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ARROGANCE



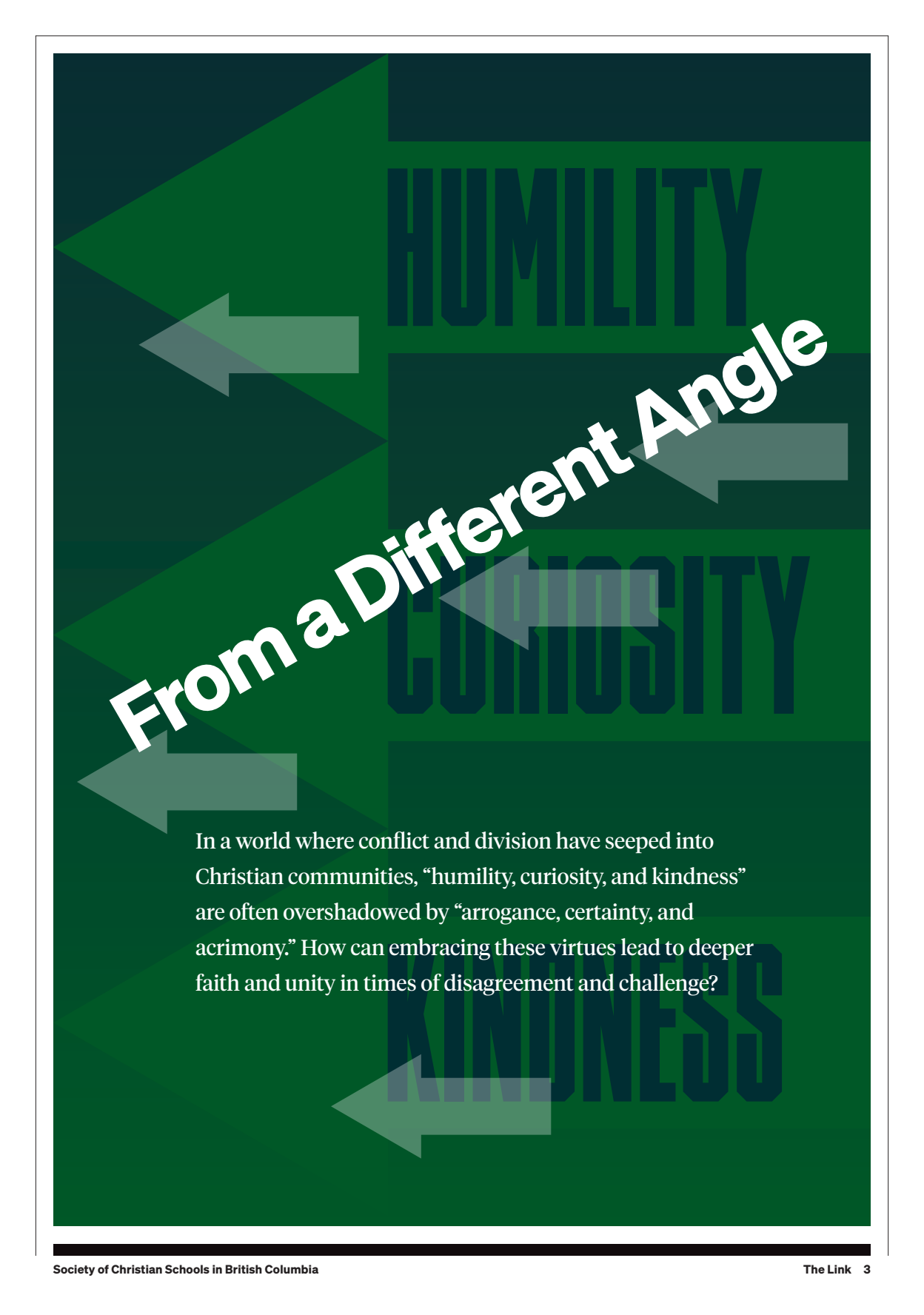
Approaching The Story

CERTAINTY



ACRIMONY

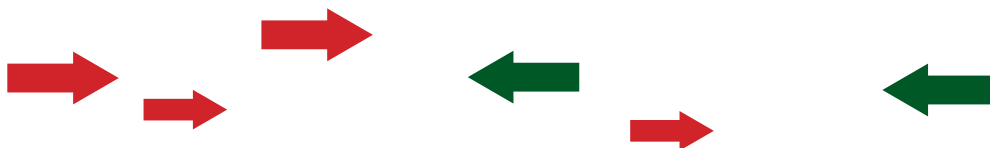




From a Different Angle

In a world where conflict and division have seeped into Christian communities, “humility, curiosity, and kindness” are often overshadowed by “arrogance, certainty, and acrimony.” How can embracing these virtues lead to deeper faith and unity in times of disagreement and challenge?

