

*To those
fleeing
persecution,
terror
and war,
Canadians
will welcome
you,
regardless of
your faith.
Diversity
is our
strength.*

—Prime Minister
Justin Trudeau

Welcoming Refugee Children to the Alberta Classroom

Françoise Ruban, Secretary, DEHR Committee

Introduction

On January 27, 2017, US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to bar entry to the US to anyone from seven Muslim-majority countries: Syria, Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia and Sudan. The order indefinitely banned Syrian refugees from resettling in the US and shut down the country's entire refugee program for 120 days. "I am establishing new vetting measures to keep radical Islamic terrorists out of the United States of America," Trump said. "We don't want them here." Refugees and immigrants were turned away or detained as American airports scrambled to adjust to the new policy. Late on Saturday, January 28, a federal judge reversed parts of Trump's order and allowed those that were being detained to enter the country.

On January 29, 2017, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau reassured those fleeing war and persecution that Canada's doors will remain open, as United States President Donald Trump banned refugees from seven war-torn countries from entering the US. "To those fleeing persecution, terror and war, Canadians will welcome you, regardless of your faith. Diversity is our strength," Trudeau tweeted.

In the wake of President Trump's immigration ban, a wave of activism has swept worldwide—at



airports, on the streets, in legislative assemblies there is spontaneous outrage.

What does this mean for Alberta teachers who have refugee students in their classrooms? How do teachers provide welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments for all students, and particularly refugee students of targeted countries amidst the political chaos, uncertainty and ambiguity of our current political landscapes? These are the best of times and the worst of times worldwide and perhaps it is in our classrooms where we can make the most difference, with our students. Start here. Start now.

These confusing, challenging times lead us to reflect on the roots of our welcome and inclusionary policies and actions at all levels of governments in our country: the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, the Alberta *Bill of Rights*,

the *Alberta Human Rights Act*, the *School Act*, the Declaration of Rights and Responsibilities for Teachers and the ATA Code of Professional Conduct, which clearly states our obligations as teachers:

In relation to pupils:

#1 The teacher teaches in a manner that respects the dignity and the rights of all persons without prejudice as to race, religious beliefs, color, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, physical characteristics, disability, marital status, family status, age, ancestry, place of origin, place of residence, socioeconomic background or linguistic background.

#4 The teacher treats pupils with dignity and respect and is considerate of their circumstances.

In this section of the DEHR newsletter, we will delve into Canada's long history of accepting refugees; challenges faced by refugee students; the first day at a school for newcomer student, Ulemu; factors to consider when newcomer students arrive; strategies for teachers who welcome refugee students; what school communities can do; useful terms for better understanding newcomer students; engaging families and the community in fostering intercultural understanding; the Alberta government site for helping Syrian refugees; stories of Syrians giving back during the Fort

McMurray fire; discovering the Pronunciator online language learning system; upcoming DEHR events and dates; and resources and organizations related to refugee and immigrant issues and anti-racism resources. Association workshops and publications related to teaching refugee students will also be featured.

Collectively, Alberta teachers need to become informed and find their voices—to speak for those whose voices are currently being systematically silenced. As Martin Niemöller, a Lutheran pastor who was imprisoned during the Second World War, reminds us,

First they came for the Communists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Communist.

Then they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Trade Unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out—

Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—

and there was no one left to speak for me.

—Martin Niemöller (1892–1984)

Alberta's Refugees

Refugees in 2016 **4,830**
(+ 2,245; 46.5 per cent)

Refugees in 2015 **2,585**

Refugees in Edmonton **1,582**

Refugees in Calgary **1,548**

Number of refugees
under the age of 18 **2,170**

(45 per cent of all
refugees in Alberta)

Number of refugees
who speak neither
English nor French **2,980**

(62 per cent of all
refugees in Alberta)

(http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/4a1b260a-7ac4-4985-80a0-603bfe4aec11?_ga=1.195576428.1127283747.1484594417; www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-refugees-in-canada-by-the-numbers/article33120934/)

Top 10 Source Countries¹

Nigeria	Syria
Hungary	Turkey
China	Colombia
Iraq	Somalia
Pakistan	Afghanistan

(http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/8a136ac4-951b-43fe-bac9-15d5b71a6f5c?_ga=1.233325150.1127283747.1484594417)

Note: websites accessed on March 7, 2017.

¹ This list refers to the countries in which asylum seekers register as refugees, not necessarily the countries from which they seek asylum. Also, the list should be considered an approximation, because the IRCC does not release detailed information about the countries of origin and destinations of refugees for privacy and security purposes.

Preamble

Twenty-five thousand Syrian refugees boarded airplanes, landed in Canada and found their way to adopted hometowns all over the country between November 4, 2015 and February 29, 2016. That first date marked the new Liberal cabinet's swearing-in at Rideau Hall, and the second date represents the government's revised deadline for an interim goal of resettling 25,000 Syrian refugees in Canada. Hundreds of local committees, church groups, resettlement associations and public servants, among others, rallied in a massive effort to make room for thousands of people whose lives were torn apart by war.

Overview

From 2015 to 2016, Canada's population increased by 437,815 people. This new growth was generated mainly by the settlement of 320,932 immigrants. 36,454 resettled refugees are included in this newly landed population, an increase from just over 20,000 the year prior.

(www.cbc.ca/news/business/canada-population-2016-1.3783959)

In Alberta, the number of resettled refugees reached 4,830 in 2016, up from 2,585 the previous year. Nearly half of all Alberta's refugees are under the age of 18, at 2,170. Moreover, 2,980 of the province's refugees speak neither English nor French.

(http://open.canada.ca/data/en/dataset/4a1b260a-7ac4-4985-80a0-603bfe4aec11?_ga=1.195576428.1127283747.1484594417)



First Syrian Refugee family landed in Toronto.
C C image courtesy of Domnic Santiago

Approximately 3,733 of Alberta's entire refugee population is from Syria, making Alberta third—behind Ontario and Quebec—in Syrian refugee intake. The majority of Alberta's Syrian refugee population has settled in Edmonton and Calgary, with 1,582 and 1,548 refugees, respectively.

(www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/syrian-refugees-in-canada-by-the-numbers/article33120934/)

Alberta is a particularly attractive settling place for immigrants, with the highest percentage of immigrants (92 per cent) remaining in the province three years after settlement. This means that Alberta must prepare for and accommodate long-term transitions of their landed immigrants, including its resettled refugees.

