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TEACH

MAGAZINE • LE PROF

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Are you enjoying your Summer?

It's hard to believe that we are already half way through the summer! We hope you are enjoying your well-deserved break, but we're sure you've already begun thinking about the looming school year, maybe even jotting down notes or bookmarking resources. Perhaps you may even know that you'll be teaching a split grade class. While commonplace in many school jurisdictions, split grade classes are new to others.

Our first **Feature Story** explores split classes, looking at how some veteran teachers have mastered teaching two different grades, providing advice to the novice among you. Must you teach two separate lessons or is it better to create one that covers both sets of curriculum expectations? What about students? How can we help them adjust to this altered classroom setup? Finally, there are the parents who may be concerned their children will suffer academically in a split class. Breaking up doesn't have to be hard—check out this article to learn strategies for teaching split classes.

Something else to consider in back-to-school planning is your voice. Like singers, teachers are professional voice users. If you lose your voice, you lose your ability to teach. As a teacher, you spend all day speaking, often over a noisy classroom. You might also catch the occasional cold that may cause a sore throat and exacerbate vocal use. Our second **Feature Story** explores the topic of practicing good vocal hygiene that includes exercises, techniques, and "do's and don'ts" to help rest your voice and prevent vocal strain or damage. Also discussed are teaching strategies that don't rely as heavily on your voice because speaking loudly can be straining, as is whispering.

It's summer so you won't be going on any classroom excursions, but in **Field Trips**, we offer some suggestions for local, family-friendly activities for you to enjoy during your break. From free movies under the stars to an outdoor acrobatic performance, there's sure to be an equally exciting event in your area. In **Webstuff**, we showcase some cool apps, many are free, that can help plan and organize your upcoming vacation or road trip this summer.

We hope you enjoy the rest of your break and look forward to seeing you again in the Fall.

Until next time,

Lisa Tran,
Associate Editor
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BREAKING UP IS HARD

Strategies for Teaching Split Classes

by Meagan Gillmore

The 2016-2017 school year could get off to a rocky start in Newfoundland and Labrador, before it even begins. In April, the government announced split-grade classes would be introduced in some schools for the first time. This is new for parents—many were never in a split-grade class as students, and their children have never been in them either. They're concerned their children will suffer academically and socially.

"It's those kids that are kind of left in the middle that might be struggling, but it might be a silent struggle (that we're worried about)," says Krista Trask, a member of the school council at Beachy Cove Elementary in Portugal Cove-St. Philip's, NL, one of the schools scheduled to introduce split-grade classes. "We're just hoping as parents that teachers will still have the time and still have the focus to make sure that those kids don't get lost in the cracks."

They're also concerned about social and emotional needs. "To us, it's more about having healthy children," says Trask, noting anxiety is increasing among students. Some students are worried about not being with their friends, or being teased for being in a split-grade class. Students won't know which children in the affected grades will be in a split-grade class until school starts. Children have questions, but parents don't have answers.

Split-grade classes, where students in one or more

consecutive grades are taught in the same classroom by the same teacher, are common in most provinces and territories in Canada. In several jurisdictions, they're actually increasing. But they're new for these Newfoundland and Labrador schools. In a province where school enrolment is projected to decline, Beachy Cove is bursting. With just under 800 students, there's little space in the K-6 school. In recent years, closets have become classrooms. (There are plans to build a school for Grades 5-9.) According to James Dinn, president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the government decided to introduce split-grade classes without consulting with teachers. As of the beginning of June, teachers had received barely more than a day of training about how to teach in these classes.

Teachers may have little control over whether or not they are assigned to teach a split-grade. The classes are often

created to maintain class sizes, or for budgetary reasons. Teachers can't control that, and they can't predict how parents will respond. Many experienced split-grade teachers say parents' worries subside once they see their children bringing home quality work or if they volunteer in the class and see it's well-managed. Still, meeting multiple curriculum expectations and responding to increased student needs—often with limited resources—is a challenge. But teachers, and students, can thrive in these classes.

Beginning with a positive outlook helps. "If (administration) give(s) you a split grade, they certainly know you can handle the extra workload," says Melanie Brown-Robson, who has spent most of her more than 30 years in Ontario's District School Board of Niagara teaching split-grade classes. She describes the assignments as an "honour" that force her to be more creative—but also as a lot of work.



Sometimes, teachers can deliver one lesson to everyone, but assess each grade differently.

Teachers need to cover two sets of curriculum expectations, but they don't always need to teach two completely different sets of lessons. Lessons can be planned around common themes that will fulfill both curriculum expectations. Brown-Robson cuts out the expectations from curriculum documents and groups common ones together. This can take a while, especially when teaching two grades for the first time.

Sometimes, teachers can deliver one lesson to everyone, but assess each grade differently. Curriculum expectations are often similar for subjects like languages (English and French) and Math, with students in the higher grade learning more advanced concepts. A teacher may teach the same poem to all students. But students may be required to focus on different literacy devices depending on their grade level. These subjects also lend themselves to teaching in smaller groups based on students' abilities, not on their grade levels.

