

BC Teachers' Federation

Jan/Feb 2024

Teacher

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Rich Overgaard photo

BCTF

Kids Matter
Teachers Care

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CLASSIFIED

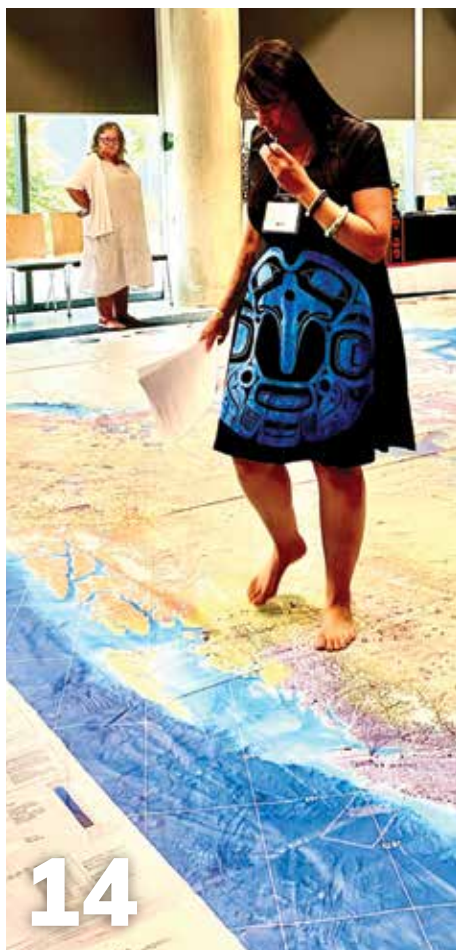
Gulf Island Getaway Website:

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CORRECTION

In the Nov/Dec 2023 edition the article "School psychologists seek consistent opportunities and full scope of practice" incorrectly used the name "Canadian Psychologists of BC." The organization's name is College of Psychologists of BC (CPBC). Our apologies to the author for this editorial error.



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Live links are available on the magazine's website:
teachermag.ca



THIS IS YOUR MAGAZINE



ON THE COVER

BCTF members at the Fall 2023 Representative Assembly in Victoria. Clockwise from top left: Jessa Clark, Kyla Hadden, Jatinder Bir, Tanya Davidson, William Nicholls-Allison, Kelsi Lesowski, Sarah Wethered, and Britt Hailstone. Turn to pages 20–23 to read about preparing for bargaining in 2024 and Britt and Sarah's advice on how to make your voice heard at the table.

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Do you enjoy writing? Have a story to tell? Know of a project at your school or in your local you want to share with colleagues? Then consider writing for *Teacher*, the flagship publication of the BCTF! Submission guidelines are available at teachermag.ca.

We also welcome letters to the editor. Send your letter to teachermag@bctf.ca.

Teacher reserves the right to edit or condense any contribution considered for publication. We are unable to publish all submissions we receive.

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New Teacher magazine website

Teacher magazine recently launched its new website: teachermag.ca. The digital version includes stories from the print publication, as well as web-only stories or additional resources related to stories from the print version.

The new website allows readers to search for *Teacher* stories by category or edition, as well as share stories to your favourite social media channels.

Submission guidelines are also available under the "Submissions" tab.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

NO ONE KNOWS BETTER than our members the impacts of increasingly complex classrooms. Spend time in any school staffroom and you'll hear colleagues confide in one another about the heartbreak of not being able to provide a student with the support they need due to staffing shortages, or the toll it takes to be pulled from counselling or library work to fill classroom absences without being replaced themselves. We know that our members' distress comes from a deep place of caring that could be solved with adequate support from school districts and government.

But if we want to see change, we need decision-makers to understand that too. That's why we organized a delegation of six members to visit the Legislature in Victoria: to share the realities in schools directly with provincial leaders. These incredible members shared heartfelt stories in back-to-back meetings with Premier David Eby, cabinet ministers, and MLAs.

"If it wasn't obvious, I love my students so much. I wish I could wave a magic wand and change the world to help them, but I can't. We need your help," Katie Keast, a counsellor from Elkford, BC, told the politicians.

Keast described students who were struggling and falling through the cracks, but who would thrive with the support they were entitled to receive.

Marjean Brown of Burnaby described an average day in the classroom, including cancelled music classes and lost prep time, EAs calling in sick without replacements, and inconsistent support for designated students.

Members described increasingly complex environments. When programs and services are lost, students are more likely to be dysregulated, teacher-librarian Marilyn Carr of Surrey said.

"When our most vulnerable learners have their social and emotional needs met, they can thrive in the classroom."

Delegates Sam Asmoucha from Vancouver, Lisa Hagar from Sooke, and Jeanine Foster from Abbotsford made similarly impactful statements.

Many of the politicians were moved, and shared messages of gratitude and support for teachers. But we also knew that if they wanted to help, they would need to hear some solutions.

School staffing shortages are paralleled in other public sectors and industries. While it may seem overwhelming, it also means this government is familiar with action: last year, they announced a comprehensive workforce strategy for the health care sector.

We told them: it's education's turn.

A fully funded workforce plan that tackles recruitment, retention, and training opportunities is one that will improve working conditions and learning conditions simultaneously. It would mean funding not just in the next budget but as part of a robust, multiyear plan to transform public education for the better.

What these decision-makers do with these stories, with our proposals, is up to them.

We know teachers have the most important job in BC: they're shaping our future. We hope this government sees that too.

As we turn the page on 2023, I want to take a moment to thank all members who help advocate for their colleagues and the profession. The BCTF will continue fighting for better working conditions in 2024. I invite you to check out the article on bargaining on pages 20–23 for a glossary and timeline of what's to come.



In solidarity,
Clint Johnston, BCTF President

← **BCTF DELEGATION AT THE LEGISLATURE:** (L to R) Lisa Hagar, Sooke; Katie Keast, Fernie; Clint Johnston, BCTF President; Carole Gordon, BCTF First Vice-President (centre front); Premier David Eby (centre back); Marilyn Carr, Surrey; Rachna Singh, Minister of Education and Child Care; Sam Asmoucha, Vancouver Elementary and Adult Educators; Marjean Brown, Burnaby (right front); Jeanine Foster, Abbotsford (right back).

MESSAGE DU PRÉSIDENT

PERSONNE NE CONNAÎT MIEUX que nos membres l'impact des classes de plus en plus complexes. Passez du temps dans une salle de classe et vous entendrez des collègues se confier sur le désarroi de ne pas pouvoir apporter aux élèves le soutien nécessaire en raison d'un manque de personnel, ou sur le poids que représente le fait d'être retiré-e du travail de counseling ou de bibliothécaire pour combler les absences en classe sans obtenir soi-même un remplacement. Nous savons que la détresse de nos membres provient d'une profonde compassion qui pourrait être résolue avec un soutien adéquat des conseils scolaires et du gouvernement.

Cependant, si nous voulons que les choses changent, il faut que les gens qui prennent les décisions le comprennent aussi. C'est pourquoi nous avons organisé une délégation de six membres pour visiter l'Assemblée législative à Victoria : pour partager les réalités des écoles directement avec les leaders provinciaux. Ces membres incroyables ont partagé des histoires émouvantes lors de réunions consécutives avec le premier ministre David Eby, les ministres du cabinet et les député-e-s provinciaux-ales.

«Si ce n'était pas déjà clair, j'aime tellement mes élèves. J'aimerais pouvoir agiter une baguette magique et changer le monde pour les aider, mais je ne peux pas. Nous avons besoin de votre aide», a déclaré Katie Keast, une conseillère d'Elkford, en Colombie-Britannique, aux responsables politiques.

Mme Keast a décrit des élèves qui rencontraient des difficultés et qui passaient à travers les mailles du filet, mais qui pourrait s'épanouir avec le soutien qu'ils sont en droit de recevoir.

Marjean Brown, de Burnaby, a décrit une journée moyenne en classe, avec des cours de musique annulés et des temps de préparation perdus, des AE qui se rapportent malades sans être remplacé-e-s, et un soutien inconstant pour les élèves désigné-e-s.

D'autres membres ont décrit des environnements de plus en plus complexes. Lorsque des programmes et des services sont perdus, les élèves sont plus susceptibles d'être perturbé-e-s, a déclaré l'enseignante-bibliothécaire Marilyn Carr, de Surrey.

«Lorsque les besoins sociaux et émotionnels de nos élèves les plus vulnérables sont satisfaits, ils peuvent s'épanouir en classe.

Les membres de la délégation Sam Asmoucha de Vancouver, Lisa Hagar de Sooke et Jeanine Foster d'Abbotsford ont fait des déclarations tout aussi percutantes.

De nombreux responsables politiques ont été ému-e-s et ont partagé des messages de gratitude et de soutien personnel enseignant. Nous savons aussi, cependant, que s'ils voulaient aider, il fallait leur proposer des solutions».

La pénurie de personnel dans les écoles se retrouve dans d'autres secteurs publics et dans d'autres industries. Bien que la situation puisse sembler insurmontable, cela signifie également que le gouvernement actuel a l'habitude d'agir : l'année dernière, il a annoncé une stratégie globale en matière de main-d'œuvre pour le secteur des soins de santé.

Nous leur avons dit : c'est au tour de l'éducation.

Un plan de main-d'œuvre entièrement financé qui s'attaque au recrutement, à la rétention et aux possibilités de formation est un plan qui améliorera simultanément les conditions de travail et les conditions d'apprentissage. Il ne s'agirait pas seulement d'un financement dans le cadre du prochain budget, mais d'un financement dans le cadre d'un plan pluriannuel solide visant à améliorer l'enseignement public.

Ce que les décideurs feront de ces histoires, de nos propositions, c'est leur responsabilité.

Nous savons que le personnel enseignant occupe le poste le plus important en Colombie-Britannique, car il façonne notre avenir. Nous espérons que ce gouvernement le comprendra également.

Alors que nous tournons la page sur 2023, je voudrais prendre un moment pour remercier l'ensemble des membres qui aident à défendre leurs collègues et la profession. La FECEB continuera à se battre pour de meilleures conditions de travail en 2024. Je vous invite à consulter l'article sur les négociations aux pages 20 à 23 pour un glossaire et un calendrier des événements à venir.



Solidairement,
Clint Johnston, Président de la FECEB



Teaching challenging histories: Strategies for approaching controversial topics in social studies

By Dale Martelli, President, BC Social Studies Teachers' Association, and teacher

A KEY COMPONENT of social studies curriculum at any grade level is world events, both current and historical. Sometimes world events can be polarizing and controversial, leading teachers to shy away from bringing these discussions into the classroom. It can be intimidating to broach challenging histories and controversial current events with students, but it can also be rewarding to see students grow their capacity for understanding, empathy, and curiosity through the process of discussing challenging topics.

Here are some strategies I use to approach controversial topics in my social studies classroom:

DEVELOP MEDIA LITERACY AND UNDERSTAND NEWS BIAS

Students are very familiar with the concept of “fake news” but are often surprised when we investigate the ways “fake news” has been documented and in existence since the mid-seventeenth century. I try to provide students with the tools they need to critically question and analyze claims and stories they read on social media and through news outlets.

Identifying bias and fallacies in news stories tends to be a bit more difficult for students compared to finding inaccuracies in social media claims. I encourage students to look beyond the lens of “fake news” and critically compare news stories with different perspectives (for example, comparing coverage of a specific topic by BBC and Al Jazeera). I emphasize using any media, first and foremost, as sources of information, not as sources of truth, so students can formulate their own understanding.

Some of the skills that are useful for building media literacy include understanding essential fallacies such as “slippery slope” or “circular reasoning,” and questioning the positionality and context of the author of the article.

LEAN INTO INQUIRY

My doctoral research began with exploring contested narratives in historiography, in particular the treatment of bias or, more accurately, prejudgement in historical inquiry. We often ask students to keep bias out of inquiry, but I questioned whether prejudgement could ever be discarded. Over the years, I've evolved my teaching practice to focus on exploring prejudgements rather than discarding them when engaging in inquiry.

