Living as an Ally: Individually and Collectively

March 8-10
Winnipeg, Manitoba

Sponsored by the Canadian Teachers' Federation, the Manitoba Teachers’ Society and the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation
Living as an Ally: Individually and Collectively

An opportunity to:

• Develop an understanding of the experiences of women as they face the “isms” imposed upon them.
• Examine our roles as individuals and activists within our teacher organizations.
• Discuss how we can create an ethical and moral space in which we can all commit to “being an ally” for Aboriginal women and others.

The fire is a representation of Plains Cree women signifying that women are the keepers of the fire and the home. The Cree word for fire is “iskotew” with the root “iskwew” meaning women. This understanding is strengthened by the teaching of respect when starting a fire. Individuals are taught to fan a fire rather than blow on it – you would not blow in your Mother’s face.

Cover photo is taken at Manitou Ahbee located in Manitoba’s Whiteshell Provincial Park. The name Manito Ahbee references a sacred site where First Nations traditionally gathered to share teachings. Manito Ahbee means “where the Creator sits.” There are a number of petroforms at this special site, including one in the shape of the turtle.
Agenda

Thursday, March 8, 2012

7:00 p.m.  Welcome and Overview
Mary Courchene, Elder, Opening Prayer
Paul Taillefer, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation to bring greetings on behalf of CTF

7:15 p.m.  The Fight for Women's Rights – In Canada and Elsewhere
Marilou McPhedran, Order of Canada, Principal, Global College, University of Winnipeg

The struggle for equality rights for women has been both arduous and rewarding. Marilou McPhedran has been integral to the success of initiatives both within Canada and internationally, and her accomplishments are amazing. However, our work is not done either at home or in many other countries around the world. As the challenges continue, we need to initiate research, advocate for women everywhere and support the various agencies as they continue their work to improve all facets of the lives of women and girls.

8:30 p.m.  Reception and Entertainment

Friday, March 9, 2012

8:00 a.m.  Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m.  Steve Allen, President of Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation to bring greetings on behalf of STF

9:10 a.m.  “I Thought Pocahontas Was a Movie”:
Understanding Racialized Violence Against Aboriginal Women in the Everyday
Dr. James McNinch, Dean of Education, University of Regina
(Co-Author of I Thought Pocahontas Was a Movie)

In this presentation I will ask participants to join me in understanding how racialized violence against Aboriginal women becomes “normal” in a society that still privileges the power of white men, even when they commit sexual assault. Focusing on an infamous trial involving three white men from rural Saskatchewan and a 12-year-old Aboriginal girl, I have analyzed the transcripts of the lengthy legal proceedings of this “cross-cultural” sexual assault trial to question the illusion of objectivity embedded in legal culture and to interrogate normative and coercive functions of law. The transcripts provide us with opportunities to see how gender, race, sex, and class are textually mediated processes rather than fixed identities. Such discourse reveals how white privilege, as a racialized construct, is normalized in the everyday. For me this case, and (far too) many others involving brutalized and disappeared Aboriginal women, suggest that there are at least four related frames for better understanding white privilege: (1) the history of colonization and immigration in this country, (2) the misogyny and homo-social nature of male heterosexuality, (3) language as a powerful tool for constructing and interpreting “reality,” and (4) the social and culture practice of the law itself. I conclude by asking what we as educators must learn ourselves from all of this and what in turn we are obligated to teach our students.

10:00 a.m.  A Reflection Activity

10:45 a.m.  Refreshment Break

11:00 a.m.  First Word – Final Word

12:00 p.m.  Lunch (on-site)
1:10 p.m. **Impacts of Poverty on Marginalized Groups: What Teachers Need to Know!**  
Dr. Julie Kryzanowski, Saskatoon Regional Health Authority

The significant and troubling health disparities between low-income neighbourhoods and the rest of the city in Saskatoon were a catalyst for action in Saskatoon Health Region. With local health and education partners, the Health Region pursued a program of research to explore the extent of students’ health disparities and address them with evidence-based interventions. Dr. Julie Kryzanowski tells their story and relates how events and experiences in childhood influence health outcomes across the life course – and explains what teachers need to know to make a difference.

