



# The LINK

NOVEMBER 2006

## IDEAS FOR TEACHING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

One resource with worthwhile ideas is **Teaching every student in the digital age: universal design for learning** by D. Rose and A. Meyer, ASCD, 2002. This book is accompanied by a website ([www.cast.org/teaching-everystudent/](http://www.cast.org/teaching-everystudent/)) with: "Ideas & Information" (includes full text of the book); "Tools & Activities"; "Community Support" (for members); and "UDL Toolkits".

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## Learning? ... All the Time! ... Anywhere! ... All-ways!

Robert Koole, DIRECTOR OF CURRICULUM [koole@twu.ca](mailto:koole@twu.ca)

*"Our students are no longer 'little versions of us,' .... In fact, they are so different from us that we can no longer use either our 20th century knowledge or our training as a guide for what is best for them educationally." (Marc Prensky, 2005)*

In what ways is the above statement true for Christian schools? In what ways is it not true? Here's a thought: take 15 minutes at your next staff meeting and your next education committee or board meeting to dialogue with each other about the truthfulness of Prensky's statement. I have a hunch that your dialogue will trigger further conversations and personal reflections about the ways we currently educate children and young people.



tal language of computers, video games, and the Internet." He calls them "digital natives," and refers to those who were born before the digital era as "digital immigrants." Digital natives feel completely at home freely exploring the digital world while digital immigrants stumble around trying to read the manual, learn the language, and figure out what they need to do for step 2 and 3.

Prensky (among others) argues that the impact of computer technology and digital communication is changing the way human beings come to understand their world and thereby creating serious challenges for engaging students in school learning.

Children and young people "are native speakers of technology, fluent in the digi-

Clearly, as **Growing up digital- the rise of the net generation** (Tapscott, 1998) demonstrated a few years ago, for the first time in history children and young people are more comfortable, knowledgeable and literate with computer technology than their parents and many of their teachers. At that time, the author also suggested that this would change what teaching and learning mean, as well as who is teaching and who is learning.

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### What do 'digital natives' have to offer 'digital immigrants?'

Digital natives demonstrate tremendous capacity to learn when they are engaged in their own learning. They find digital avenues for learning, motivating and challenging at the same time. Their desire to learn more reflects their interest in meeting desirable goals, making interesting choices, receiving timely and useful feedback, and engaging in opportunities to see themselves improve (Prensky, 2005).

Digital natives' avid involvement with digital learning illustrates the connections they make with an area of skill or knowledge: when it makes sense to them; when the material is exciting and challenging; when there is mutual engagement involv-

ing teacher (or program) and student; when they can enjoy learning together (also in virtual settings) and accept the challenge to exhibit what they have learned; when the 'things to be learned' are meaningful in their personal context are expressed in language that is friendly but not demeaning or belittling. (p. 106, R.L. Fried, 2001. **The passionate learner.**)

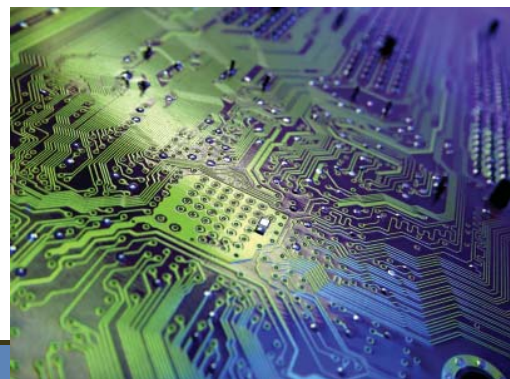
In short, learners no longer see themselves as receptacles to be filled up with content, but as creators and doers (Prensky). Having discovered that they can shape and direct parts of their outside-of-school learning, children and young people are reluctant to be passive observers, they want to be active participants and have a voice in school learning.

