

Maybe he had a point, Tammy wondered, as she walked back to her classroom. Maybe segregated classes weren't the answer after all. Sometimes, when Angus resisted every new idea that came along, he turned out to be right in the end. But that didn't mean they should ignore the issue. As her eyes fell on the poster of Gandhi, his words reminded her that she could start in her own classroom to make the changes she wanted to see.

Tammy realized that she had a responsibility to both the boys and the girls to help them recognize and break out of the gender-role stereotypes that prevented them from taking advantage of the full range of opportunities available to them. Thinking about that, she suddenly realized that there were no females represented in her inspirational poster collection. The diversity she had been missing was gender! She obviously needed to raise her own consciousness as well as those of her students.

Tammy decided she would begin to ask more pointed questions in her class discussions so that students would relate the effects of globalization and gender equality to their own experiences as high school students. As she considered the benefits of challenging her students to engage in a conversation about gender issues in their lives, she wondered if this might help them to understand better the broader concepts they were studying. She couldn't wait to get started.

Questions

The Case

At the beginning of this case, Tammy wonders if single-sex classes might be more effective than coeducational classes, but by the end she isn't quite sure what to think. What factors have contributed to her indecision on this matter?

History

What are some of the historical reasons that boys-only and girls-only schools were established in Canada? Are some of those reasons still justified? Explain.

Philosophy

In which environment—single-sex or coeducational classes—are the interests of boys and girls best served? Justify your response.

Sociology

In what ways might the structural arrangements of schools, such as timetables, course offerings, and leadership opportunities, advantage either boys or girls?

Implications for Practice

What would you do if you were concerned that too many of your female students were limiting their opportunities for life after high school? Explain.

Let Them Eat Cake!

Streamers and balloons hung from the empty library shelves at Terry Fox Junior High School. Snacks and a punch bowl sat on one of the long tables in the middle of the room. It was a day that Brina Notabendi had been dreading for months. She looked around the barren library and revelled in the last few minutes of calm before the doors crashed open and a sea of students, parents, and staff poured into the room. Well-wishers queued up to pat her on the back, while others buzzed around the food and drink.

Eventually, the principal, Lynnette Hoggett-Horst, stood up on a wooden chair and then, placing her forefinger dramatically to her lips, exhaled a loud "shhhh." Barely suppressing a giggle, she chirped, "I don't suppose we'll hear much of that in this room anymore. Sorry Brina." She "steeped" her hands and made an exaggerated bow in the librarian's direction. A smattering of chuckles came from the crowd.

"I just wanted to thank everyone for coming for Ms Notabendi's last day. As you are all painfully aware, although I fought like a trooper, I couldn't very well get special dispensation for our school when all the other school libraries in the district were being closed as well."

She motioned for Brina to come over. The librarian's immediate reaction was to hold her ground, but she knew she had no choice but to make her way over to her principal's side.

"You know, Breen," said Lynnette, putting her arm around the librarian's shoulders with sudden and unaccustomed familiarity, "you've had a good run at this school. You must have seen many changes in your day."

At this point, Brina decided to use the principal's unwitting opening to share her opinions before she left. She cleared her throat and began, "Actually, I've seen a lot of changes. For example, the year I arrived they were placing the whole card catalogue on a computer . . ."

"Ah, yes, a foreshadowing of the future," interrupted the principal.

Undeterred, Brina carried on. "Yes, and undoubtedly, some changes have been good. But some were pretty short-lived, weren't they? Shall I share a few?" Her eyes glinted as the grinning crowd encouraged her to proceed.

"I remember when Mrs Hoggett-Horst decided to rename the library with the Orwellian title of 'Learning Commons Area.' Then she shipped in a number of computer banks and couches. I guess the students weren't relaxing enough!"

"One of my better reforms that brought students back to an otherwise dead and unused space," came the principal's unrepentant retort.

"And do you remember when there wasn't room for everything you ordered, Lynnette?" Brina needled, unabashedly using the principal's first name.

"Now that's a little foggy."