Inquiry-based teaching in my classroom is guided and shaped by compassion, understanding, and rational empathy. Students are encouraged to lean into their curiosities and find their own way to present their understanding. I hope this encourages ownership of learning and ideas in ways that worksheets do not. The only limitations I set for inquiry in my classroom is that the objective of the inquiry is relevant to the topic at hand, and that the conclusion is supported by evidence and/or reasons and demonstrates some element of empathetic understanding.

“...students have the opportunity to discuss differing perspectives on controversial world events, but we do so with the goal of understanding one another’s points of view, not winning an argument.”

I don't present empathetic understanding in historical inquiry as affective. Peter Lee and Denis Shemilt describe empathetic explanation as “...the elucidation of connections between goals, beliefs and values so that we can see how a course of action or a social practice was reasonable in its own terms even when judged unreasonable in ours.”¹ Thus, Lee and Shemilt argue that empathy is

a rational operation that should be guided by the student’s prejudgements (including goals, beliefs, and values) in order to have any real impact on historical understanding.

UNDERSTAND HISTORICAL CONTEXTS

I believe that in order to understand historical contexts, we need to place ourselves in front of the event or text in a way that allows for the development of our own informed interpretation, and this includes having reasons and evidence for our views.

A significant influence on my practice and research was a text I came across from the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East in 2009, called *Learning Each Other’s Historical Narrative: Palestinians and Israelis*. This resource is grounded in teaching historical narratives as contrasting perspectives and trying to understand and humanize the “other.” The pages in the text are three-columned: one column describes the Israeli narrative, one column for the Palestinian narrative, and a third column that is left blank for students to make personal notes: additions, questions, new insights, and conclusions.

In many cases, I expand the narrative beyond just two stories to teach students that the challenge of history is that there are multiple understandings of past events. I try to encourage students to rationally unpack differing narratives of the past without inserting our own values from the onset.

FOCUS ON COMPASSION AND RESPECT WHEN ENGAGING IN DIALOGUE

In my classroom, I avoid traditional debate, which is about winning or losing. Instead, I focus on what I have termed a “collaborative learning encounter.” In a collaborative learning encounter, students have the opportunity to discuss differing perspectives on controversial world events, but we do so with the goal of understanding one another’s points of view, not winning an argument. In cases of disagreement, we acknowledge the disagreement but focus on bridging each other’s views and moving forward with a shared sense of transformative engagement. All of this is done with compassion and respect at the heart of our dialogue.

Early in the school year, I place a lot of emphasis on what listening means, especially when emotions run high. When we have a classroom discussion that may be polarizing, I always begin by acknowledging with students that our discussion may be emotionally laden, contested, and controversial. It’s important we navigate this together by staying respectful and considerate throughout the discussion and make arguments that rely on reason and evidence rather than emotion. I don’t believe rational discourse should be devoid of emotion, but it should not be undermined by it. We also set clear classroom expectations for respectful dialogue. This includes setting guidelines on what language is acceptable and what assertions are problematic, hyperbolic, or polemical.

BUILD TRUST WITH STUDENTS, PARENTS, AND ADMINISTRATORS

Clear communication with parents and administrators before diving into controversial topics is important because it opens space to discuss concerns before the planned learning takes place. I always send an email to families and administrators outlining what will be discussed in class, why and how, and clarify that the class will be making a distinction between personal opinions/views and possible truth claims. This is good practice before classroom discussions or before I introduce a resource, such as a film, to my students that may include a perspective viewed as “wrong” by a parent.

Students are also more likely to honestly express their curiosities and understandings when they know empathy, compassion, and respect are at the centre of all relationships and learning activities in the classroom. Building this trust takes time, but it is an integral part of supportive learning environments, especially related to controversial topics. •

RESOURCES

Learning Each Other’s Historical Narrative: Palestinians and Israelis

by the Peace Research Institute in the Middle East: <http://traubman.igc.org/textbook.htm>

Straight A’s for facilitating crucial conversations by Facing History and Ourselves:

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/straight-facilitating-crucial-conversations>

1 Peter Lee and Denis Shemilt, “The Concept That Dares Not Speak Its Name: Should Empathy Come out of the Closet?” *Teaching History*, 143, 2011, p. 40.

ChatGPT, generative AI, and language learning

By Ron Darvin, Ph.D., Department of Language and Literacy Education, UBC

THE ARRIVAL of ChatGPT and other artificial intelligence (AI) powered platforms, like Midjourney and DALL-E, has raised many questions about how AI will transform the way we learn and teach. To think about the pedagogical implications of these tools, their affordances and constraints, we need to start by understanding the particular type of AI these platforms are based on and how they work.

AI is a broad, encompassing term that involves a wide range of applications and techniques, like machine learning, natural language processing, computer vision, and robotics. When we Google something, use Kahoot! during lessons, or recommend translation and grammar-check tools to students, we are using assistive technologies that involve AI. Chatbots like ChatGPT are generative AI tools trained for a specific task: creating new texts based on training data they've received and prompts written by users.

WHAT IS GENERATIVE AI AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

Generative AI (or GenAI) is a subfield of AI that focuses on creating new content, whether it be text, images, videos, music, or code, to respond to prompts written by users. Through natural language processing, GenAI is trained through data collected online (webpages, books, news articles, Wikipedia entries, social media conversations, etc.) to find patterns in language and to know which words can be strung together. Algorithms analyze these patterns that enable GenAI tools to predict what words can follow others and to respond to prompts in a way that is meaningful, contextually appropriate, and grammatical.

GenAI can also go beyond written language to include visuals and images. Midjourney and DALL-E are text-to-image GenAI platforms that generate new digital images based on prompts like "draw a purple unicorn having coffee in outer space." ChatGPT Plus, the paid version of the platform, now enables users to have an actual conversation with the tool and to use images as part of a prompt. For instance, you can upload a picture of what's in your fridge and ask what kind of recipes you can prepare based on what's available.

WHAT ARE THE AFFORDANCES OF GenAI IN TERMS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING?

Apart from getting simplified explanations of complex ideas, students can benefit from using chatbots, like ChatGPT, for different language-learning purposes: using the tool as a conversation partner in a target language, getting feedback on their writing, receiving suggestions on how to present about a specific topic in class, or simulating conversations for different contexts, e.g., at a restaurant or asking for directions. ChatGPT is fluent in English, Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Italian, Dutch, and Portuguese, but can also handle a number of other languages. It can understand when users switch from one language to another, even within a sentence. ChatGPT can create bedtime stories that involve characters imagined by kids and that parents can read aloud to them. Teachers can ask ChatGPT for creative ways to explain the elements of a novel to a Grade 5 student or for classroom activities to teach the elements of a persuasive essay.

“Students need to be aware that chatbots can make mistakes and replicate biases, and, while useful for understanding some concepts, information generated by AI shouldn’t be taken at face value.”

WHAT ARE THE LIMITATIONS AND POTENTIAL PITFALLS OF GenAI?

ChatGPT, and other large language models, is a predictive tool. It produces human-like text based on the linguistic patterns it has learned, so it tends to produce formulaic structures and tropes that limit students’ exposure to the nuances of human-created texts. It doesn’t know how to recognize nuances of values or worldviews, and it can produce texts with biases or stereotypes embedded in the data the tool was trained on. Chatbots have also been known to “hallucinate” and provide false information while sounding pretty credible. Students need to be aware that chatbots can make mistakes and replicate biases, and, while useful for understanding some concepts, information generated by AI shouldn’t be taken at face value.

It’s also easy for students to cut and paste generated texts and pass them off as their work. Because chatbots don’t acknowledge sources, submitting work generated by a chatbot without proper attribution complicates further this issue of academic integrity and originality. The other challenge is that, despite the rise of different AI-generated text detectors, these detectors cannot reliably determine if a text is written by a human or a chatbot.

If students use chatbots to do assignments or answer questions for them without knowing how to evaluate the output, a student may not develop strong critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Discovering ideas through hands-on experimentation and connecting ideas from different sources enables students to engage in more complex thinking processes, and a reliance on AI to simply feed them the answers can make them less motivated to explore and learn independently.

Interacting with chatbots, like ChatGPT, that don’t have any age-verification mechanism has privacy risks. These interactions can involve sharing personal information and the collection of data, and parents and educators should be aware of what data is being collected, how it’s being used, and whether it’s shared with third parties.

DOES GenAI HAVE A PLACE IN THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM?

There has been a mix of responses from K–12 schools in terms of the role of these chatbots in educational institutions. Some schools have blocked student access to ChatGPT on school devices and Wi-Fi, while some have recognized that such a ban can be inequitable, because wealthier students with phones or laptops of their own, and home connectivity, can easily access these tools at any time.

Other schools have accepted that generative AI is here to stay, and that rather than shielding students from it, we need to make sure they’re equipped with the digital literacies needed to use it strategically and responsibly, understanding both its benefits and limitations. This involves knowing how to craft prompts effectively, recognize the genre structures and conventions of generated texts, evaluate the accuracy of generated texts, and detect embedded biases.

How generative AI will transform learning as we know it is still unknown. It’s possible that this “AI turn” can steer us toward more “flipped classrooms,” where students learn content outside of class and focus on practical applications and problem-solving activities in the classroom. In terms of assessment, teachers may need to design more oral exams and presentations, while essay writing may need to involve more self-reflection, which integrates personal details that a chatbot can’t invent.

These are the things that we as educators will need to think about as these technologies become even more powerful and popular. In the workshops I’ve designed for K–12 teachers in BC, we discuss the different affordances and constraints of these tools so that we can engage in dialogue about whether these tools have a place in the classroom and to what extent they can be part of the learning process. One thing is certain: generative AI is here to stay, and it will continue to transform the way people consume and produce knowledge. How we as teachers respond to this change will shape the evolving literacy landscape that students occupy. •

“...generative AI is here to stay,
...rather than shielding students from
it, we need to make sure they’re
equipped with the digital literacies
needed to use it strategically and
responsibly...”

FROM CHALKBOARDS TO CHATBOTS: A SHOW-AND-TELL OF CUTTING-EDGE AI CLASSROOM TOOLS

By Simon Worley, teacher, North Vancouver



IN DECEMBER 2022, ChatGPT gained widespread attention from news outlets worldwide, prompting me to explore its capabilities, along with other artificial intelligence (AI) platforms. This period can be considered a golden age of AI learning, as there is an abundance of AI tools readily available, and many of them are accessible for free. This era resembles the early days of social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram, where users could scroll endlessly without encountering advertisements. Similarly, we currently enjoy a relatively ad-free and accessible AI landscape, but it's likely to change in the near future, as platforms like ChatGPT and its counterparts may transition to a pay-to-play model or introduce advertising to monetize their services.

Before this transition occurs, I would like to introduce some valuable AI resources that can benefit both teachers and students. It's important to note that this environment is rapidly evolving, and by the time of publication, some of these resources may have already transitioned to paid models. Over the past six months, I have integrated these tools into my classroom, and I hope that sharing them will help make your life as an educator a bit more convenient, while making your classroom a more dynamic and engaging learning environment.

AI TEACHER TOOLS

Magic School—app.magicschool.ai

Magic School is the premier AI-driven teacher assistant. It offers over 50 features and tools, including a rubric generator, individualized education program creator, project-based learning and science lab generator, and numerous others, all of which are designed to expedite content creation, streamline administrative tasks, and provide enhanced support for students with diverse learning needs.

I have used Magic School to assist me in crafting assignments, deliver constructive feedback, and map out whole unit plans. The only warning I have when using Magic School for the first time is to make sure you set aside a few hours at least, because you can get carried away trying all of its functions!

Perplexity—perplexity.ai

Perplexity stands out among other generative AI chatbots because it allows users to ask questions and receive conversational responses. What also distinguishes Perplexity is its ability to provide clickable sources, enabling users to access additional context and information. This is a great way to go “down the rabbit hole” and is a one-stop shop to dig deeper into a topic.

To engage with Perplexity, simply visit its platform and pose a question or make a request. Initially, you'll receive a concise version of the response, but you can click to explore a more detailed answer. Perplexity also provides a list of sources it used to gather information, as well as related topics. You can continue the conversation with follow-up questions, just like you would with ChatGPT.