(www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/161212/dq161212b-eng.htm)

The Syrian Crisis

Sandra Anderson
ATA Librarian

Since the beginning of the civil war in 2011, an estimated 11 million people have fled their homes in Syria. An estimated 6.5 million people are displaced within Syria, while 5.5 million have fled to other countries. Western media sources report on the refugees as though they are all fleeing to Europe and other western countries. In fact, Middle Eastern countries have taken in the majority of the refugees—almost 4.8 million Syrians have landed in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq. Approximately one million people have applied for asylum in European countries.

As of October 30, 2016, a total of 33,723 Syrian refugees had landed in Canada; more than 17,000 are government assisted, while more than 12,000 are privately sponsored. The federal government has committed to continuing to accept more refugees from this conflict and is currently processing 22,000 applications. Three thousand Syrians with finalized applications are currently waiting for transport to Canada.

For an excellent timeline of events regarding the Syrian refugees, visit <http://syrianrefugees.eu/timeline/> (accessed March 10, 2017).

Canada's Long History of Accepting Refugees

Sandra Anderson
ATA Librarian



Mural of Pier 21, by Bill Johnson. The mural was on a structure on Barrington Street, Halifax, and has since been removed for repair of the structure.

From the very early days of Canada as a British colony, our country has accepted refugees who fled oppression, war and death. Each new wave of refugees has been welcomed with both acceptance and some suspicion, but each has inevitably been integrated into our multicultural mosaic.

The first official group of refugees to arrive in Canada were Americans. Mennonites and Quakers came to Canada to escape the fighting during the American Revolution. Afterwards, black Loyalists began fleeing to Canada in 1783, and were granted lands for remaining loyal to Britain. In 1830, Eastern European refugees began escaping to Canada and large numbers of refugee groups from across Eastern Europe continued to arrive until the 1960s. In an extraordinary response to the crushed Hungarian uprising in 1956, Canada accepted 37,000 Hungarian refugees in just one year (a terrific number for our small country at that time).

In 1951, the Assisted Passage Loan Scheme was first implemented to lend poorer refugees the funds for their passage to Canada; these funds were to be

repaid in two years. A version of this program remains in effect today. In 1968, once again we accepted American refugees, as draftees from the US military fled to avoid service in the Vietnam War. In 1970, Canada first accepted non-European refugees from anywhere other than the US, and thousands of Chilean, Bengali Muslim, Ismaili Muslim, Iranian and Asian refugees were welcomed into our safe borders in that decade.

Canada was awarded the Nansen medal in 1986, by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for its compassion to refugees. By the 1990s, Canadian law had changed so that anyone could apply for refugee status at any border, airport or immigration office inside the country, even people who would be turned away by other countries. In 1993, Canada became the first country to issue guidelines for female refugees facing gender-related persecution.

Since November 2015, Canada has resettled 37,000 refugees from Syria as well as almost 25,000 refugees from other countries.

Newcomers

Note: the following is an excerpt from a document by the Society for Safe and Caring Schools and Communities, available at <http://resources.safeandcaring.ca/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/Newcomer-Students.pdf> (accessed March 10, 2017).

Throughout Canada's history, immigrants from around the world have come to Canada seeking religious freedom, economic prosperity and escape from political persecution, civil strife and even war. Regardless of why people are here and whether they are recent newcomers or long-time citizens, their children need to succeed in school. This means providing welcoming, safe, caring and respectful learning environments that build understanding, promote inclusion and empathy and foster respect for everyone.

While most Canadians appreciate what cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups have to offer, sometimes these differences have been the source of misinformation, misunderstanding and even conflict. It is not uncommon for students who are new to the country to experience discrimination, bullying and harassment simply because they are unable to communicate, don't understand cultural conventions or look different. This is more likely to occur in schools that have not intentionally taught and reinforced respect for diversity.

Newcomer families come to Canada representing a broad spectrum of ethnicities and cultures. The term newcomer refers to people who are classed as immigrant or refugee according to Statistics Canada.

Generally, the children of newcomer families are first generation in Canada. For the children of newcomer families, adjusting to life in Canada can be challenging. Children must often learn a new language, make new friends, learn new cultural norms and sometimes deal with issues related to troubling or traumatic past experiences. As the demographic face of Canada changes, teachers must be proactive in helping all students understand each other's worldviews, cultures, traditions and celebrations so that respect is fostered between all groups and conflict is significantly reduced.



C C image courtesy of Domnic Santiago

The First Day at School for a Newcomer Student

Ulemu was six years old when she and her family left their home country eight years ago. For five years prior to coming to Canada, her family had lived in a refugee camp. During that time, Ulemu did not go to school. When the family arrived in Canada, 11-year-old Ulemu was placed in a Grade 7 class. She could not read or write in her first language or in English.

On her first day at school, Ulemu and her mother walked down the hallway. She scanned the hallway for someone familiar, but what she saw was an ocean of unfamiliar faces. She could feel other students looking at and whispering about her and her mother. When two girls uttered words she didn't understand and pointed at her clothes, she deeply regretted wearing the traditional dress her mother had suggested.

When they arrived at the classroom, Ulemu gestured to her mother to leave. Her mother gave her a hug and walked slowly away. Ulemu's heart pounded as she opened the door and stepped into the classroom.

The teacher smiled at her and spoke a few words to the students in the class. Ulemu had no idea what the words meant, but she knew that they were about her.

The teacher turned to her and spoke slowly and somewhat louder than she had anticipated. She gestured for Ulemu to sit in an empty seat several rows away. As Ulemu walked past the other students, she again looked for a friendly face. This time her eyes caught the smile of a girl who appeared to come from her part of the world. She smiled back and hoped that the girl would talk to her after class.

The teacher wrote a sequence of words on the board, and the other students took notes. Ulemu pulled out a pencil and a notepad. She wondered if she should pretend to write on it. Would someone know that she didn't know how to write?

Factors to Consider When a Newcomer Student Arrives

A newcomer student's life experiences can dramatically affect his or her ability to learn and to become part of the school. The following factors should be taken into account when teachers are assessing competencies and determining needs of newcomer students. While some newcomer students adjust to school relatively easily, many experience difficulties based on a number of factors. These factors could include:

The country of origin's history/political situation. Some students come from countries that have stable regimes while others do not. In countries where extreme political turmoil is commonplace, many students have experienced extreme trauma such as genocidal warfare, civil strife, torture of family members or life in refugee camps. These experiences can leave students withdrawn, distrustful, afraid and sometimes aggressive.

Limited formal schooling. Some students may have had an appropriate level of formal schooling while others may have had little or no education—some may not even be literate in their own language. Some students may have experienced so much disruption in their schooling that their educational attainment is below grade-level.

Parents' educational background. Some students may have parents who hold degrees and credentials and are well educated; others' parents have little or no formal education. Parents' personal school experiences can affect their involvement in the school, comfort level in approaching school staff and confidence in helping their child learn. Parental support is a significant factor in a student's successful transition to school in Alberta.

