



# Manitoba Association of Multi-age Educators

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in affiliation with



## Karen Karp: Presenting at MAME MTS PD Day 2019

By: Bailey Englot

Brilliant, humorous and incredibly polished, these are only some of the words that I use to describe Karen Karp's presentations. Having had the opportunity to hear her speak not once but twice at the NCTM (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics) Conference, I can say first-hand that she brings a genuine understanding and true knowledge of what is important about teaching students mathematics, especially those with diverse learning needs. She delivers her knowledge in a way that keeps a care for our learners at the core of how supportive strategies are used. Her focus is very much on helping our math learners understand the concepts rather than "tricks" to working with numbers.

Karen has worked to discover ways to teach mathematics more effectively to students with special needs and dedicates her time to working with educators who are studying at graduate levels. She is currently a professor in the School of Education at Johns Hopkins University. Prior to that appointment she was teaching at the University of Louisville as a Distinguished Teaching Professor in Elementary Mathematics Education for twenty-one years.

Having worked directly with John Van de Walle for years, Karen has more than 25 books written on elementary mathematics education including, *Elementary and Middle School Mathematics Teaching Developmentally* (with Van de Walle and Bay-Williams). She has written award-winning articles and is a former member of the Board of Directors of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, and a former president of the Association of Mathematics Teacher Educators.

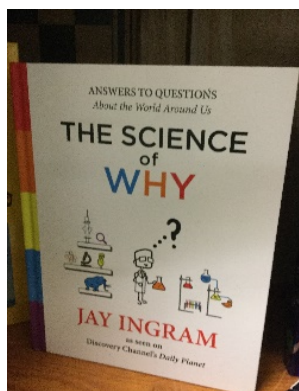
Karen knows her stuff. A day with Karen will be filled with hands-on experiences using classroom manipulatives to authentically practice demonstrating mathematical concepts for our students, especially those who struggle. We have been hoping for Karen to come since first seeing her at NCTM and we are thrilled that she is presenting with us for our 2019 MTS PD Day Conference!

## Special Projects Grant - Reading Rocks!

By: Tina Arnott

I was very fortunate to be approved by MAME for a special project grant to launch my Reading Rocks program. This grant went towards building a classroom library that helped get students excited about reading!

Upon entering my new classroom in the fall, I quickly noticed the lack of books, especially books and topics students are interested in. There were many dated chapter books and some picture books. Although the library at my school is fantastic, our classroom library needed some TLC. Coming from teaching early years I know how crucial it is to provide students with a variety of rich reading material, not only to help improve reading levels but also to foster curiosity, increase vocabulary, as well as notice different writing styles. Prior to applying for the grant, the students in my 5/6 class shared their thoughts on our currently class library, as well as what it may need to help get them more excited about reading. Many students said: "they would read more if there were better books to read". This facilitated other conversations and discussions about different genres and authors. From there we made book suggestions that students would like to see more of. Our new library has increased student's engagement during reading times and provided us with many books that are hard to get from the library due to their popular demand! We are very grateful for our new library 😊 ■



### Special Project Grants

Is there a special project that your school would like to undertake or participate in?

MAME members can apply for funding of up to \$1000 for Special Projects.

Visit [www.multiagemanitoba.org](http://www.multiagemanitoba.org) to complete your application.

## Weird and Wonderful Plants

By: Suzanne M. Simpson (M.Ed)

It's hard not to be inspired by nature. I only need to walk through my neighbourhood to be reminded of the amazing adaptation of the plants in our zone 3 climate. Consider the star of our tall grass prairie: Big Bluestem.

This grass has evolved slender stems and leaves which sway in the breeze instead of breaking in the high winds of the open prairie. The roots have evolved to grow up to 10 feet deep allowing the plant to lie dormant under a blanket of snow through our -40C weather. The long root system also allows the plant to survive the wildfires that routinely swept the prairies. Even in a drought year, the Big Bluestem can make use of its long roots to access water and nutrients, an act that leads to soil building as nutrients are brought up to the surface where topsoil is made of the annual dying leaves.

