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# Helping Kids with Dyslexia

FEATURE

UNIQUE NEEDS OF  
GIFTED STUDENTS

COLUMNS

WEBSTUFF: e-Portfolios  
FIELD TRIPS: Escape Rooms

CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVES:  
EMPATHY: Turning the Forgotten  
into the Benchmark

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**T**he content in this issue presents as a study in complementary ideas, approaches and strategies. Every classroom is a microcosm representing a full range of ability, competence, skills, talents, and struggles. Classrooms are more complex than they were decades ago and this places greater emphasis on the capability of every classroom teacher.

For example, going back in time, a condition now known as dyslexia was almost unheard of and many children who suffered from this condition went undiagnosed. In the process, they felt inadequate, struggling to understand why they couldn't decode letters like their classmates and subsequently, felt stupid or were made to feel stupid. Fortunately, there is greater awareness around this condition and a wide range of technology-based tools to enable children to become successful. No two children are alike and no two dyslexic conditions are alike. Happily, there is enough variety in the tools available to suit the range of needs and conditions most children face. Some careful thought and application on the part of the teacher is required. Take a look at the article by Adam Stone for potential remedies and suggestions.

On the other side of the learning spectrum, we explore the needs and idiosyncrasies of students identified as 'gifted'. Being gifted is not a panacea for instant academic success and those tagged in this way aren't automatically catapulted to the top of the heap. Many struggle. As in any condition, there is a wide range of ability. Some may excel in one particular area, for example, and falter in others. It can be a challenge to structure the learning to stimulate students categorized as 'gifted'. So, being gifted is not necessarily an academic cakewalk. Meagan Gillmore lays it all out for you.

Bill Morris is a former police officer working directly with 'disadvantaged' high school students. Some of these teenagers are in crisis, yet the program in which Morris works has demonstrated significant achievement. The focus of the program is simply, empathy. At times, that may mean discarding the conventional educational playbook and attending to the emotional needs of students. Take a look at this poignant piece and how Morris and his colleagues make headway bit by bit.

**Webstuff** this issue explores the benefits and uses of e-portfolios, handy tools for students, parents, and teachers. Who doesn't enjoy a challenging, clever escape room? Practically no one. Did you know that escape rooms are available as **Field Trips** for schools and students to challenge their deductive, analytical and team building skills and knowledge? Now you do.

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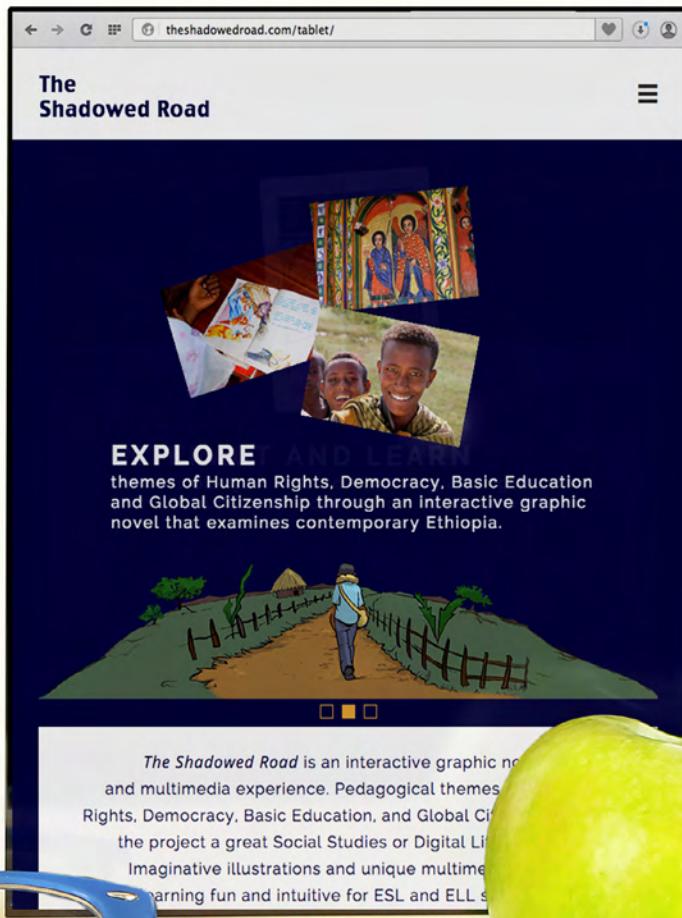
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# HELPING KIDS WITH DYSLEXIA

by Adam Stone

**A** reading clinician and English as an Additional Language teacher in Western School Division, Southwest Manitoba, Valdine Bjornson, frequently uses the Handwriting Without Tears app when working with students suffering from dyslexia. It's designed to improve handwriting, but can also have a big impact on those who struggle with reading.

"If you always write the letter the same, if it is consistent and automatic, that lowers the cognitive barrier," she says. "When you don't have to think about that part of it, it opens a gateway to reading and writing in general."

Technology can be a classroom boon for those who are dyslexic. Computer-based experiences can promote social emotional learning, ensuring kids who have trouble with reading are not left behind or feel out of step with their peers. Apps can also play a role in promoting reading skills for those who need extra help along the way.

## HOW TECH HELPS

Broadly stated, dyslexia is a learning disorder characterized by difficulty in reading. "Reading is complex. It requires our brains to connect letters to sounds, put those sounds in the right order, and pull the words together into sentences and paragraphs we can read and comprehend," according to the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity. "People with dyslexia have trouble matching the letters they see on the page with the sounds [that] those letters and combinations

of letters make. And when they have trouble with that step, all the other steps are harder."

Many educators look to technology foremost as a means of offering accommodation or accessibility, to help ensure dyslexic readers don't fall behind. "Technology has the ability to unlock printed text, which is what many dyslexics struggle with. If you can't decode a word then you can't access the meaning of that word. You can't read a story or a newspaper article. Then you're stuck," said Susan Chambre, an adjunct professor at William Paterson University and a former New York City special ed teacher.

Technology can close the gap by helping students stay current even when they can't keep up with the reading. Chambre points, for example, to Bookshare, a U.S. government-funded program that makes textbooks and commercial books available in print-to-speech format. It's one of several tools available that converts the written word into spoken format.

"The goal here is not teaching you how to read. It's a way to keep you current on the classroom content so that you can participate in the conversation," she said. "It means that even if I can't read on grade level, I can still join in the discussion about Pompeii or Mt. Vesuvius or whatever the subject is. In school, it's all about not looking stupid: you want to do what everyone else is doing. That social-emotional piece is critical."

Just as audio books convert text into spoken word, learning can go in the other direction too, with tools that

help students convert their spoken ideas into written words.

