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A Different Kind of WE Day

By Michelle Adolph
Westview School

This is the day and age where we have been hearing a lot about WE Day. Live performances by popular bands, celebrity sightings and inspirational speeches by kids and adults who have taken up the motto to "Be the Change". If you have ever gone to one of these events, you know that the energy is amazing. Kids are inspired to do more for their peers and in their communities and leave knowing that even the smallest actions can have huge impacts. It is truly amazing, for the students who are able to attend.

Okay, so maybe you have tried to download the online feed to your school and have a little WE Day of your own but it really is not the same as actually being in the MTS Center with thousands of your peers who are just as inspired as you are. Basically, it is watching the Jets at home as opposed to being in the arena on Game 4 of the Stanley Cup playoffs. It is fun, maybe you have a few friends over, but it just is not the same.

At our school, we decided we needed to give all of our students the experience of WE Day. We also happen to be Westview Elementary (get it?) so we tweaked the idea to suit our needs and our students a little. I mean, our initials are W.E., how could we not?



A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FIRST YEAR MULTIAGE TEACHER

To give you a brief outline of our school, we are a tiny little school of 183 students from K-5 in the heart of Transcona. We have a demographic of mid to lower-middle class families with hardworking parents and multiple-child families. We have only 8 classrooms with 9 teachers. There are 4 part time specialists and the principal and Mrs. Bennett, the secretary. We are a close-knit community with the motto of "Here at Westview, you are loved." We mean it and we wanted to show our students just how much, and inspire them to share that outside of the school.

With a small committee of 4, the conversation about what we saw our WE Day as started. We finalized our plan by leaving it open for teachers to decide with the only guideline being that they had to work with a partner and pick from one of these topics: Self, Community, World. Partnerships had to come up with a 30 minute lesson to get their idea across and it had to appeal to all students in the school.

Students from the entire school were grouped together into 6 large groups ranging from Kindergartens to grade 5's. We all met for an assembly explaining our mission and our ideas of what WE Day at Westview would look like and then we were off! Students were led from one session to another and were involved in teachings that were so important and heartfelt that by the end of the day, everyone was touched and inspired. Because teachers were able to choose their own teachings, there was a true belief in what we were doing and the students could feel the sincerity and love for the day. There were behaviour issues, but there were less than on any other day as the students were completely engaged in learning.

The multitalented staff put together some fantastic lessons: the kindergarten teacher and the teacher librarian did a session on spirit animals; the grade 1/2 teacher and the grade 2 teacher did yoga in the gym; the guidance councillor and the

resource teacher did drama games based on social stories; the grade 5 teachers taught students about rice and 3rd world countries on the computers; the grade 1 teacher worked with the grade 3 teacher and wrote letters to seniors in the care home down the street and myself and the music teacher taught a WE Day dance that the whole school performed together at the end of the day. It was inspirational, it was fun, and it was ours.

Although I do not know if I will be lucky enough to be at Westview next year, I know that this memory will always be with me and I hope to share this idea with any school I may be fortunate enough to work in. ■

A Day in the Life of a First Year Multiage Teacher – Part 3

By Kristin Rahn

École Beausejour Early Years School

As a first year multiage teacher, with just over thirty weeks of experience in my classroom, I continue to learn a plethora of new things. While what I learn can be overwhelming at times, I have found that the best practice is to take it all in, reflect on it, and use it in the best way I know how.

I work with a 1/2 multiage classroom of twenty (ten of each grade) enthusiastic and energetic learners. The make-up of my classroom has allowed me to utilize the veteran-rookie philosophy, giving both grades a sense of pride in the large part that they play in their learning. In working with these students for the past thirty weeks, and in working with the staff in the building, I have learned some very general but equally important points that will be practices I use for the rest of my career. The themes present in much of these points this term focus on reflection that informs my teaching and learning in years to come.

SITE 2015—LOOKING FORWARD**Assessment**

While I acknowledge that I have learned many things this year, I also acknowledge that in the future I would like to professionally develop my knowledge of, and skill/experience with assessment. University courses in my experience focused on curriculum, instruction and then assessment (in that order), suggesting that the three processes are linear, and in the interest of time, assessment was not as heavily focused on as curriculum and instruction. What I am coming to realize now is that curriculum, instruction and assessment are equal partners in the teaching and learning process and when used authentically and effectively, occur simultaneously. My most authentic assessment this year was when it was ongoing: it informed my instruction, it allowed me to reflect on where my students were at in their learning, and it informed me as to what my students learned. This is the type of assessment I plan on using more of in my future lesson and unit planning.

Health

I have also learned that as a teacher, it is important to keep my mind, body, and spirit healthy at all times. Since I take teaching as seriously as I do, I recognize that my students are only at their best when we (myself included) take the time to do what we need to do to keep ourselves healthy. My students and I can recognize when we are not at our best, (we aren't listening, aren't getting along, aren't patient, aren't focused) and have had discussions about what we need to do to fix the issue (get more sleep, eat more healthy foods, drink more water, rest our voices or bodies, go to the doctor, etc). When I think back on how many new teachers burn out within the first five years of teaching, I recognize how important this life lesson is for both teachers and students alike. In order for me to take care of my students, I first need to take care of myself and know that it is okay to do so.

The Future? (Question mark is not a typing error)

I have learned more in the last thirty weeks than in the six years that came before it. I have been privileged to work with an amazing team of staff and students who work hard on a daily basis to teach and learn from each other. The school I am privileged to be a member of goes above and beyond the curriculum to bring learning to life and to help coach and mold its' members into 21st century learners who are literate, fluent in numeracy, and are socially responsible active participants in their learning and in life. I am honoured to have been a part of it, and hope to continue to be.