Approaching *The Story* From a Different Angle



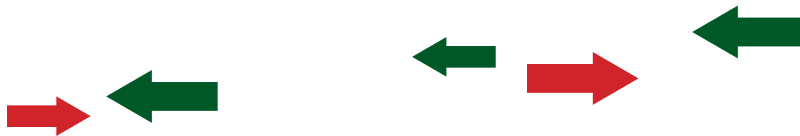
IT IS NO SHOCK that we live in times that are contested and rife with conflict. Sadly, this has spilt over into our Christian communities. Coming out of COVID, it feels like **“arrogance, certainty, and acrimony”** have colonized much of our spaces of discourse. In fact, it feels like “arrogance, certainty, and acrimony” have laid a beating on **“humility, curiosity, and kindness.”** Let me explain. Now, when people share their opinion of politics, vaccines, theology, (insert controversial topic here), they do so with a certainty that often does not befit their training or experience. I have heard statements like: “we disagree theologically,” when, in fact, neither person is a theologian, and the disagreement might be more connected to their Christian sensibilities than any rigorous theological study they have done. Invoking the word “theological” elevates the argument, bends towards taking God’s name in vain, and smacks of certainty and arrogance. How about this one? “I have done the research on a ‘fill-in-the-blank’ topic,” which usually means surfing some websites that are already biased in the direction of said surfer and does not usually mean spending years in an epidemiology lab or conducting graduate work in political science. Hear me clearly: what I am *not* saying is that each of us does not have the right to question, ponder, and test ideas, opinions, laws, and rules. I would even say it is our responsibility as followers of Je-

sus, who are being transformed by the renewing of our minds, to do so (note, “being” transformed as opposed to “already” transformed) (Romans 12:2). But the arrogance involved in the above statement implicitly dismisses anyone else’s view as having not done “the research” and elevates the speaker to the top of the heap.

There is the acrimony, wherein friends have disconnected, family members are at odds, and brothers and sisters in Christ have broken communion with one another. All while the world watches us, and all while we are called to be known by our love for one another (John 13: 34-35).

My belief is that “arrogance, certainty, and acrimony” have overtaken “humility, curiosity, and kindness.” The way forward as communities of faith is to foster “humility, curiosity, and kindness” in ourselves and in our communities as we continue to be faced with challenging and potentially divisive issues. Let me suggest a path toward such a posture.

First, we need to start with an honest realization of who we are and what we bring to the table. None of us come to the text of Scripture or an issue at hand with objectivity. All of us bring our whole selves to the table. We are shaped by our stories. My own story is one of a child of a sponsored refugee who married a prairie girl who grew up in the Great Depression. Work was the core of being a Christian for my parents: working, saving money, and reusing everything. For my father, there was also a deep fear



of this thing called “Canadian culture.” I did not grow up in a neutral home. My upbringing shaped me for good and ill, faithfully and unfaithfully, and to this day, I act according to those family norms and react against them. We all bring our story to

our faith and our response to challenging topics. None of us come to our faith with 100% objective truth, free of human error and interpretation. That position alone belongs to the Sovereign God. Let’s be careful not to conflate ourselves too far in His direction. And the Spirit guides and reveals the Truth of God’s word to us, but never to the point where we are all-knowing! We continue to see through a glass darkly (1 Corinthians 13:12).

Secondly, I think it is essential to recognize that we all are culturally situated. That means we do not exist in some objectively neutral realm where all the social norms, customs, language, and practices have been perfectly vetted and are 100% aligned with God’s will for human social interaction. 1) We live at the beginning of the 21st century with its technological innovation, specific international conflicts, philosophical debates, artistic interpretation, and rich and evolving theological contributions. 2) We live in Canada, a religiously and culturally pluralistic society with a strong social safety net and a high standard of living, and 3) We live in our own communities, full of stories of immigration, industry, success and failures, fears and hopes, and pressures to fit in. All this reality shapes us. We react against some of it. We comply with some of it (sometimes unknowingly). We question other parts of it.

Why do I make this point so directly? Because I believe it should give us cause for humility; a full

realization that, while I have strong convictions, I might grow in my faith and understanding by listening to a fellow Christ-follower with whom I disagree. Knowing that I bring my whole self to the text of the Scriptures and challenging issues should

make me humble. If it makes me certain, then it means I have a much-inflated view of myself, and, I would argue, one that might be forgetting the necessity of the grace of God needed to function as a follower of Jesus.

American Evangelical biblical scholar Michael Gorman makes the point in his powerful book *Cruciformity: Paul’s Narrative Spirituality of the Cross* that many of us have forgotten that, as followers of Jesus, we are a cruciform people, marked by the death of Jesus on the cross, and called to follow Him. We have not arrived at this Christian story by our own merits or accomplishments, but by the sovereign grace of God in our lives. Remembering this enables us to walk in the world with a

posture of humility. That kind of cruciform humility should make us kinder towards those around us as we see them as people like us, far less than perfect, but trying to walk faithfully in a world full of challenges and distractions. I think the one who is genuinely humble and kind will be curious. Rather than engaging others with a mind to defeat them, saying, “tell me more” in a spirit of curiosity allows the opportunity to learn from a fellow believer who may be different but still has something to enrich and enliven your faith. May we approach *The Story* as a people saved by grace, embodying a posture of humility, curiosity, and kindness. 🌈

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DAVE LOEWEN

SCSBC Executive Director

Respectful Workplace Training –



Wendy Leong

Why It Matters

Workplace harassment and bullying continue to impact employees across industries, including faith-based organizations. With increasing legal and financial consequences, how can implementing a Respectful Workplace Policy and proper training create safer, more inclusive environments for everyone?



