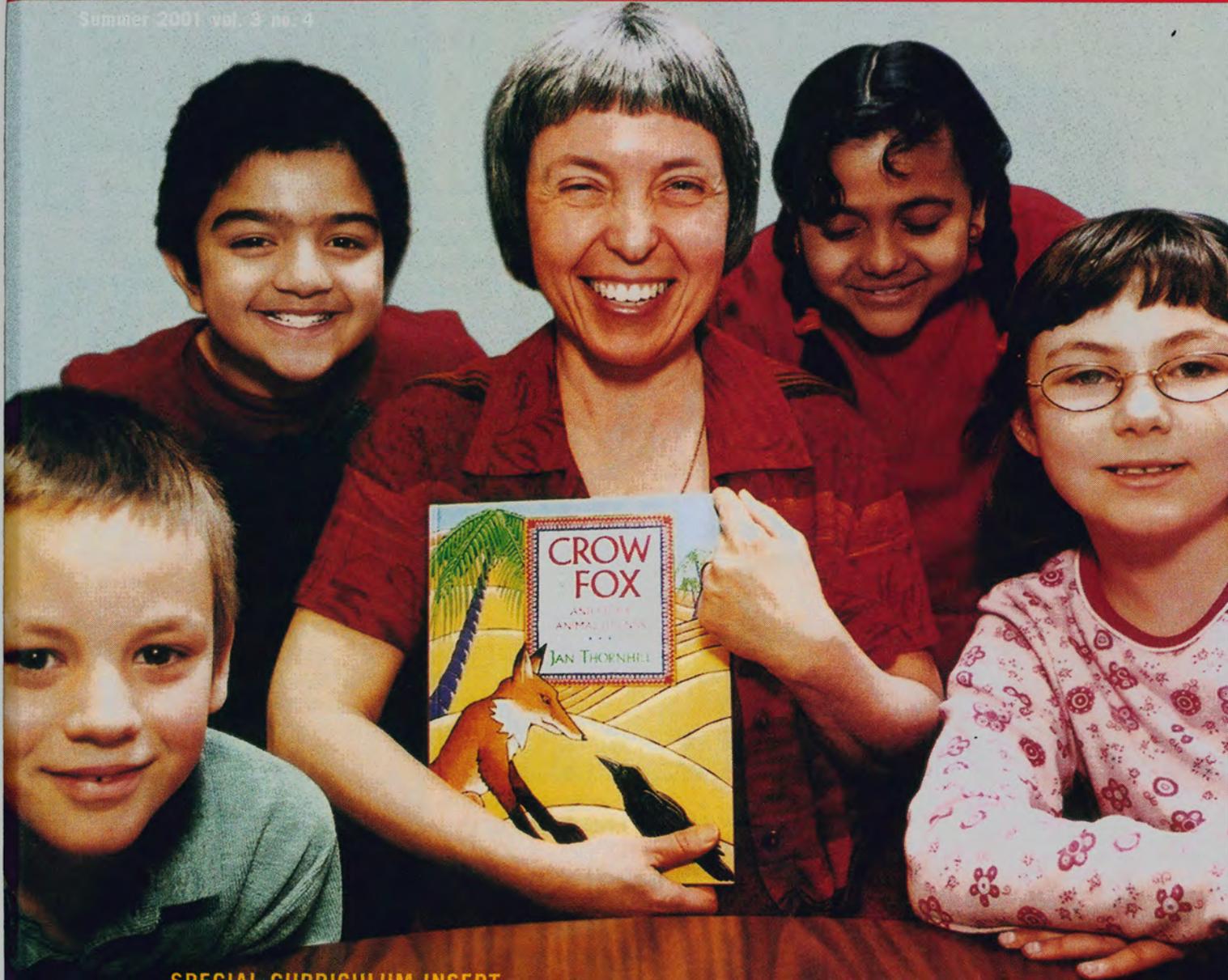


voice

Summer 2001 vol. 3 no. 4



SPECIAL CURRICULUM INSERT

The Class That Reads

Attitude is the Key to Success Summer Reading The Year in Review

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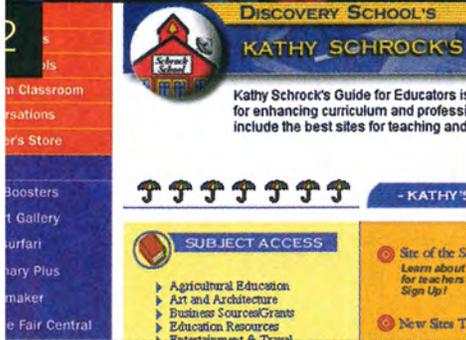


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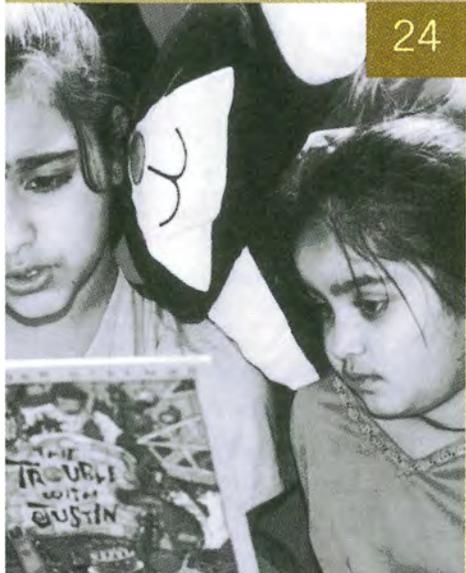
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On the cover:
Photo by Brian Pickell. Etta Kaner with some of her students at Clifton Public School, Mississauga.

voice

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 4

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Canadian Education Press Association
Indexed in the Canadian Educational
Index/Répertoire canadien sur l'éducation
ISSN: 1481-4072

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Phyllis Benedict, President, ETFO

Throughout April and May, the government made many announcements designed to shore-up its core support. For example, in pre-election style, the Premier didn't deliver the throne speech in the Legislature, but in locations all across Ontario.

Mike Harris and his advisors must be particularly pleased with their budget announcement of May 9. After chronically underfunding the public education system, the budget offers a \$3,500 tax credit for students who attend private schools. Welcome to Ontario's version of the voucher system.

Our members have experienced five continuous years of unrest, continuous assault on our profession and devaluing of public education. We have watched the creation of the College of Teachers, been threatened with teacher tests and perpetual probation. We have agonized as instructional time was lost to the EQAO tests. We have seen more hungry children in our classrooms.