I love this resource. It's free and helps both me and my students better understand a topic. The follow-up questions prompt me to keep going deeper and discover more about an area of study.

QuestionWell—app.questionwell.org/quiz-game/create

QuestionWell is an invaluable tool that provides a vast array of questions, allowing teachers to allocate their attention to more crucial aspects of teaching. By simply inputting a reading passage, the AI within QuestionWell takes charge of composing essential questions, learning objectives, and multiple-choice questions that align with the content.

To use this resource, all you need to do is copy and paste the reading material into QuestionWell. You can then specify the topic and any desired learning objectives or standards. I have used this to create essential questions and multiple-choice banks for subjects that range from Napoleon to the Vancouver Canucks. My students have used this tool to enhance presentations and ask the audience follow-up questions that push the conversation forward. The AI also allows you to print the multiple-choice questions, with or without the answers.



“...let’s begin to leverage AI to simplify routine and time-consuming responsibilities. By doing so, we can unlock more precious time for genuine, meaningful learning experiences.”

AI SLIDE GENERATORS

Tome—[tome.app](#)

Gamma—[gamma.app](#)

Tome and Gamma are presentation creators. They quickly create a multislide presentation based on a prompt provided by the user. These range from 6 to 12 slides and look professional and polished. They should be used as a starting point to build upon. I’ve used both of these to make slideshows on various subjects, but I did have to tweak the material and alter the images to fit my needs. That being said, it has saved me many an hour that I would have spent finding the right slide-deck template and populating it with information. My students have used these to make their simple slideshows pop in much less time. The free version only allows a certain number of saved slide decks, but you can always erase them and create new ones. These sites are winners: simple to use, easy user interface, and high-quality outputs.

Curipod—[curipod.com](#)

Curipod is an innovative platform that swiftly generates interactive slide decks based on the topic you provide. Typically consisting of 9 to 12 slides, Curipod offers a range of engaging features including polls, word clouds, open-ended questions, and a drawing tool. Curipod is much like Gamma and Tome except it is better suited for a younger audience, as its presentation style is more playful.

While using the free plan, you can create up to five private Curipod decks. However, you can manage your decks by deleting old ones and creating new ones, ensuring you have ample space for your desired projects.

AI IMAGE GENERATORS

Scribble Diffusion—[scribblediffusion.com](#)

Scribble Diffusion is a user-friendly platform that seamlessly converts basic sketches into AI-generated images. With its intuitive interface, this website offers a straightforward process for transforming your sketches into visually captivating artworks. Notably, the platform is freely accessible, encouraging users to explore their creativity and engage in experimental artistry. This is just a fun site to experiment with, especially for younger students. I’ve been surprised at what it can render based on one of my atrocious scribbles!

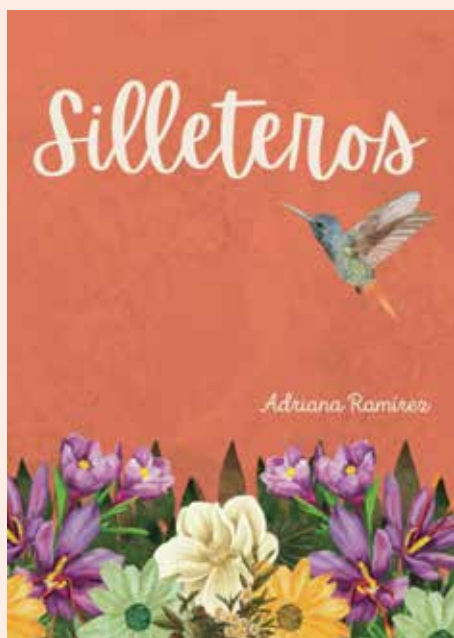
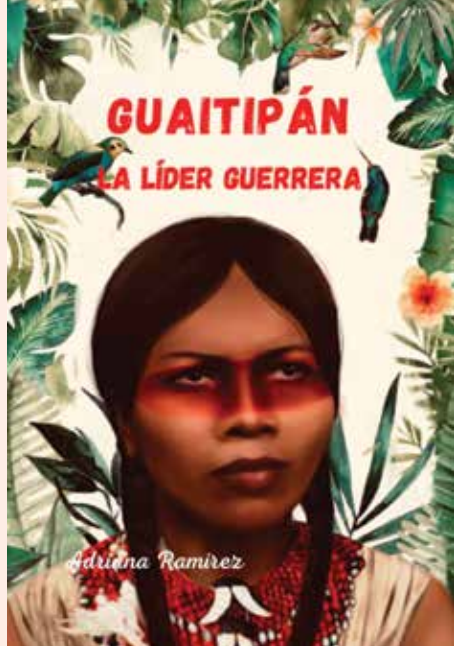
Craiyon—[craiyon.com](#)

Craiyon is a free AI image generator that creates content in artistic, drawn, or photographic styles based on text prompts. It will take a little over a minute to generate nine unique images, with many other suggested images below. The more specific the prompt, the more detailed the result.

I often urge my students to use this site when trying to find an image for a presentation. Why find an image when you can create the image yourself!

Among the vast array of AI tools available today, I’ve highlighted eight. These AI tools have the potential to be indispensable assets for educators in the classroom. They offer the capacity to streamline administrative tasks, customize the learning experience for individual students, and inject an engaging and enjoyable element into assignments. As we navigate this ever-evolving educational landscape, let’s begin to leverage AI to simplify routine and time-consuming responsibilities. By doing so, we can unlock more precious time for genuine, meaningful learning experiences. •

P.S. Before you ask—yes—I did use AI to help me with this article. Its main use was to polish my first draft and provide the piece with a more informational and professional tone.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Adriana Ramírez is a Spanish teacher, author, and teacher-trainer. Adriana has a big passion for sharing with the world the beauty of her country, Colombia, and her people. You can see this love through all her published novels. A big advocate of the #OwnVoices movement, Adriana strongly believes that those who come from traditionally oppressed and colonized countries and territories must reclaim their right to tell their own stories and build their own narratives. Originally from Colombia, she actively works on recuperating the stories and the narratives that are part of her roots and her heritage. To learn more, visit www.adrianaramirez.ca.

The importance of Own Voices literature in the language-learner classroom

“I wanted Spanish students and teachers to learn from Colombia, not about it.”

By **Adriana Ramírez** (she/her/ella),
Spanish teacher on the unceded territories of
the Semiahmoo, Kwantlen, and Katzie nations

WHEN I FIRST STARTED teaching Spanish in BC, I used the materials that were available in the different schools where I taught. Many of these materials made me feel uncomfortable; but at the time, I didn't know how to put my discomfort into words. I was just starting my decolonization journey. What I did recognize immediately was that the textbooks felt very impersonal and artificial. The novels and stories available then were all written by white authors about cultures to which they did not belong. As such, they were full of misrepresentations, stereotypes, and “poverty porn” (a concept introduced in the 1980s that tries to bring awareness to the trend in different media outlets of using poverty as a form of entertainment and emotional manipulation).

There came a point where I could no longer use these resources. I didn't want to support or reinforce the single narrative these resources led students to construct of the Spanish-speaking world. A narrative that was very narrow, very simplistic, and very biased.

When I decided to expand my collection of resources to use in my Spanish classroom, I was inspired to become part of the solution and write books that could make authentic stories available to Spanish-language learners. I wanted to show my students, and the world, what Colombia is like from the inside. I wanted Spanish students and teachers to learn from Colombia, not about it.

As a Colombian, I have the land in my blood and all my ancestors come to my heart, fingers, and mind when I write. They want me to write these stories; they want me to tell the world who we really are.

I am also well aware that my experience of culture and language as a Colombian cannot encompass the diversity that exists throughout the Spanish-speaking world; my voice alone can't encompass the diversity that exists within Colombia itself. This is why it is so important for language teachers to include multiple voices from across regions of the world where that language is used.

We need to give students opportunities to read works by diverse authors, to feel diverse narratives, to experiment with different ways of understanding the world. This creates opportunities for students to learn from other cultures in a respectful and authentic way. If we want our teaching to be culturally and historically responsible, we must consider who writes the books we use in our classrooms.

Finding level-appropriate, Own Voices books for language learners can be daunting, but they do exist, and they allow students to start understanding the intersections of language and culture. If we are to meaningfully engage students in language learning with a lens of decolonization, we must critically evaluate the resources and books we use for that learning. •

The impact I witnessed: A teacher's reflection

By **Nandini Aggarwal** (she/her), teacher, Surrey

AMIDST THE CHANGING COLOURS of autumn, I had the privilege of receiving a profoundly touching message from one of my students. It wasn't just a thank you note; it was a poignant reminder of the profound influence a teacher can have on a young life.

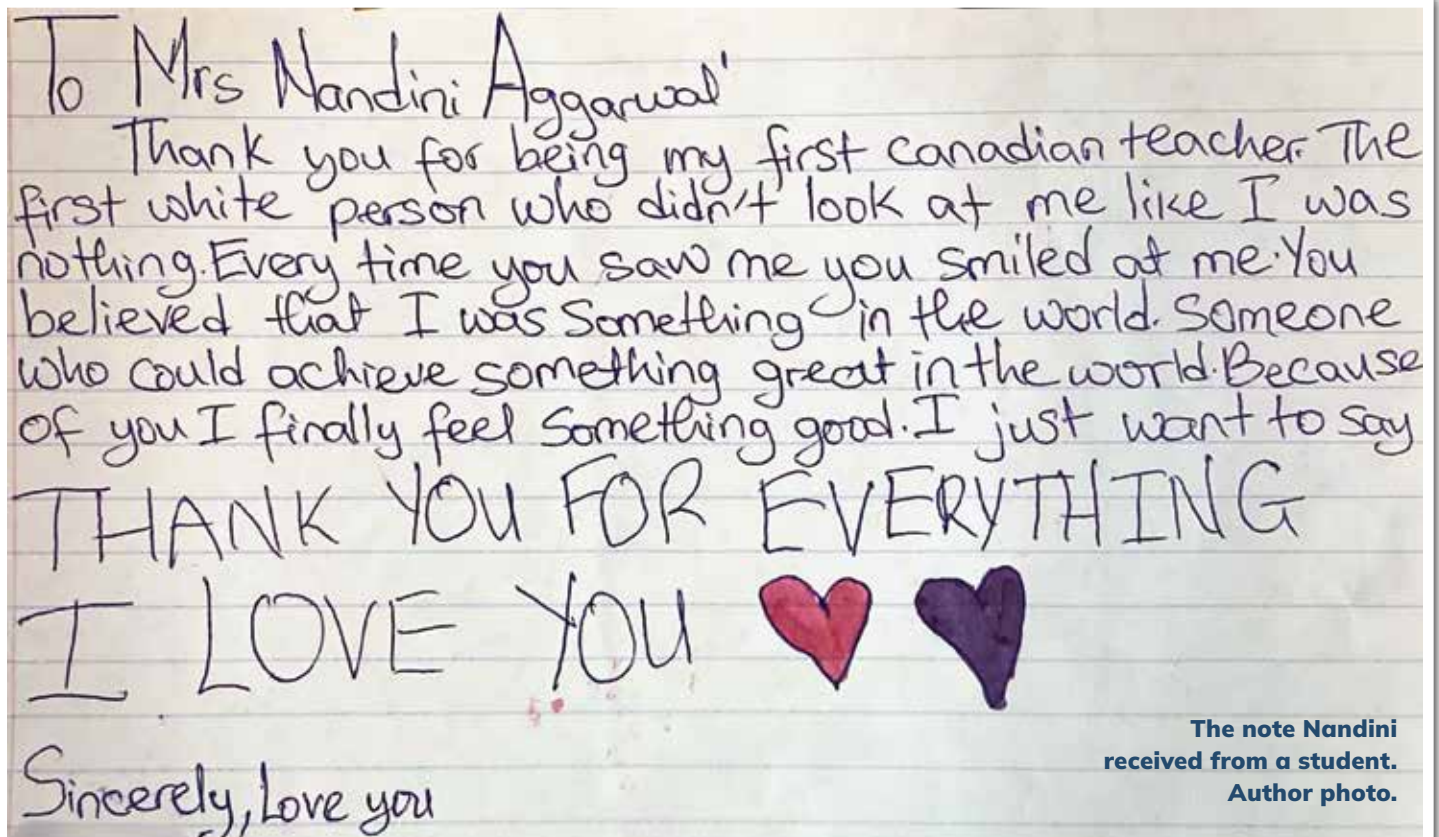
In their heartfelt message, my student expressed deep gratitude for being seen as capable and important. It was a powerful acknowledgment that every smile, every word of encouragement, and every belief in their abilities had made a world of difference. But what truly touched my heart was not the appreciation directed at me, but the transformation I had witnessed in this student.

