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Pride Perseverance Possibilities



GDI Communicator

The GDI Communicator is an internal newsletter intended to increase communication between management and staff of the Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research

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Verbal Communication in the Workplace

By Jim Edmondson

This is the second part of our three part series on Communication Skills at the workplace. Effective verbal or spoken communication is dependent on a number of factors and cannot be fully isolated from other important interpersonal skills such as non-verbal communication, listening skills and clarification. Clarity of speech, remaining calm and focused, being polite and following some basic rules of etiquette will all aid the process of verbal communication.

First Impressions

In most interpersonal encounters, especially initial meetings or communication in a supervisor /employee relationship, the first few minutes are extremely important as first impressions have a significant impact on the success of further communication. Everyone has expectations and norms as to how initial meetings should proceed and people tend to behave according to these expectations. If these expectations are mismatched, communication will not be effective or run smoothly. There can also be residual damage or misconceptions of future interactions. At a first meeting, formalities and appropriate greetings are usually expected. These include a handshake,

introducing yourself, eye contact may prove to be useful. A friendly disposition and smiling face are much more likely to encourage communication than a blank face, inattention or disinterested reception.

Reinforcement

The use of encouraging words alongside non-verbal gestures such as head nods, a warm facial expression and maintaining eye contact, are more likely to reinforce openness in others. The use of encouragement and positive reinforcement can signify interest, allay fears and give reassurance, show warmth and openness, and reduce shyness or nervousness in ourselves and others.

Effective Listening

Active listening is an important skill and yet, as communicators, people tend to spend far more energy considering what they are going to say rather than listening to what the other person is trying to say. Although active listening is a skill in itself, it is also vital for effective verbal communication. There are many factors that are essential for effective and active listening; be prepared to listen, keep an open mind and concentrate on the main direction of the speaker's message, delay

judgment until you have heard everything, be objective, don't be trying to think of your next question while the other person is giving information, don't dwell on one or two points at the expense of others, and try not to let prejudices associated with, for example, gender, ethnicity, social class, appearance or dress interfere with what is being said.

Reflecting and Clarifying

Reflecting is the process of feeding-back to another person your understanding of what has been said. Although reflecting is a specialized skill used mainly in counselling, it can also be applied to a wide range of communication contexts and is a useful skill to learn. Reflecting often involves paraphrasing the message communicated to you by the speaker in your own words, capturing the essence of the facts and feelings expressed, and communicating your understanding back to the speaker. It is a useful skill because it allows you the ability to confirm that you have understood the message clearly, avoiding confusion. It shows interest in, and respect for, what the other person has to say and demonstrates that you are considering the other person's viewpoint. It can also be valuable for the speaker to get feedback as to how the message is received.

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SUNTEP Talks Raise Awareness of Aboriginal Issues

By Chelsie Sinclair

Chelsie Sinclair is a fourth year student in the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program in Regina.

In the recent months, Indigenous issues have been on the news almost every week. From record Indigenous voter turnout at the October 19, 2015 Canadian federal elections in which eight Aboriginal members of Parliament were elected, two of whom have been appointed to the cabinet, to the Trudeau government declaration of a "new era of reconciliation" with Indigenous peoples.

News items and analysis have also included missing and murdered Indigenous women, and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) reports on Residential schools have also been in the Canadian public conversation.

Indigenous issues have also taken a prominent stage in conversations around the University of Regina Campus. Over the fall semester, the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) students in Brenna Pacholko's ECCU 300 class have been working to create presentations that focus on Indigenous issues and their implications for the teaching-learning process. We have gone beyond the classroom to engage in these conversations with the wider University of Regina community.

These discussions took place in the Aboriginal Student Center during the noon hour, where SUNTEP Regina students provided insightful information about diverse topics of interest concerning Métis and First Nations peoples. These events were better known

around the University as 'SUNTEP Talks.' The one hour-long modules included topics such as: TRC recommendations, Costumes and Culture, Métis Identity, Reservation Water, and Anti-Racist Education. The discussions provided meaningful insights for the audience attending. The hope is that by continuing these SUNTEP Talks in to the New Year, the university community will be more aware and be engaged in conversations on issues that are of significant importance to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations of Saskatchewan.