Parents' knowledge of English (or French). If parents are not literate in English (or French), they may not be able to respond appropriately to official notices, read newsletters or communicate effectively in parent-teacher conferences. In some countries, parents see schooling as strictly the responsibility of the teachers and as a result, are reluctant to ask questions, offer suggestions or seek information about their child's education.

Proficiency in English (or French). Some students may already know how to speak, read and write English (or French), while others may have little or no knowledge of Canada's official languages. Fitting in, making friends and learning are especially challenging for students who do not know the language.

Lack of knowledge or familiarity with the school's routines and culture. Sometimes students enter schools without an adequate orientation to school routines, social customs and traditions, use of school facilities and equipment, and so on. Misunderstandings can result in confusion, embarrassment, avoidance and even ridicule.

Experiences with Canadian teaching and learning styles. Generally, older students who have had some schooling before they came to Canada find it more difficult to adjust to the teaching and learning styles common here. For example, teaching strategies that use questioning, inquiry, experiential activities and group discussion may be foreign to them. Students may be accustomed to rote learning or lectures. Conversely, they may be used to cooperative learning and sharing and may find it difficult to relate to the individualistic and highly competitive practices that may be part of some Canadian classrooms. Younger newcomer children who have not attended school usually adjust more easily.

Classroom behavioural expectations. Students may have varying perceptions of the role of the teacher. For example, in some cultures, to voice an opinion or to question the teacher indicates disrespect. As a result, students may not feel comfortable in approaching the teacher to discuss problems or ask for help.

The impact of leaving home. Some children and youth come to Canada overwhelmed by the separation from friends, family members and community. In some circumstances, these losses are compounded by loss through trauma.

Frequently, it is challenging for these students to manage these separations while being expected to learn a new language, adopt new customs and do well in school.

If there are no effective interventions to help students cope, the following reactions can occur. Students may:

- have trouble forming positive relationships with teachers and other students
- become aggressive and angry
- experience depression, anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder
- feel alienated and rejected
- seek to belong by joining antisocial peer groups such as gangs
- engage in high-risk behaviours and substance abuse
- have a negative view of and attitude toward schooling in general
- become overachievers and focus exclusively on studies to the exclusion of other activities.

It is important to understand that not all students will react the same way. While some will have problems, others will be resilient, cope well and adjust with few difficulties.

...

What Teachers Can Do in the Classroom

Given the appropriate support, sensitivity and understanding by teachers and other authorities, newcomer students can learn to deal with new and challenging experiences. Recognizing diversity among newcomer students is critical in developing successful strategies for working with them and their families. Seek to develop a caring, safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. For students to achieve academically and adjust socially, it is important to develop a sense of trust and confidence, build their self-esteem and help them deal with anger or other troubling issues.

- 1. Model respect.** Students take cues from the teacher's reactions to student questions and responses to inappropriate behaviour. Students quickly pick up on nuances that suggest respect or disrespect, and they will respond in kind.
- 2. Engage in personal reflection** on your own biases that may reinforce stereotypes. Overcome your own biases by becoming more sensitive and knowledgeable about puzzling cultural differences. Develop cross-cultural communication skills. Listen carefully to students to indicate that you are

responsive and caring. Some newcomer students may have difficulty expressing themselves and being assertive in the classroom. In addition, parents' and children's respect for authority in general, and for teachers in particular, may inhibit them from asking for help or discussing problems.

- 3. Select classroom resources that are culturally relevant** so that students can construct meaning based on previous experiences. For example, find stories and information relevant to a student's background and integrate these into classroom learning. Parents, community members and students can provide ideas for culturally relevant resources and may be able to offer suggestions to improve the effectiveness of instruction.
- 4. Use teaching strategies that consider culture.** Understanding the core beliefs and experiences of the students' cultures may positively influence attitudes. Assess students' learning preferences to determine which teaching strategies will be most effective. Select teaching strategies that maximize bicultural exchanges.
- 5. Invite parent participation and use community resources for classroom activities.** Encourage families to get involved in the school so that they can reinforce learning at home. Recognize that many families come from cultures where teachers are accorded great authority and where family involvement in school is considered rude and disrespectful. Communicate with families in person but remember that written communication assumes proficiency in English. Increase and encourage opportunities for social networking between the school, home and community.
- 6. Encourage cross-grade mentoring** between mainstream and newcomer students in schools and community. Recognize that each group has a contribution to make in the mentorship relationship. Ask former newcomer students to help newer ones.
- 7. Support cultural and community connections.** When students see the benefits of education for themselves and their community, they have an incentive to do well in school.
- 8. Promote a sense of belonging** by providing all students with opportunities to work together. This participation builds confidence, establishes a positive self-identity, develops new skills and helps students gain a sense of control. As a result, students feel valued, respected and supported.

What Can the School Do?

- 1. Develop orientation programs** to help newcomer students and their families become acquainted with the expectations for students and their families and to help them understand the responsibilities of the school with regard to their needs. Ask former newcomer students and their parents to assist in the process of designing an orientation program. Ask them to identify aspects of school life that perplexed them when they arrived. Typically, these are procedures, traditions, school routines, social customs, grading systems, use of school facilities and so on. Where possible, involve them in delivering the orientation to the new students.
- 2. Make provision for individual academic support.** Some newcomer students have experienced disrupted schooling and, as a result they may be working below grade-level expectations. This is especially true for older students. Tutoring or mentorship programs can make a big difference. Irena Struk, originally from Bosnia, experienced loneliness and academic challenges when she came to Alberta. She established a homework club for immigrant children in Edmonton. The club offers two types of programs based on age groupings. The program is run by volunteers and student teachers. It is effective in providing the one-on-one attention that so many of these students need.
- 3. Invite members of the various communities who are not necessarily parents to become involved in the school as translators, cultural interpreters or brokers.** This will help both teachers and students develop better understanding of the different communities and their cultures.
- 4. Promote and encourage opportunities for social networking and meaningful connections between the school, home and community.** For example, arrange to have the school choir sing in an important community celebration. This experience offers cross-cultural learning for everyone.
- 5. Recruit people from newcomer communities to serve as volunteers.** Their presence increases the potential positive influence of adult role models. Ideally, the staff and volunteers should reflect the diversity in the student population.
- 6. Conduct staff training in cultural awareness and cultural competency.** Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn more about their students' cultures. Encourage participation in processes for teachers to develop self-awareness, sensitivity, attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with and on behalf of students, parents and communities representing diverse ethnic and cultural groups.
- 7. Assess and monitor academic progress.** Research and implement policies and practices for providing regular assessment of newcomer students' progress and identify strategies that support their success.
- 8. Ensure the school counsellor and librarian are familiar with community resources and services available for new families.** This enables them to provide information on services and resources that new families can access to help them navigate. Support families by promoting and recommending literacy programs, vocational training, language programs and medical, legal and other social services information.

