

# TEACH

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## FEATURES

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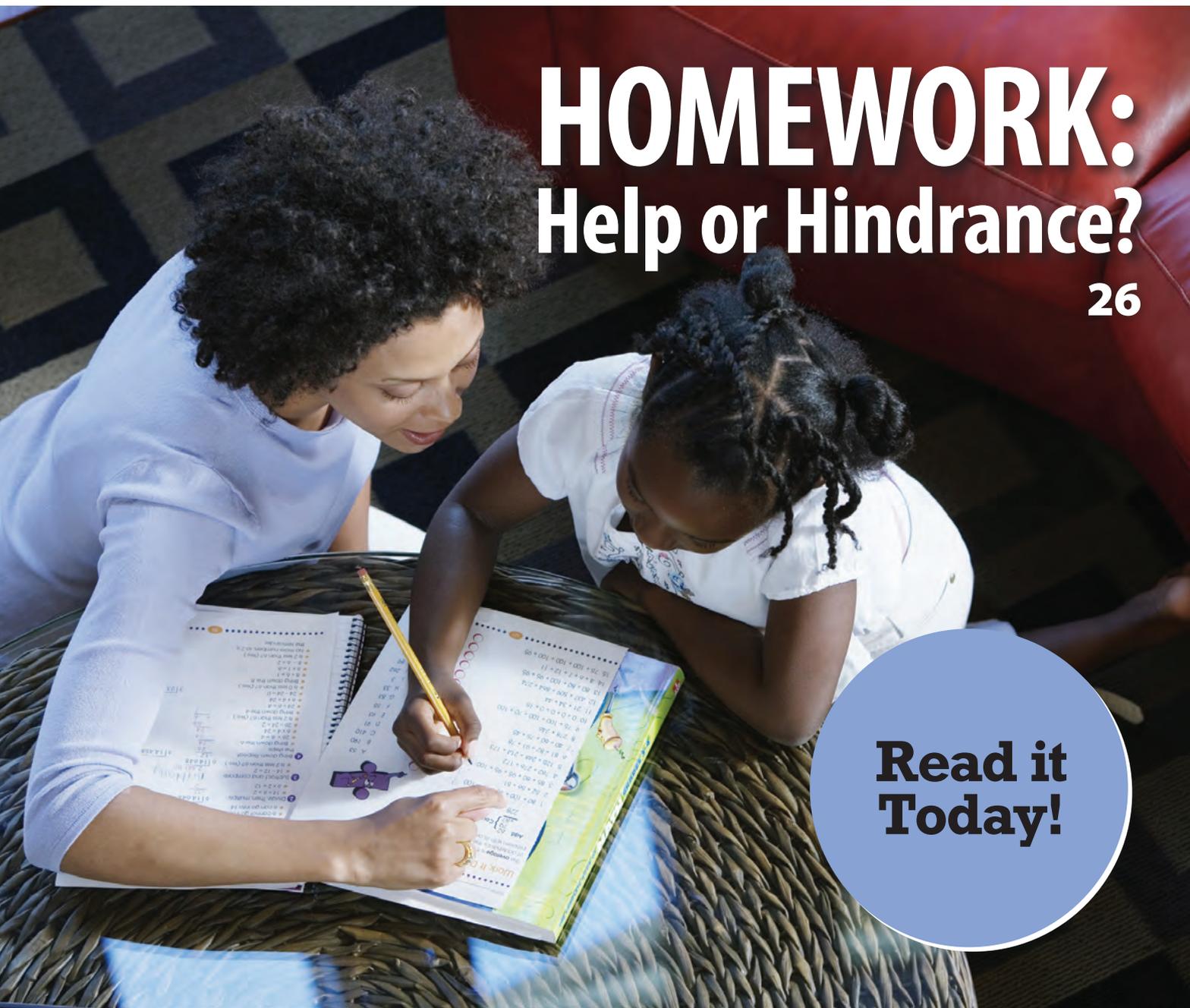
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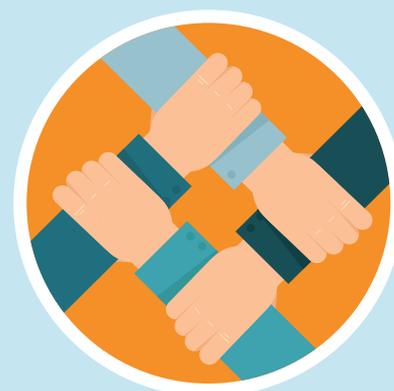
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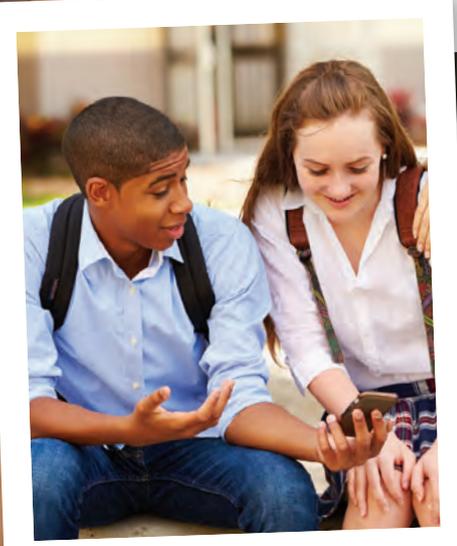
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## Happy New Year and welcome back!

The beginning of a new year sees many people resolving to make positive changes in their lives. For students, they may resolve not to procrastinate doing their homework or for some, completing it at all. This brings us to the hot topic of, homework: is it a help or hindrance? The first **Feature Story** explores this question. A growing number of teachers don't think traditional homework is working. Asking students to complete traditional, repetitive homework can make them equate multiplication, for example, as punishment. And when homework becomes a routine in pulling teeth, parents often step in to help complete the assignment—benefitting no one. How is the philosophy of homework changing to help students achieve? Peruse this story to find out.

Elsewhere in this issue, the second **Feature Story** by educator Dan Garrison, discusses cooperative learning. We often hear that kids today are different from previous generations, but this is especially true with the abundance of technology in all our lives. We live in a world where we don't ponder, we "Google" and where we don't converse, we text. How can we prepare students for a world that is constantly changing the way we think, communicate, and collaborate? Through cooperative learning, says Garrison. He explains the simple premises of the theory and how he implemented them with his own students. Read on to find out if he was successful and how his students responded.

What is the difference between cats and dogs and how does it relate to education? In **Classroom Perspectives**, school administrator Tina Bacolas observed a high school science class that was taking a 'cat approach' or, a student-centred learning approach. The results were note-worthy; student social interactions and critical thinking skills were piqued. Yet, far too many teachers prefer the 'dog approach.' Bacolas also used the same tactic for a professional development session she led and saw similar, positive results. Maybe we should all be cat-like in our teaching. You decide.

Also in this issue are our other regular columns; **Field Trips** that offers ideas for wildlife conservation outings and resources, **Webstuff** lists financial literacy apps and websites to help teach students about money and budgeting, and **CURRICULA** continues coverage of First Nations peoples and their involvement in the War of 1812.

Last, some exciting news to share: we are pleased to announce the official launch of *80 Degrees North/Cap vers le nord!*, an interactive graphic novel that explores a unique event in history—The Canadian Arctic Expedition of 1913-1918. A band of intrepid scientists and explorers embarked on a dangerous and compelling journey. The scientists documented flora and fauna of the North while explorers pushed ahead into new and undiscovered territory. The website is **free to use** and available in **English and French** to teachers across Canada. For more information or to sign up, please visit [www.80degreesnorth.com](http://www.80degreesnorth.com).

Until next time,

*Lisa Tran,*  
Associate Editor  
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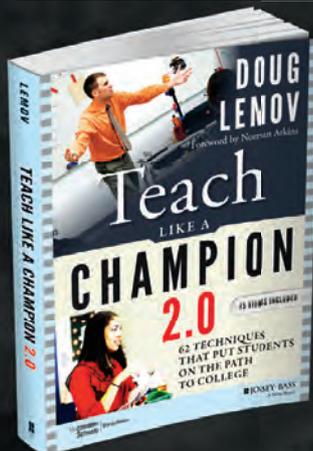
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## Wildlife Conservation

Today's students are the environmental stewards of tomorrow. Wildlife conservation centres across the country offer a range of education programs for schools. They provide dynamic, hands-on learning experiences that are connected to the Canadian curriculum. And if you can't make it out to a conservation area, many organizations can send a conservation expert to visit your class.

