ONE WORLD in Dialogue

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SOCIAL STUDIES COUNCIL of the ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

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A Message from the Editor

Craig Harding

Welcome to the latest issue of *One World in Dialogue*. Our previous editor, Gail Jardine, of the University of Calgary, did a marvelous job of raising the status of *One World in Dialogue* making it a peer-reviewed journal. Authors can choose to have prominent social studies scholars from Alberta peer review their articles. Teachers can have their articles reviewed just by the editor. The quality of articles submitted under this new format has been impressive. The quality is apparent in the current issue and will certainly promote dialogue on the various social issues presented herein.

Fifteen colleagues who specialize in one or more aspects of social studies have volunteered to act as blind reviewers. They are listed at the end of this issue. Reviewers hail from the Universities of Alberta, Calgary and Lethbridge, and Mount Royal University. The ATA Social Studies Council (SSC) thanks them all for their support and expertise.

SSC hopes that the journal remains one to reach for when social studies teachers are looking for the latest scholarship related to curriculum, engaging pedagogies and deep understanding of how to support students' learning in the multiple dimensions of our progressive social studies curriculum. As well, the journal will be a source of articles that creatively and critically take up important pedagogical issues and events in local, national and international contexts. As the Guidelines for Manuscripts say:

One World in Dialogue is a professional journal for social studies teachers in Alberta. It is published to

- promote the professional development of social studies educators and
- stimulate thinking, explore new ideas and offer various viewpoints.

Submissions are requested that have a classroom as well as a scholarly focus. They may include

- descriptions of innovative classroom and school practices;
- discussions of trends, issues or policies;
- examination of learning, teaching and assessment in social studies classrooms;
- explorations of significant classroom experiences; and
- reviews or evaluations of instructional and curricular methods, programs or materials.

We welcome articles that take up all aspects of social studies: learning in any of the social sciences that weave together to form social studies including citizenship education, Aboriginal issues and education, peace education, global education, economic education, history education, social justice, immigration issues, multicultural education, intercultural issues in second language teaching, comparative education, intercultural communication and education, innovative uses of educational technologies to promote learning in social studies, and environmental ethics,

environmental education and ecological teaching or teaching for sustainability.

The articles in this issue reflect a thematic link of social justice. In "We're Here to Teach Democracy Not Practise It. The Missed Potential of Schools as Democratic Spaces," Sears, Peck and Herriot explore the disjuncture between principles stated by many departments of education related to promoting democracy and what actually takes place in schools. As Sears, Peck and Herriot explain, "Despite social studies curricula across the country that focus on the development of active, engaged citizens and several provincial initiatives intended to foster extracurricular student participation, such as Speak Out Alberta, our research and that of others indicates students overwhelmingly feel powerless and voiceless at school." These disconcerting findings run contrary to the progressive social studies curriculum recently implemented in the province that sought to encourage the development of mini activists.

Their study sought to examine "how Canadian students in the Maritimes and Alberta understand democratic participation." It turns out we are not that different—both students remain relatively voiceless and, consequently, powerless. While the authors point out that Alberta, and all of Canada, lag behind other parts of the world, there are models offering hope for social studies teachers and students alike.

Afroza Nanji, a sessional instructor and doctoral candidate at the University of Calgary, continues with the theme of social justice in her article entitled "Understanding My Brothers and Sisters." Exploring the demographic changes in Canada that has led to "a multiplicity of spiritual, religious and secularly oriented paths by which individuals seek meaning," Nanji wonders about the impact of these paths on the multiple ways that Canadians identify themselves, both in secular and religious ways. Pluralism, a concept central to Alberta social studies, is considered as religion is increasingly relegated to the private realm as governments attempt to view as equal all faiths. Yet, this apparent secular, egalitarian attitude has created an "intellectual gap and religious illiteracy," claims Nanji. As with the Sears, Peck and Herriot article, Nanji offers hope and a solution to a social issue that will increasingly challenge Canadian society. Although several models are explored, global citizenship, a topic easily included in the current curriculum, provides a strong framework for hope.

Sandra Becker's article, "A Win-Win Situation: Developing a System of Reflection and Documentation for a Grade 4 Arts-Infused Inquiry" relates the experiences of a group of Grade 4 teachers who seek to investigate ways to assess an arts-infused learning project. However, the project had undertones much deeper than just finding out useful forms of assessment. Taking place at a school with a predominantly First Nations population, Becker states, "Not only was the project seen as an opportunity for teachers to collaborate but also to build connections between two disparate communities." As a student voice is central to this project, examples are included. At the end of the project, teachers found that deep student reflection led to students and teachers thinking more critically about their ideas—a win-win for all those involved as elements of social justice evolved from unexpected actions.

In "Social Perspectives on Antihomophobia Education: Capitalism and LGBTQ Identities," Métis doctoral student Aubrey Hanson pursues the theme of social justice as she investigates antihomophobia education work beyond that of simply defending human rights. Instead, she delves into the effect of the ideological structures of capitalism and how challenging this provides a basis for social change. Hanson notes, "Comprehension of the dynamics that exist between sexuality and socioeconomic contexts is significant for those who work to oppose discrimination against people who are LGBTQ—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer—or otherwise marginalized on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity." By contesting the oppression implicit in capitalism, change can be brought about.

Hanson takes us on a journey through the antihomophobia education of the early 2000s. Centred in Toronto, school board policy was firmly entrenched in the language and legislation of human rights. Antihomophobic pedagogy was seen as a means of addressing the concerns that arose in the latter part of the 1900s but eventually were seen as lacking a broader understanding of the social contexts such as intolerance. As Hanson digs deeper into the concern, she considers a Marxist critique of capitalism's exploitive power and the implications for oppression of the LGBTQ community. She concludes her paper with how homophobia can be challenged in our capitalist society and the possibilities for antihomophobia education to navigate the socioeconomic contexts that create social injustice. Hanson's article provides a compelling look at a controversial issue that is gaining greater recognition both in society and in schools.

Calgary teacher Richard Bieche rounds out the issue with an article entitled "Remembrance Day in Normandy." In an era where the federal government is promoting the study of memorial over the study of

historical education, Bieche's article relates the depth of stories behind such monuments, or as French historian Pierre Nora calls them, *lieux de mémoire*—sites of memory. The need for these constructed sites of memory is described in vivid detail through the personal stories Bieche uncovered as part of a group of Canadian teachers brought together by the Juno Beach Centre. Bieche recognizes Normandy was just one of the theatres of Canadian involvement in Europe, but it was a site of great sacrifice, the memory of which teachers should not let fade away.

From Arromanches and Bernières-sur-Mer to Bretteville-sur-Laize and Verrières Ridge, Bieche reflects on the past and the stories that shape Canada's collective memory. The personal family connection that Bieche has with one soldier, while adding poignancy, could be shared by many Canadians, underscoring the importance of balancing both memorial and historical thinking in our curriculum.

As the journal moves from paper to digital format, the Social Studies Council hopes to engage a broader readership. We hope that quality articles found in each issue can provide a starting point for great discussion with colleagues and instill a thoughtful consideration of practice, helping Alberta remain the global vanguard of social studies. While you enjoy the articles on social justice, keep in mind Anaïs Nin's quote, "We do not see things as they are, we see them as we are." Let's help students be better citizens to allow them to make the world a more just place.

We're Here to Teach About Democracy Not Practise It. The Missed Potential of Schools as Democratic Spaces[1]

Alan Sears, Carla L Peck and Lindsay Herriot

In the fall of 2010 Emil Cohen, a student and soccer player at Northern Secondary School, in Toronto, received a powerful civics lesson. Cohen was selected to speak for the school soccer team at an assembly honouring athletics at the school. Although Cohen did want to celebrate the accomplishment of his fellow soccer players, he also wanted to express concern about the place of soccer in the school. Soccer had been struggling for several seasons. Coaches forfeited playoff games without telling team members, and a lack of coaches resulted in years with no team at all. That year, Cohen had written a letter to all teachers appealing for a coach, but no one came forward. A teacher did agree to act as advisor, and Cohen's father functioned as coach. The final indignity was when the team's last two home games were moved to another school so that the football team could have more time on the practice field.

Cohen decided to address some of these issues in his speech to the assembly but a few lines in was cut off, moved off the stage and subsequently suspended from school. The speech, which is reproduced below, was critical but neither inaccurate nor extreme. The school's response garnered a wave of criticism and protest from students, media personalities and the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, but the school held firm with the principal insisting the purpose of the assembly had been to "present a celebratory message, to celebrate successes" (Blatchford 2010; Dempsey 2010). Before he could return to school, Cohen was expected to contact the administration and coaches to communicate his contrition and willingness "to work with them and move forward, recognize the effort they put in every day" (Blatchford 2010).

Emil Cohen's Speech

> This year, the soccer season was one that easily surpassed the expectations of everyone involved with the team. Admittedly, these expectations were extremely low, due to the three years of abject failure that we have been subjected to, through no fault of our own.
>
> We now have it instilled into us that "soccer" [at Northern] is synonymous with the word "unnecessary." We had this point made clearly to us during the season when our last two home games ... were moved to Forest Hill to allow the football team more field time.
>
> Nevertheless, we had a team this year, due to the tenacity and perseverance of several players who took it upon themselves to do the phys ed department's job and find a coach. (*Toronto Sun* 2010)

Cohen and his fellow students learned a powerful civics lesson through this incident. Although going to school in a province where the high school civics curriculum at the time stated, "Students need to learn basic civic literacy skills and have opportunities to apply those skills meaningfully by participating actively in the civic affairs of their community" (Ontario Ministry of Education 2005, 63); Cohen and his peers learned that "their community" apparently did not include school. They also learned that good citizens of the school are not meaningful participants but mouthpieces for the institution, mandated not to speak for themselves but, rather, "to present a celebratory message."

This may seem a harsh judgment, but examples of students' voices being stifled in schools and school systems are easy to come by, and evidence suggests that these contextual civics lessons are far more powerful than those delivered through the curriculum (Sears and Perry 2000; Herriot in press). Despite social studies curricula across the country that focus on the development of active, engaged citizens and several provincial initiatives intended to foster extracurricular student participation, such as Speak Out Alberta, our research and that of others indicates that students overwhelmingly feel powerless and voiceless at school. In the 1995 Hollywood movie, *Crimson Tide*, about an American nuclear submarine on the verge of conflict, the captain, played by Gene Hackman, dresses down his first mate who is contesting an order saying, "We're here to preserve democracy, not to practice it." It seems to us, this is an echo of the position schools and school systems across Canada take: We're here to teach about democracy, not practise it.

Young People as Democratic Agents of Change

For many years our research team has studied the way students and teachers understand key ideas related to democratic citizenship such as democratic participation, ethnic diversity and the role of dissent in a democracy. This work is in response to the pervasive consensus across the democratic world that consists of four elements: (1) a sense of crisis about the state of democratic citizenship; (2) a belief that the crisis can and should be addressed by effective citizenship education; (3) a commitment to a largely civic republican conception of citizenship; and (4) a move toward what are generally regarded as constructivist approaches to teaching and learning as best practice in citizenship education (Hughes and Sears 2008; Hughes, Print and Sears 2010; Peterson 2011).

The driving force for this consensus is a sense of crisis or, more accurately, overlapping crises in democracies around the world about the disengagement of citizens from participation in even the most basic elements of civic life. This concern is commonly expressed in both academic literature and popular media and is often called a "democratic deficit" (Cook and Westheimer 2006, 349). A number of critics have questioned the degree to which these crises accurately reflect the nature of young citizens' knowledge about and engagement in civic processes but, nevertheless, they permeate literature and policy statements in the area of civic education (for example, McAllister 1998; Sears and Hyslop-Margison 2007, Chareka and Sears 2006).

Canada has been no stranger to rising dismay over the disengagement of young citizens or an increasing focus on civic or citizenship education to address that disengagement. In 2011 the Canadian Political Science Association gave its Donald Smiley Prize for the best English language book in Canadian politics and government to Paul Howe (2010) for his book, *Citizens Adrift: The Democratic Disengagement of Young Canadians*. In this substantial study, Howe argues that "at least one-third of Canadians under thirty, and probably slightly more, have largely checked out of electoral politics" (p 21). For Howe, declining voting rates are not the whole story but "the canary in the disengagement coal mine" (p 8), signalling much more pervasive disengagement.

Canada has also been part of the worldwide trend to develop a civic republican approach to citizenship education, emphasizing both responsibility and agency as a vehicle to address the perceived disengagement crisis. Social studies curricula across the country stress the education of critical and engaged citizens with the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary to positively shape their communities, provinces, nation and, indeed, the world. For example, the role of social studies in Alberta is to develop "the key values and attitudes, knowledge and understanding, and skills and processes necessary for students to become active and responsible citizens, engaged in the democratic process and aware of their capacity to effect change in their communities, society and world" (Alberta Education 2005, 1).

It is all well and good to teach young people about civic engagement but if, like Cohen, their efforts to engage at school are continually squelched, it may all be for naught. As a report on citizenship education for the European Union said, "The most powerful

lessons that teachers and schools teach their pupils arise from the way they act and behave, not from what they tell them" (Harrison and Baumgartl 2002, 33). So how are Alberta schools acting as sites of citizenship? Do students feel like they have the opportunity to engage in democratic processes in their schools and school systems? Or are they like the crew on the *Crimson Tide*, learning about democracy but not practising it? Some of our recent research provides at least partial answers to these questions and we will turn to that now.

Student Voice in Alberta[2]

The research reported here is part of a larger study examining how Canadian students in the Maritimes and Alberta understand democratic participation. The study was conducted in two phases, which included surveying almost 2,000 Grade 12 students: 858 in Alberta and 1,050 in the three Maritime provinces. The survey was followed up by qualitative interviews with about 35 Grade 12 students in each of the jurisdictions. Both the survey and the interviews included direct questions about the students' experience of democracy in their schools. This article focuses on our preliminary analysis of responses to those questions.

Student Profiles

Before looking at how students feel about the democratic climate of their schools, it is important to point out that the students who responded to the questionnaire were not particularly disaffected or marginalized. Overwhelmingly they reported themselves as proud and patriotic English-speaking Canadians from middle-class families who do well in school and get along with their parents and teachers. More than 90 per cent reported being born in Canada (80 per cent of parents born in Canada as well), and 95 per cent speak English as a first language at home.[3] Those parents and students who were not born in Canada come from every region of the world with no particular area being dominant. The largest group came from East and Southeast Asia, with about 4 per cent (of the total sample) for parents and 2 per cent for students, and the next largest group emigrated from Western Europe, with 3 per cent for parents and less than 1 per cent for the students. Approximately 6 per cent of students identified themselves as Aboriginal, which is a fair bit higher than the 3.8 per cent of Aboriginal people in the Canadian population as reported in the 2006 Census, but that difference might be at least partly explained by relatively high birth rates and consequently higher numbers of young people among Aboriginal groups (Statistics Canada 2009a and b).