"First, you wanted us to remove all the non-fiction books. When I balked, you suggested that I liquidate all publications before 2001—as if they had an expiry date!" Brina chortled. "Remember that books aren't like hairdos!" she added pointedly, gesturing to Lynnette's closely cropped head and receiving a few guffaws for her audacity.

Brina's face turned serious as she continued, "Unfortunately, the biggest change that I've seen in my career is still ongoing. I remember when the government's new Digital Education Renewal Training program was introduced—DERT as we librarians jokingly referred to it, because it essentially used technology funding as an excuse to bury libraries—slashing resources and terminating personnel. I guess the last laugh was on us; we never thought it would succeed in convincing our board and *certain* principals," she glanced sideways, "that laptops could and should replace libraries or that librarians' work hours should disappear or that the board would start replacing retiring librarians with *information technologists*."

"Now, Breen," said Lynnette soothingly, "the schools need those people to manage the new workstations."

"Yes, and let's not forget they were hired at much lower salaries. These people have no expertise beyond computer troubleshooting, and yet if you look around the province, you will see that over the half the school libraries are now being managed by technologists rather than trained librarians," she retorted.

Switching gears, Brina went on, "Then there was the time you referred to trips to the library as 'lost instructional time.' We couldn't believe it! We thought you'd lock the washrooms next!" The room shook with laughter.

Lynnette chuckled through clenched teeth, "What a memory! I guess librarians are like elephants, white or otherwise. You just can't fight progress! And remember, as the board says, libraries aren't really closing—they're just getting a make-over. I, for one, think it is long overdue. Schools of the twenty-first century will have to equip students with the skills they need to be successful beyond high school. This room will soon house serious media equipment . . ."

"But what about the books?" interrupted Brina.

"Now, Brina," Lynnette said, putting her hand firmly on Brina's shoulder to show who was in command, "as you well know, no book will be thrown out. Instead, they will all be reallocated to various classrooms throughout the building. After all, books belong in the hands of children, not hidden away on some dusty library shelves."

"Let's see," Brina calculated swiftly, stepping away from Lynnette, "you can fit in about 100 books per classroom. That should interest the students for at least three weeks." Taking a deep breath to hide the churning emotions she was suppressing, she continued, "The purpose of a library is to *centralize* books for all readers, not to break up the collection so teachers can squirrel away books in their classrooms. How will this benefit the majority of our students? It just doesn't make sense!"

Lynnette had had enough and so she cut the debate short, "Breen, I am truly sorry to see your day ending. I've always found our discussions to be so stimulating."

In response, Brina pulled out her last "party favour." "Stimulating, eh? Well, I hope you find it 'stimulating' to learn that I have been hired as Bright Academy's chief librarian."

Even Lynnette's frenzied waving could not silence the crowd's uproar.

"You see," Brina said, as the audience quieted down, "I believe that the next great leap won't be to more and better technology. Everyone's got that now. No, the competitive advantage in the future will go to schools who can afford to have a librarian to guide students through the world of misinformation and make the library into a hub of learning. Students left to wander through the Internet like the Wild Boy of Aveyron will simply be out of the race."

"Wild boy, eh? I'll bet that Aveyron Board doesn't have the technological advances we have!" concluded the principal triumphantly.

Brina smiled inwardly at her former principal's ignorance of the history of education and the famous book she had referred to.

Lynnette curtly changed direction, "Now, let's turn to more pleasant matters," she said, plunging the knife into the cake.

For the first time, the librarian gazed closely at her goodbye cake, a multi-layered confection in the shape of a large thick book. She noticed that Lynnette was wearing a malevolent grin as she carved it up and distributed overly large pieces to grasping hands. Before long, disappointed students at the back of the line were told there was no more, while many of the huge slices sat half-eaten in the garbage.

Brina shook her head. "Ah distribution—if people just knew what they were wasting while others starved."

Questions

The Case

What were some of the early warning signs that the library at Terry Fox Junior High School would ultimately close?