Not all subjects can be taught this way. Sciences and social studies, may cover completely different topics. In some situations, teachers may teach the same split-grade combination for more than one year in a row. If that's the case, they can teach the sciences and social studies curriculum for one grade one year, and then the curriculum for the other grade the next. This gives 20 months to cover everything, not 10. This requires careful planning to avoid needless duplication. Classrooms where students are in different grade divisions, like having a junior-level grade in the same class as an intermediate one, present even more challenges because it can be harder to find curriculum connections across the grades.

Parents may be concerned their child could be behind if

they move from a split-grade to a straight-grade classroom, or vice-versa. But children aren't just learning subject material; there are research and thinking skills that transfer across grades and subjects.

Classroom management can be more demanding in a split-grade. "You're constantly going back-and-forth," says Brown-Robson. "There's no downtime in a split class."

Sometimes, teachers can only teach one grade at a time. But there are ways to encourage students to work independently. Josh Tellier, a teacher at Holy Family Catholic French Immersion School in Woodstock, ON, uses virtual reality when teaching social studies to his Grade 6/7 class. He teaches a lesson to one grade, while the students in the other learn with virtual reality. He then switches it so all students experience the virtual reality. Jennifer McMillan, an elementary school teacher in Halifax, uses different learning centres or stations in her classroom. One grade will complete various activities, like reading in groups or reading independently, while she instructs the other grade.

The key to making split-grade classes work, says McMillan, is viewing the class as one unit, not separate grades.

"If you're thinking of the class as a whole family unit and you are engaging all of the students based on their learning styles, then it shouldn't be as big a problem," McMillan, who previously taught in adult education, explains. Her students participate in community-building activities, like throwing a ball of yarn to each other in a circle as they share something about themselves. The act of sharing helps build community; the web of yarn shows how everyone's connected.

Every classroom—even those with students who are all in the same grade—will have students working at various levels. Some students perform above curriculum expectations in some subjects; others struggle. Building a sense of community can help lessen these struggles.

It helps that the older students may have already covered the material the younger students are learning. This gives them the opportunity to become teachers. This year, Tellier had his Grade 7 students help the Grade 6 students prepare for provincial testing. He wants to continue this in future years, he says.

Kristin Voss, who teaches at Beausejour Early Years in Beausejour, MB, uses a rookie-veteran model in her classes. Most classes at that school are combined, a decision that the administration made deliberately. She has a list in her classroom of what all students are good at; these students become the "experts." When students have questions, they need to ask three of their classmates before they ask Voss. This builds the confidence of the students.

"Everyone has gifts and everyone has something to give," Voss explains. "You can benefit from other people's gifts, but you also have something to bring to the table."

There are limits, though. Voss's students can't repeatedly ask the same students for help. If students help others all the time, they can neglect their own work. Parents are often

concerned that students who need specialized instruction because of learning disabilities or other needs, may not receive the support they need in a split-grade class. But creating a community that spans age and developmental stages can make inclusion easier in some cases.

Sometimes, teachers in split-grade classes have some students for more than one year in a row. This helps build rapport between teachers and students.

"Because of the fact that you have them for two years, you can really develop that relationship where you feel that they're able to take risks and make mistakes and that's not a bad thing," explains Natalie Hlady, also a teacher at Beausejour Early Years. (Hlady's also taught in split-grade classes in schools where those classes are created for budgetary or numerical reasons.)

Shy students have more time to become comfortable with teachers. Teachers can better observe how students learn best. They don't have to spend as much time assessing students in the fall because they know what they learned the previous year. Older students already know classroom routines, and they can teach those to the younger class.

This increases students' confidence. This "gives students that maybe aren't an older brother or sister (a chance to) become like an older brother or sister," Hlady says, explaining how older students can help model appropriate behaviour. "All students are good at something, and maybe it's not

academics, but maybe they might be the most caring and friendly and supportive person and maybe they're a leader like that in the classroom."

Granted, family dynamics work both ways—siblings annoy each other. Teachers need to pay attention to different emotional and social maturity levels in the classroom, especially when one group of students enters puberty. Teachers may also have a challenging student in their class for two consecutive years. Teachers need to "re-set their expectations," says Tellier. Students often mature during the summer.

It's unclear whether concerns in Newfoundland and Labrador will subside over the summer. Parents are still planning on voicing their concerns to the government. This has a benefit for teachers: it can help identify potential classroom helpers.

Charlene Richmond's son is entering Grade 6 at Beachy Cove next year, one of the grades slated for a split-grade class. While she doesn't know if he'll be in the split-grade class, she's determined to stay positive about the situation—and assist the teachers, if needed.

"I'll be there to support them any way I can," she says.

Meagan Gillmore is a freelance writer and editor in Toronto who attended both straight and split classes as a student.

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field trips

Summer Activities

Classes are finally done and your students are off on summer break so it's time to plan and enjoy your own 'field trip.' If you have young children, this is a good opportunity for them to explore their imagination and build upon their interests. Here are some summer activity ideas for children and families, but be sure to check your local city's events page for more suggestions.

