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Newsletter II 2015 Fall Issue

- ~ Answering your questions
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A Message from the Founders of DCM

Our mission is to champion the gifts and advocate for all Manitobans with dyslexia.

Our Goals

Advocacy - To be a strong voice for equality of education for those with dyslexia.

Support - To provide support for the recognition of the challenges faced by the families living with dyslexia.

Education - To provide opportunities for professional development for educators.

How did Manitoba students do in the last national reading tests?

A Tale of Two Views

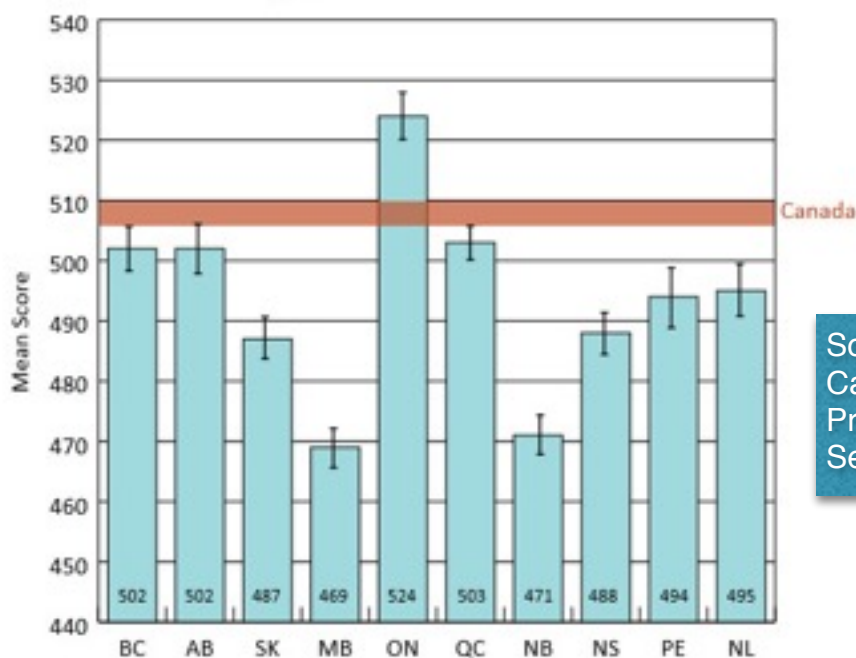
"Manitoba is dead last among Canadian provinces in math, science and reading – and this time it's the Canadian ministers of education doing the testing." Of Manitoba kids who were tested in science, 15 percent performed at the lowest level and only 4 percent at the highest level. Whereas, across Canada, these figures were 8 and 8 percent. "

- Winnipeg Free Press, October 8, 2014.

In the same WFP article, a glaring statement greeted Canadian parents as they downed their morning coffee: **"Education system is in crisis"**. Former Liberal deputy Prime Minister John Manley was quoted as saying that the results were *'on the scale of a national emergency.'*

Yet, on the same page, we read, **"With test scores, Keep Calm and carry on"**. David Mandzuk, Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba, acknowledged that "...to dismiss these results would be irresponsible and a flagrant disregard for the students of Manitoba and their parents." but added, "We live in a province where our teachers work incredibly hard and are dedicated to their students. ...Those who really care about education (beyond how students do on test scores) are used to working collaboratively and addressing complex educational problems."

CHART 5.1 Results in reading by jurisdiction



Source: 2013 Pan-Canadian Assessment Program.
See: www.wfp.to/report

In a recent education-related blog, Dr. Reid Lyon provided his insight into what he considers the core of the problem we face in education: *"The resistance in the educational community, particularly at the higher education level where teachers are trained, is enormous, almost unbelievable. When you show people objective information, non-philosophically driven research-based interactions that [work] for these kids, ...such that where a youngster [who] was at the 10th percentile in reading before, is now at the 60th percentile..., and you can show this time after time, but you still see substantial resistance from the educational community, it begins to tell us that many of these issues are way beyond kid issues. These are adult issues. They are fascinating adult issues where human beings are latching on to their beliefs, their assumptions, their egos and their careers rather than looking very clearly at what works, what doesn't, making sure people know what works, measuring it and getting the kids up to snuff."* (from "Children of the Code")

