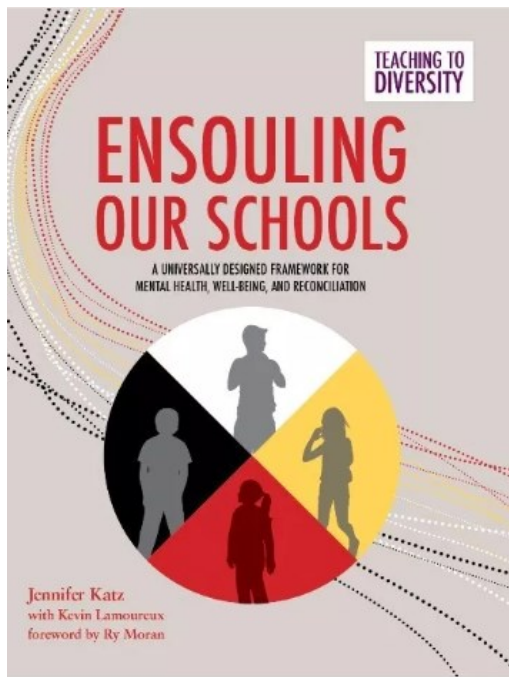


Ensouling our Schools

Written by: Jennifer Katz



“We must bring back the heart and spirit of education; the love of learning and achievement, the sense of belonging, community, and connection. It is time to ensoul our schools” (p. 3).

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OUR CHILDREN TODAY

“Canadian children today are growing up in a country where there is still not equity or genuine fairness for all Canadians, where there remains a desperate need for reconciliation” (p. 209).

SUMMARY

In *Ensouling our Schools*, Jennifer Katz presents a framework for schools that promotes spiritual, emotional, and mental-health for students and teachers. The book is divided into two parts; part one is dedicated to finding the meaning and purpose in schools through recognizing our history and the affects of our history, including the lasting generational affects of residential schools, honoring Indigenous worldviews of education, and teacher’s responsibilities in response to The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action. Part one also discusses the importance of honoring spirit and soul in education, looks at neurology, trauma and mental health in our schools, as well as, the Three-Block Model (TBM) of Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Part two provides the ‘how to’ for building flourishing classroom and school environment, as well as, building and developing student and staff culture. Part two discusses programming for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), addressing mental health needs, programming for Reconciliation, and promoting joy in schools and learning. The structure of this book is like a loom; it is the weaving together of effective practices for inclusive education, through the lens of the TBM. *Ensouling our Schools* provides a practical, culturally responsive, holistic framework and programming that can be implemented by all teachers.

MUTUAL RESPECT IN EDUCATION

“Let us all work together to create education systems where we are finally given the opportunity to learn from one another in a spirit of mutual respect.” (p.xi) as written by Ry Moran, Director, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Winnipeg.

PART I: ENSOULLED LEARNING COMMUNITIES

TEACHERS AS CHANGE AGENTS

Teachers need to adhere to an ethics of care that responds to the needs of their students. To do this, relationships must be created, and the teacher must listen, rather than talk or tell, to ensure they are supporting student's expressed needs, rather than teacher assumed needs.

Positive relationships between students and teachers, SEL instruction, and positive classroom climates are key to student growth and well-being. When students have a higher sense of belonging, there is less chance of absenteeism, school drop-out, substance abuse, anxiety and depression.

"Teachers, therefore, have the power to include the excluded

by paying attention to unique needs and responding with an ethic of care" (p. 18).



Bing Images

Explicit SEL programming needs to be implemented to prevent barriers for student learning and promote positive mental health including self-respect, self-awareness, and self-management.

Spiritual education, along with student interests and concerns should be incorporated into the curriculum because it can empower students to explore their place in the world.

"We believe every child who leaves our classrooms should know they have something of value to offer the world, they are unique and amazing, they matter, and they live in a diverse world with incredible beauty and majesty" (p. 9).

WEAVING THE THREADS

When weaving the threads, it's important to note that the boundaries between the threads are fluid and interact. There are four different colored threads.

"Each thread represents a critically important issue in twenty-first century schools, and has a body of research, well-known proponents, policy, and classroom tested practices associated with it" (p. 9).

Thread 1 – white – Spirit and Soul in Education

Thread 2 – black – Neurology, Trauma, Well-Being, and Mental Health in our Schools

Thread 3 – red – The TRC and Indigenous Worldviews of Education for Well-Being

Thread 4 – yellow – Leadership for Inclusion and UDL

INSIGHT



Data from Statistics Canada portrays the concern for our youth with increased anxiety and depression. About 20% of youth experience mental health issues that require mental health services, however, 75% do not receive care.

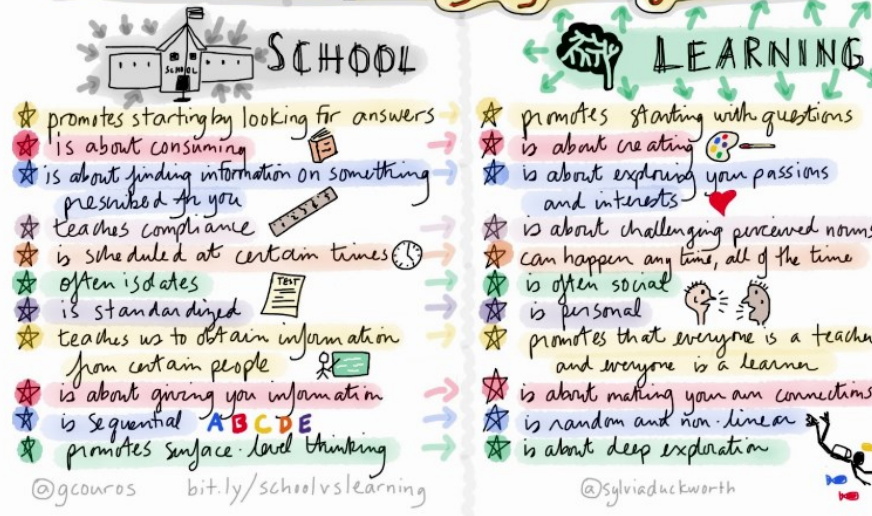
Even though the rate is significant, it is too large of a population for a school counselor's caseload. However, "...schools can play a role in the well-being of youth" (p. 2). Katz argues that the work to help our youth's mental health needs to occur universally in our classrooms.

