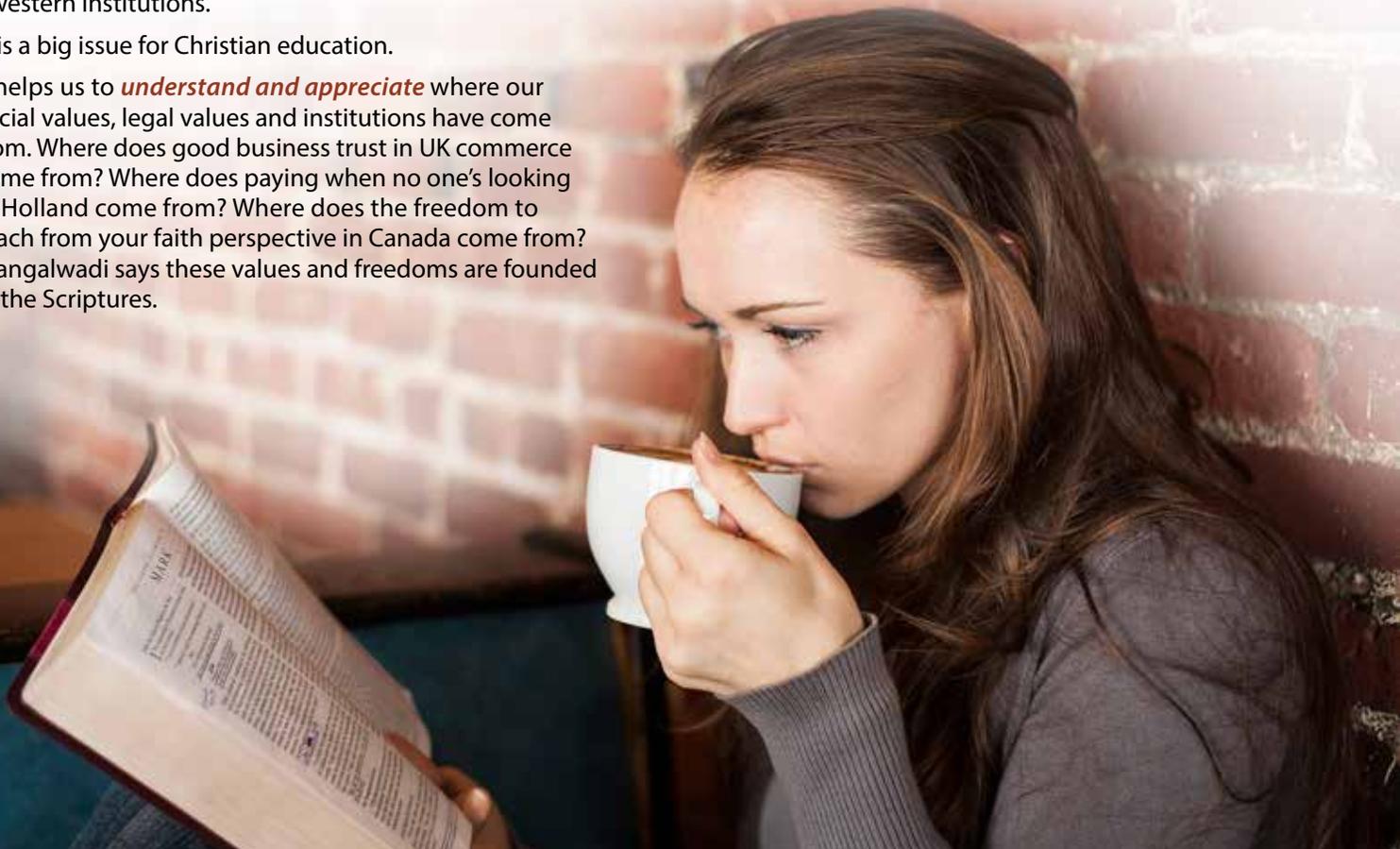
Why is a big issue for Christian education.

1. It helps us to **understand and appreciate** where our social values, legal values and institutions have come from. Where does good business trust in UK commerce come from? Where does paying when no one’s looking in Holland come from? Where does the freedom to teach from your faith perspective in Canada come from? Mangalwadi says these values and freedoms are founded in the Scriptures.

