

The Interim PLUS

Curriculum Supplement For Schools

The Interim Plus is a periodical dedicated to educational matters and specifically designed to assist teachers in integrating relevant life issues in their lesson planning.

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Contents:

Social Media	p. 1
Celebrating Remembrance Day	p. 8

Social media today is ubiquitous 24/7. It is the theme of this month's curriculum supplement. These lesson suggestions may help students in Grades 11 and 12 to analyze the effectiveness of Social Media in today's society. The material may be applicable to English media studies or communications technology. The main learning outcome is for the students to gain a clear understanding of the power and limitations of social media as tools of communication and how they may help to spread awareness about bigger issues, if used in the correct manner. A second learning goal is to educate the individual students on their own potential ability to use social media in a way that might benefit them and the wider community. They may consider the role of such media on their own networking skills and relationships as well.



but rather they should be directed to focus on the impactful social reaction to and fallout of the events. For example, one can make an excellent case for the airstrikes against ISIS being the result of world condemnation for the beheadings that shocked the world as barbaric.



The lesson material can be completed in either of two formats. After introduction of social media tools and their history, the students can choose between *Lesson Plan A* and write a formal essay, or *Lesson Plan B* which will involve creating a form of social media to spread awareness on their chosen topic.

The material is organized in two main parts: history of social media and their general impact/influence on economics, politics, and culture; and the use of social media as teaching tools in the classroom. This month's curriculum resources emphasize the first, while an upcoming edition will concentrate on the second aspect.

Social Media as research tool

For a general background to social media, have students research online a history of social media tools: why and how they were developed, where and by whom they were developed, pace of growth and variety of tools. There are several good sites for this history but among the best are these two <http://www.digitaltrends.com/features/the-history-of-social-networking/> and <http://www2.uncp.edu/home/acurtis/NewMedia/SocialMedia/SocialMediaHistory.html>.

Based on their online research the teacher should then take some time to discuss with students the origins, development and influence of social media. It could be beneficial to spend one class period explaining how much the world has drastically changed in the last ten years while focusing on the positive aspects brought about by the new advances in social media. The technology has allowed for us to communicate with the rest of the world in a new and efficient way. They should discuss the pros and cons of social media, as their potential impact is quite debatable



There are instances of social media at work on a daily basis, sometimes for the good and sometimes with questionable results. Three very recent examples illustrate the power of social media: the beheading

of journalists by Islamists belonging to ISIS; the firing of a top executive from a company because he was captured on camera "abusing" a dog; and football player Ray Rice of the Baltimore Ravens caught on camera punching his fiancée/wife in an elevator. Students should not be asked to view the actual episodes that made their way onto social media,

A political example



A good study of social media in action to influence political attitudes and movements would be any of the following: Arab Spring in the Middle East and North Africa; the orange revolution in Ukraine; rise of ISIS in Syria-Iraq; pro-life politics in Canada and United States. For example, it is unlikely that

there could have been the political shake-up that overtook Arab nations from 2010 to the present if not for the existence and application of social media (and of course the onset of satellite television channels like Al Jazeera and Al Arabiya). For decades the Arab nations like Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Syria had been under the control of dictators or a small coterie of powerful people. The traditional means of communication and the political message were controlled by the state apparatus in those countries. Radio, television, large posters, statues and monuments helped to keep the rulers and their messages always before the people. As one journalist and author (Paul Danahar, *The New Middle East*, pgs. 24-27) noted, “social media....provided the capability to organize without central control”. Social media was a powerful tool, but only that. It helped connect people that couldn’t find each other before; stimulated critical thinking among these young people; instigated organized street protests which unleashed social changes.

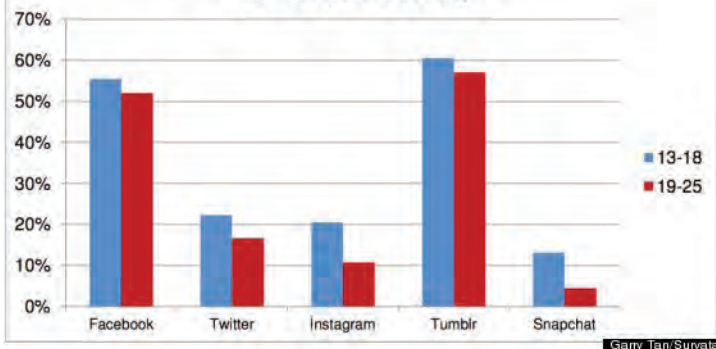
Culture and economics

We live in a fast paced world overwhelmed by information technology and its demands for our attention. These means of communication also keep changing on a daily basis while engaging a large percentage of the general public everywhere in the world. Each minute of every day people are sending and receiving messages on Facebook, posting photos on Instagram, writing blogs about their hobbies, protesting something or supporting some cause, and uploading and watching videos on YouTube.