The students located themselves and their families solidly within the middle class. Slightly over 50 per cent of parents have some form of postsecondary education, and skilled trades and professional work are by far the largest areas of reported employment. Students reported that only 4.4 per cent of fathers and 15.2 per cent of mothers were not in the labour force in some capacity.

Overall, school and home seem to be positive places for these students. More than 70 per cent said they like school, with just over 90 per cent ranking their general academic performance as average or above with almost 82 per cent rating themselves that way in subjects related to the study of Canadian government. These young people were strikingly sanguine about their relationship with teachers. Ninety-seven per cent of females and 92 per cent of males said they get along with teachers satisfactorily or very well, with almost two-thirds of females (65.5 per cent) and well over half of males (56.6 per cent) placing themselves in the higher of those categories. In addition to getting along with their teachers, the students reported significant agreement with their parents' political views, as they perceive them. Well over one-third reported often or always agreeing with their parents' political views, with only about 1 in 5 reporting they rarely if ever agreed with their parents' views. In considering the results reported below, then, it is important to remember the respondents are not overly cynical outsiders but, as we have characterized them elsewhere, "extremely mainstream" (Sears et al 2012).

Questionnaire Findings: Voiceless Members of Society

Our preliminary findings from this study suggest that students in Alberta feel a pervasive sense of voicelessness in terms of society generally and their schools in particular. In some ways they are considerably more cynical about student government and schools as democratic communities than their counterparts in the Maritimes.

The students in this sample from both the Maritimes and Alberta show high levels of support in principle for key democratic ideas and processes such as a free press; free, fair and regular elections; and citizen engagement in both formal and informal political processes such as voting and working for change in other ways, for example volunteering. The majority

also believe the political system should be equally open to people from diverse backgrounds. Attitudes change, however, when students are asked to move from abstract to more focused statements about democracy as practised in Canada, at least at the federal level. Here we find very low levels of interest and high levels of cynicism.

Less than one-third (32.9 per cent) of the students expressed a particular interest in politics generally, with only 6.9 per cent saying they had an active interest in politics. This closely mirrors interest in the Canadian federal government in particular, with 30.6 per cent of respondents saying they are fairly interested in what goes on at that level and only 6.2 per cent indicating they are very interested. Close to two-thirds (63.2 per cent) indicate they have little or no interest in government at the federal level in Canada.

This general lack of interest carries over to their attitudes toward voting. A vast majority of the students said it is important to vote (92.1 per cent of females and 85.9 per cent of males), but many fewer find the prospect of voting in a Canadian election particularly interesting. A little less than half (43.3 per cent) of respondents said they found it personally interesting that they would someday vote in a federal election, and when asked to compare it to other teenage rites of passage, such as graduating from high school, getting a driver's license or legally consuming alcohol, first-time voting comes in dead last by a long shot.

This disaffection with government is just as pronounced when students are asked to consider the degree to which politicians consider the views of citizens, particularly young ones. Almost two-thirds (65.6 per cent) agreed that federal politicians are out of touch with people generally and even more concurred with a questionnaire item that read, "political parties are only interested in people's votes and not in their opinions" (see Figure 1). These students have even less confidence that legislators care about the opinions of young people, with about two-thirds agreeing that young people do not have a say in what government does. Almost 70 per cent of students said government does not really care about the views of young Canadians.

The students in our sample are quite supportive of key aspects of democracy and open, at least in theory, to wide participation of diverse groups in political and community processes. They exhibit, however, low levels of interest in and enthusiasm for Canadian government in general and voting in particular. They show high levels of cynicism about politicians and low levels of confidence in their own potential to shape political discourse or the direction of government. Overall they display a considerable degree of what some have called "disaffection with politics and government" (Howe 2010, 36).

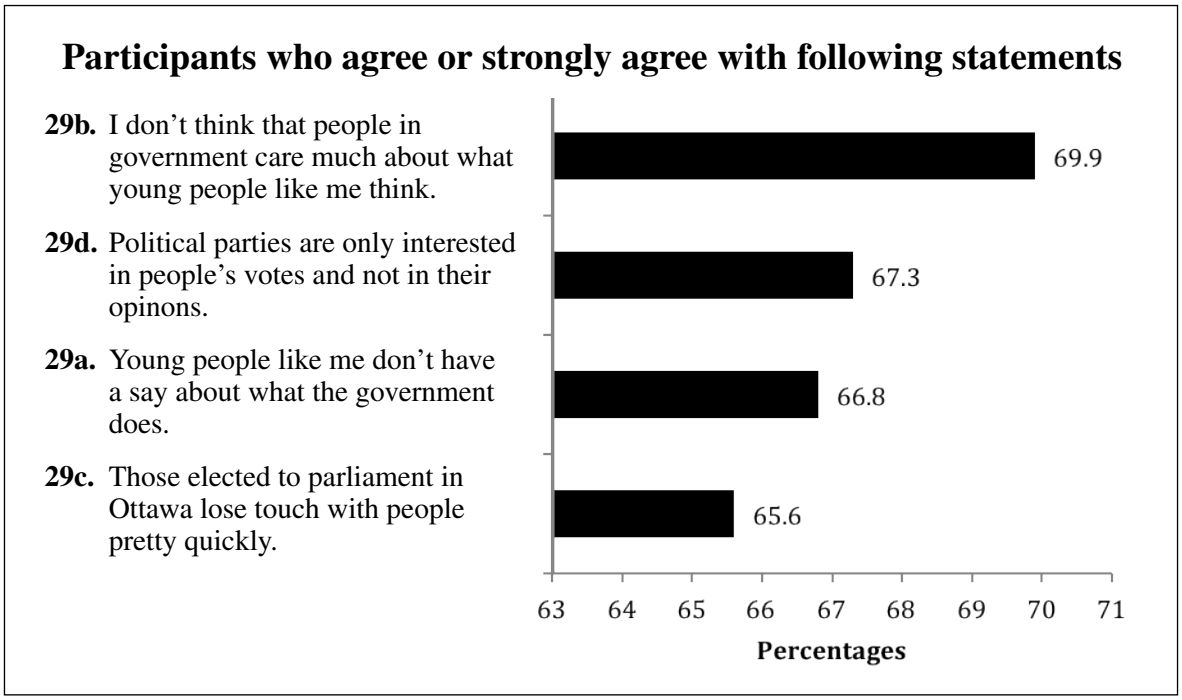

Figure 1: Young People's Attitudes About the Responsiveness of Federal Politicians

Questionnaire Findings: Voiceless in Schools

When we turn to an examination of how students feel about the potential for democratic engagement in schools, the picture is even bleaker. Respondents were asked to answer the question: Does your current school have elections for student government/ representatives? We thought elections for high school student governments were a matter of course and were surprised when two-thirds of students responded no to this question. We were even further surprised when we broke down the numbers by region to find that less than one third of Alberta students said their school had elections for student government compared to almost 90 per cent of Maritime students who responded the same way.

When asked about a range of elements related to school elections, such as whether or not everyone can vote, anyone can run or if elections are carried out democratically, students in Alberta respond lower in every area than students in the Maritimes (see Figure 3) and in some cases much lower. For example, less than half of Alberta students report that everyone

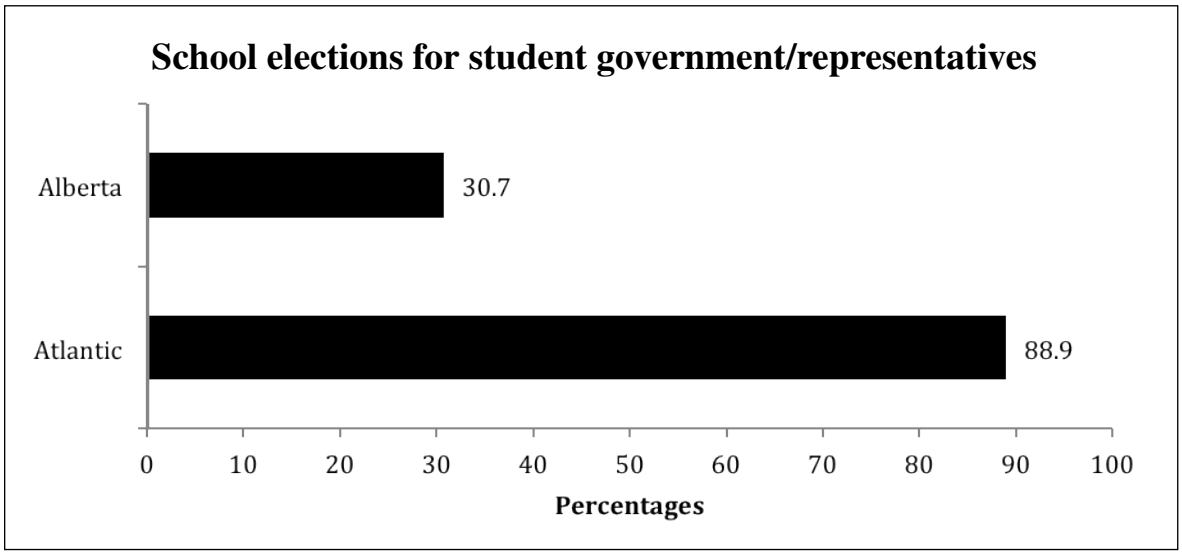

Figure 2: Elections for Student Government

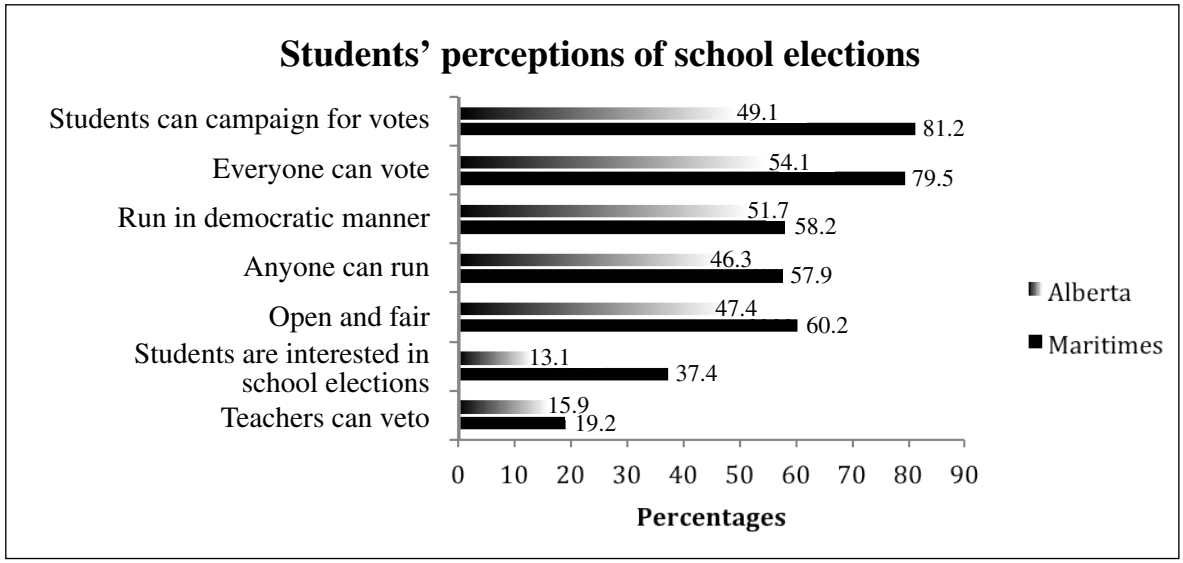

Figure 3: Student Perceptions of the Elements of School Elections

can vote in school elections compared to close to 80 per cent in the Maritimes. Sixty per cent of Maritime respondents felt school elections are open and fair, but less than half of Alberta students felt the same way. Students in both regions felt that their peers are generally uninterested in student elections, but even in this category Maritime students are much more optimistic than those from Alberta. Clearly, the Alberta respondents are much more cynical about student government than their Maritime counterparts.

Qualitative Data—Voicing Concerns over Voicelessness

Interviews with students confirmed their sense of voicelessness at school. The interviews took place in two phases. In the first, focus groups of three to five students were given a list of cards with various forms of civic engagement written on them (see Table 1).[4] They were asked to discuss and arrange these cards on a set of concentric circles with "very effective" written in the centre circle and "not at all effective" written on the outer circle (See Figure 4.). Following the activity, the interviewer conducted a focus-group debriefing to clarify the reasons for their choices.

In the second phase, students were interviewed individually about the likelihood of them engaging in any of these forms of democratic participation. To begin this activity, they were asked to arrange the same cards (plus any their group had added) on a

Table 1: Forms of Civic Engagement

Violent protest
Peaceful protest
Signing/circulating petition
Voting
Joining a political party
Boycotts
Joining a social network group to promote a cause
Writing a letter to the newspaper
Contacting an elected official
Strikes
Volunteering
Student government
Organizing an event

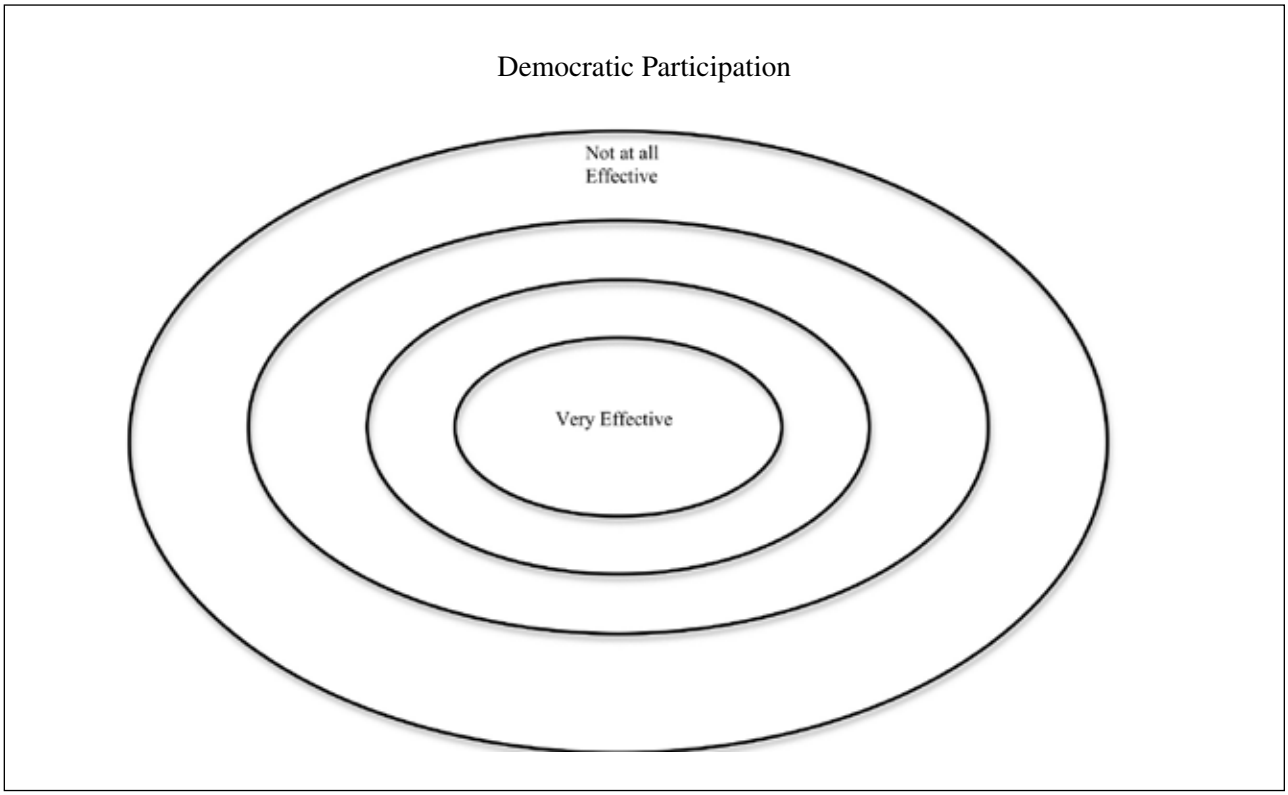

Figure 4: First Interview Activity

similar set of circles except this time the movement was from "things I would definitely do" in the centre to "things I would never do" on the outside. Students engaged in a "think aloud" procedure where they talked through their placement of the cards and following this, an interview was conducted to further explore their reasons for the decisions they made.