Useful Terms for Better Understanding Newcomer Students

Barriers

Obstacles that prevent newcomer students from actively participating in the school. The most common barriers are language and cultural differences; however, barriers can also include school practices and policies that reflect discriminatory beliefs and attitudes.

Cultural Competence

A process in which an individual or agency continuously strives to work effectively within the cultural context of an individual, family or community from a different cultural background.

Culturally Competent Teaching Practice

Pedagogy that fosters respect and empathy for people of all cultures, classes, races, religions and ethnic backgrounds. It recognizes, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families and communities.

Culture

The unique system of beliefs, attitudes, customs and behaviours that identify a particular group. Cultural norms guide behaviour and determine thoughts and actions. Culture contributes to social and physical survival.

Discrimination

Unjust practice or behaviour (intentional or unintentional) based on race, religious beliefs, color, gender, physical and/or mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, age, ancestry, place of origin or sexual orientation that has a negative effect on an individual or group.

Multiculturalism

In Canada, the official policy of living together with differences. Multiculturalism affirms and honours ethnic and cultural diversity.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

A neuropsychiatric disorder triggered when a memory related to a traumatic event is stimulated. The individual experiences changes in emotional, behavioural and physiological functioning.

Prejudice

An unfounded opinion, judgment or belief about the other. Prejudice is based on unsupported assumptions, stereotypes, inaccurate information or preconceived ideas about individuals or groups. Prejudices are often inflexible and irrational. Prejudicial beliefs and attitudes are used to justify acts of discrimination.

Refugee

A special category of immigrants. A refugee is a person who flees a country to escape danger or persecution. In Canada, the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration resettles, protects and provides a safe haven for refugees.

Settlement

The first stage in the integration process. For students, the first stage is to feel a sense of belonging. The process is two-way in that it requires everyone in the environment to grow and change to create the sense of belonging.

Engage Families and the Community

How Can You Involve Families and Communities in Fostering Intercultural Understanding in the School?

Note: the following is an excerpt from Here Comes Everyone: Teaching in the Intercultural Classroom (Alberta Teachers' Association 2010, pp 28–32).

For schools to ensure equitable access to learning for all students, teachers must find ways to liaise effectively with students' families and community members.

When families are involved with their children's schools, the learning experience is enriched for all students. For schools to ensure equitable access to learning for all students, teachers must find ways to liaise with the students' families and community members. Schools—through policy, procedure and action—are in a position to model the celebration of diversity. Many students who are marginalized because they are not part of mainstream culture lead double lives. For example, a newcomer student may be required to work at a family business to help support the family; a gay student may be out at school but not at home; a Muslim student may follow traditional practices at home but be less likely to do so at school. These students live in two distinct worlds. By engaging with families and the community, you can learn about your students' lives outside school. With this knowledge, you can better interact with the students and help them integrate into the school environment.

Schools can't educate the whole child—it truly does take a village. Culturally responsive schools don't view the school and community as separate entities; rather, they attempt to minimize boundaries and work with the community. When families from diverse backgrounds share their cultural knowledge, life experiences and unique global perspectives with the school, students learn valuable lessons. If you tap into the wisdom of a community, you will learn how to design and implement lessons and assessments appropriate to a student's home culture. Your teaching will become more culturally relevant.

Cultural acceptance grows through shared communication and cooperation. With mutual trust, school and community can work together to mediate and manage conflict, and to reduce the effects of marginalization.

Objective one: Believe that all families and community members want their children to succeed.

Be careful of assumptions you make about parents' values. Sometimes cultural differences can be interpreted as evidence that parents don't care about their children's future. Assume that parents' motivations are positive, even if they express them in a way that does not seem positive. For example, some parents might think that their children should have a part-time job because they see this as a way to teach familial responsibility. Some parents might leave discipline up to the teacher; this shows that they respect and trust the authority of the teacher's position. Sometimes, parents want their child to miss school for a religious event because, to them, this is a highly valued component of the child's total education. To interact effectively with all students, be aware of what prompts your response to cultural difference and work to overcome preconceptions that interfere with genuine and useful communication.

Get to know students' families by establishing trusting, caring relationships with students, their parents and the community. Try to understand the complexities in your students' lives. Consider inviting parents into the classroom to help them get to know you and the school. Their presence in the classroom also helps you to get to know and understand your students' families or caregivers. Ask parents to tell their stories and share their experiences, hopes and fears. Listen carefully to what they say.

Set up learning activities that require and encourage students to share stories with their families. Stories can be those that were studied in class or ones that are suitable for reading to younger siblings. Some schools purchase backpacks for students and stuff them with books that can travel back and forth from home to school and be passed on to other students later. Consider sending home wordless picture books when English is not easily read or understood.

Objective two: Provide a welcoming environment for families and the community.

Provide school orientation programs for parents. Some districts establish welcoming centres for newcomer families and provide parent resource centres. Recruit translators to help at these events.

Offer bilingual language programs and bring in educational cultural brokers to assist. Identify and hire a cultural resource person to serve as a home-and-school liaison.

Try to make contact with each student's family early in the term. Phone to introduce yourself to parents within the first few weeks of school. Make sure the first contact with parents or caregivers is positive. When parents don't speak English, ask the child how best to communicate with them, or try to connect with interpreters or cultural brokers in education. Educational cultural brokers are trained to bridge and liaise between cultures. They help bring about mutual understanding by interpreting and explaining cultural differences.

Encourage relaxed two-way communication between yourself and parents.

Find ways to ensure that parents feel comfortable contacting you and vice versa. Frame problems by clarifying your common goal—to ensure student success. Listen without interruption and wait until the parent has spoken. In some cultures interrupting is not acceptable, although it is common in mainstream Canadian conversation. Learn to wait.

Maintain a class website (if all students have Internet access) or develop a family bulletin board or journal to which families contribute pictures.

Consider modifying the Meet the Teacher evening to ensure that all cultural groups feel welcome and can participate. Do this by inviting parents in ways that they understand. Offer to provide transportation, food, child care and translators, if possible. Don't assume that traditional methods such as school newsletters, usually written in English or French, will be read or understood.

Recognize the value that some cultures place on oral traditions and collective experiences. Use talking circles to ensure that all voices are heard. Use translators when necessary.

Host conversational evenings for parents. As an example, Terry Fox School in Calgary has an interesting approach to learning about the families of its many immigrant and refugee children. Read on to learn more.