Along with student increase of anxiety and depression, statistics state that there is also an increase in teacher burnout and 47% of teachers in Canada will leave the profession before retirement age. Research has shown that SEL programming in the classroom not only has a positive impact on students, but also on teachers. Teacher's have shown to have less stress and more self-efficacy; "These findings are significant, as many teachers worldwide experience high levels of stress – the main reason for career dissatisfaction and leaving the profession" (p.17).

Katz created the Three Block Model of Universal Design for Learning to support inclusive education, social and emotional learning (SEL), and health promoting schools. The curricula for this book is based on the TBM. It is inclusive of Indigenous views and reconciliation. "When we weave together such practices as inquiry, differentiation, backwards design, and SEL – the impact for both students and teachers is exponential in power" (p. 9). A significant increase in self-concept, engagement, and belonging when the TBM is implemented.

Research has shown that the academic gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students was closed when using the TBM framework. Teachers have reported that, "...planning and teaching through this framework reduces teachers' stress, increases job satisfaction, reduces challenging behavior, and improves teachers' self-efficacy related to inclusion" (p. 9).

School vs Learning by George Couros



Traditional schooling is prescribed, with little student choice and voice, and limited relevance to students lives or aspirations. This image portrays traditional schooling compared to an environment created for learning.

SPIRIT AND SOUL IN EDUCATION

"Our soul is the core of who we are, our humanity, our essence. Soulful education is about self-actualization – discovering who we are, where our passions lie, and what gives our lives meaning and purpose" (p. 13).

Spirituality is the connectedness to self and connection to the natural environment, the world and transcendent sphere. In schools, students can gain a sense of self, place and their meaning and purpose. One way to accomplish this is through land based education which connects Indigenous students and others to the land.

The holistic child is at the heart of spiritual education; this can occur when schools value and support education with a focus on heart, mind, body and spirit. However, we cannot teach spiritual education or help them become agents of change without helping them become "literate and numerate, understand scientific concepts and discoveries, learn about human history and geography, or develop their ability to maintain their own health. For students to live a life of meaning and purpose, they need to see the complex web that is their world and find their place in it" (p. 20).



LEADER'S ROLE IN SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

A leader's role in spiritual education is visionary and serving. Leaders need to recognize needs, provide support and ways to nurture staff and students on a spiritual education journey. Leaders need to see the big picture in this journey, but also recognize short term matters that require attention and are worth investing in.

"Relationships with self and others bring passion and power to an individual's life and learning" (p. 19). Our instincts are to fit in with what we know, but it is important to connect with others we do not know and who are different; teachers and leaders can play a role in this action, by providing guidance and support to move from tribalism to universalism.

"A healthy school begins with a healthy staff culture that builds a healthy school culture" (p. 108).

WHY SPIRITUAL EDUCATION IS CRITICAL IN THE 21ST CENTURY

"If prejudice, discrimination, and ethnocentrism can be learned, so too can peace, acceptance, and respect for diversity" (p. 19).

Spiritual education includes peace and social-justice; inclusive education of all students is connected to human rights, as well as, it has the potential to "empower students to become agents of change" (p. 19).

Schools have an impact on spiritual education and can either promote "human rights, peace, inclusivity, critical thinking, and innovation, or schools that reinforce 'traditions' that continue a legacy of privilege for a minority" (p. 19).

A FRAMEWORK FOR WELL-BEING

"Well-being gives our lives meaning and purpose, and allows us to see the interconnections within ourselves, with others, and with the planet" (p. 108).

Katz has designed a holistic framework and programming for K-12 students; it can be adapted as needed.

Sustainable implementation of the framework will require: leadership, professional learning, recognition, believe, intrapersonal well-being, interpersonal well-being, Indigenous worldviews and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and spiritual well-being.

Katz argues that we need to redesign our resources in order to make the programs about tolerance and mental health and well-being, as well as, the Calls to Action of the TRC accessible for all learners with the goal of everyone being an active participant.

INDIGENOUS VIEWS OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

THE CIRCLE OF COURAGE

THE CIRCLE OF COURAGE (COC) IS A FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED BY MARTIN BROKENLEG; BASED ON THE MEDICINE WHEEL; "THE CIRCLE OF COURAGE COMBINES INDIGENOUS BELIEFS ABOUT WELL-BEING AND MINO-PIMATISIWIN, AND MODERN RESEARCH ON RESILIENCE" (P. 25). THERE ARE FOUR MAIN HUMAN NEEDS FOR GROWTH AND WELL-BEING: MASTERY, GENEROSITY, INDEPENDENCE, AND BELONGING.

The COC can be used in schools as a planning tool to help meet the needs of student's positive development. Teachers need to create an environment that fosters diversity and provide a place for everyone to create a sense of belonging.

Mastery is developed when youth experience success with challenges, whether they are a part of the physical, emotional, spiritual, or mental realm. Mastery is lost when youth feel a sense of constant failure which can lead to lack of self-worth.

