

THE BRUNSWICKAN OPINION & EDITORIAL

Editorial

Coping with stress

by Cindy Brown
Editor-in-Chief

The end of term. Oh joy, oh bliss. The end of term brings with it a much-needed break, but, in my case, and that of many of my peers, the end of term brings with it a huge pile of work. So, I am pretty stressed.

Why am I stressed? All my work seems to be due now. How do I deal with this overload? Well, personally, I scream and kick a lot. Well, only sometimes.

How should one deal with stress? Probably not like I do.

In my humble experience, it is best to stay away from stressful situations. If you know you have a lot of work to do, spread it out. But, I am a prime example which proves that that doesn't always work.

If you get stuck with a lot of work and you need to get it done here are a few things you should do to cope:

Take lots of breaks. If you plan on taking your Sunday to write a paper, make sure you get up to stretch, go for a walk - get out and get away from the paper. This will allow you to unwind a bit and will hopefully

prevent a breakdown. Taking a break is not a bad thing - it will do wonders to preserve your sanity.

Remember that school is not the end all and be all. There is life after a bad mark and an all-nighter. Your sanity is much more important than passing an exam or writing a kick-ass paper. Sanity also helps you keep your thoughts straight when writing that paper or exam.

Try going to the gym or exercising - all of the time. Exercise is pretty good for relieving stress. If you don't want to go to the gym, try any other mindless act to get your mind off your work and to relieve stress. Try playing foosball, ping-pong, or doing a crossword (although that sometimes stresses me out more).

Try to get a good night's sleep. Staying up all night does not help. Stay up late if you have to, but try and get at least six hours of good sleep time. Rest prevents stress.

As most people will tell you, prevention is key - try not to put yourself in a stressful situation. Everything in moderation. Try to do a little work here and there all term and that will keep you from stressing too much.

CHSR presents "The politics of food"

CHSR FM presents "The politics of food," a special broadcast on April 8th and 9th, two days of programming not to be missed!

Monday April 8th
10:30 to 11:30 am

Food and the culture of biotechnology: a talk by Brewster Kneen, internationally recognized expert on food systems, author of "Farmageddon - Food and the Culture of Biotechnology," and co-publisher of *The Ram's Horn*, a monthly newsletter of food system analysis.

12:00 to 1:00 pm

Organic permaculture at Polyface farm. Joel Salatin, author and owner of Polyface farm in Virginia, was the keynote speaker at this year's Atlantic Canadian Organic Regional Network (ACORN) conference. This presentation is on how his farm operates.

1:00 to 1:30 pm

Farming and free trade. This documentary features Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians; Terry Norman from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Cecilia Rocha of the Ryerson Food Security Workgroup; and Devlin Kuyek, from Belly of Resistance.

1:30 to 2:00 pm

Voices from the Farmers Market, part I. Listen to what Frederictonians have to say about the Politics of Food at the Farmers Market on April 6th.

2:00 to 2:30 pm

Grains of Truth. A discussion with a prairie farmer. Join Holly as she speaks with Rodney Luhnig, about being an

independent grain producer.

3:30 to 4:00 pm

Making contact. Food for thought: Nutrition and Healthy Kids. A growing number of young people across the USA are being diagnosed with severe depression, attention deficit disorder, and other behavioral and mental problems. On this program we take a look at evidence suggesting many mental health problems in children and adults, are linked to diet.

4:00 to 5:00 pm

Native solidarity news. Agribusiness and Pharmacy take on the World. Host Adam Gottlieb interviews Pat Roy Mooney from Rural Advancement Foundation International. They will be discussing topics such as intellectual property, international free trade, and food.

5:00 to 5:30 pm

Hope's Edge: The new diet for a small planet. Frances Moore Lappe wrote the ground-breaking book about the politics of food, *Diet for a Small Planet*, 30 years ago. She also started the Food First organization. Listen to her discuss these issues and the new book she wrote with her daughter Anna.

5:30 to 7:00 pm

Chicken bones with Sue Fisher. Want some beans? Some good corn bread? Musical virtuosos to satisfy your soul.

7:00 to 8:00 pm

The politics of veganism. Join Ben Conoley and Shea Thomkins for a discussion on the ethical reasons for going vegan, with music and recipes.

Tuesday, April 9th

9:00 to 9:30 am

Making contact. On the kill floor: U.S.

slaughterhouse conditions. Some workers and inspectors at U.S. slaughterhouses have reported abysmal conditions and inhumane treatment of animals. Industry and government officials say they're doing their best to ensure safe and clean facilities.