This transformation spoke volumes about the importance of understanding the backgrounds from which students come. In this case, the student's background was unique, and they needed simple acts of belief and support, not grand gestures. It was a revelation of how little it takes to inspire and motivate a young person to believe in themselves. For instance, a small act of belief and support could be as simple as acknowledging their efforts or offering encouragement during challenging times.

“...a revelation of how little it takes to inspire and motivate a young person to believe in themselves.”

In my role as a teacher, I take intentional steps to try to ensure all students feel genuinely embraced within our school community. I made a point to acknowledge this student's contributions in class and offered reassurance when I saw them being challenged by certain subjects. I regularly emphasize my availability for support as I remind students that progress happens at your own pace.

My overarching goal as a teacher is to create an environment where all students feel truly valued, supported, and confident as they embark on their educational journeys. This experience with this particular student served as a reminder that a kind word, a smile, and unwavering belief can create a profound impact on the life of a student. •



The note Nandini received from a student. Author photo.



A new way of looking at Canada

MORE INFORMATION

The BCTF has three atlases available for members to borrow. Some districts also have atlases for teachers to sign out from district resource centres. If you would like to book one of the BCTF atlases, email Miranda Light (mlight@bctf.ca) for more information.

Teacher guides are available at www.cangeoeducation.ca.

Above: BCTF members experience the atlas at Summer Leadership Conference. A BCTF workshop will be available soon for local and schools to book for professional development. Photos provided by Gail Stromquist.

By Denise Hendry, teacher, Kamloops

FOR THE LAST THREE YEARS, I have been using the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada with my Grade 4 students to teach several lessons touching on reconciliation and other social studies curriculum topics. The response from students has been overwhelmingly positive, so much so that I've now begun leading other teachers through some of the lessons I've tested out with my classes, so they can take the learning back to their own classrooms.

What is the Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada?

This giant atlas is the size of a school gymnasium. It covers the floor to give students an opportunity to walk across the map and interact in a more tangible way. The map intentionally leaves off provincial and territorial borders and many of the European place names most of us are accustomed to using as identifiers. Instead, the map highlights Indigenous territories and languages to identify place.

It is designed to change the way kids and adults look at this country. It centres Indigenous knowledge and challenges the privilege given to settler place names and languages.

“...students are able to deeply understand the colonial legacy of Canadian history and develop an appreciation for diverse Indigenous languages.”

Each time I watch students walk into a room and see the map for the first time, I see their faces light up with curiosity, excitement, and a bit of confusion. The first activity I do with students is an opportunity for exploration. Students are invited to take their shoes off and walk around on the map, exploring the Indigenous place names and trying to centre themselves on a map that may feel unfamiliar. We often do a scavenger hunt on the map so students can explore in more detail as they search for specific places and landmarks across the country.

As we dive into more learning, students compare and contrast a typical map of Canada with what they see on the Indigenous Peoples Atlas. They note the similarities and differences. We look at the size of reservations and compare them to the size of the territory used by the Indigenous nation before colonization. We acknowledge and commit to remember the Indigenous place names for locations familiar or important to us, such as where our homes or relatives are situated. We learn about the languages spoken in the places we identify as being personally significant. Often, we're able to research how the place names came to be and how they connect to language describing the landscape in that area.

To me, this is all a part of reconciliation. Students get to learn in a way that prioritizes Indigenous languages and knowledges. And they have an opportunity to explore a visual depiction of how Canada's history is shaped by stolen lands.

The lessons with this map can extend into a variety of topics, including climate change, residential schools, movement of people, seasonal cycles and migration, trade routes, human rights, and Indigenous governance. Teacher guides to support educators in planning and teaching lessons related to all these topics, and more, are available on the Canadian Geographic website, www.cangeoeducation.ca. Supplementary reading is also available at www.indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca. The teacher guides and supplementary reading cover regions across Canada to give educators an option to look at Indigenous history on a national scale.

The BCTF is also working to develop additional resources for teachers wanting to use the map with their classes. At the 2023 BCTF Summer Leadership Conference, we tested out some workshops for teachers to provide training, ideas, and resources on how to structure learning opportunities using the map. The workshop will soon be available for locals or schools to book as professional development with their colleagues. The objectives of the workshop are to guide teachers as they explore the map, and help educators challenge the current Eurocentric practices that have silenced other ways of knowing and being.

My experience using this map with students has been impactful and meaningful. I can see that students are able to deeply understand the colonial legacy of Canadian history and develop an appreciation for diverse Indigenous languages. With so many opportunities to engage in different levels of learning about several topics, the map is an inspiring resource that can be used from Kindergarten to Grade 12. I look forward to bringing this workshop to teachers across the province, so more students have an opportunity to learn about Canada's geography with an Indigenous lens. •



Denise Hendry facilitates a workshop with BCTF members featuring the Indigenous Peoples Atlas.

BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association members Scott Roberts, Donna Frost, and Meghan Dehghan welcoming conference attendees.



The value of small provincial specialist associations

“...a lot of planning and effort went into the execution of this successful PSA conference...”

The goal is always to pack as much into this one weekend as possible, while at the same time keeping our conferences relevant, collaborative, and educational.”

By Trevor Randle (he/him), President, BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association and chef instructor, Maple Ridge and **Lori Pilling** (she/her), Vice-President, BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association and chef instructor, Delta

PROVINCIAL SPECIALIST ASSOCIATION (PSA) DAY is an important time for teachers to experience professional development, collaboration, and learning. This day has long been (and continues to be) invaluable to the chef instructors of the BC Culinary Arts Specialist Association (BCCASA). If your school is fortunate enough to have a culinary arts program, you are one of the lucky 64 schools throughout the province to witness first-hand the complexity of the course, as well as the daily demands and requirements of the chef instructor.

If you are unfamiliar with the program, culinary arts is a multifaceted, fast-moving program that serves as an on-campus restaurant. Culinary arts can only be led by an individual or team who holds a Canadian Red Seal of trade and qualifications in cooking, has years of industry experience, and a BC teaching degree. The program requires the chef instructor to not only manage a regular classroom and perform all duties required of a teacher, but also operate and sustain a full food-service business. The business responsibilities include daily production, menu planning, food and supply ordering, catering, managing vendors, co-ordinating with CUPE staff, budgeting, food safety, WCB safety, healthy food guidelines, equipment maintenance, business licensing, health inspections, and all of the responsibilities that come with operating any restaurant or commercial food operation.

Right: Chef instructors started their conference at Davison Orchards in Vernon, BC, to learn about local farming practices and palate training.

So what does all of this have to do with the value of small PSAs and the PSA Day?

There is rarely more than one chef instructor in a school, and, in many cases, only one chef instructor in a district. As anyone who belongs to a small PSA can attest to, it is difficult for chef instructors to find time and opportunity to collaborate with each other. Especially if a chef instructor is in a rural community. PSA Day has always been important to BC's chef instructors, and the 2023 PSA Day was no different.

BCCASA offers its annual October conference and AGM at different locations throughout the province every year. This is done to promote inclusion and diversity. This year's conference was held in Vernon, BC, thanks to the vision and enthusiasm of BCCASA member Jennifer Gray. Jennifer eagerly volunteered to host and showcase all the culinary treasures and learning opportunities that come from that region of the province.

Accommodation for the conference was at Sparkling Hills Resort. This hotel was chosen as our host accommodation for many reasons: its unique staff housing facilities, its multiple kitchens, and its 400-year-old farmhouse turned restaurant. In addition, the owner's philosophy and practice of attracting employees aligns with one of BCCASA's annual goals: acting as a bridge to connect students with industry.

Once the host city and accommodations were established, a lot of planning and effort went into the execution of this successful PSA conference. The BCCASA conference chair relies heavily on the BCTF Professional Development Lens to ensure that speakers, tours, and activities maximize learning opportunities and potential. The goal is always to pack as much into this one weekend as possible, while at the same time keeping our conferences relevant, collaborative, and educational.

The 2023 BCCASA conference followed this tradition.





First, was a visit to Davison Orchards where we learned about local farming practices, the inner workings of a fourth-generation farm, and palate training with unique apple varieties. Second, we were treated to an advanced lesson at Planet Bee, where we learned about pollination, the life cycle of bees, the science behind honey production, the challenges of raising bees, and producing honey while dealing with a declining bee population. We learned about environmental changes that affect the industry and what we as educators can teach students to help protect the future bee population.

The final stop of the afternoon was at Vernon Secondary School for a student-prepared lunch that featured alternative cooking focusing on gluten-free and vegan cuisine. The meal also highlighted local agriculture and producers. After lunch, three student-led round-robin breakout spaces were cleverly organized. In the teaching kitchen, culinary arts students led participants through a local apple osmosis lab that allowed the members to cook a variety of apples using different methods, observe the results, and use the cooked apples in appropriate applications. Another breakout room was dedicated to a hands-on mocktail lesson that showcased locally sourced botanicals and creativity while keeping relevant to the current trend of non-alcoholic beverages. In a third lab, lotion bars were created using food-grade and food-safe ingredients, since many commercially made lotions cannot

PHOTOS

Top left: Touring the 400-year-old farmhouse that was moved from Austria to Sparkling Hills to repurpose as a restaurant.

Bottom left photos: At Planet Bee learning from James Nowek, son of Ed Nowek and second-generation honey and bee industry.



PHOTOS

Above: Laura Shaw, daughter of Tom and Tamra Davison and fourth-generation farmer, greeting the attendees at Davison Orchards.

Left: Parallel 50 chefs presenting their menu: (L to R) Executive Chef Ryan Harney, Sous Chef Jordan Bell, and Pastry Chef Noel Dizon.

be used in the kitchen as they are not food-grade or food-safe. The lessons from the breakout rooms all included take-away resources that could easily be brought into classrooms around the province. Further, participants were able to experience Jennifer's classroom management and set-up, which proved a valuable lesson. The long day of learning was completed with a dinner hosted at Parallel 50 restaurant. This was a blind tasting menu, which meant that the menu was a complete surprise and designed to promote discussions regarding local ingredients and techniques used to create a challenging palate-training lesson.

Day two of the 2023 BCCASA conference had the participants stay together in the hotel. The day began with an extensive tour of the on-site staff housing facilities, its multiple kitchens, and its 400-year-old farmhouse turned restaurant. After the tours, the business of the AGM took place, which fostered new ideas and discussions among the members, including the current issue of grocery and supply price inflation. From this collaborative discussion, a list of suppliers and costs was created. Chef instructors may now use the resource as a guide when food costing and negotiating with suppliers on behalf of their programs.

Once the AGM was adjourned, the hotel chefs provided a wellness lunch that delivered a unique and inspiring menu that was completely vegan and gluten-free. These chefs were among our guest speakers who described their culinary methods and techniques to the group in

preparing the lunch. Their concepts directly follow, and support our efforts to follow, provincially prescribed Healthy Schools guidelines.

The two full days of professional development ended with optional wellness breakout sessions to provide opportunities to summarize learning, collaborate on healthy food ideas and techniques, and share successes and challenges.

The annual PSA Day, and the professional development it offers, continues to be a valuable day for BC's chef instructors. Professional development and PSAs are vitally important for all educators. Those who make the effort to be involved in PSAs should be applauded for providing the time, energy, and resources to learn and enhance their career-long practice. The BCCASA has proven that its conferences and resources are not only for those who teach the culinary arts curriculum, but also provide multiple opportunities for cross-curricular learning. Any teachers interested in food, agriculture, business, or anyone who values BCCASA's philosophy of hands-on, inclusive, professional development for career-long learning is welcome to join BCCASA. •

JOIN A PSA

There are over 30 PSAs in BC offering collegiality and professional development to teachers and education specialists. Visit bctf.ca and search for "provincial specialist associations" to find your PSA.