### What do 'digital immigrants' have to offer 'digital natives?'

Digital immigrants have wide-ranging experiences and knowledge in oral, written, and visual communication that can broaden and deepen digital natives' understanding of their world. Digital immigrants know that "learning and teaching takes place in humble dependence on God: "trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding" (Proverbs 3:5) and that the fear of the Lord is the fountain of life (Prov. 14:27) as well as the beginning of wisdom and knowledge (Prov. 1:7; Ps. 111:10) [p. 12, H. Van Brummelen, 1998. **Walking with God in the classroom**, 2nd Ed.]

Digital immigrants need to "create a classroom atmosphere where students feel secure enough to take risks in ... their learning; and to recognize students for the contributions they can make to the learning community. Since learning is personal and social, digital immigrants need to encourage reciprocal trust, respect, and responsibility. (p.122)

Digital immigrants know that "...students need opportunities to learn and respond in personally meaningful ways." Teachers accomplish this with digital natives when



**Universal Design for Learning** is based on three principles, each of which is explained and illustrated (see Rose and Meyer, p. 109-130).

1. To support recognition learning (i.e. teaching concepts, information, facts, 'knowledge-that'), provide multiple, flexible methods of presentation: provide multiple examples, highlight critical features, provide multiple media and formats, support background context.
2. To support strategic learning (i.e. skills and strategies, 'knowledge-how'), provide multiple, flexible methods of expression and apprenticeship: flexible models

**"Faced with insufficient challenge, students can complete a task without thinking or working; faced with too much challenge, students have little incentive to stay engaged. (Rose and Meyer, p. 97)**

- of skilled performance, opportunity to practice with supports, ongoing, relevant feedback, and offer flexible opportunities for demonstrating skill.
3. To support affective learning (i.e. engage in and love learning, 'knowledge-why'), provide multiple, flexible options for engagement: choices of content and tools, adjustable levels of challenge, choices of rewards, and offer choices of learning context.

they address students' needs and understandings in their particular context; demonstrate each unit's relevance in today's world; include activities that evoke wonder and surprise in themselves and their students; support open-ended and original forms of expression and products, including digital formats; and plan for student choices by providing alternatives. (based on p.122, H. VanBrummelen, 2002. *Steppingstones to curriculum*, 2nd ed.)

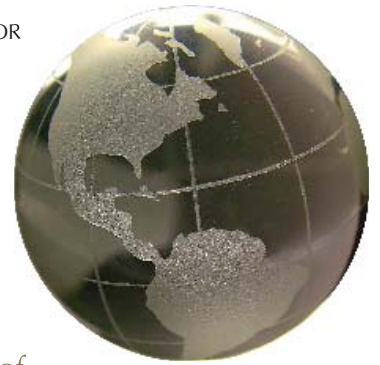
Digital immigrants help children and young people organize and evaluate information, sort the relevant from the irrelevant, and the meaningful from the meaningless. More significantly, digital immigrants enable children and young people turn information into knowledge and help them move knowledge toward understanding so that they come to choose the way of wisdom. Digital immigrants tell stories and help children and young people discover and develop frameworks that reveal the meaning of their learning and their life.

#### Sources

- R. L. Fried, 2001. *The passionate learner: how teachers and parents can help children reclaim the joy of discovery*. Boston: Beacon Press
- M. Prensky, 2005. "Listen to the natives," *Educational Leadership* 63:4 p. 8-13
- H. Van Brummelen, 1998. *Walking with God in the classroom*, 2nd Ed. Seattle: Alta Vista.
- H. VanBrummelen, 2002. *Steppingstones to curriculum*, 2nd ed. Colorado Springs: ACSI

# Developing a Global Awareness

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*Several weeks ago, Christian leaders from across Canada gathered in Toronto for the Christian Schools Canada Conference, entitled "Leadership in a Canadian Mosaic". I think that most everyone who attended would agree that having delegates from Africa, Asia, Europe, Australia and Central America sharing their perspectives on the effects and challenges of globalization challenged many of us to take an honest look at ourselves and our school communities. We needed to ask some hard questions with respect to how we may be responding to the increasing cultural diversity within our communities.*

As the coordinator for International Education in SCSBC schools, I was convicted that as leaders within our respective communities we need to challenge our staff, students and parents to develop a global awareness. We need to encourage each other to become inclusive communities where we celebrate not only our unity in Christ but also the diversity with which God has created us. As leadership, it might be worthwhile to set some time aside and discuss some of the following questions. I'm sure that more can be added, but hopefully these questions can be a springboard for open and honest dialogue.