As well, students and faculty will be inspired to address thought-provoking topics and provide imperative information for advancement in the decolonization process. Furthermore, SUNTEP Regina is working to have Indigenous voices heard throughout the campus and beyond.



SUNTEP Regina students Chelsie Sinclair (above), Alicia Reiss and Daylyn Benoit at A SUNTEP Talks session



Alicia Reiss



Daylyn Benoit
Photos by Brenna Pacholko

Office Admin Program Fosters Inclusion, Collegiality

By Tracy LaPrise

Next time you are in the Gabriel Dumont Institute Building on 1003 22 Avenue in Saskatoon please take a visit into the basement and say hello to the Office Administration Program. Lindsay Blair and Dr. Elizabeth Majocha are the instructors in this 10 month program which has been brokered through the Saskatchewan Polytechnic.

The program is being offered by the Dumont Technical Institute in a block system, so the learning is fast and the work is intense. Currently, there are 12 students in the

program and they are enjoying the classes and looking forward to their practicum placement in June. The current challenge is meeting the required typing words per minute of 45 with no more than three mistakes. This is a big accomplishment and our fastest time has been 55 words per minute with two mistakes!

The class is like a community of learners. It has a supportive, encouraging, and friendly environment. When one of the students recently had a baby three weeks after she started the

program, the other students worked together to help her get caught up.

Each student would be a great asset to any company looking for fill an office administration position. We are currently securing practicum placements with the goal that the students will be hired as full time employees after practicum is completed.

The program will be offered again in September 2016. A call for application for admission will be posted online at the Institute website, www.gdins.org, in early 2016.



SUNTEP PA's Sandy Sherwin-Shields Retires

By Michael Relland

At the end of December, 2015, Sandy Sherwin-Shields will be entering a new phase in her life as she retires from her position as faculty with the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP) in Prince Albert. Sandy has had a tremendous career as an educator; first as a primary school teacher in Northern and First Nations schools, and later as a faculty member at SUNTEP Prince Albert Centre.

Sandy first started working as a sessional lecturer at SUNTEP in 1982, which makes her the longest serving member of the SUNTEP Prince Albert family. In 1985 Sandy became a full-time faculty member at SUNTEP Prince Albert where she has remained for the past 30 years. During this time Sandy has taught a multitude of classes, such as Math 101, Math 99, Communications 99, EdCur 301.6 and EdFtd 435.3. To date, SUNTEP Prince Albert Centre has graduated 490 Indigenous teachers with Bachelor of Education degrees, including generations in the same families. Given our small classes and faculty, Sandy has been a part of the journey of the hundreds of SUNTEP graduates.

In addition to teaching a variety of courses over the years, Sandy has played a pivotal role in the evolution and development of the SUNTEP Program. Over the years, she has played a lead role in numerous Centre initiatives such as

coordinating SUNTEP's field placements, developing the SUNTEP Internship Manual, and being the SUNTEP Prince Albert representative on University of Saskatchewan committees such as the Undergraduate Program Committee.

For many years, Sandy has been renowned for being the lead organizer for SUNTEP Prince Albert graduations and for the accompanying slide show that honoured our SUNTEP graduates. In short, Sandy Sherwin-Shields's professional life has been exemplary and her commitment to the program and her students has been stellar. SUNTEP and Gabriel Dumont Institute have been blessed by Sandy's presence. She approaches her work in a "good way" and treats people with compassion and respect. She has been a positive contributor to the Centre, a great team member, and her high standards in everything she does has helped develop the credibility and goodwill that SUNTEP holds in the community.

Members of faculty of the SUNTEP Prince Albert who have worked with Sandy had many positive things to say about her. Linda Lysyk, for example, noted that, "The early days of SUNTEP were intent on transforming education. As a progressive educator Sandy has been instrumental in achieving this goal."

Corey Teeter said that "It is very difficult to put into words what Sandy means to the SUNTEP Prince Albert. She has always put her heart and spirit into all she does. Her contributions have formed a footprint into the foundation of this program.

Sandy's dedication and work will be missed, but it will have an everlasting impact on the SUNTEP family."

Bente Huntley stated that, "From the bottom of my heart Sandy, I wish to thank you for the amazing journey you and I embarked on when I started at SUNTEP. You have been an inspiration to many staff members and countless students. Your passion for the program and your compassion for your peers and your students will be greatly missed. But, the new journey you embark on will be an exciting and rewarding one also. No matter what you do, you will touch the lives of those, like me, who were fortunate to cross your path."