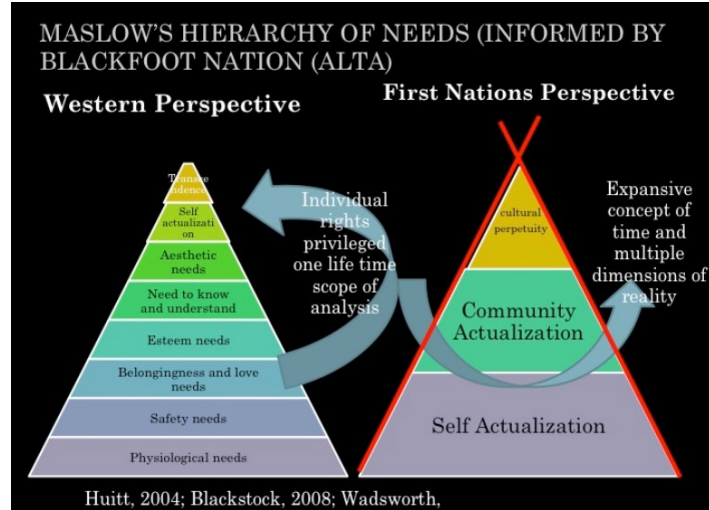
Generosity is, "nurtured in children when they learn to serve others, to appreciate the needs of the collective, and to place them ahead of their own" (p.26). However, generosity is lost when youth experience trauma and survival which can lead to isolation and needing to take care of oneself; ironically, generosity is also what can help those in trauma, to help others and create a sense of belonging for themselves.

Independence includes autonomy and self-regulation.

Belonging is expressed through trust, friendship and intimacy.

There is a stigma of mental health, however Indigenous views do not separate health problems; they are interdependent of one another.

Mino-Pimatisiwin means 'leading a good life' or 'walking in a good way' and Indigenous views believe that Mino-Pimatisiwin occurs through a blending of self-actualization and roles in community; this differs from western views which is individualistic.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs stops at the development of the individual, whereas the Indigenous hierarchy of needs begins with the individual, moves to community actualization, and then to culture perpetuity.

CONTEMPORARY WESTERN VIEWS OF MENTAL HEALTH

Health Canada defines mental health as "a state of well-being that allows us to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face" (p. 26).

Social-Emotional Learning provides key skills to promote mental health; mental health is considered the big picture, whereas SEL focuses on specific targets. Mental may also include clinical illnesses, and spiritual well-being.

Languishing and Flourishing Mental Health: The Implications for Youth

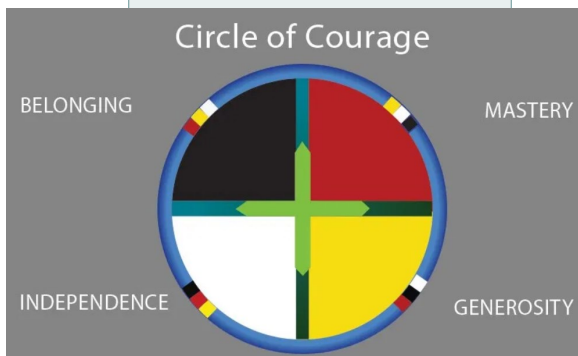
"Languishing mental health is characterized by alienation, isolation, hopelessness, and the lack of a social support network. Youth who have friends and positive relations with significant adults are far less likely to have languishing mental health" (p. 29). Whereas flourishing mental health includes positive mental health and the ability to engage with community in a positive way.

Stress - the Number #1 Source of Stress is School

Stress can be displayed both physically and emotionally; symptoms include: headache, stomachache, backache, dizziness, depressed, irritable, nervous and sleeping problems. "While educators often assume that the stress comes from home, this denies the fundamental truth that, for many students, school is stressful" (p. 30).

FACTS:

- 1 in 4 grade 6 students display at least one symptom daily, in grade 7 more girls than boys display symptoms, and by grade 10, 1 in 3 girls display symptoms
- 1 in 5 grade 6 students feel they don't belong at school; in grade 8 and 9 this statistic increases to 23%



SCHOOL-BASED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES AND PROGRAMS

"Preventative programming can affect students' emotional resilience and well-being" (p. 34). Schools are the only place where we can access all youth, therefore, "...schools are the only place where universal programming can occur" (p. 35). Implementing SEL in classrooms has more impact on academic improvement than any other instructional practice.

Teacher Impacts – Teachers are affected by mental health as well, and in fact double that of the general population. When teachers incorporate mental health programming in their classrooms it has been shown to reduce the stress teacher's face in their work.

Family and Community Impacts – When a child suffers from mental illness, it can be hard on the family and community; parents often have to miss work or leave the workforce to be with their child, it can cause marital stress, as well as cost to families and community; these children don't need to be fixed but they do need to learn how to manage the illnesses on a daily basis.

Mental Health Programming in Schools - in Canada and the United States, it is promoted but is inconsistent in its delivery; teachers are pressured to get through the curriculum and feel like they lack time to focus on the whole child but, "Modern science teaches us that this argument is moot, as cognitive function (including neurocognitive processes such as the ability to pay attention, retain in memory, and process language) are all mediated by social, emotional, and mental-health factors" (p. 36).

THE ROLE OF TRAUMA AND THE PROMISE OF PLASTICITY OF THE BRAIN FOR STUDENT LEARNING

"Trauma affects brain function. Chemical release during times of stress affects brain function, and over time, structure" (p. 30). Cortisol is released and the brain shuts off the cortex, the part that is responsible for thinking. The body goes into fight or flight mode and once the danger is gone, the brain stops releasing cortisol and the body starts to calm down. If teachers or students are under chronic stress they will retain high levels of cortisol in their body; "...cortisol reduces the brain's ability to produce serotonin, a chemical responsible for mood and anxiety. As a result, ongoing levels of stress gradually wear down our ability to manage our emotions, and depression and anxiety are the result" (p.31). The balance or imbalance of these chemicals over time affects individuals, but also has potential to affect future generations.