2. It’s also a huge **confidence booster**. In a secular context where Christian schools are painted as being narrow, exclusivist, irrelevant, bigoted, intolerant, judgemental and so on, we can interrupt those false perceptions and point out that we stand for a wonderful set of values and attitudes that are steeped in the Scriptures and provide value to our society at large.
3. It affirms the message of the Scripture’s **relevance**. By opening up the way the Scriptures speak into our *everyday*, we inspire our students to see how essential and relevant God’s Word is for their lives.
4. It reminds us we’re making a **contribution to the common good**. If you were to brainstorm a list of core values that undergird Canadian society, you’d come up with quite a list, and the vast bulk would find their beginnings in the Scriptures. We’d say these are intrinsic to our lives and pivotal for a healthy society.

We could do the same for values in education. Would these be true?

- ... education is geared to assisting students grow in confidence and competence for the purpose of contributing and developing culture
- ... we stand for fairness and justice for all students; each is a gifted image-bearer who should have the opportunity to grow
- ... students need to work together in forging community, loving their neighbour as themselves



Recommended!

Check out these resources ...

... students are charged to actively contribute to the common good and build a flourishing society, a healthy nation.

A word of caution. Some Christians claim that all we need to do is return to our heritage, our roots and reclaim the territory. I'd suggest this is unhelpful as such claims are historically and intellectually challengeable. The inference is that we *are* or have *been* the common good. It's far more balanced and theologically sound to talk about *contributing to, or being a presence for*, the common good. This discussion should be kept to the significant influence of the Scriptures, the gospel message and the Judeo-Christian ethic.

In conclusion, one of the big challenges for us as Christian school leaders is to ensure that the Scriptures speak into every nook and cranny of the school yard. We particularly want our teachers to use the Scriptures meaningfully, not in a trite way. As we affirm again the dynamic-ness, the significance and the relevance of the Scriptures, we return to "thou shalt not steal" and we can see two contrasting approaches.

Even the most secular person knows that one of the biblical commandments says "thou shall not steal." And sadly, that could be the most predominant image they have of Christianity – a whole list of "thou shalt nots" – limited, not expounded, culturally out-of-step, judgemental and moralized. Our Lord is insulted because He wants to speak into every square inch of life, not be sidelined into mockery and irrelevance.

But there's another way to read the text. Even though, "thou shalt not steal" is just four words, they are still rich and relevant in meaning. We know the eighth commandment touches our actions when no one's watching. We know it impacts all the mechanisms needed for a flourishing economy. We know that when we dig deeply, contextualise, and unpack the relevant, needed and applicable message, the Scriptures come alive with renewed influence and meaning.

As we seek the Kingdom of God in education, let us continue to drink deeply from this vat of delicious milk, this wellspring of God's revelation for schooling and for life.



Martin Hanscamp is the Executive Officer for the Australian Association of Christian Schools, a political advocacy organization for Christian schools Down Under. He visited British Columbia earlier this year for a "sticky beak" and left thoroughly inspired. Martin shared the above reflection as a devotion at the SCSBC Business and Development Conference in March 2016.

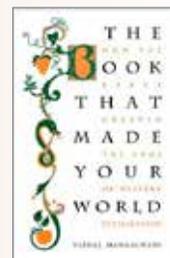
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1 <http://www.ligonier.org/learn/articles/heidelberg-catechism-1563/>

The Book That Made Your World: How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization

by Vishal Mangalwadi

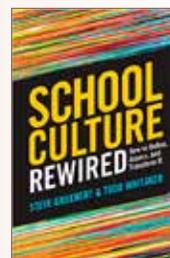
Indian philosopher Vishal Mangalwadi reveals the personal motivation that fueled his own study of the Bible and systematically illustrates how its precepts became the framework for societal structure throughout the last millennium. From politics and science, to academia and technology, the Bible's sacred copy became the key that unlocked the Western mind. Mangalwadi examines the origins of a civilization's greatness and the misguided beliefs that threaten to unravel its progress. Learn how the Bible transformed the social, political, and religious institutions that have sustained Western culture for the past millennium, and discover how secular corruption endangers the stability and longevity of Western civilization.