2:30 p.m. **A Reflection Activity**

2:45 p.m. **First Word – Final Word**

3:45 p.m. **Wrap-up**

6:00 p.m. **Dinner at the Qualico Family Centre at Assiniboine Park**  
Paul Olson, President of the Manitoba Teachers’ Society to bring greetings on behalf of MTS  
Inspirational Readings by Dr. Priscilla Settee from her latest book, *The Strength of Women*

### Saturday, March 10, 2012

8:00 a.m. **Continental Breakfast**

9:00 a.m. **Greetings by Alexis Allen, President of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union and Chair of the CTF Advisory Committee on the Status of Women**

9:05 a.m. **Human Trafficking in Canada – Really?**  
Diane Redsky, Chairperson, National Task Force

As Canadians, we often believe that, as a civilized society, the trafficking of people does not and could not be happening here. The troubling truth: it is happening and action needs to be taken to protect the women and children who are the victims in this insidious practice. Diane Redsky has been an activist for two decades and will challenge us all to step forward to make a difference individually and collectively. There are initiatives underway and strategies to be shared!

10:15 a.m. **Refreshment Break**

10:30 a.m. **Living as an Ally: Individually and Collectively – A Panel**

Panel Members:  
- Bev Park, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association Staff Officer  
- Cindy Rottmann, Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba.  
- Markus Rubrecht, Provincial Executive, Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation  
- Shari Worsford, Yukon Teachers’ Association

12:00 p.m. **A Reflection Activity**  
Our Challenge, Our Commitments

1:00 p.m. **Wrap-up and Farewell, Alexis Allen**
Mary Courchene

Mary Courchene is an Ojibway woman from Sagkeeng First Nation. She enjoys being a mom, a Nana (grandmother) and a great-grandmother and feels very privileged to be the matriarch of such a wonderful family.

A long-time educator (over 40 years), her career path has included teaching at the elementary and high school levels, school counsellor and first Principal of Children of The Earth High School. She was also Director of Education, an Assistant Superintendent with Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, and retired as Dean of Aboriginal Education from Red River College. Her retirement was short-lived however. She now enjoys being an Elder-in-Residence for River East Transcona School Division and Seven Oaks School Division. This position serves her well as Mary can follow her passion of sharing her ancestral teachings in a school setting as well as providing professional development for school staff from an Aboriginal perspective.

Mary has attained a Bachelor of Teaching, Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts Degree. As well, she studies with Elders in the traditions of her people.

Mary is a Residential School survivor and is committed to sharing her story to ensure healing is in place for future generations.

Dr. Julie Kryzanowski

MD, CCFP, FRCP, MSc
Deputy Medical Health Officer

Dr. Kryzanowski is a Deputy Medical Health Officer for the Saskatoon Health Region. She received her medical degree from Queen’s University, a Master of Science degree in Community Health Sciences from the University of Calgary, and is a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada with certification in the specialty of Public Health and Preventive Medicine. She is a member of the National Specialty Society for Community Medicine and the Canadian Public Health Association.

In the Saskatoon Health Region, Dr. Kryzanowski is the MHO responsible for the Communicable Disease Control and the Health Promotion departments. Her professional interests include school and community interventions for built and social environments to promote health and reduce health inequities.

Dr. James McNinch

Dr. James McNinch is Professor and Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Regina. He started his career as an English teacher in the high school in Lac La Biche, Alberta. He is a past Director of the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Since 2003, he has taught a foundations course on Schooling and Sexual and Gender Identities. He was the co-editor of and contributor to the 2004 anthology, I Could Not Speak My Heart: Education and Social Justice for Gay and Lesbian Youth. In 2009, he was a co-editor of and contributor to the anthology, “I Thought Pocahontas was a Movie”: Perspectives on Race/Culture Binaries in Education and Service Professions. Recent research involves interviews with Aboriginal youth who identify as GLBT, queer, questioning or two-spirited. He has contributed a chapter called “Queering Canadian Manhood” about the impact of gay rights on the formation of masculine identity for a textbook published by Oxford University Press in 2011. James is a board member of Camp fyrefly, a university supported residential summer camp for sexual and gender minority (queer) youth.
Marilou McPhedran

C.M., LL.B., LL.M., LL.D., (Hon)

Born and raised in rural Manitoba, Marilou is a lawyer who specializes in international human rights, particularly comparative constitutional law and legal empowerment of the poor, and is currently directing the Institute for International Women’s Rights as part of her responsibilities as the Principal (dean) of The University of Winnipeg Global College. She co-founded several internationally recognized non-profit systemic change organizations, such as LEAF, the Women’s Legal Education and Action Fund, which has conducted constitutional equality test cases and interventions for almost 30 years. She is a pioneer in research and advocacy to counter human rights violations through systemic reform – in law, medicine, education and government. A tenured professor in Criminal Justice, she authored “Equality Rights” in the Pursuing Justice (2011) textbook and co-authored a pilot high school teaching guide in International Human Rights Law for teachers in BC and Manitoba. Proud mother of two fine young men, Marilou volunteers as the Vice-President of the Canadian International Council, Winnipeg Branch, as a founding board member of the Winnipeg Legal Help Centre and as an advisor to the Antigone Foundation for Young Women.