Complex trauma—over time exposure to fear and/or neglect; post-traumatic stress. This can result in addictions, self-harm, depression, physical conditions, psychiatric disorders; often reactive to other's moods. Students can sense the teacher's tone and body language and may shut down, if body language is negative.

Intergenerational trauma – occurs at both individual and communal levels; "...has affected the health and well-being and the social disparities facing Indigenous peoples in Canada and other countries" (p. 32). Residential schools and the sixties scoop had a "... significant impact on parenting, employment, education, and other aspects of Indigenous life and communities" (p. 32). This trauma, if one hasn't had an opportunity to see help or heal, is often passed on to the next generation.

Epigenetics – "...study of heredity of experience – how one's life experiences affect children through the transmission of genes and their expression" (p. 33). This is a system of passing on danger, as well as, trauma experiences to the next generation. Students may enter school feeling unsafe and scared and may not know why they feel this way, but the feelings and experiences have been passed on to them.

Neuroplasticity – plasticity in the brain along with building healthy relationships at school can have long term effects on health and mental well-being. Neurocognitive research has shown that when teachers meet the diverse needs of their students, create a welcoming environment and one that addresses social and emotional needs will provide students with an atmosphere to learn.

The gift of neuroplasticity allow us to grow and change.

Regardless of students home life, if students feel safe at school their cortisol levels will reduce, they will be healthier and be in a better situation to learn; even providing 10 minutes day of meditation in the classroom can improve behavior and academics. Relationships are key; if teachers find ways to reduce stress and increase joy, they will address well-being for everyone, improve learning readiness, and fulfill one of the TRC calls to action: "build student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect" (p. 66).

"As teachers, we must be aware of our students' well-being, it is non-negotiable, and more important than any curriculum" (p. 34).

THE TRC AND INDIGENOUS WORLDVIEWS OF EDUCATION

"A society can not be fully healthy, or reach its full potential, when certain citizens are denied rights and privileges on the basis of race and ethnicity" (p. 49).

Reconciliation implies that relationships have been denied that should have always existed and it can bring people together and enrich the lives of everyone. Residential schools were implemented under the Indian Act and between 1870-1996, 130 schools were in operation. The Indian Act has affected all Canadians. Residential school children and other children all learned that Indigenous ways of living and culture had no value; this information was passed down from generation to generation.

At least 3200 children died intentionally and it is suspected there were many more; over 150,000 children attended residential schools. "...Canada has many examples of racial and cultural mistreatments, but the forcible removal of children from their families into such horrific conditions is perhaps the most disturbing example of cultural genocide in Canadian history" (p. 47).

The TRC was formed from the lawsuit between residential school survivors and the federal government and churches. 94 calls to action were created that present a roadmap to reconciliation.

The Role of Schools and Teachers in Reconciliation

"Education played a huge role in getting us into this mess, and education must play a huge role in helping us get out of it. -Marie Wilson, member of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission" (p. 50).

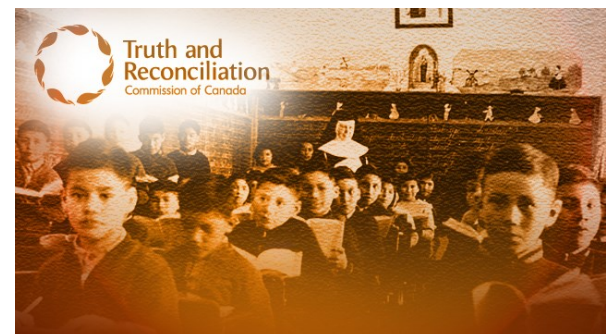
Teachers must educate themselves, learn alongside their students if needed, allow themselves to make mistakes along the way and embrace teaching about Indigenous peoples; if they fail to do this, they are allowing the silence and ignorance of all non-Indigenous people to continue for another generation.

Statistically Indigenous student's academic performance is lower than non-Indigenous peers. "Today's Indigenous students may be intergenerational survivors – another legacy of residential schools" (p. 50).

Reconciliation in schools means: educating for change and equity, and reclaiming identity for Indigenous students and for all Canadians.

Education as a way Forward

#62 and #63 of the TRC's Calls to Action pertain to teachers and the role that they need to play in fulfilling these actions. #62 pertains to all governments to work with survivors on curriculum that includes Indigenous peoples, funding for pre-service teachers to learn about the history of Indigenous peoples, funding for First Nations schools to implement Indigenous ways of knowing, and Aboriginal content in education. #63 pertains to the Canadian Ministers of Education to ensure there is an annual commitment to Indigenous education issues, these include: develop and implement curriculum that shares the history of Indigenous people along with the history and legacy of residential schools, best practices for teaching curriculum on Indigenous peoples, as well as, recognizing the need for any teacher training to be able to implement the above.



LEADERSHIP IN AN INCLUSIVE CULTURE

"If inclusion is implemented through both policy- and evidence-based practice, then it is incumbent on school leaders to further its implementation" (p. 56).

However, there is a lack of consistency in implementing inclusion in schools because of the different definitions of inclusion. Teachers may feel added stress if they fail to succeed at meeting the needs of all students. Research has also shown that teachers that have a positive attitude towards inclusion have a higher burnout rate. The climate of the school affects teachers levels of burnout.