All sorts of measurements indicate that teenagers rarely watch TV anymore. Their source of entertainment is largely related to cellphones, iPads, the internet, and other social media tools. With the spike of interest in the internet many



Social Network Usage



Garry Tan/Survata

companies have become wise to this and now use it to market to a younger demographic. Large amounts of money and resources are being used to reach a generation that is constantly on social media. Networking has become so influential and important in our present lives that many people wouldn’t know what to do without it.

In conclusion, it is true to say that social media has become increasingly popular and it has filtered through all aspects of everyday life, from economics to politics, from business to private socializing, from entertainment to education. Companies, organizations, and individuals in all those fields are endorsing their products and services and positions through social media tools. Increasingly social media is becoming a reliable way to communicate about all sorts of issues around the globe. It has opened a world of possibilities and teenagers are making use of it to the fullest extent. It is crucial to remember the good that can come from using social media regarding any issue that the individual feels passionate about. Social media can be used to spread the word with just a click of a button. That’s very exciting and very sobering.

Questions

1. Were the computer tools developed for military, commercial, educational or social purposes to start?
2. Which motives dominated at the various stages?
3. Why did all this happen in the United States first?
4. How did entrepreneurs see and seize on the advantages of different breakthroughs?
5. What role did investment capital play in the growth and expansion of internet social media?
6. Just in the past weeks a Chinese site known as Alibaba was offered in an IPO on the stock market in New York, what is the significance of this development?
7. What changes have you seen in social media over the past two years?
8. What evidence is there that social media use has grown enormously in the past few years?
9. What dangers exist in the communications field when Rogers, Bell, and Telus essentially control this telecommunications business in Canada? How do the big three control things?
10. By referring to at least four current events “covered”

on social media evaluate and give your opinion as to whether Social Media is a positive or negative contributor to society?

11. What are some organizations that use social media to their advantage?

Lesson Plan A:

Lesson Plan A consists of a formal essay that will cover the effects and impact that Social Media has on our society. This can be demonstrated more particularly by considering the current issue the student selects for research focus (e.g. euthanasia, abortion, global warming, political decision-making, etc.). The essay should explicitly focus on the topic chosen by the student and express the fundamental necessities of Social Media and its ability to reach a vast majority of people on varying topics and issues.

- The formal essay should follow the prescribed essay structure and be a minimum of 1200 words and include sources to support the essay.
- There should be noted references to the information provided in this particular lesson plan.
- The essay should focus on the way social media has effected various issues and the success in spreading awareness through the use of networking.

Lesson Plan B:

Lesson Plan B involves creating a form of Social Media to bring awareness to the student's chosen topic. The student has a choice of creating a blog, YouTube channel, Facebook page, Twitter account, and other forms of social media to spread awareness about their topic. This should encourage the students to research and gather as much information as possible, while still focusing on the social media aspect. The format of the assignment is to encourage the students to look at the many different ways in which they can use Social Media for a greater good.

The form of social media should be full of information on the selected topic explaining varying aspects of the issue.

It should be appealing and attractive to anyone who visits the social media content.

The students should be creative in their approach to this assignment and focus on making it user friendly and easy to understand.

Facebook, Google, social media sites 'actively' censor Christian content:



LifeSiteNews.com
Life, Family and Culture News

*This article was provided by LifeSiteNews.com and written by Jeremy Kryn.

MANASSAS, VA, September 21, 2011 A new study has found that Google and other major social media sites such as Facebook have "actively" censored Christian and conservative viewpoints.

The report, conducted by National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) and the American Center for Law and Justice,

examined the policies and practices of several major Internet-interactive "new media" communications platforms and service providers, including Apple and its iTunes App Store, Facebook, Google, and others.

The study found that some of the new media technology companies have outright banned Christian content, and that all social media sites, except Twitter, have speech policies more restrictive than the free speech rights guaranteed in the U.S. Constitution.

According to the study, seven of the major social media sites have banned "hate speech," a term that the study's authors point out "is often applied in the culture to stifle Christian communicators."

The same authors also found that some of the media companies have been responsive to demands by pressure groups calling for censorship of conservative or Christian viewpoints.

They note in the study that when Google established new guidelines for its "Google for Non-Profits" in March 2011, it refused to list "churches and other faith groups" that consider "religion or sexual orientation in hiring practices." Christian churches that have applied for the suite of Google tools geared at non-profits have been rejected.