A GRIM REALITY EXISTS in our workplaces across the country. The National Survey on Harassment and Violence at Work in Canada, conducted between October 2020 to April 2021, found that:

- 71.4% of survey respondents experienced at least one form of harassment and violence or sexual harassment and violence in the two years prior to completing the survey;
- 50% of affected employees suffer from mental-health related issues;
- 48% of affected employees reduce their efforts at work; and
- absenteeism due to bullying and harassment costs Canadian organizations approximately \$19 billion each year.

I still remember incidences during my career

where I experienced moments of unease and intimidation as a result of another person's actions. With hindsight and knowledge gained over the years, I can look back and acknowledge that I experienced harassment and discrimination in the work-

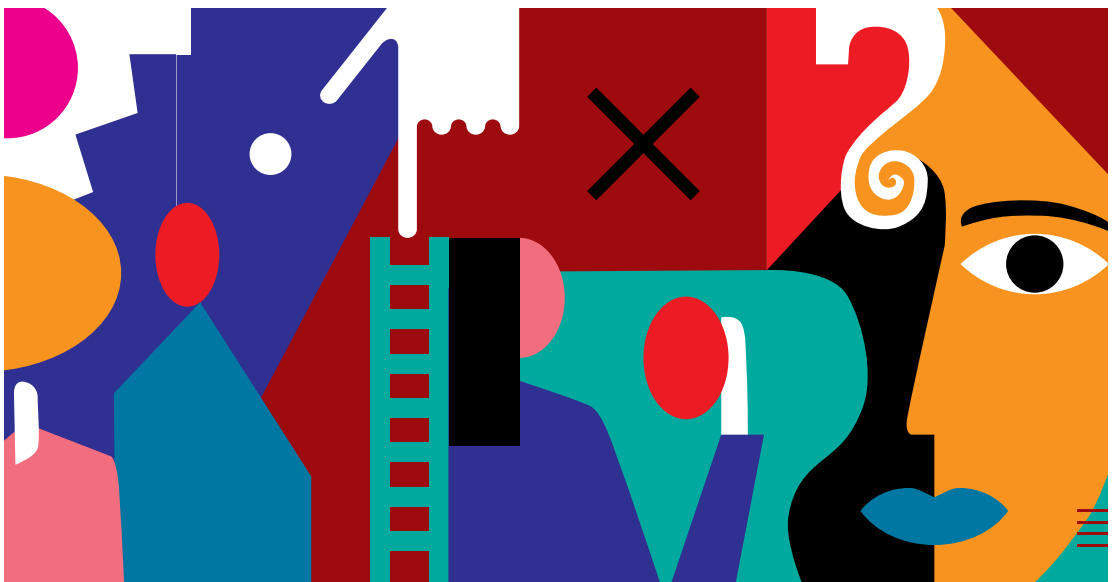
place. Sadly, at the time, I didn't feel capable of addressing the behaviour as I was a young adult in my first real job and didn't feel able to speak up, nor did I realise I should have reported the behaviour to someone.

Sadly, Christian schools and other faith-based organizations are not exempt from employees engaging in inappropriate bullying and harassing behaviour. But I believe that we, more so than any other organization,

are called to model Christ's love and acceptance for all and not behave in ways that would damage or diminish others.

As an HR professional and a Christian school parent, my deep hope is that our schools are workplaces where staff feel safe, accepted and valued,

“We are called to model Christ’s love and acceptance for all, and not behave in ways that would damage or diminish others.”



Illustrations: toplem84 / Stock

where individuals can bring their authentic selves to school and be treated with kindness and respect. When people engage in unlawful discriminatory, bullying, and harassing behaviour in their workplace and these issues are not effectively addressed, the feeling of safety is diminished, often resulting in difficulty attracting and retaining staff, low morale, and high absenteeism. It also exposes an organization to costly and stressful grievances and complaints that can result in significant financial and reputational damage. Courts and tribunals are awarding complainants with increasingly higher amounts in damages: a discrimination complaint in 2022 resulted in the highest award given in BC in the amount of \$176,000 for injury to dignity, in addition to lost wages and future earnings for a total remedy of nearly \$1 million.