- Are we building meaningful relationships and opening our hearts to individuals from differing cultural perspectives or are we expecting them to blend in and become like us?
- Does our curriculum allow students from differing cultures to share "who" they are and provide them opportunities to share their unique experiences and perspectives in an atmosphere of mutual learning?
- Are our policies and programs demonstrating inclusiveness by giving international students and their families the support and services

they need to make a successful transition into their new community?

Recognizing that we live in a broken world, we can only ask that the Lord will enable our school communities—in all their brokenness and with all their shortcomings—to be shining lights in a fragmented and fractured world. As Christians, we have a wonderful picture in Revelation 7: 9 & 10 of a time where peoples of all nations will be worshipping our great God in true unity:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."

*Marlene Bylenga is available to provide support to schools in the area of International Education. Feel free to contact Marlene at the email listed above, or by phone at 604-888-6366.*

# Moving Forward in Community and Vision

## SCSBC Strategic Plan 2007-2012



“What new initiatives should SCSBC undertake to best fulfill its mission to our member schools in the next 1-5 years?” This was the question the SCSBC board spent considerable time discussing at its last meeting.

Several new initiatives were discussed against the backdrop of the following criteria:

- **Linkage to Mission:** Does it fit within SCSBC’s stated mission?
- **Expressed Need:** Does it address needs our member schools have identified?
- **Impact:** Will it have a positive affect on the majority of our schools and students?
- **‘Umbrella factor’:** Is it best done under the SCSBC ‘umbrella’ or by another organization or mechanism?
- **Affordability:** Can the membership afford to fund these new initiatives?

What emerged from this discussion were three new initiatives, each receiving a high priority from the SCSBC board. They were:

### 1. **Expanding the current Director of Curriculum position:**

Currently this is one staff position, however the expanding scope and complexity of curricular issues relating to technology (Pre K-12) as well as Early Childhood (Pre-school- Kindergarten); Elementary (Grades 1-5); Middle (Grades 6-8), and High School (9-12) necessitate a division of this responsibility to a Director of Curriculum and a team of additional curriculum leaders.

- ### 2. **Student Support Services:**
- This new initiative would incorporate the curricular areas of Learning Assistance, Special Education, ESL, (English as a Second Language) and Enrichment into one or more staff positions. The ‘Coordinator of Student Support Services’ would serve as the point person to encourage and support the growth and development of these areas at both the school and provincial level.

- ### 3. **Director of Finance:**
- This new staff position would bring together the administrative areas of school finances, accounting, budgeting, tuition assistance, fundraising, endowments, foundations, and charitable tax receipting (Canada Revenue Agency). This director would work directly with Business Administrators, Treasurers, Auditors and also oversee the work and activity of the SCSBC Educational Development Society (charitable arm of SCSBC)

Other initiatives considered by the board included:

- **Leadership Development** – Plans would include:
  - a) expanding the current *Called to Serve-Prepared to Lead* training program for new and beginning leaders
  - b) launching a ‘West Coast’ Educators Leadership Development Institute (ELDI) in partnership with CSI to identify potential leaders early in their career
  - c) formalizing a Mentorship Program for new and beginning principals and vice-principals
  - d) participating in a ‘renewal program’ for veteran principals
  - e) working directly with the Christian Principals Association of BC (CPABC) in professional development initiatives for administrators

- **Policy Development-** Given the recent amendments to the Independent School Act (July 2006) and the increasingly regulatory nature of the Office of the Inspector of Independent Schools, member schools face a growing need for further policy development to stay in compliance with various government statutes, orders, and regulations. SCSBC needs to revisit the work and role of the current Leadership, Policy and Government Relations (LPG) Committee and ask the question, “Is there a more effective and efficient method of moving policy development forward?”