In terms of effectiveness (phase one of the study), "participating in student government" was ranked last of all 13 items (Table 1) in all of the group placements from Alberta. Overall, students felt it was the least effective of all the means listed for making change. However, in the second interview, most students placed participating in student government near the centre saying it was something they had done or would consider doing. If students considered participating in student government as ineffective, why did they still participate (or indicate a willingness to participate) in it?

In our conversations with students, we noticed some recognition that students could learn something about democratic processes by participating in student government. When asked about the value of student government, for example, one young woman replied, "It helps people realize how complicated it actually is to run the government and get stuff done." Another gave a similar but more detailed response: "If a student runs for a position in student government, then they realize that they have to cater to things, like, the students, not necessarily what they want. . . . Sometimes it's really frustrating when you want something done but nobody else wants it done and you get voted out. But that's democracy, quote unquote, I guess."

Beyond this acknowledgement that there might be some learning to be gained through the process of participating in student government, students overwhelmingly told us that the enterprise was phony and more about toeing the administration line than listening to students. In the words of one young man: "You're just basically going in there [student government] and saying, 'Okay, we're going to keep the status quo. How do we go about keeping the status quo?'" Another put it very bluntly:

> In [school] you vote for … one class rep and then a president and the treasurer, vice-president and you never see, like, anything again. Like, you can talk to them to suggest stuff, but you never get to have any say in the decisions or anything. *I think most of it's pretty much shot down by the administration anyway*. (Emphasis ours)

In the face of this widespread disparagement of student government as effective for anything beyond planning social events, we often asked interviewees how they might go about making change in their school if a rule or policy concerned them. Most said there really was no way they could think of, or no systematic way at least. Some acknowledged that a trusted teacher might take up a cause but that was rare. One young woman summed up the general feeling in her plea for some kind of system that took student voice into consideration.

> Even though we have a school government and stuff it has nothing to do with our own Canadian government or anything to do with Alberta. I think something that would help me participate more in the government and get my voice across is if they introduce something to schools, where the students can make the change too. I don't think our voices get heard as well as they should be.

Clearly the Grade 12 participants in our study from Alberta feel a pervasive sense of powerlessness in their schools even though the social studies curriculum and schooling more generally officially focused on fostering engaged citizenship. We acknowledge that student perceptions might not always be a fair reflection of reality—that some schools might be doing more to listen to students and take their ideas seriously than they are given credit for—nevertheless, perceptions this widespread and strongly held are important to consider. There is a plethora of international research to indicate that "Schools that operate in a participatory democratic way, foster an open climate for discussion within the classroom and invite students to take part in shaping school life are effective in promoting both civic knowledge and engagement (Torney-Purta et al 2001, 176).

Possible Ways Forward

The bad news is that Alberta—all of Canada, in fact—lags significantly behind other parts of the world in paying attention to the contexts of civic education in addition to the curriculum (Hughes and Sears 2006; Hughes, Print and Sears 2010). The good news is that Alberta and Canada lag significantly behind other parts of the world in paying attention to the contexts of civic education, so there are a number of models on which to draw. Space does not permit detailed consideration of those here but suffice it to say they address contextual issues at three levels: the classroom, the school and the wider culture.

England provides the most comprehensive example of the first two. Along with making citizenship part of the national curriculum in 2001, England also

mandated the inclusion of students in meaningful governance roles in classrooms and schools. Not only was this mandated, but a system of monitoring and inspection was also established to ensure it took place. The national 10-year Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study, for example, developed a set of measures to evaluate the level of democracy in classrooms and schools and reported these regularly (Cleaver et al 2005).

In the United States, the Education Commission of the States has sponsored work on evaluating democratic practices in schools and published ideas that might be adopted by others (See Table 2). It should be noted that as in England, some of these measures address democracy for teachers as well as for students.

Finally, there is the wider policy context that does not seem to be getting attention anywhere. Herriot (in press) studied student responses to Bill 44 in Alberta, a controversial measure granting parents the right to exclude their children from the discussion of some sensitive topics in schools. Herriot makes the point that although the controversy raged for some time, students were never consulted in any meaningful way on how they felt, even though many had strong and well-thought-out points of view on the matter. This kind of exclusion is counter to Article 12 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of the Child which reads, "Children have the right to say what they think should happen when adults are making decisions that affect them, and to have their opinions taken into account."

Table 2: Selected Aspects of Democratic Schools

- Students on hiring committees for teachers, principals and superintendents
- Students on school planning committees and leadership teams
- Student representatives on school boards and board committees
- Students on curriculum committees
- Student involvement in planning their own programs particularly through internships and individualized studies programs
- Training provided to student representatives on boards and committees
- Training for principals on facilitating public dialogue to encourage wide community involvement in schools
- Controversial and political issues relevant to the curriculum are dealt with, including using visiting speakers
- Staff makes decisions by consensus

Adapted from Miller 2004

Conclusion

Talk of democratic schools often sends shivers up the spines of administrators and teachers. They imagine disciplinary chaos and students voting to eliminate math from the curriculum. That is not what we mean at all. As Herriot (in press) points out, "Student voice with meaningful authority does not, however, preclude adult guidance and involvement." A check of any of the initiatives discussed above will indicate that a meaningful student voice does not come at the expense of well-run and productive schools. In fact, research indicates that schools will be more productive if students feel they are valued parts of the community and not just passive recipients of adult authority and advice.

Democratic schools might just be administratively pragmatic as well. The principal of Northern Secondary School in Toronto was embarrassed that Cohen criticized the school in a public forum, but Cohen's critique was mild compared to the street protests and petitions that ensued after his suspension. Popular comedian Rick Mercer even weighed in about the issue on Twitter—and not in favour of the school. We suspect the embarrassment to the school was much greater as a result of stifling Cohen's participation than it would have been had the school embraced it. There are a number of jurisdictions trying to find creative ways to give students a voice in their education, and it makes good sense for Canada, and Alberta in particular, to get on board.

Notes

1. With grateful acknowledgement to Keith Owre, graduate student assistant, for help with the statistical analysis.

2. The study was conducted in the Maritimes and Alberta. Some of the quantitative data refers to both places, and where that is true, it is indicated in the paper. All of the quotes from interview transcripts come from Alberta students.

3. According to the 2006 census 22.2 per cent of the Canadian population was foreign born (Statistics Canada 2009a), and 66.7 per cent used English most often at home, with 21.4 per cent using French, the other official language, most often at home (Government of Canada 2012).

4. Each group was also provided with blank cards on which they could add their own forms of participation. For consistency we have only used the ones provided by the researchers for this paper.

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Understanding My Brothers and Sisters

Afroza Nanji

On March 13, 2012, the world welcomed in a new Pope. I remember watching the white smoke with intrigue as I caught a scene of the Vatican on the news. Masses of people, pilgrims they were called, had gathered, awaiting the news of their new religious leader. I was moved and inspired. It was the immense sense of faith and hope of my Catholic brothers and sisters that moved me. Being myself Muslim, one may wonder why I call Catholics my brothers and sisters. I have come to realize that we can no longer isolate ourselves from religious communities that differ from our own. Our identities are interconnected now more than ever before, and increased mobility and communication between peoples of the world are causing increasing encounters with diverse others. I was due to catch a theatrical performance at my children's school that afternoon, and as I headed over I thought of my need to send my warm wishes and prayers for blessings to my Catholic friends and colleagues. This comforting thought, however, was followed by a perplexing one. Apart from a handful of people I knew the religious identity of, for the most part I had no idea of the religious affiliation, or lack thereof, of those I would consider my more intimate associates.

The present condition presents itself with a large selection of individualized meanings of religious identification (O'Toole 2006; Esposito, Fasching and Lewis 2008; Taylor 2008). There are multiplicities of spiritual, religious and secularly oriented paths by which people seek meaning. According to Esposito, Fasching and Lewis (2008) we have moved away from traditional societies in which the "majority of people share common religious stories and rituals" (p 5). We have also moved beyond modern notions of society in which science replaced religion as the most certain form of knowledge. Present conditions, Esposito, Fasching and Lewis (2008) suggested, are characterized by a pluralism of world views in which religions and cultures intermingle to create diverse and particular beliefs and expressions. A tension is apparent to me. On the one hand is an interconnected global community of religiously devout citizens. On the other hand is religious particularity further differentiated by diverse interpretations and contexts within which belief and practice are occurring.

One can turn to Canadian religious demographics, which Bramadat (2007, 2008) stated is expected to see drastic changes, to obtain a sense of the increasingly multiple ways in which Canadians identify themselves religiously. A snapshot of changes between 1991 and 2001 demarcates the number of non-Christians, such as Muslims, Buddhists, Sikhs and Hindus, had more than doubled (Statistics Canada 2003). It is estimated that by 2017, more than 10 per cent of Canadians will be non-Christians (Bramadat 2007). Beaman (2012a) suggested it is important to query, how are people religious? That is, "when Statistics Canada asks people to identify their religious affiliation we learn almost nothing about how people are religious or what they think religious behaviour is" (p 270). The increasing plurality, diversity of interpretation and contribution of cultural particularities cannot be appreciated through statistics. The lack of appreciation of individualized meanings of religious identification is attributed by Bramadat (2009) to a sense that conversations about religion are considered to be too volatile to have in

public space. Instead they are reserved for the private sphere. For those conversations that do enter public space, there is a tendency "to frame the religious phenomena … in terms of a binary essentialism in which all religions are essentially oriented toward love, peace, kindness and egalitarianism" (Bramadat 2007, 121). This decontextualized approach that uses neutral language may contribute to "safe" conversations but does not contribute to understanding that in fact religions are constituted by people, and thus by their beliefs, interpretations, expressions and assumptions (Bramadat 2007; Bramadat and Seljak 2013).

Relegating conversations about religion to the private sphere is likely a by-product of attempting to create a neutral government that does not appear to favour any one religion and a multicultural nation that makes room for religious diversity. However, excluding religion from public life creates myths about the secular temperament of our society (Beaman 2012b). Taylor (2008) recommended a need to understand private and public in a manner that supports a positive rather than a subtraction story as it relates to religion and society. That is, by using the term *secular* to describe public life, one cannot assume that a commitment to religiosity has waned. It is not that we are more secular due to the erosion of religious belief. Rather, from a positive viewpoint, there is a plethora of options and commitments today, of sacred, religious and spiritual varieties along with secular ones. Secularism in public space is in fact directed to the state and its institutions (Bouchard and Taylor 2008; Woehrling 2011), ensuring their neutrality with respect to religion. "In point of fact, religions already occupy this space and pursuant to the charters, religious groups and the faithful have the freedom to publicly display their beliefs" (Bouchard and Taylor 2008, 43). This is in keeping with Habermas (2005), who reminded us that most religious citizens do not have a reason to artificially divide secular and religious in their minds. Religion provides meaning to the entirety of one's existence for many Canadians and, therefore, how can we expect an individual to be divided into a secular being in public space and a religious one in private?

As a microcosm of broader public space is the school classroom, one in which the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), as of 2005, permits the teaching of courses on religion within the Alberta program of studies (Calgary Board of Education 2012). According to the CBE, this will enable students to gain understanding of world religions and the influence of religion in such areas as politics, economics, history, literature and the arts (Calgary Board of Education 2007).

The fairly recent introduction of religion in the curriculum manifests against a historical backdrop of the secularization of schools. Commencing in the 1960s, through to its widespread prevalence by the establishment of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms in 1982, removal of religion from Canadian public schools secured state neutrality and accommodated religious diversity (Seljak 2008, 2009, 2012).

However, the virtual absence of teaching religion in public schools has led to an intellectual gap and religious illiteracy (Bramadat 2007; Bramadat and Biles 2005; Moore 2006, 2007; Seljak 2008, 2009; Sweet 1997). Religious literacy can be defined as a basic understanding of the world's religious traditions, the internal diversity of expressions and beliefs within each tradition, and the role of religion in social, cultural and political life (Moore 2006, 2010). According to Moore (2007), few teachers have had the opportunity to learn about religion in a way that is appropriate for teaching in public schools and are "teaching about religion in the context of deeply rooted and widespread religious illiteracy" (p 181).

There is hope! The introduction of religion in Calgary public schools can contribute to basic understanding of what it means to be a Muslim, or Jewish, or Hindu which Peck et al (2010, 270) suggested, will provide Canadians a "sense of how to engage with the wider world." Add on multidisciplinary curriculum that unravels religious beliefs and expressions as internally diverse, dynamic and contextually dependant phenomena and you have the ability to nurture religious literacy.

Turning to global citizenship education, Evans et al (2009) presented two relevant goals that examine diverse beliefs and world views that develop "critical literacy capacities" (p 21):

- To explore and reflect upon one's identity and membership through a lens of world-mindedness (e.g. indigenous; local; national; cultural; religious) and by coming to know others, I come to know myself
- To examine diverse beliefs, values, and worldviews within and across varied contexts that guide civic thinking and action (e.g. cultural; religious; secular; political)

Ultimately the tension between a global community with shared values and individual religious differences can be a healthy one if framed by human rights and engagement with those religiously different than ourselves. The remarkable thing is that these encounters do not dilute our identities. Rather, they can encourage self-search and a clarification of our

assumptions along with their origins and consequences. In asking Who are You, we are searching and strengthening the sense of Who am I?