One of the most important tools an organization has in combating this behaviour is a policy that clearly defines what constitutes unlawful discrimination, bullying and harassment, individuals' responsibilities, and how to address such behaviours if they occur. Commonly called a Respectful Workplace Policy or a Bullying and Harassment Policy, organizations are required by legislation (including the BC Human Rights Code and the Workers Compensation Act) to have such a policy in place. Employers must also ensure that all staff are made aware of this policy through a training session that allows for an examination and discussion of its contents. In the face of a complaint, having a policy and having staff trained on this policy are the most basic mitigations. "Do you have a policy that prohibits bullying and harassment, and have you trained your staff on it?" is usually the first question that a judge or tribunal member would ask an organization defending against a complaint.

Where there has been inappropriate behaviour substantiated, resulting in a breach of this policy, the Respectful Workplace Policy will be cited in the investigation report and/or the disciplinary paperwork. In my years working in HR, the Respectful

Workplace Policy is probably one of the most used policies and is often relied upon in investigations, disciplinary actions, and termination proceedings.

While Respectful Workplace training is considered mandatory for all staff, managers have unique responsibilities because they play such a pivotal role in the management of issues and complaints. Therefore, school administrators and staff with management responsibilities should first learn how to deal with complaints and how to restore the workplace following a complaint.

To support schools in adopting a Respectful Workplace Policy, SCSBC is in the process of

updating its Bullying and Harassment Policy to a more comprehensive Respectful Workplace Policy template that schools can adopt and implement as their own. SCSBC will also support training efforts to help schools be compliant with their employer obligations.

As I reflect on the start of another school year, I recall the excitement and eagerness in the faces of our newest employees, and I know their hope is that they have found a school community that respects and values them and where they will feel a sense of belonging. Schools can help achieve that goal by implementing policies, building awareness, and having honest conversations about appropriate behaviour in the workplace. 🌈

“When people engage in unlawful discriminatory behavior and these issues are not effectively addressed, the feeling of safety is diminished, often resulting in difficulty attracting and retaining staff.”

WENDY LEONG, CPHR
HR Consultant to SCSBC



Darren Spyksma

IN THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL, my daughter received an assignment with minimal instructions. She asked her teacher for help five days before the due date but was left waiting, slowing her progress. With two days remaining, her anxiety grew, and her optimal state for learning vanished. Still, no support was provided. Larger systems also contribute to the lack of student support.

Frustrated, she turned to me for help, and I turned to AI tools. Within seconds, AI generated answers to her initial set of data. When asked to explain the process, AI provided a step-by-step guide to calculate total error and standard deviation. Using this approach, she worked through the remaining data sets. I imagine it won't be long before an AI company's slogan is, "From tears to understanding in one prompt."

AID OR AILMENT: DEVELOPING A FRAMEWORK FOR MISSION-DIRECTED AI INTEGRATION

Aid or Ailment: Developing a Framework for Mission-Directed AI Integration

AI is already integrating into your school. The larger question is: will it quietly enter through the back door via students and parents frustrated by a lack of support or simply taking shortcuts? Or will you intentionally step into this space, using your mission and vision as a framework for thoughtful AI implementation?

Mission statements are meant to cast a vision for the future while answering the question: “How should we live now?” We live in a cultural moment, an “AI moment,” with a potential impact comparable to that of the printing press, agriculture, the wheel, and the internet.

Your mission is based on principles guiding

your organization into the future—a future where AI will be a dominant force. Christian institutions must ask, “How do we equip students to be a faithful presence in an AI-driven world?” Suppose we are not walking with students and families on this journey. In that case, technological advancements will be shaped by competing narratives of self-gratification and individualism, winning over the hearts of our students—and possibly our own.

To engage AI responsibly, schools must consider what decision-making framework they will use to reinforce their vision in a world where AI-based educational tools are evolving rapidly. One starting point might be the PELT principle:

PRIVACY

AI works by generating consensus across large language models, which learn from the prompts and responses provided. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, users should assume that shared information is publicly available and stored internationally. Thoughtful consideration must be given to where data is stored, how it's harvested, and who has access to it. Private information should not be shared, as it can be exploited if integrated into AI models.

EQUITY

Redemptive AI use in Christian schools (as referenced in Andy Crouch's blog, tinyurl.com/p299th9m) ensures that all learners benefit from AI, with a focus on the most vulnerable in our communities. If resources are limited, prioritizing support for marginalized students may be the most appropriate place to start. As each person bears the image of God, we must ensure everyone has equitable access to the support they need to thrive.

To engage AI responsibly, schools must consider what decision-making framework they will use to reinforce their vision in a world where AI-based educational tools are evolving rapidly.



LEARNING

Learning-centred AI prioritizes deep learning over efficiency or mere task completion. In education, being faster is often not being better. In a world obsessed with speed, we can draw on the wisdom of our Indigenous neighbours, who understand that learning requires patience and time. AI tools should enhance the learning process rather than be a short-cut or replace it.