School Culture Rewired: How to Define, Assess and Transform It

by Steve Gruenert and Todd Whitaker

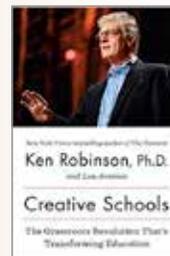
Though often invisible to the naked eye, a school's culture influences everything that takes place under its roof. This groundbreaking book offers tools, strategies, and advice for defining, assessing, and ultimately transforming your school's culture into one that is positive, forward-looking, and actively working to enrich students' lives. Drawing from decades of research on organizational cultures and school leadership, the authors show how to optimize the culture and climate of your school including strategies to help teachers adopt positive outlooks and behaviors; a framework for pinpointing the type of culture you have, the type that you want, and the actions you need to take to bridge the two; tips for hiring, training, and retaining teachers who will actively work to improve your school's culture; and instructions on how to create and implement a successful School Culture Rewiring Team.



Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That's Transforming Education

by Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica

At a time when many schools are struggling, and students and educators are suffering under the strain, Robinson points the way forward. He argues for an end to the outmoded industrial educational system and proposes a highly personalized, organic approach that draws on today's unprecedented technological and professional resources to engage all students, develop their love of learning, and enable them to face the real challenges of the twenty-first century. This book is filled with anecdotes, observations and recommendations from professionals on the front line of transformative education; case histories; and groundbreaking research. *Creative Schools* will inspire teachers, parents, and policy makers alike to rethink the real nature and purpose of education.



TeachThought Twitter Feed

twitter.com/teachthought

TeachThought.com is a broad collection of filterable educator professional development posts that are thought-provoking and poignant, interspersed with practical ideas to support learning. The Twitter feed is an excellent way to be alerted to and engage with new posts.

"Absolutely enriching, motivating, inspirational articles. Loads of knowledge so well written! Thanks so much for sharing and giving me the opportunity to learn every day!" – reader review



Engage Your Planning with Core Competency

This is an exciting time to be involved in education. During the last few hundred years, schooling has been characterized by discipline-based and content-focused studies whose success has been measured, by and large, by students' ability to recall the information from the canon studied. However, times are changing. Over the last fifty years, there has been an increased interest and call for focus on the development of *transferable or 21st century skills*. In 1958, Theodore Yntema, who worked with the Ford Motor Company, challenged educators to teach and equip students with "the basic skills and abilities that are widely transferable from one field to another."¹ Since then, recognition of and acceptance for the need to emphasize the development of skills and competencies has grown and is now an integral part of the British Columbia Ministry of Education's BC Ed Plan. The revitalized British Columbia curriculum is aligned with current research and what we know about how people learn, and compels educators to pedagogically direct their focus on the development of students' "core competencies."²

"Core competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning."³ Six core competency areas have been given priority within the BC Education Plan: communication; creative thinking; critical thinking; positive personal and cultural identity; personal awareness and responsibility; and social responsibility. While many other areas of competency development could have been included, these six areas represent some that might be considered *critical aspects* for being *good or educated* citizens in the 21st century.⁴ British Columbia is not alone in pursuing this focus on developing competencies in students. Other curriculum systems have also

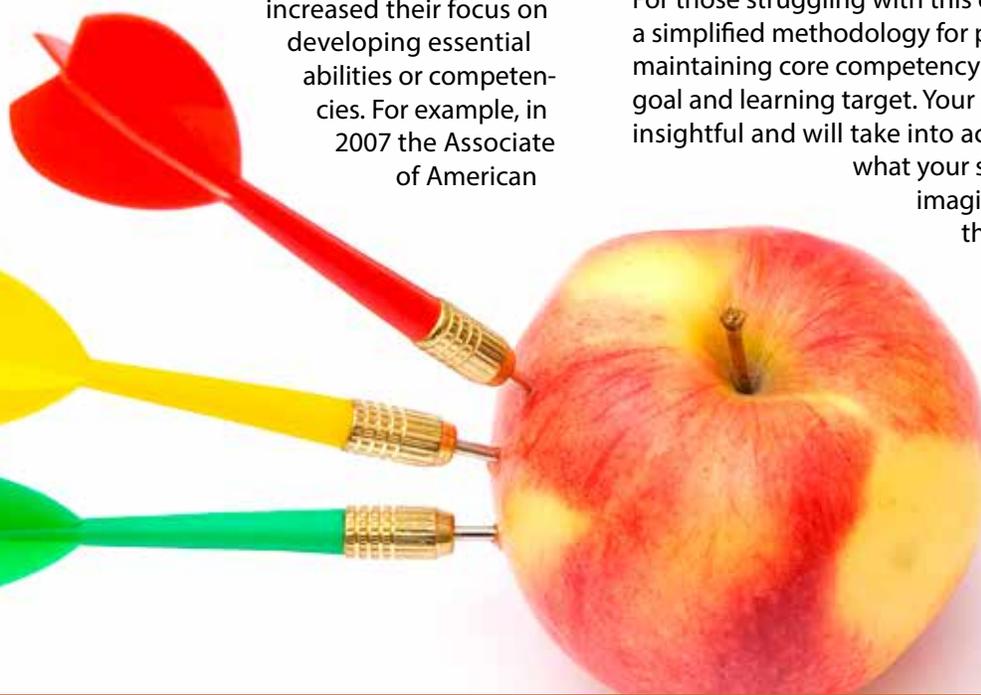
increased their focus on developing essential abilities or competencies. For example, in 2007 the Associate of American