- **Human Resource Management**- Provide member schools with expanded support in the areas of employee contracts, employment standards, human resource management, conflict resolution, mediation and arbitration.
- **Consultancy Network**- An increasingly qualified and experienced educational work force is retiring earlier. Many of these people are looking for avenues whereby they can serve as either volunteer or paid consultants in school situations that require specific assistance (retired principals, teachers, business managers, support staff). Avenues need to be explored for how SCSBC can effectively link needs within our schools with this growing group of highly skilled and passionate professionals. Formalizing and expanding this consultancy network may be of particular benefit to smaller and struggling schools.

In summary, the SCSBC community will need to discuss the board's initiative to expand services to our member schools.

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Upon eventual endorsement of the SCSBC Strategic Plan, member schools will also need to discuss methods of how to best fund these new initiatives. It is anticipated that revenues to fund these new initiatives will come from three different sources, namely membership dues, consultancy fees and a special percentage levy against increased government grants.

As the SCSBC Strategic Plan is presented and endorsement sought, it is important that each school's voice is heard and considered as the SCSBC moves forward in community and vision.

## OVERALL ENROLLMENT INCREASE WITHIN THE SCSBC!

September 2006 data collection revealed that 15 school communities saw an overall increase in enrolment; 10 schools' enrolment remained virtually the same as the previous year; and 9 communities saw a decrease in enrolment. Aided by the addition of Carver Christian High School's grade 12 class and other significant enrolment gains in Langley, Nanaimo, Richmond and Victoria (Lighthouse & Pacific Christian), our overall enrolment among SCSBC schools is up by over 250 FTE's over last year's count, for a total enrolment of 9516.

It was particularly encouraging to see that two of our smaller schools—Port Alberni Christian School and Lighthouse Christian Academy—saw significant enrolment increases, percentage wise. Both of these schools faced closure in June 2004, yet by God's grace and the faithful support of Christian parents, both schools continue to prosper.

Several factors appear to contribute to enrolment increases across our schools. They include:

- establishing a pre-school program that seems to translate into



higher kindergarten enrolments in subsequent years

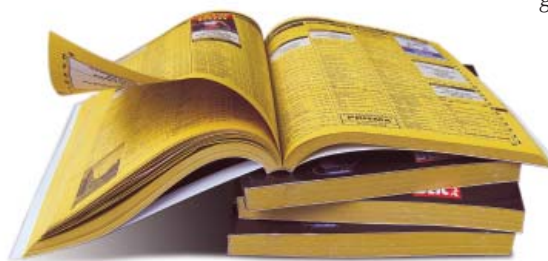
- schools with high student retention rates, confirming that it is easier to retain an existing family than to recruit a new one
- schools that provide a credible program for international students in combination with a strong Christian home-stay program tend to attract and retain a greater number of international students and recent landed immigrants.

The single greatest factor contributing to a general overall provincial decline of students (over 7000 this year alone) is the fact that many schools graduated a grade twelve class larger than their incoming kindergarten class. A decreasing demographic of school-aged children in BC is projected to continue for the foreseeable future.

# What Are We Marketing?

Gerald Ebbers, FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT  
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Over the past month, I have heard the same general feelings about Christian education from three different people: a Christian school board member, an administrator, and a parent. That makes me wonder if we have a trend here!



All three asked this: what's the message in our marketing? Is it that our Christian schools are as good as, or perhaps even better, than the public school? Is it that we do everything the public school does, except that we do it from a Christian perspective? Why should we market ourselves by comparing ourselves to the competition? Why can't we state who we are and what we do? Why do our schools (facilities and programs) look exactly like public schools?