When you learn a bit about Big Bluestem it's hard not to be in awe of the amazing survivability of this plant, but truthfully, sometimes on a cold winter day, when I'm walking outside and see Big Bluestem, my mind simply registers "grass" instead of "millions of years of evolutionary perfection". Some plants take a little teaching for students to gain an appreciation. Today, I'm highlighting some plants which inspire interest simply at first glance.

1) Resurrection Plant: This plant is originally from the desert and has evolved a unique adaptation which allows it to "dry up" and become dormant during times of drought. When it is placed in water, it "wakes up" and within half an hour the tips of its leaves start turning green and unfurling. A miraculous plant which children love to observe. To grow this plant, simply put it on some pebbles in a dish. Add a little bit of water to the dish (water only if it starts to curl on its edges) and place it in a sunny location.



2) Air Plants: These plants have roots which do not require soil and are mainly used to anchor the plant to a larger tree. Evolved in the forests, mountains and deserts of South and Central America, these air plants take water and nutrients in through their leaves. Air plants are easy to maintain as they require a good soaking (5–10 minutes) for once or twice a week and a bright but indirect light source.



3) Morimo Moss Balls: Contrary to the name, these plants are not actually moss but a type of algae. They are very low maintenance and require only indirect light such as can be provided by a room with a window. To keep your morimo plant happy, change the water once a week (tap water is perfectly fine). To keep the round shape of your plant, make sure you move it around so that growth occurs on all sides of the plant. This shouldn't be hard to do since children love picking up this live pompom. A gentle squeeze will result in the plant floating near the surface of the water. A perfect plant for tactile learners!





4) Carnivorous Plants: A plant that eats protein? Is there anything cooler? Don't worry, your students will be safe as they only digest small insects. These uniquely-adaptable plants are fun to have around, but don't pin your hopes of eradicating a fruit fly problem with these carnivorous creatures since they require only 2-3 small insects a month. Children love checking to see if any insects have triggered the trap and are caught inside. They prefer a terrarium setting where warmth, light and moisture all combine to create an ideal growing environment. Be careful to use distilled water and not to touch their delicate traps too much since these insect-eaters are actually very sensitive plants.



All of these plants are available at Sage Garden Greenhouse, although I would recommend phoning ahead before your visit to avoid disappointment as some are only available seasonally.

If you are interested in learning more about connecting children with plants, we offer many different programs throughout the year. First, through our Horticultural Supports for Schools we offer consultations, PD sessions and in-classroom programs. For a full list of this year's program list, click on this link: <https://sagegarden.ca/pages/horticultural-support-services-for-schools>.

Second, if you have students interested in learning more about horticulture, Sage Garden Greenhouse offers a Junior Botanist Club (Jeunes Botanistes) for kids from ages 5-12 (English and French sessions). There's also a special weekly session on Wednesdays for the homeschooling families in our community. Click on the following link for information about these clubs, <https://sagegarden.ca/collections/junior-botanist-club>.

Third, look for our newly launched Teacher Workshops where each session offers an in-depth look at a plant-based topic, hands-on activity to take back to your classroom and a safe place to ask your gardening questions. These sessions are equally for those teachers who have a budding interest in plants as well as those who would like to go the next level with their gardening skills. (<https://sagegarden.ca/collections/teachers-workshops>)

Whether you are growing one of the extreme examples of plant life or just appreciating plant life living in an extreme climate, I think you'll agree that plants truly are weird and wonderful. ■



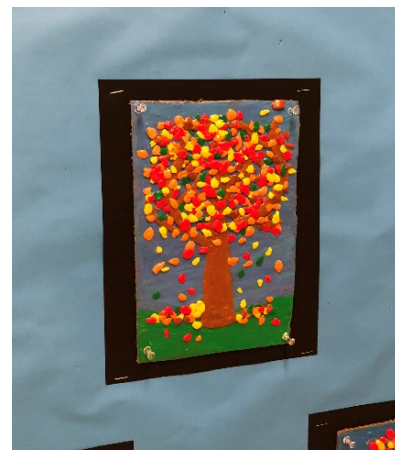
**Suzanne M. Simpson, M. Ed.** is a passionate educator who values the educational and restorative potential of the natural environment. Although raised in rural Manitoba, Suzanne and her family now live in Winnipeg. Together they strive to live lightly on the earth and remain connected with nature through gardening and being active in the wild edges of the outdoors. Suzanne has experience teaching classes from Kindergarten to grade eight, and wrote her masters thesis on the topic of elementary school garden use in Manitoba schools. She is qualified as a LEED Green Associate, Master Composter and is Master Gardener in training. Suzanne is the classroom educator & school consultant at Sage Garden Greenhouse and teaches the Junior Botanist club program and the Teacher Workshop nights throughout the year.



