



**School leaders
are engaging
in the work of
Equity**

bcpvpa



CONNECTING LEADERS

by

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Educators around the world are embracing opportunities to explore, understand, and create lasting and meaningful engagement around Equity. School leaders in BC have a critical role in creating a space for their staff and students to inquire, connect, and commit to action. BCPVPA's October 2021 Connecting Leaders Conference embraced the theme Leading for Equity, and this root idea was woven through every aspect of the conference. Videos produced by BCPVPA members and their teams who are engaging in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion work in their districts or schools were highlighted throughout the conference.

The Power of Story

Riley McMitchell and Harjinder Sandhu shared the books and school-wide strategies they are using to make issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion more visible in our schools. They select books featuring diverse characters and themes that act as anchors for school-wide learning experiences. By exploring texts for and by people who are typically underrepresented in our system, Harjinder and Riley strive to deepen understanding, awareness, and safety for all.

Harjinder said, "I did not want my students to see white settler cultures as the norm, and their differences as deficits. I wanted them to see themselves reflected. The more we know about each other's heritage, history, and cultures, the harder it is for racist beliefs to fill out minds and hearts."



A Good Mind / A Kind Heart

Sue Boucher and Joseph Dandurand shared the voices of students who participated in an integrative immersive experience on Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being in their video, *A Good Mind/A Kind Heart*. The video illustrated the connection of cultures, and the opportunity to learn together in something culturally significant that gave life and the freedom to have good intentions.



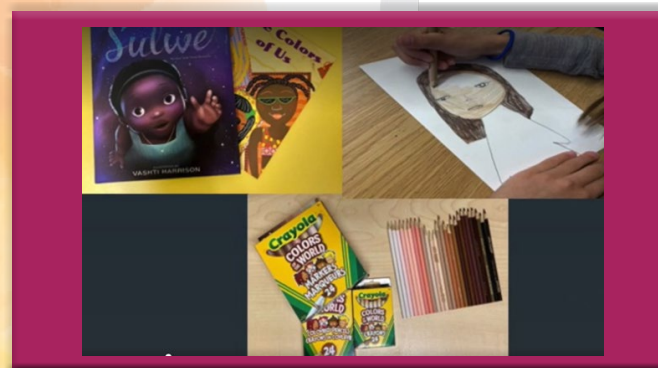
A Long and Winding Road

Sean Della Vedova shared his metaphor, *A Long and Winding Road*, for leading equity work. His story marks the journey from defensiveness to exploration, and being okay with vulnerability.



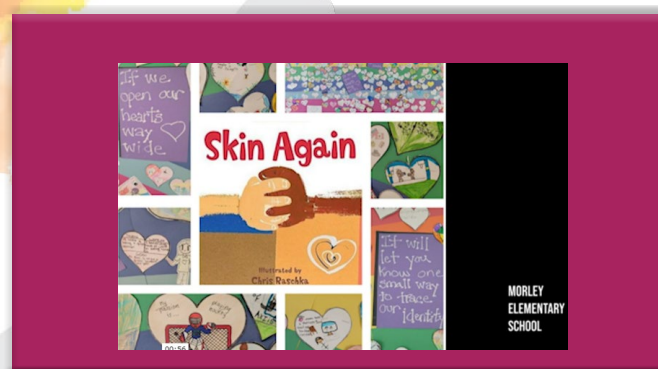
The Anti-Racism Work of Queen Elizabeth Elementary

Debbie Ramen and Queen Elizabeth Elementary shared their journey into anti-racism work. They began by intentionally setting a tone that recognizing people from all cultures was important. They explored colourism, and delved into the concept through stories and the use of the Colours of the World crayons.



Re-imagining Leadership and School Culture Through Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Beth Applewhite's video included the voices of students, teachers, and leaders. It stands as an example that when people feel heard and respected, they are more engaged and they feel braver, more courageous to be creative, and take innovative risks. Diversity is where true creativity blossoms.



Words of Reflection from Riley McMitchell

"For me, making the video helped me to synthesize my understanding of the actions I am taking in my school towards equity. The video helped to move some parts of my work from unconscious to conscious. I knew what I was doing but might have had trouble articulating the rationale behind it until making this video. Everyone approaches equity work from their own stance, and it was invigorating to see how others are putting it into practice. I truly believe the more we can connect big ideas with tangible everyday action, the more empowered we will all be to nurture awareness and change."

Connecting Leaders 2021: Leading for Equity

Carolyn Roberts welcomed us with an acknowledgement of the territories, and grounded us in the legacies of colonialism that can still be felt on this land today. She focused our attention on creating safer environments and communities for all students.



Tanina Williams from the Lil'wat Nation shared that, "Language is based on the land. "If that is where your heart is that is where your home is".

Mark Edwards, our Learning Companion, shared his deep commitment to wearing his orange shirt, and keeping it close to his heart to embody his commitment to truth and reconciliation.



Darren Danyluk
@bcpvpapresident



Overheard today:" Do unto others and be for others what they need." (Edwards) New golden rule for Equity.

[#CL2021](#) [@BCPVPA](#)

2021-10-22, 9:45 AM



Candy Palmater spoke poignantly about the influence of educators in her life. She revealed how one educator advised her to set low expectations for herself because she was Indigenous, and how another educator saw the fire within her and challenged her not just to follow her dreams but to become a leader.