Here's what they think we should be saying:

- Christian education should be the first choice for parents, not the second choice. It is not the fall back position after the other options have been tried; it is the primary option which one chooses without the primary consideration being the cost involved.
- Christian education is not better than public education; it is different and those differences should go far beyond a 'sprinkling' of Christianity on the subjects we teach

and the lifestyle we hold forth. Our schools should be radically different in ways that witness to the radical difference that a relationship with Christ makes in everything we do and say.

- Christian education should excel at everything it does: its programs and their outcomes, the staff and their professional expertise, the parents and their involvement, the differences that it makes in the world.

Something for the marketing committee and the board to review: what is the primary message of our marketing materials, our advertising, our programs and their outcomes, the messages we share at parent events and society meetings. We define who we are not by saying how we are different from or better than something else; we define who we are by stating what we believe education to be when it follows the Master and his call for a transforming vision of all of creation.

**Nurturing Growth**  
Christian Schools Learning to Thrive with Millennial Kids, Cultural/Denominational Diversity and a Shifting Social Landscape

11<sup>th</sup> Annual Developing Christian Schools Conference

February 21 - 23, 2007

- Vision Setting
- Marketing & Community Relations
- Strategic Planning
- Diversity & Cross Cultural Communication
- Development & Fundraising

## Nurturing Growth



### 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Developing Christian Schools Conference

The Developing Christian Schools Conference is designed to equip and encourage Christian school leaders, and to support schools in meeting their marketing, recruitment, retention, community-building and fundraising objectives. Members of your team might include:

February 21 - 23


Cedar Springs

Christian Retreat Center

- international student coordinators
- development directors
- committee members
- board members
- principals/teachers
- school treasurers
- admissions directors

**To register or for more information:**

[www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/dev/devcon.html](http://www.scsbc.ca/services/conferences/dev/devcon.html)

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The SCSBC community expresses deep condolences to the family of Bea Vander Heiden, who passed away suddenly, after a short struggle with cancer, on October 10. Bea was a well-loved and respected member of our Christian school community. She was one of the two founding teachers at what was then Calvin Christian School in 1960; she continued in various capacities at Pacific Christian School until her retirement in 1995. Bea always had a heart for the hurting and disadvantaged, clearly evidenced by her pioneering efforts to establish a Learning Assistance/Special Ed. program at PCS. Bea went on to serve PCS as a board member, and later served on the board of the SCSBC. The funeral service was held at First Christian Reformed Church of Victoria on Saturday, Oct. 14th.



- Vernon Christian School has a new logo, representing the area they are in and the view from their school (Swan Lake in front and the hills and orchards around). The cross is placed in the centre, as the “centre of all that we do and who we are so.”

In addition, the Vernon Christian Elementary Campus went through some major renovations over the summer: a donor put \$50,000.00 on deposit and challenged the community to match that amount. The call to action was given to parents and society members in late May; they raised \$27,185.00 in donations and another \$17,000.00 in pledges for a total of \$44,185.00. This was matched by the private donor, providing \$88,370.00 for renovations. As Vernon’s Development Administrator, Deb Holbrook, writes: “What a blessing when a community pulls together for the greater good of all.”



- Richmond Christian School Society conducted a ground-breaking ceremony for their new high school campus construction during their “Welcome Back to School BBQ” on August 30th.



- Members of the Cedars Christian School (Prince George) Society recently approved the purchase of an adjacent 5.5 acre parcel of land. Acquisition of this land is an important step in the school’s future expansion plans.



- Construction continues on Langley Christian School’s new elementary campus. An early 2007 occupancy is expected.
- Valley Christian School has successfully “moved their location” across the Fraser River. We celebrate that the SCSBC now has a Christian school presence in the growing city of Mission. With a waiting list for pre-school, Valley’s continued growth looks promising.



- Pentiction Christian School also has a beautiful new logo. Pentiction Christian began the year in two different temporary church sites, awaiting completion of their new campus. Last reports were that the roof was going up.
- Carver Christian High School moves into its second year operation with its addition of grade 12. Enrolment projections have been met with an increase of another 50+ students to over 125 students in this its second year of operation.