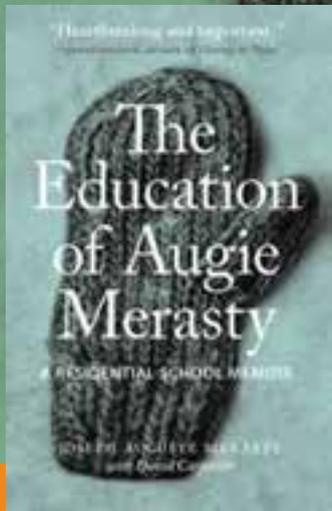
MOONLIGHT MOVIES

Get the family together, pack up some chairs and blankets, and enjoy a summer evening family movie. Throughout the month of August, you can enjoy a unique and free movie experience under the stars on Wednesday evenings in Richmond Hill, Ontario. This summer's line up includes,



Photo by Brent Eades

Zootopia and Inside Out. Similarly, the city of Thunder Bay also offers Friday evening movies at Prince Arthur's Landing from August 19th to September 16th overlooking Lake Superior. The line up will be determined by online voting during July. For more information on these events, visit and www.richmondhill.ca/subpage.asp?pageid=moonlight_movies and www.thunderbay.ca/Living/recreation_and_parks/Events/MovieNights.htm



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The Puppets Up! Festival is a free, weekend-long event that runs from August 5th to 7th. Visitors can enjoy family-friendly street entertainment by acts from around the world, a parade, workshops, and a bazaar. The festival is located in downtown Almonte, just 30 minutes from Ottawa. You can also purchase tickets to see individual performers that include The Puppet Tamer, Aakaar Puppet Theatre, Échantillon 23, Theatre de Deux Mains, Rock the Arts, and many more. The festival also provides free overnight parking for RVs and campers, visit www.puppetsup.ca to learn more.

CRÉPUSCULE

Accompanied by the electrifying music of Valaire, the Flip FabriQue acrobats return to Quebec City this summer with their new show, Crépuscule—Raviver les braises. The performance promises to take you to a fascinating and magical world where sizzling streetlights mingle at dusk. Don't miss this free and outdoor show at the Agora Port of Quebec. For further details, visit www.ville.quebec.qc.ca/en/idees_sortie/grands_evenements/cirque.

DAY OUT WITH THOMAS THE TANK ENGINE

From August 12th to the 14th and 19th to the 21st, take your family to meet Sir Topham Hatt, and go for a ride with Thomas the Tank Engine at the Uxbridge Train Station outside Toronto. Enjoy a day filled with Thomas-themed activities and games at the Imagination Station that includes collecting stamps, temporary tattoos, face painting, and a Thomas storytelling and video viewing area. The event is hosted by the York-Durham Heritage Railway and will also feature live entertainment, a petting zoo, ride-on motorbike scooters, hay maze, jumping castles, and more. To find out more about this event, visit www.ydhr.ca/day-out-with-thomas.php.

BURLINGTON CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL

On August 21st, celebrate Burlington's 25th Annual Children's Festival with a birthday party at Spencer Smith Park! This Children's Festival, packed with live entertainment, crafts, and playzones, is ranked among the top 100 festivals and events in Ontario. If you're interested in attending, visit www.burlington.ca/en/live-and-play/childrens-festival.asp.