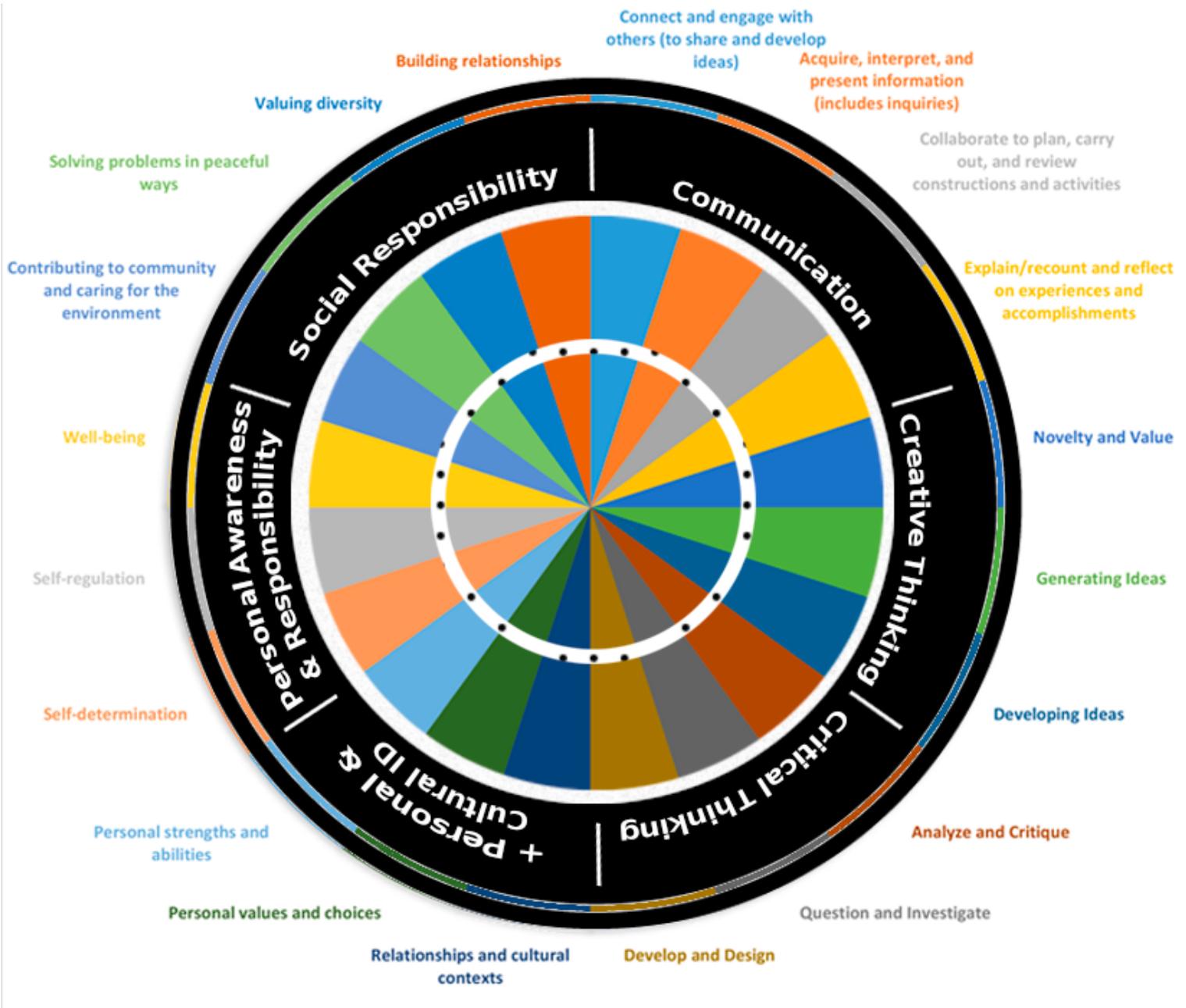
Colleges and Universities published an excellent collection of sixteen rubrics⁵ intended to help faculty assess essential undergraduate competency outcomes. While some of the AAC&U rubric areas are in common with the core competency areas identified by the BC Ministry of Education, the AAC&U set of rubrics also include areas such as global learning, integrated learning, problem solving, and information literacy.