As elementary teachers, we have seen no reduction in class size, no significant change to address the needs of early learners, no assistance for our most needy and vulnerable children. Meanwhile, the gap in per student funding between elementary and secondary continues to widen, in spite of the Minister of Education's promise to address this glaring inequity.

Our members have continued to make the system work. We have transformed the "rigorous" new curriculum into learning experiences for students. We have given a minimum of 120 unpaid hours per year to completing the standardized report card. We have continued to offer a wide range of extra curricular activities for elementary students. We have spent even more of our own money equipping our classrooms.

We take pride in the work we do. However, we must ensure balance between our personal and our professional lives. The quality of our professional lives is at an all time low. Our members are taking more sick days than ever before; more members are on long-term disability; teachers are leaving the profession.

We can't continue to do it all, all the time. We must learn to say "No" and mean it. "No" is not a bad word. Saying "No" can restore some harmony in our lives.

From the General Secretary | NEW MEMBERS' STRENGTH IS ETFO'S FUTURE



Gene Lewis,
General Secretary, ETFO

Many of our members will retire this year. To those moving on, congratulations and all best wishes for the future. Your work has made a difference. To those who plan to be back in your classrooms next year, your skills and experience will be more valuable than ever. It will be your responsibility to be a good colleague by welcoming new

staff to your school, giving them the good news in education (the bad will surface soon enough), sharing your resources and providing support and guidance as necessary.