Sharing Culture

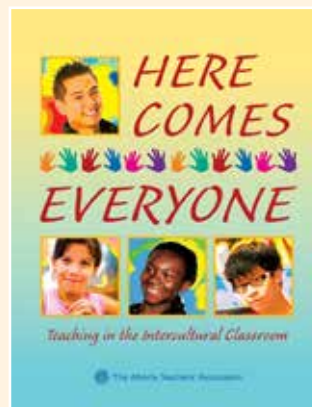
Michelle Ranger, a teacher who works with First Nations and Métis students, puts her desk with all of her supplies and books in the middle of the room. She tells her students that if they need anything, they are free to borrow it. This can save students embarrassment if they don't have the supplies they need to complete assignments. In this way she models sharing and generosity, values that are inherent in the students' traditional cultures—her desk is everyone's desk.

Here Comes Everyone—Teaching in the Culturally Diverse Classroom (English/French)

Description: It is a fact that the demographics of Alberta's schools is changing dramatically and this means that teaching practices and strategies that once worked may no longer be as effective. This workshop will explore concept of cultural competence. Cultural competence provides an approach for examining beliefs, attitudes, policies, structures and practices to enable schools to work effectively cross-culturally. Cultural competence replaces earlier ideas of cultural sensitivity and awareness, which are often embraced by typically result in little change in individual or organizational behaviour. Participants will begin to learn how to develop greater capacity to engage in cultural self-assessment and become more conscious of the dynamics of intercultural interactions.

Length: Half-day session | **Language of Instruction:** English or French

To book the above workshop, please contact pdworkshops@ata.ab.ca



Helping Syrian Refugees in Alberta: Alberta's Plan

(www.alberta.ca/syrian-refugees.aspx; accessed March 10, 2017)

In collaboration with federal, provincial, municipal and community partners, as well as private individuals, Alberta is committed to providing a welcoming new home for those fleeing violence in their homeland by

- supporting a coordinated community response to ensure the immediate and long-term successful resettlement outcomes of refugees through the Alberta Refugee Resettlement Grant Initiative;
- coordinating and sharing information between municipal, provincial and federal governments;

- providing grants to 6 federally funded refugee reception centres, located in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat, Brooks and Red Deer;
- establishing a Cross Ministry Refugee Working Group focusing on housing, health, education, resettlement and integration services to address the most immediate needs; and providing information to the public as it's made available.

Find out more about how refugees are supported at www.alberta.ca/syrian-refugees-supports-for-refugees.aspx (accessed March 10, 2017).

RESPECTFUL SCHOOLS ONLINE TOOLKIT

DEHR is seeking input to support the creation of an online human rights education toolkit that can be used by educators, leadership and community members. Two separate surveys have been created—one for teachers and one for noneducators. Both are available through Survey Monkey, from now until May 5. Please complete

the survey and/or circulate the QR codes and links to your contacts as you see fit.

Participation in the surveys and focus groups is an essential part of developing this important tool. Your assistance in supporting this is greatly appreciated by the committee.



RESPECTFUL SCHOOLS ONLINE TOOLKIT

Realizing the vision of welcoming, caring, respectful and safe learning environments through human rights education

Scan QR code to complete online survey



For stakeholders
www.surveymonkey.com/r/VS3NJ75



For teachers (K-12)
www.surveymonkey.com/r/VCKLDN6

Syrian Refugees Giving Back

Syrian Refugees in Calgary Help Fort McMurray Evacuees

When a wildfire spread across Fort McMurray on May 1, Rita Khanchet Kallas, a Syrian refugee who arrived in Calgary with her husband and son in December 2015, wrote a message in Arabic on the private Facebook page for the Calgary-based Syrian Refugee Support Group.

“Canadians have provided us with everything and now we have a duty,” she wrote.

“We must ... help the people who lost their homes and everything in a fire (in) Oil City ... Get ready, it’s time to fulfill.” A fellow Syrian refugee translated and shared the Facebook post and offers of help poured in within hours and the group started assembling hampers.

In October, Kallas won the 2016 People’s Choice Peace and Human Rights Award for mobilizing



Members of the Syrian Refugee Support Group Calgary assemble hampers with essentials to send to Fort McMurray evacuees after a wildfire that began on May 1, 2016 spreads across the area, forcing people from their homes.

Calgary’s Syrian newcomers to help Fort McMurray evacuees.

(www.ctvnews.ca/canada/12-stories-about-syrian-refugees-in-canada-that-warmed-our-hearts-1.3167273)

Pronunciator

Sandra Anderson
ATA Librarian

Pronunciator is an online language learning system available through the ATA library. Teachers can use it to learn phrases in Arabic so they can communicate more clearly with their Syrian students. Pronunciator focuses on language used in real-world conversations, so teachers will immediately learn useful terms.

The link can be shared with students so that they may create their own accounts. The system also supports learning English from 80 home

languages, so English language learners are supported in their own languages while working through lessons. Teachers can view usage statistics as well as quiz scores to see student progress. This system also includes a Course Designer mode, which allows teachers to design lessons around specific terms or situations related to classroom lessons so that English language learners can better learn general lessons with the rest of their classmates.

Gay Syrian Refugee Marches in Pride with Trudeau



Bassel Mcleash, a 29-year-old gay Syrian refugee, arrived in Canada in May 2016, three years after leaving Damascus for Egypt. Just over a month later, he found himself, marching in Toronto's Pride Parade, next to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. It was a first for both of them. Mcleash told CTV News Channel that he told the prime minister "Because of you I'm here, because of you I'm safe and able to do everything."

Community Pride Events

Edmonton Pride

June 9–18, 2017
www.edmontonpride.ca

Lethbridge Pride

June 16–24, 2017
<http://lethbridgepride.ca>

Calgary Pride

August 25–September 4, 2017
<http://pridecalgary.ca>

Medicine Hat Pride

September 8–16, 2017
www.medicinehatpride.ca

Banff Pride

Dates to be announced
www.facebook.com/BanffPRIDE

Upcoming Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Dates

May 15

International Day of Families

This international day provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting families.

www.un.org/en/events/familyday/

May 17

International Day against Homophobia, Transphobia, and Biphobia

This day draws the attention of policymakers, opinion leaders, social movements, the public and the media to the violence and discrimination experienced by LGBTIQ people internationally.