This is exciting. British Columbia's education plan is mandating that teachers facilitate the development of core competencies in all learners. Just think about this – a mandate to intentionally develop students' abilities to think creatively and critically, communicate more effectively, and to be aware of themselves and consider the needs of others in the process. On one hand, this is revolutionary. On the other hand, this is what really good teachers have been doing for years. Still, there are many seasoned teachers who are nervous about the change and there is good reason for that. In the traditional understanding of what it meant to teach, content knowledge transfer was the goal. Now, breaking out of the *content-first* mindset presents a major challenge and many teachers don't know how or where to start in their work of planning for the development of student competency.

As the educational focus shifts from one where content was king toward one focusing on development of learners' competencies, our frame of reference for what constitutes *good* planning and *effective* teaching also moves. The *natural* method of lesson planning, which hinges on content required to be covered, is no longer good enough. We must figure out what it means to plan and assess for competency development. Not knowing what this might look like or even where to start can be very unsettling. So where does one start?

For those struggling with this question, allow me to outline a simplified methodology for planning a lesson or unit while maintaining core competency development as your primary goal and learning target. Your version of this will be far more insightful and will take into account your understanding of what your students need, but for now, let's imagine a blank slate. All we know is that we have students coming, and we need to create a lesson plan that focuses first and foremost on developing core competencies areas.





As we already noted, there are six core competency areas we are responsible for in the new BC Ed Plan. Further, each of the core competencies have three or four sub-parts called facets that help better define narrower particular focus areas. In total, there are twenty core competency facets that schools are responsible for *intentionally* developing in students. There is no way you can intentionally develop and track all these areas at the same time, so, instead, you could use the following procedure:

Step 1 – Select a core competency to focus on. Imagine a dartboard where each target number represents one of the core competencies facets. Throw a dart. Congratulations, you

have a core competencies facet of focus. Write it down on the top of a sheet of paper.

(Example: Communication: connect and engage with others to share and develop ideas.)

Step 2 – Brainstorm as many pedagogical methods or learning activities as you can that will serve to intentionally develop the core competency facet you are focusing on. This is NOT the time to filter your ideas. Write down every idea you have, the good ones and the bad ones.

(Example: Have small groups engage in a peer critique protocol: the “like” and “I wonder” feedback circle. Have

by Marlene Bylenga

students in small groups create an “everything I know about _____” mindmap as an introduction, and follow up with class “arising questions” activity.)

Step 3 – Steps 1 and 2 did not require knowing what content area you are working with. The pedagogies and activities you thought of could be used in a lesson about butterflies, trigonometry or poetry. They are adaptable for all areas. But now, go ahead and consider your content area and the big ideas you will explore as a vehicle for developing the core competency. Refine, add or delete some of the activities you brainstormed in Step 2.

Step 4 – Add another core competencies facet to focus on and repeat Steps 1-3. You will probably find that two to three core competencies facets of focus are entirely manageable.

Step 5 – Make a record of your intentional core competencies focus areas. If you’re not sure what that might look like, you could create a tracking grid like the one found at teaching.scsbc.ca/core-competency-planning-grid. This would help you track the core competencies focus areas your team has worked to develop intentionally throughout the year.