## Barbara Reid Art in Grade 5/6

By Amber Duff  
Samuel Burland School

I have started a new adventure teaching grade 5/6. After teaching grade 1/2 for 6 years it was an exciting, nerve racking and scary transition to make. Wanting some familiarity, I chose to read several picture books by the amazing author and illustrator Barbara Reid (YAY! Grade 5/6's still love picture books!). Using the book "Picture a Tree" as inspiration we created autumn trees using plasticine. To frontload, we watched several YouTube videos of Barbara Reid explaining and demonstrating how she creates her artwork. Each student received a piece of cardboard and plasticine to make their creation. We broke the process down into several sections. First, they started with creating the background by spreading a thin layer of plasticine onto the cardboard. The next day they worked on the tree and leaves by rolling out small sections of different colours and forming them into shapes. Using toothpicks and old toothbrushes students were able to add fine details. Finally, they brushed a light coat of Modge Podge on top. The Modge Podge helps create a beautiful shine and prevents other students in the hallway from picking the plasticine off. I recommend this art project for any age group!



## Growing in the Classroom – Part One

By Charlene Sacher



Our classroom decided to explore the question: "Where does our food come from?" for a year long inquiry process. We started by attending Fort Whyte and their Farm to Fork program to jump start our year. We had previously planted lettuce in our class garden in the spring and over the summer, as families ate from it, I asked for them to leave the lettuce once it had become bitter and allow it to go to seed. We were then able to harvest the seeds and separate them. We then planted the seeds in our Tower Garden and this became our lettuce all winter. We let one plant flower and go to seed and this was what we planted in the spring when we were ready to once again plant in our outdoor garden in April/May. It was amazing to see the full life cycle during the school year as this is often difficult to do because of our growing season. Using the tower garden, multiple pots, heating pads and lots of trial and error, we were able to grow potatoes, tomatoes, a variety of peppers, lettuces, basil, orangelo, mint and carrots.



We were able to tie all this growing in the classroom to the various subjects in our grade 1-2 multiage classroom. We looked at sustainability and how we rely on worms and other such creatures to help create rich fertilizer for our plants. We also looked at healthy eating, the needs of living thing and the diversity of living things. We were able to have an elder come and speak to us about plants that were indigenous to this region. We also looked at other regions of Canada and different crops that were available based on their climate. The amount of science, social studies, math and literacy that we needed to answer the question "Where does our food come from?" was unbelievable.



We were able to use much of this produce to create amazing meals for our school and local community.

Note: The purchase of the Tower Garden came from Manitoba Hydro Eco-Sustainability Grant. This is one option to pursue. Another would be applying to our MAME Special Projects Grant which may allow you to access \$1000 for a special project that you would like to pursue.





## Cooking in the Classroom – Part Two

By Charlene Sacher

As a follow-up to last time, I wanted to share how we used much of what we grew in the classroom to bake and cook in the classroom.

We continued to grow and harvest our food all winter long due to the multiple pots, heating pads and tower garden. We wanted to be able to share our food with others. In the middle of winter, we were able to harvest beautiful red peppers, herbs and tomatoes from our tower. With this produce, our grade 1-2 class, with support of students from Windsor Park, made chili for us to share as well as share with the whole school.



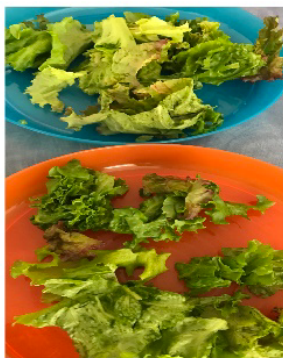
We also got the opportunity to get some wheat and we thrashed and separated the seed from the plant. We tied in this to our history in our community. We took the wheat seeds and ground them in order to make multiple flour-based recipes such as bannock (which was also served with our chili) and cookies.

