

Case Nine Synthesis - Myrna Ordon

Dear Journal,

The end is near. It's been awhile since I've sat down and written a journal entry on how my school year has progressed. They say teachers are always learning, and after the year I've had, I could not resonate with that idea more. As the school year phases into its last term, I cannot help but wonder what to consider for the next school year. What can I do differently? What can I improve on?

For unit planning, I have finally printed off copies of the BC New Curriculum to get a better idea of what I'm supposed to be teaching! Why did I not do this at the beginning of the year? I felt that having a hard copy of the curriculum for my grade by subject, I was able to **unpack the big ideas and curricular core competencies**. The New Curriculum is the starting point for all planning, and after having a first run with it this year, I can move forward with clearer, focused ideas. In terms of inquiry, I wonder what I can do to really dig deep into my students' curiosity. Although our recent Insect Unit had the students intrigued on its diversity in species, I did feel that I was scaffolding them a lot. Basically I felt that I was telling them what to wonder about. How can I **make inquiry more open** going forward? Perhaps as the students get older, having **career education** can stimulate inquiry by having them explore their own skills and assets and how they can be applied in the real world? I also need to consider not pushing so much onto my **ELL students**; the goal is to make their **learning meaningful and natural**.

Another thing to think about is how I can really **integrate sexual orientation and gender identity education** into my planning. I'm still feeling uneasy about Jamie's coping with his gender identity. He claims to be fine with everything and says he also just "kicks around" with the other students when they tease him. But really, I am **tired of hearing "we were just kidding around Miss M."** The way I see it, once you say it comes out of your mouth, there's meaning and intention behind it; you can't take it back! Rather than just responding to slurs I hear in class and in the hallways, I should look at ways to really integrate SOGI education across the curriculum. When it comes to "The Day of Pink", I want my students to **think beyond the trend of wearing a pink shirt on just one day**. What does it really mean? I've researched online some amazing **literature** that I could share with my students, and we could take it a step further by looking at what **human rights** look like around the world.

Speaking of human rights, I've come across a **unit plan** that really focuses on **inequality issues in Canada**. The plan helps the students understand that **past and present are NOT separate entities**. Looking at inequality issues gets the students thinking about **'cause and effect'** and also the **'push and pull'** factors in regards to immigration. The essential questions of the plan are "How does discrimination, racism and oppression in modern Canadian society compare with that during other periods in Canada's past?" and "Does Canadian history truly reflect its reputation as a peaceful, multicultural and accepting nation?" This unit plan will also allow the students to make **ethical judgements** on past and current events, and how to respond to these issues. I look forward to taking that into my teaching plan in the future.

My group of students have really seem to embrace the diversity among their peers; I've made it clear that **all languages are welcome in the classroom**. But now I'm hearing way more Chinese than I think is expected. It is always Soo, Wendy, Shei and Mina that I catch speaking their language in between lessons. The conversation I suspect to be off task and by their giggling and snickering, maybe even bullying? But how can I be sure? I feel that because I have been so open to my students about letting them use their native language, it is now being taken advantage of. I will need to consider doing more **cooperative learning tasks** with the group and have them interact with the other students more. Perhaps I could **increase engagement** by incorporating more **authentic tasks** that allow my ELL students to speak more English (in a natural and meaningful way.) Maybe I will hand the **year end trip planning** over to the students and they can be responsible for organizing our itinerary, our meals, our transportation and the packing list. Yes!

It is also time for my students to do more writing. They seem to be immersed in reading and I have seen more and more non fiction books in their hands. Now how can I get them to write more? They are now at the stage where the **processes of writing** become relevant to prepare them for high school. For **pre-writing** I could have the students brainstorm their ideas based on personal connections, or even give them a list of prompts. We have not been doing many **writer's workshops** so I will need to consider engaging topics (inside and outside of the units) for them to write. I myself have neglected my own **reflective writing**. This is my first journal entry in months, so perhaps I need to reinforce my own beliefs on writing, by putting in more journal entries! Maybe now the students will have a free write period every day until the last day of school. Oh they will be so thrilled...