Robyn Evans
@revans45



Identities are complex and fluid... these vectors of identity shape “how we experience the world and how the world experiences us.” Powerful conversations [@BCPVPA](#) Connecting Leaders conference [#CL2021](#) Thank you [@S_Nouman_Ashraf](#)
2021-10-22, 10:48 AM

Sean Della Vedova Reflected on Nouman Ashraf’s Session

“You sometimes must walk toward the storm. If not, nothing changes, particularly in some schools where we often do a good job of telling ourselves we are doing a good job! Nouman reminding us that we are human beings, not human doings. To do lists don’t foster the idea of being and existing in the present. Being able to connect with leaders from all over the province was so wonderful and important, as I was inspired by the stories and experiences of others. As Nouman said, “we are experienced creators, not knowledge holders,” and stepping up to achieve this requires tenacity and a willingness to face that which is hard and sometimes uncomfortable. The conference served to create new connections with leaders who are united in this work – what a community!”

Anna Maria Tremonti spoke about what we might not see, what we might have missed, and how to listen into the silence. She challenged us to be aware of our own bias and lived experience to raise our awareness and curiosity. She encouraged us to use our awareness and understanding going into conversations.





Darren Elves
@DarrenElves



'There's a difference between a flippant question and a meaningful one. Find a way to ASK. ENGAGE. LISTEN'

[@amtremonti](#) [@BCPVPA](#)
[@newwestschools](#) [#CL2021](#)

2021-10-22, 12:05 PM



Sanj Johal
@johal_sanj



Thank you [@amtremonti](#) for your words and for sharing the importance of being a listening leader. It is important to listen with an open heart and open mind.

[#CL2021](#) [@BCPVPA](#)

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Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Professional Learning Series



The 2021 Connecting Leaders Conference: Leading for Equity marked the beginning of our Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion focus for professional learning. Equity work is ongoing work.

As we become more aware, our understanding deepens, and we embed new ways of being into our identity. To further develop and extend learning from the conference, Dr. Nouman Ashraf has continued to guide us along with three educators – Carolyn Roberts, Bryan Gidinski, and Beth Applewhite – who are leading the way with equity in British Columbia.

Nouman Ashraf is an Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream, within the Organizational Behavior area, and the Director of Diversity and Inclusion initiatives at the Rotman School of Management. His webinar, Leading Equity, engaged a deeper exploration of how we might enable an equitable learning and working culture. In his session on Cultural Fluency, he introduced a continuum that begins with cultural awareness. As cultural awareness develops, it supports the development of cultural understanding. That deeper understanding results in the development of skills that enable leadership across difference.



Carolyn Roberts is a Coast Salish woman belonging to the Baker family from Squamish Nation, and the Kelly Family from the Tzeachten Nation. Carolyn is an Indigenous academic working in the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University as a Faculty lecturer and Indigenous Pedagogies Teaching Fellow. She has been an educator and administrator for more than 20 years in the K-12 system. In Carolyn's webinar, Decolonizing and Indigenous Education, she talked of how the western colonial education system has shaped and formed our understanding of the colonization of Canada. She spoke of the impacts the education system has had on Indigenous people. She deepened knowledge and understanding of decolonial practices in the classroom.

Putting our learning into action requires a commitment to identify what we might start, stop, and continue to do with our teams, organizations, and ourselves to deepen the work of diversity, equity, and inclusion. It is time for us to move beyond the performative and into the 'people work' of equity.

We look forward to our continued learning with our upcoming webinars The Performance of Pink with Bryan Gidinski and Equity in Action: Using a Cultural Humility Lens with Beth Applewhite.

The Performance of Pink

April 11, 2022 3:15-4:30 Zoom
Register bit.ly/BCP_LFE_Webinar

Bryan Gidinski is an intermediate elementary school teacher with more than twenty years of teaching experience. In addition, he has worked as a Faculty Associate and Sessional Instructor, teaching courses in Language Arts Methodology and Classroom Management as well as facilitating teacher education modules with Diversity and Literacy themes.

This session will provide some insights and perspectives on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) and how leaders can influence the creation and maintenance of inclusive communities. Whether queer people are out and visible, or whether they are questioning or closeted, they are in our spaces and looking for messages as to whether it is safe to explore their identities and be their authentic selves. This session is situated in shifting the context from “Should we be having these conversations?” to “How do we have these conversation?” It will invite you to critically consider how to engage in supporting and empowering LGBTQ+ youth (and their families) and avoid performative allyship – The Performance of Pink.



Equity In Action: Using a Cultural Humility Lens

May 9, 2022 3:15-4:30 Zoom
Register bit.ly/BCP_LFE_Webinar

Beth Applewhite is the acting District Principal of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion with the Burnaby School District. BC born and raised, Beth is a bi-racial educator of Trinidadian and Scottish heritages. She has been unrelenting in her determination to challenge the status quo and create equitable experiences and spaces that both acknowledge racial bias and celebrate personal and cultural identities.

Beth uses her lived experiences to inform her practice and enlighten participants about the long-reaching effects of discrimination. This presentation is explicit, thought-provoking, and interactive. Beth's approach is not to shame and blame, but rather to meet participants where they are at with compassion and understanding. The session will take participants beyond definitions and awareness to reach honest personal reflection and authentic personal goals. Beth endeavours to create brave and courageous spaces for participants to reflect on their blind spots, share experiences, and 'try on' new perspectives. Participant voice is encouraged, appreciated, and respected. Beth looks forward to walking alongside BCPVPA members as we learn and grow together, and begin to reimagine what education could be.