On the day the new Pope was elected I saw thousands of religious Catholics on the news. Around me, I saw few. The apparent familial connection I felt with Catholics as the Pope was declared was marked by a significant lack of understanding of Catholicism and the lived religious and cultural experiences of Catholic Canadians. Worldwide, and almost every day, issues about religion are arising all around us. They are a result of an intersection between increased religious diversity, religious freedom and various understandings of what it means to be religious in public space. However, an understanding of and conversation about how people are religious in daily life and conversations that inform us about the particular lived experiences of our friends and colleagues seem scarce, both inside and outside the walls of schools. The plurality of religious world views one encounters necessitates an appropriate religious literacy in order to be equipped to analyze and discern the role of religion in a fellow human being's life and within society in general. For me, this will start by asking who my Catholic Canadian siblings are and what the Pope's appointment means to them.

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A Win-Win Situation: Developing a System of Reflection and Documentation for a Grade 4 Arts-Infused Inquiry

Sandra Becker

Ask the Grade 4 students at Elizabeth Rummel School in Canmore, Alberta, for a highlight of their year, and they would automatically respond, "Arts-infused learning!" Under the inspiration and leadership of former Canadian Rockies Public Schools music teacher Kathleen Matheson, local artists from the community came to the school to give a series of workshops to small groups of children on their art form. The workshops ranged from drawing to sculpture to photography to songwriting.

Description of the 2012 Project

In the winter of 2012, Matheson and fellow staff members Sue Bjorge and Sandra Becker embarked on a project with teachers Jody Keon and Brenda Cooke from Exshaw School. The population of this neighbouring school is approximately 96 per cent First Nations. Not only was the project seen as an opportunity for teachers to collaborate but also to build connections between two disparate communities. Using the social studies curriculum as a starting point, a focal question was developed, "How do artists tell stories?" Teachers involved in the project met on several occasions to plan and make the experience as meaningful as possible for all. A research question the teachers focused their work on was, "How can we authentically assess a performance?" They planned six opportunities for the children to come together—three at Elizabeth Rummel School and three at Exshaw School. The first three sessions involved attempts to form a community of learners. Typically, the children from Exshaw School are quiet and reserved. Teachers engaged all the children in a group art project, a teleconference with the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, singing and dancing. The museum presentation entitled "Telling Stories Through Portraiture" involved studying particular pieces of art from the museum collection to see the stories within them. All students involved in the project read and discussed the picture book, *Finding the Green Stone,* by Alice Walker (1991), which became the starting point for their research question. For the final three sessions, children worked in small groups on one art form under the direction of a local artist. While students worked with the artists, teachers circulated with cameras, iPads and iPods to record processes and performances. After each session, they debriefed their own class. As a final wrap-up, they interviewed students using video and asked them to talk about their artwork. As well, they asked students to complete a self-assessment, created collaboratively by the teachers (Figure 1), on the process.

How Do Artists Tell Stories?			Performance Assessment
Name		**Artist**	
Did I	**Yes**	**Not Yet**	**Evidence I learned . . . .**
Did I tell a story?			
Did I follow the techniques presented by the artist?			
Did I contribute to the group's learning?			
Did my thinking change about how to tell a story?			

Based on a template provided by the Alberta Assessment Consortium (www.aac.ab.ca).

Figure 1

Though the project was seen as a good first step, the assessment process appeared superficial. Teachers had some idea of how and what the children learned, but they were left feeling that while the children enjoyed the experience, they had not made the connection to art as a way to engage in critical thinking. A frequent student comment was, "I cannot believe there are so many different ways to tell stories." For many of them, that seemed to be as far as their thinking went.

The teachers spent a good deal of time discussing assessment, but they lacked ideas about how to meaningfully get at the children's deeper learning. They created a website to showcase student work, but it became a simple repository of information—photos, videos and print. In retrospect, for both students and teachers, the focus was on the creation of a product, rather than the research process. There was no evidence that as a result of the project, all learners, both children and adults, had made important connections that they could carry forward and apply in future teaching and learning situations. This became abundantly clear with a second look at the research question, "How can we authentically assess a performance?" The teachers realized that by focusing on the final product or performance, they were limiting what might be gleaned about student learning throughout their arts-infused sessions.

As part of a master's-level course on inquiry, I decided to take what was learned during the 2012 experience to further research and develop assessment tools that would enhance arts-infused learning, as process, in the future. This paper will present the research that helped guide the development of assessment tools for the 2013 arts-infused learning project, as well as some of the assessment results using those tools.

Using the Arts as a Tool for Research

Originally, the 2012 team looked at the arts as a way of including all students and of furthering collaboration, especially with First Nations students. Teachers also saw the arts as a way of reaching every type of learner. Students chose the art form they wanted to work in, which included sculpture, painting, performance art, creative dance, hip hop, printmaking, collage and video game construction. It was felt that in choosing an expressive medium, the students would have an opportunity to make their voices heard.

In surveying the literature, the evidence exists that there is a more substantive reason for using the arts. Gandini (2012) suggests that the arts allow for the development of multidisciplinary critical-thinking and problem-solving skills that are inherent in the concept of 21st-century learning:

> The connections and interweavings among different disciplines with the languages of the atelier often produce, in our projects, a shift in established points of view and favor a more complex approach to problems, revealing the expressive, empathic, and aesthetic elements that are inherent in any discipline or specific problem. (pp 306–07)

I realized that not only could the arts allow thinking to happen, the artistic process could help children develop strategies for research, including posing questions, extending ideas and building knowledge that could be applied in future learning situations. Clyde et al (2006) further these ideas. They suggest that the arts provide a mechanism for thinking:

> Through the use of visual and dramatic arts, the children began to search for detailed explanations for their theories. The acts of drawing, sculpting, and dramatizing moved the children from documenting to questioning to research to altering hypotheses. Multiple sign systems were invaluable as children communicated ideas and responded to feedback, prompting them to add details to clarify theories for their audience. They also inspired kids to question more deeply. (p 224)

Baker (2011) from Ochoa Community Magnet School in Tucson, Arizona, at a recent conference clarified that it is not art for art's sake:

> We are inventing languages for learning.… We are not doing art, but researching a question that needs to be answered.… The studio allows you to "see" their questions. We see materials as tools to invent ideas with. Materials are just as important as letters and numbers as symbols of communication.

This was important for the team at Elizabeth Rummel to understand, because it moved them past seeing the arts as production, to seeing the arts as a process of researching, questioning and thinking. I felt that assessing the understanding that comes when using an "expressive language," or any language for that matter, is both challenging and important, because it guides teachers and students into thinking what's next, instead of thinking I'm finished. But how does one assess in a way that moves learning forward? Most teachers involved in the project at Elizabeth Rummel felt it had to be more than the gathering of comments and products, the completion of a checklist or a test, or even a written reflection. Further reading and research led to documentation.

Documentation as a Way of Learning

In conducting research, not only did I question, what is documentation? It also became important to ask, how can we use documentation effectively in an arts-infused learning project? As Susan Fraser (1999) states, much of the knowledge from documentation comes when it is revisited.

> Documentation is like a system of gears that sets the curriculum in motion. Making visible the children's ideas and experiences in some form of documentation provides the teachers with a means of revisiting them with children, discussing them with colleagues and parents, and making hypotheses and flexible plans for future action. When children and adults review the earlier experiences together through representations such as children's drawings or recorded comments, the children are moved to a higher level of mental functioning. (p 78)

I knew from our previous experience that it had to be more than the simple act of recording students' comments and actions. More than that, the teachers had to train themselves to listen and interpret what the children were saying when it came to their understanding of ideas. They had to know when to ask questions, when to prompt thinking and when to sit back and simply listen. I felt that this careful listening, when practised, could lead to rich discussion between teachers, students and parents, which could, in turn, lead to deep learning.

> Pedagogical documentation is a research story, built upon a question, or inquiry "owned" by the teachers, children, or others, about the learning of children. It reflects a disposition of not presuming to know and of asking how the learning occurs, rather than assuming—as in transmission models

> of learning—that learning occurred because teaching occurred . . . pedagogical documentation is a counterfoil to the positioning of the teacher as all-knowing judge of learning. (Wien 2011, Documentation as Teacher Research section, para 3)

I also came to realize while conducting research for the 2013 project that this move from teachers as evaluators to teachers as learners and inquirers, especially for those not practised at it, would require perseverance and time, would probably need to happen in incremental steps and would involve a complete shift in thinking. This shift in thinking was made clear by Krechevsky (2011), from Project Zero, Harvard University, when she spoke at a conference: "It is not about learning to document, it is about documenting to learn."

However, the notion of learning to document for learning can be problematic, especially if educators are not steeped in the practice of teacher as inquirer. Teachers may often not see purpose in documentation until they learn to document well, and they may not learn to document well if they do not see its purpose. Teachers may have to give up other methods of assessment, which to some, are intellectually less demanding and less time-consuming.

> Documentation can initially feel like an "add-on," and teachers may feel like they cannot find time to do it. Understanding the intellectual purposes of documentation is difficult for teachers when they have not yet developed habits of documenting and are still frustrated by not remembering to document. (Wien 2011, Habits of Documenting, para 3)

I felt that once teachers embedded documentation into their practice, continual self-assessment and growth would be unavoidable, because not only would they come to know their students more clearly as learners, they would also come to be more thoughtful about their own teaching role, as one of mentor and guide, rather than all-knowing directors. "Clearly, documentation plays an important role in nurturing improved practice for all involved by making teaching practice visible at a distance" (Hetland, Cajolet and Music 2010, 63). It seemed that documentation as a rich form of assessment, though challenging, was a worthwhile endeavour to undertake as part of the arts-infused learning program.

2013 Project Details

Because of funding constraints, the 2013 arts-infused learning program was only conducted with students at Elizabeth Rummel School. There were four sessions over the course of six weeks. Students could choose from drama, dance, guitar, drawing, painting, photography, puppetry and working with clay. That session was held in a potter's studio, off-campus. Prior to the artists beginning work with the children, teachers viewed and discussed with their classes specific art forms created by Alberta artists and what they told us about our community and province. This connected to General Outcome 4.3: "Students will demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of how Alberta has grown and changed culturally, economically, and socially since 1905," and specifically to 4.3.3: "In what ways have music, art, narratives and literature contributed to the vitality of the culture, language and identity of diverse Alberta communities over time?" (Alberta Education 2005). This led to our big question, How do the arts show that we are proud Albertans?

As part of the 2013 project, I offered to locate tools that would scaffold more meaningful assessment. Wien (2011) suggests starting slowly: "1. Choose one tool for documenting.… 2. Watch for and document ordinary moments of learning…. 3. Choose from several such documentation moments one occasion that you will try to make more intelligible to others via polished documentation.…" (Concluding Remarks section, para 4).

I knew from previous experience that it was important to focus the documentation. "The sharper the teacher's thinking about the data, and her purposes in sharing it, the clearer the message in sharing the documentation" (Wien 2011, Concluding Remarks section, para 2).

This was an obvious flaw in the "documentation" attempted by the team from Canadian Rockies in 2012. Teachers collected a great deal of data to place on the website, which included student quotes, photos and short video interviews, but there was no purpose or message in sharing it.

As well, the teachers lacked strategies for extending and building on student comments, whether orally or in writing. Often, it felt as if teachers were putting words in the students' mouths in order to get the "answers" they were looking for. It was thought that a structured document that could scaffold teachers in learning to document would be beneficial.

A "Kidwatching Form" (Gee 2000, 105) could be useful in guiding the work (Figure 2). The key words in the document instruct teachers in what to look for while documenting. This was one tool presented to teachers for use in 2013. It was suggested that teachers focus on one or two students throughout the project, giving them an opportunity to practise so that their documentation was rich and detailed.

Student Name				
Coming to Know the Process of Learning				
Date	**Learning Event**	**Engagement** -pleasure and involvement -perseverance -risk-taking -responsibility	**Collaboration** -thoughts expressed -openness to feedback -use of input -group work	**Flexibility** -modalities used -problem-solving strategies -revision strategies

Student Name				
Showing You Know the Products of Learning				
Date	**Learning Event**	**Understanding Content** -verbal and nonverbal expression of main idea	**Conventions and Forms** -first uses of conventions -practised use of conventions	**Presentation** -clarity -detail -focus -purpose -voice

Figure 2

A second tool was developed for student reflection. Project Zero, an educational research group at the Graduate School of Education at Harvard University, provides structured ways to guide the documentation process, using its Visible Thinking and Artful Thinking routines (Artful Thinking Palette www .pzartfulthinking.org/atp_palette.php).

Not only do the thinking routines provide an approach that will scaffold teachers as they learn how to document, the routines are configured in such a way that they scaffold student learning as well.

ERS teachers used a Creativity Routine called Creative Hunt from the Visible Thinking website as a starting point to create a self-assessment document that was used with each arts-infused learning session. In creating the routine, and with input from the team, I wanted the children to pay attention to what skills they were developing, what habits of mind they used and how their thinking changed over the course of the project. The teachers at Elizabeth Rummel wanted to help children think more deeply, but they often lacked ideas for how to help them successfully do it. "Often, we found, children (and adults) think in shallow ways not for lack of ability to think more deeply but because they simply do not notice the opportunity.…" (Palmer et al nd).

In discussion with teachers, the reflection document focused on three areas—the artistic process, the habits of mind used while in the process of creating art and thinking about the big question, How do the arts show we are proud Albertans?

2013 Results

Results using the tools for documentation of learning were mixed.

Kidwatching

In retrospect, it is difficult to know if the kidwatching form could provide the scaffolding needed for teachers to become better at documenting, because it was not used as thoughtfully as it might have been. Three issues need to be addressed in future. In past iterations of arts-infused learning, teachers travelled from session to session, observing all the students in action. This meant that they observed all the children

Arts-Infused Learning 2013

Name _____ Date _____

Session No _____

What was the main purpose today?	
What were the skills learned and what is their purpose?	
What did you do that was especially smart or creative?	
Who was your audience today?	

Source: http://tinyurl.com/lj9c4j6

Figure 3

Big Question: How do the arts show we are proud Albertans?

What new ideas do you have about the big question that you didn't have before?	
How has your thinking changed?	
What habits of mind did you use?	

Source: www.pzartfulthinking.org/creative_questions.php

Figure 4

for five to ten minutes, at most. Zeroing in on two students for all the sessions, as suggested, meant teachers would stay in one session for longer periods of time. Logistically, planning did not occur for this to happen. Teachers were needed to troubleshoot in various sessions, and all teachers expressed a desire to attend the potter's studio, which required them travelling off-campus for one of the four sessions. Built into the arts-infused planning process in the future must be strategic teacher observation periods, as well as preconference, observation and post-conference sessions.

