



Winter 2019 Newsletter

We create educational opportunities in correctional settings where the experiences of teaching and (un)learning challenge assumptions, stigmatization and inequality.

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A Word from Shoshana

Hello W2B network! We are very excited to bring to you our first Walls to Bridges newsletter. Instructors, students and alumni are doing some groundbreaking work at our various sites across the country and we feel it's important and inspiring to keep us all connected and to learn from one another! With some very generous donations from the Lyle Hallman Foundation in Kitchener, ON and other private funders, we have evolved and grown since beginning our program in 2011 under the name Inside-Out Canada. In 2014, we became Walls to Bridges Canada, providing classes, annual instructor trainings, and support to those establishing W2B classes in their own communities. To date, we have trained 89 instructors in the W2B pedagogy, resulting in 9 universities and 10 correctional facilities partnering to deliver W2B classes - this has allowed 803 students to experience W2B classes so far!



Over the years, our pedagogy and program structure has evolved to be grounded firmly in the lived experiences of those experiencing incarceration; this is most notable in the fact that the annual instructor training in Kitchener, ON is developed and facilitated by the Walls to Bridges Collective (a vibrant group of W2B alumni and instructors) at Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI). The W2B Collective has been honoured to receive teachings about learning circles from Indigenous scholars and Elders such as Dr. Priscilla Settee, Larry Morrisette, Gayle Cyr and Dr. Kathy Absolon-King and from anti-racism leaders, such as Dr. Rai Reece. We continue to learn and develop from the feedback we receive and from our connections with you; we look forward to our continued work together. We are very grateful for the amazing work being done to take W2B in new directions and into various communities.

In Solidarity,
Shoshana Pollack
Director, Walls to Bridges Canada

W2B Community Collective—Tiina

I am Tiina and I've been a member of the W2B Community Collective since I was released from Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI) in 2013. Members of the Community Collective include formerly incarcerated W2B alumni living in the Greater Toronto Area who help deliver workshops and outreach in community settings. The last year has been a busy one for us and we have done some great work in the community that I am very proud of! Recently, various Collective Members have participated in or presented at:

- Prison Abolition Symposium at Brock University (St. Catharines, ON);
- Stride Symposium: Women in Prison Building Community held by Community Justice Initiatives (Kitchener, ON);
- Encounter KW for students at St. Jerome's University (Waterloo, ON) which is an immersive, local experiential learning opportunity that engages students deeply in social justice issues important to the Kitchener-Waterloo (KW) community;
- The W2B Annual Facilitator Training (by interviewing participants and running a training day held at Wilfrid Laurier University); and
- Various other community workshops which discuss breaking boundaries and deconstructing stereotypes!

It has also been an excellent year for me personally! With the support and love of W2B, I completed my Master of Social Work from Wilfrid Laurier University and have begun my career as a Mental Health/Addictions Case Manager at The Meeting Place, West Neighbourhood House in Toronto! The Meeting Place is a Drop-In Centre for adults experiencing homelessness and it has given me the opportunity to do some great harm reduction work that I can be really proud of! I am looking forward to working with the Collective in the future and continuing this excellent and very necessary work!



W2B GVI Collective

Formed as the final class project of the 1st W2B class held at Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI), the GVI Collective is responsible for designing and facilitating the annual W2B Facilitator Training and supporting W2B classes at GVI.

From January - June 2018, the GVI Collective met bi-weekly to plan and refine the annual W2B instructor training held in June 2018. Using W2B pedagogy, collaborative process, and trainee feedback, the Collective added new experiential training activities and refined foundational W2B teachings. This year we trained 17 exceptional instructors from across Canada, which brings our total of trained instructors to 89.

Earlier, in Fall 2017, the GVI Collective took part in a project entitled Erasing Frankenstein which was spearheaded by Elizabeth Effinger and Sue Sinclair from the University of New Brunswick (UNB). On the bicentennial of the publication of Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, members of the GVI Collective, along with UNB students, each "erased" several pages of the novel by covering up Shelley's words in order to create a new piece of poetry/art with the chosen words left behind. The final Creation, I or Us, was exhibited in Spring 2018 at Kitchener Public Library, Fredericton Public Library, and University of New Brunswick Library. The Fiddlehead, Issue No. 276, also published an article about the collaborative piece of work in Summer 2018.