In Ontario, the Essex Region Conservation Authority (ERCA) takes students into the Hillman Marsh in the spring and the Carolinian forests of Kopegaron Woods and the Hawk Migration Beach Conversation area in the fall. Students can study bird migration and banding, butterfly catching and tagging, participate in dip netting for pond and marsh critters, and learn about solar car experiments and energy conversion. The ERCA also offers a 'Nature in Education Lottery' to assist schools that may not have the financial resources available to participate in the programs. Eligible schools receive a ballot to win up to \$500 to cover costs for an ERCA field trip.

Elsewhere in the province, students can also visit Haliburton Forest and Wild Life Reserve whose philosophy is one of integrated, sustainable resource management and land use. The forest has 80,000 acres of land that offers numerous types of educational activities for grades 7-12. A unique feature is the Wolf Centre. Students may witness a pack of non-socialized wolves through one-way glass. Students can watch the wolves playing, eating, or simply sleeping and learn more about their ecology and behaviour.

Students in Quebec have the opportunity to visit the Johnville and Bog Forest in Sherbrooke and spend time exploring and analyzing nature in a unique outdoor laboratory that features a developed peat bog. The activities can be tailored to students of all ages, from

preschool to high school. Some of the educational topics include, wildlife habitats and their characteristics, habitat problems and threats and how to protect them, as well as using nature's elements.

In British Columbia, students can visit the Grouse Mountain Refuge for Endangered Wildlife that offers educational programs. A day visit includes a curriculum-connected session that can be modified to suit grade level or ESL or French language groups. They include Bears of North America, Owls of Grouse Mountain, and Survival Within the Ecosystem. Students will also experience a Hiwus First Nations Feasthouse presentation and finish the day with the choice of three mountaintop activities such as, timber wolf habitat, guided snowshoe tours in the winter, or grizzly bear habitat during the summer.

If you can't make it to a conservation site offering school programs, you can consult organizations such as Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society that provide curriculum-linked resources and listings of other conservation areas so that you can create your own field trip.

### Field Trip Opportunities:

#### Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society

[www.cpaws.org](http://www.cpaws.org)

#### Essex Region Conservation Authority

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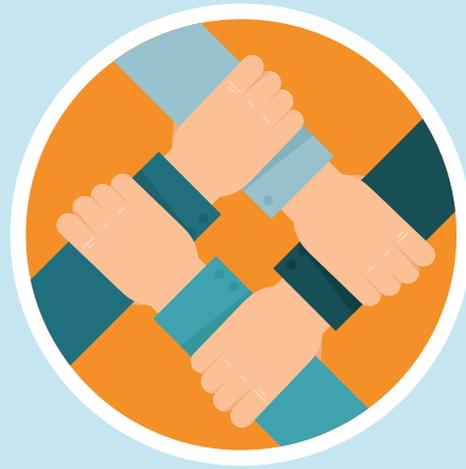
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# PIES IN THE CLASSROOM

## How Cooperative Learning Made Me a Better Teacher

by Dan Garrison

Let's begin with the realization that what we all inherently understand is indeed true: *kids are different today than they were when we were younger*. You hear this stated by colleagues and, if you're like me, from your own mouth quite frequently. The fact is, they are. Children today are growing up in a world that only a few generations ago would have been science fiction. The technological boom has, for better or worse, changed society, and our social interactions look vastly different today than they did only a decade ago.

Today's world is one of instant gratification. We don't ponder, we 'Google.' We don't converse, we text. And we've even lost the simple magic of Saturday morning 'cartoon day' since cartoons are available 24/7. So, when we educators find ourselves frustrated because a child doesn't respond the way we expect, sometimes it's because our frame of reference is greatly different than their own. Still, we must prepare our students for a world that will continue to change, but just as assuredly will continue to require age-old skills such as communication, collaboration, and teamwork. This is where the use of cooperative learning can change your teaching.

Several years ago my administrator informed me that he was sending me to a conference on cooperative learning. I was excited to have a few days where I could eat out and enjoy some adult conversation, but bemoaned the fact that I despised 'group work.' Many of us have had experiences with group work and find one person does all the work while the others chat amiably and toss in a few positive catchphrases. Or perhaps you've been in a more structured group in which roles were assigned, but the weight of the work was not equally shared. For instance, while you do all of the research and drafting, another is the 'timekeeper.' It doesn't seem fair, and that's because it's not. Cooperative learning, as I was soon to discover, is NOT group work.

Effective cooperative learning relies on a few simple premises. Dr. Spencer Kagan, a former clinical psychologist and professor of psychology and education, has an exhausting amount of research to support his belief that for learning to be truly cooperative, it must contain each of these principles: "positive interdependence," "individual accountability," "equal participation," and "simultaneous interaction." We educators love an acronym, so we'll call these *PIES*. I'll briefly explain.

Positive interdependence means that my success requires you to be successful as well. Often we fall into the trap of creating negative interdependence, where one's success is built upon the other's failure, or at least lack of success. But learning teamwork is a life skill, and with that in mind, we want to allow opportunities where the students learn to operate as a team. Individual accountability eliminates one student hiding behind the work of the others. At the same time, the contributions made by the students must be equal in nature. The roles may indeed vary from one strategy to the next, but there can't be one who coasts along while the others do the majority of the work. Lastly, there must be simultaneous interaction taking place. Each student is working simultaneously with each other at all times. Granted, sometimes this is actively listening, but as each strategy holds all accountable, this must be distinguished from the passive listening we often see taking place during even our own best whole class instruction.

When strategies are utilized that employ this philosophy, we also have the benefit of true differentiation of

instruction. As teachers, we are constantly told that we need to find ways to differentiate our instruction so that we meet the needs of all students at their various levels. This can be overwhelming when the reality is that there is only one of us and 25-30 students. How are we to reach



**... we must prepare our students for a world that will continue to change, but just as assuredly will continue to require age-old skills such as communication, collaboration, and teamwork.**

every student at his or her level of understanding? And how can we do this while simultaneously challenging them with higher-level thinking? Dr. Paula Kluth, an independent scholar who works with teachers and families, asserts that "When a teacher uses cooperative learning approaches and assigns students' roles that will challenge them as individuals, he is differentiating instruction."

So, what exactly does this look like in a classroom? I can't begin to list all the various strategies available, and honestly, I don't advise trying to use too many strategies. I'll briefly describe a couple that I use daily that can demonstrate the principles I've described. First of all, although you can make adjustments to adapt to any classroom setting, I have my students sitting in teams of four. They don't realize it, but they are seated heterogeneously by their skill level (High, Med-High, Med-Low, and Low) so that a 'high' is shoulder-to-shoulder with a 'med-low,' and a 'med-high' is next to a 'low.' Not all strategies are dependent on heterogeneous grouping, but some work better this way. If I am teaching a process with a definite strategy, I use what Dr. Kagan calls 'Rally-Coach.' Simply defined, this strategy requires one student to 'teach' the other the process, while simultaneously the second student is 'coaching' the first. The task is put in between the two students and the first begins the step-by-step explanation of solving the task, with emphasis on using the proper vocabulary. The 'coach' is actively watching, correcting when necessary, and supporting the first student's success. Then, roles are reversed. We all know the most effective learning takes place when one teaches another. This strategy takes this belief to heart. Content areas such as math, grammar, and scientific method are well suited for this approach.

In those situations where I am reviewing a concept, or asking higher-level cause and effect questions, I will use a strategy called 'Round-Robin.' This uses all four students in the group. Taking turns, one student starts the discussion for a set amount of time. The other students are actively

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listening and asking open-ended questions if the student falls silent. When the time is up, it's the next student's turn. They may add additional information, or build upon the former. They are not allowed to simply respond with "I agree" or "that's what I was going to say." If that occurs, the other students prod them to explain why they feel that way. When all have had a turn, you may then ask the question to the class and ensure understanding by either randomly choosing a few students to answer or have the groups decide upon a final answer to share. How does this differ from the traditional "I ask a question and call on a student to answer" approach? Simple, in the traditional scenario you pose a question, and hope that all students are thinking about it, and then call on one student to respond. You can be certain that at least one student is actively engaged.