New members too have chosen to make a difference in the lives of children. They deserve to arrive in schools that have adequate resources. They deserve clean classrooms, support and

assistance from their principals and active, ongoing professional development from their school boards. In return, they will prepare effective lessons and do the best they possibly can for their students.

Last but by no means least, new members must continue to build their union. Their working conditions and future pension benefits have resulted from years of united action and hard collective bargaining. As many of those who have given so much to federation move on, we look to our new members to continue the struggle. New members must take up the challenge and ensure that ETFO continues to distinguish itself as an effective advocate for members and students.

Wherever you are in your career, it's important to remember that ETFO is your union and your future.

From the Editor

The theme of this issue is reading. The curriculum insert is excerpted from ETFO's soon-to-be-released publication *The Class that Reads*. Also in this issue are some thought-provoking summer reading ideas for members.

As you might expect, most parents believe that teaching students reading, writing and math should be the number-one goal of elementary schools. And many parents would like to receive information to help them work with their child to improve their reading. That's why, in June, ETFO will be distributing *Read and Succeed*, a colourful brochure designed to help parents guide their children's summer reading. The brochures will arrive in your school in class sets of 25 for distribution with report cards and at end-of-year events.

The next issue of *Voice* will be published early in November. By then, ETFO will know who retired this summer and who joined us in the fall. Staff in Members' Records have also asked me to thank all those who have notified ETFO of their change of address. Doing so saves time and ensures anything ETFO sends you doesn't go astray.

See you next year.

Charlotte Morgan
cmorgan@etfo.org

On Location Report

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Position _____

School _____

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Event or Award Description _____

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On Location

York Region Teacher Country Singer

Six years after being diagnosed with a rare form of bone cancer, **Christina Doyle**, a special education teacher and country singer, has produced her first full length cd – *I Wouldn't Change A Single Day*. Twenty per cent of the sales profits are being shared by Toronto's Mount Sinai Hospital and the Canadian Cancer Society. "I don't play guitar, I don't read music, but I sing my heart out," says Doyle. For information visit www.christinadoyle.com

Developing Healthier Schools

Until July 2001, the Indoor Air Quality in Canadian Schools on-line project is collecting information about indoor air quality (IAQ). Funded by Health Canada, the project aims to develop a national approach to indoor air quality in schools through the development and implementation of guidelines. Please help! Email the research team at iaqs@dal.ca; or access the survey through www.medicine.dal.ca/iaqcs or http://www.mcms.dal.ca/scripts/ehcs_bak.html.

Hamilton-Wentworth

As part of their novel-studies program, some students in Hamilton-Wentworth are enjoying local teacher **Carole Paikin** Miller's book *One Enchanted Tunelight*. Set in Hamilton, the story centres on a ten-year-old white girl and a 12-year-old black boy who take a magical musical adventure into a music box. After a series of misadventures, the children help the "Racketrons" learn harmony while developing and

enhancing their own understanding of diversity and peaceful co-existence. Comes with a Teachers' Guide. Some proceeds support an endowment administered by the Hamilton-Wentworth DSB that assists elementary students who otherwise would have no means to study any of the creative or performing arts. Contact Tunelight Productions at (905) 643-0759 or email Carole at millepa@sympatico.ca

Avon Maitland

Congratulations to **Barb Smithers'** grade 6 class at Stratford Central. The class placed first in their division in America's Community Problem Solving Project. The class project on child poverty earned it the right to represent Canada at Georgia University in June. The students will present a PowerPoint presentation of their project activities, be questioned by a panel and design a display about the project. Well done!