"Some of these exist already within the computer's hardware, while others are apps or software programs like Dragon Naturally Speaking," says Molly Ness, an associate professor in the Fordham University Graduate School of Education. "These resources allow a student's voice to be captured and then translated into the written word—improving their accuracy and efficiency to encode the ideas in their head onto paper. Students can use this for everything from short answers, to their homework, to longer essays."

**"Reading is complex. It requires our brains to connect letters to sounds, put those sounds in the right order, and pull the words together into sentences and paragraphs we can read and comprehend."**

When researchers at the Yale Center for Dyslexia and Creativity tested Dragon Naturally Speaking, they got strong positive feedback. After two weeks, one student reported: "I can do my homework so much faster. This is just unbelievable, I love it."

Let's take a look at some of the most recommended classroom tools and learning apps that may be used to support dyslexic readers.

- Note taking: Some dyslexic people have trouble jotting down quick notes. This makes it hard for a student to create a reminder while simultaneously listening to a teacher. Evernote makes it easy to capture ideas on the fly without breaking stride. Portable handheld scanning devices like Infoscan and Live Scribe Smart Pen also fulfill this role.
- Text-to-speech: An online application, Natural Reader uses a natural-sounding voice to give students ready access to web pages, emails, PDFs, documents, and text messages. Balabolka and Panopreter operate along the same basic lines.
- Typing tools: Talking Fingers teaches typing while also breaking down language into its phonetic components. Students get a practical skill—the ability to type—while absorbing a deeper appreciation for phonics, which can support fundamental reading skills.

- Audio books: In addition to Bookshare, another popular source of audio books is Learning Ally, a nonprofit whose offerings include a collection of some 80,000 audio books at all grade levels. By highlighting words as students read along, the tool can help dyslexic readers stay connected to the text.
- Vocabulary builders: A web-based tool, Rewordify helps students understand words and build their vocabulary. Readers can enter a word or block of text to see suggested alternatives. The tool simplifies hard-to-read sentences, with the reworded portions highlighted.

These tools can help with both the social aspects of dyslexia and the direct educational process: they can enable students to feel like they are keeping pace with their peers, and they can augment teacher efforts to promote reading ability.

While tech tools offer a range of potential supports for the dyslexic learner, educators offer some words of caution as well.

## THE RIGHT TOOLS

Not all dyslexic learners are the same. Difficulty with reading can have a range of causes and may manifest in different ways for different learners. Educators caution that tech tools in support of dyslexia should be similarly nuanced. "Teachers have to be very critical about the materials online, to make sure they are useful in supporting the learning for a student's specific needs," Bjornson said.

To ensure that is the case, Chambre looks for apps that are highly customizable. "Let's say I want to help a kid learn [the] short 'e' sound. I find an app that teaches that, but it might have short 'e' words with consonant-vowel-consonant, or it may have consonant-consonant-vowel-consonant, or some other combination. A kid who is truly dyslexic has to master 'bed' before they can tackle 'bred' or 'bled.' They have to build up to that."

Pedagogy matters too. If the point of an application or program is to support reading skills, it makes sense for the teacher to take a somewhat deep dive into the specific approach being implemented. "I lean toward tools that mention synthetic phonics or morphological training. For most kids with dyslexia, we are trying to break down those little pieces in the reading material, so I look for tools that take the same approach," Bjornson said.

She also seeks out those apps that offer a streamlined user interface. "There is a lot of stuff online with too many complicated visual pieces, with too much information. I look for tools that offer a narrow practice for particular skills, to reinforce specific instruction. I want it to be as clear and straightforward as possible," she said.

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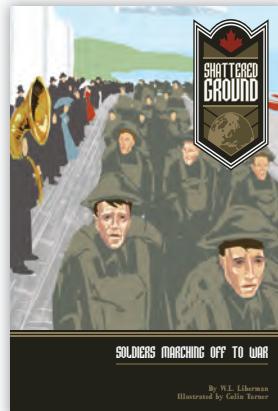
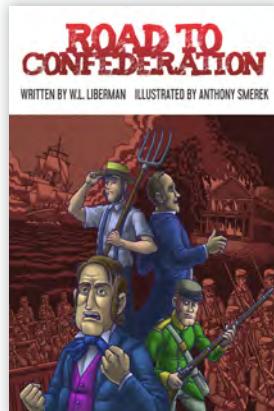
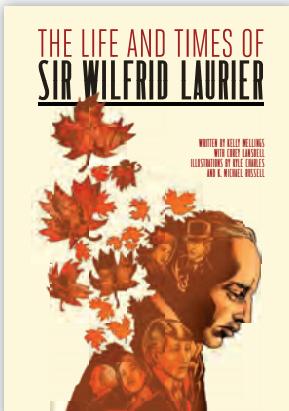
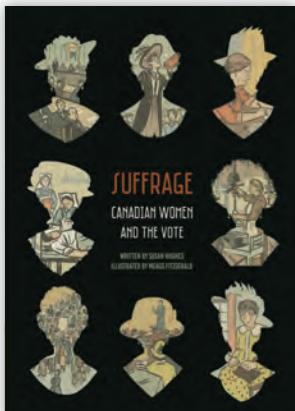
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Finally, Chambre says, it makes sense to look for apps that offer a logical learning sequence, a forward progression that aims to develop sequential skills.

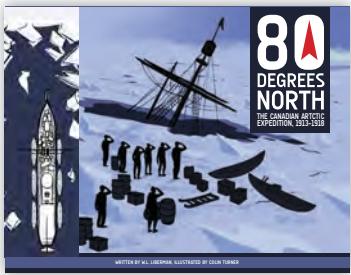
"Does it differentiate once a student has mastered a skill set? What skill does it go to next? There is a stepwise progression in how children master language. You can't jump right to higher-level orthographic patterns. There has to be some rhyme of reason to the progression," she said. "A lot of apps just throw in words. It has to be done in a logical way."

Even apps that meet all those criteria likely won't prove a panacea for the young reader whose neurological setup makes it hard to turn all those cryptic squiggles into intelligent signifiers. The written word is a complex landscape for the dyslexic learner and there's no fast and easy path through the woods. Nonetheless, educators agree that the right tech tools can have a decidedly positive influence when paired with thoughtful and persistent classroom support.

A seasoned journalist with 20+ years' experience, Adam Stone covers education, technology, government and the military, along with diverse other topics.



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## EMPATHY: TURNING THE FORGOTTEN INTO THE BENCHMARK

by Bill Morris

"I need to know, Brian. Are you going to hurt yourself over Christmas break?"

Over the course of my teaching career I've asked that question to students more times than I care to admit. They usually balk, choke, or whisper, "I don't know, sir." Sometimes, a student will speak clearly, "Yes." Both answers spark a myriad of interventions too detailed for the scope of this writing.

