

Inquiry Mindset Assessment Edition Scaffolding a Partnership for Equity and Agency in Learning by Trevor MacKenzie

Reviewed by
Dr. Diane Charles SD 68

“Am I doing something for my students that they should be doing for themselves?”

This is the key premise of Trevor MacKenzie's newest book, *Inquiry Mindset Assessment Edition Scaffolding a Partnership for Equity and Agency in Learning*. Ron Ritchhart's foreword sets the stage as he shares a two-dimensional mapping tool of assessment practices focusing on the intersection between integration and evaluation in relation to both formative and summative assessments. Keeping this model in mind, Trevor shares an inquisitive look at the process of evaluation and assessment, one that challenges some of the traditional methods employed by teachers around the world. The narrative of Trevor's book comes from his own experience as a teacher of inquiry, supported by research on best practice by Dylan Williams, Angela Duckworth, and Adrienne Gear, to name a few. One of the strengths of Trevor's approach is his use of Sketchnote images to visually display his ideas, followed up by detailed descriptions of the key points.

I read this book through the lens of a Principal of a K-7 school. Written from a middle to secondary school viewpoint, teachers of younger students may need to adapt some of the strategies. However, building a school-wide vision and culture of assessment is a universal need, regardless of the age of the learners

we work with. Trevor continually emphasizes the importance of building relationships, in getting to know our students as learners, and in the students getting to know that their teachers are invested in their learning. Learning is a verb, he reminds us, “in which there's movement, action and deep thinking. When students are not given an opportunity to reflect and have a voice in the assessment process, they lose sight of the exact skills human beings need to navigate the world and beyond” (p. 202).

For educators and leaders in BC, Trevor's reference to the big ideas and core competencies aligns directly with the redesigned curriculum for all grades. The permission to let go of assessment and evaluation practices that have teachers doing all the heavy lifting is fully supported by our BC Curriculum. What Trevor provides are some tangible ways of doing just that. “Imagine if each school and classroom started the year with the big idea, an inquiry into self: Who are you and what shapes your identity?” (p. 208) and used this to guide the learning that was to follow? Instead of teaching programs, teachers would be teaching learners who have agency over their own learning, and who have a voice in setting their goals for improvement, celebrating their strengths, and fortifying their stretches, and – potentially – co-writing their own report cards!

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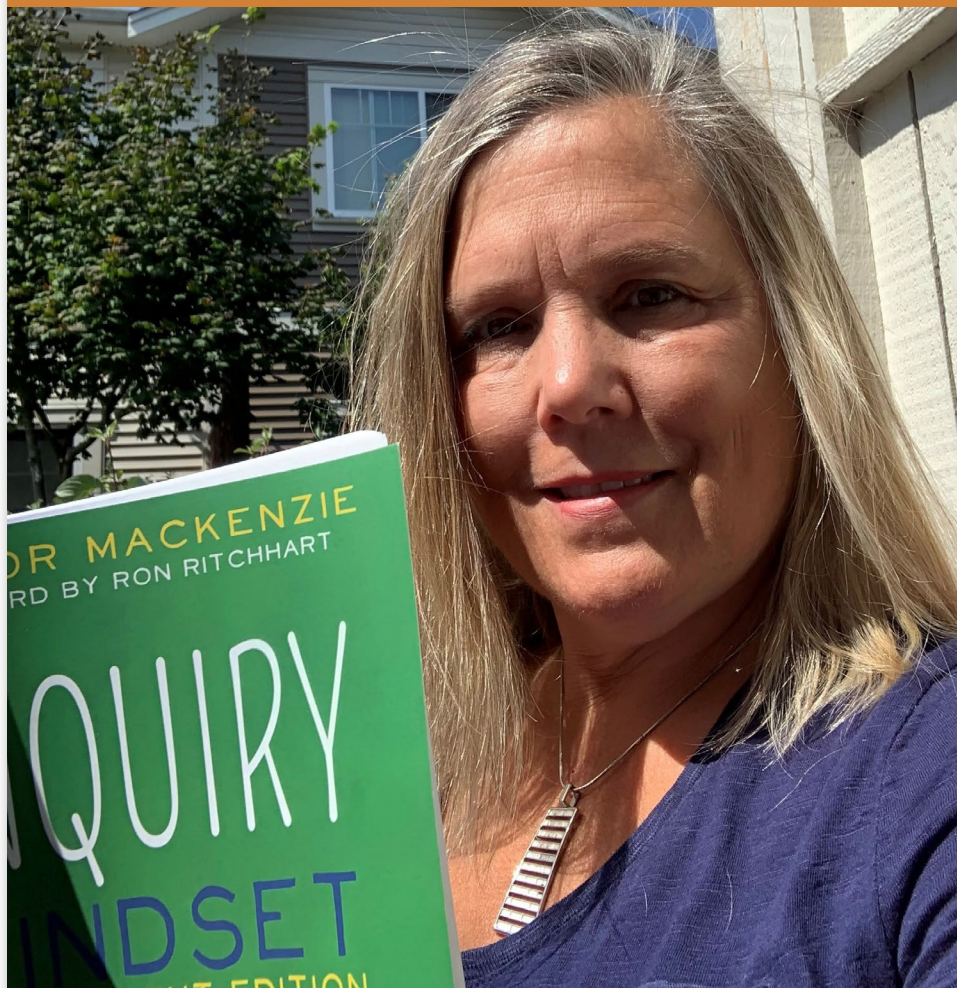
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Contact