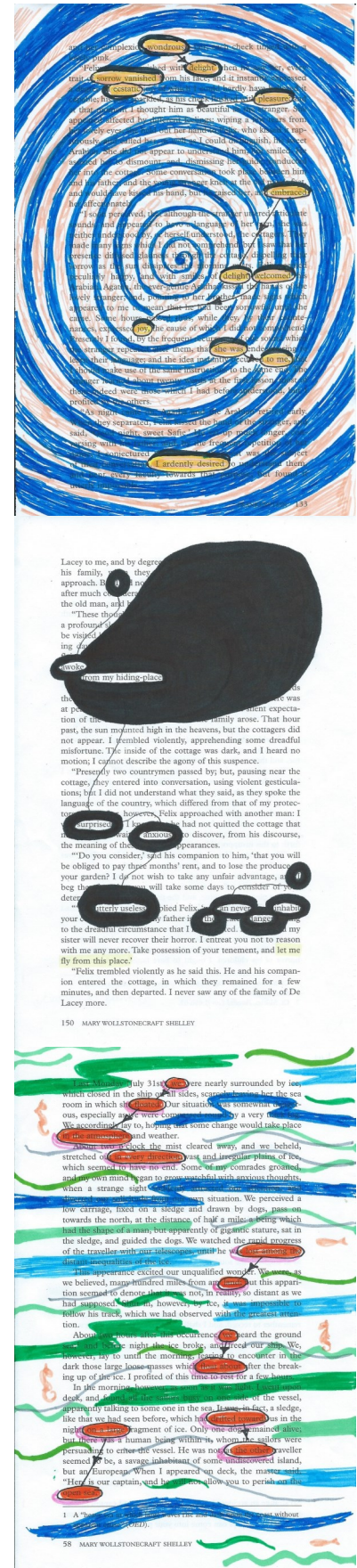
Erasing Frankenstein: An Introspection

The “Erasing Frankenstein” project was a challenging and angst-ridden experience but it was cathartic. I have never been a fan of poetry (is it strange that I have a B.A. in English?) but the concept of transforming a piece of classic literature into poetry tickled me. As I considered the assigned pages, the words that jumped out at me told another story of their own: could “Frankenstein” also be a love story? I had never considered this theme before while reading this science fiction horror and I would never have realized this possibility had it not been for this project. It taught me that even among the horrors of life, there can be love and beauty.

-Nickey (W2B Collective Member)

Not considering myself an artistic person, I was surprised to see how drawn I was to the concept of erasure poetry. Sitting down with Shelley's pages and my art supplies, I was able to 'get out of my own head' and reflect on her words and my experiences with W2B from the heart and soul. I feel that erasure poetry embodies the spirit of W2B, as it encourages connection with the whole self in order to reflect on and challenge ideas, as well as embracing artistic expression as a valid way of knowing and sharing.

-Sydney (W2B Collective Member)



W2B Across Canada



University of Winnipeg

This year has been exciting for W2B Winnipeg and the momentum is growing in our province. University of Winnipeg has been teaching courses at the Women's Correctional Centre since 2014 including Community Development (Dr. Judith Harris with Bernice Cyr), Rhetoric and Writing (Dr. Judith Harris with Jaque McLeod Rogers) and English (Dr. Kathleen Venema).

This year at Stony Mountain Men's Correctional Institution, we offered Community Development (CD) taught by Dr. Judy Harris with Melody Stevenson (spring 2018) and a prep course in the fall term. Academic Writing, taught by Dr. Helen Lepp Friesen, has an enrolment of 13 men from Stony Mountain (with no outside students). To date, 109 inside and outside students have participated in our classes.

As part of Dr. Harris' CD course, students create a 'zine' to showcase their co-op business plan. One zine creation 'Con-post', a compost co-operative developed by Anna, Donald, Nik and Tam, was short-listed at the 2018 Canzine competition held in Toronto. Anna and Judith presented at Canzine and were encouraged to develop an ongoing art zine by the staff of Broken Pencil Magazine.

