



VICTORIA
CONFEDERATION
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Moving our Culture – Schools and Families Learning Together

The title for this speech was originally “Moving our School Culture”. But, as the sentences formed on the page, I realized that the concepts apply equally to home and school. We believe not only that changing our culture is imperative, but also, that schools and families must work together to ensure the success of these changes.

What we now know about how the brain develops and how children learn gives us a great opportunity to improve our teaching and parenting methods. Brain-based learning, multiple intelligences, personalized learning and self-regulation are just some of the terms we use to represent this expanded knowledge. This knowledge base is also increasing very rapidly. We must develop strategies to respond to this new knowledge on a continuous basis.

How many times do we hear, “we are in a rapidly changing world”? This is the perspective of people that have been on the planet for some time and compare the past to the present. Our children do not see change the way we do. For them rapid change is normal. For them, the term “rapid change” has little meaning.

We are also hear and use the term, “we must prepare students for the real world”. John Abbott tells us that the only reason we have made progress as a civilization is that it is natural for adolescents to break out of their parents’ paradigm and attempt to bridge new horizons. We would submit to you that our job is not to “prepare students for the real world”, but instead to “prepare students to change the world”.

We can start by using our expanded knowledge about human development to shift the culture of our schools and families. Here are a few suggestions to start the ball rolling:

- Move from punishment and rewards to intrinsic motivation.
- Move from labeling students to identifying services.
- Move from removing students to supporting teachers.
- Move from the teachings of BF Skinner to the leadership of Stuart Shanker.



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Over the next few months, VCPAC will start the process of developing position statements and recommendations with respect to these and other important change issues.

This first item that we will discuss is the possibility of moving from a single all-encompassing letter grade to an enhanced reporting system.

This work will begin at our general meeting next Tuesday, November 26th. Some of the ideas that this process will consider include:

- Unpacking our letter grades
- Reporting on competencies such as critical thinking, teamwork and life-long learning
- Parent-teacher conferences
- Students' responsibility for their learning
- Defining and measuring achievement
- Reporting that is consistent, accurate, meaningful and supports learning

It will be our pleasure to start our deliberations with a panel discussion and Q&A session featuring Rod Allen, Superintendent of the Learning Division at the Ministry of Education and our own Sherri Bell, Deputy Superintendent. You are all invited to join us.

Thank you

November 18, 2013