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Diane is entering her 34th year as an educator, and 21st year in administration. Her EdD focused on Teacher Efficacy working with Marginalized Students. Supporting her staff in creating classrooms where students thrive is a focus of her work. Diane likes to imagine a world where students and teachers work together in support of shared goals and authentic learning, and where – when asked, "How do you know?" – the answer is rich and meaningful.

The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person

by Frederick Joseph

Reviewed by
Carmen Eberle

BCPVPA

Prior to joining the staff of the BCPVPA, I worked for the Learning Support Services Department in Langley where there is a district-wide commitment – and time set aside – to engage in discussions around anti-racism. Following one of the discussions, a colleague of mine ordered us both a copy of Frederick Joseph's book *The Black Friend: On Being a Better White Person*. Frederick is an award-winning marketing professional, philanthropist, and writer. He was selected for the 2018 Root 100 Most Influential African Americans, a list that honours the innovators, leaders, and game changers recognized for breaking down barriers and making way for a better future.

Reading Frederick's book has been a game changer for me. This book is written from the "perspective of the friend everyone should have". He offers "an essential read for white people who want to be better about race — and for people of color who long to see their experiences validated". This book has given me a chance to re-learn through education and storytelling that evokes empathy and understanding. Every chapter features the voice of one artist or one activist through diverse representation. Frederick provides relevant examples of systemic racism and significant instances where racism exists within the TV, film, and music industries. He eloquently captures what microaggressions are and how they feel, as well as identifying proactive actions people can take to be anti-racists. The book also shares the importance of learning from people who are more culturally aware. Readers will find definitions, source notes, a list of people to learn more about, materials to read, things to watch, and – one of my favourite sections – "The Black Friend Playlist" starting with "Naima" by John Coltrane. If you have not listened to this ballad before, you can easily find it on YouTube.

Throughout the book, Frederick uses humour and sometimes painful yet powerful retellings of his own experiences with racism and White Supremacy. He touches on his personal reflections about how his thinking has changed and evolved over time from childhood into adulthood.

Although I loved each chapter, what resonated the most was the chapter titled "In the End: We Don't Need Allies; We Need Accomplices". This important chapter is about making change instead of wanting change. As highlighted in the book, the difference is that an ally, as defined by Merriam-Webster dictionary, is "someone that aligns and supports a cause with another individual or group of people." Whereas an accomplice, as defined by the same source, is "a person who knowingly, voluntarily or intentionally gives assistance". The main point from Frederick's perspective being that an accomplice is a person who actively participates in some way; instead of just knowing something is wrong, one might actually step in and do something about it. For example, if one were to witness cultural appropriation, one might speak up and explain what they noticed and why it could cause harm or offend someone. A willingness to engage in calm and respectful dialogue could lead to positive change.

Reading this book has led me to share Frederick's literature with others, to follow him @fredtjoseph on Instagram, and to continue to ponder and reflect upon the words of wisdom he shares. Without a doubt, he is masterful at taking a serious topic and relaying his message with care and kindness. He has written this book in an attempt to make things better and eliminate historic oppression, as a conversation starter that can lead to next steps for positive change. A big thank you to Ms. Kathy Keyworth, the colleague and friend who sent this book my way. Enjoy the read, and maybe you too can order a copy for yourself, a family member, a friend, or a colleague!

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Carmen has recently joined the BCPVPA as a Director of Member Support Services in Vancouver. She worked previously as a District Principal of Learning Support Services in Langley, BC, and is the proud mother of an 18-year-old son who has recently enrolled as a student at BCIT.