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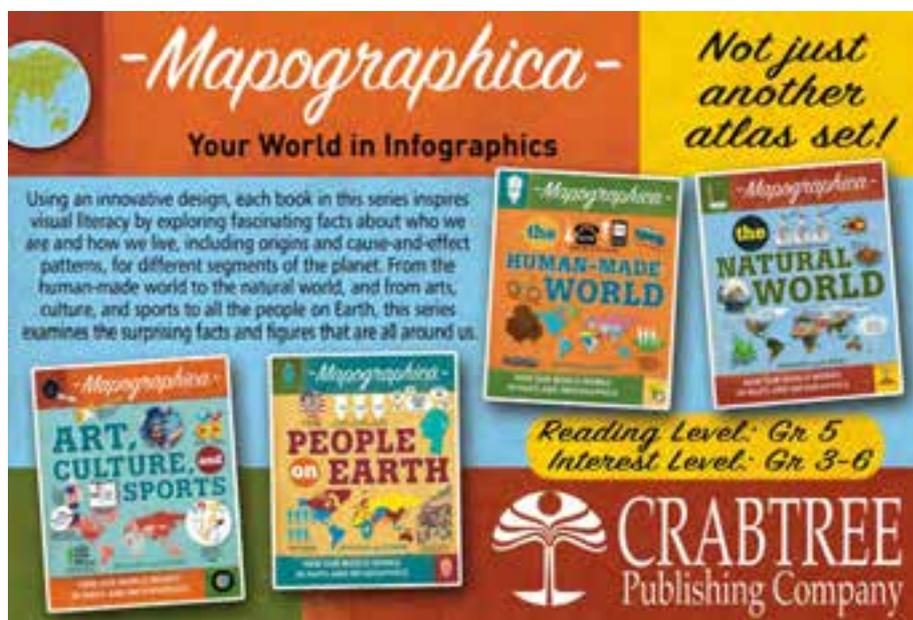
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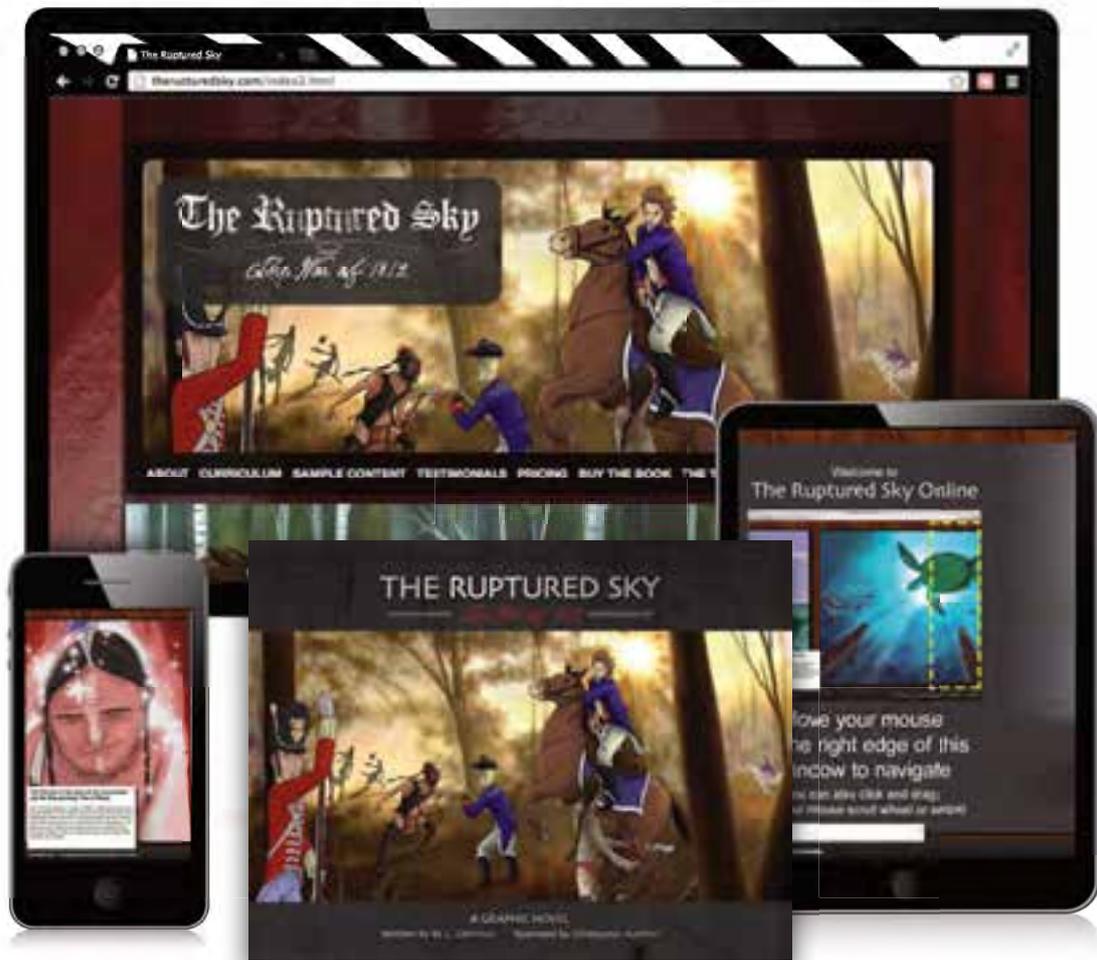


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Grant McRae, 1942

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Le Concours commémoratif Grant McRae

The Grant McRae Commemorative Contest encourages young Canadians to thank a veteran in a creative way!

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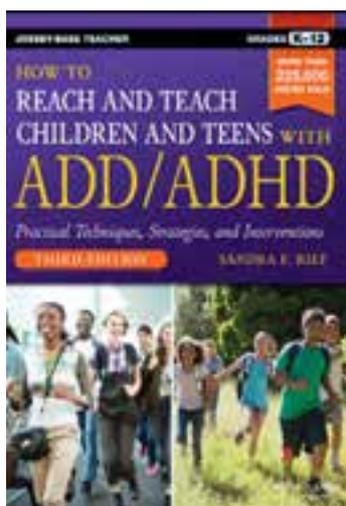
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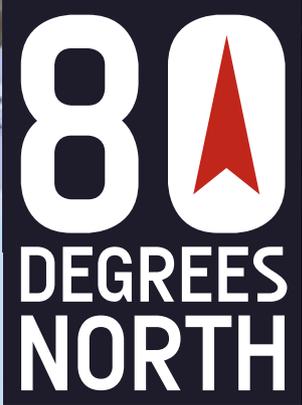


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80 DEGREES NORTH



CURRICULA

FOR GRADES
9 TO 12

The following is a lesson plan excerpt from *80 DEGREES NORTH*, a graphic novel and digital literacy title. To see the full lesson plan or to learn more, please visit www.80degreesnorth.com.