One Day at a Time

My first-year-multiage-teacher motto is, "You can't get it all done in one day". As teachers all know, there is always work to do, and it will always be there for you the next teaching day. I need to remember to stop what I am doing at a predetermined time, and to rest so that I am ready to tackle whatever it is that I need to the following day. ■

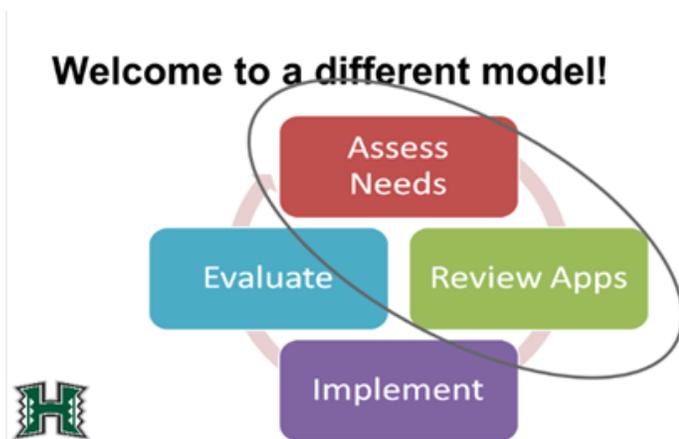
**SITE 2015 - Looking Forward: Innovation
Las Vegas March 2-6, 2015**

By Regan Hindle

In March I had the opportunity to attend the 26th International SITE Conference in Las Vegas. The conference had many different presentations including keynote speakers, paper presentations, workshops, round table sessions, and poster presentations. Some of the many topics included the use of technology in teacher education, engaging students through 21st century learning, learning to bridge conventional school practice with informational learning, and learning how to address instructional objectives through the creation of content.

ENTERING A NEW AGE IN SCIENCE

One workshop I attended was facilitated by Dr. Matthew Schmidt and Dr. Grace Lin from the University of Hawaii. They discussed the SIED framework (Software Identification and Evaluation for Decision-Making) which is a student-centered needs-based approach. Each of the four steps incorporates a cycle of reflective inquiry that includes identify, report, gather feedback, and reflect and revise. By following this process I was able to plan for implementing and evaluating apps for a specific case study.



I would like to thank the Louis Riel School Division and MAME for their financial support in allowing me to attend this professional development opportunity. Next year, SITE will be hosting its 27th International Conference from March 21-25, 2016 in Savannah, Georgia. ■

Entering a New Age in Science

By Michelle Adolph
Westview School

My school was very fortunate to be approved by MAME for a grant to support our science lab. As we are a small school with limited funds, this grant went a far way to build our almost non-existent science lab. We were able to purchase beakers and magnifying glasses, a classroom greenhouse, and

even a digital magnifier to hook up to our projectors. It is truly amazing what children can do with proper equipment!

Within my class, we have just started looking at plants and soils and we are over the moon using the digital magnifier to see our seeds sprouting! This device allows me to project even the smallest of objects in a close up on my whiteboard (which is especially helpful when trying to get students to not crowd around to see something tiny!) We are able to hold classroom discussions about our seeds and compare them as a group instead of using small groups or one on one discussions. As our science class is usually late in the day and the students are done with each other and small groups by then, this also allows me to engage them in a whole new way. The insightful discussions that follow exploration are really exciting to hear as the students build off of each other and are enthusiastic about seeing their seeds grow.

My students are very excited to use the greenhouse as well because they know it is a special place to grow their seeds. We work hard in my class at being organized and this really cleans up the space where we used to have our baggies of seeds on the window sill. The students are taught to use it with care and really take pride in knowing that some of their parents grow seeds this way as well. I am excited to use it myself when we plant our tomato and onion plants during a cross-curricular unit involving ancient societies.

Although we have not been able to use all of the wonderful treats inside our new science lab yet, the whole school is excited to experiment and learn with the new tools, especially with the battery and magnet kits. Maybe we will even use them together in a cross-curricular activity with our buddies in grade 5 next year! Having proper equipment makes teaching and exploring that much easier and we at Westview are so very grateful for MAME and their grant for this new equipment. ■

APPS! APPS! APPS!

Apps! Apps! Apps!

By Julie Van Caeyzeele
H.S. Paul School

Looking for a new app in the classroom, try one of these:



Skitch: Free! An app for labeling, adding to and mocking up any photo or image. Some examples of uses are labeling a map of Canada, extending patterns and adding comments to a students work.



Rocket Speller: Free! Multi-level vocabulary word work game. As students progress through levels they gain pieces to build and fly a rocket ship.



Draw & Tell: \$2.49. Students can create pictures using different tools, stickers and effects. Using the microphone and cursor students can then explain the picture. Example uses are drawing the water cycle and then explaining it or drawing examples of the 5 senses and explaining each body part with examples.



ToDo Math: Free! Offers multi-level and multi skill practice on a variety of basic number sense and operations. Great for Daily Math centers.

From the Professional Development Committee

Remember that your MAME group has Professional Development funds available for you, our members to use. You can go onto our website and apply under PD funding. You are entitled to \$250 to attend professional development. If there is a special project that your school is interested in participating in, there are also special grants available for up to \$1000.

This year our members had the opportunity to travel all over North America to attend a variety of professional development conferences on topics such as math, literacy, technology, and developing social skills.

Library Corner

The MAME LIBRARY

MAME has been accumulating resources that are relevant to multi-age educators. These materials are available for loan to our members. If you would like to see more titles go to our website, www.multiagemanitoba.org and click on the Bookshelf tab. To borrow these or other MAME resources, please contact Charlene Sacher at: charlene.sacher@gmail.com