It is significant that Dean Mandzuk states *"I am convinced there are plenty of people who will be willing to find common ground. They will examine what we are currently doing that seems to be working and what we could be doing that might make a difference in the future. I know I speak for other deans of education in the province when I say that we are prepared to continue to work together with other educational stakeholders to find ways of increasing achievement in math, science and literacy because our students deserve nothing less."*

Let's make a promise to our Manitoba children that we will hold him to his words. Research has given us the answers – we need only to shift our thinking to implement them. This is the goal of the Dyslexia Champions - to advocate to help reverse this trend. It is critical that we succeed for the benefit of all.

- Christine van de Vijssel, M.Ed.



Precedent Setting Supreme Court of Canada *Moore vs British Columbia (Ministry of Education)*

On November 9, 2012, the Supreme Court of Canada released its decision in *Moore v. British Columbia (Ministry of Education)*, a case dealing with education and equality rights of children with severe learning disabilities.

In its decision, the Supreme Court found that Jeffrey Moore, a student suffering from dyslexia, had been denied meaningful access to the educational programs he needed to address his disability and accordingly was discriminated against in a manner that could not be reasonably justified.

The Ontario Branch of the International Dyslexia Association (ONBIDA) argued that children with learning disabilities - just like all other children - are entitled to an education that allows them to reach their full potential. "This decision represents a great achievement. It is an acknowledgement that children living with learning disabilities, like dyslexia, should not, and cannot, be denied the full benefit of public education," says ONBIDA founder and former President, Sally Shearman.



"We were excited to hear that dyslexia was recognized as a specific learning disability and that it was understood that students with dyslexia must receive, and are entitled to, specific instruction and programming to reach their full potential."

We are very hopeful that the resulting decision will act as a catalyst in bringing change to early identification, teacher education and training, and the Ministry of Education's understanding of literacy and special education.

Parents and families of children with severe learning disabilities should take comfort from the Court's decision," says ONBIDA's current President Jana Leggett. The British Columbia Human Rights Tribunal held that the B.C. Ministry of Education and the local school district discriminated against Jeffrey by failing to provide him the educational program and supports he needed in light of his dyslexia.

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See ruling at: <https://scc-csc.lexum.com/scc-csc/scc-csc/en/item/12680/index.do>

For more information on the education implications of this ruling see: <http://www.ldao.ca/educational-implications-of-recent-supreme-court-ruling/>





## Dates to Remember

**Saturday, October 17, 2015**

1:00 - 3:30 pm

Linden Christian School

**The Power of Self-Advocacy**

hosted by

- Dyslexia Champions of Manitoba
- Linden Christian School Parent Advisory Council

### **Presenters:**

“YES”(Youth Examples of Self Advocacy), Colorado Springs. <http://explore1in5.org/YES!Program.aspx>

- Cynthia Bernard, Parent Advocate, YES
- Abby, High School Student Advocate, YES
- Victoria, High School Student Advocate, YES

### **Target Audience:**

Target Audience: Middle & Senior Years Students, Parents

*The Mission of YES! is to teach students with learning differences to recognize their strengths and weaknesses, to help them build confidence and to provide them with the tools to become strong self-advocates.*

*Cost: \$20 per adult, Students: Free*

*Pre-registration required. Registration opening soon.*

*For more info about YES click [here](#).*

*Follow YES on [Facebook](#)*

## April 8, 2016. Multi-sensory Teaching In the Classroom

Presenter: Ms. Corey Zylstra, Director of REACH, Vancouver, B.C.

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July 18-21, 2016. 1 week course: Foundations of Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSL)

Presenter: Ms. Corey Zylstra, Director of REACH, Vancouver, B.C.