Second, it became clear that one of the things missing was teacher discussion beforehand, which may have helped to focus teacher attention during observation periods. Because this was not established ahead of time, in most cases, it did not happen. Assuming that classroom teachers would do this in their busy day-to-day lives was not enough.

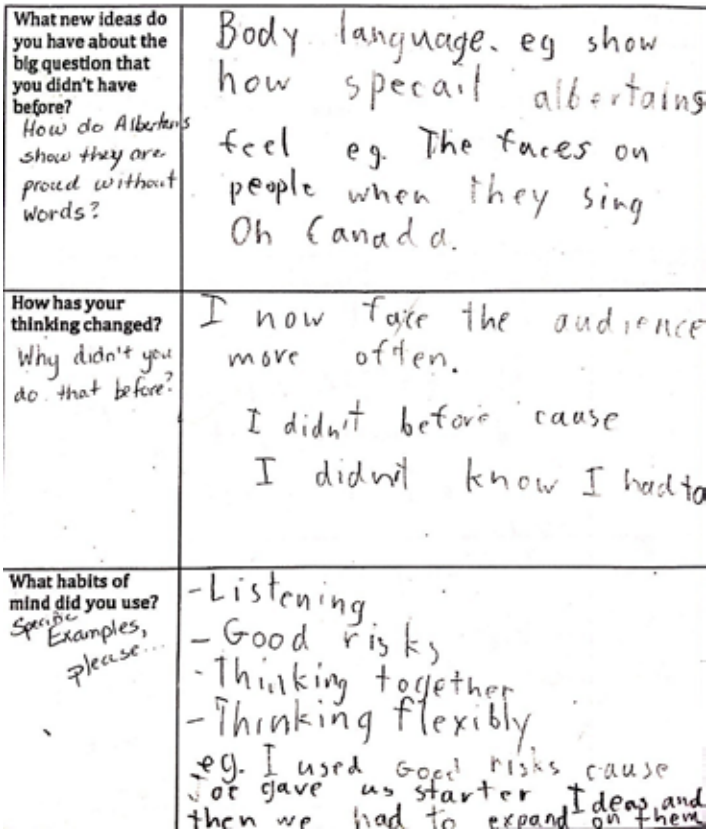
Third, only two teachers on the team were familiar, through reading and research, with documentation. More study and buy-in on the merits of documentation by all members were needed by all teachers.

Student Reflection

As part of arts-infused learning each week, the students were given time to complete a reflection of their learning for that session. Several teachers gave the students immediate feedback on their reflections, both oral and written, if they felt the students' thinking lacked detail or information. The feedback helped the students improve the quality of their reflection and provided the teachers with information and a lead-in to further discussion about student learning.

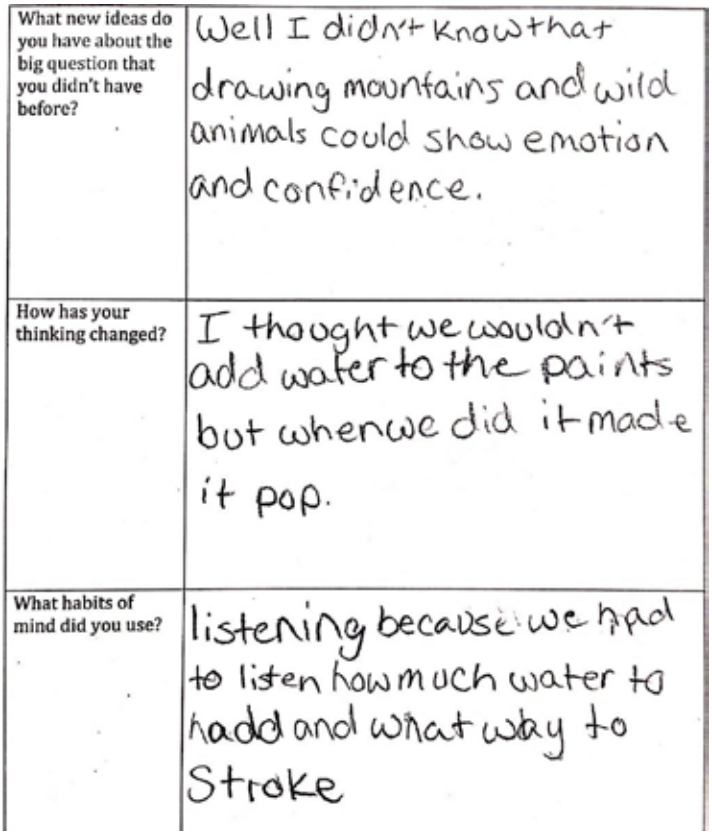
Students often did not include enough detail in their reflection, and needed guidance in the form of questions and suggestions to help them be more specific in their sharing, as evidenced in the teachers' questions in Figure 5.

With my own class, sometimes the reflections were a starting point for me to initiate class discussions with students about their thinking. In Figure 6, a class discussion was held around how artists show emotion in their work, why it is important and if it connected to the big question. Figure 7 led to a further discussion about Canadian weather, the feelings it evokes in people who live here, and what it says about our identity. In Figure 8, the student, when questioned about his reflections on technique, expressed orally why it was important to him to make the grass look sharp and thin. This led to a discussion about details in an artist's work and what it tells us about their connections to the land.



What new ideas do you have about the big question that you didn't have before? How do Albertans show they are proud without words?	Body language. eg show how specail albertains feel eg. The faces on people when they sing Oh Canada.
How has your thinking changed? Why didn't you do that before?	I now face the audience more often. I didn't before cause I didn't know I had to
What habits of mind did you use? Specific Examples, please...	-Listening - Good risks -Thinking together -Thinking flexibly eg. I used Good risks cause Joe gave us starter Ideas and then we had to expand on them

Figure 5



What new ideas do you have about the big question that you didn't have before?	Well I didn't know that drawing mountains and wild animals could show emotion and confidence.
How has your thinking changed?	I thought we wouldn't add water to the paints but when we did it made it pop.
What habits of mind did you use?	listening because we had to listen how much water to hadd and what way to Stroke

Figure 6

What new ideas do you have about the big question that you didn't have before?	Pictures show weather and that tells us wele proud of our weather. Why? cause it represent our activities and how much we like nature. It also represence perseverence
How has your thinking changed?	I didn't know that photographe have to go out in this weath
What habits of mind did you use?	I used pelsistance because I was cold and wet

Figure 7

What was the main purpose today?	Learning how to show Light and Shadows
What were the skills learned and what is their purpose?	Mixing colours to show light and Shadows.
What did you do that was especially smart or creative?	I used a thin brash to make my grass look Sharp and thin.
Who was your audience today?	Our group and teacher.

Figure 8

Attempting Polished Documentation

After four sessions of arts-infused learning, a culminating event was held in the school gymnasium. Students involved in drama, hip hop, puppetry and guitar presented their works to the audience as a whole. Then audience members were free to roam and view the paintings, pottery, photography and drawings the students completed. Student artists, participating artist teachers and classroom teachers were available for questions and discussion.

Student quotes about the process were displayed around the gym for audience members to read. Figure 9 includes some of the student comments. Though many of the comments relate to the research question and the artistic skills acquired through the project, what was most unanticipated was the students' attention to the habits of mind they used, their growth in confidence and their ability to take risks in front of their peers and adults. This confidence factor was expressed by students of all achievement and ability levels.

Student Comments as They Relate to Content, Skills and Habits of Mind

Student Comments	Artistic skills and knowledge	Attempts to understand research question	Confidence	Habit of Mind	Risk Taking
"I improvised when something didn't work."	X		X	X	X
"I'm proud to paint Alberta's huge mountains."		X	X		X
"I think the most important thing in acting is purpose. When you do something, it has to have a purpose."	X		X		
"I thought flexibly. Joe gave us an umbrella and we had to work with it."	X		X	X	X
"I know that we are creative and that we can do something."		X	X	X	X
"The most important habit of mind in dance is taking good risks …"	X		X	X	X
"I was frustrated when I was on the pottery wheel. I had to slow it down, and I kept turning it off, but I stuck to it."	X		X	X	X
"We had to listen and think together to make the beat the same."	X	X	X	X	X
"Your body is an instrument and a tool."	X	X	X		X
"If I got stuck, I would stop, and then join in."	X		X	X	X
"I didn't know that painting buildings can show we're proud Albertans."		X	X		X

Figure 9

The student reflection tool was the most successful part of the assessment. The teachers realized that by having students focus on specific ideas, skills and habits, they were more clearly able to articulate their own learning. Having said that, feedback was necessary to guide the childrens' reflection process. Without it, many student reflections would have remained superficial.

There was no follow-up plan on the part of the teachers for discussion about student learning and how this learning might be extended. Reflecting on this, part of the sharing and celebration time in the school gymnasium might have included written documentation from teachers regarding the learning process. This could have sparked further discussion between teachers, students and parents.

Next Steps

What has been learned thus far about the successful assessment of arts-infused learning? We know that thoughtful documentation must be clear, purposeful and focused. There must be planned time for scheduling, discussion and debriefing. Simply providing a kidwatching form to guide teachers and a reflection sheet for students is not enough.

The teachers at Elizabeth Rummel know that their work in documenting to learn has really only just begun. Recommendations for future growth exist in the form of questions for further inquiry:

How can we involve students more deeply and genuinely in the discussion of their learning?

- How can we make the presentation of documentation more polished and thoughtful so that it truly moves learning forward for all?
- How can we build into the process more meaningful discussion time with colleagues and students so that our question always becomes, what next? As Wien (2011) states,

  Pedagogical documentation is a route for teaching teachers, for professional development. Whose learning is made visible in documentation? The children's, of course. Yet in the spaces at the edges of pedagogical documentation is evidence of the teachers' thinking. (Making Learning Visible: From Recounting Activity to Reconceptualizing Purpose section, para 2)

Though we are just beginning to use documentation and deep student reflection as a tool for assessment, it is evident that it can lead children and teachers to thinking more critically about their ideas. As the result of this work, we are thinking, what next? It truly is a win-win situation.

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Social Perspectives on Antihomophobia Education: Capitalism and LGBTQ Identities

Aubrey Hanson

The Antihomophobia Workshop

"Thank you for the great presentation. Now I appreciate gays, lesbians and bisexuals more."

"I don't have any questions, but the stories were good. I can't believe his parents kicked him out."

"Were you ever gay bashed?"

"No questions, thank you. I like your hair."

"How did you know that you were gay or lesbian?"

"How can two men have sex?"

"Hey guys, I think you are cool. But do you know that God hates homosexuals? I'm sorry but you will probably go to hell."

"I thought it was a great lesson you taught us and I hope you influence a lot more people with your speeches so there will be no more hateful comments."

Our antihomophobia workshop is coming to an end, and our small team of facilitators is working through a hat full of student questions. We have given each person in the class a chance to put in an anonymous question or comment, and we will discuss as many as we can before we leave. This batch of questions and comments is typical for a high school group. Most of them thank us for our excellent guest-speaker manners, a few comment on our fashion or hairstyles, one cautions us on the state of our eternal souls and one or two questions are about sexuality or personal experiences. We start with the most common question: "How did you know?" I give them our usual careful answer and encourage my facilitators to jump in.

It's been a strong workshop and another good day for our organization, which is called SpeakOut: Youth Education Against Homophobia. Over the past 45 minutes, we shared our standard workshop with this big group of Grade 10s. We've generated definitions for key terms, such as *LGBTQ*, *homophobia*, *heterosexism* and *discrimination*. We've brainstormed pejorative terms and stereotypes, and worked to debunk or challenge these. We've discussed sources of and influences on our ideas about LGBTQ people, such as families, peers and popular culture. Drawing on students' empathy, we've explored the potential negative consequences for LGBTQ youth experiencing discrimination. A few key statistics have come up; for example, a significant portion of street-identified youth are LGBTQ, and LGBTQ youth are much more likely to die by suicide. We have also explored positive consequences, such as finding allies and personal empowerment. Finally, we've shared personal stories of coming out to our loved ones—stories of love and heartbreak, affirmation and rejection.

It has been an intense experience for us facilitators, having worked through difficult and personal issues with the students; this is also typical. The students have generally been respectful and engaged (even when school audiences are hesitant at first, the stereotypes and slang portion of the workshop usually gets them interested), and they have tackled some tough topics. Our team has been at this Toronto school all afternoon, and we've delivered our workshop four times in a row. After we address the students' anonymous questions, we'll thank the school and return home. The four of us will debrief together on the way, reflecting on the workshops and supporting each other through the complex feelings that they always engender. It's tiring but rewarding work. Most of us are students—all less than 24 years old—and we're all heavily invested in working against homophobia in schools. This work is personal. We hope that our workshops will significantly affect students' perceptions of LGBTQ people, of course, but also of the larger social landscape that they inhabit.

My two years as a peer facilitator with SpeakOut are now a solid decade behind me. I carry those experiences with me. For one thing, those workshops remain some of the toughest teaching I have ever done. They were an integral part of my journey into professional teaching: for my investment in social justice education, for my understanding of what teaching involves, and for my ability to teach from my own personal and social location. However, another key part of what I carry with me from my SpeakOut days is an interest in the question of change. What does it mean to encourage social change? When I took on the challenging work of antihomophobia education, what else was I taking on, unwittingly or not? What contextual factors must be examined if significant social change is to be effected? I have since, as a teacher and as a graduate student, had some time to consider these questions. The dimension that I will take up in this article is that of economics: what is the relationship between antihomophobia work and capitalism? What does it mean to work against homophobia in this socioeconomic context?

This Article: What's Capitalism Got to Do with It?

While sexual identities—and people's prejudices about them—may seem profoundly personal, broader public and social factors are at work in people's experiences of their sexuality and of homophobia. Comprehension of the dynamics that exist between sexuality and socioeconomic contexts is significant for those who work to oppose discrimination against people who are LGBTQ—lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer—or otherwise marginalized on the basis of their sexuality or gender identity. Sociological perspectives allow us to pursue this kind of comprehension. As sociological thinker C Wright Mills said in 1959, sociological analyses enable us "to grasp history and biography and the relations between the two within society" rather than to see only our "personal troubles," divorced from context (Mills 1959, para 10). To work effectively for social change requires that we engage at the broader level of social structures. My intention in this article is to examine the interplay between LGBTQ identities, homophobia and capitalism, in order to understand the importance of socioeconomic contexts to antihomophobia work.