AI applications can address many of the shortcomings in today's educational system. AI can meet students at their level as a tutor, offering personalized support for optimal learning. It can help students edit papers based on teacher-designed criteria and provide constructive feedback. As a co-creator, AI can assist teachers with idea generation, draft challenging emails, and provide a starting point in difficult situations. However, if ignored, AI can also exacerbate existing problems. By continuing to

TRANSPARENCY

If teachers are uncomfortable explaining how they use AI to write report cards, they shouldn't use those tools. Likewise, students should not use AI in ways that their teachers would consider cheating. Transparency is crucial for all AI-related practices. Teachers can use a "traffic light" metaphor to guide AI usage: red means no AI, yellow means limited use with clear guidelines, and green means all appropriate uses are encouraged. Teachers help students develop strategies for responsible AI use by setting clear expectations.

focus solely on content acquisition, memorization, and irrelevant projects, schools create environments that encourage AI use to bypass learning while still achieving artificial success.

Mission-driven AI implementation can mitigate these risks, inviting students and families to embrace their role in God's story as ambassadors for faithful and responsible AI use. 🌱

DARREN SPYKSMA

SCSBC Associate Executive Director



Student

Unmotivated. Disrespectful. Defiant. Lazy.

Have you noticed students today seem different from those of even a decade ago? This shift in student behaviour, largely influenced by **the brain's response to stress**, calls for a new approach in how we restoratively lead and respond to students. The authors propose the "**Learning Readiness Window**" as this new approach.

WHEN WE SPEAK to educators about the students they work with today, the overwhelming response is that students are not who they were in the past. Educators new to teaching express that these students are very different from when they were students. One study expressed how teachers struggled with the behaviour of students when they returned to school during the COVID pandemic, feeling that behaviour had ratcheted up (Fray et al., 2023). Haidt (2024) cites many reasons for the shift we are seeing in students, including the impact of technology and phones on students, parenting styles that prioritize safety over risk where by the decision-making capacity of children has been reduced, and societal shifts that have reduced the amount of time that students engage in play.

Haidt believes that each of these factors has contributed to the increase in stress we see in our students. In our current reality, educators can struggle with their identity as a teacher, identifying that their students are "not where they are supposed to be." Teachers feel pressure to support students to "catch up" (Fray et al., 2023). The shift in the capacity and capability of our students may also impact an educator's perception of their students, which can trickle down to a student's identity as a learner. Students who are struggling can result in misattributions by teachers, peers, and themselves for the student's inability to live by classroom rules can be viewed as intentional defiance and labeled as poor character (Faith, Bush, and Dawson, 2022).

In an era where school can be a difficult place for both students and educators, we want to emphasize

Behaviour

A WINDOW INTO UNDERSTANDING LEARNING READINESS

Student Behaviour: A Window Into Understanding Learning Readiness

that we believe learning needs to start with the value of the individual. “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well” (Psalm 139:14). We can’t overemphasize enough to our students and our educators that they are worthy and that they have value.

The authors of this paper have been studying the link between restorative practices and the brain’s stress response. Educators have struggled with the concept of what it means to be *restorative*, for restorative can have the connotation, “make it like it was.” A friend once said to us, “When I think of restorative, I think of my 1940s home. I don’t want it to be what it was in 1940. I want it to be what it can be today.” Moving forward, we define restorative as: *supporting someone to be who they can be*. We write this paper because of the hope we have for both students and educators, seeking to walk with them to be who they can be, through the learning that happens each day in our schools. We trust in the words of Paul, in Philippians 1:6, believing that God has started a good work in our students, and that he might use us to continue the work that He promises to complete.

Understanding Learning and the Brain/Body Response to Stress

What if there was a different way of “seeing” today’s student that could radically change how we understand and support them? Our brains are an amazing aspect of creation. We have so much capacity for learning and creativity and yet how we are wired might also be getting in the way. We are primarily wired for safety and relationship (Winfrey & Perry, 2021). This means that when we become stressed, our brains default to seeking safety. This is critical in the context of learning because stress physically gets in the way of learning. Stress is a chemical response between the brain and the body, an internal wiring designed to protect us.

All information we receive from the world comes in through our senses—vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch and vestibular—and is carried via our spinal

cord to our brain stem which is our most primitive safety site responsible for the automatic life sustaining functions including breathing, heart rate, blood flow, and digestion. From here the information is passed onto the limbic system, which includes the amygdala, and is considered our fight-flight-freeze system where our brain decides subconsciously if we are safe. Information is then passed onto our prefrontal cortex which is the centre of the universe for learning. Some functions of the prefrontal cortex include sound decision making and planning, control over emotions, self-awareness, empathy, and learning (Siegel & Payne-Bryson, 2011).