All year long, we were able to regularly have salads as the students would just pull some lettuce from our pots and add some dressing as they got hungry or in addition to their snack.



We decided as we were making so much food, we would need some aprons, so for our measurement unit, our project was to create an apron. It was a simple project that used ribbon, IKEA tea towel and a whole lot of math. The students were very proud of their creation and even more proud of the meals that they were able to share with their friends and whole school community.

If you are interested in doing a project similar to this but need some supplies to get you started please check out our MAME Special Project Grant.

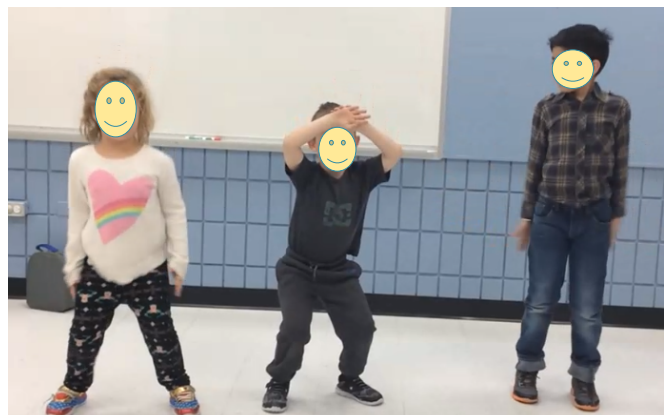
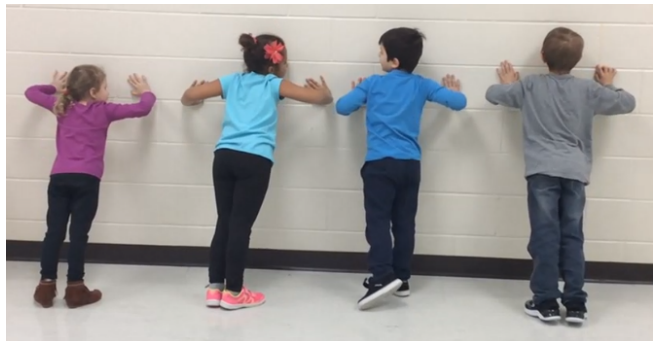




## Keep Fit and... Skip Count: Creating our Own Movement Break Videos

By: Breccan Wilson  
Grade One-Two Teacher  
Shamrock School

Having your students create their own movement break videos might be the antidote you need to all of these indoor recesses. My grade one and two class was learning about The Characteristics and Needs of Living Things earlier in the year, investigating the question: "What keeps us healthy?" (Being active, for one!) We were also doing a lot of skip counting as part of our daily math routines. Being fans of movement break activities and "Go Noodle" videos we watched and jumped around to the limited amount of counting videos they had, and then embarked on creating our own. We discussed what we noticed about those videos (our criteria). Then we listed all the ways we knew how to skip count and broke into groups with each group selecting the counting sequence they would create the video for. With the help of our Music specialist to add some artistry and rhythm, the students wrote out scripts and planned the movements. Beyond the number sequences, some groups had lines and themes like: "do the number robot". They practiced, revised, and practiced some more until they were ready to film. This process definitely solidified those number sequences, and got them moving, and it will continue to do so as we use them to be active and count



# Tips for Teaching our Most Struggling Readers and Writers in Grades 3 - 6

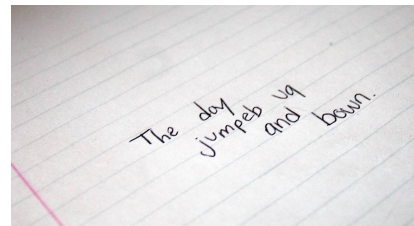
By Kathy Klenk

Student Services Teacher

Early Reading Intervention & Later Literacy (Grades 3-6) Support Teacher



Early into my new position as a Literacy Support Teacher (Student Services), I realized an immediate need for a shift in thinking and teaching practices. The students I was working with had already experienced balanced literacy programs in classrooms with intense classroom support and guidance from the Student Services department as well as Early Reading Intervention. Still, only minimal growth had been made. Throughout my own professional learning journey, I have found these strategies and approaches have benefitted my students...