As a way into these intricate relationships, I will first take up the question of human rights. Antihomophobia social justice work often, for good reasons, relies on discourses of human rights. As Fudge and Glasbeek (1992) state, "it makes sense for [people] to use the language of rights. The assertion of rights claims by . . . social movements is a natural aspect of any progressive politics. In this sense it is impossible to object to 'rights'" (p 66). However, antihomophobia education work—such as that described above and by scholars such as Collins (2004) and McCaskell and Russell (2000)—is about much more than defending human rights. Further, justifying antihomophobia work only through a discourse of human rights protection would impose significant limitations on this work. I will argue here that discourses of human rights are caught up in the ideological structures of capitalism, and are inadequate, by themselves, as a basis for significant social change. It is worth noting that I have never seen antihomophobia work described solely through human rights; again, I am simply using the example of human rights as an entry point for my wider exploration of the relationships between homophobia and socioeconomic contexts. Social justice work combating homophobia, I argue, must take into account capitalism's role in shaping oppression against LGBTQ people in order to locate possible sites for change. Ultimately, of course, the economic aspect will be only one dimension in this complex undertaking.

A Brief Note on Terminology

In this paper, I use the initialism LGBTQ, which stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer. As innumerable others before me have noted,

the question of appropriate terminology is complex, and it is difficult to choose one general label that fits this type of discussion (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, viii). The initialism I have chosen here, for instance, does not represent everyone; it may exclude transsexual, intersex, two-spirit and questioning people, and people who do not fit neatly (or at all) into these categories. Many supposedly general terms, such as *lesbian* and *gay*, *homosexual* or *queer* have been widely contested over decades of activism and theory (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, viii). I agree with others such as Knegt (2011) that it is not only cumbersome to use very specific sets of terminology for the sake of inclusivity—for example, to spell out LGBTTI2SQQA each time—but also inaccurate. I am not, in this paper, addressing the nuances of two-spirit perspectives, which are differentially rooted in distinct Indigenous cultures and are concerned with decolonization (Driskill et al 2011). Nor am I addressing the particular concerns of transsexual or transgender people: being trans is about gender identity, and not (necessarily) about queer sexuality, so that trans people do not always share the same concerns as lesbians and gay people (Knegt 2011, 108). I have chosen the shorter acronym, LGBTQ, as a recognition that my arguments here do not focus comprehensively on particular communities' concerns. My intent in this paper is to focus on antihomophobia education; that is, programs and teaching that work to counter stereotypes, prejudice, discrimination, harassment and violence arising from the fear of nonheterosexual people (McCaskell and Russell 2000). This is a basic framework. As scholars such as Jeppesen (2010) have noted, homophobia itself is ultimately too small a target for activism and education; heterosexism and heteronormativity—including assumptions that heterosexuality is normal or natural—represent a wider problem (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008). Antihomophobia education, however, often chooses to be strategic; compared to transforming normative gender roles, for instance, working against homophobic bullying in schools may be a relatively achievable goal (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008).

Rights in Toronto's Early 2000s Antihomophobia Education Initiatives

The kind of antihomophobia work that I took part in through the SpeakOut program was well supported by human-rights-based rationales. The Toronto District School Board (TDSB), whose equity department created the SpeakOut program, adopted a human rights policy in 2000. This document points to the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code, and outlines the board's "duty to maintain an environment respectful of human rights and free of discrimination and harassment" (p 2). It includes "gender," "gender identity," "same-sex partnership status" and "sexual orientation" as "grounds" on which it will not allow discrimination (p 3). In 2000 (revised 2002), the TDSB also published a document entitled *What Is Antihomophobia Education? A Fact Sheet*, primarily aimed at parents, to address questions and concerns specifically related to antihomophobia education (Toronto District School Board Equity Department 2002). This fact sheet cites the protection of human rights as one of the primary goals of antihomophobia education: "Anti-homophobia education is about respect of difference and recognition of the human rights guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Ontario Human Rights Code to lesbian, bisexual, and gay persons" (TDSB Equity Department 2002, 2). Likewise, McCaskell and Russell (2000), writing about their antihomophobia work in Toronto public schools, cite human rights as a significant justification for the work. For instance, they suggest that, when educators balk at taking on antihomophobia initiatives for fear of parent or public reactions, the "challenge is to remind school staff of their responsibilities under Board policy and the Human Rights Code" (McCaskell and Russell 2000, 47). The board policy to which they refer includes the human rights policy I cited above and the *Equity Foundation Statement and Commitments to Implementation* adopted in 1999. This latter document states that harassment violates human rights and refers back to the board's and the province's human rights policies. In the time of my experience with antihomophobia education in Toronto, human rights were a relatively solid foundation on which our work could stand. Human rights were upheld by provincial and national legislation and by international agreements, and these rights were solidly backed by school board policy.

I am not trying to argue that human rights were the only justification for this work. To avoid suggesting this, I will take a moment here to point to some of the other rationales described in the documents discussed above. For instance, a notably different focus appears in the TDSB's *Equity Foundation Statement and Commitments to Equity Policy Implementation* (1999). This comprehensive document (taken together) does not focus extensively on the human rights

rationales that it cites. It acknowledges that "certain groups in our society are treated inequitably because of individual and systemic biases" and that "such biases exist within our school system" (p 4), then proceeds to explain how the board will ensure that "fairness, equity, and inclusion are essential principles of our school system and are integrated into all our policies, programs, operations, and practices" (p 4). It dedicates one section to "antihomophobia, sexual orientation and equity" (sec 3), which goes beyond simple antiharassment. There are dozens of commitments outlined in this section, including "ongoing, constructive, and open dialogue in partnership with [LGBTQ] communities" (p 23) and enabling LGBTQ students "to see themselves reflected in the curriculum" (p 24). Like the rest of the Commitments document, this section is organized around 10 areas such as "Leadership," "Curriculum," and "Guidance" (TDSB 1999). The degree to which these extensive commitments have actually been implemented is not my focus here (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008; McCaskell 2005, 2013).

Likewise, McCaskell and Russell (2000) cite homophobic and sexual harassment in schools—including the killing of a gay teacher, Ken Zeller, by homophobic students in 1985—as justifications for antihomophobia work, but they, too, describe broader reasons. They share a story about a student, harassed for years, who "became confident, centered, and enthusiastic about life … found friends, had relationships and became active in community work" (p 29). This student's story reaches beyond safety into affirmation and activism. McCaskell and Russell (2000) also explain the value of workshops like the ones I used to teach, of support programs and of curricular changes. They consider the "effective pedagogy" that was put into play through such equity initiatives (p 34). Justifications for the antihomophobia initiatives I am discussing here were by no means limited to human rights; again, I am focusing on human rights as an example, as a way into looking at the broader social contexts of antihomophobia education.

Rights and the Individual in Capitalism

I intend to argue here that the notion of human rights is part of and even complicit with the potentially oppressive workings of capitalism. Because of this complicity, it may ultimately be inadequate—on its own—as a tool for creating significant social change in a capitalist context, and can even be a distraction from the more hidden workings of oppressive structures. I will first examine how, through the historical process of shifts into modernity and capitalism, the notion of an "abstract individual" emerged, accompanied by ideological and juridical equality and freedom (Sayer 1991, 66). This examination will lead us toward the functioning of rights in capitalism.

In examining the emergence of the free and equal abstract individual, I will draw primarily upon Sayer's (1991) analyses of Marx's writings. Sayer (1991) states, first, that the abstract idea—or ideal—of an individual as it exists today did not exist before capitalism, but rather only became "conceivable" within a modern, capitalist context: "it is this solitary individual—'the individual' in the abstract, without any distinction of, or reference to the 'accidental' particularities of concrete circumstance—who is the moral subject of the modern world" (p 58). The conceptualization of this abstract individual is shaped by the workings of capitalism, specifically commodity exchange, which posits, along with "exchange values," the "subjects as exchangers" (p 58). The conceptualization of an abstract individual, separately from society, came into existence through capitalist modernity. Clarke (1982) explains this formulation as well, stating that "the realization of human rationality through capitalist relations . . . derives moral imperatives from the rational self-interest of the abstract individual that can serve as the basis of education, enlightenment, and legal regulation" (p 60). This notion of the individual, fundamental to the notion of human rights, emerged through the economic and ideological workings of early capitalism.

Just as the individual was established as a concept, equality and freedom are established as the rightful conditions of the individual. These notions are posited as integral to the nature of the individual in capitalism: "in exchange they [the subjects], like their products, are 'socially equated' as equals," and, further, based on the equality inherent in exchange relations, the individual is posited as participating freely (Sayer 1991, 59). On the basis of the capitalist economy, then—in which subjects are posited as equal and free in their ability to engage in exchanges of commodities, wages and labour—the abstract individual operates in a context of presupposed equality and freedom. These notions, based in the material conditions of the economy, become ideological and juridical as they are entrenched in legal systems (Sayer 1991, 59).

Of course it is fundamental to understand the materialist basis of Marx's formations in order to understand this argument. By this basis I mean his tenet that consciousness is based on the material conditions

of existence. Marx and Engels (1845/1998) make this tenet clear in *The German Ideology*, for example:

> The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness, is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. Conceiving, thinking, the mental intercourse of men, appear at this stage as the direct efflux of their material behaviour. The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics, etc. of a people. (p 42)

This framework, connecting how we think to the material conditions in which we live, helps to delineate the origins of the legal and moral notions linked to the individual in modern, capitalist society. Rooted in the material conditions of capitalism, then, are the ideological notions of the individual and his equality, freedom and rights. This gendered pronoun, "his," is intentional here, as Sayer (1991) explains: "much of what Marx wrote concerning 'individuals' in *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* [civil society] openly applied … only to (some) men"—to working men, specifically (p 58).

Although equality and freedom as concepts originate in capitalism and are entrenched in its ideological and juridical workings, they do not actually materialize for all of the real individuals who exist in the capitalist context. Sayer (1991) states that "just as the material specificity of use value is effaced in exchange value, so are the differential material circumstances of real individuals ignored in this *fictio juris* [fiction of law] who is the ideal subject of *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* [civil society]" (p 60). In other words, the legal and ideological ideals are not reflected consistently in the actual experiences of individuals. While equality and freedom are espoused, they are not manifested in a "real" form. Freedom, for Marx, means maintaining power in relation to the conditions of one's life, "and capitalism, from this point of view, represents the apotheosis of unfreedom" (p 61). Under capitalism, people are not less dependent than they were before capitalism. Rather, they are dependent in a different, more universalized way, and, further, the mediation of this dependency by "material things" disguises how it works (p 63). In other words, "people appear to be independent of one another because their mutual dependency assumes the unrecognizable form of relations between commodities" (p 64). Thus capitalism entails and creates the idea of freedom at the same time as it counteracts real freedom, as it disguises a lack of freedom from oppression with a freedom to sell one's labour and purchase commodities.

Similarly, while the idea of equality is espoused—for example, politically, "universalistic, rational, consistent law provides a level playing field" within capitalism (Sayer 1991, 74)—people have varying material experiences and therefore varying social power. This disparity arises from the fact that material things mediate social power. Sayer (1991) explains Marx's ideas like this:

> Power is externalized, residing now in objective forms outside of people rather than in their differential subjective identities. It is, literally, disembodied. . . . Its essential character as a relationship of persons is obscured by the "material" forms through which it is mediated. (p 67)

So while these social relations and power are rendered external to identity and theoretically accessible to anyone who can own a material thing, in practice they are not equally shared. Some people are rich and powerful while others are poor and lack social power. With exploitation—and therefore the uneven distribution of social power—at the heart of how capitalism functions, real equality is not possible in a capitalist society (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). While anyone can own and exchange material things, according to Marx, some people are going to own the means of production and make profit off the labour of others. This profit, or surplus value, is inherently exploitative, in that the workers do not receive the full value of their labour (Marx 1867/1976; Marx and Engels 1848/1967). Freedom and equality, then, are troubled concepts, rooted in but disconnected from the material realities: their prominence within capitalist society not only contradicts but also masks its inherent inequities.

The notion of individual rights is a corollary to these notions of equality and freedom. Rights become the terms according to which "social redress" is imagined within capitalism, as Spivak states (1999, 85). Like equality and freedom, rights become entrenched in law in a capitalist context and are, in Marx's terms, a "political" basis for emancipation that capitalism sponsors (Sayer 1991, 65). This political emancipation is limited in scope, in that it does not extend to "that arena which [Marx] considered the foundation of all human beings, the 'production of life'" (Sayer 1991, 66). In the *Communist Manifesto*, Marx and Engels go so far as to say that "political power . . . is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another" (1848/1967, 105), further emphasizing the limitation of such operations on a political level. Furthermore, rather than emancipating people through a collective enterprise that opposes the real (material) conditions of their oppression, rights actually separate people from each other

in an abstracting process that considers each citizen individually, in opposition to others. Marx believed that people needed to come together, collectively, in order to challenge their oppression. However, political society, with human rights, in fact protects only "egoistic man," and is actually a "restriction of their original independence" (Marx 1844, para 102). So the abstract individual is protected politically through human rights, but real individuals are in fact alienated from each other, and most are also alienated from the material power that could change their situation (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). Political rights, on a functional level, are bound up within the limitations of their capitalist context.

As we saw with freedom and equality above, the conditions promised by the discourse of rights do not extend in actuality to all of the members of capitalist society. Sayer (1991) emphasizes that the modern state is founded upon an exclusive conceptualization of citizenship: "the 'political' citizenship Marx discusses (and the 'civil' rights which go with it) have never extended to all individuals who live within civil societies"; rather, "these exclusions . . . have been fundamental to the ways in which that community has been imagined" (p 84). Sayer's argument here is linked to what Fraser (1997) sees as a "nonrealization in practice of the bourgeois ideal of open access," resulting in exclusions on the bases of "gender, property, and race" (p 77). Rights are limited in their conception, scope and practice; in Marxist terms, the notion of rights is not a tool that can effect fundamental social change. To take Audre Lorde's (1984) famous words somewhat out of context, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p 112). The notion of rights is a tool provided by capitalism, and inevitably limited to the possibilities therein: from this perspective, the oppressions inherent in capitalalism will continue to be perpetuated despite all of the best efforts made under the appeal of rights. Brown (1995) supports this contention: for example, she states that "to the extent that the egoism of rights . . . obscures the social forces producing rather than merely marking particular groups or behaviors as subhuman, rights appear to discursively bury the very powers they are designed to contest" (p 115). The prominence of human rights discourse within capitalist society can be seen as not merely contradicting, but even disguising the real oppressive workings of capitalism.

Sexual Identities in Capitalism

My brief exploration here of Marxist perspectives on human rights and the individual has suggested that meaningful "human emancipation" (Marx 1844, para 27) cannot be achieved through political protection of human rights alone. Efforts aimed at social change must engage with the material conditions of existence. What does this insight mean for our consideration of homophobia?