**We all know the most effective learning takes place when one teaches another.**

In contrast, using the cooperative learning strategy you are ensured that all students are actively engaged in thinking about the question, even if you call upon one to respond in order to guide your class discussion. And consider this, whichever student you call upon has the security of knowing his/her response is based on hearing the rest of his/her group. There is no longer the fear of participation because a student is not confident in the answer. This strategy actually builds confidence.

This brings me back to my initial point that today's students are different than we were. In an age where people communicate via email and text messages, children often times don't have the skills of verbal communication, eye contact, recognizing tone, and body language. We, as adults, often find ourselves thinking, 'they know better than that' when a student rolls their eyes or looks at the ground while talking to you, but the truth is, sometimes they honestly don't. Today's students don't always have that skill set that seems to us that everyone should have naturally. The proper use of cooperative learning addresses this missing skill. And as a consequence of it, we find it promotes better classroom management. Students act out less frequently as they are getting their needs addressed throughout the day. Students who seek attention, receive attention. Students who want control, feel as though they have more control over their

Continued on page 30

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## THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CATS AND DOGS Where Do You Fit In?

by Tina Bacolas

I recently observed a high school science lesson that left me feeling like I had just swished some super-minty mouth wash. I was refreshed. I was inspired...so much so, in fact, that I built an entire upcoming PD session around my takeaway from this lesson. I will return to this in just a moment.

One of the best viral YouTube sensations I've caught in the past few years titled, "The Difference Between Cats and Dogs" ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq8nYgnE93Y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oq8nYgnE93Y)) features a Golden Retriever and its puppy. The puppy stands at the top of a flight of stairs, looking down the seemingly endless slope, not knowing what to do. The parent dog proceeds to walk up and down the stairs relentlessly demonstrating the task. Mom even pauses occasionally, nudging the pup that backtracks a step or two to the landing. After some time, the pup finally makes his way down the stairs guided every single step by mom's gentle nose. The video then shows a kitten at the top of some basement steps that looks cautiously over the edge, and then to his mother and back at the flight again. He nervously takes a single paw and places it on the first step, only to be shoved from behind by mom's paw. This results in the kitten tumbling loudly down the stairs.

While this video has nothing to do with education, it has everything to do with the student-centered learning I saw taking place in that high school science class. On this particular day, these junior and senior physics students were learning about the relationship between force and acceleration. After a very minimal background lesson was disseminated, the teacher pointed out an array of lab equipment available to the students and instructed the lab groups to design an experiment to test this relationship (force and acceleration). No worksheet. No materials list. No lab procedure. Just a goal.

While the students did not look quite as bemused as myself, it was obvious after a few minutes that they were frustrated. Some time passed and ideas began to flow. Students talked about the distance of toy cars and

stopwatches. They drew diagrams and talked openly, pointing out the need to control certain variables. The conversation was amazing. Being a science person myself, I could tell some of the experiment ideas were way off. However, the conversation was completely focused. The students were problem solving. They were compromising with group mates and considering multiple ideas in a collaborative solution. While the stumped groups received guided questioning from the circling instructor, groups on the right track received encouraging words.

You see, this teacher is a cat—and, while I am by no means suggesting pushing students down a flight of stairs—this teacher set up a finish line for them and let them grapple. Her student-centered lesson ended in more than just a physics lesson. Student social interactions and critical thinking skills were piqued while they struggled through the task. Far too often teachers are Golden Retrievers. It is so difficult for educators to let go of traditional methods and handholding. We need to understand, however, that our puppies are getting to the bottom of the stairs, while the kittens are arriving with a greater skill base and a deeper learning experience.

Now as school administrator, I spend a great deal of time in classrooms watching and, I am fortunate in this. I have the honour of personally gathering a large sampling of data—what is working? What is not working? How are our students thinking? How are they learning?



**I am not suggesting the content of our traditional classrooms go by the wayside. I am simply suggesting that our delivery should encourage more thought-provoking conversation**

As a 1:1 laptop district, I will say this: the laptops are a go-to. Students find a word they don't know in a text in English class... they open their laptops. They argue about a historical fact or event... they open their laptops. They want to see what's #trending in the news... they open their laptops. The truth of the matter is, our students are in a world (and will soon enter a workplace) where technology will be at their fingertips... 24 hours a day. The excitement that used to follow, "Okay, class, we are going to the computer lab" is long gone. A wealth of information sits in a black canvas case and contains a streamlined silver Apple. Is

**Continued on page 14**

# The Remedy for Monotony



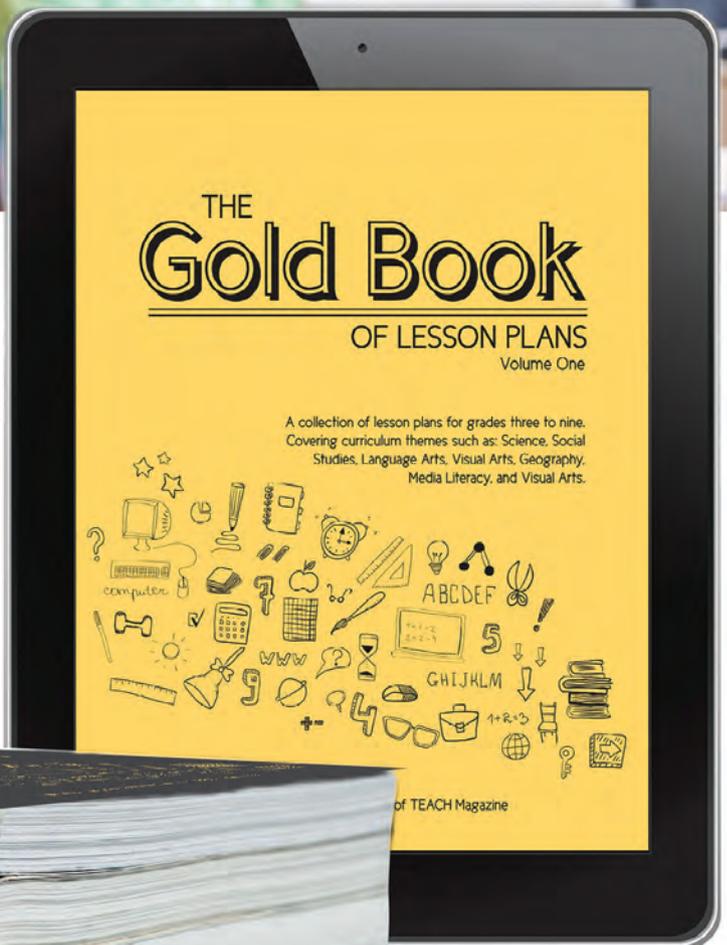
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it really important anymore for students to learn traditionally when glossaries are becoming extinct?

Our students can access billions of webpages, blogs, and databases with ease. Now, what they do with that information is the important part. Can they assemble facts from various sources to form a well-rounded argument? Can they involve multiple opinions and viewpoints when solving a problem? Do they know how to properly gather credible sources? These are the skills that they will need for life. For their careers. For their (and our) futures. Are we designing lessons that will foster these skills? And as an administrator, how can I design PD to help my teachers make this transition?

I am not suggesting the content of our traditional classrooms go by the wayside. I am simply suggesting that our delivery should encourage more thought-provoking conversation (which is, consequently, also my strongest argument against virtual schooling).

In a recent professional development session where I took on the role of the mother cat, I told my staff they had just 45 minutes in groups of four to grapple with the task below:

**Your Task:** The Oregon Department of Transportation (DOT) has hired your consulting team for its expertise. Increasing populations on both sides of the Columbia River have created a demand for a method of transportation for commuter vehicles across the waterway. The Oregon DOT is considering: 1) a bridge, 2) a tunnel and 3) a dam.

They would like your team's opinion. The main concerns for decision include:

- An option that is fiscally responsible
- An option that is environmentally responsible
- An option that is aesthetically pleasing

**Your team needs to:**

1. Decide which option (bridge, tunnel or dam) best fits these needs.
2. Come up with 3 questions you would like answered by the DOT to make a more informed decision. There is no incorrect answer to this prompt. However, justification (in the form of data) is needed.