"According to the Canadian Teacher's Federation, 47 % of teachers quit before retirement age, citing stress and lack of support as reasons....The feeling of being isolated, unsupported, and constantly having to overcome systemic barriers has the same effect on teachers that it does on students – alienation and disengagement" (p. 56).

It is critical that there is a process of support for teachers; principals are expected to guide this support through expectations, developing capacity in teachers and redesigning mind-set for inclusion. "Leaders who can build capacity in personally supportive ways are therefore likely to reduce teacher stress" (p. 56). Leaders can create these conditions through teacher collaboration, distributed leadership and empowering teachers, as well as, focusing on student achievement, equity, and justice. Administrative priorities to serve a diverse student population should align with the TBM of UDL .

"A clear vision and message must be sent across schools that inclusive practices are expected and permanent. Otherwise, inclusion will be seen as a passing trend that won't outlive the tenure of an individual principal" (pp. 61-62).

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) promote collaboration and are beneficial in inclusive education settings. Leaders can help facilitate safe learning environments through team building, supportive staff meetings, and celebrating and sharing teachers strengths. PLCs provide the opportunity for dialogue, sharing, celebrating, ongoing professional development. Principals need to show their staff that they advocate for them and do "...their best to remove any barriers that cause teachers additional work and stress....and recognizing that fair doesn't mean everyone needs the same thing requires leaders who know their people" (p. 62).

Communication with family is a key to success. "Families play a significant role in all three aspects of TBM, and it is crucial that educators invite, value, and use the gifts families can offer not only to their children, but to the community as a whole" (p. 63).

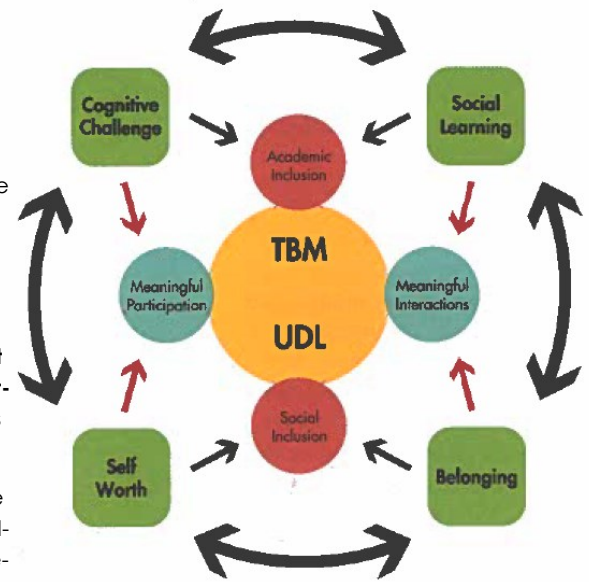
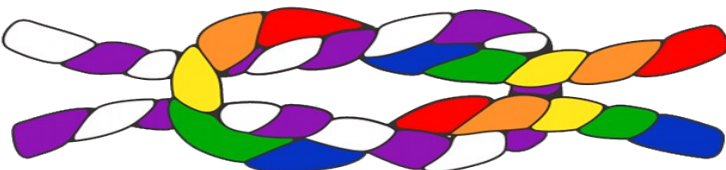
Everyone, including students, staff, and family, needs to feel valued. Teachers and leaders need to capitalize on peoples strengths, so everyone feels welcomed and valued in the classroom and the community.

"The TBM of UDL emphasizes developing students' higher order thinking, and involving all students in activities related to the general curriculum. As excellence for all is the goal of UDL, it seems an appropriate framework for providing school leadership with a coherent pedagogy for supporting inclusive education" (p. 64). In order to implement this framework, significant professional development is required, along with the "guidance of a transformational leader" (p. 64).

Reflecting on the values of UDL through the lens of Reconciliation

Teachers need to see the big picture in response to Reconciliation and the implementation of UDL; this includes the idea that everyone is valued, included, and there is much to learn from Indigenous worldviews. "When we create learning communities that truly value the diversity of humanity and recognize the importance of well-being...we will help our

students develop their spirit, heal the wounds of our history, and lead our society into a new and healthier age" (p. 67).



UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)

UDL involves designing a learning environment that is beneficial for all students. UDL uses 3 principles: multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement.

THREE-BLOCK MODEL (TBM) OF UDL

"As with spirit, there are many paths to the same goal" (p. 53).

The TBM is one path to create a healthy school environment. The TBM is similar to the UDL, but there are a few differences.

There are **4 pillars**: self-worth, belonging, cognitive challenge and social (interactive) learning; these are the theoretical underpinnings of the model. Teachers can use these pillars to design environments, programs, and interactions.

There are also **4 visions**: social inclusion, meaningful interactions, academic inclusion, and meaningful participation.

Meaningful interactions are critical for teachers and parents. Teachers need to ensure they are not judging or criticizing parents for their involvement in their child's education. Parents may easily retreat from any involvement and this could have a negative impact on their child; however teachers can have conversations with parents regarding expectations and student strengths which can lead to increased parent expectations.

PART II: HOW TO BUILD FLOURISHING LEARNING COMMUNITIES

Respecting Diversity Program (RD)

"The goals of RD are to develop specific components of self-awareness-, social awareness, and respect: self-efficacy; goal-setting; emotional resiliency; perspective-taking; empathy; valuing diversity; and creating a positive, inclusive classroom climate" (p. 82). The RD consists of 9 lessons designed to be taught and scaffolded as needed. The lessons explore how multiple intelligences (MIs) apply to teaching and learning. All MIs are viewed as equal and it allows the teachers and students to gain insight into students and how to reach them in meaningful ways. "Research indicates that the RD program significantly increase students' self-respect and their respect for others" (p. 82).