How does stress impact our learning? Stress is a normal function of our brain, and we all experience it. The challenge with stress is when it becomes greater than our brain’s capacity to manage it. Stress is primarily managed by our limbic system, which is constantly monitoring our world for threats (like a smoke detector) and when it senses smoke it activates our stress response (alarm). The challenge is that our limbic system, like the smoke detector, can’t tell the difference between smoke from burnt toast and burning house smoke: it just triggers a stress response to smoke. When our stress alarm system is triggered, the limbic brain reduces or stops sending information to our prefrontal cortex, reducing the brain’s capacity to “think” in the moment. We, therefore, act before we are able to think (Winfrey & Perry, 2021). The more the limbic brain is activated by stress, the greater and faster the stress response happens. This stress response is behind some of the behaviour we see in our classrooms. Our students’ stress responses can include defiance, yelling, cursing, leaving the classroom, checking out, refusing to work, constantly being tired, and being unmotivated (Brummer, 2020). Stress reduces the access we have to our prefrontal cortex, reducing our ability to “think” our way through problems, make better decisions, regulate our emotions, and ultimately learn. The outcome of high stress results in many of the behaviours we see. Behaviour is the language our nervous system uses when it can’t find words (Brummer, 2020).

Student Behaviour: A Window Into Understanding Learning Readiness

Another component of our safety system is that it causes us to default to negative thinking (Vaish, Grossmann, & Woodward, 2008). If our brain is wired to detect threats, it means we are wired to look for danger or the negative. How does this impact us as teachers in the classroom? It means we are wired to notice negative behaviour because in the classroom, a student engaging in negative behaviour becomes a threat to our teaching and classroom management. We will see students behaving poorly and often miss them performing positively. This focus on negative behaviours can become problematic for a student who is often getting in trouble and rarely receiving positive experiences: their brain is wired for safety and relationship, but the student may experience

neither. Seeing our students differently, not as individuals displaying defiant behaviour—rather as students who are fearfully and wonderfully made, are capable, and can grow in their capacity and capability—requires us to shift to a stress response lens. Stress is what is getting in the way of the student meeting your expectations at that moment. How we relate to our students is key to creating a safe learning environment.

Walking “With” our Students

Vaandering (2014) proposed the Relationship Window (See Fig. 1, below) as a model for understanding how “power influences people’s engagement with one another” (p. 515).

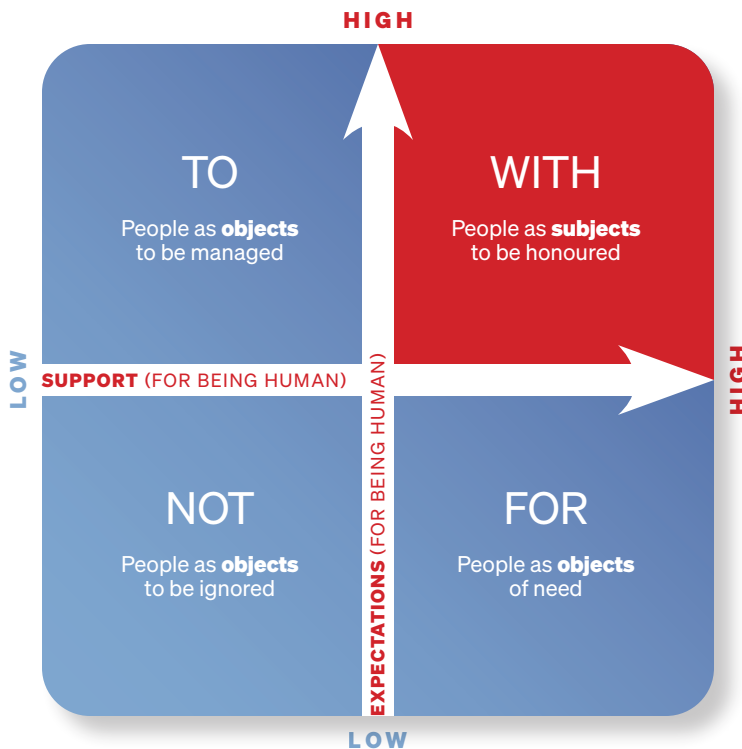


Fig 1. Relationship Window

Student Behaviour: A Window Into Understanding Learning Readiness

The horizontal axis expresses the support, nurture, and/or care we provide to others while the vertical axis expresses the expectations we have for others to be human. Expectations include both what we believe a student can do and who we believe a student can be. When we work with a high degree of support but low expectations, we work FOR our students. In the context of the classroom, we might say that FOR is teachers protecting or harbouring their students. In this quadrant, the brain is dysregulated as a result of disengagement. On the other hand, if we work out of high expectations and low support, we are doing things TO them. In the context of the classroom, we might say that teachers seek to move their students forward through control and compliance (Webb, 2018). In terms of the brain, the student is dysregulated in their need to fight, freeze, or flee. A classroom culture that provides low support and low expectation falls in the NOT quadrant. This is a learning environment based in negligence, and in which educators avoid engaging with students, perhaps even failing to engage students in the learning process. The NOT brain is dysregulated as a result of shutting down, with few to no expectations, and little to no support.

In summary, Vaandering (2014) expresses how the quadrant we are situated in reveals how we view others, and how we use our power as educators. When our relationships reflect the NOT quadrant, we view people as objects to be ignored. When our relationships are situated in the TO quadrant, we see others as objects to be managed. When classroom learning reflects the FOR quadrant, we see our students as objects of need. Each of these quadrants fails on some level to meet the needs of our students for being human.