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### REACH EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**Corey Zylstra** has been in the field of education for over 25 years. She has taught in colleges, elementary schools, private clinics, community facilities and is a regular conference and workshop presenter in Canada, United States, Kuwait, Dubai, Egypt and other middle eastern countries. Since specializing in the field of learning difficulties and multisensory language remediation using the Orton-Gillingham approach, Ms. Zylstra has served on several non-profit boards in executive, board and advisory positions. She holds a Masters of Education degree from SFU, a Provincial Instructor's Diploma, and has been recognized and accredited as an Orton-

Gillingham Master Trainer for the Canadian Orton-Gillingham Academy (CATT, OG) and an Honorary Fellow of the American OG Academy (AOGPE) and has twice been nominated for Vancouver's Women of Distinction awards for Education and Training. Ms. Zylstra is a strong advocate for effective mediation of literacy skills and evidence-based teaching, particularly for students with language-based learning difficulties. Corey has authored and co-authored several publications and has developed a wide array of materials for teachers and remedial educators. Corey lives in North Vancouver, Canada with her two children and husband of 20 years.

Corey Zylstra can be reached at [zylstra@reachlearningcentre.com](mailto:zylstra@reachlearningcentre.com)

## Inaugural DCM Conference Report- April 16, 2015

The Dyslexia Champions of Manitoba held their first Annual Conference at the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education Building on April 16, 2015. 110 participants listened intently as Dr. Elaine Cheesman, University of Colorado at Colorado Springs gave the keynote address which focused on the learning difference that is dyslexia and how technology can support the student who struggles.

Dr. Cheesman was followed by Ms. Joyce Tschmier, the Western Canadian representative for Bridges Canada, an educational firm that supplies technology tools and training to schools and students. Joyce set up an interactive station at which participants could use some of the technology she brought with her,

After lunch, we were treated to two presentations by Mr. Todd Hanson, director of technology at Groves Academy in Minneapolis, Minnesota. His presentation was divided in two - one for technology for younger children and then a second for older students. His enthusiasm was comparable only to the positive feedback we received from the participants.

In between Todd's two sessions, Tess Dzogan gave us her perspective of living and learning with

dyslexia, and Dr. Karen Smith presented a teacher's perspective on how to reach a student with dyslexia.



We were thrilled to have our first event so well attended by parents, students, educators and clinicians. We thank our many generous sponsors and our talented presenters, some of whom travelled far to be with us to make our event so successful!

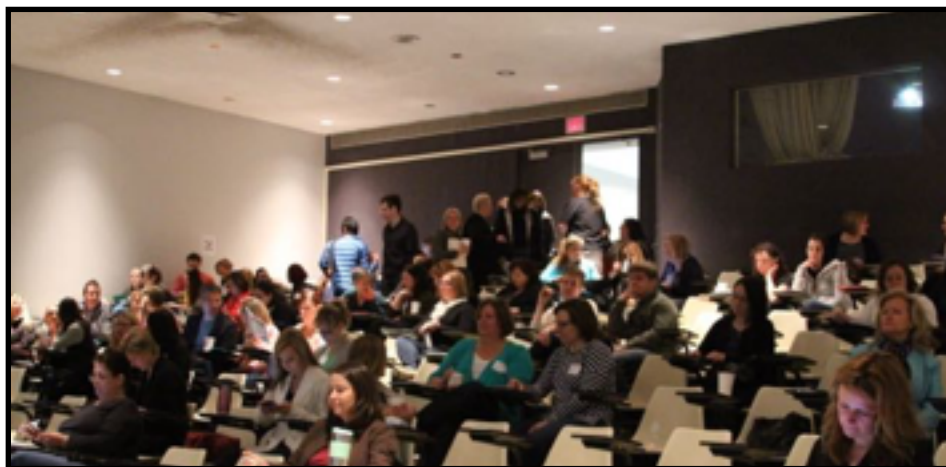
Left to right: Joyce Tschmier, Bridges Canada, Todd Hanson, Groves Academy, Dr. Karen Smith, University of Manitoba, Faculty of Education, Christine van de Vijssel, Tess Dzogan, Shirley Dzogan, Sharon Gurney, Marilyn Mazzone - missing: Dr. Elaine Cheesman

Enjoy some scenes from our April event!

September 2015

Again, THANK YOU to all who participated.

-DCM Executive Committee







Dr. Elaine Cheesman, Associate Professor, University of Colorado



Joyce Tschmier, Bridges



Dr. Karen Smith, University of Manitoba



Top: Mr. Todd Hanson, Groves Academy  
Left: Ms. Tess Dzogan, Student, Tutor