On another occasion the world's most powerful search engine initially prohibited the British Christian Institute from purchasing space for an advertisement about abortion. It was only after the Christian Institute sued Google that the search engine permitted the ad.



Apple has twice removed applications that contained Christian content from its iTunes App Store, the study documented. In both instances, Apple admitted that these apps were denied access because it considered the Christian viewpoints expressed in those applications to be "offensive."

"Of the 425,000 apps available on Apple's iPhone, the only ones censored by Apple for expressing otherwise lawful viewpoints have been apps with Christian content," observes the study. For its part, Facebook has openly partnered with homosexual activists to "eradicate anti-gay comments on its platform," the report found. "All of which suggest that Christian content critical of homosexuality, same-sex marriage, or similar practices will be at risk of censorship [by Facebook]" says the study. In fact, in some cases such content already has been removed by the social networking site.

Myspace, another social networking site similar to but less popular than Facebook, also has a policy banning "homophobic" content.

The pro-life organization Live Action has had a



number of encounters with new media censorship. In a conversation with LifeSiteNews about the NRB study, Live Action Media Director David Schmidt recalled a censorship threat from YouTube earlier this year.

"We were threatened earlier this year," he said. "After our attorney sent a letter to YouTube, they didn't remove our videos. Thankfully, they were considered 'newsworthy,' a standard not 'cut-and-dry' to all users."

Schmidt said that a majority of Live Action videos have been rejected for consideration as YouTube Promoted Videos because "it is a content issue of some sort."

The authors of the NRB study point out that the attitudes of the new media companies to Christian content are important, since currently "a handful of 'new media' giants are the gatekeepers to new web-based communications platforms."

"There is a real and present danger that these companies can, and in some instances actually have, committed viewpoint censorship as a result of monolithic control over these technologies."

Questions

1. Do you agree or disagree that websites like Google and Facebook, should have the right to censor content?
2. Why did the social media sites feel the need to censor certain Christian content?
3. What do you think will happen if social media continues to censor?
4. Have you ever experienced censorship? If so, why



were you censored and how did it make you feel?

5. Should freedom of speech be restricted on the internet? Why or why not?

Social Media Presence in Activism

The following article has been provided by Campaign Life Coalition, a grassroots organization that lobbies for protection of human life from the moment of conception to its natural death. It is an example of the strong presence of social media in activism. The ability to reach others by updating social media has become an outstanding way to communicate, and many are making use of this tool. It is important to remember that social media is available for everyone to use, and it can be utilized in either a positive or negative manner. Please read the following article and take note of the way social media is used for the event and current issue.

Campaign Life Coalition is challenging pro-life citizens across Canada to get the March for Life trending on Twitter during the day of the March for Life, Thursday May



9th. This popular social media tool is a great new way to get people talking about an event. That will hopefully also force many media outlets who typically censor the annual event,

to report on it. The tweet-a-thon is planned for 10am - 3pm on Thursday March 9th.

Whether you are at the National March for Life in Ottawa, at a regional March for Life in various provinces across Canada, at work, home or school, show your support by getting the March for Life trending!

The Official March for Life Hashtag is #MarchforLife

Join in the civil rights movement of our day by your online presence! Let's make it known to our Canadian lawmakers, the media, the whole country, that the abortion issue is not settled, and we won't stay silent until every human being from the moment of conception/fertilization to natural death has full legal protection.

This year the theme is "End Female Gendercide: 'It's a girl' should not be a death sentence". Let's get this message trending!

To send your tweet to Prime Minister Stephen Harper, include @pmbharper in your message.

For secondary hashtags so more people see your message, include #endfemalegendercide or #cdnpoli.

You can also join our Facebook event page for the Tweet-a-thon to indicate you'll be participating. You can also invite your Facebook friends to participate from there.

Questions

1. Do you think getting a hashtag trending on Twitter is helpful to the cause? Why or why not?
2. Do you know other organizations who promote events in the same manner?
3. Why was Campaign Life Coalition asking people to get their hashtag trending for the day?
4. What other ways can organizations promote events through different social media sites?
5. Discuss with the class the pros and cons of media use in events such as the March for Life.

Questions for Reflections after the Assignment

Spilt the students into groups and have them discuss their assignments and the information they gathered. Following that, have the entirety of the class discuss the reflections.

More questions

1. After researching your topic for this assignment did you grow in appreciation for what activist organiza-

tions do?

2. Do you believe there is a better way to spread a message besides social media?
3. Discuss one thing you learned, or grew in knowledge of during this exercise on social media.
4. How influential do you find social media to be in your life?
5. Discuss the positives and negatives of social media.
6. How much do you think social media will advance in ten years?
7. Show your fellow classmates your assignments.
8. How well did they explain social media and/or create a social media webpage?