**Your team:**

- An engineer/architect
- A biologist
- A financial analyst
- A town resident

Proposed cross location

The immediate reaction was to open their laptops and begin searching. What endangered species (if any) live in this area? What is the average cost of building a bridge? What soil textures are conducive to tunnel excavation? And so on... the conversation was argumentative and the fact comparing was aggressive. This time span flew by and, when I asked the groups to present me with their findings, the results were varied (mostly bridges, but some dams and tunnels throughout). However, the consistency in the room brought new-found knowledge of Oregon's freshwater wildlife, (including the endangered salmon in the river), fiscal undertakings of several transportation options, environmental impacts dams have on canal wildlife and the visual aesthetic opinions of one's colleagues. All without me saying a word.

The problem was authentic. Interdisciplinary. It asked my teachers to do more than just listen and write. They were forced to listen, research and compromise. With this activity, my hope was to open the minds of my staff to new methods, by example, to focus on a goal. The level of facilitation and structure will vary by group and age of students. It is also essential that if teachers are going to provide their students with the resources, they are credible and age appropriate. My library media specialist has been a wonderful training support in this area.

Either way, innovative examples and consistent encouragement is a necessary component in promoting change in fundamental lesson design. We may all integrate cat-like lessons into our curriculum and classrooms.

Previously a high school biology teacher, Tina is currently a Technology Coach and Supervisor of Instructional Technology in Park Ridge, NJ, where she hopes to continually improve the 1:1 MacBook program in the district. While her main focus is effective technology integration strategies, her love of curriculum and instruction shows in her work in the school's professional development committee.

## EDITORIAL SPONSORSHIP

### Tech that stays focused on students

Teachers are changing the way they evaluate student achievement. Based on developments in assessment theory and practice, assessment is no longer defined by a series of marks averaged out at the end of a term: rather, teachers are being called upon to provide a bigger picture of individualized learning.

No small task, indeed.

To help teachers, Quipped Interactive Learning Tools Inc. has developed a new software application, called QUIO Learning Map.

QUIO provides teachers with a simple, flexible environment to collect, analyze and communicate their students' progress. This new software is free for teachers and helps them keep the focus on learning, and not on collecting data. The application is based on the work of educators and assessment experts Kathleen Gregory and Caren Cameron, authors of Rethinking Letter Grades.

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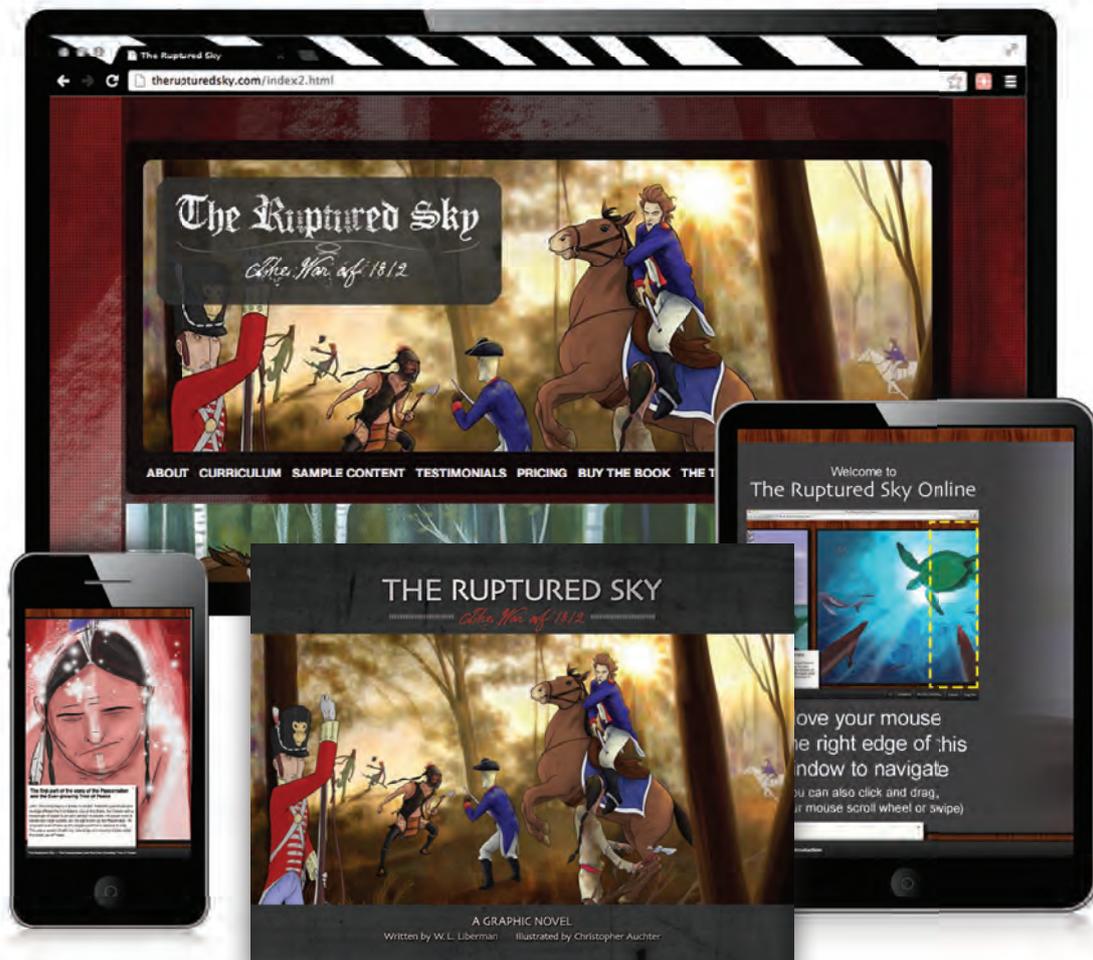


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## Overview

Students will examine the various perspectives that different individuals and groups of people had on the causes, peoples, events and impacts of the War of 1812 to understand the motivations and experiences of the peoples who participated in the war. Students will begin by taking a closer look at what is meant by “worldviews” and perspectives. They will then examine various aspects of both verbal and non-verbal communication to understand the factors and strategies that influence communication.

Students will gather information from the graphic novel about the perspectives of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples on the war and compare them within the context of historical perspectives and world views. Students will also reflect on contemporary perspectives in relation to the War of 1812 and compare the similarities and differences to the historical perspectives.

## Key Concepts

### Historical Perspective

- People have diverse perspectives on historical events
- Historical perspective means looking at past events and peoples in the context of the times and the worldviews of the time. These diverse perspectives affect the interpretation of significance, cause, and consequence
- Differences in worldviews affect the perspectives held by people who participated in the War of 1812
- Perspectives on the war held by various groups including the British, Americans, Canadians, and First Nations peoples are unique and different
- Perspectives on the roles of key individuals, groups and nations in the War of 1812 are varied

### Skills

- Inquiry/Research Skills
- Recording key ideas and information from a range of resources
- Analyzing texts to identify and explain elements in them
- Critical thinking
- Working with a partner and in small groups
- Communicating effectively (listening, speaking, and writing) to different audiences for different purposes using a variety of communication strategies

## Time Required

Seven classroom periods, 40-60 minute sessions (plus time allotted for homework)

### Prior Learning/Knowledge

- Have read *The Ruptured Sky*
- Have summarized battles
- Have created a timeline of events (or have access to one)

## Lesson Steps

- Step One Windows on the World (Worldviews)
- Step Two This Land is Our Land
- Step Three Perspectives
- Step Four Eyewitness Accounts
- Step Five Verbal/Non-Verbal Communication
- Step Six How Different Contexts, Purposes and Audiences Affect Communication
- Step Seven Performance Task: Perspectives Triarama

## Blackline Masters

- #1 My Window on the World Handout
- #2 Reflection Journal Rubric
- #3 Thinking About Worldviews Handout
- #4 Class Discussions Rubric
- #5 Writing Rubric Worksheet
- #6 Venn Diagram Handout
- #7 Triarama Display Checklist
- #8 Triarama Display Rubric
- #9 Oral Presentation Rubric
- #10 Triarama Example

## Appendices

- Appendix I *The Native Concept of Land*, a poem
- Appendix II Recommended Resources

## Materials Required

- Chart paper and markers for Teachers
- Copy of *The Ruptured Sky*
- Internet access
- Media resources (DVDs on the War of 1812) see suggested resources
- Informational print resources (texts, informational books, newspapers)

- Writing paper and supplies
- Art materials for the triorama (or alternate activity)
- Any lesson specific materials identified

**CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS**

**Overall Curriculum Expectations**

The overall expectations listed below serve as an entry point for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to make connections to specific expectations in their region and grade.