This is my teaching reality. I work with "disadvantaged" high school students. I always have and probably always will. My students, fellow teachers and I; we work in seclusion on the other side of the road away from the early college campus, neatly partitioned from the world. We are largely forgotten by the establishment, save for once a year when test scores and graduation rates are published. Then

the whispers at staff development days begin.

"What do you guys do over there? Your numbers are really good."

There are two things that bother me about the question: "What do you guys do over there?" One, it clearly demonstrates the outsider's opinion of my students. Most people, including fellow educators and society at large, tend to assume that my students are capable of less than stellar academic performances because they have complicated lives outside school. My students are caring for dying relatives, in drug rehabilitation programs, on parole or probation, married, have social or psychological disabilities, and work full-time jobs to support their families. Second, the question assumes that my students are the only students in the school with these obstacles prohibiting them from attaining an education. The truth is, they are the lucky few that have been identified by the educational system as being eligible for the program I teach. I promise you, there is a child in your class right now

that is experiencing a complicated hardship unique to them. That kid needs more than a history lesson.

So, here's the secret to turning the forgotten into the benchmark: empathy. Honestly, that is what my team of eight educators work on day in and day out. It takes all eight of us. I do not teach United States History. Along with my team, I teach respect, compassion, community responsibility, humor, and social awareness through a series of lesson plans.

Having empathy for my students means that I have to truly get to know them. I make it a point. On the first day

I promise you, there is a child in your class right now that is experiencing a complicated hardship unique to them. That kid needs more than a history lesson.

of school, I ask my students to write about their hardest day and their best day. I ask them what they want to do after graduation, and how they plan to achieve that goal the day after they walk across the graduation stage with a high school diploma in hand. I have entire days where I don't teach at all. Instead, I listen and help my students plan for tomorrow. I make success inevitable in my classroom. I purposely refrain from saying "if" in my room in favor of "when...."

Empathy also means removing barriers that inhibit learning. Once I really started listening to my students, I started to understand the depth of the difficulties each one experiences daily. Resources are always in short supply. I never have enough working laptops, iPads don't exist here, and I won't give students rides to and from their personal appointments. My students understand that if success is inevitable, then obstacles to success are constant and largely a state of mind. Providing answers rarely helps a student achieve sustainable success, so we brainstorm about, anticipate, and plan for life obstacles as a class. My classes are teams. "When one of us succeeds, we all succeed." This mantra is constant along with putting community first before the self.

I emphasize positive reinforcement to celebrate even the smallest of student successes. We laugh, play, and have pull-up contests, ice-cream sandwich days, pizza days, popsicle afternoons, and lunchtime sports. Passed your driver's license test? Here's a taco. I've learned that my students have an extremely low tolerance for disciplinary actions. If I take away a cell phone, I will not see that student ever

again. He or she has a full life to deal with and school is just another place to be disciplined. Sometimes, it's necessary to discipline a student, but rarely.

My students don't fight with one another. They are articulate and honest most of the time. My students come to school of their own accord because here they feel safe, loved, and like kids again. Therein lays the secret to my success—and yours. My students perform above the state average on standardized tests and graduate from high school because they know the following: a team of eight adults expect them to be successful, care about their well-being, and listen when they are hurting. My co-teachers and I are not our students' friends. The boundaries are clear and our standards are uncompromising, but empathy is our ethos.

Brian, if you're wondering, didn't meet the requirements to graduate this year. But Brian is still alive and comes to school every day. While Brian will not walk across the graduation stage in 2018, he did tell me to write this paper, because "I would've killed myself if my teachers didn't notice I was hurting, and you guys were the first teachers that did." Brian will be back next school year to plan for life the day after graduation.

He promised.

\*Student names have been changed to protect the identity of the student.

**Bill Morris** is a former police officer turned teacher of kids he used to arrest. He has a BA in Law and Society from Penn State. He's currently pursuing his M.Ed. in Educational Leadership. He lives and works in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas as the social studies teacher for Edcouch-Elsa ISD-Academy.

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# LE MOUVEMENT DES SUFFRAGETTES CANADIENNES

# CURRICULA

## DEUXIÈME LEÇON :

## Les disparités raciales et linguistiques

La deuxième leçon va au-delà des grands événements ayant marqué la lutte pour le droit de vote des femmes au Canada et se penche sur le racisme et la discrimination systémiques que subissaient divers groupes de femmes au sein de la société canadienne. La majorité des gens n'éprouvait aucun intérêt pour les femmes en situation minoritaire au Canada et ignorait peut-être même qu'elles existaient. On parle ici des femmes de Premières Nations, des Inuites, des femmes asiatiques et des immigrantes. Ces femmes ont dû redoubler d'efforts pour obtenir le droit de vote fédéral qui leur échappait même après qu'il eut été accordé à la majorité des Canadiennes.

Au cours des années de lutte des femmes pour le droit de vote au Canada, de la Confédération à 1918 et même après, elles ont été la proie des valeurs et mœurs sociales de leur époque. Certaines sont devenues des féministes égalitaires tandis que d'autres, en très grande majorité, peinaient à reconnaître, et encore plus à défendre, l'idée selon laquelle les femmes étaient égales aux hommes. Des décennies durant, les habitants du Canada multiculturel ne considéraient pas comme égales toutes les ethnicités et races; la plupart des femmes, dont beaucoup de féministes et de suffragettes, ne faisaient pas exception à la règle.

### MATIÈRES

Citoyenneté, citoyenneté mondiale, histoire du Canada, études sociales, politique

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## OBJECTIFS

Voici les résultats attendus pour les élèves :

- accroître leur bagage de connaissances sur la lutte pour le droit de vote des femmes et la montée du féminisme au Canada;
- comprendre l'importance du vote, pouvoir en discuter et argumenter sur les personnes qui devraient avoir le droit de voter au Canada;
- s'informer des inégalités passées entre les groupes de Canadiennes (groupes raciaux, ethniques, linguistiques) dans leur lutte pour le droit de vote et des raisons de ces inégalités;
- étudier le concept d'intersectionnalité pour mieux comprendre l'inégalité dans l'acquisition du droit de vote des femmes au Canada;
- prendre connaissance de la théorie de l'intersectionnalité et mieux comprendre leur propre identité ainsi que leur place dans les rapports de force;
- transmettre leurs idées, leurs arguments et leurs conclusions par divers moyens et dans divers styles selon la situation.