Sandy's students also commented on how she has impacted their lives. One such student, Veronica Carr, said, "Sandy has been an indispensable part of my SUNTEP journey. Her retirement is well deserved and she will be dearly missed."

SUNTEP and Gabriel Dumont Institute wish Sandy the best in retirement and we would like to acknowledge her significant contributions to Métis Education and her role in working for the betterment of the Métis and First Nations communities. We hope that Sandy enjoys her plans to travel, spend time with her grandchildren and pursue her interests in home decorating. We are also thankful that she is open to the possibility of continuing working with supervising SUNTEP interns. Thank you Sandy! It has been an amazing pleasure and an honour to work with you! 🌟



Sandy Sherwin-Shields (left) with a friend
Photo courtesy of S. Sherwin-Shields

2016 Gabriel Dumont Institute Annual General Meeting
GDI Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday, February 13, 2016. Detailed information and Community invitations will be sent out shortly. The last AGM was held on February 28, 2015



Glenn Lafleur, GDI Vice Chair fielding questions from the media following GDI Apprenticeship Funding announcement, February 13, 2015
Photo by James Oloo



IT Update

By Gareth Griffiths

Staff Changes

It was with great regret that IT had to say goodbye to Brody Parent. Brody accepted a position with the Finance Department in Saskatoon, and will be greatly missed. I would like to thank Brody for his hard work in IT at our Prince Albert Centre, and wish him all the very best in his new position.

Regarding IT Support for Prince Albert and the North, we have just conducted interviews, and hope to be able to announce a new hire very soon.

CommunityNet

Working with SaskTel and the Saskatchewan Ministry of Advanced Education, the Institute now has enterprise grade high speed connections to our Saskatoon, Regina and Prince Albert campuses, operating at a speed of 50 Megabits/s (50Mb/s).

Gabriel Dumont Institute recently signed an agreement for La Roche for a CommunityNet connection, to be installed over the coming months. These super high speed connections will allow the Institute to explore new possibilities for enhancing the Gabriel Dumont Institute service and program delivery, such as via distance learning and video conferencing.

IT Support System

In November 2015, 64 new Work Orders were received into Track-IT. Of these, 53 are now closed (82% completion rate). Overall we closed 44 Work Orders in the month (November was a tough month due to being a staff member down). There are currently 47 open Work Orders.

Should you have any IT-related question, please do not forget to email support@gdins.org. In the event that an email cannot be sent for any reason, you can also call any member of the IT Team, who will log the support Work Order for you. The IT Team includes Gordon Holtslander at (306) 657-2238 and me at (306) 347-4118.

Website

The Institute website (www.gdins.org) saw 3,289 Pageviews (2,671 Unique Pageviews) in November 2015. Some highlights of activity: 23% of visitors to the home page clicked on What We Offer, 13% clicked on Contact Us, 13% clicked on Work with Us and 6.5% went to Métis Culture.

GP 2015

In November, a major upgrade to Microsoft GP (Finance Accounting System) was undertaken. This involved the commissioning of a new SQL Server, migrating data from

SQL Server 2008 to SQL Server 2015, program and database upgrades, plus configuration and implementation services. The upgrade went seamlessly in under four days. Many thanks to our support partners Encore Business Solutions for helping us navigate through the transition with minimal downtime.

The new upgrade offers many enhancements to existing services including a web based Management Reporter Viewer, workflow processes, different abilities to sort and set views, and an increased user experience. This is also a foundation step to us being able to implement other functions to improve the efficiency of the Finance, Human Resources, and Payroll Departments. This will allow us to start planning to incorporate services such as the HR Module, Document Attach, EFT payments, automatic scheduling of Management Reports, to name a few.

Closing Thought

I wish you all Geeky Holidays and a Nerdy New Year. May you get all the upgrades available, and don't forget to recharge your batteries. May the Force be with you. 🌐

Verbal Communication at Work ... *Continued from Page 1*

Closing Communication

The way a communication is closed or ended will, at least in part, determine the way a conversation is remembered. A range of subtle, or sometimes not so subtle, signals are used to end an interaction. For example, some people may avoid eye contact, stand up, turn their body away,

or use behaviours such as looking at a watch or closing notepads or books.