In order to pursue this question, I will examine how LGBTQ identities are also fundamentally bound up within a capitalist context. In order to do this, I need to take up the notion that sexual identities are essential forms of identity that have existed in a pure, unchanging form throughout all of history. Instead, they must be seen as socially constructed (Weeks 2003). Halperin (1993), building on Foucault's (1978) analysis in *The History of Sexuality*, interrogates an essentialized view of sexualities through an examination of power and sex in Ancient Greece. He argues that sexuality, or sexual identity, as we understand it today, is constructed within contemporary social contexts. Although it is currently regarded in Western contexts as a "positive, distinct, and constitutive feature of the human personality" (p 417), sexuality is "a cultural production" (p 416), and in fact only exists as such after the rise of modernity and capitalism. He states, "far from being a necessary or intrinsic constituent of human life, 'sexuality' seems indeed to be a uniquely modern, Western, even bourgeois production" (p 427). Cloud (2001) also discusses the social construction of sexuality, examining the development "and persecution of homosexuals as a category" (p 82). While diverse sexual acts have taken place over geographies and histories, distinct sexual identities are particular to this early modern capitalist context. Paralleling the emergence of the "abstract individual" discussed above then, we can envision the emergence of constitutive sexual identities through a process of shifting social relations, as Foucault (1978) argues about the emergence of figures like "the hysterical woman" or "the perverse adult" as produced identities (p 105). Sexuality itself is "a historical construct" (Foucault 1978, 105); likewise, sexual identities emerged through mechanisms of knowledge and power in particular socioeconomic contexts.

If sexual identity is a "modern, Western, even bourgeois production" (Halperin 1993, 427), then it is useful to examine more specifically the ways in which LGBTQ identities emerged historically within the workings of a capitalist economic context. With the growth of capitalist industrialism came a new way of conceptualizing those who engaged in same-sex acts, as is suggested by the fact that the word *homosexual* appears around 1870 (Foucault 1978, 43).

Notably, as the Oxford English Dictionary shows, the term *homosexual* emerged before *heterosexual*, which is indicative of the ways in which otherness is often identified as a precursor to identifying the self, or that which is normalized. Scholars such as Hennessy (2000) and D'Emilio (1992) have explored the phenomenon of sexual identities developing in capitalist contexts. D'Emilio (1992), for instance, argues that this rooting of homosexual identities in capitalism seems to be tied to the changing functions of the family with the development of a capitalist economy. He contends that "the expansion of capital and the spread of wage labor" led to significant changes in "the structure and functions of the nuclear family, the ideology of family life, and the meaning of heterosexual relations" (p 6). Before capitalism, the family was different, in that it served different kinds of economic functions. D'Emilio (1992) argues that in 17th-century New England, for example, the family functioned as an "interdependent unit" within an economy that relied on "household family-based" production (p 6). The slow shift from this type of economy to a "capitalist free-labor economy" entailed a change in the family from being an interdependent, economic basis for subsistence to being the "setting for a 'personal life,' sharply distinguished from the public world of work and production" (D'Emilio 1992, 6–7). Only with these economic changes, D'Emilio (1992) contends, did it become "possible for homosexual desire to coalesce into a personal identity—an identity based on the ability to remain outside the heterosexual family" (p 8) The advent of wage labor influenced the nature of the family and of personal life. It shaped how people thought about sexuality, helping to produce the sexual identities that we discuss today.

I would like, at this point, to consider further contemporary relations between sexual identities and capitalist economic contexts. Capitalism does not look today like it did at its beginnings. What, for instance, are the implications of economic globalization on sexual identities? We teach our students that globalization makes people in the world increasingly interdependent. Does it make us more collective-minded, however, or do the material conditions of global capitalism still support the idea of an abstract, discrete individual? What are the effects of global shifts in labour, such as the fact that a large proportion of manufacturing is carried out among the global poor, and often among women? Spivak (1999) was already able to state more than a decade ago that "the subaltern woman is now to a rather large extent the support of production" (p 67). What are the consequences for conceptions of gender and sexual identities of these kinds of global dynamics? Scholars like Binnie (2004) and Knegt (2011) have examined sexuality in relation to contemporary national and global economics and politics. However, these kinds of questions are ultimately outside the scope of this paper.

I have argued in this section that capitalism and sexual identities are interconnected; next, I will explore what that means for homophobia. If LGBTQ identities are tied to the context of capitalism, then the oppression of LGBTQ identities is also tied to the context of capitalism. Just as we have been able to examine the emergence of sexualities, we can examine the emergence and functioning of homophobia and heterosexism within capitalism. In order to approach this examination, I want to explore more closely the roles and functioning of the family.

One Model of the Family in Capitalism

First, to be consistent with my previous examinations, I will examine one model of the heterosexual nuclear family, as it might have been conceived in the early days of capitalism. (I am by no means invoking this model as a current, natural or desirable model of the family, as I will explore further below.) Ideas about families, like sexual identities, are not eternal and unchanging, but are shaped within particular contexts (Cloud 2001, 75). One model of the heterosexual nuclear family, or, "what is popularly (and erroneously) understood in present-day North America as the 'traditional' family of the male breadwinner with female and youthful dependents" is tied to a capitalist economic context in particular ways: it "presumes commodity production on the basis of wage labour" (Sayer 1991, 36; Marx 1867/1976). The family exists in this form because of the way labour works in capitalism. Its functioning of course relies on the unwaged labour of women, or a gendered division of labour; that is, capitalism relies on the private, "unpaid, uncommoditized labour of women in the home" (Sayer 1991, 32). Cloud (2001) contends that "capitalism produced and requires the separation of household labor from relations of production and commodity exchange so that it will not have to pay for the services performed in the domestic sphere" (p 78). These "services" include, among many others, the reproduction of future male workers (Marx 1867/1976, 275; Sayer 1991, 31). The reproductive heterosexual family thus supports the capitalist economy.

Pursuing this model of the family further, another of its functions within capitalism is that of maintaining the split between the private and the public. This split, so "fundamental to the modern state" and to the workings of capitalism, entails the separation of supposedly public, "external" parts of society—such as the economy, political life and the abstract individual—from supposedly private entities—such as the family and the real, private individual (Sayer 1991, 75). This separation of the economy from the family helps to perpetuate labour: the family becomes entrenched as a private realm in which the male worker, as imagined above, can escape the public world of work (Adams and Sydie 2002). It distracts him from the "brutal and unforgiving world of wage labor" (Cloud 2001, 78). Warner's (1999) ideas support this analysis, as he argues that thinking of marriage as a personal act masks its profoundly public—that is, political and economic—functioning, including the social inequalities that inequitable access to marriage produces. As a private realm, the family becomes sanctified as "an affective unit" that provides "emotional satisfaction and happiness" as well as the setting for a "personal life" (D'Emilio 1992, 7). D'Emilio (1992) says that "the ideology of capitalist society has enshrined the family as the source of love, affection, and emotional security, the place where our need for stable, intimate human relationships is satisfied" (p 11). Notably, the private space of the family is also a space for consumption; one supposed form of freedom for individuals in capitalism is the freedom to purchase goods and services (Kumar 1997). Most important, the family is an escape from the power relations of the public realm. In his private life, the male worker can be the master, given how the male domination of women has been integrated within capitalism (Cloud 2001, 78–79). As Sayer (1991) argues, "capitalism has so far been, amongst other things, a patriarchy, and integrally rather than merely incidentally so" (p 37). The public/private split in capitalism discourages people from recognizing the larger workings of society and their direct relation to them; they become, as a result, less likely to resist capitalism itself (Marx and Engels, 1848/1967, 92). In these ways, the family is a necessary and valuable structure for capitalism; it upholds the capitalist economy, while its members believe its function to be a profoundly personal, private one, outside of the economy. Again, I am working here with only one model of the family—one that generations of feminists, queer theorists and other critics have discussed and challenged. This model was never a universal, even in early modern capitalism (Cloud 2001; Marx 1848/1967), and is even less so now (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001). It is only one model. Having discussed the way this model works in capitalism and is universalized (though never universal), I must next look at how homophobia in capitalism connects to its functioning.

Homophobia and the Family in Capitalism

Using the model and functioning of the family model I just described, I will next explore connections between the family, capitalism and homophobia. First, if the heterosexual family is the site of labour's reproduction, it follows that the heterosexual family will be valued and deviations policed: non-reproductive relationships would constitute a threat to the imperative to participate in a heterosexual family (Cloud, 2001, p. 101). Of course, this argument only works if one presumes that only the heterosexual family can produce future workers—a presumption that has little place in contemporary society (Knegt, 2011; Weeks, Heaphy, & Donovan, 2001). Certainly heterosexual sex does not always "lead to procreation" (Weeks, 2003, p. 13), but, further, reproduction is changing, as "the possibilities for parenting, motherhood and fatherhood, are being innovatively explored, to the extent that parenting practices do not necessarily depend on biological relationships, and gendered notions of mothering and fathering are held up for scrutiny" (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, 198). Nonheterosexually-coupled people have children too. Scholars have examined the functioning of this presumption about the heterosexual family and reproduction, however, given its social impact (Cloud 2001, D'Emilio 1992; Hennessy 2000). D'Emilio (1992), for instance, suggests that homophobia and capitalism fit together if the heterosexual family is assumed to be the site of reproduction: "the elevation of the family to ideological preeminence guarantees that a capitalist society will reproduce not just children, but heterosexism and homophobia" (p 13). Persecution of LGBTQ people reinforces the supposed reproductive value of the heterosexual family.

Homophobia functions less clearly in relation to the second function of the heterosexual family outlined above; that is, the creation of a private realm away from work and the economy. Do LGBTQ identities threaten the sanctity of this private realm? Not necessarily. LGBTQ people, too, can participate in wage labour and build private lives that provide

respite from the exploitations inherent to capitalism. LGBTQ people can of course also be consumers in this context: many scholars have explored the notion of the "pink dollar" (Walcott 2004) and other phenomena where capitalism may welcome or exploit LGBTQ identities (Cloud 2001; Gluckman and Reed 1997; Jeppesen 2010). It is possible that LGBTQ people constitute an abstract threat to the supposed sanctity of the family, however, in that, just by existing, they suggest that the heteronormative family model is an arbitrary or socially constructed model, rather than a "natural" or "universal" ideal (D'Emilio 1992). For one thing, same-sex relationships may challenge the asymmetrical gender roles attributed to men and women in the heterosexual family model I have employed here, in that, at a bare minimum, which spouse will work and which spouse will provide unwaged domestic labour is a point that must be negotiated, rather than assumed in accordance with sexist values. Sexism and homophobia are of course importantly linked; Almaguer (1991), among many others, has explored this connection, for instance, by examining how gay men are condemned for supposedly acting more like women, during sex or otherwise. If capitalism incorporates sexist structures—including but not limited to those discussed above—then homophobia may, again, act to defend the heterosexual family as one of its structural elements.

This situation may seem contradictory, in that capitalism both enables and opposes the existence of LGBTQ identities. However, such contradictions are not uncommon in this terrain. D'Emilio (1992), for instance, explains how capitalism both "push[es] men and women into families" and "continually weakens the material foundation of family life" (p 13), for instance through the expansion of wage labour, which means that the supposedly traditional family model discussed above has become less hegemonic. D'Emilio (1992) and Cloud (2001) contend that LGBTQ people have been "scapegoats" for the "social instability that capitalism generates"—for supposedly threatening the heterosexual nuclear family—when, in fact, "capitalism is the problem" (D'Emilio 1992, 13). Similarly, one could contend that nonheterosexual identities can function—along the lines of Foucault's (1978) arguments—in order to police the heterosexual family. By this I mean that LGBTQ identities, for capitalism, could function as an undesirable "other" in relation to the normative "self" of heterosexuality, reinforcing heterosexism and homophobia. LGBTQ identities may be useful as scapegoats or foils for heterosexual nuclear families, if capitalism relies on these structures. In this sense, the seemingly contradictory relationship between capitalism and homophobia could be integral, rather than accidental. Of course the model of the family I have explored here is by no means the only basis for understanding connections between homophobia and capitalism, but I hope to have illustrated a few ways in which these two concepts are significantly intertwined.

Challenging Homophobia in Capitalism

What are the implications for antihomophobia social justice work if capitalism and homophobia are so interconnected? As the many thinkers cited above have suggested, material factors influence both sexual identities and people's intolerance of these identities. How, then, do we think about antihomophobia education? Such work would benefit from considering the material realm, in order to engage with the dynamics within capitalism that influence homophobia (Fudge and Glasbeek 1992).

This brings me back to the case of human rights, with which I began this exploration of homophobia and its socioeconomic contexts. If the notion of individual rights emerged with early modern capitalism, then is it a useful notion for antihomophobia work? Is this idea of defending the abstract individual at a legal level an effective concept for social justice? I have suggested in this article that the framework of individual rights emerged along with modernity and capitalism (Sayer 1991), and that this framework remains complicit with the workings of a capitalist system. I have suggested that the legal protection of individual rights is not enough to ensure that real people enjoy not only the freedom to participate in the economy as subjects, but freedom from homophobic violence or prejudice in their daily lives. This point fits with common sense: as a teacher, I know that rules are not enough, and that I need to engage my students in dialogue about how we treat each other in a respectful community in order to keep the ideas and values behind the rules alive and meaningful. Human rights, of course, are extremely important; my point here is that they are not enough (Fudge and Glasbeek 1992). They are certainly not enough when it comes to transforming the attitudes and behaviours that lead LGBTQ youth to experience bullying, violence and suicide (Goldstein, Collins and Halder 2008). Knegt (2011) makes this point about "queer rights" in Canada, suggesting that, while advancements in rights are signs of "progress," they do not

mean that the "overarching and inter-connected problems of homophobia and heterosexism" have been addressed (pp 5–9). Human rights create important social changes: even Marx (1844) argues that "political emancipation"—at which level rights operate—"is, of course, a big step forward. True, it is not the final form of human emancipation in general, but it is the final form of human emancipation within the hitherto existing world order" (para 51). We know, of course, that Marx's suggestion was then to change "the existing world order" by struggling collectively to overthrow capitalism (Marx and Engels 1848/1967). A number of scholars have engaged with this framework, or looked for other ways to oppose homophobia and heterosexism that are informed by materialist or economic analyses.