New faculty members have been trained as W2B instructors including Dr. Kevin Walby (Criminal Justice), Karen Ridd (Conflict Resolution Studies), and Dr. Heather Snell (English and Cultural Studies). New courses are being scheduled for Spring and Fall 2019.

Our Think Tank continues to meet monthly and has connected with the Public Interest Law Centre to discuss advocacy projects. Our strategic planning for the group produced a PATH (Planning Alternatives for Tomorrows with Hope). To date there are seven former inside W2B men and women who are attending classes at University of Winnipeg. We hope to soon begin to train former inside and outside students as tutors and teaching assistants.

- Ashley Hayward
(Walls to Bridges Intern)



University of Windsor & South West Detention Centre

Walls to Bridges courses began being offered at University of Windsor and the South West Detention Centre in Fall 2017 through the Women's and Gender Studies program. This offering was the first time that a W2B course has been delivered at a maximum-security detention centre. The first course, called "Tough Chicks: Women's Strength and Anger in Pop Culture and Society," was offered on the women's side of the detention centre, as was the Fall 2018 offering last term, called Restorative Justice. In January 2019, Walls to Bridges was extended to the men's side of the jail. The course is called "Tough Guys: Men's Strength and Vulnerability in Pop Culture and Society" and is being co-taught by Cara Fabre and Richard Douglass-Chin. We have established an ongoing relationship with South West Detention Centre and expect regular courses to be offered in Fall and Winter terms.

- Cara Fabre

- Announcing the next W2B Instructor Training - June 8th to June 12th, 2019

2018 W2B Facilitator Training

A W2B instructor training was offered again in June 2018 where 17 educators from across Canada gathered at Grand Valley Institute for Women (GVIW) to learn a variety of pedagogical methods, enhance experiential facilitation skills, and gain some practical tips on setting up W2B classes. As one participant stated, "Learning through doing was incredibly helpful. Witnessing a truly beautiful collaborative leadership & facilitation model from the collective at GVI and community collective was inspiring."

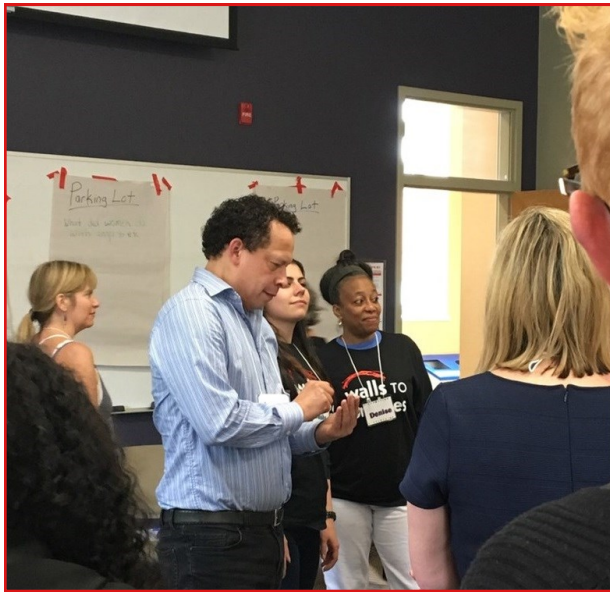
Bruno Vompean, a participant, reflects on his experience:

"On the first day, a few of us had finally just made it inside the classroom - the others still going through security - when a collective member approached me to discuss common interests. A couple of things were said and I wondered, wait, could it be that she's incarcerated at the prison?!

Hmmm why not? Couldn't anyone? Who was I expecting?

The training renewed my understanding of the ways in which we perpetuate systemic racism, gender discrimination and marginalization by failing to recognize our own privilege in daily life. I was surprised not at the depth of the learning but at how much it taught me about myself - I didn't expect the five days to make me (want to be) a better person, but it did."





"W2B stands out as a Canadian gem, because it exemplifies courageous and innovative ways to expand mutual understanding, intellectual advancement, empathy and respect in Canadian society."

- Lawrence Hill

author of *Book of Negroes* and *The Illegal*

Thank you Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation (KWCF) for your support & all other folks who have given generously to the W2B program!



Check out our website www.wallstobridges.ca for W2B publications, articles and the recent TVO video clip for further information.

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WE ARE ONE
NOT THE OTHER