News Without Spin

Two new websites are something to celebrate. **Straight Goods** helps Canadians sort out fact from fiction and features journalism from professional writers across Canada. Packed with information, Straight Goods also features a weekly animated cartoon by leading web animator **Jim Kempkes**. If you have a story to tell, email thegoods@straightgoods.com and visit www.StraightGoods.com

Also New and Interesting, **rabble.ca** on-line magazine invites you to see what's happening and have your say. Founder **Judy Rebick** has drawn

together a cast of Canada's finest to produce original journalism and to link to a wealth of material exploring social change. **Rabble.ca** is a place to explore your political passions, voice your opinions and connect with rabble-rousers like yourself.

Raising the Roof on Homelessness

Toronto teacher **Beverley Lane** represented the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) on the National Working Group on Homelessness. Raising the Roof's activities included developing a website that has links to lists of literature on prevention practices, more general information on homelessness, and links to resources that will be useful to those seeking to eliminate homelessness in Canada through prevention strategies and approaches. Visit www.raisingtheroof.org/nationalapproach/innovativepractices.php.3

Nestlé Listens to Concerns

Thanks to 6,000 letters, calls and e-mails from concerned citizens such as York Region teacher **Philmor Edelmyra**, Nestlé Canada will continue to guarantee that some of its popular products, including Smarties, Kit-Kat, Coffee Crisp and Aero, are nut free. Consumers had contacted Nestlé about the company's plans to manufacturer all its candy bars in the same factories, exposing children to the dangers of peanut anaphylaxis. In announcing that it had decided to maintain the status quo, Nestlé said "We've listened to consumers and moved quickly to reverse our original decision."



ETFO *Voice* is pleased to provide "PD Notes," a column written by the ETFO Professional Development Services Staff. It introduces issues, programs and publications.

Northern Conference

Our first northern regional conference, Spring Ahead, was held in Sault Ste. Marie on April 26-27, 2001. It was wonderful to have members from Rainbow and Superior Greenstone join their Algoma colleagues for this professional-growth conference. Dick O'Brien gave a keynote address entitled, "Have You Ever Had a Bad Day?" followed by a workshop on the same theme.

Upcoming Regional Conferences

"Primary Pathways to Success" will be held in Stratford on Friday, September 28, 2001. The Avon Maitland ETFO Teacher Local, the District School Board and ETFO provincial are co-operating to present an exciting primary conference based on three strands: Utilizing Instructional Strategies for Success; Creating Classrooms that are Successful; and Personal Skills for Success.

Plans are also underway for two regional kindergarten conferences in the new school year. In October, a large conference is being planned in partnership with the Elementary Teachers of Toronto, the District School Board and ETFO provincial. In the spring, the Hamilton-Wentworth ETFO Teacher Local and District School Board will host a kindergarten conference in partnership with ETFO provincial.

Watch for flyers and registration forms in your ETFO steward's mailings.

www.kindergartenconsultant.com

This is a new kindergarten website especially for kindergarten teachers, created by Joanne Sleightholm. Joanne, a retired kindergarten teacher, is pursuing a dream of supporting her colleagues by creating an opportunity for them to learn from each other. Joanne, who received the Prime Minister's Award for Teaching Excellence (2000) and the TVO Award of Merit for Teaching Excellence (1999), wants to share her ideas and create a forum in which teachers can communicate with her and with each other. On the site you will find practical ideas that are classroom ready, a message board for sharing thoughts and ideas, and links to other useful websites that will enrich your program. The site is being built now. Joanne invites you to visit and make suggestions about what would be useful to you.

Financial Management for Women

ETFO can proudly celebrate the success of its third annual Financial Management for Women Conference – "Taking Charge of Money Matters". This provincial conference was held on April 20-21, 2001. Two hundred members attended a variety of dynamic workshops and plenaries on estate planning, pensions, insurance, RESPs, online banking, investing and much more. A special thank you is extended to the following presenters: Lisa Coy, Toronto: The "B" Word – Budgeting. Janet Bennett-Cox, Toronto: Realizing Your Real (Estate) Asset Potential. Marcie Warren, Hastings Prince Edward: Developing Your Financial Goals. Lorna Wilson, Thames Valley: Creating a Financial Plan.