Katz includes 9 lessons for educators to use and scaffold as needed. Each lesson includes: rationale, well-being foci, materials, process, discussion and journal reflection, tiered supports (and sometimes – indigenizing the lesson)

Spirit Buddies

"Spirit buddies helps foster students' sense of belonging and social coherence; initiate positive interactions; and increase students' self-worth. Students want to 'be seen', and have an impact on others" (p. 102). Spending 10-15 minutes at the beginning of every day allows students to start their day in their Spirit Buddies community; they are connected in small groups to welcome and greet each other, and to talk and share.

Classroom Meetings

Katz argues that holding classroom meetings is the best way to create a democratic classroom. These should occur weekly, but can occur anytime by any teacher or student. Creating a democratic classroom requires: rules and logical consequences, guided discovery, academic choice, classroom organization and family communication strategies. Students take ownership of their learning and develop pro-social problem solving skills.

Classroom-Based Programming for Social-Emotional Learning

Katz uses three educational frameworks to create inclusive education programming for the well-being of all students and teachers. These include Response to Intervention (RTI), UDL and SEL.

RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION

"RTI reduces the number of students requiring special services, builds capacity in teachers to design instruction for diverse learners, and provides what the students need to be successful in the classroom. RTI does not weed students out" (p. 76). There are 3 tiers, and a teacher always begins with tier 1 interventions that are classroom-based.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

UDL involves the physical set up of learning environment, the design of the social and emotional climate, as well as, learning activities.

THREE-BLOCK MODEL of UDL

1. Creates compassionate learning communities
2. Inclusive instructional practice
3. Systems and structures

TIER I OF RTI IN THE TBM OF UDL

This is an instructional program designed for all learners to succeed. John Hattie, an educational researcher, "uses effect size to rank most effective educational strategies" (p.79). He argues that effect size should be .4 or higher; the TBM has an effect size of 2.0 and for those with significant disabilities the effect size has shown to be .8.

1st block—addresses social and emotional needs

2nd block—includes a 5 step planning and instructional framework

1. create a cross-curricular year plan
2. Include big ideas/essential understandings for each unit
3. Transform these ideas into questions for inquiry
4. Develop rubrics to assess essential learnings; ensuring instruction allows for multiple means of expression
5. "Plan differentiated instructional activities to support diverse learners, using multiple means of presentation and engagement" (p. 80).

3rd block—systems and structures that need to be in place to support inclusive pedagogy

"Empowered students are motivated to assume a degree of social responsibility, as they recognize how their contributions, either positive or negative, affects others in their community" (p. 103).



Social and Emotional Learning: Block One of the TBM

Katz uses 3 strategies for developing SEL; each of these strategies also addresses many factors of well-being. These strategies include:

1. Respecting Diversity Program (RD)
2. Spirit Buddies
3. Classroom Meetings

See sidebar for explanation of these three strategies.

MENTAL HEALTH LITERACY

Mental Health Literacy is defined by the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health as, "...the knowledge, beliefs, and abilities that enable the recognition, management or prevention of mental health problems" (p. 111).

"Mental-health literacy in inclusive schools means that our students need to explicitly be taught how the brain works and what is involved in well-being" (p. 111). It also includes how to maintain well-being and how to be a friend.

Katz includes 7 lessons that are a part of "The Brain Unit: Mental Health Literacy the UDL Way" (p.112). The lessons include learning about and understanding: parts of the brain, cross section of the brain, neurons, neurochemistry, brain reactivity, the senses and their effects on the brain, and mental health and mental illness.

Strategies for well-being

"It is important to note the difference between using strategies to maintain well-being, and using them to numb or repress emotions. Teaching children that when they're upset they should do something to get rid of the feelings is a dangerous message: students may use alcohol or drugs to avoid feeling bad" (p. 131).



Breathing and it's Effects on the Brain: There are many ways to breathe, but when we take slow deep breaths, it sends signals to our brain to calm down. Some forms of breathing include: breathing to a count or a mantra, using imagery, belly breathing, reverse belly/back breathing, and nostril breathing.

Managing our environment : How do we design our classrooms to create a calm space?

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT): DBT is an expansion of Cognitive Behavior Therapy and includes a spiritual and psychosocial component. Teachers would not use the therapy part, but can focus on the preventative parts of the program. There are 4 modules that include: mindfulness, interpersonal effectiveness, emotion regulation, and distress tolerance.

"Everything we have talked about up to now is relevant to the TRC, and necessary. The TRC Calls to Action included the need to teach students empathy and caring, and the need for trauma informed care particularly in regard to the intergenerational impact of residential schools. As we are doing the brain unit, DBT, RD program, spirit buddies, and class meetings with all students, Indigenous learners will also benefit. This also created a trauma informed classroom, in which students can feel safe, and learn to manage stress and distress" (p. 165).

PROGRAMMING FOR RECONCILIATION AND EDUCATION FOR RECONCILIATION

"To restore friendly relations, we have to create a culture of mutual respect, as the TRC calls to action indicate" (p. 165). Education for Reconciliation focuses on prevention.

TRC Resources and Lesson Plans

Many provinces have created resources to guide reconciliation. The Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba (TRCM) has an excellent treaty education continuum for students in kindergarten through Grade 12, however it doesn't quite fit the UDL model. Katz redesigned the way it could to be delivered through UDL while keeping the content that was created by the TRCM. Katz includes examples of this through lesson plans and activities at various grade levels. When teaching about Reconciliation teachers need to ensure a safe environment has been created for students to share and express their thoughts.