The student-educator relationship based in high support and high expectations is in the restorative, or WITH quadrant. Vaandering (2014) states that when the student-educator relationship exhibits the WITH quadrant, we view students as *subjects* to be honoured. This student is situated in an environment of safety, connection, and trust, a space where they are ready to learn. VanderVennen (2016) describes working out of the WITH domain as

working out of secure attachment: “It is both a safe haven (high emotional support) and a launching pad for exploration (high expectations and high degrees of challenge), the domain most amenable to learning” (p. 130). When an educator conveys high expectations to a student, they express that they believe in who the student can be. An environment is established that focuses on what one is capable of rather than learning deficits. When an educator can provide high support, they indicate to students that they are walking with them, regulating student stress as they engage in their learning journey.

When the student-educator relationship is working out of *with-ness*, or high support and high expectations, the WITH relationship can develop to be a two-way street. Educators provide high support for students while exhibiting high expectations for what students can do and who they can be. At the same time, students have high expectations for their teachers, believing in who the teacher can help them become as a learner, while providing high support for their teacher. A fully restorative classroom culture reveals *with-ness* in the student-student relationship, whereby students provide high expectations and high support for each other (Webb, 2018). This is a culture that fulfils the description of a community of one body found in Romans 12:5, where each member belongs to all the others.

Capability, Capacity, and Assumed Skills

A perspective of learning that combines a stress response lens and a restorative environment of high expectations and high support can be conceptualized by a framework of *capability and capacity* (Apers, 2020). Capability refers to the skills—physical, social, emotional regulation, executive functions, and academics—we develop over time from direct teaching and learning. Capacity is our ability to perform these skills in the moment and is heavily dependent on our level of stress, our coping tools, and how much energy we have. For example, as an adult we would assume that we have well-developed skills (physical, social, emotional, etc.) and therefore we have high capability. As adults, we also have

Student Behaviour: A Window Into Understanding Learning Readiness

high capacity in that we can regulate ourselves in moments of stress and challenge. However, we all have situations where we may not respond well in the moment. This is a result of our ever-changing capacity. Viewing our students in terms of capability and capacity allows us to pause and ask ourselves a critical question: “What is getting in the way of this student being successful?” Do they have areas of lagging skills (capability)? Have we seen them

demonstrate the skill but they can’t do it right now (capacity)? Framing a student’s learning around capability and capacity leads us to approach their support differently. For this framework supports us in seeing our students in terms of hope rather than in terms of despair. Ultimately this can support both the capacity of the student and the educator for creating a learning environment that supports flourishing for the entire classroom community.