12:00 to 1:00 pm

Transformation of animals into food with Tan-Nee Ng. From the cradle to the grave... Competition to produce inexpensive meat, eggs, and dairy products, has led animal agribusiness to treat animals as objects and commodities to be bought and sold. This is their story.

2:30 to 3:30 pm

Genetic engineering and food: Promises, Politics, and Facts, with Andrea Smith. In this show we will explore the biotech industry's schemes for feeding the world, and the ethics and ideology of genetically modified organisms.

3:30 to 4:30 pm

Resistance to genetically modified organisms with Candace Moers.

4:30 to 5:30 pm

Vegetarianism and the meat industry. Join Jen and Ian as they discuss the ethical implications of "you are what you eat."

5:30 to 6:00 pm

Voices from the Farmers Market, part II. Listen to what Frederictonians have to say about the Politics of Food at the Farmers Market on April 6th.

6:00 to 7:00 pm

The global food system: Regurgitate this! with Jenn Thomas. A look at food in the global economy, why we should reject this system, and how to reconnect with our fundamental foodness.

Paideia: Analysing the theory and practice of education

To Bend or Break III(a): The Sudbury Valley School Project

by Shea Tompkins

Because I was unaware that the annual Brunswickan 'spoof issue' appears alongside the regular issue, rather than instead of, I have decided to expand the last article in this series into two sections. The first will deal strictly with an explanation of the Sudbury Valley School project, its method, and the 'performance' of its graduates. Next week's section will be dedicated to the critical examination of this school and the apparent 'success' of SVS students in relation to public school students.

The first Sudbury Valley School (SVS) opened in Framingham, Massachusetts in 1968. Despite the fact that there are now dozens of SVSs, the 'data' used in nearly all studies and reports I have seen are isolated to the one school in Massachusetts because it is the only one, so far, that has been in existence long enough to follow students who have received their entire education through its method, with adequate time after graduation to do 'meaningful' follow-ups. For this reason, I will talk about the project as though it is a singular school because other SVS 'experiments' are not old enough.

To begin, the SVS does not create arbitrary age segregation, and as a result, age mixing and interaction is common and varied. The school is located in a 'natural', non-alienating location with a great deal of wooded space, open areas, and a large lake. 'Teachers,' who are part-time for the most part, are selected to bring a diversity of worldviews, experiences and perspectives to the learning environment. The school admits anyone who wishes to enroll (first come, first serve), with no attention paid to previous school records or other indications of ability, because such a background is in no way an indicator of a student's performance in an open educational environment.

Despite the fact that there are no grades, or evaluations of any sort, the school is certified to award high school diplomas. In order to graduate, there is one requirement: in a meeting open to all members of the school's Assembly (which includes students, staff, trustees, parents, and elected public members), the student must defend the thesis, "why and how will I be able to take responsibility for myself in the society at large?" Further, of the schools first 79 thesis/graduation presentations, only one was denied, which should be noted, is profoundly more 'successful' than any contemporary common public school. According to Assembly members, this success can be attributed to the fact that students do not attend their presentations until they are sure they are prepared. The presentations are taken seriously and are attended by most students of all ages. As well, by the time the student is ready to present their thesis, they have already seen several thesis presentations, which certainly contributing to their 'shaping' and 'maturity'.

In terms of its approach, the SVS is most distinct in its total absence of curriculum. It is the student who provides all learning initiative, which, as was touched upon last week, leads to a profoundly different educational experience. At such a school,

'teaching' takes place entirely through informal processes, unless asked for by students. Upon such a request, teachers set up tutorials or more formal classes - to which students may, or may not attend. When it is not possible to provide students with the 'material' requested, outside help is sought.

According to the schools literature, the fundamental assumptions of the SVS is "that all people are curious by nature; that the most efficient, long-lasting, and profound learning takes place when started and pursued by the learner; that all people are creative if they are allowed to develop their unique talents; that age-mixing among students promotes growth in all members of the group; and that freedom is essential to the development of personal responsibility." The term 'freedom' is of great importance here. It does not mean that students are allowed to do anything they want, with no repercussions. In fact, the SVS actually has far more 'rules' than one would expect from a public school. The difference is that the rules are made up entirely by the members of the school, can be changed whenever they like, and grow out of genuine 'life' situations and problems/tensions that occur at the school. Compared with our public schools, this process creates an incredible degree of pre-contextualization and relevance to the student's life.