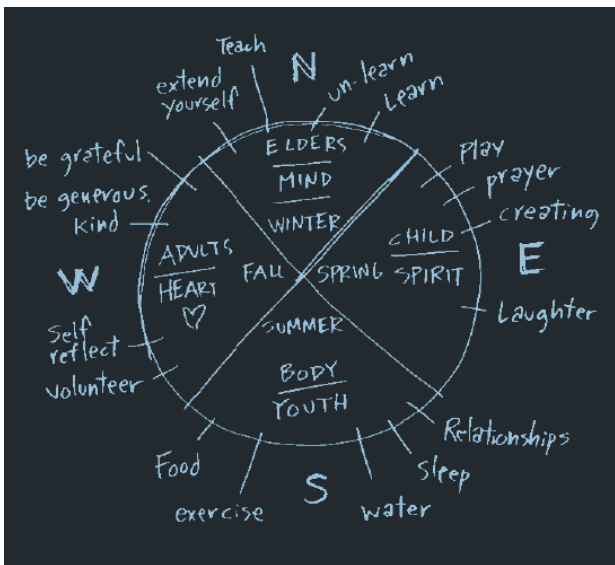
Treaty education can begin in kindergarten. Learning that Canada was formed through cooperation and partnership, and the partnership began to struggle, is not traumatic....The dark part of our history, though-the forced resettlements and attempts at assimilation, removal of human rights, residential schools, and ongoing racism and discrimination should not, in my opinion, be taught until students are emotionally ready to manage them (pp. 172-173).

The Medicine Wheel and Well-Being

Michael Redhead Champagne has had many successes, on of them is his teachings on the medicine wheel which appear in this book. The purpose is to "discuss healthy ways of taking care of ourselves with our students, using our own self care strategies as a positive example" p. 174

Calls to Action and Teacher Responsibilities

Katz provides excellent elementary and high school examples for teachers to aid in responding to the 3 calls to action of the TRC that teachers must play a role in. Katz explains that if teachers are participating in these actions, they are doing their part in reconciliation.



Medicine Wheel Activity

MOVING TOWARD JOY

Joy, Neurology, and Engagement

"From a neurological level, joy is associated with the chemicals oxytocin, serotonin, dopamine, and endorphins. This means that joy is not only associated with well-being, it is associated with attention, memory, language processing, and critical thinking!" (p. 177).

Finding Meaning and Purpose

Those that find their life meaningful and purposeful are more likely to flourish. Students may engage in service/helping, but choice and voice are critical in doing so, when it is forced upon children it can feel like a chore. "Infusing joy into our students, can ironically, also come from confronting significant challenges, both personal and professional". (p. 179)

Through class discussions, teachers can pick up those teachable moments. Katz gives an example of a student saying in a conversation that an adult should 'just get a job.' The teacher had the students figure out a budget for family of 4, that earn minimum wage, as well as, brought in someone to talk about kids that were in homes. These students then decided to sing at this home and brought care packages for each kid; this teacher empowered her students to provide service and to help others.

Indigenous Perspectives on Connecting with the Whole

"Finding ways to engage students with the natural world supports well-being" (p. 179). Go outside do yoga, breathe, dig in community garden; we can all get students "out of the classroom, onto the land, and into the community" (p. 180). They don't have to be big experiences, but they need to be meaningful.

Instructional Practices for Well-Being and Joy

"When we take the time to focus on well-being, we also are priming our students brains for the curriculum to come" (p. 180). Students can learn best when they are happy. We are more successful when we have a sense of well-being.

Research shows that "Meta-analyses show an 11 point gain on standardized exams when SEL programming is present, compared to when it is not" (p. 181). We are more successful when we have a sense of well-being.

Katz argues that regurgitation needs to end; there needs to be a revolution. Teachers need to allow our students to be innovators and show their learning in a way they want that makes sense to them – "Have you ever had a student say or do something that wowed you? That's what we are aiming for – allowing students to try, fail, try again, and wow us, their peers, and themselves" (p. 182).



Connecting Mental-Health Programming with Curriculum Across the School Year

- Need to be innovative; sneak it into subjects and sneak subjects into mental-health programming
- Katz provides examples of science and social, as well as, a math unit; language arts can be connected to everything
- Katz provides examples of student products: musical rhythmic, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, verbal-linguistic, logical-mathematical


Scheduling Programming Across the Year

Katz provides excellent examples of elementary and high school year plans that teachers can use and adapt in their own practice.

"Creating classrooms and schools that are filled with passion and joy, innovation and creation, is possible, even in our current system. It benefits students and teachers alike, and can only benefit the communities they live in and serve" (p. 193).



"Joy can be found when we: pay attention to what we need, honor own interests, needs, and experiences; focus on gratitude for what is good in our life, do service: feel we have made a positive difference in the lives of others" (p. 179).



For the child taken,
For the parent left behind.

Bing Images

We cannot underestimate the complexity of the task at hand, nor can we afford to be naïve in our belief that it will not be deeply challenging on a personal, organizational, societal level. This is a process of maturation we are going through as a nation, and like all growth, it will at times be difficult and painful” (p. x) - Ry Moran, in Ensouling our Schools

SCHOOL CULTURE AND STAFF-WELL-BEING

Building Staff Culture

Teachers must develop a positive culture just as we do in our classrooms. Educational leaders are also responsible for this as well. The key processes in doing this involve: identifying staff strengths, setting a vision, building and supporting collaborative practice and teacher leadership, and supporting teacher professional learning. Katz provides ideas for team building using the RD Program for Staff, adapting it slightly from the RD program for students.