- Congratulations to the White Rock Christian Academy community as they celebrate their **25th Anniversary!** A three-day celebration is planned, November 23-25, 2006: a 20th anniversary celebration of their sister school relationship with Chukyo High School in Japan (Nov. 23, 7:00 pm), a family night/alumni games evening (Nov. 24, 6:00 pm), and an elegant appetizer/dessert evening with a short program (Nov. 25, 6:30 pm). RSVP by Nov. 15 (wrca@wrca.bc.ca att: RSVP anniversary; OR 604-531-9186).

# RESOURCES

## Curriculum



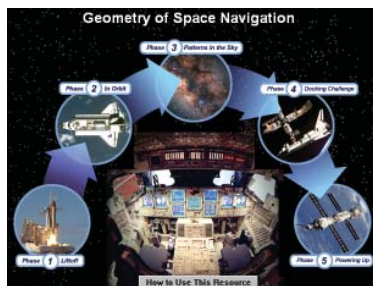
### *Culture.ca, Department of Canadian Heritage*

Canada's cultural gateway provides Canadians and visitors from around the world with quick and easy access to the vast array of quality Canadian cultural content on-line.

Culture.ca allows visitors to explore, find and share in the rich diversity of Canadian culture. Explore Arts & Expression, History & Heritage, Media & Publishing, People & Diversity, Places & Land, and Sports & Leisure.

[www.culture.ca](http://www.culture.ca)

### *Geometry of Space Navigation, NECTAR Foundation and the Canadian Space Agency, 2006.*



A new multimedia science/mathematics software program, AVAIL-ABLE AT NO COST TO ALL CANADIAN SCHOOLS. Geometry of Space Navigation covers mathematics and science learning outcomes in the grade 4, 5, 6 Canadian curriculum. The included Educator's Guide contains teaching strategies, outcomes, exploratory activities, performance tasks and rubrics, student assessment, and a mathematics glossary. All materials can be printed.

[www.space.gc.ca/asc/eng/educators/resources/geometry/default.asp](http://www.space.gc.ca/asc/eng/educators/resources/geometry/default.asp)

### *Decisions, Office of the Superintendent of Bankruptcy (Gov. of Canada), 2003.*



Decisions is an interactive, educational and fun game designed by a group of children, parents and professionals to help parents and teachers introduce home finances to a young generation. Decisions is intended for children aged 7 and up, for 2 to 8 players. All materials can be downloaded/printed free of charge from the website.

[http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inbsf-osb.nsf/wvappj/Decisions-EN.pdf/\\$file/Decisions-EN.pdf](http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inbsf-osb.nsf/wvappj/Decisions-EN.pdf/$file/Decisions-EN.pdf)

# CALENDAR

## November

- November 3 SCSBC Business Administrators/Charitable Tax Receipting Workshop
- November 4 SCSBC/NWCSI Leadership for Christian Schools Conference, "Freedom in the Truth"
- November 13 Statutory holiday in lieu of Remembrance Day
- November 17 International Student Coordinators Networking Mtg., 9 am - 3 pm
- November 27 SCSBC LPG Committee Mtg., 5:30 pm

## December

- December 22 Schools close for Christmas vacation

## January

- January 8 Schools reopen after Christmas vacation
- Jan. 19-20 SCSBC Regional Board and Committee Training Seminar - Vernon, BC
- January 26 Sunshine Coast CTABC Pro-D Day - Gibsons
- Jan. 26-28 MissionsFest Vancouver - Vancouver

## February

- Feb. 16-17 SCSBC Regional Board and Committee Training Seminar - Nanaimo, BC
- Feb. 21-23 SCSBC Developing Christian Schools conference, Cedar Springs Retreat Centre in Sumas, WA - **See page 6 for more details**
- February 23 Island CTABC Pro-D Day - Nanaimo, BC

[www.scsbc.ca/calendar.html](http://www.scsbc.ca/calendar.html)



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