## MATÉRIEL REQUIS

- Bande dessinée *Le mouvement des suffragettes canadiennes*
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- Article sur le droit de vote,  
<http://encycopediecanadienne.ca/fr/article/droit-de-vote-1>
- Articles ou reportages sur le mouvement pour le droit de vote des femmes au Québec, par exemple  
[www.fondationlionelgroulx.org/Le-18-avril-1940-L-adoption-du.html](http://www.fondationlionelgroulx.org/Le-18-avril-1940-L-adoption-du.html) et  
<http://archives.radio-canada.ca/sports/elections/clips/9428>

## INTRODUCTION

Bien que les femmes aient voté au Bas-Canada dans la première moitié du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, on leur a formellement interdit de voter en 1849. Les Québécoises ont commencé leur lutte pour le droit de vote seulement en 1912. Un historien avance que l'Église catholique, une force dominante dans le paysage de la Belle Province, prônait la famille et l'engagement communautaire. Elle s'occupait des sans-abri et défendait la tempérance, un rôle qui revenait aux femmes dans les autres provinces, où la question a ainsi franchi les portes de l'arène publique. Au

Québec, les femmes se sont battues pour le vote fédéral et l'ont obtenu en 1919, mais l'équivalent provincial n'a été acquis qu'en 1940, longtemps après les autres provinces.

Les provinces de l'Ouest ont peut-être été plus ouvertes à l'idée d'accorder le droit de vote provincial aux femmes pour des raisons stratégiques : elles désiraient attirer des colons, hommes et femmes, pour déplacer les Premières Nations et les Métis sur place. Certains historiens suggèrent que les gouvernements de ces provinces offraient le vote des femmes comme moyen de les encourager à s'installer sur leurs terres.

Lorsque le droit de vote des femmes est finalement devenu réalité au Canada, ce n'était qu'en partie pour répondre au désir d'égalité sociale et à la volonté de réparer une injustice. Les politiciens fédéraux, à l'affût des revendications de plus en plus fortes pour le droit de vote des femmes, au Canada comme ailleurs dans le monde, voyaient l'obtention de ce droit comme étant inévitable. La décision ultime n'est pas celle d'un gouvernement juste désirant une société où hommes et femmes sont égaux; c'est plutôt celle d'un premier ministre dont le parti allait en retirer un avantage.

La plupart des suffragettes étaient des femmes blanches de la classe moyenne qui voulaient dans certains cas améliorer le sort de toutes les femmes, mais qui cherchaient surtout à accroître l'influence de leur propre classe. Ironie du sort, on évoquait souvent des propos racistes pour soutenir le droit de vote. Au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, le député provincial de la Colombie-Britannique James Hawthornthwaite a fait savoir qu'on était nombreux à se dire outré que la moitié de la population n'avait pas le droit de voter alors que les Indiens et les hindous (alors de nouveaux partenaires d'importation) jouissaient de ce droit.

Les épouses des immigrants nouvellement naturalisés n'ont pas été d'emblée incluses parmi les femmes ayant obtenu le droit de vote fédéral en 1918. Elles ont dû composer avec des embûches que leur a mises dans les jambes le gouvernement du Canada. Fait intéressant, certaines organisations féministes approuvaient de tels actes. Des dizaines de milliers d'immigrantes mariées se sont vu refuser le droit de vote. La situation n'a pas changé au Canada jusqu'à l'adoption de la Loi sur la citoyenneté en 1947 au sens de laquelle les femmes mariées étaient des citoyennes de plein droit, peu importe la citoyenneté de leur mari.

Les exclusions raciales se fondaient parfois sur le statut politique ou social de la personne. Au cours de la Première Guerre mondiale, par exemple, les « sujets d'un pays ennemi » n'avaient pas le droit de voter. C'est seulement en 1948 que le gouvernement fédéral a adopté des lois qui levaient toute restriction de nature raciale sur le droit de vote. La discrimination n'avait pas été entièrement abolie pour autant. En 1955, des lois ont été promulguées pour éliminer les interdictions de vote pour des raisons religieuses.

Les Autochtones ont obtenu le droit de vote en 1867 à la Confédération au cours de ce qu'on a appelé le processus d'émancipation, mais ils devaient abandonner, pour ce faire, les droits qu'on leur avait accordés en vertu de traités ainsi que leur statut d'Indien. Les mêmes conditions étaient imposées pour les études universitaires. Les femmes mariées à des hommes n'ayant pas le statut d'Indien perdaient le leur (même si elles obtenaient par le fait même le droit de voter). De la même façon, la loi mentionnait que les femmes autochtones mariées à des hommes autochtones adoptaient d'emblée le statut de ces derniers. Comme leurs époux, les femmes de Premières Nations n'ont eu le droit de vote qu'en 1960. Les Inuits s'étaient quant à eux vu accorder le droit de vote en 1948. Le gouvernement fédéral n'a pas fait de même avec toutes les Premières Nations cette même année parce que ces dernières refusaient d'abandonner les exemptions fiscales dont elles jouissaient en vertu de traités. Ce n'est donc qu'en 1960 que les personnes ayant le statut d'Indien ont eu le droit de voter. Cependant, la décision n'a pas été prise en consultation avec les peuples de Premières Nations. Certains représentants de ces peuples continuent aujourd'hui de s'opposer à la méthode employée par le gouvernement et n'exercent pas leur droit de vote.

## PREMIÈRE ÉTAPE : DISCUSSION AVEC L'ENSEIGNANT

Parlez avec les élèves des raisons pour lesquelles il est important que tout le monde ait le droit de voter. Notez ce que les élèves savent déjà. Demandez-leur ce que vaut un vote (quelques réponses possibles : c'est un moyen de choisir quelqu'un qui partage notre vision pour nous représenter au parlement, c'est une responsabilité, c'est une manière de faire sa contribution au processus démocratique et de développer un sens communautaire, c'est l'expression de l'égalité entre tous). Comment les Canadiens ont-ils, par le passé, déterminé qui pouvait voter et qui ne le pouvait pas? Qui prenait ces décisions?

Après la lecture de la bande dessinée *Le mouvement des suffragettes canadiennes*, revenez sur le lien entre le statut de propriétaire et l'effet qu'il avait sur de nombreuses personnes, races et sexes confondus, qui ne pouvaient ainsi pas voter. Cherchez à voir s'ils trouvent que c'est un moyen raisonnable de déterminer le droit de vote au Canada à la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle et au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle. Demandez-leur avec quelle vision du monde on peut dresser un parallèle et comparez cette vision à celle des Autochtones (pas de propriété sur les terres).

## DEUXIÈME ÉTAPE : UN BREF DÉBAT

Passez en revue avec les élèves les conditions à respecter pour voter au Canada aujourd'hui :

- être citoyen canadien (les résidents temporaires et permanents ne peuvent pas voter);
- avoir au moins 18 ans le jour du suffrage;
- résider dans la circonscription électorale;
- être inscrit sur la liste électorale.

Demandez aux élèves de discuter sur les gens qui devraient avoir droit de vote dans une société. Quelles sont les restrictions actuelles? Dites-leur que jusqu'en 1993, les personnes ayant un handicap mental ne pouvaient pas voter, et il en était de même jusqu'en 2000 pour ceux qui n'avaient pas d'adresse fixe.