Obviously, throwing a dart as a methodology for choosing core competencies to focus on lacks some intentionality and acknowledgement of your students’ needs, but it does illustrate that planning can be completed with the development of core competency at the forefront of intention. To make it intentional, think of your students – you know them. Replace Step 1 by considering the core competencies facet areas that should be addressed for development with this group of students. No dartboard needed. Target acquired.

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- 2 BC Ministry of Education. Core Competencies: Building Student Success. (2016). BC’s New Curriculum. Retrieved 4 April 2016, from <https://curriculum.gov.bc.ca/competencies>
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- 5 See <https://www.aacu.org/value-rubrics>



We live in a world where technology has given us so many new ways to communicate. For the most part, many of these communication tools can allow us to stay better connected and work more efficiently. However, the art of conversation is at risk of being lost.

One of the characteristics of a good conversationalist is that of being a good listener. Every person has a unique story and history that needs to be heard; our communities should be safe places where these stories are shared and appreciated. Taking the time to listen to other’s stories allows us to appreciate differing cultural perspectives and leads to an awareness and appreciation for the diversity with which the Lord has created us.

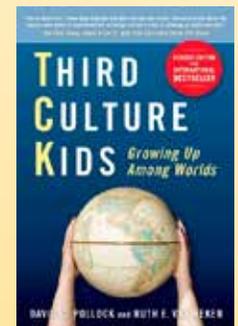
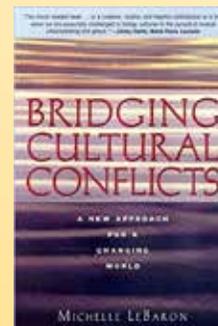
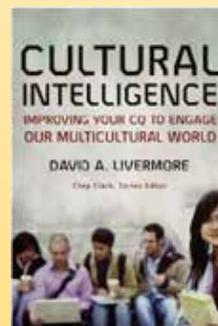
As leaders, we work to foster an excitement within our student body about learning from others who have different cultural perspectives and expressions but who share the same Lord and Saviour. Leaders model what it means to engage in good conversation, to take the time to listen and learn from one another.

Be intentional. Go out and talk to people. Listen to their stories and enjoy each unique perspective. Community is strengthened as each person feels cared for, valued, and heard.

Marlene Bylenga (ieprogram@scsbc.ca) is the SCSBC International Education Coordinator

Here are three books I like to recommend for increasing skill in cross-cultural conversation:

- **Cultural Intelligence: Improving your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World**
by David A. Livermore
- **Bridging Cultural Conflicts: a New Approach for a Changing World**
by Michelle LeBaron
- **Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds**
by David C. Pollock and Ruth E. VanReken



Does STORY Matter? by Cathy Kits

“Storytelling is how we introduce ourselves, discover commonalities and differences, build community, and learn from each other’s experiences.”¹

People love stories. You need only go back to your own childhood to understand storytelling’s effect. Picture yourself curled up in a chair or snuggled under a blanket while someone told you a story. My favourites were the ones my Dad told – the adventures of Freddy the frog and Hector the snake – over and over again. Stories produce experiences that imprint themselves on our hearts.

STORY connects

Stories have the capacity to cultivate community; we connect with each other through the telling of them. They can move people to become a part of something bigger than themselves, gathering people together for a common cause. This is particularly relevant as you strive to grow a culture of giving in your school, inviting God’s people to be community and to give out of their own experiences of grace and God’s generosity.²

STORY inspires

Sharing the story of your school’s vision, how you’re living it out, and what your hopes and dreams are for your school’s future will inspire the people who share your values and worldview. Your vision is something they can get passionate about, that moves them at a transforming heart level. So inspire them! Your school has an amazing story to share. Find your voice.

STORY motivates

Stories have the power to motivate, but the reality is that storytelling is hard work. It’s far easier to communicate facts, and we tend to default to that, particularly when it comes to asking people to give. Facts do matter, but ultimately people make decisions based on what the facts mean to them, not on the facts themselves. Stories appeal to the emotional decision making parts of our minds in ways that facts can’t.