PREPARING FOR BARGAINING 2024

BARGAINING TIMELINE

January 30– February 1, 2024

In-person bargaining training
for BCTF members

March 4, 2024

Deadline for locals to submit
their priorities and resolutions
to the bargaining conference

April 2024

Executive Committee makes
recommendations to the
bargaining conference;
bargaining collaboration
day for locals

May 22–23, 2024

Bargaining conference
determines provincial
bargaining priorities



GLOSSARY

ARBITRATION: A method of settling a labour-management dispute by having an impartial third party conduct a hearing and render a decision that is binding on both the union and the employer.

BARGAINING SURVEY: A questionnaire sent out by the local to all members of the bargaining unit to assist in the drafting of bargaining proposals. It is not an unbiased scientific survey, but rather aims to inform and gather information from members.

BARGAINING UNIT: A group of employees agreed to by the union and the employer as constituting an appropriate unit for the purposes of collective bargaining and is certified by the BC Labour Relations Board.

CAUCUS: An informal meeting of the bargaining team, away from the bargaining table, to discuss, clarify, or solidify positions on issues.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT: An agreement in writing between the union and the employer setting out the terms and conditions of employment, including rates of pay and hours of work.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING: A process where the union and employer make offers and counter-offers back and forth regarding their employment relationship for the purpose of making a mutually acceptable agreement that outlines the terms and conditions of employment.

GRIEVANCE: An alleged violation, misinterpretation, or misapplication of a provision of the collective agreement. The grievance follows a process outlined in the collective agreement.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: A formal process, specified in the collective agreement, that provides for step-by-step meetings that allow for discussions at a progressively higher level of authority of the employer, usually culminating in arbitration if necessary.

LETTER OF UNDERSTANDING (LOU): An agreement regarding the interpretation or application of existing provisions in the collective agreement. It does not generally alter the provisions of the collective agreement.

MEDIATION: A process in which a neutral third-party assists parties in a bargaining dispute to come to a voluntary agreement. The mediator may suggest to the parties various proposals and methods for resolution of disputes, but they have no formal power to force a settlement.

MELDING: The act of blending existing collective agreement provisions with newly agreed to, or restored, provisions.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING/ AGREEMENT (MOU OR MOA): A written agreement between the employer and the union setting forth agreed terms and conditions. Generally used as a supplement to the collective agreement to resolve a dispute or to conclude negotiations.

RATIFICATION: The voting process for or against the new collective agreement. The voting process by bargaining unit members constitutes the ratification of the collective agreement, which is required for the new agreement to take effect.

SPLIT OF ISSUES: As mandated by the *Public Education Labour Relations Act* of 1994. It determined which bargaining matters can be negotiated locally and which must be negotiated provincially.

TENTATIVE AGREEMENT: The point in the collective bargaining process where all issues have been resolved between the parties and agreement is waiting to be ratified by the parties. This term can also refer to individual bargaining proposals that have been mutually agreed to by the parties.

TERM: The negotiated length of the collective agreement that may include a bridging provision that maintains the terms of the agreement until a new collective agreement has been negotiated.

September 2024

Additional bargaining training offered online from the BCTF

November 4, 2024

Local bargaining tables open

February 28, 2025

Local bargaining concludes

March 1, 2025

The last day provincial bargaining tables can open unless there is an extension by mutual agreement

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD AT THE BARGAINING TABLE



AS MEMBERS OF A UNION, our working lives are largely laid out by our collective agreements. Bargaining is the process through which we negotiate changes to our collective agreements and make improvements to our working lives. Everything from salary and benefits to school year start and end dates can be brought to the table during the bargaining process.

The split of issues outlines which matters can be bargained locally and which are bargained provincially. In both cases, member input is integral to the process.

In Chilliwack, we have already begun school visits to connect with members and get input on bargaining priorities, while also sharing information about the bargaining process.

Both Chilliwack and New Westminster, like many other locals around the province, will be sending out surveys to the membership throughout early 2024. The surveys give us a better idea of what is most important to members right now. This helps inform local bargaining and set priorities for the bargaining team.

The surveys are also an important source of data for provincial bargaining. For each round of provincial bargaining, the BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) hosts a bargaining conference where members set key priorities and objectives for that specific round of bargaining. Locals, and the BCTF Executive Committee, will make recommendations to the bargaining conference for bargaining objectives. These recommendations are informed by the membership and often draw from the survey results where members share what is most important to them. Local general meetings are where final decisions are made for any bargaining objectives that get put forward to the bargaining conference; attending your local general meeting in the new year is important for this reason.

By Britt Hailstone (she/her), Vice-President and Bargaining Chair, Chilliwack Teachers' Association and **Sarah Wethered** (she/her), Second Vice-President and teacher-librarian, New Westminster Teachers' Union

PAGES 20–21: BCTF members (L to R) Jessa Clark, Britt Hailstone, Sarah Wethered, and Kelsi Lesowski while at the BCTF Fall Representative Assembly in Victoria. Rich Overgaard photos.

Making your voice heard when locals are gathering information to inform bargaining is a great first step to get involved in the bargaining process. For those who are looking for a bit more involvement, there are a number of different ways to volunteer within your union to be directly involved in the bargaining process, such as joining your local's bargaining team.

The bargaining team is a group of members that represent the membership at the negotiating table with the employer. Throughout our careers, both of us have experienced bargaining teams consisting mostly, and in some cases entirely, of men. Gender balance and diverse representation are important if the bargaining team is to be representative of the membership. It can feel like an intimidating process to put your name forward for bargaining, and there can certainly be some feelings of impostor syndrome, but both of us have found the environment to be supportive and welcoming. Every step throughout the process is collaborative and democratic.

There are several different roles involved in bargaining, and some are more accessible for members who feel they don't have enough experience to represent their colleagues at the bargaining table. For example, observers and note-takers are two roles that allow members to experience bargaining first-hand without the pressure of being a negotiator.

Bargaining is collective action that directly affects our day-to-day work, which is why getting involved in bargaining and staying informed throughout the process is important. In recent rounds of bargaining, we've made some monumental gains that benefit members. For example, in New Westminster we were able to add language to the collective agreement for job-sharing and solidify language to help prevent split shifts. With only one overcrowded high school in our local, we are looking to potentially have longer school days in the future to accommodate our growing school population. This language proactively works toward ensuring members will have continuous work shifts if the high school day extends beyond four blocks.

In Chilliwack, through bargaining, we've secured strong bookends to our school year: we always start on the Tuesday after Labour Day and finish on the last Friday of June. This sometimes means we have a short and compressed school year, but ensures members have consistent start and end times each school year. We also created an option for an intra-district exchange, where members can opt to swap positions with a teacher from a different school for one year to try working in a different community before committing to it long-term. Other significant gains include clarifying staff meeting language, the creation of a District Advisory Committee on Health and Safety, and making our collective agreement gender neutral by removing gendered pronouns and replacing terms like "maternity leave" with "pregnancy/parental leave."

We're looking forward to working with colleagues to further improve our collective agreements in the next round of bargaining. Keep an eye out for surveys from your local and connect with your local office to learn more about how you can get involved. •



Sarah Wethered



New addition to the BCTF Code of Ethics

By Larry Dureski and Viva Moodley, BCTF Judicial Council members

THE BC TEACHERS' FEDERATION (BCTF) Spring Representative Assembly passed a motion to add a new clause to the BCTF Code of Ethics. The Code of Ethics outlines general rules that apply to all members to maintain high standards of professional service and conduct toward students, colleagues, and the professional union. Clause 10 states that, in the course of union business and meetings, the member must not discriminate against any other member because of any of the protected grounds under the *BC Human Rights Code*.

The addition of Clause 10 is part of the Federation's ongoing work to be a more inclusive and accessible union. Incorporating the *BC Human Rights Code* ensures that our Code of Ethics remains current and relevant, as Clause 10 can be updated to reflect any changes that are made to the

BC Human Rights Code based on emerging understandings of equity and inclusion. Clause 10 will help to ensure safe spaces that are free from discrimination for all members.

The Judicial Council is responsible for implementing the Code of Ethics and considering complaints of alleged breaches. The council consists of 18 members and one chairperson who are elected by the Representative Assembly.

For advice on how to proceed with issues related to the Code of Ethics, members are advised to contact local union officers. For information and advice on the Code of Ethics and the complaint process, contact Sherry Payne, Ethics Administrator at 604-871-1803, spayne@bctf.ca, or contact Nadia Bove, Internal Relations Administrative Assistant at 604-871-1823, nbove@bctf.ca, toll free 1-800-663-9163. •

BCTF CODE OF ETHICS

1. The member speaks and acts toward students with respect and dignity, and deals judiciously with them, always mindful of their individual rights and sensibilities.
2. The member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare. *The member follows legal requirements in reporting child protection issues.*
3. A privileged relationship exists between members and students. The member refrains from exploiting that relationship for material, ideological, or other advantage.
4. The member is willing to review with colleagues, students, and their parents/guardians the practices employed in discharging the member's professional duties.
5. The member directs any criticism of the teaching performance and related work of a colleague to that colleague in private. If the member believes that the issue(s) has not been addressed, they may, after privately informing the colleague in writing of their intent to do so, direct the criticism in confidence to appropriate individuals who can offer advice and assistance.* *It shall not be considered a breach of the Code of Ethics for a member to follow the legal requirements for reporting child protection issues.*
6. The member acknowledges the authority and responsibilities of the BCTF and its locals and fulfills obligations arising from membership in their professional union.
7. The member adheres to the provisions of the collective agreement.
8. The member acts in a manner not prejudicial to job actions or other collective strategies of their professional union.
9. The member, as an individual or as a member of a group of members, does not make unauthorized representations to outside bodies in the name of the Federation or its locals.
10. In the course of union business and meetings, the member must not discriminate against any other member because of race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, or age of that person or member, or because that person or member has been convicted of a criminal or summary conviction offence that is unrelated to the membership or intended membership, or any other protected grounds under the *BC Human Rights Code*.

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ADVOCATING FOR EQUITABLE FRENCH-LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN BC

By Astérie Ndikumana, Daniella Melanson, Elizabeth Rush, Kayleigh MacMillan, Nicholas Renaud, Patrice Oscienny, and Sonja Gowda, Advisory Committee on French Programs and Services members

THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FRENCH PROGRAMS AND SERVICES (ACFPS) supports French-language education in BC by advocating for equitable working conditions and resources for members who teach in French-language programs. We explore approaches to French-language teaching and learning that meet BC Teachers' Federation (BCTF) commitments to reconciliation, decolonization, anti-racism, indigenization, and climate justice.

The committee has been organizing biennial coalition meetings with partners in the education sector as far back as 2011. The goal of the coalition meetings is to foster collaborative and collective action in supporting French education in BC. Our partners include the Ministry of Education and Child Care, the BC School Trustees Association, SOGI 123, and the Accessible Resource Centre BC. After a hiatus due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we planned a new coalition meeting in spring 2023, the first since pandemic restrictions were put in place.

The meeting resulted in the development of three themes that outline how we can collectively work to improve French education. The themes (see right column) highlight actionable items that can support teachers and students with French as a first or working language (FFWL).

The BCTF has already begun to respond to these themes. For example, specific French-language spaces have become a regular part of new teachers' Zoom gatherings so FFWL members can develop belonging and community as outlined in theme three. Additionally, the French spaces within the Zoom gatherings have provided important professional development on topics such as inclusive and gender-neutral language, and interconnections between Indigenous languages and French.

The ACFPS has also brought forth recommendations to the BCTF Executive Committee to ensure the language used by the Federation when communicating in French is in line with inclusive language guidelines in French from the Canadian government. (See the *Inclusionnaire: recueil de solutions inclusives*, an excellent resource that offers suggestions for inclusive language to replace traditionally gendered words used to describe people.)

