

Manitoba Education Research Network

**Annual Report
2013 - 2014**

MERN

Manitoba Education Research Network

Message from the Director:

The Manitoba Education Research Network Annual Report 2013 – 2014 marks a second year for MERN operating with grant funding from Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, administrative support from the Manitoba School Improvement Program, office space provided by the University of Winnipeg and an array of other in kind resources allocated by education partners to support MERN research and dissemination activities across the province.

MERN thrives as a result of these in kind contributions from its network members. In 2013-14, it has carried out core functions and added initiatives throughout the academic year. Innovations included:

- The MERN Social Studies Education Research Group (SSERG) initiated the *Grade Twelve Inquiry Project* for teacher research on project based learning in senior years. A MERN Special Forum on social studies education featured this work and promoted dialogue on pedagogy and practice. SSERG is in the process of writing a special volume for *The MERN Journal* on Manitoba-based social studies education research.
- MERN initiated proposal to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) *Connections* program for teacher research through shared stories. The Manitoba School Improvement Program (MSIP) is lead on this project with the University of Winnipeg, the Frontier School Division and the Professional Learning and Leadership Centre (PLLC) of the Winnipeg School Division as partners.
- Benefits of the reciprocal relationship between MSIP and MERN continue to be realized through collaborative teacher research initiatives. Inquiry-based efforts for teacher development and school improvement contribute to the field of education particularly with respect to priorities in Manitoba.
- Technology applications enhance the capacity of MERN to work at a distance. In particular, support from the University of Winnipeg, helping connect with Brandon University and University College of the North, and from the Frontier School Division, supporting teleconference meetings, as well as, hosting the MERN Winter Forum as a live-streamed event to extends access across the province.

I am pleased to provide this annual report for 2013 – 2014 on behalf of the Manitoba Education Research Network.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Hunter, PhD
Director

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1. Preface

The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) works to improve public education through an informal network that supports education research related to schools and schooling in Manitoba. Now in a tenth year of operation, the network has an established program of Manitoba-based education research events and activities. Core functions are sustained within a strategic and cyclic planning framework, while new initiatives develop in response to evolving priorities, leadership directions and an expanding knowledge base in the field.

MERN exemplifies “the sum being greater than its parts”. It is clear that many limits to individual and organization capacity may be effectively addressed by the mechanisms for collaborative opportunities that MERN provides to create and share knowledge for professional learning and change processes for improvement. As an informal network, MERN can have significant impact on its partners’ ongoing strategy execution and organizational effectiveness as it serves to be the “glue” to hold together cross-functional process-improvement initiatives, alliances and partnerships (See Performance Reporting section for details of MERN activities in 2013- 14). Some identified strengths of MERN are listed here intended as an “organizational snapshot”:

1. MERN has built a community of researchers, across the field, faculties and government, that is characterized by trusting, communicative relationships. Advances in Manitoba-based education research are cultivated and nurtured and the work continues to capture the attention of individuals and organizations that become involved in network activities. MERN has been described as a community of practice writ-large.
2. MERN fosters new partnerships among its members, forming and reforming education research groups, to collaboratively capture information and document a body of literature and knowledge about teaching and learning strategies in Manitoba.
3. MERN provides opportunities for research to be conducted and disseminated in ways that respect and support the empowerment of teachers. Meaningful, quality teacher research is being made accessible through events and publications. Establishing mechanisms that allow classroom teachers to conduct research and participation in dissemination activities has been a focus this past year.
4. MERN demonstrates the importance of exchanging useful information that goes beyond more and effective communication. It does this by acting on the principle of starting from what we know from our work in

Manitoba, identifying who knows what, establishing fruitful connections linked by research interests and leveraging expertise to address common themes.

5. MERN also recognizes and acts on the understanding that not everyone needs to be connected to everyone else in order for the network to see through its mission. People are connected where there is strategic payoff, at critical junctures to support information flow for research events, and targeted collaboration for research partnerships.
6. MERN partners benefit from creating time and space for cross-organizational collaboration. Sharing resources, reducing constraints and the productive working relationships that develop from collaborative projects far outweigh the costs invested.

2. Mandate

The Manitoba Education Research Network (MERN) serves as liaison between the deans of education in Manitoba universities, superintendents of school divisions, other senior leaders in the education field and government to facilitate educational improvement through collaboration on the part of Manitoba's five faculties of education, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning and its affiliated partner organizations.

3. Governance

3.1 MERN Deans Advisory Group

The MERN Deans Advisory Group members are the five (5) deans of education faculties from Manitoba universities, along with the Deputy Minister of Education, and the Director of MERN (chair).