<https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2015/jan/22/a-dyslexic-authors-writing-tips-for-dyslexic-kids>

## Use Learning Assistive Technologies

**Immersive Reader** is a tool in **Word Online** that will read aloud any text in a document. Students can even copy/paste information from a website into Word or another program and have it read to them.

Students who have difficulty getting their ideas written down can use the **Dictate tool** in **Word Online**. It's so simple to use...all they need is a headset with microphone to tell their story and the text appears on the screen!

**Flip Grid** is a web-based video discussion platform that could also be used for recording student reflections. Students can begin by creating a mind map (<https://bubbl.us/041806249370583354>) to help organize their thoughts, then record these thoughts or stories in FlipGrid and then finally draft out their story using the Dictate Tool in Word Online (or even write it out on paper if he/she is able).



#### How to Teach Sight Words in a Multi-sensory Approach

1. **Write the sight word on a flash card.** Have the child read the word. Of course, if they don't know the word yet, tell them what the card says.
2. **Trace each letter on the card with the back of a pencil or pen,** saying the name of each letter as you do. Then say the whole word while underlining it. Do this 2 times.
3. **Trace the word on the table using your finger.** Like step 2, say each letter as you write it and then say the whole word while underlining it. You can have your child turn the card over as they get closer to mastery so they are tracing from memory and not from looking at the card. Do this 2 times.
4. **Using the hand you write with, tap each letter down your opposite arm** – going down the left arm or up the right arm. Say each letter and then the whole word while sweeping your hand down the left arm or up the right arm (depending on handedness).
5. If your child is writing, have them **write the word in a notebook.**
6. Practice these sight words until they can read them by sight 5 or 6 times. Then put them in a pile for occasional review.

## Use a multi-sensory approach to teaching sight words

## Get back to basics with more phonics instruction

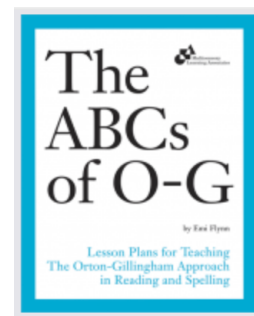
Thanks to an opportunity to learn from colleagues about the Orton-Gillingham approach through a Professional Learning Network, I found out about The ABC's of O-G.

This is a teacher's guide to the Orton-Gillingham approach for reading and spelling. It has some fabulous multi-sensory strategies for teaching letters sounds, vowels and other phonics skills in easy to follow lesson plans for small-group settings. (Psst...these materials can be ordered through the MLRC as a special order!)

<http://mlaog.com>

You can also use visualization stories to help students learn (and remember!) vowel sounds, as recommended by Susan Barton

<https://bartonreading.com>



## Use of audiobooks – digital libraries

Students can listen to stories independently and/or read along with a paper copy of the book

Overdrive - <https://www.overdrive.com>

Libby - <https://meet.libbyapp.com>

According to the International Dyslexia Association 15-20% of the population has a language-based learning disability. Dyslexia is the most common cause of reading, writing and spelling difficulties.  
Source: <https://www.dyslexiacanada.org/dyslexia-basics>



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## Submit an Article to Our Newsletter

This newsletter is created by our membership for our membership and we would love to hear from more of our members. Is there something exciting happening in your classroom or school? Do you have a teaching experience or thoughts on multi-age education that you would like to share? Please do! You can email your submissions including images any time to [lisa.mcavoy@lrdsd.net](mailto:lisa.mcavoy@lrdsd.net)

## DID YOU KNOW?

Your MAME group has professional development funds available for our members to use. Simply go to our website and apply under PD Funding. You are eligible for up to \$300.00 to attend professional development opportunities.

Visit [www.multiagemanitoba.org](http://www.multiagemanitoba.org) to complete your application.

## The MAME Library

MAME has been accumulating resources that are relevant to multi-age educators. These materials are available for loan to our members. To view a list of titles, go to our website, [www.multiagemanitoba.org](http://www.multiagemanitoba.org) and click on the Lending Library tab. To borrow MAME resources, please contact Charlene Sacher at: [charlene.sacher@gmail.com](mailto:charlene.sacher@gmail.com)