<http://dayagainsthomophobia.org/>

Teachers may choose to discuss two-spirit people and their suppression under colonialism.

www.dancingtoeaglespiritsociety.org/twospirit.php

May 21

World Day for Cultural Diversity for Dialogue and Development

On this date the UN challenges members of the public to do some action that will promote diversity.

www.un.org/en/events/culturaldiversityday/

Teachers may choose to act on one of the calls to action from final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

www.trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Findings/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

May 29

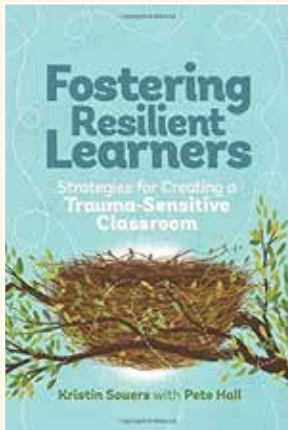
International Day of UN Peacekeepers

In 1956, Lester B. Pearson, Canada's Ambassador to the UN and later the Prime Minister of Canada, proposed the first UN peacekeeping mission and the creation of the UN Peacekeepers.

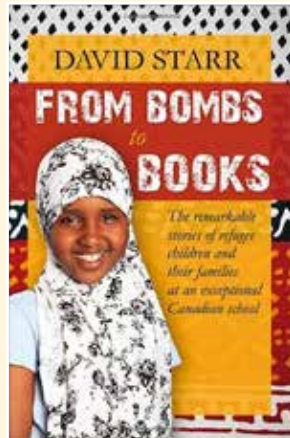
www.un.org/en/events/peacekeepersday/

Note: websites accessed March 13, 2017.

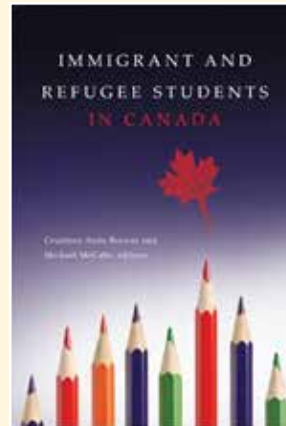
Resources in Your ATA Library



Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom
Souers, K. 2016. Alexandria, Va: ASCD.



From Bombs to Books: The Remarkable Stories of Refugee Children and Their Families at an Exceptional Canadian School
Starr, D. 2011. North York, Ont: Lorimer



Immigrant and Refugee Students in Canada
Brewer, C A, and M McCabe. 2014. Edmonton, Alta: Brush Education.

- ***Education, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers***
Demirdjian, L. 2011. New York: Continuum International.
- ***Education, Immigrant Students, Refugee Students, and English Learners***
Faltis, C, and G Valdés. 2010. Chicago, Ill: NSSE.
- ***Immigrant and Refugee Youth in Alberta: Challenge and Resilience***
Knight, A W et al. 2012. Edmonton, Alta: University of Alberta.
- ***Immigrant Children: Change, Adaptation, and Cultural Transformation***
Chuang, S S. 2011. Lanham, Md: Lexington Books.
- ***Life After War: Education as a Healing Process for Refugee and War-Affected Children***
Manitoba Education. 2012. Winnipeg, Man: Manitoba Education.
- ***Reading and Expressive Writing with Traumatized Children, Young Refugees and Asylum Seekers: Unpack My Heart with Words***
Baraitser, M. 2014. London, UK: Jessica Kingsley.
- ***Refugee and Immigrant Students: Achieving Equity in Education***
McCarthy, F, and M Vickers, eds. 2012. Charlotte, NC: Information Age.
- ***Supporting Refugee Children: Strategies for Educators***
Stewart, J, and R Dallaire. 2011. Toronto, Ont: University of Toronto Press.
- ***Trauma-Sensitive Schools: Learning Communities Transforming Children's Lives, K-5***
Craig, S. 2016. New York: Teachers College Press.
- ***Understanding Your Refugee and Immigrant Students: An Educational, Cultural, and Linguistic Guide***
Flaitz, J. 2006. Ann Arbor, Mich: University of Michigan Press.
- ***Voices from the Margins: School Experiences of Refugee, Migrant and Indigenous Children***
Brown, J, and E Alerby. 2008. Rotterdam: Sense.

Other Resources

Note: websites in this section accessed on March 13 and 14, 2017.

ATA Publications

***Just in Time* newsletter (most recent)**

[www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Just-In-Time/Just%20in%20Time%2011-2%20\(April%202016\).pdf?Web=1%20originalAttribute](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/Just-In-Time/Just%20in%20Time%2011-2%20(April%202016).pdf?Web=1%20originalAttribute)

Promoting Success with Arab Immigrant Students

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For-Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/AR-CMEF-4%20Arab%20Resource.pdf

Teaching Somali Immigrant Children: Resources for Student Success

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For-Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/AR-CMEF-1.pdf

Working with Karen Immigrant Students—Teacher Resource

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For-Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/AR-CMEF-3%20for%20web.pdf

Working with South Sudanese Immigrant Students—Teacher Resources

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/For-Members/Professional%20Development/Diversity,%20Equity%20and%20Human%20Rights/AR-CMEF-2.pdf

Coaching to Support Inclusion: A Principal's Guide

www.teachers.ab.ca/_layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Professional-Development/COMM-196_Inclusion-Principals-Guide_2016-01.pdf&action=default

Creating a Compassionate Classroom

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/COOR-79e%202015%2012.pdf

Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools: Getting It Right

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Professional-Development/PD-170-1a%20Blue%20Ribbon%20Panel%20Companion%20Doc%20web.pdf

Report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Inclusive Education in Alberta Schools

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Professional-Development/PD-170-1%20PD%20Blue%20Ribbon%20Panel%20Report.pdf

Here Comes Everyone

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Human-Rights-Issues/MON-3%20Here%20comes%20everyone.pdf

Understanding ESL Learners (a series)

Distinguishing Between BICS and CALP

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Specialist-Councils/ESL-3-1%20Distinguishing%20between%20BICS%20and%20CALP.pdf

Meeting Needs in the Classroom

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Specialist-Councils/ESL-3-2%20Meeting%20Needs%20in%20the%20Classroom.pdf

Teaching in the Content Areas

<https://www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Specialist-Councils/ESL-3-3%20Teaching%20in%20the%20Content%20Areas.pdf>

Assessment

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Specialist-Councils/ESL-3-4%20Assessment.pdf

Differentiating Instruction

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Specialist-Councils/ESL-3-5%20Differentiating%20Instruction.pdf

Moving Toward Cultural Responsiveness

www.teachers.ab.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/ATA/Publications/Specialist-Councils/ESL-3-6%20Moving%20Toward%20Cultural%20Responsiveness.pdf