Diane Redsky

Diane Redsky is a nationally renowned visionary thinker and community leader who has long worked to address the myriad of issues facing Winnipeg’s urban Aboriginal community in all areas of health, justice, education and social services. Since 1993, she has served in both a professional and volunteer capacity working within the social services sector and has become a strong advocate for Aboriginal, children’s and women’s issues. She has helped to create numerous innovative programs that have helped build healthy communities. She believes in a shared value and culturally appropriate approach and possesses clear vision to detail. Diane’s belief in the inherent strength of the community continues to guide her along her life’s journey:

“I believe that everyone has gifts and strengths to share that will enable us to work together for healthy families and healthy communities.”

For the past several years, Diane has been instrumental in the development of resources for sexually exploited youth in Manitoba including a safe house and rural healing lodge. She is currently working with the Canadian Women’s Foundation as the Project Director for the Task Force on Human Trafficking of Women and Girls in Canada and Grand Council Treaty #3 Women’s Executive Council to develop a strategy in First Nations communities to address the human trafficking of women and girls between Manitoba and Ontario.
Dr. Priscilla Settee

Priscilla Settee is an Associate Professor in the Department of Native Studies at the University of Saskatchewan and a member of Cumberland House Cree First Nations from northern Saskatchewan.

Priscilla works in the city of Saskatoon in a number of capacities including the parent’s council of Oskayak High school and as a member of the Iskwewak group which focuses on disappeared and missing Indigenous women. She has served as a board member of Paved Arts. Settee’s second edited book (Coteau Publishing) is called The Strength of Women, Akemeyimow. In 2008, Settee was awarded a Global Citizen’s award by the Saskatchewan Council for International Cooperation and was twice nominated for a teaching excellence award by her students.

Dr. Settee is a board member for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Canada’s leading progressive think tank and publishing organization, a Faculty Fellow at the Centre for Global Citizenship Education and Research at the University of Alberta and a Research Fellow at the Adivasi Academy in Tejgadh, Gujarat, India.

Settee is a fabric artist whose wolf image was purchased by the Saskatchewan Arts Board to be part of its Permanent Collection. Other pieces which depict disappearing species have appeared on several communiqués and posters.
Living as an Ally: Individually and Collectively

Purposes of Panel

- To provide opportunities for the voice of teachers and teacher organizations to express commitment to being/becoming an ally.
- To provide opportunities for hopeful reflection on what teachers and teacher organizations are doing that is an expression of “being an ally.”
- To provide opportunities for hopeful reflection on what teachers and teacher organizations could be doing to strengthen allies personally and organizationally.

Panel Members

- Bev Park, Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers’ Association Staff Officer
- Cindy Rottmann is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Educational Administration, Foundations and Psychology at the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba
- Markus Rubrecht, Provincial Executive, Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation
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Reflective Journaling

The principles of reflective writing:

- Reflective journal writing is an opening: a way to explore what we can become without being judged. Stories are a gift to ourselves and others, and express the uniqueness of individuals and their circumstance as well as the common ground they share.
- What we bring to an experience is essential to our understanding of what occurs. This is influenced by our past, our future, and our present world views.
- A deeper understanding enables us to integrate former learning with experiences, to form relationships between parts of knowledge, and to search for meaning.
- Critical reflection promotes an understanding of diversity in beliefs, values, behaviour, and social structures. Any claims to a universal truth or total certainty are questioned. The more we share our thoughts and feelings, the more we challenge accepted views of traditions and myths, which have kept alternate interpretations from becoming possibilities.
- Reflective writing is a personal journey.
- Journal writings are places to discuss movement in thinking.
- Journal entries are reflections, which often evoke more questions than answers. The purpose of forming questions is to help focus on personal meaning and interpretation in the reflective moment.
- Change is the only constant, and writing reflectively offers a way to examine the meaning of change.