Further, all of the discussions of the school (including the rules, teacher hiring, and the general running of the school, such as budget allotment, for example) are always conducted in a fully democratic way. Although not all choose to participate in these routines at all times, when they chose to, everyone, teacher and student alike, receive an equal say. When voting is necessary, all teachers and students (despite age) receive the same 'one person, one vote' status.

In this environment, 'failure,' and the reduced confidence and/or self-esteem that comes with it, becomes a genuine and relevant learning experience. SVS students are allowed to see the direct repercussion of the 'rules' that they make - as well as their learning, evaluation and worldview. SVS students are 'free' to learn from their mistakes in a constructive and supportive environment - to accept responsibility for their actions, rather than being 'punished' by external, alienating authority figures.

In terms of the 'success' of the SVS students, it is important to mention that this term is used in two very distinct ways - the subjective, and the conventional. Subjective success can be defined simply as being happy with ones life. In this regard, there is no doubt that SVS students are far more 'successful.' In order to verify this for oneself, however, the reader will have to consult the personal interviews and testimonials of the students themselves in various studies and reports. There is not room in this article. If this is not a desired pursuit (although I would hope it would), the reader will have to take my word that

SVS students talk about the correlation between their education, life and happiness in a way that brings a tear to an educator's eye. It is what we all wish for public school students.

Personally, I don't think the discussion needs to go any further than this. If people are happy, fulfilled, and understand the consequences of their actions in the world, all consistent with SVS students, we should consider their education successful. However, there is a second understanding of 'success' that concerns social conventions, such as the ability to attend high status post secondary institutions and competition for professional careers, as two example (keeping in that the first 'definition' may imply the desire to pursue some of these more *status quo* definitions of 'success'). I will discuss this form of success, therefore, not because I think it adds to the SVS project, but because it speaks volumes about the 'failure' of contemporary public schools. What does it mean for us as educators that public schools spend 4 to 6 hours a day, for years, on a training regiment, only to be 'out-competed' by students who have done what would be considered nothing by conventional standards?

It was concluded in a study by Peter Gray and David Chanoff that the SVS students were not inhibited by their alternative education in any way. "They have gone on to good colleges and good jobs. They have become, or are clearly en route to becoming, productive members of our society, contributing to the economy in nearly the entire range of ways that people can contribute. They are taking responsible positions in business, music and art, science and technology, social services, skilled crafts, and academia...by even the most conventional standards [they are] doing well."

Personally, I think this is a drastic understatement - although I wish the authors had used the term 'society' instead of 'economy,' but that's another article. SVS students 'out-compete' public school students, to use public school language, in every single category one could possibly think of. As of a 1992 study concerning SVS graduates, 87% had attended post-secondary schools of some sort - compared with approximately 25-30% in public schools, although the number varies widely depending on region, race, gender and socio-economic factors. What may be more amazing, is that, of the individuals who left during their course of study, not one left due to academic difficulty. Most of the qualitative answers referred directly to a disappointment in 'higher education' or a realization that such diplomas were not needed in order for them to pursue their goals. Further, keeping in mind that this is the conventional understanding of success, individuals who would be ignorantly called 'drop-outs' or 'drains' on their community, are virtually none existent in the SVS project.

Due to space restrictions, some letters to the Editor were not published. To view more of what is supposed to be in the Opinion/Editorial section, visit our website at www.unb.ca/bruns. Happy reading!

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Hello! We at Human Resources Development Canada want to encourage students to check-out the Federal Student Work Experience Program and of some affiliated programs that are also overseen by the Public Service Commission (PSC) of Canada.

Departmental Programs

All federal departments and agencies have access to the computerized general inventory to fill student jobs. Around 80% of the student's jobs are filled through this general inventory. On the other hand some departments have specific student programs within the broader FSWE program. If you are interested in being considered for one or more of the specific departmental programs, you must indicate the proper departmental program code(s) on your FSWE application form.

Aboriginal Programs

Basic criteria for these Programs:

- Be an Aboriginal person as defined under the Section "Employment Equity" and indicate this by completing Section 30 of the FSWE Application for Employment form.
- Be a full-time secondary or post-secondary student in an accredited institution and be returning to full-time studies in the next academic term.

For more details, please use the following:

http://jobs.gc.ca/bswep-pfete/student/index_e.htm

http://jobs.gc.ca/bswep-pfete/manager/code_aboriginal_e.htm

Canada