Anti-Racism Web Resources

Alberta Human Rights Commission

www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/about.asp

Calgary Anti-Racism Education

www.ucalgary.ca/cared

Canadian Human Rights Commission

www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/index.html

Canadian Race Relations Foundation

www.crrf-fcrr.ca

John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights

www.jhcentre.org/welcome

Racial Equity Tools

www.racialequitytools.org/home

Stop Racism and Hate Collective

www.stopracism.ca

Teaching Tolerance

www.tolerance.org

Youth for Human Rights

www.youthforhumanrights.org/what-are-human-rights.html

Refugee and Immigrant Web Resources

Anatomy of a Refugee Camp

www.cbc.ca/news2/background/refugeecamp/refugees/refugee.html

Canadian Council for Refugees

<http://ccrweb.ca>

European Council on Refugees and Exiles

www.ecre.org

The Global Flow of People

www.global-migration.info

Immigrant Heritage Month

<http://welcome.us>

An Interactive Guide to Life in

Zaatari Refugee Camp

www.thinglink.com/scene/396609503933497344

Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

www.internal-displacement.org

Portraits of Refugees with

Their Most Valued Possessions

<http://petapixel.com/2013/03/21/portraits-of-refugees-posing-with-their-most-valued-possessions>

Refugee Project

www.therefugeeproject.org

Refugees International

www.refugeesinternational.org

Settlement.org

<http://settlement.org>

UN Refugee Agency

www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

UN Refugee Agency: Canada

www.unhcr.ca

Other Resources for Teachers

Fleras, A, and J L Elliott. 2002. *Engaging Diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto: Nelson Thomson Learning.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

www.cic.gc.ca

Citizenship and Immigration Canada was established in 1994 to link immigration services with citizenship registration, to promote the unique ideals all Canadians share and to help build a stronger Canada.

The Refugee Project

www.therefugeeproject.org

A site that illustrates where the world's refugees are located.

UNHCR—For Teachers

www.unhcr.ca/documents/teachersguide-e.pdf

A site that helps teachers introduce refugee-related issues. Provides links to some of the major international and regional websites and databases in the field of child welfare and children's rights.

Voices of Youth—The Teachers' Place

www.voicesofyouth.org

Provides resources, discussion forums and networking opportunities for those involved in education for development.

Coalition for Equal Access to Education

<http://eslaction.com>

The coalition consists of individuals, community groups and organizations who share a collective vision of “an accountable, culturally competent public education system with quality, equitable education for all children regardless of cultural background, first language or color.”

Alberta Human Rights Commission

The Alberta Human Rights Commission publishes information sheets on a variety of human rights topics. www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca/publications/bulletins_sheets_booklets/bulletins/Pages/sheets.aspx

Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation

Sharing Histories, Cultures and World Views

*Andrea Berg
Executive Staff Officer, Government*



In June 2016, a stakeholder group that included the Alberta Teachers' Association signed the Joint Commitment to Action with Alberta Education to ensure that all students learn about the histories, cultures and world views of First Nations, Métis and Inuit.

The Alberta Teachers' Association has begun to fulfill its commitment by establishing the Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation professional learning project.



Walking Together consultants from left to right: Terry Lynn Cook, Julia McDougall, Crystal Clark, Hali Heavy Shield and Cheryl Devin

Design and Development

The Walking Together project is facilitated by five First Nations, Métis and Inuit education consultants from across Alberta, all of whom are experienced classroom teachers with strong knowledge and expertise in Indigenous education. The consultants are leading the way toward ensuring that teachers feel confident to understand and apply foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit as outlined in Alberta Education's new Teaching Quality Standard.

Engagement with Community

The Walking Together project is engaging local Indigenous communities by establishing regional advisory committees that include representation from elders and local knowledge keepers. This process will ensure that the professional development programs and resources developed include regionally specific content for teachers. In spring 2017, newly developed workshops will be offered to school jurisdiction representatives in a "train the trainer" model to facilitate knowledge sharing throughout the province.

Contact Us

For further information on Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation, contact andrea.berg@ata.ab.ca.

www.teachers.ab.ca

 [walkingtogetherata](https://www.instagram.com/walkingtogetherata)

 [@ATAindigenous](https://twitter.com/ATAindigenous)

Meet the Walking Together Consultants

What impact has the Walking Together experience had on you personally and professionally?



Crystal Clark

Walking Together has contributed to setting me on the path of reconciliation, both personally and professionally. Being given the opportunity to work with the ATA and the other four consultants of the team is an honour. It is both empowering and

humbling, as we all have many individual and collective strengths, which contributes to moving this project forward for the betterment of self and society. Not only working with our direct team but being able to walk alongside other cultural advisors, elders, knowledge keepers, education stakeholders and educators is helping to create positive entry points of communication and relationship building in the realm of an FNMI context. Through this project, I feel as though I am holding the hands of my relations—those who have passed, those who continue to survive, and those who thrive in the face of adversity and oppression, as we journey through the ACTION stage of reconciliation. Through our positive actions, I hope to help contribute to positive results that help create healthy local, provincial, national and global community relations for my son's and all people's sake.

Crystal Clark is a Fort McMurray-born Métis who currently resides in Rocky Mountain House, Alberta. She holds a master of educational technology, bachelor of education, bachelor of fine arts, new media diploma, and native creative writing and visual arts diploma. Her teaching experience includes working with the Tsimshian Nation in Lax Kw'Alaams, British Columbia, and the Saulteaux/Cree of O'Chiese First Nation, Alberta. Along with teaching, she gained experience as a vice-principal and FNSSP (First Nations student success program) coordinator. Most recently, she has enjoyed teaching educational technology to preservice teachers. She has received a Prime Minister's Teaching Achievement Award and an Esquao Award for Education Service, and is a two-time Peace Hills Trust Art Award recipient.



Terry Lynn Cook

I am honoured to be part of the Walking Together project. Being Métis and having family that are First Nation, this project is very important to me. It is my desire that the complete history of Canada be told and understood. I see many positive and negative

things as I walk in both worlds. This project brings these positives and negatives to light, where we can all examine the truth, develop understanding and work toward reconciliation. I am committed to increase my knowledge and to support teachers on their journey. We are working toward applying foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples, realizing the implications of treaties and agreements, and learning the history and legacy of residential schools. From these truths come understanding, acceptance and a desire to proceed in a mutually respectful manner. These are important steps for positive change and, most important, success of all children.

Terry Lynn Cook is a long-term resident of northern Alberta, where she owns and operates a family farm with her husband, children, grandchildren and parents. Terry Lynn is on secondment from High Prairie School Division, where she was an assistant principal at Kinuso High School. She has worked recently as a pedagogical supervisor for Northland School Division and as an Alberta regional professional development First Nation, Métis and Inuit consultant. She enjoyed her position with Living Waters Regional Catholic School Division as an assistant principal in Slave Lake, being the leader of St Mary's Outreach for 16 years. She started out her teaching career as a junior high teacher at Driftpile First Nations. She has an MEd in educational studies of leadership and school improvement, with a focus on Aboriginal education. She is currently the northern representative for the First Nation, Métis and Inuit Education Council.