Algoma PD Committee for "Spring Ahead." Left to right: Steve Scott, Bill Clarke, Cathy Hawkshaw, Laurie MacEachern (PD Chair)

Matters of Management

This column provides teachers with ideas for successful classroom management. The topic this issue stresses the importance of using your personal attributes to help defuse bad behaviour and keep learning on track. The following suggestions are ideas that work. This is not a complete list.

Teachers are important models for their students. A sense of humour, effective voice, physical presence and empathy are personal attributes that can make a difference to student reaction, help to defuse bad behaviour and keep classroom management on track.

Manage by Maintaining Your Sense of Humour

Used wisely, humour can be an effective way to deal with situations that could become difficult. Try to find the humorous side of a situation, being careful it is never expressed at someone else's expense. Take yourself lightly and don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. Show genuine delight in something you are teaching to your class – a humorous poem, a cartoon, or a challenging problem-solving activity. Humorous anecdotes can work in small doses. Be careful that sarcasm doesn't creep into your humour. Always use humour with respect. Choose what you will react to and ignore the rest. Certain issues cannot be ignored and brushed aside. Focus on the important big issues. Don't forget to smile!

Make Your Voice a Management Strategy

Communication skills can be enhanced through the volume and tone of your voice. It is important to use an invitational voice when you want the attention of your students. Avoid raising your voice over the classroom sounds.

A calm voice can help to ease a difficult situation. Either speak softly so students must be quieter to hear the message or find a signal that will focus attention on you and what you are saying. The rate at which you speak can also be an effective management tool. Signal phrases such as "eyes on me," "eyes forward," "listen up," or "focus front," can also be very effective. It doesn't really matter what phrase you choose as long as it is consistent and works to help students focus and listen. Provide the necessary waiting time after you say the signal words to get the attention you need before proceeding. When most of the class is attending except for one or two students, offer personal invitations to listen to you by saying "A personal invitation to Keith," pause and wait for eye contact from Keith, then nod and move on.

This keeps the lesson moving and fairly quickly draws those in who need a personal invitation to join the class. For the teacher who enjoys being theatrical, a dramatic remark made in character can also engage students' attention.

Choose Your Words Carefully

They should always be respectful of the student, even if he or she is misbehaving. Use the kind of language you want the students to use with you and their peers. Words spoken in anger are best left unsaid.

Physical Presence Makes a Management Statement

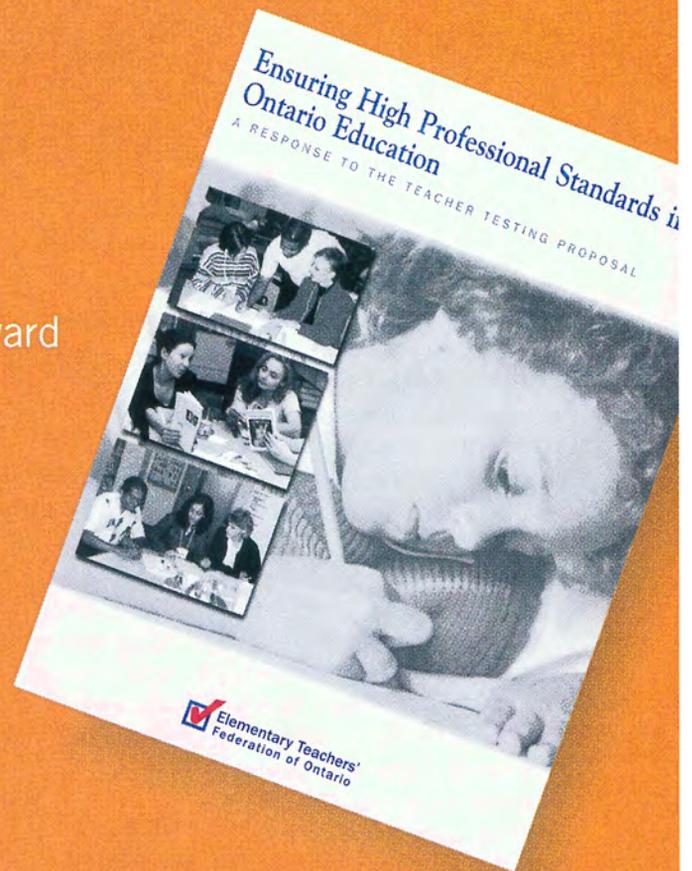
Body language is a key element in the communication process. Make sure your body is giving the same message as your voice. Walk tall. Rounded shoulders and a dropped head may be seen as a lack of power. Stand firmly. It signals you are in control. When you walk around the room, make eye contact and walk as if you are not intimidated. Keep your arms loosely at your sides. You don't have to be tall to have a physical presence. Some of the most petite teachers have a presence and stance that commands students' attention. If this is an area you would like to improve, take the time to watch your colleagues and note how they hold students' attention through their presence and stance.