Social Media Lesson Ideas and the changing classroom

The following is an excerpted and summarized version of original articles that may be found at <http://www.wise-qatar.org/social-media-classrooms> and <http://mashable.com/2013/08/18/social-media-teachers/>

Social media provides an engaging avenue to learning for students who are growing up in a different information age.....Many young people like the flexibility of their own gadgets, apps, I-phones, etc. as to when and how they view events and entertainment. The same may be true when using social media tools for education purposes. Perhaps the younger generation will benefit from the use of fast-paced social media tools.....Many teachers themselves are practitioners of the new technology and feel quite at home in using them in the classroom. But one should not assume that all is smooth with this approach or that everyone is totally sold on the concept and gung-ho about using it in their classroom. It is good to be receptive, but also wise to be selective and prudent in deploying these social media tools. One must not forget that social media are tools not replacements for the teacher, nor for the questions and dialogue so necessary to true teaching and learning. Here are several ideas on the use of social media in the classroom:

1. **Frontloading or traditional assignment of homework as preparation for class discussion of a topic.**
This approach may work very well for social science classes or any class requiring a fair amount of reading in advance by the students. The teacher in effect teaches the bulk of the lessons as homework through student interaction. When students arrive for class, they are ready to apply their knowledge gained from a careful reading, research and point summaries from assigned work. Whether it is in the form of an article to be read or a document to be dissected, or a filmed documentary to watch and critique, the student has done work in advance of class. This can maximize the classroom interaction between students and teacher and between students and students. With a classroom social network, the teacher can add almost any type of media. For example, the teacher could videorecord her Spanish lesson, or her science experiment, or even find a YouTube video that introduces a

concept. Then she may post it on her social network website. After viewing the content, students engage in an online discussion. When class starts the next day, the students are already familiar with the content and are ready to take it a step further.

2. Microblogging

Depending on school board and school policies governing the use of internet and social media tools in the school environment, the teacher can be creative in the application of these tools for classroom learning.

For example, in an American setting, one easy to use site for microblogging is TodaysMeet.



3. Tweets

Teachers can encourage students to engage actively in the material and classroom discussion through tweets. This might be useful for engaging shy students

who fear opening their mouth in class but do not have the same hesitation in contributing via online. They may also help create online communities for students that might not exist for them in real life.



<http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-25888737>

Technology reporter Carolyn Rice of BBC News wrote about the changing classroom and the influence of social media. In an article *Social media transforms the textbook lesson*, Rice described a different kind of classroom in Norway. These kinds of changes are occurring in other jurisdictions as well.

The exercise books, the textbooks and the stationery can also be packed away. There is no need for any of them in the classroom of the future.

A room full of students with a tablet each and a teacher with an enthusiasm for social media is all that is required to engage developing minds.

At least in one school in Norway this isn't a vision of the future. This is now.

Every student in Ms. Michaelsen's English class is taught how to set up their own blog. This becomes where they display their work, which others can comment on, and the teacher can mark online.

"I don't use textbooks at all because I think that limits how you teach. I post something on the front of my blog and tell my students: 'This is what we're going to do today'. she says.

The aim of this method, she adds, is to create a "digitally rich" environment where pupils drive learning and classrooms are constantly online, allowing students to be creative by making their own discoveries rather than being led by a teacher.

"You can't grade being inventive," she adds.

The class also uses Quadblogging - software that allows four schools to join up online and interact and comment on each other's blogs.

"It's been really exciting because we can read, comment and exchange information with students in other countries," says Haakon Bakker, a 17-year-old student at Sandvika.

Updates and instructions are given via a group Facebook page. Being a member of a group means Ms. Michaelson doesn't need to address the tricky issue of friend requests from students as people can interact on the page without needing to be Facebook friends first.

"Teachers are sharing interesting, innovative thoughts. There are people from the US, South Africa and New Zealand on my feed, I can ask people around the world for help."

The class also makes use of Skype and has link-ups with schools in Lesotho, China and North America.

"We use it to ask them about cultural differences and how different their lives are," she explains,

"If students don't know how to do this then they'll be as conservative as the teachers about it"

"Everyone is scared," he says. "For 15 years teachers have been saying 'put your phone away' in class - now it's 'get them out'."

"Individual teachers don't need to be totally up to date but they do need to be open and willing to new ideas," she adds.

"If teachers don't know how to do this sort of thing then nothing will change. If students don't know how to do this then they'll be as conservative as the teachers about it," she says.

Student Hanne Wiger is keen to let others know what this way of learning means to her.

"I think it makes life easier, if you're not in class then you can just go online. You're not missing out," she says.



analog commodities -- they're carrying laptops, tablets, smartphones and other gadgets.