Cheryl Devin

I am grateful to be part of a dynamic team of talented and passionate educators who share my desire to move forward on the path of reconciliation. I have learned so much from the team, school jurisdictions and community members. I have also realized that

there is so much more to learn; it is a life-long journey. As I travel through Treaty 6 territory, I am energized by the commitment to bring about positive change through the work of dedicated educators and community members sharing their stories and listening to one another. I am honoured to serve my profession and my ancestors through this work. As an unanticipated gift, I am able to explore my own Métis family history in greater depth.

Cheryl Devin has 25 years of award-winning teaching experience at the junior high level in a variety of subject areas, including language arts, social studies and science. Her family comes from St Paul, Lac la Biche and the Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement. Cheryl enjoys a variety of outdoor pursuits with her husband and two sons. She is currently on secondment from Edmonton Public Schools.



Hali Heavy Shield

As the Treaty 7 consultant for the Walking Together Professional Learning Project, I've had the opportunity to work creatively and collaboratively with teacher colleagues and members of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit communities to respond to the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. It is both an honour and responsibility to share in the complex processes of healing historical trauma and renewing relationships. One way we are doing this is by engaging teachers in meaningful dialogue that will help us to move forward in a more respectful and compassionate way.

Hali Heavy Shield (Nato'yi'kina'soyi *Holy Light That Shines Bright*) is from the Blood Tribe of southern Alberta. She is the granddaughter of the late Adelaide and Eddie Heavy Shield. As a First Nations literacy educator, Hali hopes to inspire positive relationships through education for reconciliation. She has joined the ATA's Walking Together learning project in partnership with the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation as the Treaty 7 representative. Her work includes research and professional development in the areas of residential schools, Treaty 7 and Blackfoot ways of knowing.



Julia McDougall

Our elders' teachings: To always speak the truth. It is with great pride and honour that we have taken the lead toward ensuring that teachers are ready to meet the foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit in their classrooms. It has been an amazing experience both personally and professionally as I

began my work in early September 2016. I have met and worked with very knowledgeable individuals and gained so much insight as I worked alongside them. It is a humbling experience while meeting with community members and elders as I listen to their stories. Just knowing that I have much more to learn. I will continue to learn and share my knowledge towards our goal to fulfill our commitment: education for reconciliation. I am confident this work for reconciliation will influence knowledge sharing. To speak with truth.

Julia McDougall has a rich traditional background. She was raised in a family living off the land in Wood Buffalo National Park. She is honoured to have been given many teachings. Fort McMurray is home, where she and her husband raised their three sons. A teacher for Fort McMurray Public School District currently on secondment with the Alberta Teachers' Association, Julia is honoured to be a part of the Walking Together: Education for Reconciliation professional learning project.



Terry Lynn Cook
and Julia McDougall

In the team's opinion, what impact will the Walking Together project/initiative have on teachers and students across Alberta?

Walking Together will lead the way toward ensuring that teachers are ready to meet the foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit as outlined in Alberta Education's new draft Teaching Quality Standard.

Walking Together will engage local Indigenous communities by establishing regional advisory committees that include representation from elders and local knowledge keepers. This process will ensure that the professional development programs and resources developed include regionally specific content for teachers. In spring 2017, newly developed workshops will be offered to school

jurisdiction representatives to facilitate knowledge sharing throughout the province.

When teachers have foundational knowledge of First Nations, Métis and Inuit culture, histories and worldviews, they will gain confidence in infusing and passing on this knowledge to their students with a deeper level of understanding. With deeper knowledge it is hoped that reconciliation in terms of building positive relationships among FNMI and non-FNMI people will be established.



THE ANNUAL DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE FOR LOCALS

THURSDAY, APRIL 27 (EVENING)
FRIDAY, APRIL 28, 2017

BARNETT HOUSE | 11010 142 STREET | EDMONTON

► CONFERENCE FOCUS

- Relationality
- Reconciliation
- Anti-oppressive education

ELIGIBILITY AND REGISTRATION

Two delegates per local on a grant-in-aid basis are eligible to attend. Additional delegates are welcome. Interested teachers should talk to their local president for registration information. Additional information is available at www.teachers.ab.ca.



The Alberta Teachers' Association





DR ALEX WILSON

Alex Wilson (Opaskwayak Cree Nation) is an associate professor and the academic director of the Aboriginal Education Research Centre at the University of Saskatchewan. Her scholarship has greatly contributed to building and sharing knowledge about two-spirit identity, history and teachings, Indigenous research methodologies and the prevention of violence in the lives of Indigenous peoples. As a community activist and antiracist educator, her work also focuses on the interventions that prevent the destruction of land and water.



DR SHEELAH McLEAN

Sheelah McLean's research has focused on integrated antiracist theory and practice. She has been teaching in secondary and adult education for 25 years, and as an instructor in educational foundations at the University of Saskatchewan for 10 years. She has also worked as an antiracist activist within the community addressing racism, patriarchy, heteronormativity and classism. As one of the cofounders of the Idle No More movement, her goal is to work on projects that build scholarship praxis in order to address the issues faced by marginalized groups, focusing on the historical legacy of oppression experienced by Indigenous peoples within a white settler society.

► THURSDAY KEYNOTE

ALEX WILSON

RELATIONSHIP, RECONCILIATION AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE EDUCATION

A foundational principle of Indigenous knowledge and the traditional education system is relationality. Building on relationality and on the framework of anti-oppressive education, this keynote lecture examines the social construction of race, gender, sexuality and ability. It also examines the intersecting factors that impact our current understandings of reconciliation. Dr Wilson will review relevant theory and current research and discuss the implication of these social constructions in our education systems.

► FRIDAY WORKSHOP

ALEX WILSON AND SHEELAH McLEAN

ALLYSHIP AND ANTI-OPPRESSIVE EDUCATION

In this workshop participants will examine structures and ideologies that produce and maintain hierarchies across race, class, gender, sexuality, religion and other identity markers. Activities will be incorporated that deepen participant understanding of individual and group privilege and various forms of supremacy. The concluding discussion will focus on identifying potentially oppressive practices in our schools and supporting ways to intervene as allies.



WANT TO LEARN MORE?

For more information about the Association's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee, **scan the QR code** or visit www.teachers.ab.ca > For Members > Professional Development > Diversity, Equity & Human Rights.