Demandez ensuite aux élèves de former des équipes de trois ou quatre personnes et de débattre brièvement des conditions actuelles d'admissibilité au vote. Demandez-leur s'il est raisonnable d'empêcher les personnes de moins de 18 ans de voter au Canada. Devrait-il y avoir un âge maximal après lequel le droit de vote devrait être retiré au Canada? Croyez-vous que tout le monde, quels que soient la race, la religion ou le sexe, devrait pouvoir voter? Pensez-vous que les Canadiens incarcérés (établissement correctionnel ou pénitencier fédéral) devraient avoir le droit de voter? Pensez-vous que seules les personnes ayant des biens d'une certaine valeur ou qui ont un certain montant d'argent devraient avoir le droit de vote? Croyez-vous que les personnes ayant un handicap mental ou les sans-abri devraient avoir le droit de voter? Si vous pouviez modifier les conditions d'admissibilité au vote, que changeriez-vous et pourquoi?

Dites à chaque groupe de faire part de ses conclusions.

## TROISIÈME ÉTAPE : D'IMPORTANTES DIFFÉRENCES INTERPROVINCIALES RELATIVEMENT AU DROIT DE VOTE

Rappelez aux élèves que le premier ministre Borden a fait un compromis lorsqu'on s'est opposé au projet de loi sur le droit de vote des femmes : au lieu d'accorder ce droit à la totalité d'entre elles, la Loi ayant pour objet de conférer le droit de suffrage aux femmes exigeait des femmes les mêmes conditions que les hommes, y compris en ce qui concerne la propriété dans les provinces où de telles dispositions existaient. La Loi a reçu la sanction royale en 1918. En 1920, les restrictions relatives à la propriété ont été levées pour le vote fédéral à l'adoption de la Loi des élections fédérales, renommée Loi électorale du Canada. Les seules exclusions restantes concernaient l'âge et la citoyenneté (la race et la religion avaient aussi été des prétextes d'exclusion) : toute personne qui ne pouvait pas voter à l'échelon provincial pour ces raisons ne pouvait pas non plus participer au suffrage fédéral. Concrètement, les exigences liées à la propriété n'ont été complètement abrogées au Québec qu'en 1948.

Rappelez aux élèves que le droit de vote n'a pas été accordé aux femmes en même temps dans toutes les provinces. Dites que les Manitobaines ont pu voter dès 1916 tandis que les Québécoises viennent en queue de peloton en 1940, 18 ans après l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard. Demandez aux élèves pourquoi il existe de telles différences.

Attribuez une province canadienne par petit groupe d'élèves. Faites-leur faire une recherche éclair de 30 minutes en ligne ou dans les livres de la bibliothèque pour trouver la date à laquelle leur province a accordé le droit de vote aux femmes et les raisons qui expliquent le délai.

Rassemblez-vous pour que les élèves présentent le fruit de leur recherche. Demandez-leur ce que leur recherche révèle en matière de gouvernance, de mœurs et de réglementation au Canada. Pourquoi le Québec a-t-il été la dernière province à accorder le droit de suffrage? (Quel a été le rôle de l'Église catholique dans la province au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle? Quelle était sa vision du vote des femmes?) Affirmez-vous que certaines de ces différences ont des origines discriminatoires ou racistes? Le cas échéant, pourquoi?

## QUATRIÈME ÉTAPE : UNE CLARIFICATION QUI S'IMPOSE

Passez en revue les restrictions imposées au vote au Canada au fil du temps, entre autres le sexe, la propriété et le statut de marié ou de célibataire dans le cas des femmes. Dites aux élèves de mettre ces exigences dans leur contexte historique et d'expliquer si c'était une façon de faire raisonnable pour l'époque et si ce serait tout aussi raisonnable de procéder ainsi aujourd'hui.

Abordez la perception répandue selon laquelle toutes les Canadiennes ont obtenu le droit de vote en 1918. Est-ce le cas ou non?

Demandez aux élèves, en équipes de trois ou quatre, de lire l'article « Women and the Right to Vote in Canada: An Important Clarification » ([www.cbc.ca/strombo/news/women-the-right-to-vote-in-canada-an-important-clarification.html](http://www.cbc.ca/strombo/news/women-the-right-to-vote-in-canada-an-important-clarification.html), en anglais) et de faire une recherche sur l'un des quatre thèmes suivants liés au droit de vote au Canada :

- 1) les femmes de couleur (y compris les Japonaises, les Chinoises et les femmes d'Asie de l'Est);
- 2) les Premières Nations;
- 3) les Inuits (hommes et femmes);
- 4) les immigrantes.

Demandez aux groupes de créer une présentation multimédia qui résume leur recherche et qui répond aux trois questions suivantes : « Le groupe a-t-il été traité équitablement ou a-t-il fait l'objet de discrimination? Sur quoi appuyez-vous vos dires? Qu'est-ce que votre réponse révèle en matière de gouvernance, de mœurs et de réglementation au Canada? »

Pour voir les plans de leçon complets ou pour en savoir plus, veuillez visiter [canadiansuffrage.com/fr](http://canadiansuffrage.com/fr).