**English Language Arts**

**Listening**

Explain the connection between a speaker’s tone and the point of view or perspective presented in oral texts (e.g., why humour might be used to convey a serious theme sarcasm?).

Identify a wide range of presentation strategies used in oral texts and evaluate effectiveness (e.g., moderator tone, sound effects, interviews, body language, vocal effects, etc.).

**Speaking**

Identify a range of purposes for speaking and explain how the purpose and intended audience might influence the choice of speaking strategies. Adapt speaking to suit purpose and audience.

Analyze oral texts in order to evaluate how effectively they communicate ideas, opinions, themes, or experiences.

Demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated understanding of appropriate speaking behavior in a variety of situations, including paired sharing, dialogue, and small-and-large group discussions (e.g., acknowledge different points of view; paraphrase to clarify meaning; adjust the level of formality to suit the audience and purpose for speaking).

Identify a range of vocal effects, including tone, pace, pitch, volume, and a variety of sound effects.

Identify a variety of non-verbal cues including facial expression, gestures, and eye contact and use them in oral communications appropriately and with sensitivity towards

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cultural differences, to help convey meaning.

## Reading

Demonstrate understanding of a wide variety of increasingly complex texts by summarizing ideas and citing a variety of details that support the main idea.

Extend understanding of texts, including increasingly complex or difficult texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge and experience, and insights, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them (e.g., by comparing their own perspective to those of the characters in a novel).

Identify the points of view presented in texts and give evidence of biases and suggest other perspectives.

## Writing

Gather information to support ideas for writing, using a variety of strategies and a wide range of print and electronic resources. (E.g., interviews, graphic and multimedia resources record sources in a form that makes it easy to understand.)

Identify their point of view and other possible points of view, evaluate other points of view, and find ways to acknowledge other points of view.

Use a wide range of appropriate elements of effective presentation in the finished product including print, script, graphics, layout, etc.

## Media Literacy

Explain how various media texts address their intended purpose and audience

Interpret increasingly complex media texts to understand both overt and implied messages.

Produce media texts of some technical complexity for specific purposes and audiences, using appropriate forms, conventions, and techniques a multimedia presentation.

Demonstrate understanding that different media texts reflect different points of view.



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Identify different perspectives presented explain differences in perspective.

Identify perspectives.

Produce a variety of media texts of some complexity for various purposes and audiences.

## STEP ONE: Windows on the World (Worldviews)

### Materials Required

For Teachers:

- Chart paper and markers

For Students:

- Chart Paper and markers
- My Window on the World Handout (BLM #1)
- Reflection Journals

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

Ask students to think about the beginning of *The Ruptured Sky*. Why were Chris and Angie, the two young people in the story struggling to get interested in the War of 1812 assignment? Have students respond orally (if necessary use a prompt question to elicit -they didn't think it was important).

If we don't believe something's important, we act as if it isn't. Ask students to share other examples of this.

The elders who guide them through the stories of the people and events of the war see it differently. Have students suggest reasons why this is so.

How did their beliefs and actions change as a result of hearing the stories and the explanations of the elders. Share ideas orally.

Ask students to brainstorm ideas about where we learn the values we have? Beliefs? Record on chart paper.

Draw students' attention to the foreword on Page 5 of the graphic novel and to the paragraph that says:

"The purpose of the following narrative is to explore some key people, places, and events from First Nations perspectives; to attempt to understand how this conflict affected them at the time; and to understand how the repercussions of those actions still echo today."

Different peoples in the War of 1812 had very different perspectives on it. Explain to students that they will be looking more carefully at the various perspectives of peoples and events with a particular emphasis on understanding First Nations perspectives.

Refer students to the following quote also in the foreword:  
"All First Nations people have their own beliefs, traditions, values, stories, philosophies, and world views that guide their actions and perceptions."

Explain to students that before they look more closely at these different perspectives it is important to understand more about how what we mean by perspectives as well as how perspectives are shaped. It is also helpful to understand what is meant by World View or, our window on the world as our perspectives are shaped, in part, by our world view. World View is a bigger idea. It includes the set of beliefs and values through which we interpret the world.

Note to teacher: *Perspectives are an aspect of world view but are generally limited to specific situations, issues, or bias in accounts and can shift relatively easily depending on context and amount of information available as well as other factors. World View is much more stable although aspects of it can change over a lifetime. Provide students with as much explanation as is needed.*

Ask students do a think-pair-share in order to examine their own World Views.

Provide students with copies of the My Window on the World handout (BLM #1).

Factors that influence world view include: gender, age, religion/spiritual beliefs, social class, parental aspirations, parents, family structure and values, culture, stories and books, print/text, media, experiences, heritage, skin colour, education, career/job, abilities/disabilities, etc.

Ask students to first reflect on the various aspects of their windows on the world and record jot notes to describe themselves/beliefs. (Teachers may wish to model completing one first before students begin if needed.)

Then ask students to share with a partner two or three things that they learned from doing this exercise.

Teachers can debrief orally as a large group.

Ask students to record responses in their Reflection Journal on how understanding the World Views of others

can lead to greater understanding and more harmonious relationships.

## Literacy Extension

Have students describe what they learned about themselves by doing the My Window on the World exercise.

## STEP TWO: This Land is Our Land

### Materials Required

For Teachers:

- Reflection Journals Rubric (BLM #2)
- Class Discussions Rubric (BLM #4)
- Writing Rubric (BLM #5)

For Students:

- Thinking About World Views Handout (BLM #3)
- Copy of *The Ruptured Sky*
- Note paper
- Chart paper and markers

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

#### Part A

Recap for students that My Window on the World is often referred to as our “World View.”

We could describe World View as: The set of beliefs, values and assumptions that make up our window on the world (through which we interpret the world and people in it).

Introduce to students the concept that Aboriginal World Views are very different than Eurocentric World Views. Also explain that there is diversity across the World Views of both groups although there are some common themes that would apply for the most part to each group as a whole.

Use the following example as a primary reason for the conflict in the War of 1812 is about land.

Which of the following statements would apply more to one group than the other? (i.e. reflect a Eurocentric world view or Aboriginal world views).

Note: *Ensure that students understand that the descriptors of Aboriginal and Eurocentric World Views are general concepts to help us understand why there were core misunderstandings*

*between early European explorers and settlers and the First Nations peoples they encountered but all concepts are not exclusive to each group i.e., there are Europeans who care about the environment and that we are thinking about their beliefs from an historical perspective so these general statements may be different in the context of today’s world.*

These can be written on a chalk/white board or chart paper or read aloud or provide students with the Thinking About World Views Handout (BLM #3).

The teacher may also choose to have students do the activity first in pairs and then share their conclusions with the large group.

- **Control of land means power so acquiring land is a driving force. It can be purchased, taken by force, squatted upon, or gifted to others.**
- **Land is a gift from the Creator and this it is a source of spiritual sustenance.**
- **Animals, birds, plants, trees, water are all seen as brothers and sisters in the web of life and therefore are to be treated with respect.**
- **Land is to be exploited to serve human needs. There is little regard for the impact of human activity on the land.**
- **All of creation is interrelated so it is essential to live in harmony with the land and when something is taken from the land there is a reciprocal responsibility to care for the land.**
- **Territory (large areas of land with varied resources) is valued and shared. Individual ownership is unheard of.**
- **The land is to be shared so that all may survive and live good lives.**
- **Land means wealth and so ownership is important. Land can be bought and sold by individuals and government or church bodies.**

Discuss with students the concept of “expressed ideals,” in other words all cultures create “ideal states” what they believe people should value, believe in and behave like but the extent to which people within a culture actually do varies widely.

Discuss several examples in relation to above statements.