In 2013 – 2014:

Stefan Delaquis, Dean, Université de Saint-Boniface

Heather Duncan, Dean, Brandon University

Gerald Farthing, Deputy Minister, Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning

David Mandzuk, Dean, University of Manitoba

Ken McCluskey, Dean, University of Winnipeg

David Williamson, Dean, University College of the North

& Heather Hunter, Director, Manitoba Education Research Network (Chair)

The MERN Deans Advisory Group also serves as the MERN Editorial Board along with Jon Young, Managing Editor, *MERN Monograph Series*.

3.2 MERN Affiliates Group

The MERN Affiliates Group members are the senior leaders of education partner organization and the Director of MERN (chair).

In 2013 – 2014:

Spencer Clements, Chair, Council of School Leaders of the MTS

Sharon Conway, General Manager, Louis Riel Institute, Manitoba Metis Federation

Carolyn Duhamel, Executive Director, Manitoba School Boards Association

Lorne Keeper, Executive Director, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre

Ken Klassen, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of School Superintendents

Naomi Kruse, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of Parent Council

Ken Pearce, General Secretary, Manitoba Teachers' Society

Helen Robinson-Settee, Director, Aboriginal Education Directorate

Roy Seidler, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of School Business Officials

Lesley Weisshaar, Executive Director, Manitoba School Improvement Program

James Wilson, Commissioner, Treaty Commission of Manitoba

& Heather Hunter, Director, Manitoba Education Research Network (Chair)

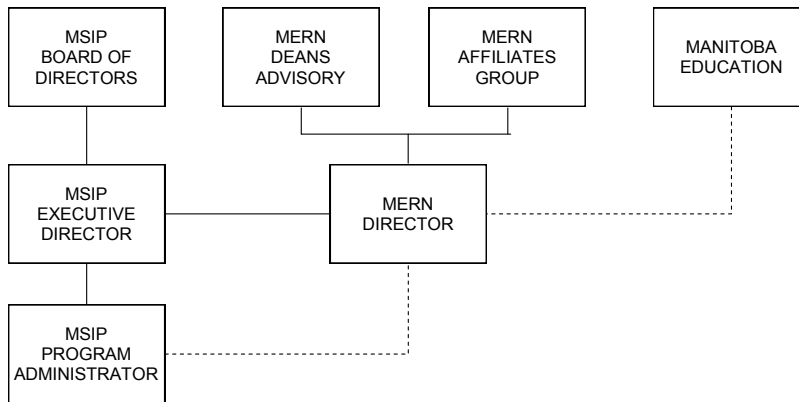
4. Responsibilities

The Manitoba Education Research Network serves public education by carrying out its responsibilities for:

- a) Facilitating a province-wide education research community,
- b) Increasing professional learning through inquiry,
- c) Creating opportunities for research connections across the field, and
- d) Supporting education priorities most relevant to Manitoba through collaborative research activities.

5. Organizational Chart

MERN - Organizational Chart



MERN Organizational Chart April 2012

6. Financial Information

Appendix B: 2013 – 2014 Manitoba School Improvement Audited Financial Statement (Pending - Draft document developed in September 2014 to be passed at MSIP AGM, November 2014)

7. Performance Reporting

The following table summarizes MERN activities for the 2013/14 reporting year:

PROGRAM AREA	2013 - 2014 ACTIVITIES	IMPACT/COMMENTS/RESOURCES
Governance		
	MERN Affiliates Group Spring Meeting – June 13, 2013	Location – MSBA
	MERN Deans’ Advisory Group Spring Meeting – June 14, 2013	Location – Legislative Building
	MERN Affiliates Group Fall Meeting – August 27, 2013	Location – Prince Charles ERC
	MERN Deans Advisory Group Fall Meeting – September 5, 2013	Location - USB
	MERN Deans and Affiliates Joint Meeting – December 11, 2013	Location - MSBA
Forums		
	MERN Spring 2013 Forum – April 12, 2013 <i>“Working Together: Schools and Communities”</i>	100 participants Facilities - USB Leads – USB, MAPC, COSL
	MERN Fall 2013 Forum – November 8, 2013 <i>“Efficacy and Leadership in Education”</i>	90 participants Facilities – BU Leads – MASS, MAPC

	MERN Winter 2014 Forum - January 31, 2014 <i>“Technology in Manitoba’s Schools”</i>	110 participants Facilities – FSD / live-streamed Leads - COSL
	MERN Special Forum - March 21, 2014 <i>“Inquiry into Social Studies Education”</i>	80 participants Facilities – UM Leads – MSIP, UW
Education Seminars and Special Events		
	Just Teacher – May 2 & 3, 2013 Manitoba Teachers’ Society <i>“Action Research”</i>	80 participants Leads: MSIP, MTS Note: This event is now organized by MSIP as a leadership retreat
	MERN Treaties and Reconciliation Education Summer Seminar – June 7, 2013, Brandon University	Location: BU 75 participants Leads: MMF, MFNERC, TRCM, AED
	MERN Treaties and Reconciliation Winter Seminar - December 13, 2013	Location: MSIP 80 participants Leads: MMF, MSIP, MFNERC
Luncheons at the Legislative Building		
	MERN 3rd Annual Awards Luncheon, June 14, 2013, Legislative Building 2013-14 Award Recipients: David Anderson (Research) Marlene Atleo (Research) Lloyd Kornelsen (Research) Frontier School Division (Special Contribution)	75 participants Lead – MERN Acknowledges efforts of individuals and organizations to enhance education in Manitoba by innovative, collaborative, and high quality work