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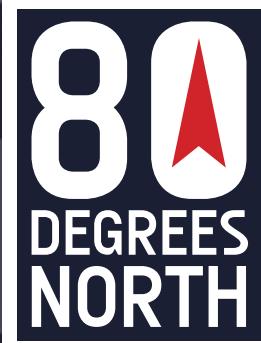
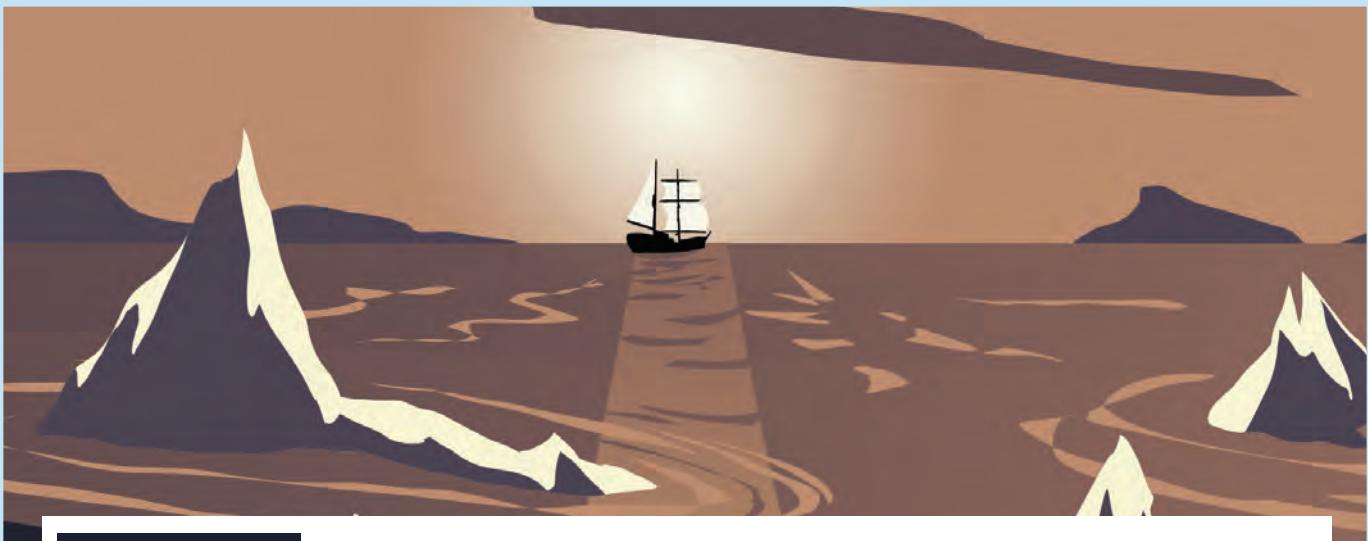
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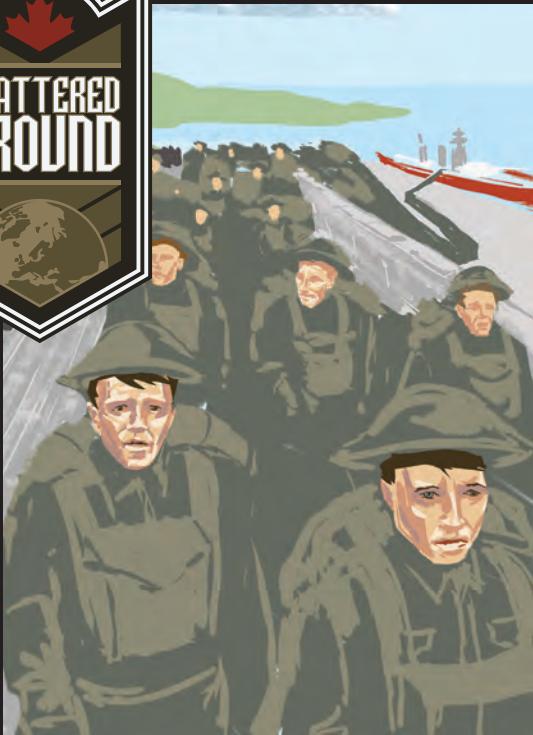
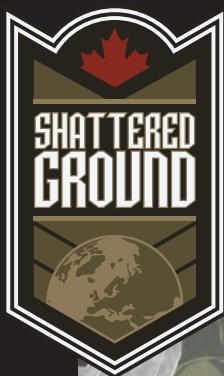
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# UNIQUE NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

by Meagan Gillmore

Dale Mar has always known her English students can explore topics with great insight. They “blow her mind” regularly, she says. However, she was surprised when two students’ spoken-word poems landed them a personal visit with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau during their Grade 8 graduation trip to Ottawa.

Mar teaches gifted students in the Durham District School Board in Ontario. This year, some of her students participated in a spoken-word poetry contest. Two poems caught the attention of a parent in the audience—the local Member of Parliament. She told the students that the Prime Minister needed to hear their work, especially a poem that reworked the lyrics of “O Canada” to address the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians and arranged a meeting.

“When you give them a topic, they will take it in a direction you never expected it to,” Mar says of her students. “That is so exciting as an educator because they’re able to look at it from their own perspective, and their own slant.”

Teaching gifted learners doesn’t excite everyone. Resources for these students can be sparse. Assessments may take years to schedule, and even then, not all educators agree on their effectiveness. Debates about whether these students are best served in mainstream or separate classrooms—or schools—can be intense.

Giftedness may technically be considered a “special education” need, but teachers might be more inclined to help students with learning or developmental disabilities versus ensuring high-performing students have learning opportunities suited to them. Students who are identified as gifted may also have learning, developmental or physical disabilities, and when that happens, their giftedness may be overlooked.

Educating gifted learners properly begins with understanding giftedness correctly. Sometimes, people think of giftedness as an inherent quality that makes students better than others, says Dona Matthews, who, along with Joanne Foster wrote *Being Smart About Gifted Education*. However, the best way to understand it is to realize that students identified as gifted have “gifted learning needs.”

Matthews prefers tests be subject-specific, because students who are gifted won’t excel at everything. “Just because a child is gifted does not mean that they are going to translate into being very successful at school and have straight As,” says Michelle Doiron, the gifted learning facilitator at the Durham District School Board in Ontario.

Doiron says the term “gifted” can create barriers because it may lead some people into thinking that programs for gifted students are elitist. All students have gifts in some

areas, but gifted students think in a way that's "different from those around them," she says. "It's just that ability to think at a greater depth and breadth."

Achievement alone does not separate gifted learners from non-gifted learners, says Laurie Alisat, Assistant Principal at Westmount Charter School, a school exclusively for gifted students in Calgary, AB. Gifted learners "live in the world with intensity," she says. "That intensity is around some intellectual curiosities."

Some gifted students demonstrate their giftedness by quickly answering questions and participating well in class. Others withdraw, and may seem unengaged with the material. They may be slow to respond. That doesn't mean they don't understand what's being taught, says Alisat. It's more likely that they're considering multiple ways to approach a subject. Sorting through all that material takes time. Most classrooms and teaching methods prioritize speed and don't allow students the extra time to process information, says Alisat.

They're motivated by a challenge, not an outcome. "They will achieve at high levels because of their interest and their desire to learn," says Alisat, "not because they're after that 98 percent."

The desire to be challenged may cause some gifted learners to question how a teacher approaches a subject. They may not be questioning authority or showing disrespect—they just want to be engaged.

This "definitely can present to the teacher as if they're going to be a bit of a problem, or they're going to be a challenge in the classroom, because that's exactly what they're trying to do: get the teacher to challenge them a little further," says Cara Owens, student support teacher in the Sun West School Division in Saskatchewan. Owens works in an online school, and has collaborated with teachers to develop learning plans for gifted learners. It makes sense that students who aren't identified until they're older become disengaged, she says; they've spent their entire academic careers waiting for others to catch up to them.

Challenging gifted students doesn't mean giving them more work, says Doiron. Forcing them to complete additional math problems about a concept they already understand will just bore them, she says. "Once they demonstrate mastery of a subject or a topic, they're encouraged to move on either at greater depth or explore a different avenue," she says.

"It's important that they're given the same opportunity we give the rest of the kids: to work at the edge of their learning, to not be repeating all of the time," says Maureen McDermid, a board member of the Gifted Children's Association of BC and former teacher.

Students can help create assignments they'll find interesting, says Owens. Gifted learners can see connections between various subjects that others—perhaps their

teachers—can't. They can suggest projects that will fulfill requirements of multiple subjects.