Moving forward, the ACFPS will present the three themes at the BCTF spring zone meetings to get more member input to inform future recommendations to the BCTF Executive Committee. Another coalition meeting is planned for May 2024 to check in on the progress that has been made by coalition partners and to discuss next steps.

As a committee, we look forward to strengthening our relationships with our partners in the education sector to achieve more for students and teachers and improve French-language education in our province.

THEME 1: CULTURAL SAFETY AND LINGUISTIC AGENCY

- Deliberately present different forms of French (vocabulary, syntax, varieties).
- Explicitly teach approaches to inclusive and gender-neutral French with students to foster their linguistic agency (i.e., show that learners have choices in terms of how they represent identity and community in French).
- Emphasize the interconnection of Indigenous languages and French on the territories where schools are located, and address how First Peoples Principles of Learning relate to learning and using French in community.
- Promote a model of the school community as an active producer of French-language culture rather than a consumer of culture.

THEME 2: PROGRAM ACCESSIBILITY

- Improve the physical and economic accessibility of French-language resources that reflect a diversity of Francophone families, individuals, cultures, and communities (by broadening representations of race, sexual orientation and gender identity, community memberships, etc.).
- Enhance resources that celebrate Francophone cultures in both minority settings and international communities.
- Grow French-language programs in rural and urban settings in consideration of geographic and socio-economic barriers to access.

THEME 3: STRATEGIES FOR RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF FFWL BCTF MEMBERS

- Encourage the Teacher Regulation Branch and Teacher Qualification Service to facilitate the recognition of the training and experience of people from elsewhere, while offering professional development to clarify BCTF educational commitments.
- Establish strategies to support school board human resources in working on cultural safety and accessibility in recruitment practices (e.g., give applicants the opportunity to talk about their experiences in relation to hiring needs, emphasize that people from linguistic minority backgrounds are both necessary and beneficial).
- Emphasize the importance of programs and activities that develop a sense of belonging and security for new BCTF members.
- Promote focused mentoring programs and offer paid internships for people from different communities to get work experience in a BC classroom setting before applying. •



Supporting French-speaking newcomer high school students throughout the school integration process

By **Anusha Kassin** (she/her), associate professor, Vancouver
Gayatri Kainth (she/her), registered psychologist, Calgary
and **Tonje Molyneux** (she/her), Ph.D. candidate, Vancouver

BEING A BILINGUAL NATION with two official languages (French and English), Canada selects a portion of its newcomers (i.e., immigrants, refugees, and international students) from countries where French is a main language. Following immigration, many newcomer families opt to enroll their children in French education.¹ Schools therefore become the primary point of contact for cultural immersion and integration for students and their families,² and for the sustainability of the French language in Canada.

Our research aimed to better understand the process of school integration for newcomer youth transitioning into a French public school in British Columbia following immigration to Canada. According to Kassin and Mukred,³ this phenomenon captures the adjustment of newcomer youth inside and outside the school system, including, but not limited to, language learning, academic performance, classroom behaviour, social networking, identity negotiation, emotional and familial well-being, involvement in school life, and understanding of the educational system. Results of our qualitative research⁴ highlighted three significant barriers to integration:

1. NAVIGATING SCHOOL DIFFERENCES AND INTEGRATION CHALLENGES

One of the challenges identified in our study pertained to language learning. The use of French in academic settings and the use of English in social and community settings was said to be confusing. Further, adjusting to school system differences like physical features and tools was tricky. The method of transportation to school was also different for them, as they often had long commutes to the nearest French-language school. Another challenge entailed ways of finding and seeking support throughout the process of school integration. To ease the transition into the new setting, newcomer students often relied on classmates from similar backgrounds (e.g., shared language and/or immigration status). Such supports allowed them to remain connected to their cultural and linguistic practices and identities. In some cases, they needed support finding work, medical assistance, and cultural spaces where they could meet people with similar lived experiences.

2. NEGOTIATING MULTIPLE AND INTERSECTING IDENTITIES

Newcomer students were put in a position to navigate many cultural differences once they arrived in Canada. Specifically, they were surprised by the ethnic and cultural diversity within their schools. Further, they remarked on the presence of friendliness and regular greetings among students and staff in the school setting. Students' growing awareness of Canada's history of colonialism and the experiences of Indigenous Peoples prompted them to reject the idea of being called a Canadian. At the same time, they felt less connected with their French identity and culture. The only connection that linked them to their culture/country of origin was that of language. These factors contributed to growth, change, and an emerging new identity in Canada.

3. COPING WITH BIASES ON A DAILY BASIS

Students appreciated bringing their own attitudes, ways of thinking, and life experiences into their new school setting. Simultaneously, they faced racism and discrimination on many fronts, including, but not limited to, their skin colour, religion, newcomer status, as well as speaking French as an additional language. These experiences were marked by microaggressions, teasing, and bullying, which directly affected their mental health and well-being.

Our findings point to critical experiences of school integration among French-speaking newcomer youth, which can inform the work of educators and decision-makers. The following recommendations can enhance the experiences of French-speaking newcomer students in schools.

1. CHANGING THE WAY WE RELATE TO NEWCOMER YOUTH BY EXPANDING CULTURAL AWARENESS

Increased cultural awareness among students and staff could help change the perception of majority (English) and minority (French) languages in Canada, in turn affecting newcomers' experiences of school integration. This shift can be achieved by considering French students' pluralistic background and intersecting experiences, working to integrate them into the general school culture and reduce potential isolation.⁵ For example, teachers can introduce students to a more diverse history and conception of French and the French language. This could involve reframing bilingualism and pluralism as a strength rather than a deficit. Teachers are also able to facilitate identity development by designing classroom activities that prompt students to think about culture, language, and other facets of identity.

2. EMBRACING COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY AS SCHOOL STAFF

Given that schools represent the first point of contact for newcomer youth,⁶ school staffs have a cultural and social responsibility to create welcoming and engaging spaces for students. Newcomer students may not reach out for support because of language barriers, prejudice, and discrimination. Thus, direct engagement from the school staff and students can be helpful in fostering positive connections and preparing a welcoming ambience. The easiest way to accomplish such a task is to initiate conversations with newcomer students directly and provide them with open invitations to ask questions or seek support at any time. The use of arts-based methods to create safe spaces and environments within the school can also be helpful. Some examples include artistic clubs, peer-support groups, and homework assistance. According to Prasad,⁷ arranging performances for varied audiences can contribute to reproducing and preserving both French language and culture. Intercultural education may also be fostered by celebrating cultural holidays.⁸

3. APPRECIATING THE VALUE OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE SETTLEMENT SERVICES IN SCHOOLS

By providing settlement services, schools can play a pivotal role in addressing the needs of newcomer students and their families as well as fostering a sense of community and belonging.

In this way, teachers may need to advocate alongside newcomer students and their families to ensure adequate, tailored resources and supports within the school. Further, equipping administrators with the skills needed to enhance cultural representation among school staff will also support a smoother transition and integration.⁹

4. REMEMBERING THAT TEACHERS' STRENGTHS ARE BOLSTERED BY PD

Professional development (PD) training opportunities that emphasize the overall experiences of newcomer students, including their social, cultural, psychological, and academic dimensions, are necessary.¹⁰

5. TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS

School integration following immigration is demanding for newcomer youth, and, as such, it may result in experiences of anxiety, depression, and overall isolation. It is imperative for schools to have accessible counselling services in several languages.¹¹ At a policy level, supports for students may be enhanced by strengthening partnerships between schools and community clinics. These services would also be beneficial to the entire student population.¹²

As we highlighted in this article, newcomer students who enroll in French school systems following immigration to predominantly English-speaking provinces have unique and sometimes complex needs and experiences. It is incumbent on schools to address them in ways that are culturally responsive, socially just, and ultimately promote the optimal development of newcomer students. •

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9 K. Palova, A. Pagtalunan, L. Rahal, & A. Kassan, "Integration experiences of francophone newcomer students in English provinces: A literature review," *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*, 38(2), 2023, p. 159–181: <https://doi.org/10.1177/08295735231155045>

10 M.T. Masinda, M. Jacquet, & D. Moore, "An integrated framework for immigrant children and youth's school integration: A focus on African francophone students in British Columbia – Canada," *International Journal of Education*, 6(1), 2014: <https://doi.org/10.5296/ije.v6i1.4321>

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Celebrating Black Canadians

By **Nikitha Fester** (she/her), BCTF staff

JOY IS AN ACT OF RESISTANCE! – TOI DERRICOTTE

HAPPY BLACK HISTORY AND FUTURES MONTH!

Black History Month was first recognized in Toronto in 1979, and a decade later it was observed in Nova Scotia. Finally, it was officially recognized by the House of Commons in 1995, following a motion introduced by Dr. Jean Augustine. In February 2008, the first Black male senator, Senator Donald Oliver, introduced a motion to recognize the contributions of Black Canadians during Black History Month. More recently, in 2022, the BC government, thanks to the hard work of the Ninandotoo Society, proclaimed Black Excellence Day. Black Excellence Day provides us with an occasion to reflect on the positive and important contributions of Black Canadians and Black British Columbians to the success of the province. The continued activism of Black folks in the country demonstrates that Black excellence is not fossilized in our past but very much alive and present today.

The contributions of Black Canadians have been shaping Canada's heritage and identity since the early 1600s. Many of us learned of the Halifax explosion during the First World War, however few of us learned of Dr. Clement Ligoure, a hero of this event. He was born in Trinidad and moved to Canada to study medicine at Queen's University in the early 1900s. He graduated in 1916, and two years later the institution banned Black students until 1965. Dr. Ligoure moved to Halifax to join the war effort, but he was refused entry and was also denied hospital privileges. Therefore, he set up a private

clinic in his home, a short distance away from where the explosion occurred on December 6, 1917. On this day, Halifax's hospitals were overwhelmed by patients, so Dr. Ligoure and his housekeeper worked tirelessly over three weeks helping those injured by the explosion. Records show that by December 28, 1917, three weeks after the explosion, the doctor had assisted nearly 200 people per day! His home on North Street has since been awarded heritage status. In addition, the Dr. Clement Ligoure Award in recognition of exemplary service during a medical crisis was created in 2021 and awarded to Dr. Robert Strang, Nova Scotia's chief medical officer of health, that same year.

While the Black population in BC is small, Black excellence can be found here as well. For example, Eleanor Collins, who lived in Burnaby, was the first Black television host in North America. Her variety show, *The Eleanor Show*, debuted in 1955 and she is known as Canada's "first lady of jazz."

Separately, Barbara Howard, a Canadian sprinter and educator, was the first Black woman to represent Canada at an international sports competition. She grew up in East Vancouver's Grandview neighbourhood and attended Britannia Secondary School, and her grandfather even owned a barbershop in Gastown. After her sporting career, she became an educator in Port Alberni. Later she was the first racialized teacher to be

Want to learn more?

WATCH

AFRO-CANADA This French series documents the presence of Black Canadians from slavery to forced displacement and exile, and the resilience and resurgence of Black communities in Canada.

AFRICAN RENAISSANCE: WHEN ART MEETS POWER Journalist Afua Hirsch explores how different African countries shed their colonial pasts to emerge as cultural and artistic powerhouses.

SECRET VANCOUVER: RETURN TO HOGAN'S ALLEY *Return to Hogan's Alley* is a short documentary exposing the rich Black community that existed in Downtown Vancouver up until the late 1960s.

LISTEN

OSCAR PETERSON, "HYMN TO FREEDOM" Born in Montréal and considered one of the greatest jazz pianists of all time, Oscar Peterson won seven Grammy awards and a lifetime achievement award. His discography includes features by Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington, among others.