Jan Moxey, ETFO Professional Development Services Staff

Additional information on ETFO PD Programs and Services can be obtained from the website at www.etfo.on.ca ETFO PD – Making a Difference in the Professional Lives of Our Members

Update on Teacher Testing

The government is moving forward aggressively on teacher testing



This spring, the Ministry of Education is focusing on three initiatives for possible implementation in the 2001-2002 school year:

- an initial qualification test for entry to the profession;
- a province-wide performance appraisal system for teachers; and
- a recertification program for teachers every five years.

The Ontario Teacher Testing Project branch of the Ministry has invited representatives from the teachers' federations, principals' associations, directors and supervisory officers, and the Ontario College of Teachers to participate in workgroups to develop proposals for each of these initiatives. To ensure the voice of elementary

teachers is heard, ETFO has agreed to be part of the work groups. However, ETFO's participation in no way signifies endorsement of the final product.

ETFO believes teachers welcome accountability strategies that are effective, fairly implemented and achieve meaningful objectives. To that end, ETFO representatives will lobby hard within the work groups to develop such strategies. The 11 positions ETFO set out in *Ensuring High Professional Standards in Ontario Education: A Response to the Teacher Testing Proposal* (December 1999) will form the basis for our input:

- Students have the right to the highest quality teaching.
- Effective pedagogy engages students in the learning process.

- ETFO opposes written competency tests for Ontario teachers.
- The Ontario government should provide Curriculum Implementation Days within the existing school year calendar, during the instruction day, to facilitate teacher in-service related to the curricula.
- The only prescribed professional development for teachers should be that related to the curricula, student assessment and effective pedagogy. It should be provided by school boards within the existing school year calendar, during the instructional day, on a consistent basis and be adequately funded by the provincial government.
- School boards alone are responsible for evaluating teachers and providing opportunities for prescribed learning.
- As lifelong learners, teachers engage in ongoing professional development on a voluntary basis by assessing their own learning needs and developing individual growth plans.
- The Ministry of Education should develop core guidelines and principles for a Supervision for Growth Model in partnership with teacher federations and school board, supervisory officers and principal associations.
- School administrators who evaluate teacher competence should be trained to assess teachers with respect to implementation of the curricula.
- The Ministry of Education should implement and fund a province-wide mentoring program to assist beginning teachers in their first two years in the profession.
- The Ontario College of Teachers has a role to advocate on behalf of Ontario teachers with respect to ensuring there are sufficient and appropriate opportunities for ongoing professional learning.

For further updates check the ETFO website at www.etfo.on.ca

April 1999: In anticipation of an election call, Premier Harris announced a program to test Ontario teachers, including recertification exams, every three to five years.

October 1999: The Speech from the Throne stated that the testing plan will include “regular testing of teachers’ knowledge and skills through written and other assessment methods. Remediation will be offered to those who fail assessments, and decertification will result if remediation is unsuccessful.”

December 1999: ETFO published *Ensuring High Professional Standards in Ontario Education*, a response that rejects the assumption that written competency tests for teachers will achieve this goal.