Have students describe their own attitudes, values and beliefs about land in their Reflection Journals.  
Have students submit their Reflection Journals for assessment. Refer to Reflection Journals Rubric (BLM #2).

Also, the teacher should record anecdotal notes on oral participation in class discussions. Refer to Class Discussions Rubric (BLM #4).

## Part B

Have students in small groups find evidence in the graphic novel of differences in World View with respect to the land held by Aboriginal peoples and by Europeans. Record their findings on chart paper. Share with large group. Some groups may focus on Eurocentric World Views. Other groups will focus on Aboriginal World Views.

Compare and describe any similarities and the differences.

Have students discuss how the different orientations to the land have affected both groups of peoples. (Land provides sustenance for both groups but Europeans who own or lease land can move or relocate more easily. When Aboriginal peoples were driven from their land base and their ability to relocate became restricted this had a devastating impact on their ability to sustain themselves if resources became scarce.)

- What examples are described in the graphic novel?
- Describe one example and explain how it was a factor in the War of 1812 in a one-page report.

Students submit one-page reports for assessment. Refer to Writing Rubric (BLM #5).

## Literacy Extensions

1. Read and discuss the poem “The Native Concept of Land” by Richard Nerysoo of Fort McPherson quoted in “Northern Frontier, Northern Homeland” by Mr. Justice Thomas R. Berger, 1977 in Appendix I.
2. Choose a First Nation community like Attiwapiskat. How is this an example of what happens when a community’s land base is restricted? Create a blog that would highlight the issues in the community.
3. Research to find information on three forced relocations of Aboriginal communities.

## STEP THREE: Perspectives

### Materials Required

For Teachers

- *The Ruptured Sky*, specifically Page 35
- Venn Diagram Handout (BLM #6)

For Students

- Copies of *The Ruptured Sky*

### Teaching/Learning Strategies

Ask students to recall orally some of the things they have learned about World View.

*Note: World Views are deeply ingrained and relatively stable throughout our lifetimes although certain aspects of our World Views may change. We approach all of life through our World View.*

Explain to students that they are going to next take a closer look at perspectives and how World Views and perspectives are similar yet different. We approach all of life through our worldview. Perspectives are somewhat similar in that we view events and peoples from different viewpoints. How are perspectives different from World View? Perspectives are influenced by World Views, but generally the term “perspectives” is more limited and refers to more specific contexts, issues, and situations. Even those with very similar World Views may have different perspectives. (E.g., although there are common aspects within Aboriginal World Views, there are many diverse perspectives on issues facing them.)

*Note: The differences in meaning between World View and perspective are not easily understood. This is likely the first discussion that students may have had so this is essentially an introduction.*

Discuss the following with students:

- What affects perspectives? (Worldview, context, values, biases etc.)
- How can perspectives change? (More information, life experiences, etc.)
- What is meant by “historical perspective”? (Viewing events and peoples in the context of the times in which they took place/lived.)
- Why is it important to understand the various perspectives of peoples and events within their own

historical context as well as why they are important/significant today?

Discuss the following example from Page 35 of the graphic novel in relation to the historical perspectives on the war.

“James Madison thought he could send troops to Upper Canada and simply take over. Those in his cabinet urged him to declare war. He believed that the people of British North America would actually welcome the takeover.”

Have students generate ideas orally to respond to the following questions:

Why would James Madison believe he could just take over and that the people of Upper Canada would welcome the takeover?

Why would the people of Canada do exactly the opposite? i.e., Take up arms to defend their land?

- Upper Canada was founded by United Empire Loyalists who sided with Great Britain during the American Revolution and therefore there were strong feelings of allegiance to Britain.
- Most Loyalists formed the status quo in the colonies: the judges, the magistrates, etc.
- The rebels (Patriots) had won their freedom in the Revolutionary War.
- Many had lost a great deal, some had lost everything and had had to take refuge in
- Upper Canada where they had been rewarded for their loyalty with land and provisions.
- Many had been tortured (tarred and feathered, beaten, even killed, etc.) and mercilessly persecuted by their fellow Americans and feelings of bitterness ran strong.
- First Nations-Mohawks were still committed to the silver covenant that bound them together as allies of Great Britain. [eg: [www.aandc.org/pdf/tyendinaga-county\\_p1\\_rev2.pdf](http://www.aandc.org/pdf/tyendinaga-county_p1_rev2.pdf) (document showing the Meeting on the River of Life, Mohawk and Loyalists Exchanges).]
- Tecumseh and the Shawnee supported the British.

Compare historical perspectives with contemporary perspectives as follows:

- **Attitudes, values and beliefs about the war of 1812.** How do Canadians view the War of 1812 today? In small groups, have students brainstorm and record notes on chart paper, then present their findings to the large group or have students create mind maps individually and share with a partner.
- Current attitudes and beliefs about the relationship of Canada to both Great Britain and the United States.

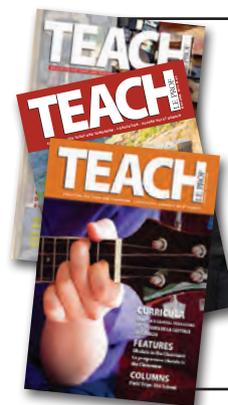
Assign students to research current newspaper articles that are related to current relationships with the United States and Great Britain, one of each. Student can then share their articles within small groups. Small groups can report on their findings to the large group. Summarize findings on chart paper.

Discuss similarities and differences between historical and contemporary perspectives. Create a Venn diagram to illustrate the similarities and differences.

## Literacy Extension

1. Have students read a novel about the United Empire Loyalists.
2. Discuss the following with students: Why might there be a strong bond of friendship between some Loyalists and Mohawk peoples? (Some United Empire Loyalists had lived beside their Mohawk neighbours for about two hundred years in the Mohawk Valley in New York. They had fought beside each other in the American Revolution and relocated as settlers to Upper Canada following the American Revolution, the Silver Covenant commitment etc.)

To view this lesson plan in its entirety, please visit [www.therupturedsky.com](http://www.therupturedsky.com) for more information.



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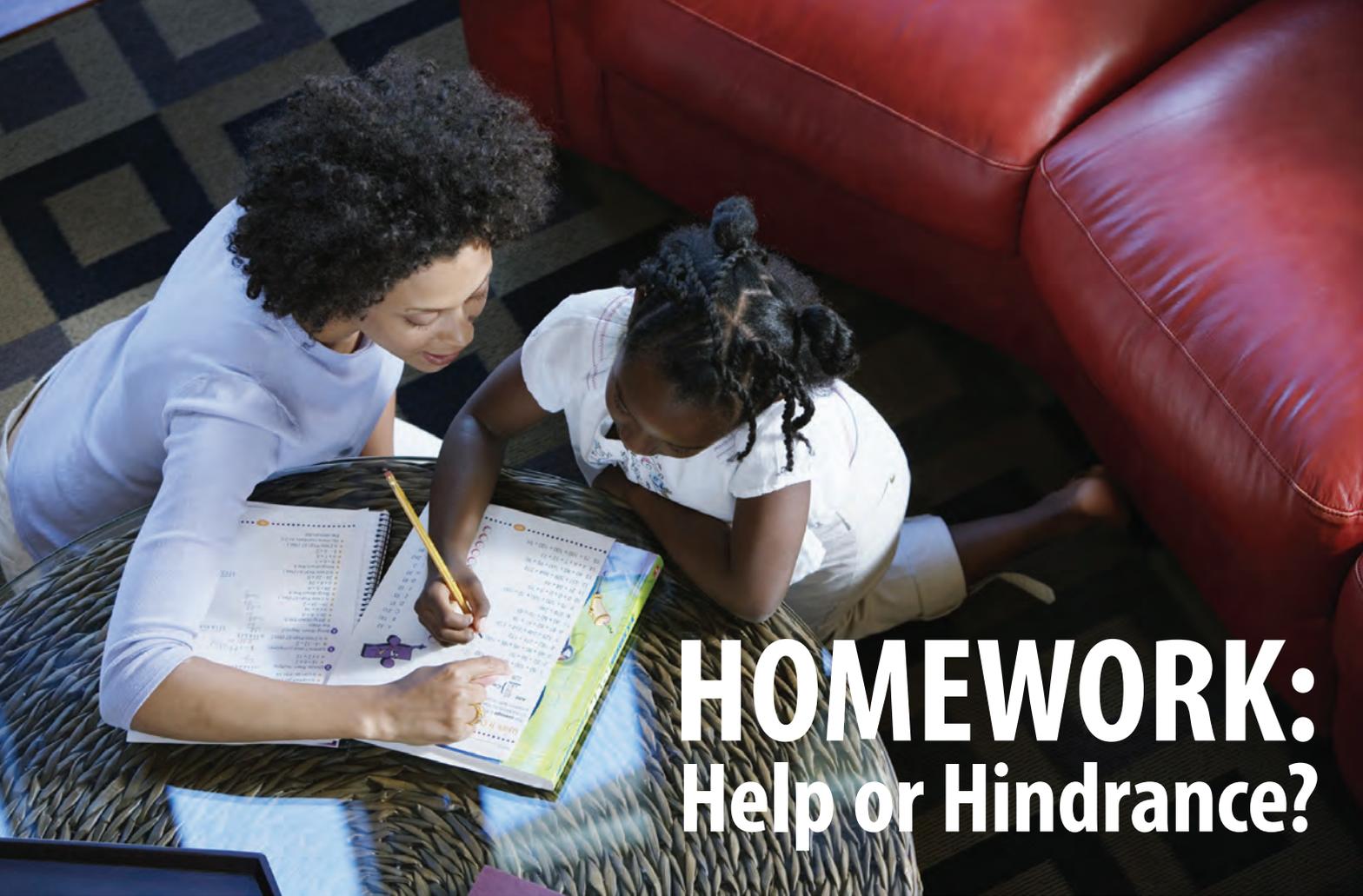