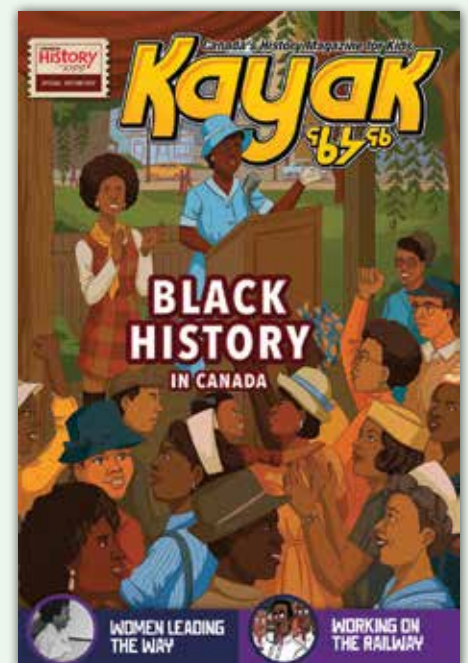
LIDO PIMIENTA, "ESO QUE TU HACES" Afro-Indigenous-Colombian Canadian queer powerhouse, Lido Pimienta has worked with the likes of The Halluci Nation (formerly A Tribe Called Red). Her album *La Papessa* won the Polaris Prize in 2017. Additionally, she became the first racialized woman to compose a score for the New York City Ballet.

THE RASCALZ, "NORTHERN TOUCH" Vancouver talent that put Canada's hip-hop scene on the map, long before Drake, with the Canadian hip-hop anthem "Northern Touch." The Rascalz shocked Canadian music fans when they refused to accept their Juno Award in 1998, as the urban music category was not televised.

TEACH

See [teachermag.ca](https://www.teachermag.ca) for lessons on Grafton Tyler Brown, a Black artist who found fame in Victoria. This lesson is art-focused and appropriate for Grades 2 and 3 but can be adapted as needed. The lesson is complete with links, a biography, prompts, and extensions. A high school print-making lesson is also available. This one is appropriate for Grades 8 and 9. Similarly, this lesson includes links, step-by-step process, background information, and prompts. Some materials are required.

In addition to the BC-focused art lessons, check out Kayak, a free downloadable PDF workbook all about Black Canadian history, assembled by Dr. Natasha Henry, Black Canadian historian and curriculum developer.



Visit linktr.ee/BHMResources2024 for links to these items.

hired by the Vancouver School Board. She taught at Hastings, Henry Hudson, and Trafalgar elementary schools and remained a teacher for 43 years.

Before Barbara, there was John Craven Jones, the first Black teacher on Salt Spring Island in 1859. He would travel eight kilometres a day between schools, where he taught Black, Indigenous, and white children. From 1867 onwards, he taught reading, writing, math, geography, geometry, Latin, and Greek, all without pay. In 1869, public funding for schools was established and he earned a monthly salary of \$40. In 1875, he retired to his farm on Salt Spring and then moved back to Ohio in 1882. John's brother William, commonly known as "Painless Jones," was BC's first dentist. He lived and served in Barkerville, BC. Painless Jones would extract or gold-fill a tooth for a nominal fee of \$5. •



ENDING THE ERASURE

Black studies course brings stories of Black joy, excellence, and resistance to the forefront



**“Black histories and present-day realities and futures are not just reserved for February.”
– Manvir Mander**

PHOTOS

Mel Scheuer (left) and Michael Musherure (right) are two of the three teachers who created a Black Studies 11 and 12 course in Surrey. Manvir Mander (not pictured) was also instrumental in the process. Joshua Berson Photography.

They started out with the goal of giving students an opportunity to see Black representation in the curriculum; they ended up with approval to run a new course called Black Studies for Grades 11 and 12 in Surrey schools.

FOR YEARS, Mel Scheuer was acutely aware of the absence of Black voices in classroom lessons and resources about BC and Canada’s history. “I always tried to weave Black stories and Black voices into my courses until I experienced more of a revolution in 2020,” said Mel. “At that point, I knew we needed a more systemic solution to stop the ongoing omission and racism in our curriculum.”

Mel reached out to colleagues Manvir Mander and Michael Musherure to ask if they were interested in working together to challenge the erasure of Black histories.

At the height of COVID lockdowns, the three teachers began collaborating through a WhatsApp group called Planning the Revolution. They started out with the goal of giving students an opportunity to see Black representation in the curriculum; they ended up with approval to run a new course called Black Studies for Grades 11 and 12 in Surrey schools.

It was a long process to design a course from scratch and get the appropriate approvals to run the course in schools. All of the work was done off the sides of their desks, as no release time was available for a project like this, but all three are proud of what they created.

For Michael, the decision to be a part of this project was an easy one. “I was born and raised in Uganda, and I was shocked by how little Black representation is included here,” said Michael.

By bringing together Michael’s lived experience and connection to the continent of Africa with Mel and Manvir’s anti-oppression lenses, the trio was able to create a course that covers a wide variety of topics related to Black studies, including a strong focus on Black joy, excellence, and resistance.

“The course brought to light a lot of positive impacts that Black people in the past had. It is common we see only slavery and its negative impacts being talked about when bringing up Black history; though these conversations are also important, I thought it was refreshing that the course included so many positive impacts,” said Bullen Kosa, who took the course in Grade 11 last year.





“I learned so much about the Black experience in Vancouver. My ancestors were here building this country too; it was enriching for me to learn that.”
– Michael Musherure

The course was designed to start with an in-depth look at the continent of Africa. Rather than give students a generalized overview of the continent, the course focuses on particular nations and specific stories. “It was amazing to watch my students learn about their ancestors and understand colonial lies they’ve been told about where knowledge comes from,” said Mel.

Like any curriculum document, each teacher will modify the course to suit the needs of the students they are teaching. In Manvir’s case, the students wanted to start the course by deconstructing the concept of race, so they reversed the order of topics to fit the students’ curiosities.

Manvir’s student-driven course meant students were able to dive into their own inquiry questions and analyze the colonial implications of the systems and structures we live within.

“When it came time to do research, the course challenged colonial expectations of research by encouraging students to start with their own lived experiences as a primary source,” said Manvir.

After covering the invention of race and colonial history, including the contributions of Black communities in Canada, the course moves on to a celebration of Black cultures, joy, love, and futurisms.

Learning like this can be very personal and relational, and so community building, while not officially a part of the curriculum, is an important piece for teachers to consider when teaching this course.

For Manvir, Michael, and Mel, the course created an opportunity to learn alongside their students. “I learned so much about the Black experience in Vancouver,” said Michael. “My ancestors were here building this country too; it was enriching for me to learn that.”

“For me as a non-Black educator of colour, I recognize that I am in a privileged position to be teaching Black studies, so the course was an opportunity for me to unpack my identity along with my students,” said Manvir.

This year, the course did not run in any schools in Surrey. While the course was approved by Surrey's board of education, it is not yet recognized as an official course by the Ministry of Education and Child Care. The Ministry has approved the course through Explorations in Social Studies 11 so students can receive graduation credits by taking the course. However, the fact that it is not a stand-alone course recognized by the Ministry is still a barrier, say Mel, Manvir, and Michael, especially because parents express concerns about Ministry approval when students express interest in enrolling.

When the course ran last year, it was a big success with students. High school student Bullen Kosa shared the following:

[This course] forced me as a Black student to dive into the history and motives of historical events that shaped the world we see today. A key take-away I had from this class is that there is a plethora of Black history that is not seen in today's school curriculum. That needs to change. This course is especially vital because there are not enough people who know about Black culture and history. Things like subtle racism and N-word culture are so prevalent these days due to a lack of knowledge and understanding, so this course is super important to have in every educational institution. In general, the Black studies course was one of my favourite courses. I'm glad I got to experience it and I wish it could be more available across the Lower Mainland.

Students have repeatedly asked for the course to be offered this year, so in the absence of the official course schools have implemented some creative solutions to make safe spaces and communities for Black students.

"We asked students, what do you want to do? They want change, so we organize, we learn, and we meet. We started a Beyond Black History Group Collective, which evolved into a Black Student Union," said Mel.

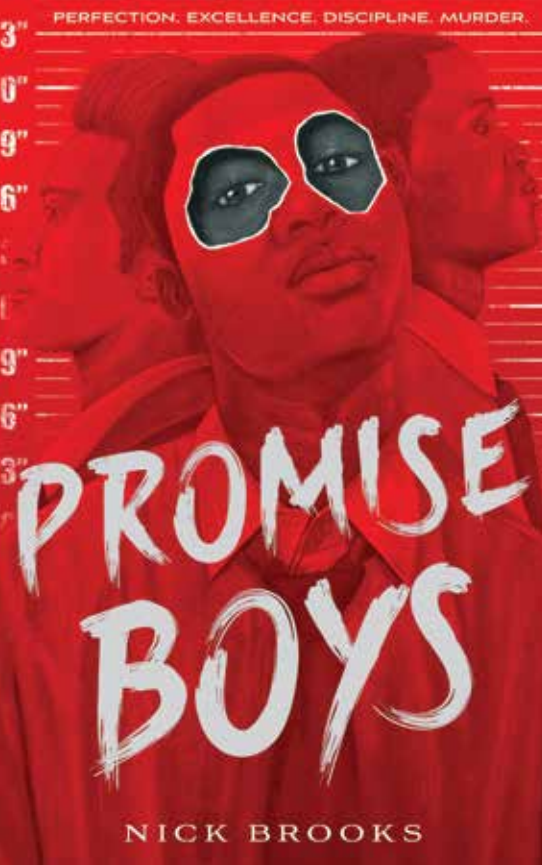
The actions from Black students serve as a reminder that kids are taking it upon themselves to create change, but all three teachers noted that it's important for educators to acknowledge that the labour shouldn't be on Black folks. Anti-racism needs to be a collective responsibility.

"This course is a step in the right direction, but we need to weave anti-colonial, anti-oppressive, and intersectional lenses into all of our work as teachers," said Manvir. "Black histories and present-day realities and futures are not just reserved for February."

"I see that students are questioning decisions that instill ignorance and fear and uphold systems of oppression. I'm excited to see where students go with their knowledge, their passion, and their advocacy," said Mel. •

**"I'm excited to see where students go with their knowledge, their passion, and their advocacy."
– Mel Scheuer**





BOOK REVIEWS

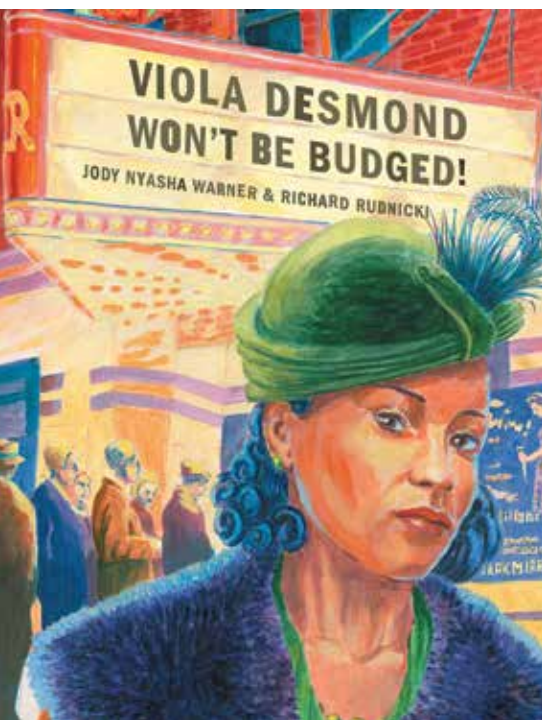
Page-turning murder mystery draws in reluctant readers

Promise Boys by Nick Brooks

Reviewed by Tammy Le, President, BC Teacher-Librarians' Association

PROMISE BOYS is a recently published book that is a murder mystery novel for students who like a fast-paced read with multiple perspectives. It's about three teenage boys at Promise Prep School who are suspected of murdering their principal because all three were at school in detention when it happened. Because of their situation, the three boys have to help each other to solve the murder because no one else is willing to help them. Aside from the three main characters who are Black and Salvadoran, we also have perspectives from teachers, community members, news reporters, etc. This novel sucks you in from the beginning and will get reluctant readers turning the page. The audiobook has a full cast and is even more engaging for those who struggle with reading.

This is a great book to recommend for Black History Month because it deals with issues of racism and prejudice against BIPOC individuals, themes that can be discussed as a class or in literature circles. It allows the class to explore the ideas of bias and perspectives that would help with deeper learning. •



Story of Canadian civil rights hero rich with learning opportunities

Viola Desmond Won't Be Budged!

by Jody Nyasha Warner and illustrated by Richard Rudnicki

Reviewed by Doni Gratton (she/her), teacher-librarian, West Vancouver

THE STORY of Viola Desmond wasn't often told prior to this book being published; this account of determination and resilience is a favorite read-aloud of mine, especially for Black History Month. The book lends itself to many opportunities for discussion, as mentioned below.