"These students have the ability to provide and support some incredible insight into their learning process," she says.

Students, however, still need to work with teachers to create appropriate assignments. Gifted students may become so focused on one topic that they won't want to move onto another. Teachers can allow students to return to their area of passion once they finish their work in another subject, says McDermid.

Gifted learners often read voraciously, she says. They may have read the assigned book in the curriculum and can recall the details easily. She suggests students develop alternative, but related, assignments. This may mean reading other books by the same author, or in the same genre.

Teachers don't need to develop different assignments for every student, though. "Differentiation is quite different from individualization. A teacher can differentiate for groups of (students) without individualizing," says Lannie Kanevsky, a professor in the graduate education program at Simon Fraser University who studies gifted learners. Teachers can make their jobs too stressful if they think they



All students have gifts in some areas, but gifted students think in a way that's "different from those around them," ... "It's just that ability to think at a greater depth and breadth."

must have different lessons for each student, she says.

Kanevsky has developed several strategies to help teachers make adjustments for gifted learners. These include making concepts more complex, or allowing students to move through some material more quickly than their classmates. Many of these strategies may work well for students who aren't formally identified as gifted. Kanevsky says teachers should consider grouping students based on "readiness." Students who are ready to learn an advanced concept should study it together. Students who aren't identified as gifted may be part of these groups.

Teachers must find materials that are intellectually stimulating and age-appropriate. "Just because they can, doesn't mean they should," says Doiron. They may be able to discuss complex world issues, but may not be emotionally mature for the information. "Consider the actual age of the student. Even though they can handle that debate or discussion doesn't mean it's appropriate for the age of the child."

Continued on page 23

# field trips

## Escape Rooms

An escape room is a thrilling game in which players of all ages collaboratively solve a series of puzzles in order to escape from a confined space in a limited amount of time. An escape room is undeniably a unique, fun excursion for students to learn valuable skills. It can be an adventure that enhances students' teamwork, cooperation, communication, critical thinking, and time management skills. Working together towards a common goal can also be a great community building activity to bring students together. Here are a few escape room adventures across Canada that will have students thinking in new ways!



### Mobile Escape

Mobile Escape, based in Calgary, AB, brings the escape room to you. With hands-on, inquiry-based learning, students build problem-solving skills as a group to solve the escape room problems and puzzles before them. They also have the opportunity to build their own escape rooms! Each escape room is connected to the Alberta curriculum. Science curriculum connections can be found in detail at [www.mobileescape.ca](http://www.mobileescape.ca). For example, in the Grade 5 Electricity and Magnetism & Mechanisms Using Electricity escape room, students complete circuits that activate locks, which help them progress through the room's puzzles. In the Grade 8 Mechanical Systems escape room, students work with different mechanical devices from pulleys and levers, to high-tech robotics.

### Escape Rooms 4 Kids

Based in Vancouver, BC, Escape Rooms 4 Kids provides an after-school program for students in all grades. Participants make and test puzzles, coding ciphers, and challenges. As they create their escape room, participants practice their

core competency skills such as planning, creative and critical thinking, communication, decision making, and teamwork. At the end of the program, parents enter the escape room and try to finish the puzzles within the time limit set by the participants. Escape Rooms 4 Kids also offers a full-day escape room event at your own school, where they set up an escape room in a classroom, library, or multipurpose room. Visit [www.escaperooms4kids.com](http://www.escaperooms4kids.com) to learn more.



### Improbable Escapes

Based in Kingston, ON, Improbable Escapes has years of experience running escape rooms for students. One of their game developers can come right to your class and help create puzzles around topics in the curriculum with students. This teaches them about different topics in fun and engaging ways. The Improbable Escapes team has travelled throughout North America giving talks on learning through gameplay. Learn more at [www.improbableescapes.com](http://www.improbableescapes.com).

### The Real Escape

Based in Winnipeg, MB, The Real Escape offers a fun escape room experience for students. Their facility has enough space to accommodate up to 66 students. They offer eight unique rooms, such as the Spaceship room and the Castle room, to help ensure that everyone will find a theme that appeals to them. With a heavy emphasis on problem solving, math skills, and teamwork, each escape

room contains thematic elements and technology that create a unique learning experience. Learn more at [www.therealescape.ca](http://www.therealescape.ca).

## De Code Canada

De Code Canada believes teamwork is a key factor of success. Based in Mississauga, ON, their activities provide students with an opportunity to learn the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and to demonstrate their creativity in a challenging and competitive, environment. De Code Adventures is available for school bookings Mondays to Thursdays. School packages include team-building activities and a room escape adventure. Each package is customized to fit your group. Their facility is also available for rental before and after the event. They can accommodate groups with up to 100 members. Visit [www.decodecanada.com](http://www.decodecanada.com) to learn more.



### Continued from page 21

At the same time, that intensity can help others. Alisat remembers how many students were “distraught” when fires ravished the Alberta communities of Fort McMurray and Slave Lake. They understood how these events happened and could imagine all the consequences. Many used that intensity to find ways to support the victims.

“It’s tough for people to understand that young people can feel so strongly,” says Alisat, noting some may assume students are over-dramatic.

What gifted learners most need are interactions with intellectual mates. They often struggle to relate to children their own age. Some may downplay their giftedness or try harder to fit in, and that can make things more awkward, says Alisat.

Matthews supports integration—“the less segregation and discrimination, the better,” she says, explaining that all students need to learn they have both strengths and weaknesses, just like everyone else. Gifted learners can thrive in mainstream classrooms, she says, but teachers need appropriate resources and training.

Acceleration—students skip a grade—can help, when done in a way that considers the emotional and social needs of a child, Matthews says, noting it’s not always good when students accelerate by themselves.

Clustering gifted learners, whether in separate classes in a neighbourhood school, working together on special-interest projects, or even enrolling them in schools specifically for gifted learners, provides them with opportunities to work with others who can stimulate them appropriately.

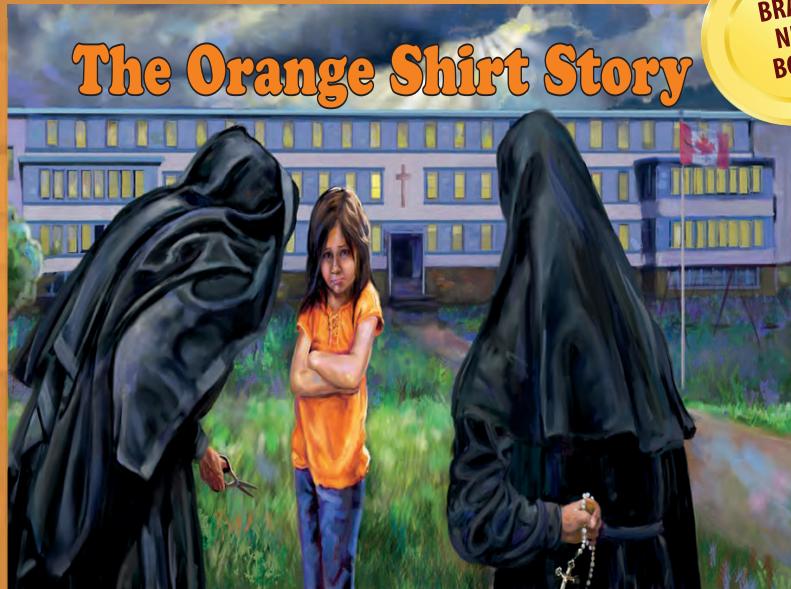
(Many gifted learners) don't find a kindred spirit. They don't find someone their age that has the intensity that they do—and they notice. They need to know that there are others like them out there.”