Putting technology in the hands and laps of students opens a vast pool of opportunity and knowledge, but it can also be distracting. Especially when students are using those devices to check Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat or any one of the hundreds of social platforms that beg for their attention right in the middle of class.

Some administrators and educators have taken things to the extreme by outright banning the use of mobile devices in the classroom. Meanwhile, others believe that classrooms are the perfect environment to break bad habits and encourage students to embrace these tools for productive means.

"I think that the cons can be effectively managed if the engagement strategies the teachers employ are well-thought-out" says Scott Silverman, Associate Director of Student Affairs, University of California, Riverside.

"The biggest challenge I face as an educator is that students use social media as a toy instead of a tool," Kathleen Stansberry, assistant professor of public relations and social media at Cleveland State University, writes in response to questions from CIO.com. "It is often assumed that millennials are social media experts because they grew up with interactive media. They may know how to use the technology behind sites like Facebook and Twitter, but they don't understand the strategy that goes into using social media to accomplish professional, personal, or organizational goals."

Stansberry says she allows students to use mobile devices during class time because the "constant temptation" they face from social media sites won't end after graduation. "I believe learning to control social media use in professional situations is part of the learning process," she adds.



Here is another article that helps explain the need for balance when considering social media as classroom teaching and learning tools. They offer advantages but they could be counter-productive in education as outlined in the following article by Matt Kapko at the CIO.com site <http://www.cio.com/article/2604686/social-media/is-social-media-reviving-or-killing-our-classrooms.html>. Teachers need to ask themselves how, when and to what extent they wish to use social media in the classroom. How much familiarity do the students have with such tools before they enter their school (say, grade 3, of grade 8, or grade 9 etc.).

Is social media reviving or killing our classrooms?

Remember the days when back to school meant a trip to the store for new pencils, paper and maybe a spiral notebook or two? Today's students, particularly those in the higher grades and college level, have little time or interest in those

"As with any disruptive technology, social media must be assimilated into our lives -- and during the process, there will be negative impacts. Technology in the classroom results in bullying, distraction, and cheating... and also engagement, deep and authentic learning, and global interactions," Jane Owen, professor emeritus of educational leadership at Midwestern State University in Texas, writes in an email response to CIO.com. "As an administrator, I would never let the negatives overrule the positives."



Teachers have to educate students to be disciplined and responsible in their use of technology, Owen adds. "Why should the next generation have to power down when they come to school and thus receive their educations in a 60s' style classroom because educators can't figure out a way to successfully harness technology?"

Ramani Durvasula, a psychologist and professor at California State University, Los Angeles, says the impacts of social media in the classroom are mostly negative. "It has devolved into a tool of distracted students looking at photographs of ex-girlfriends' or ex-boyfriends' vacation photos during a lecture. How do we know that? The fact that they are smiling at their laptop during a rather plodding lecture on reliability and validity of diagnostic classification," she writes.

"Now only the most disciplined and focused students can focus on the task at hand, and not get lost in the mindless ravines of Instagram and Facebook. In that way, social media may be a great tool for separating the men from the boys," Durvasula adds. "It is all but impossible to police unless I put a mirror in the back of the room, and now I as the faculty member am distracted playing policewoman instead of focusing on the matter at hand - our curriculum."

Durvasula says she plans to ban the use of laptops and other mobile devices in her classroom because she's found that most of her students lack the discipline or the intellect to manage having such a distracting tool in front of them. "I have never had a social media trolling student in one of my classes perform better than average, which speaks volumes," she adds.

The challenges presented by social media in the classroom are even more difficult for those teaching in the lower grades. Gail Leicht, an eighth grade language arts teacher in New Jersey, says social media and more specifically the obsession with the self indirectly makes it more difficult for her to connect with her students.

"Eight years ago, when I started teaching, I could make a social reference and my students would get it," Leicht writes in response to questions from CIO.com. "But now, because kids are only interested in their small circle and anything that constantly reinforces what they already know and validates their own existences, they lack any sophistication or know-how or just basic awareness of the immediate and not-so-immediate world around them."

Leicht says her students no longer relate when she references Jon Stewart, Stephen Colbert or Bruce Springsteen. "I used to try to mention current events or make social references by way of examples or as a way to connect with the kids. Now it's very difficult to find any topics on which I can do that," she adds.



Scott Silverman, associate director of student affairs at University of California, Riverside, says there are four primary cons that arise from the use of social media in the classroom: distraction, academic dishonesty (or cheating), discerning fact from fiction and cyberbullying.

"I think that the cons can be effectively managed if the engagement strategies the teachers employ for social media use are well-thought-out," he writes. "A teacher could have his or her class contribute to a wiki study guide for the upcoming exam, or students can use social media to tweet with others and learn more about a current event."