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# HOMEWORK: Help or Hindrance?

by Martha Beach

Each day after school, eight-year-old Miranda heads home and unwinds from the social school day, plays outside, and has a snack. But after dinner it's time for Miranda to get to work. Only halfway through grade three in the east end of Toronto, Miranda is still getting used to weekly assigned homework.

Getting into the routine of completing pages of math questions, reading review, and writing at home is no easy task. "I have to annoy the heck out of her to get her to sit down and do it and there will be eight distractions on the way to the table," says Miranda's mom Kathryn Rose. "Miranda and I have a terrific relationship, it's fun and humouristic. But when she's doing her homework she gets a lot of attitude. We have to make friends over and over," Rose says. "She claims she doesn't need my help, but I have to come and go and supervise to keep her on track."

Some good news for parents like Rose is that educators are starting to place more importance on home activities and reading rather than repetitive, regurgitative homework. It seems that traditional homework is not necessarily helping students succeed academically. A new homework philosophy is on the up and up: enjoyment of learning through home practice. There are many ways for teachers to help students continue learning outside the classroom by assigning constructive homework and communicating with parents about how best to support students without too closely helicopter helping.

A growing number of teachers don't think traditional homework is working. "Teaching a kid to do traditional repetitive homework makes them equate doing multiplication with punishment. They aren't interested," says Dave Martin, a calculus teacher at École Secondaire Notre Dame in Red Deer, AB who stopped assigning his classes homework three years ago. "If there has to be homework, it should be personalized. Kid A should have none, Kid B two questions, and Kid C should have five and they should all be different questions," he says. "But no one wants to sit down and just do math problems." Indeed, a 2008 University of Toronto study from Lisa Cameron and Lee Bartel found that children start in kindergarten being 85 percent enthusiastic and willingly cooperative, but this drops in later grades, with 61 percent of grade four students being very resistant to only grudgingly cooperative. "This change is related to the time required by homework—more homework correlates with more negative attitude," write Bartel and Cameron.

Amount of work isn't the only concern. "Homework takes the individuality out of learning," says Martin. He recommends using games to practice concepts. Monopoly and cribbage require math skills, while checkers and chess is all logic. Find video games that require problem solving, hand-eye coordination, math, and reading. (Martin shares the ultimate success story: four of his students told him one Monday that over the weekend they got together to play a video game. Partway through, they put down their controllers in order to figure out the gravitational pull in the game, just because they wanted to.) Find ways to incorporate learning into their interests. For example, ask young basketball fans how the points add up. "Find something relatable," says Martin. "It won't help them on their quiz on Friday, but who cares?" says Martin. "The main thing with work at home is that it should be fun. It shouldn't be pulling teeth," Kleckner agrees.

Many teachers do still assign traditional 'pulling teeth' homework, and parents help with that homework: over 80 percent say they help their kindergartener to grade two child "usually or always" and this continues at around 77 percent through grade four, according to Lee and Bartel's 2008 study. But research published by U.S. sociology professors, Keith Robinson from the University of Texas and Angel Harris from Duke University come to the surprising conclusion that no clear connection exists between traditional parental involvement and success. "Helping with homework is not associated with reading or math achievement," write the duo in *The Broken Compass: Parental Involvement with Children's Education*, a book that exhaustively looks at how parents across socio-economic and ethnic groups contribute to academic performances of students in kindergarten to grade 12 in the United States.

One would presume that teachers would stop assigning

homework if parents are 'helicopter' helping (carefully and closely circling their child like a chopper, occasionally making an emergency landing to drop in the right information). Some schools in Canada are trying just that. One example is College de Saint-Ambroise, a small school in Quebec's Saguenay region (in the southeast) that launched a one-year pilot program in September 2014 where every class in grades one to six has an almost complete ban on homework.



**"Teaching a kid to do traditional repetitive homework makes them equate doing multiplication with punishment. They aren't interested,"**

But Christina Rinaldi, a child psychologist and professor of educational psychology at the University of Alberta, doesn't think eliminating homework is the answer. "To say you got rid of homework is unrealistic because any work outside of school is homework," Rinaldi says. "How a teacher defines homework is part of assigning it."

Before sending home assignments, worksheets, or learning games, Rinaldi reminds teachers to communicate their philosophy on homework with parents and students: what are their expectations of the student, what is the purpose of work that may be sent home, and what is the teacher's goal when assigning home practices? Teachers also sometimes have to communicate with parents what may seem obvious to educators: "Helping with homework is more so knowing that the child is doing the work rather than how well or how quickly or even if they're finishing every little thing," says Rinaldi.

Traditional homework is different from home practice. "I come from a background and philosophy of no homework, but I'm a big advocate of home practice," says Jordan Kleckner, Vice Principal of North Glenmore Elementary in Kelowna, BC. "It's not about going back to school and being marked. It's about practicing for the sake of skill development. If you already understand it before leaving the classroom, regurgitating it at home won't do anything." And Kleckner agrees that communication is key. "Parents will tell you if it's not working, if it's a fight every night, or if they don't understand the work. Parents will also give positive feedback if the kids are playing games and are enthusiastic and are learning," Kleckner says. "Teachers also need to recognize that parents are doing a zillion other things. They aren't experts on reading help or math help, so it's best to make information about how to help easily available."

"Parents should ask the teacher for help knowing how to support their child, how to find resources," Rinaldi agrees.



Rose occasionally asks Miranda's teacher for suggestions on ways to help because she herself doesn't understand the work. "I'm only now just getting comfortable saying what I don't understand," Rose says. Despite some of the work being a little tricky, in general Rose feels home work is a way to teach responsibility and reinforce lessons. "I think homework is a good way to help grapple with what they've already learned in school."

The main method to help students do that grappling is something Rinaldi calls scaffolding—providing hints, prompts, and ways to set them up to find the answer themselves. "It means communication with the child of the

## WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY

Research has found that forcing homework completion and helicopter-style helping is not beneficial to students' long term success. "In general, parents can do more to increase their children's achievement by focusing on post high school education (either through conversation or expectation) than they can by helping with homework or setting rules about homework or grade-point averages," write Harris and Robinson in *The Broken Compass*. The same can be said of teachers: communicate expectations, don't set a weekly number of required math problems. *The Broken Compass* has some other advice: just talk to students about what they learned. "Discussing school activities with children seem to provide more positive benefits than any other form of parental involvement."

expectation that they do homework, not 'I'm going to make the best exploding volcano for you!'" says Rinaldi.

"A parent can't helicopter if the right task is sent home. So if you're sending a kid home to make a volcano, then yes a parent might make it for them," Kleckner points out. Send homework students can (and have to) do on their own, with a bit of scaffolding.