Setting the Vision: School Plans for Well-Being

Teachers need to know the 'WHY' for change to make the connections between the programming and the needs for teachers and students. There are any ways to do this but, Katz finds it effective to follow a certain process; create a student profile and staff profile and from there, set goals, develop school plan for students and school plan for staff. An additional activity to this is to have staff write a professional eulogy. She provides the necessary steps to work through the creation of student profile and goals, staff profile and goals, as well as, the school plan for both staff and students.

Building and supporting Collaborative Practice and Teacher Leadership

Katz provides a few examples for how leaders can support collaboration and promoting teacher leadership. These are all examples of what has been explained to use with students. Katz' ideas include: Spirit Buddies for staff, as well as, creating a democracy, empowering teachers through distributed leadership, and hosting staff meetings as class meetings.

Scheduling and Service-Delivery Models

Collaboration is key to scheduling and service-delivery. Katz explains that resource programs should operate as push-in services rather than pull-out, as pull-out can cause negative identities and social isolation. When resource teachers support the students in the classroom, schools are promoting inclusive education. Katz also believes that EAs should be assigned to classrooms, just as teachers are assigned to a classroom and "When we assign EAs to individual students the results can be very negative" (p. 205).

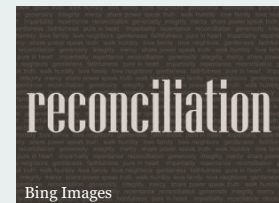
Supporting teacher professional learning

Katz argues that, leaders need to consider "...the need to give everyone a vision of where we are trying to go – an acceptance that not everyone will start at the same time or place, process at the same rate, or need the same supports along the way" p. 206

TEACHERS HAVE AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN HEALING OUR NATION

"As Educators we have the opportunity to help young Canadians find the commonalities in our shared humanity. We have the opportunity to accomplish what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action refer to as education for "intercultural understanding, empathy and mutual respect." We have the opportunity to contribute to reconciliation in inclusive classrooms where *all* students see themselves as transformative, of having the tools and compassion they need to help our nation heal and reclaim its identity as a Treaty nation" (p. 211).

- Kevin Lamoureux, in Ensouling our Schools



TEACHERS HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE AN EDUCATION SYSTEM BASED ON MUTUAL RESPECT

"Our collective opportunity now is to make sure that education is no longer used as a weapon against Indigenous people—stripping and robbing them of their right to be Indigenous. Let us all work together to create education systems where we are finally given the opportunity to learn from one another in a spirit of mutual respect" (p. xi).

- Ry Moran, in Ensouling our Schools.

CRITICAL EVALUATION

This book has brought back a sense of revival and joy about teaching. Katz does an exceptional job in providing a framework that teachers can implement in their classroom without creating added stress in doing so. The year plans, units and lessons that Katz provides in her book make it easy for teachers to implement. Katz' vision of inclusive education through combining instructional frameworks and creating the Three-Block Model of UDL makes sense.

Katz provides the important WHY for teachers to create and implement a framework of inclusion for all. Katz explains the background information needed in order to fulfill this important work. Katz shares the 'why' and 'how' to respond to the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Katz examples of what teachers need to do in order to fulfill this obligation are very useful to all teachers and administrators.

Katz not only focuses on what teachers should be doing for their students and how they can create a safe, caring and calm classroom environment, she also focuses on teacher well-being, and staff and school culture. I appreciate that Katz recognizes and explains the importance of teacher well-being and provides leaders with ways to promote staff-wellbeing, and a positive staff and school climate.

I recommend this book to all teachers and administrators. I cannot wait to share the wealth of information I have gained from this book; it is time to ensoul our schools!

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Throughout this book I found numerous critical questions that are important of all teachers and leaders to ask themselves as they work through this important work of reconciliation, inclusion and social emotional learning.

1. "...do our practices match our dreams? Will they help us raise the kind of youth we want to hand our world to – the kid who can improve the world we live in?" (p. 1).
2. "What does this mean for Indigenous students, who likely have epigenetic cultural trauma embedded in their DNA?" (p. 32).
3. "What does this knowledge – that parents' trauma affect their children – mean for students whose parents had a negative school experience?" (p. 33).
4. "What does this mean for Indigenous students, who likely have epigenetic cultural trauma embedded in their DNA?" (p. 32).
5. "If we know that beginnings may be difficult, and students need to feel safe in order for cortisol to reduce, how might this change what kindergarten, September, and morning start-up look like?" (p. 34).
6. With high rates of teacher burnout, how can we add more to teacher's plates? "Is there a way to create inclusive classrooms; address the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC); and address the well-being of students, teachers, and their communities?" (pp. 65-66).
7. "...How do we continue to grow and develop in ways that benefit all of us, and stop doing things that are causing them?" (p. 68).
8. On joy – "Why is humor, fun, and interaction lacking in so many of our classrooms? (p. 177).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



JENNIFER KATZ, PHD, taught for 16 years in diverse classrooms from K to 12, including special education and inclusive classrooms in Winnipeg and Vancouver. She has also served as a resource teacher and counsellor. Her work as an advocate of inclusive education has spanned several countries, provinces, and territories, and multiple audiences, including students, parents, teachers, educational leaders, and curriculum and policy development ministries. Dr. Katz received the MCEC Outstanding Achievement Award for Leadership, 2016. She now serves as an Assistant Professor of Inclusive Education at the University of British Columbia.



KEVIN LAMOUREUX currently serves as the Education Lead for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation while on leave from the position of Associate Vice-President, Indigenous Affairs at the University of Winnipeg. Lamoureux has served as faculty member at the University of Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba, and is a well-known national public speaker. He has served as co-chair for the Manitoba Provincial Task Force on Educational Outcomes for Children in Care, scholar-in-residence for several school divisions, and education consultant throughout Manitoba and across Canada.