LESSON THREE

Exploration of the Arctic

80 Degrees North tells the remarkable story of Canada's first Arctic Expedition that began over 100 years ago. Led by the noted and controversial Arctic explorer, Vilhjalmur Stefansson, the expedition members experienced extreme conditions and staggering challenges. The flagship of the expedition, the *Karluq*, became caught in the ice and was lost early on. Twenty-two individuals and the ship's mascot, a cat, survived. The ship's captain, Robert Bartlett, trekked hundreds of miles over the ice in harsh conditions to effect the rescue. Divided into two parties, North and South, each had a separate mandate. The Southern Party, led by Dr. R.M. Anderson, noted zoologist and Stefansson's partner on a previous expedition, examined flora and fauna and mapped the Mackenzie River Delta. The Northern Party, led by Stefansson, explored the Western Arctic searching for new lands to be claimed for Canada and Britain in a bid to maintain sovereignty over the north. Despite setbacks and even, tragedy, both parties managed to fulfill their objectives. In particular, the findings of the Southern Party provided the basis of knowledge for Canadian scientists and researchers of the Arctic and Inuit peoples for decades to come.

SUBJECTS

Leadership, Contributions of Individuals and Groups to Shaping Canada, Perspective

DURATION

3 to 4 classes

TERMINOLOGY

Aboriginal: refers to all indigenous peoples in Canada, including First Nations, Métis, and Inuit

First Nation: refers to all the Aboriginal nations of North America (formerly tribes and includes over 65 different languages) except the Métis and Inuit

Métis: refers to Aboriginal people who are of First Nations and French descent

Inuit: refers to Aboriginal people who speak Inuktitut and live in Arctic Canada

Copper Inuit: refers to a specific group of Canadian Inuit people who relied on the use of native copper of the region

Inupiat: refers to a specific group of Alaska Native people

INTRODUCTION

Students will become familiar with early exploration in the Arctic, including the migration of the ancestors of the Inuit to North America. They will examine how the lives and struggles of Vilhjalmur Stefansson and his crew, such as Captain Bartlett and Diamond Jenness, as well as the Inuit who assisted them, helped shape Canada by mapping Canada's North. They "discovered" several large Arctic islands north of Canada's mainland, and recorded and shared information about the Inuit and their ways of life, and the flora and fauna of the North. Implementing an understanding of the historical perspective concept in a culminating activity, they will consider the nature and consequences of the Canadian Arctic Expedition from various perspectives and consider why we might view it differently now.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Graphic novel: *80 Degrees North*

Topographic map of Canada/climate map of Canada

Access to library resources and computers with Internet access

Access to online video: www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episodes/inuit-odyssey

Writing paper and tools

Costumes and props for trial, if possible

EXPECTATIONS/OUTCOMES

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. Students will:

- Describe the early explorations of the Arctic up until the 1913-1918 Canadian Arctic Expedition
- Explain how the lives and struggles of individuals on this expedition contributed to shaping Canada
- Review the historical concept of perspective and analyze the leadership of Stefansson as it might have been viewed at the time

STEP ONE

TEACHER-DIRECTED DISCUSSION

Tell students that they will be learning about the exploration of the Arctic in this lesson. Explain that the first explorers of the Arctic were Paleo-Eskimos, who may have arrived across the Bering Strait more than 20,000 years ago, according to some theories, but not settling until around 5000 BCE. They were later, by around 2000 BCE, displaced by ancestors of the Inuit and Alaskan Eskimos. Details of the migration theory are still being discovered and evaluated.

With the students, discuss the 45 min CBC documentary written by Canadian Arctic anthropologist Niobe Thompson, *Inuit Odyssey*: www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/episodes/inuit-odyssey. Students may also be interested in reading about how the film was made, for example, the actors were drawn from the Inuit community of Novoe Chaplino, and the whaleboats were built and designed by a local master boat builder: www.cbc.ca/natureofthings/features/recreating-the-world-of-the-thule.

Discuss what the film conveys about the migration of Inuit to Canada. Tell students that information about the past is accumulated, changes over time, and it is important to consider the perspective of the sources. Discuss the intentions and perspectives of the filmmakers of *Inuit Odyssey* and how their points of view might have been influenced/biased. Remind students that it is important to gather information from a variety of sources, making sure to take into account a variety of perspectives, but also working to check that the sources are reliable and current.

Encourage the students to do additional research to arrive at the most recent theory of Inuit migration to, and exploration of, the Arctic, using and making note of, various sources. Have the students gather as a class to share what they have learned. Help them arrive at a conclusion about the evidence.

STEP TWO

Resume the discussion of early exploration of the Arctic. Explain that the Vikings arrived by sea around 850 AD. Europeans did not come to the Arctic until around the year 1500 and much of the Arctic was still not mapped in the early 1800s. Discuss the motives of the European adventurers as they explored the area thoroughly into the early 1900s (expanding the Empire, finding a safe and shorter Northwest passage to Asia, whaling and sealing expeditions). Note that many later expeditions came to the Arctic in search of the whereabouts of crew and ships from previous expeditions, especially that of Sir John Franklin.

Have students create a timeline showing the history of Arctic explorations, including Jacques Cartier, Martin Frobisher, John Davis (three voyages), Henry Hudson (1610), Thomas Button, Robert Bylot, William Baffin, Sir John Franklin, Robert Peary, and Matthew Henson (reached North Pole by land, 1909). Have them indicate the purpose of the exploration and the route (and whether it was by sea or overland).