But some the most beneficial work isn't meant to be done alone. In younger grades especially, families are expected to simply read together. "Parents should be aware of projects and worksheets, but mainly they should focus on literacy," Rinaldi says. Research in *The Broken Compass* found that reading to children is associated with increased reading achievement. Simply put, any form of reading is beneficial. Kleckner worries about misconceptions around reading development. "For example, parents don't let their kids

**"I think homework is a good way to help grapple with what they've already learned in school."**

read the same book over and over because it's just done by memory. But what's more important than if they are reading from memory is whether or not they are enjoying reading. So if they read the same book twice, that's okay," he says.

Enjoyment is a huge part of learning. "The question shouldn't be 'did you learn this?' It should be 'Did you enjoy learning this?'" says Martin. "We need to change the game. When I started teaching, I was traditional. I assigned 35 minutes to one hour of homework per night. At the time, my failure/dropout rate was 50 percent. I was proud of that. Now my failure/dropout is only one percent. I thought I was weeding out the people who didn't want to do math, but I was just killing their passion," says Martin. "My goal now is to get students interested in and talking about math at home."

It's part of a teacher's job to communicate with parents the best method of support: encourage students to learn things in ways that interest them, but remember that ultimately only the child can be the student. "I'm learning this year to try and allow Miranda to do it right or do it wrong or not do it. She has to have the consequences. That's important for her learning," Rose says. "It's always going to go back to why are we doing this. If it's a logical answer, then continue," Kleckner adds. "If you feel like the why is going to help strengthen the child's abilities, then continue with that."

**Martha Beach is a recent graduate of Ryerson University's journalism program. Currently, she is a freelance writer and factchecker in Toronto.**

## Financial Literacy

January is often the month where many of us resolve to create new budgets or reduce debt. In 2009, Canada's Ministry of Finance created a task force solely to examine how to best teach Canadians about financial literacy. Its recommendations released the next year included making financial literacy part of elementary and secondary school curriculums across the country. Here are some web resources that can help you teach these concepts.



**Centsables**  
[www.centsables.com](http://www.centsables.com)

This award-winning animated FOX Business show uses a group of superheroes to teach kids about financial literacy. There is also a companion website that makes sure they can keep learning when the TV is turned off. The site includes clips from the show, information about the characters, games that can be played online, and activity sheets to print out. The site also has partial lesson plans for teachers and a place where they can order a full kit for their classroom.

**Money Smarts 4 Kids**  
[www.moneysmarts4kids.com](http://www.moneysmarts4kids.com)

Money Smarts 4 Kids is a financial literacy curriculum developed by Richard Rainford, a former accountant based in the Toronto area. The material uses games to involve children in financial planning, teaching them how to decipher between needs and wants, creating a sample budget, learning how to save money and making money work for them, and understanding different kinds of credit. Some materials, like a sample budget or simple financial literacy tips, can be found on the website. Teachers and parents may also request a free kit, and order the companion iCanSave guide. The site also includes information about summer camps based on the materials.



**Practical Money Skills – VISA**  
[www.practicalmoneyskills.ca/foreducators](http://www.practicalmoneyskills.ca/foreducators)

VISA launched an in-school financial literacy program in 2006. This site includes lesson plans for teachers to download. It also has games children can play to review financial literacy concepts. These games are more challenging and better for older students. In 2014 "VISA FIFA World Cup Financial Soccer," players score goals by correctly answering questions about different financial documents or how to manage credit. Another game requires players to pick an item for purchase and then work and save until they can afford to buy it.



**The City**  
[www.themoneybelt.gc.ca/theCity-laZone/eng/login-eng.aspx](http://www.themoneybelt.gc.ca/theCity-laZone/eng/login-eng.aspx)

This multimedia resource is designed specifically for high school students. It was created by the Financial Consumer Agency of Canada and the British Columbia Securities Commission and has been endorsed by BC's Ministry of Education. It uses a soap opera-styled show to teach students about making wise financial choices. It also helps them consider how much their desired lifestyle will cost and what job they will need to support it. The materials can be used in a classroom or virtual setting. Teachers and students will need to create accounts on the website to use the resource. There is also information for parents, including sample discussion questions they can use at home.



**TVO Kids — Homework Zone**  
<http://homeworkzone.tvokids.com/hwz/math>

The Ontario educational broadcaster provides several resources to help teach children about money. The website includes clips of TV personality Teacher Troy showing kids how to save money or round prices now that pennies are no longer produced. The Money Problems section features games, including Coin Combo, a Tetris-styled game that asks kids to make correct change. Worksheets are also available for download. Material is best suited for classes up to grade four.



**WOW!Zone**

[www.tdbank.com/wowzone/wowzone.asp](http://www.tdbank.com/wowzone/wowzone.asp)

Created by TD Bank, this website includes content for both primary and secondary classes. An animated children's series, 'Adventures in Wowza,' follows Penny Arcade and her friends as they learn about using money wisely from Plazzy, the talking display screen at their local TD Bank. The episodes include games viewers can play. Kids can continue to watch the rest of the show even if they don't win the game. For teenagers, the site offers a virtual stock exchange game and handouts about budgeting and building credit. Teachers can also download classroom materials for elementary and secondary classes.

**Continued from page 10**

learning, and students who simply don't know how to behave socially, learn how to behave in a social world. I left my training and reported back to my school with a different philosophy. The very next day I became a different teacher, my classroom became a different learning

**I found that utilizing this approach takes no additional time because it doesn't replace any content; it's just a strategy to teach your curriculum.**

environment, and I increased my effectiveness. I found that utilizing this approach takes no additional time because it doesn't replace any content; it's just a strategy to teach your curriculum. And after becoming more comfortable with it, I found that it fits flawlessly with whatever I am teaching. In fact, I don't know that I could now teach without it. It's become who I am as an educator. I have continued to develop my cooperative learning skills and have been pleased to find my students among the highest achievers year after year. I am also pleased to find that I have very little behaviour issues to contend with. Is this the answer to all the problems in a classroom? Not even close. There is no single solution to all the obstacles we face in education. And there are always exceptions as children are individuals and have individual needs. But this approach greatly enhances their learning, creates a safe and productive classroom, reaches students at a variety of levels, and at the end, it has made me a better teacher.

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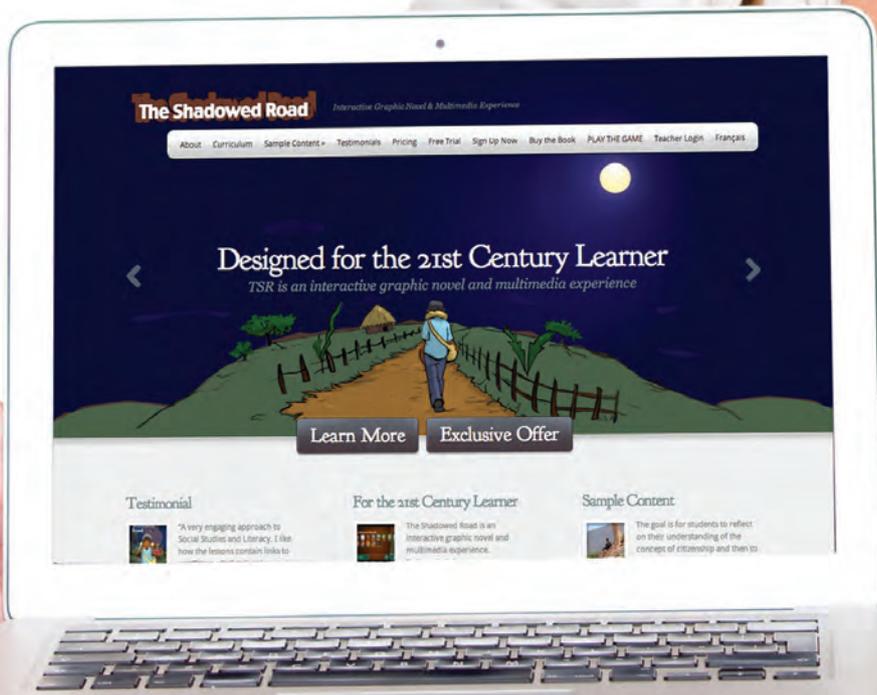
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