

Provoking Curriculum Conference 2019

Three grade 12 students, Abdulfattah A., Alvi N., Rimsha N., and Mrs. N. Ramadan from the Huda school were invited as guest speakers at the **Provoking Curriculum Conference 2019** to present their mindfulness statements in Sheena Koop's and Audrey Aamodt's presentation: "An English Teacher's Treaty Mindfulness: A Polyphonic Invitation. It was a powerful presentation where different voices including high school and university students, teachers and university professors, all joined together to present their obligation as treaty people, living on Treaty 4 Land. Audrey Aamodt further explains that the presentation is "not about producing (non-indigenous; white; settler; Canadian; old-new immigrant) guilt/shame or even using treaty to reassert belonging, but instead asking what our treaty responsibilities are. As non-indigenous peoples to this land, we seek to make treaty-land acknowledgements that are mindful & meaningful, that call us to tell the truth about Canada and act as good treaty partners. We work to move beyond simply reciting a pre-packaged, googled script in order to check off a perceived territory acknowledgment box."

Sheena Koops sparked the idea of Treaty Walks and mindfulness, as she explains: "In 2011, I was writing in my Morning Pages, a la Julia Cameron's The Artist Way. I wrote, "I need to get in better shape. I should walk to school next year. As I walk, I should meditate on the Treaties." Those three statements led me to starting a blog, Treaty Walks, and in the two years following, walking to school 300 times, and blogging about Treaties. Since that day I see how Treaties impact my life everywhere I go, and certainly these Treaty Walks led me to change careers from my 24 years in the classroom. I am now with Treaty 4 Education Alliance in Fort Qu'Appelle in the role of Nation Builder Advocate. In my belief, these walks, these moments of reflection, this practice is what I'm calling Treaty Mindfulness."

Sitting in a circle with the audience, all speakers presented their mindfulness statements. Here are some examples that were read by the Huda school students at the conference:

Abdulfattah: "*I am mindful* that I am an immigrant living in a land that has oppressed its original inhabitants, and as a Muslim citizen, I should educate myself on their hardships and be willing to make a change"- **by Maria**

Alvi: "*I am mindful* that I am a Muslim Canadian taking residence in a land that provides me with freedom and rights-allowing me to express my opinions and ultimately take a stance against the oppression of Indigenous people."

Rimsha: "*I am mindful* that I am a Muslim African immigrant living in Canada, a land rich with history, and it is my duty as a citizen to learn, educate and spread awareness on issues regarding treaty agreements and promises"- **by Amel**

Alvi: "*I am mindful* that I am a student who is exposed to Canada's history in a very Eurocentric manner-one that downplays, and sometimes completely erases Indigenous tragedies and victories"-**by Noor**

Abdulfattah: "*I am mindful* that indigenous studies in schools is not enough to understand the culture fully"-**by Faysal**

Rimsha: "*I am mindful* that the negative effects of residential schools on the indigenous people caused many citizens and newcomers to hold various stigmas about them"-**by Shakib**

At the Huda school, Narmeen Ramadan constantly reminds herself and her students that they always need to situate themselves in the Canadian landscape, as she explains: “as a visible minority and Muslim teacher, I attempt to guide my students as well as myself to constantly acknowledge that we are on Treaty 4 land and that we hold the responsibility to implement the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action, but especially, article 63 iii where it says: “Building student capacity for intercultural understanding, empathy, and mutual respect.” My ELA courses are set up for students to find where they are at and how do they situate themselves in the Canadian landscape. I heavily focus on the relationship between European settlers and Indigenous nations, and further push my students to ask themselves: “what is their role and relationship with the Indigenous people?”