Refer students to the graphic novel *80 Degrees North* and discuss the purpose of Stefansson's expedition, as well as the sequence of events that occurred during the years the teams spent in the Arctic. Ask: ***In what ways did the lives and struggles of these individuals help shape Canada during this period?*** Have them provide specific quotes and page references as you chat together about the goals, preparations, and routes of the teams. As well, have them view photos taken on the expedition in order to help the experience come alive for the students:
www.historymuseum.ca/arctic/photo-gallery.

STEP THREE

Read out this quote about the CAE to the class: ***"It marked a critical moment in the exploration of Canada's North and had a lasting impact on the nation's sovereignty."*** Tell students that it was written by Anne Watson in "Canada's Unsung Expedition," in Canadian Geographic (Source: www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/jf13/first_canadian_arctic_expedition.asp). Explain that there have always been

disputes over which country has territorial sovereignty over the North.

Using what they have already learned about the early exploration of the Arctic, tell students the following: Martin Frobisher claimed the land for England. In the 1600s, the Dutch claimed parts of Greenland. In the 1700s, the Russians established settlements in Alaska. In the 1800s, the Americans purchased Alaska from Russia and moved to take control of the rest of the continent's North, much of which, was "owned" by the Hudson's Bay Company, but in 1870 the northern territory was transferred to the Dominion of Canada.

Ask students to provide examples of how the CAE contributed to Canada's sovereignty over the Arctic from what they have read in *80 Degrees North* and other sources, for example, Stefansson's mapping and "discoveries of new lands," (www.historymuseum.ca/cmc/exhibitions/hist/cae/exp30e.shtml) "On June 18, 1915, they discovered land to the north of [Prince Patrick Island] that didn't appear on any charts. New land discovered! Stefansson and the men built a mound as a marker. He left a note claiming the land for the British king and the Dominion of Canada." (Page 58 of *80 Degrees North*). Discuss whether or not "discovery" of an area and mapping it can comprise a claim of sovereignty over that land.

Have students look at a political global map projection with the North Pole positioned in the centre and name the eight countries that border the Arctic. Today, there is general agreement that many of the islands north of Canada's mainland belong to Canada, but there is less agreement about the waters, especially those waters making up the Northwest Passage, for example, the water separating Somerset Island from Devon Island, or Melville Island from Banks Island. Some nations claim these are international waters; Canada claims them as Canadian waters. There are five countries with claims in the Arctic: Canada, Russia, the United States, Denmark, and Norway. As well, there is a growing notion that the Arctic should be considered as "global commons."

To see the full lesson plan or to learn more, please visit www.80degreesnorth.com.

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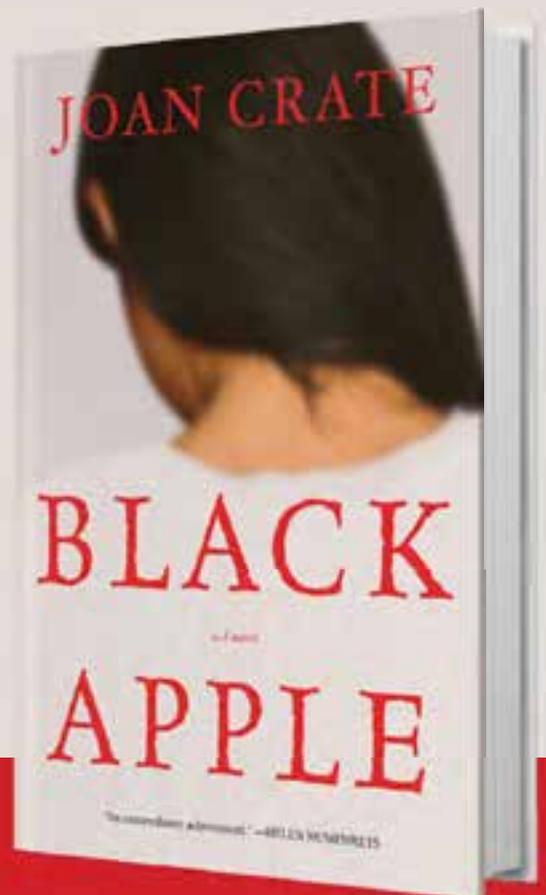


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Teacher's Guide**



HOW TO SAVE YOUR VOICE

Vocal Hygiene for Educators

by **Martha Beach**

You've probably experienced some bouts of hoarseness, whether you've corralled a group of students on a field trip or experienced a scratchy throat during cold season. But imagine pushing your voice so much that you lose it entirely: you can't quickly ask students to turn to page 34, you're unable to sufficiently get their attention in a noisy room, and it's pretty much impossible to explain any topic at length. As an educator, "taking care of your voice is everything," says Jane Schultz-Janzen, a music teacher in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. "If you lose your voice, you lose your ability to teach."

There are lots of steps you can take to help keep your voice healthy and prevent damage and voice loss. "When we see teachers, we give them as much education as we can in vocal hygiene," says Carla Di Gironimo, director of speech-language pathology and standards at Speech-Language and Audiology Canada in Ottawa. She also worked as a clinician for 20 years in Montreal. Teachers fall into the category of professional voice users. "They have a lot of voice use, but more specifically poor voice use," Di Gironimo said. "Sometimes it's just a lack of knowledge about how to properly use your voice." Over use or misuse can lead to phono trauma, Di Gironimo explains. Trauma can present in the very common form of basic vocal fatigue or swelling of

vocal cords. Di Gironimo has seen many teachers with basic problems of that nature. If left unchecked, simple trauma can escalate to something more serious like vocal nodules (growths that form on the cords, common with singers, but also occurs in teachers), polyps (blister-like lesions), or contact ulcers (caused by the cords hitting together, like an ill-fitting shoe rubbing over and over).