Spring 2000: The Ontario College of Teachers released its response to teacher testing *Maintaining, Ensuring and Demonstrating Competency in the Teaching Profession*.

Many of the College’s recommendations were consistent with the positions developed by ETFO.

Fall 2000: The Ministry approved a language proficiency test. Teachers who take their training outside of Ontario in a language other than English or French must pass a language proficiency test as part of the requirement to be certified by the Ontario College of Teachers.

The Ministry of Education established the Ontario Teacher Testing Project, a department within the Ministry, responsible for developing and implementing:

- an initial certification test for entry to the profession;
- a province-wide performance appraisal system;
- a system of recertification;
- an induction program for new teachers;
- a quality assurance process for schools; and
- a system to recognize teacher excellence.

Wendy Matthews, an ETFO executive assistant, represents ETFO on the Ministry of Education’s Teacher Standards Panel and Recertification Consultation Group.

REPORT CARD

Handwritten notes on the report card cover, including a name and a date.

GOOD WORK

VERY GOOD

A

A



"We're doing division now. And math is so much easier than in September when we started times-tables. I thought I couldn't do it until I tried and I had faith in myself."

Jessica - grade 3 Student's Math Journal comment

Attitude is the Key to Success

By Heather Knill-Griesser

In our increasingly technological world, it is essential that students develop their skills in mathematics. My action research project began with a review of the *Summary of Attitudes of Grade 3 Students* in our school from the 1998 Grade 3 EQAO Provincial Assessment. I was concerned with the response to the following statements by the Grade 3 students:

"I like mathematics"

Girls – 50%; Boys – 38%

"I am good at mathematics"

Girls – 31%; Boys – 44%

The way we teach math should be driven by what we believe to be important. I wanted to bring my teaching practice closer to my belief that "attitude is the key to success." My question for my action research project, therefore, became: "How can I use quality math/literature materials to improve students' attitudes towards math?"

TAKING THE RISK

I took a critical look at the way I was teaching math and the resources I had available. I wanted to design a complete math program that would improve students' attitudes towards math and consequently their success in math. I envisioned a complete math program to include:

- use of quality resources;
- math/literature activity centres;
- problem-of-the-day challenges;
- integration of math across the curriculum; and
- math journals.

I attended Brant Action Research Network (BARN) sessions for information and peer support and learned how to use math/literature materials. I purchased some of these materials and created the corresponding activities.

I decided to collect data from teacher journals, teacher/critical friends, photographs, parent and student math attitude surveys and student math journals.

“How can I use quality math/literature materials to develop programs to improve students’ attitudes and positive parent interaction in math?”



THE PROCESS BEGINS

As well as being interested in my students’ attitudes toward math, I was also interested in the attitudes of their parents. As I began this Action Research Project, I designed a *Parents’ Math Attitudes Survey* and sent it home. Students’ completed a *How I Feel About Math Survey* periodically after finishing various math strands.

My complete math program began with the use of high-quality resources. I used the *Interactions 3* math texts (1995) and *Practice On Your Own* masters to support my math program. Students were encouraged to use manipulatives with each new skill taught and to complete assigned tasks. I felt it was important to reinforce and develop problem solving skills in math and designed daily “problem of the day” challenges using *Gage Mathematics Assessment Activities for Grade 3* (1999).

A component of each science and social studies unit I created from the Ontario curriculum documents was integration of math. Math was also integrated into music, art, health, and computer technology lessons as well.

My question encouraged me to look for creative ways to teach math using a literature-based approach. The first activities I developed were activity centres to accompany literature-based math packets from Wintergreen. The story which accompanied the math manipulatives was math based and the activities were designed to reinforce the math concept.

I developed a math rubric to assess the students at each of the activity centres. Students rotated through the centres in groups of four and each student had their own copy of the story to read in a guided reading approach. As the second term ended, students became more confident in writing about their learning and I expanded the student attitude surveys to include math journals.