	Launch of the <i>MERN Monograph, Issue 6</i> - MERN Lunch at the Leg, October 4, 2013	65 participants Lead – MERN
Website		
Website Development		Gerald Neufeld, Webmaster (Retired, BU Faculty)
Event Information	<i>Calendar of Events</i> for all partner activities Call for proposals, programs and abstracts posted	Education affiliates share events for posting to facilitate cross-organizational planning
Online Registration	Support for MERN Forums with online registration	Online registration tracks names, affiliations, emails and session choices
Archives Use		Visits to Journal page = 221 Visits to Monograph page = 273 Visits to Award Recipient page = 130 Note: Visits to the Journal and Monograph pages are underestimated as only the visits to journal and publication lists page are counted. MERN publications are PDF files that can be downloaded directly and this access is not included in the count.
Site Visits	Source: Google metrics	Visits = 9, 289 Unique visitors = 2, 776 Unique page view = 6, 452
Publications		
<i>MERN Monograph Series</i>	<i>The MERN Monograph Series, Issue 6</i> – English/French version “Inclusive Special Education in Manitoba: 2001–2012” Authors: John VanWalleghem and Zana Marie Lutfiyya with Sheena Braun, Lesley Eblie Trudel, Charlotte Enns, Barbara J. Melnychuk, Tammy Mitchell, Youn-Young Park, and Joan Zaretsky	Jon Young, Editor (Professor, UM Faculty) Published online at www.mern.ca with limited number of hard copies printed for distribution at the launch

<i>The MERN Journal</i>	<i>The MERN Journal, Volume 5</i> <i>The MERN Journal, Volume 6</i>	Marion Terry, Editor – New Vol. 5 Launch at UM – April 12, 2013 Vol. 6 Launch at BU – November 8, 2013
MERN crc	<i>MERN crc - Fall 2013</i> <i>Winter 2014</i> <i>Spring 2014</i>	Revised format Issues posted on website Sent as MERN e-message
MERN <i>Researcher Profile</i>	Paul Betts, UW (Fall 2013) Lloyd Kornelsen, UW (Spring 2014)	Published in <i>Education Manitoba</i> Posted on website
MERN e-messages	Average 5 – 10 emails monthly to network members informing about calls for presentations, forum registration information, invitations, event programs and relevant research information.	Email is primary mechanism for network communication requiring regular, systematic updating of contact information essential to network functioning.
	<i>Canadian Journal for Teacher Research</i> (University of Alberta)	Beginning collaboration with Jim Parsons, Editor, to publish MERN articles.
MERN Editorial Board	Meetings twice yearly	Forms part of the MERN Deans Advisory Group meetings
MERN Occasional Paper	Two submissions reviewed - did not meet publication criteria	Reviewers: Jon Young, Editor of the <i>MERN Monograph Series</i> Heather Hunter, Director, MERN
Other		
	MERN Office 1G03B Graham Hall, Faculty of Education, University of Winnipeg	
	MERN Indigenous Education Research Group – added Metis representation	Members: Marlene Atleo, Laara Fitznor, Frank Deer, Kevin Lamoureux, Sherry Peden, Laura Sims, David Anderson, Jamie Wilson, Lorne Keeper, Glen McCabe, Sharon Conway, Heather Hunter (chair)
	MERN Math Education Research Group	Members: Ralph Mason, Paul Betts, Ian Donnelly,

		Ken Clark, Glenn Cockerline, David Anderson, Sheri Lynn Skwarchuk, Don Metz, Heather Hunter (chair)
	MERN Social Studies Education Research Group	Members: Lloyd Kornelsen, Gary Babiuk, Lesley Weisshaar, Linda Mlodzinski, Renee Gillis, Heather Hunter (chair)
	MERN Teacher Research Group	Members: Lesley Weisshaar, Lloyd Kornelsen, Kathy Collis, Bradley Hampson, Heather Hunter (chair)
	SSHRC Letter of Support for Understanding by Design project	Jennifer Katz, Laura Sokal, Umesh Sharma - received A4 designation

Contact:

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Heather Hunter
 Director
 Manitoba Education Research Network
 1G03B Graham Hall
 University of Winnipeg
 515 Portage Avenue
 Winnipeg, MB
 Heather.Hunter@mern.ca
 (204) 891-8100