Such serious problems seem rare, but can happen. In May 2006, Janzen was speaking to her class after a choir competition. "I started to announce and my voice just stopped," says Janzen. She tried to continue but couldn't even whisper. "My thoughts were absolute panic: What about my job? Have I lost my voice forever?" She

remembers. "I had totally lost control. I lost my life overnight."

Janzen's extreme experience started as a commonplace flu in May 2005 and, left unchecked, escalated to the terrible climax of complete voice loss. Janzen pushed herself to go back to work even though her voice felt weakened. It got lower, huskier, breathy and more difficult to project. ("A baritone or low tenor range," specifies the music teacher.) Despite several trips to the doctor, it continued to deteriorate over the next few months. "I found I was repeating myself and I didn't have the same control in the room," Janzen recalls. "I'd be physically exhausted by Thursday. Total body exhaustion and a lot of tightness in my neck." She took to showing movies on Friday or taking the day off to rest and recuperate. Resting the voice during evenings and weekends is important, and even during recess and lunch if possible, suggests Di Gironimo. You can also ask students to play games (educational ones of course!) or do group work to avoid too much talking.

But adequate rest is just one part of vocal hygiene. Good hydration is another biggie: drink lots of water, but also use a humidifier if a classroom is dry. Always do your best to be face-to-face with the person you're addressing. Cross the classroom instead of talking over the students, walk across the soccer field to give game advice, or ask students to come up to your desk to chat away from the noisy group. And a tricky, but essential part of vocal hygiene is reducing background noise. "I know that's hard in a classroom, but maybe use a tool to get attention without your voice," Di Gironimo suggests. Try clapping, using a bell, or flicking the lights. "Then once you have everyone's attention, you can speak at a normal level." After you have those other aspects of vocal hygiene working together, you should focus on breathing. "If you aren't breathing, you tense up," Di Gironimo explains, thus straining the vocal cords which need to be relaxed to create sound. So, slow down your words to improve breath flow and reduce strain on the vocal cords.

Without good vocal hygiene, strain, fatigue and damage are very real possibilities for educators and it will impact more than teaching.

There is also a list of things not to do: do not clear your throat (harsh forced breath to clear phlegm) since this causes the cords to clack together and can further damage them. No yelling, cheering, or screaming either. "Especially for physed teachers this is important," says Di Gironimo. Voice problems are also common amongst music, kindergarten, tech, and language teachers. "Get a megaphone or some sort of amplification," Di Gironimo suggests. On the other end, you don't want to whisper for prolonged periods of time either. "Just as speaking too loudly is a strain, so is whispering. You have to find something in the middle."

Without good vocal hygiene, strain, fatigue and damage are very real possibilities for educators and it will impact more than teaching. Janzen lost the ability to communicate easily with her young son and her friends. She is, by her admission, a chatty and very social person. "I'm usually the first one to host a party! But that was down the tube. I learned to sit and listen, but it was lonely," Janzen recalls. "It was really impacting my whole life. I wouldn't even commit to anything on the weekend like church choir on Sunday."

In retrospect, Janzen recognized there were warning signs of vocal strain. If you are experiencing vocal fatigue (a tired or weak voice, a husky quality), if you

VOICE-SAVING TIPS



DO...

Hydrate and re-hydrate

Speak face-to-face

Use other attention-grabbing methods

Slow down your speech

Remember to breathe

Use a portable voice amplifying system

Rest your voice

DON'T...

Clear your throat

Scream, yell, or cheer

Talk over background noise

have difficulty changing your vocal range and getting to a higher or lower register, if you are experiencing tightness in the neck and throat, or if your voice has a breathy quality, you may have some vocal strain and potential damage.

If you have concerns about your voice, it's best to speak to your doctor who may refer to you an ear nose and throat specialist. Often, the ENT can perform a scope that looks at your vocal folds. From there, they can diagnose and potentially send you to a speech-language pathologist. "They provide counselling, direct therapy, or exercises," Di Gironimo explains. Information helps you practice vocal hygiene in the future. Exercises help relax muscles and reduce strain. "If you have a lot of tension on the vocal area, it can be painful," says Di Gironimo. "It's just like using your legs every day, except it's small muscles in the throat and neck." So you need to stretch, rest, rehydrate. "We stretch before we exercise, but we don't think to stretch our vocal cords."

As a result of complete voice loss, Janzen finally saw a specialist. She found out she had been struggling with polyps that formed from the strain of using her weakened voice after her bout of the flu. Over time, a simple weakness escalated into a terrible situation. The polyp ruptured and she lost the ability to make any sounds. Janzen's extreme case required surgery and therapy. She worked at completing her rehabilitation exercises and made nearly a full recovery. But her vocal habits are very different now.