Silverman's research for a doctoral dissertation on the effects of social media on college students' experience concluded that the benefits of social media still outweigh the risks. "Student will be more engaged when they can use all of the tools at their disposal, including social media," he adds.

Instilling good behavioral traits and educating students about the proper and more productive use of social media is paramount, says Cleveland State University's assistant professor Stansberry. Her ongoing study on the impacts of social media indicates that students feel unprepared to use social media professionally because they aren't learning about it in their college classes.

"Instead of banning social media in the classroom, educators can model responsible social media use and incorporate it into teaching styles," Stansberry says.



Celebrating Remembrance Day

Every country in western civilization seems to take out some time on November 11 to observe Remembrance Day ever since the armistice that officially ended the First World War at 11:00 a.m. on November 11, 1918. Since then observances have been conducted regularly and are still done today in most jurisdictions. Most of the population does take note of the day and recognizes its true meaning. Yet, given the increasing pluralism in our society some of the lustre is being lost. Some are indifferent to the observance and some even hostile towards it. We believe that special day should be observed and for the right reasons.



The ordinary person can do that in a variety of ways, with most at least observing the two minutes of silence at 11:00 am regardless of where they are. Here are 10 simple ways in

which to reflect about the day and its meaning for us.

1. Buy a poppy and wear it for the week preceding November 11. What is the poppy and its power as a symbol? When did it come into prominence as such?
2. Observe the two minutes of silence at 11 am on Tuesday, November 11. What happened at that time? Pray for those who gave their lives during wars.
3. Recommend that your local church include special prayers for this purpose in the Sunday liturgy that precedes or follows Remembrance Day. Attend a parade at the nearest war memorial.
4. Watch the national ceremony from Parliament Hill within each classroom.
5. Organize a school assembly with speakers from veterans groups or active military personnel.
6. Lay a wreath within the school at an appropriate location (chapel, foyer, office, gymnasium, etc).
7. Hold a ceremony of observance and reflection over the general public address system, with poetic readings, prayers intentions specifically composed for the day.
8. Have students conduct an interview with a grandparent or senior citizen who may have served in the armed forces.
9. Have students write a short one page paper explaining what Remembrance Day means to them.
10. Write a letter to Canadian soldiers serving somewhere in the world.

In addition to these ideas the teacher can create written and oral assignments associated with the observance of Remem-



brance Day. There are legitimate questions that can be raised. We have made it clear where our preferences lie relative to the nature of the observance; nonetheless, it would be fruitful to challenge the students so as to make the event more meaningful to them personally.

The comments following are taken from reader online reactions to a story that appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* in November 2012. The online material might help stimulate reflection on the questions that follow. Students could be divided into groups and each group discuss *one* of the questions and prepare a summary/list of their major points.

Online comments to the editor in the *Edmonton Journal* newspaper

Let's talk about the Ten Commandments, if it were not for the soldiers in the past, present and future, we wouldn't have the freedom to even practice and follow the commandments. This day isn't about God, or religion. It is about brave Canadian heroes, who leave everything to fight for something that people today take for granted. It isn't only about remembering the soldiers that fight, but the families that stand behind them. It is remembering and appreciating sacrifices made by everyone so we can have peace in this country. As my family gets ready to attend a service today, as my husband puts on his dress uniforms, I stand tall and proud beside him and other soldiers and they're TRUE heroes; they are willing and ready to take a bullet for this country. This reminds me of a time, a few years ago. We were attending a ceremony in Edmonton mall, my husband in his full CFs. We were in the parking lot, and a woman, came up to me spitting on him in front of our two little kids. Yelling at her instead of getting mad, my husband looked at me and said, "We don't choose to die for ignorance, but we choose to die for a belief in freedom, and she has the freedom to do this, because others have laid down their lives".

In a country such as Afghanistan this woman would face death because she disrespected a man. In this country, she is allowed to do as she pleases, only because of those who died for her rights. Being part of the military, it is not a job, it is a lifestyle. I would welcome any one of these parents to live a day in my children's life. Learn what sacrifice is about. Learn what it means to love Canada so much that they watch their dad go off to WAR, so they don't have to fight on Canada's soil; maybe their opinions will change and maybe not. But they only have those opinions and have a right to those opinions because of heroes of the past, present and future.

