

Trinity Review

Monthly Newsletter

Issue 7, March 2011



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Focus on Success in March

A busy, busy month with work on transition issues and Focus on Success programs ongoing. Peer Leaders have begun delivering workshops with the gr.9 students that develop assertiveness, while we are customizing the Moving Forward manual for each of the Long Term Support sites in the TDSB.

The challenge of working in various Focus on Success Programs involves how to meet a young person's needs for belonging, respect, autonomy, and learning. All of these are closely tied to their social/emotional development and rely for fulfillment on their innate resilience.

The key elements involved in the development of one's resilience that we are trying to build into our workshop program are:

- 1) Participation: Encouraging students' engagement in exercises and games, and in particular helping them become more aware of the nature and level of contact they are making at a given moment in those exercises etc.

Schools Trinity Visited in March

Victoria Park CI

Earl Haig SS

Norseman Jr. PS

Central Commerce Collegiate

St. Stephens – Attendance & Support

West Hill CI

Sir Oliver Mowat CI

George S. Henry Academy

North Albion CI

York Humber HS

Runnymede PS & CI

Focus on Success Program continued...

Key elements involved in the development of one's resilience

- 2) Observation: Being able to note your experiences with others at multiple levels i.e. intrapersonal, interpersonal and systemic, and without self-limiting judgment.
- 3) Reflection: Interpreting experiences, both the "what" you are learning (content), and "how" you are experiencing (creating a space between yourself and your experience)
- 4) Transformation: By turning participation, observation and reflection into ultimately conscious action we create the opportunity for a self-determined act of growth or change to be undertaken.

The adapted theatre exercises we use lend themselves easily to the development of resilience, since imaginative play and role playing were the original contexts for the development of our resilience when children.

What are schools for – An ongoing Discussion

Continued from Trinity Review – February 2011

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Why do we see public education in such limited ways? We never ask whether there is any purpose and meaning beyond getting youth basic knowledge and skills so they can pursue their adulthood.

What does the act of public education say about our community and how we care for our young? What does it say about our expectations of one another and the importance we place on social engagement in the acquiring of skills and knowledge?

When we send our children to school are we not saying we want them to learn how to relate with others as well as develop academically? Learn how to meet both the good and the bad that emerges from our dealings with others and from within ourselves and be able to design peaceful outcomes? Was all that parental and caregiver love and concern spent to set our children adrift in academics?

There is something much greater going on in public education than academics. And that something has all to do with learning how we treat one another, the way s we want to reach out of our own isolation and in community handle ignorance, despair, anger and other shadows in our personalities.

Public Education is the dream we have for ourselves as socially engaged life-long learners realizing our human potential.

The longer we deny this dream the long we fail to create a new vision of ourselves in community.



Trinity Travels

Trinity traveled to the Grey Bruce County this month to consult with Peer Leaders, teachers and social workers on the *Creating Communities We Want* manual. We had a very productive trip and we will be returning to Grey Bruce in the near future.

'Student voice'- Bendale Conference

The student voice conference was held at Bendale BTI on March 9th, 2011. This conference consisted of workshops on identifying issues that limit student's success and how to develop your strengths.

This workshop was done with the Bendale junior school (gr.9 & gr.10) Peer Leaders who facilitated the workshops. The students did a great job and we look forward to taking part in this conference again next year!





What are Schools For Continued...

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Developing Peer Leadership groups to address the social development of their school community is important for a number of reasons besides the obvious mentoring and structural benefits like enriched student councils, more able club leadership etc.

Being a peer leader and being interacted with by a peer leader is a highly emotional exercise and emotion and learning are inextricably linked and are only seen as separated by conceptual thinking. In fact recent research in neuroscience has discovered that "emotion is so fundamental to human activity that most other neurological functions, including learning, are layered on top of it."

This argues for a radical about face in how much attention we pay to the social/emotional development of students and, in particular, the role peer leadership could play in affecting positive growth in the learning capacity of their peers.



If a student comes to school anxious and upset by her parents' fighting little learning is likely to happen. Likewise, if a student feels emotionally motivated and connected to what he's learning because of the people he's learning with (and from), the learning takes place more easily.

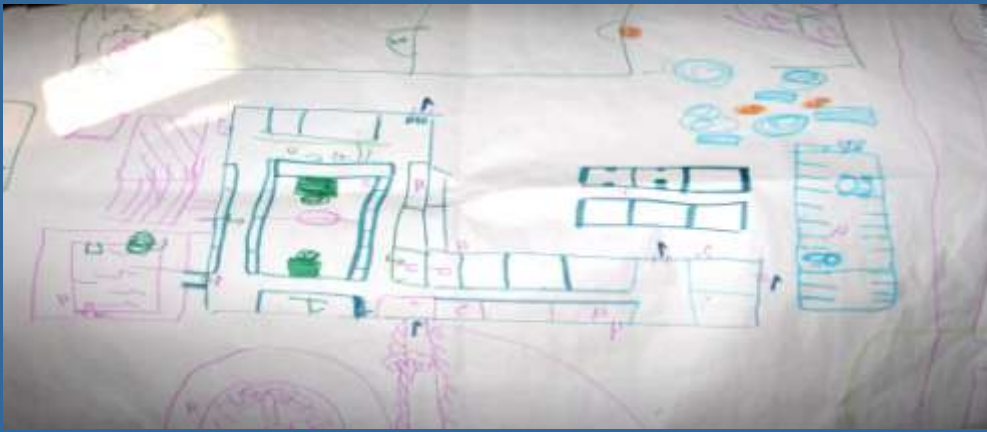
Inspiring Quotes

Knowing yourself is the beginning of all wisdom.

- Aristotle

Have compassion for all beings, rich and poor alike; each has their suffering. Some suffer too much, others too little.

- Buddha



Toronto Focus on Success Schools

Bendale BTI

Winston Churchill CI

Earl Haig SS

Central Commerce CI

North Albion CI

Victoria Park CI

Marc Garneau CI

Lester B. Pearson CI

Runnymede CI

Upcoming Events & Program Updates

Transition to High School Play

Trinity begins work with students from Malvern CI, RH King Academy and Birchmount Park CI to create a play that deals with the transition to high school – what student's need to know. We are very excited about this project and look forward to working with all of the students.

Transition to High School & Welcoming Practices

Trinity is working at Malvern CI with grade 9 students to discuss the transition to high school and new welcoming practices for FALL 2011.

Peer Leadership Program

Peer Leader groups at fourteen TDSB high schools have moved into the last phase of their Creating Communities we Want Workshops.

Pathways Conference

Trinity will be attending the Pathways Conference on April 20th in Sarnia. The purpose of this conference is to empower students to take a leadership and mentoring role in their schools especially around issues affecting mental health and how to access resources.

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