She rests her voice often during lunch, recess, evenings, and weekends. She is very conscious of how long and how often she talks to her students. She uses a personal portable amplifier while she is teaching and she does exercises to help relax muscles and practice proper breathing.

Speech comes so naturally that we give it little thought. So practicing vocal hygiene may be a total change in routine, habit, and lifestyle. "It's hard to do, to change all of this," concedes Di Gironimo. "You want to change your habits so you can continue teaching because you can permanently damage your vocal cords if you don't deal with an issue early on." Both Di Gironimo and Janzen mention the need for proper vocal hygiene instruction in teacher's college, maybe a half credit or a workshop. "Even just a three-hour lecture would be enough," Di Gironimo says.

If you've already got some bad habits, poor vocal hygiene, or even some damage, not all hope is lost. "It's never too late," according to Di Gironimo. "Having the knowledge and making a change is always worthwhile." Start hydrating, resting, breathing and speaking quietly today to help your voice tomorrow.

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

SUPPORTIVE EXERCISES & STRETCHES

COW-GRAZER

Helps relax lower jaw and upper neck

- open your lower jaw as if biting a sandwich
- move your jaw in a clockwise motion, as if you are drawing a circle with your chin
- after 10 circles, repeat in the opposite direction

HEAD & NECK ROLLS

Helps relax neck, shoulders, and upper chest muscles

- tilt your head toward your shoulder then roll your head forward in a circular motion until it reaches the opposite shoulder

- lift your head straight up and continue from the beginning, do not roll it backward as this may cause injury
- after 10 rolls, repeat the exercise beginning on the other shoulder

BELLY BREATHING

Encourages good breath support and posture

- sitting comfortably and with good posture, place one hand on your chest and one on your belly
- take a slow, deep breath in while trying to push the hand on your belly more than the one on your chest then slowly let the air out
- repeat 10 times

Source: University of Western Ontario Teaching Support Centre

Travel Apps

We know that during the summer you may be tempted to keep up a fast pace, getting all of those chores out of the way that didn't seem possible during the hustle and bustle of the school year. But remember, hardworking teachers, summer is the time of year when a restful vacation should top the to-do list. Here are some handy apps that can help you keep your summer getaway easy and organized.

PackPoint (Free, Android and iOS)

PackPoint is a free packing list builder. If you plug in the details of your trip, and what's on the agenda, PackPoint figures out exactly what you should bring based on the weather during your trip and your activities. Add, remove, and change quantities of items to bring with ease. The app also saves your list for future trips. Visit www.packpnt.com for more information and download links.

Roadtrippers (Free, Android and iOS)

With over 5.5 million trips booked to date, Roadtrippers is a free app that helps people discover the world around them. Enter your starting point and your destination and discover places to hit in between. This app will create a route plan covering all spots to visit, making the journey just as enjoyable as the destination. Your pit stops sync with your phone for seamless navigation with any maps app. You can also search and sort for places to stay along your route. Visit www.roadtrippers.com for more information and download links.

RootsRated (Free, iOS)

Do you like to go off on adventures during your vacation? RootsRated connects people to the best outdoor experiences across the United States including opportunities for paddling, hiking, trail running, camping, backpacking, climbing, and more. The detailed guides provide thorough reviews and practical info from local experts. Visit <https://rootsrated.com/app> for more information and download link.



Field Trip (Free, Android and iOS)

Field Trip is like your own personal tour guide. It provides users, wherever you are, with historic spots, fascinating architecture, film locations, and more interesting information about your destination. As you reach each destination, a card pops up to enhance your exploration with fun facts and details about the location. For more information and download links visit www.fieldtripper.com

Google Translate (Free, Android and iOS)

Embarking on a journey to a foreign language destination? No need to worry. Google Translate is a free app that provides you with real time translations between 29 languages through your camera. Point your phone's camera at print text in Word Lens, and it instantly translates from English to Spanish, German, French, Russian, Italian, Portuguese, and more—and vice versa. The app also provides two-way instant speech translation in 32 languages. By typing, the app can translate between 103 languages.

Back 2 School Countdown (\$1.39 CAD, iOS)

Of course you should enjoy your summer to the fullest, but it's handy to note just how much free time you have left before school is back in session so you're prepared. This app provides a precise countdown of the exact months, weeks, days, hours, minutes, and seconds left until the bell rings again. Visit <http://apps.orrcreative.com/back-to-school-countdown.html> for more info or to download.



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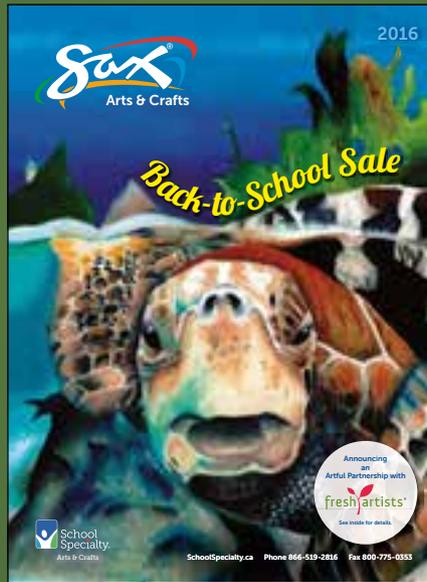
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