Shifting further away from the supposed preeminence of the heterosexual nuclear family model is one possible venue for change (Cloud 2001; D'Emilio 1992). Cloud (2001) argues that a "gay and lesbian challenge to 'family values' could point the way toward a strategy of liberation" that links meaningfully to economic contexts (p 107). I should clarify that, in critiquing the concept of "family values," Cloud (1998, 2001) examines how that concept is used, for instance, rhetorically to scapegoat minoritized groups and to privatize social responsibility. As Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) point out, there is a great deal of complexity and contestation when it comes to language about "the family" in social discourse (p 15–18). Meanwhile, D'Emilio (1992) emphasizes that "gay men and lesbians exist on social terrain beyond the boundaries of the heterosexual nuclear family" and are therefore in a good position to "broaden the opportunities for living outside the traditional heterosexual family units" through "programs and issues that provide a material basis for personal autonomy" (p 13). Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan (2001) explore, in-depth, shifts in families and intimate relationships, describing what amounts to an "informal revolution taking place in everyday life" (p 187). They argue, citing Foucault, that such "life experiments" constitute "practices of freedom," opening up alternate ethical and personal possibilities, rejecting "models of domination and subordination" (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, 187). Changes in "intimate relationships and families of choice" are allowing people to "reach beyond the heterosexual assumption" (Weeks, Heaphy and Donovan 2001, 187). If the functioning of homophobia in capitalism is tied to the imposition of one model of the family, as described above, then challenges to this imposition can in turn challenge homophobia and heterosexism.

Broader improvements for LGBTQ people can also fit within collective social justice work aimed at capitalism itself. Cloud (2001) makes this point by critiquing "identity politics": she argues for more collective work, incorporating "solidarity across 'identities' of race, gender, and sexuality" (p 90) and aimed at "the institutions, structures, and public relations of power" (p 102). She insists that such work cannot focus only on "private, moral, sexual behavior" (p 102) and must incorporate "class" and the "public" realm. Hennessy (2000) similarly critiques attempts at social change that do not consider the influence of capitalism or the material roots of oppression. She believes that recognizing how identities are socially constructed will enable people to move beyond identity-based politics to work collectively. She calls this process "disidentification" and says that it involves "unlearning" and "uprooting" the "identities we take for granted" (p 229). Hennessy (2000) believes that the ability to work collectively against the economic root causes of social inequalities is essential: letting go of identity politics enables "a standpoint that does not claim any single group identity but rather the collectivity of those whose surplus human needs capitalism has outlawed" (p 230). Recognizing that there are economic factors at work behind social injustices, scholars such as Cloud and Hennessy have argued that those economic factors must be the primary targets if social change is to take place.

Another way to work against homophobia and heterosexism involves incorporating analyses of economic contexts into LGBTQ advocacy—in other words, looking at material factors and social factors surrounding sexuality together. This entails recognizing that different systems of oppression "mutually constitute each other" (Razack 2002, 16), and not focusing on class or other material aspects at the expense of gender and sexuality, or vice versa. Fraser (1997) argues that oppressions are related to both "economic disadvantage and cultural disrespect" (p 12). She therefore argues that "redistribution"—or economic approaches—cannot fully address injustices such as those based on gender and race, and so "recognition"—or considerations of identity-based difference—must also be incorporated into social justice work (Fraser 1997, 32). Comparably, Gluckman and Reed (1997) contend that "the fight against homophobia will take on its most liberating forms only if it is conceived as part of a broader vision of social and economic justice" (p 525). Work done to oppose identity-based oppressions cannot erase "history and its constructive social relations" (Bannerji

1995, 38). While it is possible that focusing primarily on challenging the problematic elements of capitalism would lead to a better society for LGBTQ people, this kind of multifaceted approach may be more viable.

Jeppesen (2010) articulates very well the need for forms of antiheteronormative activism that incorporate an understanding of economic contexts. She calls for those that do not replicate consumer-friendly norms: "anti-capitalist queer organizing assumes a critical relation to the new power hierarchies that have been established within queer culture, to unlink queer culture from consumerism, offering critiques of gay villages steeped in commerce, the 'pink dollar,' the gay niche market, and corporate sponsorship of Pride marches" (Jeppesen 2010, 470). She critiques actions such as "Kiss-Ins and Mall Zaps" (p 471), as they do not challenge sociocultural norms: "a Kiss-In emphasizes public kissing, not a norm in all ethnocultural groups. Shopping imagines all queers as middle-class consumers who escalate environmental devastation" (Jeppesen 2010, 472). These kinds of "queer activism," while they are "earnest attempts to challenge heteronormativity," have "inadvertently reinscribed a homonormative subject complicit with capitalism, racism, environmental destruction, ableism, patriarchy, beauty myths and so on. Radical queer activists attempt to move beyond this deadlock without abandoning the notion of queer culture altogether" (Jeppesen 2010, 472). Antiheteronormative activism needs to be critical and "radical," according to Jeppesen; it needs to move beyond seeking inclusion in the economy into challenging problematic aspects of capitalist contexts.

Conclusion: Possibilities for Antihomophobia Education

In this article, I have argued that significant change for LGBTQ people must come from an understanding of the socio-economic contexts that shape homophobia. Efforts at creating change must seek to navigate these contexts. Human rights are an important tool for protecting LGBTQ people from violence and discrimination. However, human rights are caught up within the ideological workings of a capitalist economic structure, which, in turn, shapes the functioning of homophobia and heterosexism. Because of these interconnections, human rights alone are not an adequate tool for bringing about more significant social and economic shifts. Human rights, articulated through terms of capitalist ideologies, cannot by themselves transform the heteronormative structures and attitudes that capitalism enables. Antihomophobia work needs human rights, but it also needs more. It needs to work with an understanding of the historical contexts that make it necessary. My focus in this paper is on economic dimensions; there are of course others that can inform antihomophobia work. Perhaps, if we continue to grasp the threads that make up the fabric of contemporary heteronormative discrimination, we can eventually pull the whole thing apart.

I began this paper by discussing antihomophobia education work being done in Toronto schools in the early years of the new millennium. I have suggested that a range of sociological analyses connect to the importance of that work. My study here of the links between rights discourse, capitalism and homophobia forms only a single example. While it has been years since I participated in the kind of antihomophobia workshop I described at the beginning of this paper, I am no less convinced that such work is intricate, intimate and powerful. Its possibilities have not yet, I believe, been fully investigated. Vast and crucial aspects of its workings need to be explored further, such as the connections formed between teller and listener in telling coming out stories in schools, the multiple levels of engagement and resistance, shock and identification, experienced by students, and the specificities of antihomophobia work here in our province—to suggest only a few ideas. I extend a call to others to continue the significant discussions that are already taking place about antihomophobia education. I intend to do the same.

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Remembrance Day in Normandy

Richard B Bieche

Normandy, France

Remembrance Day may be an easier exercise in a place like Normandy, France, than in Canada. In Canada, we gather around monuments every November and try to make sense of remote historical events such as our participation in World War II. War monuments are all over Normandy as well, but the difference for the people there is that World War II went right through them. It's less of a historical event than it is a part of their family stories.

Shadows in the Sand—Arromanches

A rather spectacular monument went up in Normandy in September of 2013. On the beach of the coastal town of Arromanches, one of the main landing sites on D-Day in 1944, people from all over the world joined the locals to build it in just one day. They raked 9,000 silhouettes of bodies into the sand. Each one represented one soldier (Allied or German) or one civilian killed on that day. Then, within hours, symbolizing all lives lost in war, the shadows faded away with the tide. But the effects of that day on those 9,000 families did not simply wash away. They remain to this day both in Normandy and in Canada.

Four Rose Bushes—Bernièrs-sur-Mer

A little farther up the coast from Arromanches is the town of Bernièrs-sur-Mer, which on D-Day was part of the Canadian invasion point and carried the code name Juno Beach. You can find a quieter but more enduring monument here, but you have to know where to look.

Starting at the famous beach house where the Canadians landed, you have to follow the road inland and retrace the steps of thousands of young soldiers. On the other side of town, there's a house with a fence that is low enough to peer over into the backyard. This is where you'll see four rose bushes standing apart. The family here planted those roses in the spot where they buried four young Canadians on D-Day. They still grow today as a humble and subtle reminder of what these youngsters and their families gave up for this French family.

D-Day was not the end for the Canadian soldiers or for the people of Normandy. It was only the start of 100 days of fighting, suffering and dying. And

you'll find large and small monuments all over the area. But this being Normandy, there are people and family stories behind each of them. Here are three examples:

Private G E Millar

Jardin des Canadiens, Ardenne Abbey

Not far from Bernières is the Ardenne Abbey, an old monastery in rural Normandy. Nowadays, a quiet garden within the Abbey is referred to as the Jardin des Canadiens. It features a small monument and portraits of a few Canadian soldiers. One of those young men pictured is Private G E Millar of Renfrew, Ontario.

As a teenager, young Millar said goodbye to his family and went to war as a volunteer with the North Nova Scotia Highlanders. That was the last they ever saw of him.

In Normandy, Private Millar and the rest of the Canadians faced a famously brutal enemy—the 12th SS Hitler Youth Division. These were 16- and 17-year-old kids whose education had largely been a process of indoctrination in Nazi racism before they were taken away from their own families to be drilled and taught to fight to the death. These kids had been turned into fanatical, brutal and effective killers. They were perhaps the most formidable enemy in the whole Normandy theatre, and the Canadians had to face them every day.

Private Millar survived D-Day but was soon captured behind enemy lines and found himself at the mercy of the 12th SS at the Ardenne Abbey, which had been commandeered as a command centre. After interrogation, he was bound and lined up against the Abbey wall with a group of fellow prisoners. One at a time, each prisoner was taken out of the line. When it was Private G E Millar's turn, he was led around the corner into the garden and executed. He was 19. His parents' image of him as he bade them goodbye and left for a foreign land to die must have stuck with them for the rest of their lives because that poetic excerpt was the message they had engraved on his tombstone.

Helene Carville

Place de 37 Canadiens, Authie

Authie is a small town near the Ardenne Abbey. The plaza in the centre of town now bears the name Place des 37 Canadiens. It was here that Canadian prisoners were executed on June 7, 1944, by those indoctrinated killer-kids from the 12th SS—many gruesomely so—by running over them with tanks. Eleven civilians were murdered along with their liberators. A small monument at Place des 37 Canadiens remembers those lost citizens.

A youngster by the name of Helene Carville lived in Authie. Four hazardous and hungry years of occupation were about to get a lot worse for her before they ever got better. You see, she was there. She was forced to watch as her father was executed.

Carville's father Jules is named on the monument at Place des 37 Canadiens. As it was for the Millar family of Renfrew, the Carville family of Authie was forever scarred by those bloody days in Normandy.

Phillip Roch Hanrahan

Varrieres Ridge, Near Caen

In the same region, this time just south of the city of Caen, there's a large official Canadian monument at a place called Varrieres Ridge. It sits atop a huge crest, with a view of much of the surrounding villages. The Canadian regiments who fought here are honoured in front of the flags of France, Canada and all the Canadian provinces.

Roch Hanrahan fought at Varrieres Ridge. He had left his family and his fiancé in Fort Macleod, Alberta, and joined the Calgary Highlanders. He never saw his intended bride again, because she became terminally ill and the war wouldn't wait for him to take a break to be with her.

Phillip Roch Hanrahan

Hanrahan would have been under fire for nearly all of the 100-day battle of Normandy. Among the worst would have been the infamous Battle of Varrieres Ridge. The strategic value of the place is obvious, and in July 1944, both sides knew it. The Canadians and the Germans—among them those fanatical kids from the infamous 12th SS—engaged in a vicious battle for this hill for days on end.

Hundreds of young Canadians, many of them Hanrahan's friends, died trying to get up the ridge and liberate the villages around it. On one day alone, the Black Watch tried to advance and put it to an end. Three hundred and twenty-five went up. Three hundred and fifteen of them were killed, wounded or captured. There hasn't been a bloodier day for Canadian Forces since. And Hanrahan was there.

Hanrahan did survive the war and return to his family, but they never really got him back in the same way that he had left them. Today he would probably have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder. He eventually died while still relatively young. He's not listed as a casualty of war; all the same, the Hanrahans of Alberta lost him and joined in the sorrow of the Millars of Ontario and the Carvilles of France.

Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery, Cintheaux, August 4, 2013

Close to Varrieres Ridge is the small town of Cintheaux. About 2,872 Canadians have remained here since the Battle of Normandy. Every August 4, the people of the town dedicate the day to Canada at yet another monument: the Bretteville-sur-Laize Canadian War Cemetery.

I was a guest at this year's gathering as part of a group of Canadian teachers, there courtesy of the Juno Beach Centre. The Juno Beach Centre in Normandy is a place every Canadian should visit as much as Vimy Ridge. It was started by veterans in the hopes of keeping alive the memory of what young Canadians did—and continue to do—in wartime.

August 4, 1944, was the day of Cintheaux's liberation from four years of occupation, danger, imprisonment, hunger, torture, forced labour and other horrors. Young and old, they gather among the Canadian graves. They play the national anthems of France and Canada. They talk about each of the provinces the soldiers buried here hailed from. They basically try to get their heads around how this bunch of kids volunteered to leave their families and come halfway around the world to share in their suffering, and to fight, suffer, bleed and die for their safety and freedom.

And it's obvious from the gravestones that they were just kids—barely out of their teens or barely into their 20s. They should have been safe at home starting out their lives, but instead they volunteered for this carnage. The people of Normandy are fully aware of that and remain both grateful and gracious.

Helene Carville

A lone elderly woman stood out the most for me the on that afternoon. I noticed her before the ceremony, struggling in the midday heat with her two canes. The sheer effort of making it here was obviously very important to her. I felt compelled to give her an arm and share the moment with her.

This lady represented the attitude I found throughout Normandy. They don't dwell on how they suffered in the war or on those who inflicted hardship and cruelty on them. They focus on thanking our families for lifting their families out of all of that. That's what's behind all the monuments.

For the people of Normandy, Remembrance Day is not about history. It's more important than that. It's about home and family. So should it be for us. We're the descendants of these kids, and they did great things that we should be proud of. That pride and the grim lessons behind their deaths need to be taught and retaught to each generation, because war is not history. It continues. Families still lose their kids to it.

This summer afternoon of 2013 was certainly not about history either. It was an occasion for all three families—the Millars, the Carvilles and the Hanrahans—to actually come together after all these years.

Private Millar is buried in the Bretteville Cemetery. He was here with us, as was the message his family had left for us on his headstone:

"I think I see him as he bade goodbye, and left us forever in a distant land to die."

You've met Helene Carville. She is that elderly woman who was so determined to be here with us.

And Phillip Roch Hanrahan? In my family, he was just Uncle Roch. I never met him because we lost him before I was born. But I think he was here with us, too. And he would have been more at peace this time than on his first visit here—because of the peace he and other Canadian kids like him brought to this place.

Shadows in the Sand

Normandy was just one theatre among many— in one conflict among many—that our young people and their families have been sacrificed. The symbolism of the shadows in the sand fading away with the tide is a powerful image of what happens to young men and women and their families in war. A lot of kids have volunteered for the ultimate sacrifice through the years. Others are preparing to do it now.

Richard Bieche

Roses

But we must not let the memory of what they did fade away with the tides of time like that. We are their descendants. Even if you're new to Canada, this is your heritage, too. We are, all of us, their legacy. We owe it to them and to ourselves to keep that legacy alive and growing, like those roses in Normandy.

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