All of these non-verbal actions indicate to the other person that the initiator wishes to end the communication. Closing an interaction too abruptly may not allow the other person to complete or otherwise conclude

what he or she is saying so you should ensure there is time for winding-up. The closure of an interaction is a good time to make any future arrangements.

Consider thanking the other person for their time or what they have said. If possible, a handshake is advisable. 🌐



Gabriel Dumont Institute
Central Office, Saskatoon



GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship
Project Stats, November 2015:
155 clients employed
44 indentured
44 gone for technical training
22 complete trades-focused
GED program
- On track towards meeting
and/ or surpassing the targets



Revisiting 2015 at Gabriel Dumont Institute

By James Oloo

2015 was an exciting and eventful year at Gabriel Dumont Institute marked by significant milestones. In February, the Western Economic Diversification Canada announced a \$3.1 million funding for a new GDI Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project to create 150 new jobs and indenture 100 new apprentices.

Dumont Technical Institute students in La Loche organized a well-attended Suicide Awareness Walk in the community. Jeannie Murray, Adult Basic Education instructor, stated that "Just two cases of suicide were reported in the 1970s. Today, it is a very common problem."

In July 2015, the first cohort of the GDI-University of Regina Master of Education program held a graduation celebration. Twenty three of the 25 (or 92 percent) students who started the program graduated after successfully meeting the requirements of the program.

The Dumont Technical Institute Business Plan 2015-2018 was released in July 2015. The Business Plan titled, *Helping Build Brighter Futures*, is available online at <https://gdins.org/about/reports/businessplans/>

In August, the Government of Saskatchewan and GDI renewed a funding agreement for five years to provide support to the Saskatchewan Urban Native Teacher Education Program (SUNTEP)

and DTI. The provincial government will provide GDI with \$11.23 million in 2015-2016.

During 2015, GDI introduced a new online system for employee T4 forms for 2014 tax returns. It was the first year in the Institute's history that printed copies of T4s were not mailed to employees.

Ashley Hayden-Ross, Employment Counselor at the GDI Training & Employment Centre in Regina, released her first book titled *You Can't Make Me*.

Karon Shmon, the Director of GDI Publishing, was honored with the 2015 YWCA Saskatoon Women

of Distinction Award in the Education category.

The Institute celebrated the retirement of three employees, Sharon Wood, Muriel Luther, and Sandy Sherwin-Shields. Together, the three have worked at GDI for a total of 61 years. Sharon Wood, a graduate of SUNTEP, worked at the GDI Prince Albert location for 20 years while Muriel Luther was at the same location since 2007. Sandy Sherwin-Shields joined SUNTEP Prince Albert in 1982 as a sessional lecturer.

GDI Family celebrated the life of Leonard Gamola, a dear friend and colleague. Lenny joined the Institute in 2009 and worked with dedication at our La Loche Learning Centre until he died in January 2015. 🌹

Payroll Cutoff Calendar, January 2016

By Carmala Thiessen and Veronica Verzonowski

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1	2
					New Year's Day Stat Holiday	
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Cutoff @ Noon for Jan 8 Student Payroll	Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Jan 8 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Jan 15 Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Jan 22 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
		Cutoff @ 3:00 for Stop Payments on Student Jan 22 Direct Deposits		Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Student Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Cutoff @ 4:30 for TMS & Payroll Revisions for Jan 29 Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for Feb 5 Student Payroll			Accounts Payable Cheque Run	Staff Payday Cutoff @ 4:30 for A/c Payable Invoices	
31						

MRTS due by the 15th of every month, and Employee contracts are due prior to payroll cutoff date.



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Visit us at
www.gdins.org

Back issues of this newsletter
can be obtained at:

[www.metismuseum.ca/browse/
index.php/833](http://www.metismuseum.ca/browse/index.php/833)

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of Native Studies and Applied Research

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3737 Wascana Parkway
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<http://gdi.voyager.uregina.ca/>

GDI Library Prince Albert

48 12th Street East
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GDI Mission:

To promote the renewal and the development of Métis culture through research, materials development, collection and the distribution of those materials and the development and delivery of Métis-specific educational programs and services.



GABRIEL DUMONT INSTITUTE
of Native Studies and Applied Research