Consider your own response to an appeal. What moves you? The what or the why? Will the request to donate to a new program or building alone motivate you to give? Imagine if the facts and features of the new building were combined with the story of how your gift will help achieve the school’s vision, and ultimately impact the lives of the students in the school? You need to unite the heart and the head; communicating information in isolation isn’t enough. Make your facts come alive by knitting a story around them to create meaning.³

STORY resonates

People give to a vision that has meaning for them, that evokes shared values. So, knowing that, the story of your vision must resonate with those who are listening to it. “Who’s listening and why are they listening?”⁴ You need to know. What are their stories? What do they care about? How do they perceive you? And what do they want to know about you? In order to have authentic engagement you need to meet people where they are and share the stories that resonate with them.

STORY matters

Yes, STORY matters. So tell your story and “grow real relationships with people, helping them see what God is doing, and then challenging them to have the impact that only they can have.”⁵ Share the stories that genuinely reflect your school’s vision in action, that are real, relevant and relatable. These are the ones that have the capacity to grow relationships with the people God has given you, inspiring them to join their story with yours.

Cathy Kits (cathy.kits@scsbc.ca) is the SCSBC Director of Development

References

- 1 Christina Baldwin, *Storycatcher: Making Sense of Our Lives through the Power and Practice of Story*
- 2 Jeavons and Basinger: *Growing Givers’ Hearts*
- 3 Jon Thomas, Communications Director, Post Advertising
- 4 Josh Feit, Evangela Creative
- 5 Zach Clark, Development and Leadership Coaching

NEWS AND EVENTS

UPCOMING CALENDAR

BC Ed Plan Foundational Workshops

To facilitate training for the implementation of the new BC Education Plan, *Building Student Success*, the Ministry of Education has provided a grant for the use of FISA-BC member groups. Our Directors of Learning have been busy offering professional development around the province for teachers of SCSBC schools as well as other local FISA-BC schools. These full-day workshops are designed to help develop a deep understanding of the foundations of the BC Ed Plan with the goal of equipping teachers with tools they can use to plan and implement assessment and reporting strategies that align with this new paradigm.



Adoption Ceremony

Duncan Christian School's principal, Jeremy Tinsley, and high school teacher, Bethany Ellis, were privileged to attend the Cowichan Tribes adoption ceremony at the Somona Longhouse on March 31. In all, fourteen children were adopted, six into two DCS families and the rest into four other families. During the extremely moving ceremony, each of the six families received their blanketed children into their arms. Then, as part of the ceremony, the parents and children were asked to present the blanket to someone. Bethany and Jeremy were touched to receive the gift of adoption ceremony blankets, one from each of the two DCS families.



children into their arms. Then, as part of the ceremony, the parents and children were asked to present the blanket to someone. Bethany and Jeremy were touched to receive the gift of adoption ceremony blankets, one from each of the two DCS families.

Creation Calls Conference

Valley Christian School held their *Creation Calls Conference* from February 17 to 19. Thomas Bailey from Creation Ministries International in Ontario spoke on *Dinosaurs, the Flood, and Who Was There?* In addition, each day included worship time, take-home materials and a variety of afternoon field trips, each guided by a creation speaker / teacher who highlighted evidence of creation at different locations around the Lower Mainland. Other schools, homeschool families, pastors and community members joined in on two of the three days.



FISA BC Convention

Over five thousand BC independent school educators came together at the Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre in February to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Federation of Independent School Associations in BC. Since its inception in 1966, FISA BC has been a strong advocate for parents in their right to choose the kind of education they want for their children. The convention tagline, *Learning Together; Leading Forward*, captures the vision of 293 schools coming together to celebrate fifty years of unity and freedom of choice in education. Seeking to strengthen the understanding and co-operation between diverse independent schools while respecting each school authority's right to operate according to its own philosophical, pedagogical and faith perspective, FISA BC has promoted common purposes and the rightful place and responsibility of independent schools in British Columbia, and has played an essential role in achieving funding for independent education in the province.

Videos from the conference are posted on the FISA BC Convention YouTube channel.



APRIL

25: International Education Program Coordinators Networking Meeting

MAY

4-6: CPABC Spring Conference

13: SCSBC ICT Focus Day

16: Librarian Specialist Day

JULY

10-15: Van Lunen Fellows Program 11th Cohort

11-15: Educators Leadership Development Institute West

SEPTEMBER

21-23: Christian Schools Canada Conference

NOVEMBER

5: SCSBC Leadership Conference and AGM

2017

MARCH

7-8: SCSBC Business and Development Conference



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