“Even with the most welcoming teacher in the world and a wonderful, strong classroom community, (many gifted learners) don't find a like-minded student in the room,” says Kanevsky. “They don't find a kindred spirit. They don't find someone their age that has the intensity that they do—and they notice. They need to know that there are others like them out there.”

Teaching gifted learners can also be lonely. They likely know things their teachers don't. “It can be daunting to walk into a classroom of gifted students,” says Doiron, a former teacher of gifted students. If students asked her questions she didn't know the answers to, she often encouraged them to research it on their own. This led to everyone learning more.

Many gifted learners have been excluded, she says, and that's made them “one of the most accepting and embracing populations.” The greatest lesson they've taught her “is about acceptance.”

**Meagan Gillmore** is a freelance writer in Toronto, ON.



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When Phyllis Webstad (nee Jack) turned six, she went to St. Joseph's Indian residential school for the first time. On her first day at school, she wore a shiny orange shirt that her Granny had bought for her. When she got to school, it was taken away from her and never returned. "This is the story of Phyllis's orange shirt and the story behind Orange Shirt Day."

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**Written by Kung Jaadee**

After the Raven (Yaahl) had finished creating the world, he was lonely, so he invited the whole world to join him in Haida Gwaii for the greatest feast imaginable.

**Moral:** All of us have been given a sacred gift - something uniquely our own.



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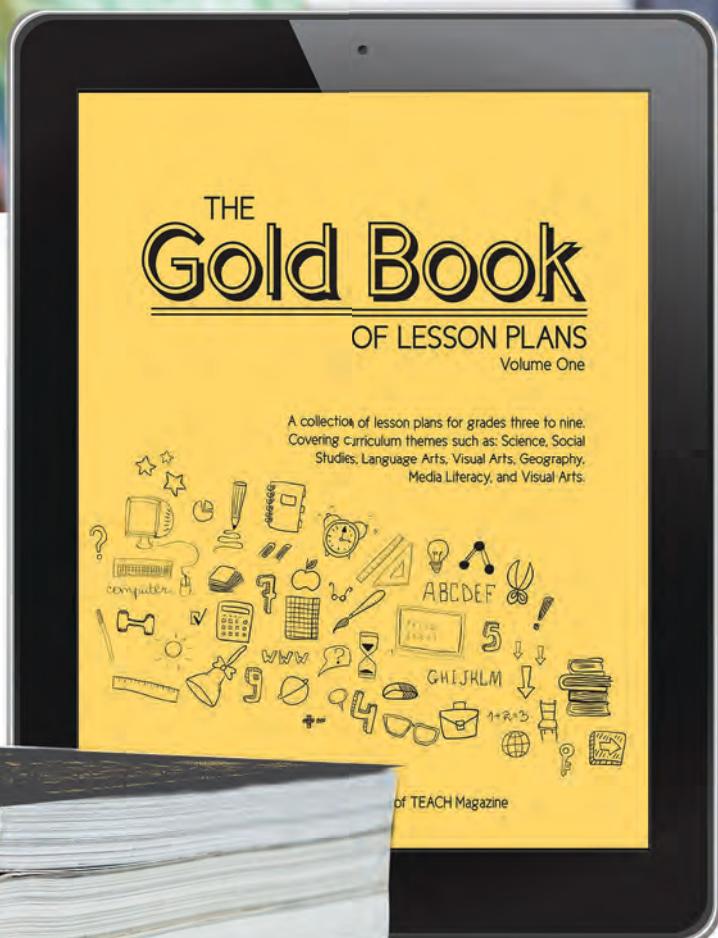
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## e-Portfolios

An e-portfolio is a great tool for students to present and share the progression of their work and talents in a digital space, while encouraging them to showcase their creativity. It is also a great tool for teachers and parents to track students' areas of growth and areas in need of improvement. Here are some e-portfolio creator websites and apps that can help boost student learning.

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### Freshgrade

[freshgrade.com](http://freshgrade.com)

Free

Freshgrade is a free portfolio and assessment platform with both web and app access, designed to promote collaboration between teachers, students, and parents. While working on activities, teachers and students can use their mobile devices to capture photos, video, audio recordings, and other notes. It allows teachers to document student learning as it happens, but also to track assessment and reporting. Freshgrade's data dashboard provides information on students' strengths and areas for growth. Their analytics allow teachers to track progress towards learning initiatives, track engagement trends, and ensure alignment district-wide. Freshgrade also provides onsite workshops and on-demand webinars designed to help teachers learn to use and get the best from the product.



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### Sesame

[sesamehq.com](http://sesamehq.com)

Free

Sesame is focused on student success. With both app and web versions, Sesame is a free portfolio and assessment tool. Teachers can create a portfolio for each student, create assignments and rubrics, and assess students directly from the site. In addition, using the Sesame Snap app, teachers and students then can add photos or videos of how a student is doing in school. Teachers also can comment on these snaps. Teachers can also provide parents with access to private portfolios that give instant insight into the student experience.

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### Seesaw

[web.seesaw.me](http://web.seesaw.me)

Free

Seesaw is a free digital portfolio creator, with both web and app versions, that allows students to build a comprehensive record of their learning over the years. Students may save and submit videos, photos, text, and drawings. They can reflect on their work in writing or with a voice recording when they submit it, and teachers may offer feedback. Teachers can also approve items to make them accessible to parents. This real-time data supports teachers and improves family engagement. In addition, student portfolios sync from class to class and follow students as their knowledge grows.

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### Pathbrite

[pathbrite.com](http://pathbrite.com)

Free

Pathbrite is a free web-based tool with which students showcase work, teachers manage and assess classes, and institutions collect data. Digital portfolios are easy to create with Pathbrite, as they provide users with demo videos, a step-by-step guide, and access to sample portfolios. Students customize their theme and layout, and create their own, unique portfolio including text, images and videos. Portfolios are easily shared across a wide range of devices. For large-scale use with courses or institutions, there is a fee that is paid by the student or the school.



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