History

In the past, libraries and books were at the heart of the educational enterprise, but with the ascendance of new technologies and media, they are now vanishing from schools at an alarming rate. Is there still a role for libraries and if so, what is it? Explain your response.

Philosophy

Is it morally defensible to close a school library? Why or why not?

Sociology

How are the social norms and culture of a school likely to change if the library books are allocated to classrooms and the library is replaced by access to the Internet?

Implications for Practice

Given the tenuous future of school libraries, how will you ensure that your students develop the research skills they need?

The Future Is Now

Ricardo Perez had moved to the Maritimes over a year previously from Ontario, where he had been living since his arrival in Canada from Mexico as a teenager. He had been employed as a classroom teacher for three years in two different school districts in the Ottawa area, and during that time he had gained valuable experience as a middle years teacher. However, after Ricardo's wife, Mabel, received a sizeable promotion, her second since their marriage, the young couple's decision to move was a relatively easy one. The downside was that Ricardo would have to leave a permanent position in Ontario at a time when teaching positions were becoming increasingly scarce.

In his first year on the east coast, Ricardo found work as a supply teacher in one of the mid-sized cities. The work was sparse to begin with, but it became more and more regular as Ricardo was seen to be both reliable and competent. Some weeks he worked every day; often, he would even have a sequence of days with the same class. In this, his second year, he was delighted to have been hired for a one-year term appointment at Greenbriar Elementary School to replace a Grade 5 teacher who was scheduled to be on medical leave for the entire year.

Greenbriar was one of the early adopters of the Ministry of Education's Twenty-first Century Learning, or 21C, initiative. The initiative had grown out of a media firestorm about the province's lack of competitiveness in the wake of a particularly dismal showing on the PISA (Programme for International Student Assessment) tests. The purpose of the initiative was to draw attention to skills that would

be considered most valuable in the knowledge economy of the future. Schools were being directed to place greater emphasis on core language, science, and mathematics and to make every effort to integrate technology into all aspects of the school.

Greenbriar had already begun moving in that direction, and the staff wholeheartedly supported the Ministry's initiative. Midway through the previous year, the administration and staff had applied for a technology grant and been awarded a substantial sum. The funds were to be used to develop a new technology infrastructure to link the administrative, educational, and support operations in the school, including all of its forms, records, grades, curriculum maps, and even cafeteria purchases.

The grant enabled the school to outfit each classroom with an interactive smartboard and to buy enough laptops for four class sets. All the wireless networking capabilities of the Internet were upgraded and audiovisual equipment and document cameras were bought for teachers to share. Ricardo could see the value of most of these purchases, particularly at the classroom and administration levels, but he remained troubled by the pending implementation of biometric scanning in the school cafeteria.

Greenbriar was to be the first in Canada to become a "cashless" school. The program, already piloted in the United States, made some rather bold claims about eliminating lunchroom bullying in the school. It was argued that without cash being used to buy food from the cafeteria, bullies wouldn't be able to steal money. In addition, the program offered reassurance to parents and caregivers who might be worried that their children's lunch money might get lost. As an added bonus, there would be shorter line-ups since a fully automated lunchroom would mean that staff wouldn't have to waste time on cash transactions.

To enrol in the program, students would be asked to create a unique electronic thumbprint, which would be saved on the school server and linked to a parent or caregiver's account number. To load money onto the student's account, they would simply log on to the server with their own account number and private password. Once the account was loaded with funds, a student would be able to make purchases in the cafeteria by simply scanning his or her thumbprint onto the biometric scanner. The system would perform the match, and the right amount of money would be withdrawn from the family's associated account.

For his part, Ricardo was appalled at the entire prospect of the cashless school. He couldn't get past his aversion to having fingerprints taken. He had always associated fingerprints with images of criminalization and incarceration, but at least when prints were made with paper and ink, they could be destroyed. It was not so clear whether electronic fingerprints could ever be expunged from this system. Although the school community was being assured that students' prints were being saved on secure servers, well-publicized breaches had shaken Ricardo's confidence in the security of any electronic data. In fact, he had lots of ques-