Adapted from: http://www.snjourney.com/ClinicalInfo/WrAndReport/ReflectiveWr.htm

First Word – Final Word Dialogue Protocol

The purpose of the “first word – final word” protocol is to facilitate meaning-making of rich text by considering multiple perspectives through a dialogue process. The protocol requires that each participant in a small group selects a portion of text (in this case, the text includes the reflection materials, the quotations and the journal writing that you have done in the reflective writing time) and uses that quotation to initiate commentary on the meaning that all participants are making of that text. Here are the instructions:

- Five to seven people are arranged around a table or in a circle. Participants will determine who the first speaker will be and will number themselves around the table from there.
- Individually, each participant will select two or three short selections of text from the reflection materials.
- The first speaker will share her/his text with the others in the group without commentary.
- Each group member, in turn, will comment on the meaning that s/he is making of the text that the first speaker read aloud.
- When each group member has commented on the text, the first speaker will have the “final word” on the new meaning s/he has made of the text, after having heard the comments of the others around the table.
- Now, the second speaker shares her/his text with the group, reading it aloud without commentary.
- Each group member, in turn, comments on the meaning that s/he is making of the text read by the second speaker.
- The pattern of sharing comment is continued until every person has had an opportunity to have the “first word” and the “final word” about her/his selection of text.

This highly structured and participatory protocol encourages deep listening while discouraging talk “across the table” or out of turn. Group members speak in turns moving around the table in one direction. Crosstalk (i.e., talking out of turn) is not permitted, but a group member may choose to pass if s/he so chooses.
Reflections on Presentations

Friday, March 9, 2012 – 10:30 a.m.

“I Thought Pocahontas Was a Movie”:
Understanding Racialized Violence Against Aboriginal Women in the Everyday

Historically marginalized through acts established in law and the common daily practices of Canadians, the exclusion of Aboriginal women has become the norm … how is that we begin to deconstruct these exclusionary practices?

“No culture can live, if it attempts to be exclusive.” – Mahatma Gandhi

Definition of Social Exclusion:

Social exclusion is a multi-dimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society in which they live. With different kinds of poverty in today’s scenario developmental studies is necessary to explore the subject of social exclusion. Basically, poverty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon. Poverty and exclusion are two different concepts. Poverty is a distributional outcome whereas exclusion can be defined as process of declining participation, solidarity and access. But the definition or meaning of social exclusion varies from country to country. For example, in the French Republic, social exclusion is defined as “rupture of social bond.” It can be termed as European approach to social disadvantage. They used policies of social inclusion like minimum income policies, active labour market policies, improved access to service in order to combat social exclusion.
Impacts of Poverty on Marginalized Groups: What Teachers Need to Know!


Context for Standing Committee on the Status of Women
The Standing Committee on the Status of Women began its study of violence against Aboriginal women in April 2009 with the stated intention to gather information about the extent of such violence, programs in place to address it, the root causes, and what steps could be taken to break the cycle. In March 2011, the Committee tabled an interim report in the House of Commons, capturing what the Committee heard in hearings in Ottawa and in 14 communities across Canada, from more than 150 witnesses.

For this final report, the Committee has chosen to shift its focus from the aftermath of the violence to empowering young Aboriginal girls and women, supporting their desire to strive for a better life of independence, confidence, influence and power, with the goal of reducing the victimization, poverty, prostitution and abuse experienced by Aboriginal women and girls.

Aboriginal Poverty
Throughout the Committee’s hearings, witnesses identified poverty as cause, effect, or both of virtually all aspects of violence against Aboriginal women. Housing, prostitution, low self-esteem, lack of educational opportunities, addiction – all are linked to poverty, according to witnesses from every region and every walk of life.

The Committee heard extensive testimony about the economic poverty disproportionately affecting Aboriginal people on and off reserve. One witness put the poverty rate among Aboriginal women at 40 per cent. The Committee also heard how this poverty limited options available to women seeking to escape violence in their homes and families:

Women return to or cannot leave abusive relationships because they are unable to adequately provide for themselves and their children on welfare. A crucial measure to prevent the vulnerability of women to men’s violence is in providing economic security to [A]boriginal women....

http://parl.gc.ca/housePublications

“Poverty is the worst form of violence.”  – Mahatma Gandhi

“You have to maintain a fine balance between hope and despair.
In the end it’s all a question of balance.”  – Rohinton Mistry

How in our respective organizations can we create a balance?
Our Challenge, Our Commitments – A Reflection Activity

“There’s a difference between an interest and commitment. When you are interested in doing something, you do it only when circumstance permits. When you are committed to something, you accept no excuses, only results.”

As you reflect on your thinking, learning and discussions over the past few days consider the following questions both for you as an individual and for your organization …

- Goal – What is one area in which you would like to see change happen?
- Reality – What is the current reality?
- Options – What options are available to you as an individual or to your organization to support this change?
- Will – What is the will to see this change attained? What barriers might exist?

“Racial justice is key to a compassionate, inclusive, dynamic society.”

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