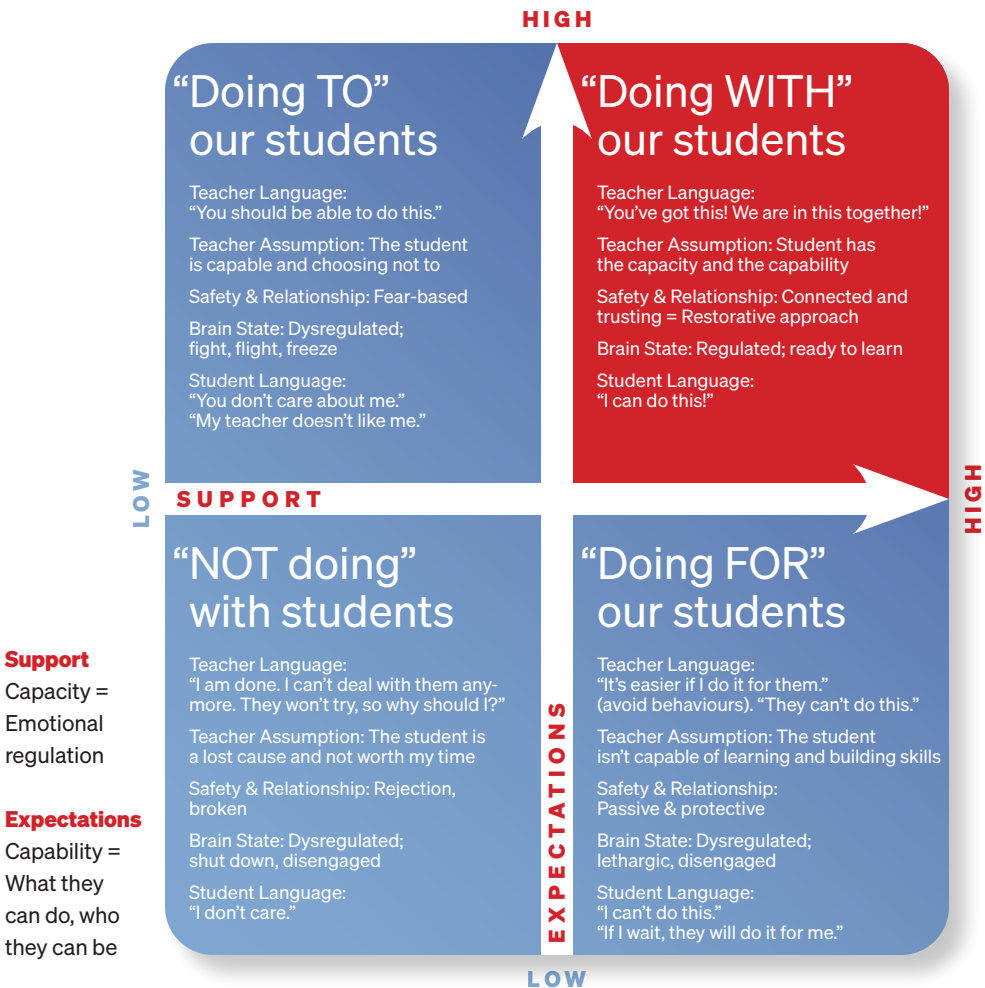


Fig 2. Learning Readiness Window

Student Behaviour: A Window Into Understanding Learning Readiness

Assumptions can impede our ability to see a student's capability and capacity. A student's capability is dependent on two key factors: their developmental stage and the skills they have been directly taught. A five-year-old will have limited skill development in emotional control compared to a sixteen-year-old. We assume limited emotional control in a five-year-old because they have not yet developed this skill. We assume emotional control in the sixteen-year-old, so when we see a lack of emotional control in them, we might think that the behaviour we are seeing is deliberate and disrespectful.

(Remember, our brain defaults to seeing the negative). We can look at 'assumed skill' another way. When we give a student a test, we likely assume that they have been taught how to study for a test. Poor results on the test then indicate that they don't know the material or did not study. But what if students are reaching your class and have never been taught how to study for a test? Over-assumption of learned skills is very prevalent in middle and high school (Croasdaile, 2023), to the point that when the teachers see behaviour in the classroom

the assumption is it is due to a lack of motivation, disrespect, or deliberate intent to derail a lesson rather than the brain's stress response to lagging skills (capability) and/or limited capacity. If we can sit in a space of curiosity about capability (skills/lagging skills - they have not fully learned this yet) and capacity (they have demonstrated this skill before but can't do it in this moment) it fundamentally changes how we see and support our students. Curiosity becomes the starting point for walking WITH our students in high expectations and high support. We have represented our conceptualization of stress and the brain, the restorative Social Discipline Window, and capability and capacity as the *Learning Readiness Window* (Fig. 2, see previous page).

The Learning Readiness Window expresses expectations in terms of capability and support in terms of capacity. It is the educator language and assumptions that determine the quadrant. This influences safety and relationships, student language and assumptions, and ultimately the brain state. Each quadrant expresses a progressive reaction, starting with an educator's language and assumptions. This impacts safety and student-educator relationships, influencing brain state, and ultimately the student's response language or thoughts. Ultimately, the window expresses how educators have the ability to influence learning readiness, establishing environments that increase student capacity, and entering learning where they can grow in what they are capable of.

Buber (1923/1970) and Bradbury and Lichtenstein (2000) refer to the need to study the *space between*, the medium where individuals interact and evolve together. Educators have the privilege of intentionally creating the space, shifting from a space that is simply a collection of students where they may experience

distance and isolation, to a space that is built on connection, relationship, and community. We are seeking to create student-educator spaces that students want to enter and participate in, rather than spaces that students want to flee: a restorative classroom is a space students want to come back to the next day. Through working WITH our students, through high support and high expectations, we support regulation in our students to decrease stress and increase capacity. This is ultimately about increasing capacity, and placing students in a position where they can engage with learning. Our deep hope is that in this context, our students may fulfil what they are capable of and become who they can be. 🌱

In an era where school can be a difficult place to be for both students and educators, we want to emphasize that we believe learning needs to start with the value of the individual.

Student Behaviour: A Window Into Understanding Learning Readiness

Reflection Questions

1. What is getting in the way of students meeting your expectations? What assumptions might be influencing your expectations?
2. Consider your posture, language, and pedagogy: How are students experiencing both high support and high expectations when learning with you?
3. What would a conversation about a struggling student with a colleague, parent, or the student look like if it was framed around capability and capacity?

OWEN WEBB has served as an educator for the past 22 years, serving as the Director of Learning at Pacific Christian School in Victoria, BC for the past two years. He previously worked at Hamilton District Christian High as the Dean of Students, and as a math and geography teacher. Owen completed his PhD in 2018 in Educational Leadership, focusing on restorative practices as a means for supporting students and educators, and developing school culture.

LIZ ULLRICH has been working in education as an occupational therapist for over 30 years. As a Non-Violent Crisis Intervention Instructor she has seen an ever-increasing shift in classroom behaviour. Her experience has led her to see a connection between stress, brain function, and learning. She provides training to schools across British Columbia as a Learning Leader for the Society of Christian Schools of BC, equipping educators with knowledge to support today's students.

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“The coaches were so helpful and encouraging and full of ideas. There was a good balance of getting up for movement and brain breaks.”



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