D. Anderson, Nov. 10, 2012 1:42 PM

If parents of kids today only recognized that 100 years

ago, your high school kids would have been marching off to die in the trenches of Ypres or 70 years ago would have been getting blown to bits on D-Day, or watching their pal's head being blown to bits in Korea. A mere 20 years ago they could have been being killed in Iraq, or even last week in Afghanistan. And they don't have to do it. Why? Because somebody else made the sacrifices to do it for them. So your kids didn't have to go do it - someone else's kid did. And given all that, you can't encourage your precious little snowflake to say thank you, for 10 minutes, one day a year? The selfishness you display is learned by your kids. And is an insult to the rest of us....

Mike Moody, Nov. 9, 2012 8:07 PM

In regards to Lily's post. This is about remembering those who sacrificed, not about one of the Ten Commandments, that if you really study, you can see that God took the lives of many and still does. Let's just say thank you to those of us who have served and paid the price to allow us to read this article, write a response and live in a place where we actually have a right to comment and live this way.

Amanda, Nov. 9, 2012 11:54 AM

I completely agree that it is appalling that students are given the right not to attend their school's Remembrance Day activities. However, with that said, my wife graduated from an Edmonton school 4 years ago and her accounts of what they did during the activities she attended is just as appalling. Instead of having a Veteran come in and talk about the friends they may have lost or show a video about all the men and women who gave their lives for their country, they had a soldier come in to speak to them about things like how he had to shoot a Afghanistan child when there was children throwing rocks at the tanks. They spoke about how it was to strut around with their guns and tanks and how it felt to take a life. This day is NOT about condoning war. This day is NOT about bragging about the people you have killed. And this day is DEFINITELY NOT about WAR PROPAGANDA. Personally, I feel that is taking it too far. This is not about being immigrants and not caring about the people who sacrificed for their country - my wife's family had been in Canada for over 5 generations - but she was disgusted when they turned Remembrance Day in her school into a career drive for the military. In THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, I feel it's fine to walk out or not attend. Before you judge why

parents are pulling their children out of the celebrations in their school, FIND OUT WHAT IS GOING ON FIRST. It may surprise you.

JS, Nov. 9, 2012, 11:52 AM

One of the 10 Commandments from the Bible is that one should not kill. If you take those commandments to heart, you might think twice about celebrating a day that honours those who did just that - even if it is for as just a cause as your country's freedom. Many soldiers die for noble causes - but they also take lives (i.e. kill) in the process. That may be the point behind some not wanting to celebrate.

Leslie, Nov. 9, 2012, 9:30 AM

Lost in all this is what it means to belong in a free, open and democratic society. Within such a society, we have the freedom to say and do what we want within certain defined limits. Going hand in hand with such freedoms are responsibilities we all accept as citizens of this country. Too often, some prefer to abdicate their responsibilities for reasons that may be misguided or spurious. One responsibility we all have regardless of race, religion or creed is to give thanks and remember the sacrifices others have made for us so we could live in this free and open society. Remembrance Day has never been a day of celebration. It has always been a sad and sombre occasion to honour and give thanks to those who have put themselves in harm's way for the greater benefit of those at home and for future generations. It should also be a stark reminder as to why we should all get involved to ensure everything possible is done to prevent such conflict in the future. As such, I firmly believe schools have an obligation to teach all students the meaning of good citizenship and personal responsibility and not permit parents or anyone else to relieve students of their responsibilities as citizens and the basic courtesy they should show towards fellow citizens that have sacrificed themselves for those citizens.

Mike, Veteran, Nov. 9, 2012 2:49 AM

Read more: <http://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/schools-preparing-for-remembrance-day-but-some-students-will-opt-out-1.1027436#ixzz3EwbK6mZ4>



Questions

1. Do people today take our freedoms for granted?
2. What are the greatest threats to our freedoms in our society?
3. Is observance of Remembrance Day a glorification of war?
4. Is non-participation in Remembrance Day observance a sign of disrespect?

Another valuable exercise would be to have students role-play a soldier returning from either of the two World Wars

and magically visiting Canada today. Have students write a one page paper or present a 5 minute oral report on one of these current realities of Canada. Would they be shocked, surprised, disappointed, betrayed, or elated by any of these situations? Explain.





- A.) Canadians stand by and do nothing as 100,000 babies are killed each year through abortion.
- B.) Canadian men can legally “marry” men, and women “marry” women.
- C.) The divorce rate among Canadians is rampant, and more people cohabit then actually marry.



- D.) People can watch events directly on television regardless of where the event takes place.
- E.) Babies can be, and some indeed are, created in laboratories.
- F.) You can access more information via a hand-held smart phone than once existed in all the city libraries.
- G.) People would rather euthanize old and frail people rather than care for them.
- H.) The average cost of a home in Toronto is \$550,000.



- I.) Weekly church attendance barely reaches 25% among the general population.
- J.) There are thirty teams in the National Hockey League.