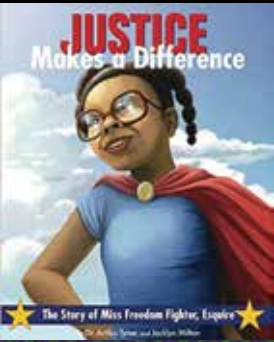
Before Rosa Parks, before Ruby Bridges, Canada had its own hero in the battle against injustice and segregation: Viola Desmond. Viola's story takes place just outside one of the oldest Black communities in Nova Scotia in 1946. On a business trip one day, Viola finds herself killing time while her car is fixed, so she ends up at a movie theatre. Through what Viola originally perceives as a misunderstanding about ticket price, we see that racial discrimination has occurred. We then see how Viola defies the segregation law in the Roseland Theatre by refusing to budge from her seat in the "whites only" section. The story continues with Viola spending a night in jail, resulting in her outrage that lends momentum to getting Canada's segregation law changed.

"...this account of determination and resilience is a favorite read-aloud of mine..."

This book shows clear examples of how Black people were persecuted at that time in Canada; there are many places to stop the story for questions or connections the teacher or students may have. For example, students are often outraged to see Viola arrested and may want to discuss why this happened.

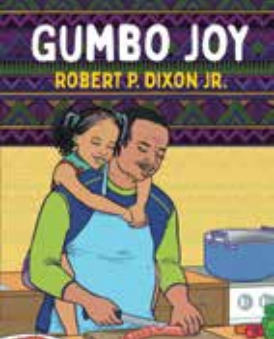
The back page of the book contains further information and an explanation of why Viola Desmond is considered a hero and a change-maker in Canada. It is interesting to note that the same year this book was published the face of Viola Desmond was depicted on the new Canadian \$10 bill. •

more titles for BLACK HISTORY MONTH



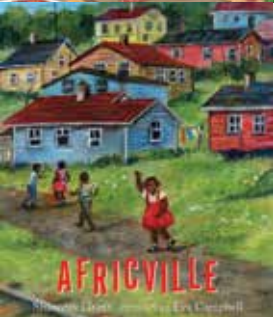
***Justice Makes a Difference: The Story of Miss Freedom Fighter, Esquire* by Artika Tyner and Jacklyn Milton, and illustrated by Jeremy Norton**

In this picture book, Justice learns about important change-makers and leaders from her grandmother. She dreams of making a difference in her community as a superhero named Miss Freedom Fighter, Esquire.



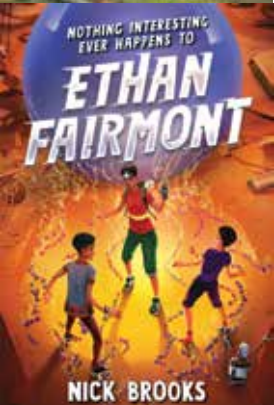
***Gumbo Joy* by Robert P. Dixon Jr. and illustrated by Amakai Quayle**

The story and illustrations in this book are a celebration of the cultural history of the African diaspora. The book highlights the significance of gumbo as a tradition, meal, celebration, and way of gathering.



***Africville* by Shauntay Grant and illustrated by Eva Campbell**

Grant and Campbell share the vibrant history of Africville, a Black community in Nova Scotia that was populated for over 150 years until its demolition in the 1960s. The story highlights the annual Africville reunion/festival where residents and their families gather every summer to remember the community.



***Nothing Interesting Ever Happens to Ethan Fairmont* by Nick Brooks**

This middle-grade science-fiction novel follows self-proclaimed genius inventor Ethan Fairmont who works with his ex-best friend and a new kid in school to help save an alien who is stranded on earth.

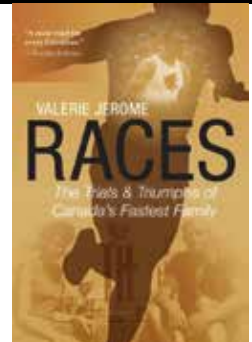


***Too Many Interesting Things Are Happening to Ethan Fairmont* by Nick Brooks**

In the second title of the Ethan Fairmont stories, Ethan tries to communicate with his alien friend, Cheese, while mysterious and drastic changes occur around his neighbourhood. This book is ideal for readers ages 8–12.

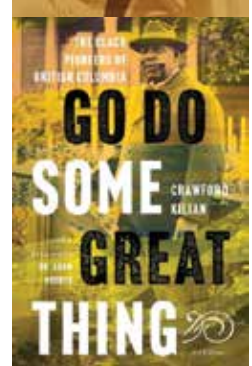
***Races: The Trials and Triumphs of Canada's Fastest Family* by Valerie Jerome**

Valerie Jerome shares the story of the Olympians in her family, including Harry Jerome, who set seven world records; John "Army" Howard, Canada's first Black Olympian; and herself, a competitor at the 1960 Rome Olympics. The book addresses the racism the family faced and the legacy of activism that lives on today.



***Go Do Some Great Thing: The Black Pioneers of British Columbia* by Crawford Kilian**

This book brings to light stories of prominent Black pioneers and trailblazers including Sylvia Stark, one of the earliest settlers on Salt Spring Island; Joe Fortes, lifeguard and special constable; and Mifflin Gibbs, the first Black person to hold public office in BC.



***Teaching Black History to White People* by Leonard N. Moore**

Moore combines his personal story and experience teaching Black history with insight into pedagogy and practice that can help educators guide students through honest conversations about race.



***Pourin' Down Rain: A Black Woman Claims Her Place in the Canadian West* by Cheryl Foggo**

Cheryl Foggo recounts her adolescence in Calgary in the 1960s and the process of becoming a proud Black woman. Her book is a celebration of Black experience and Black resiliency on the prairies.



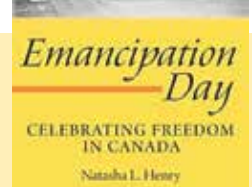
***Emancipation Day: Celebrating Freedom in Canada* by Natasha Henry**

This book shares history and traditions surrounding Emancipation Day in Canada, with a specific focus on the social, cultural, political, and educational practices that mark Emancipation Day in Ontario, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and BC.



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The Memory Project Speakers Bureau volunteer speakers have a diverse range of experiences from the front lines to peacekeeping missions worldwide, and more.

Their personal experiences can add nuance to classes and create opportunities for more open conversations about Canada's military and its role at home and abroad.

Visit thememoryproject.com to request a speaker today!


There is history curriculum to explore year-round! Consider welcoming a speaker this winter and spring.


Feb: End of Gulf War

Mar: International Women's Day, End of Afghanistan Mission

May 29: UN Day for Peacekeepers

A Gift Beyond Imagination


 神韻晚會 2024
SHEN YUN
CHINA BEFORE COMMUNISM



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 **University of Lethbridge**



"Both the formal and informal MED curriculum encouraged me to be resilient, helped me to rise and make a difference in the lives of others. This transformed a culture of learning into a way of being. My hope is for other students to navigate learning and make it meaningful, while preserving their identity and connection to culture."

~ **linaatsii'swaawaakaasaakii (Pretty Spider Woman),
Taylor Little Mustache (BA/BEd '19, MED '23)**

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UBC Okanagan is located on the unceded traditional
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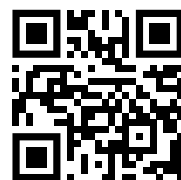


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 March 31, 2024 at
educ.ubc.ca/edaward



THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
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Being Afro-indigenous

Always made me feel left out as a kid

It made me feel different. Sometimes I would look around my classroom and notice that there was not any other black-indigenous queen in my classes. So, I took my differences and embraced them.

Now I am a beautiful Afro-indigenous queen myself.

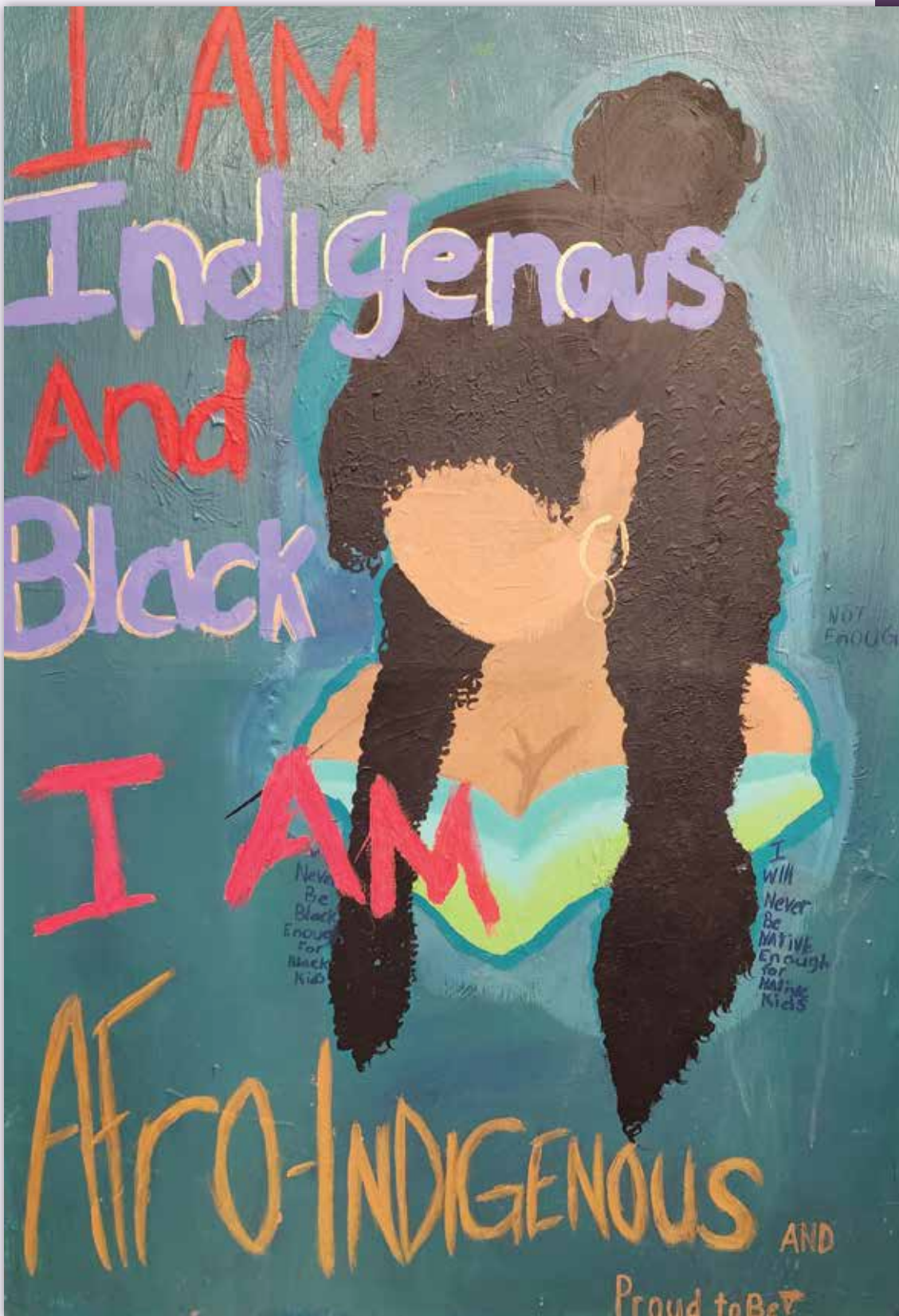
I created this piece with some texture brushes and basic acrylic paint.

While making this I had to create my unique hair texture to embrace the curl/coils.

I wanted this painting to inspire others that there is beauty in everything, No matter how different you are.

You're beautiful just the way you are!

– Jeniya Cummings



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STUDENT ART

Send images of student art to teachermag@bctf.ca
for a chance to be featured in an upcoming issue.