Remembrance Day Poems

The following poems appear along with others on a terrific site. Here are four samples, two praising the sacrifice of soldiers and two perhaps questioning the futility of all wars. Students could be asked to read the poems out loud and then discuss their meaning, and whether they agree with the sentiments being expressed in the respective poems. The

teacher in an English literature class could assign the poems as homework for reading and analysis, as they would any poem. This exercise would be reserved specifically for the period around Remembrance Day celebrations. There are enough poems found on this site that other poems could easily be substituted for those selected.

Students could be asked to read a poem of their own choosing and then explain its meaning and why they chose that particular poem. How does the poem speak to them? What is there about the poem that appeals to them?

Another possible assignment could involve the students composing their own poem. They could be expressing their own view of war or Remembrance Day in a short poem, whether it was free verse or in rhyming stanzas.

http://www.warpoetry.co.uk/RemembranceB.htm#Some_Corner_of_a_Foreign_Field

Taking a Stand

I ask you to stand with me
For both the injured and the lost
I ask you to keep count with me
Of all the wars and what they cost
I ask you to be silent with me
Quietly grateful for our lot
As I expect you're as thankful as me
For the health and life we've got
I ask that you wish them well with me
All those still risking their all
And I ask that you remember with me
The names of those that fall
I expect that you are proud like me
Of this great nation of ours too
So enjoying all its freedoms like me
Support those upholding them for you
I hope that you are hopeful like me
That we'll soon bring an end to wars
So you'll have to stand no more with me
And mourning families no different from yours
'Til then be thankful you can stand with me
Thinking of those who now cannot
For standing here today with me
At least we show they're not forgot
John Bailey © Copyright May 2011



Remembrance Day

She stands in the cold
Her black cloth coat
Suits the occasion
But fails to keep her warm
Despite the gleam of silver
At her breast.*



Her thoughts circle round:

“Why did we have another war?
Didn’t we lose enough men already?
Why did my sons have to die?
O God, keep me upright.
Help me not to scream
Out their names.

“What will we have for dinner tonight?
What would Joey and Bill have wanted?
It’s so hard to have faith...
It’s so hard to have hope...
Why did my sons have to die?
Jesus, you comforted your mother
As she stood and watched you die.
If I pray hard enough
Will you bring comfort to me?

“If that preacher says ‘Noble Sacrifice’
One more time I’ll scream...
I’ll scream out their names
So hard the dead will hear me.
Only this time, I’ll scream out loud
Instead of in my heart.”

But she doesn’t scream...
She stands beside the Honour Guard
Who are older than her sons
Were when they died.

The people nearby watch her,
Wondering how she can stand
So still, so calm,
Knowing she lost two boys,

Here is also a list of youtube videos on Remembrance Day, useful to let students experience a bit of the meaning of what is being celebrated.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86J_RTfg_zQ
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S8gRx8tWJml>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=luo4BseF9uk>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HPMeInMdfHU>
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gUOqcHRTDp8>

Thinking she has lost her grief
After all these years
When to her it might
Have been today.
Clare Stewart Copyright © 20 November, 2000

Remember Me

I was once the pride of this country,
The healthy, the young, the strong and brave,
Then I quickly became the acceptable casualty
In my country’s undeclared war
In the name of national interest,
A country where I was too young to vote!

I went because I was still too young
To know any better, though others
Cleverly refused or ran away to hide.
I never once dreamed my own government
Would ever lie to its own people,
But I was mistaken and they did for years.

I fought their war in a hell for one year,
Then came home and found another hell,
Awaiting from the very people and country
Who determined I go in the first place
Then their war, suddenly became mine,
And I was the convenient scapegoat!

Today, I am the broken bodies and minds
Shunted off, out of sight, behind heavy doors
Of VA hospitals and mental wards to die.
I am in wheel chairs and braces, in hospital beds;
I walk the streets; I wander the railroad tracks,
I sleep beneath the stars.
Curtis D Bennett



A Soldier’s Face

The soldier is a shell
A shell of metal medals
The soldier is the messenger
With a country’s deadly message

The soldier is a trained killer
A soldier’s eye is trained
On an enemy pre-defined
Our blackest fears framed

The soldier carries out
the orders of a few
A soldier’s hands are tied
By a flag’s blood white and blue

A soldier’s flesh and blood
Is spent on the battlefield
War’s currency
The years of our youth we steal

A soldier has a face
A soldier’s heart is not unknown
It’s their heart we all must face
Can we bear to face our own

Christophe Elie is a Singer/Songwriter who writes folk music mainly focused on social issues. He lives in Canada, and was recently inspired to write this poem on November 11th , 2012, Canada’s Remembrance Day.

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