PARENT PARTNERSHIPS

My complete math program seemed to be missing something. I reviewed my *Parents’ Math Attitudes Surveys* and discovered I had not addressed a very important issue; partnership with parents in math. One parent wrote, “Yes, I can help my child but I would like to learn how he is taught at school, so when he has homework, we can use the same system at home so math homework will be less confusing for him.”

Parents commented on “Friday File” comment sheets and “Report Card” comment sheets that they were unsure of the new curriculum when assisting their children. They wanted more active roles in their children’s math programs, but were unsure of the best way to help. I needed to develop strategies to foster positive attitudes in math for both parents and students. I then adjusted my action research question as follows: “How can I use quality math/literature materials to develop programs to improve students’ attitudes and positive parent interaction in math?”

The *Mathtotes* take-home activities program by Sandy Woodcock (1995) was a resource I wanted to develop for my classroom. *Mathtotes* is a mathematics lending library. *Mathtotes* are created from empty Pringles Chips containers with a mathematics game or activity inside. Included in the tote are all materials required to complete the assignment or game (worksheets, manipulatives, crayons, dice, counters, etc.) *Mathtotes* are divided into six strands; logic, geometry, numbers, measurement, patterning, and statistics and probability. Students and parents complete a *Mathtotes* evaluation sheet each week in their math journal. *Mathtotes* enable parent and child to work together to build and strengthen positive attitudes towards mathematics. The concrete materials and game-like activities make learning fun and reinforce important math concepts and skills.

VOICES OF SUCCESS

At our February BARN meeting, Cheryl Black stressed the importance of validating your project by getting other opinions. The BLD (behaviour/ learning disabled) class is integrated into my program throughout the day. I asked the BLD teacher, Cindi Sharp, if she would comment on my class because she often works with my students. Cindi wrote:

“As the year has progressed, Mrs. Knill-Griesser’s grade 3/4 class, as a whole, has improved its attitude towards math. Students have become better risk takers and seem more willing to perform various math tasks. The different math centres and activities offered to them this year have presented math in a fun, non-threatening manner that has appropriately challenged their thinking while encouraging them to draw upon

their various skills. These experiences have all contributed to helping them improve their confidence in their math ability which in turn has led them to have a more positive attitude towards math.”

Cathy Theophilus, the educational assistant who assists in my class wrote:

“When Heather first introduced geometric solids, her students were unable to share a lot of information about them. Through the use of hands-on study using a variety of learning strategies and different materials (e.g., solid wooden forms and the building of their own solids using paper and toothpicks), the students became excited to share their new knowledge. Students demonstrated this by being able to answer a variety of questions and give demonstrations to others.”

During parent-teacher interviews, Tanya’s mother commented that her daughter’s confidence in reading and math had increased dramatically. In turn, this had improved her academic achievement. When asked to write in her math journals about her favourite math subject, Tanya wrote, “My favourite math subject is multiplication. When we first learned it, I was so frustrated. I panicked! But now I really, really like math.”

In fact, *Student Math Attitude Surveys* showed a definite improvement from September 1998 to February 1999. In February, 20 out of 22 students responded that they liked math, compared to 11 out of 22 in September. In February, 17 out of 22 students responded that they were good at math, compared to 11 out of 22 in September.



In February, 20 out of 22 students responded that they liked math, compared to 11 out of 22 in September. Seventeen out of 22 students responded that they were good at math in February compared to 11 out of 22 in September.

Parents' Math Attitudes

NAME _____ DATE _____

1. Do you like math? Explain.
2. I am good at math. Yes or No? Explain.
3. I can help my child at math. Yes or No?
4. What has your child learned in Math lately?

Students' How I Feel About Math Questionnaire

NAME _____ DATE _____

1. I like Math. ☺ ☹ ☒
2. I am good at Math. ☺ ☹ ☒
3. When I learn something new in Math I feel: ☺ ☹ ☒
4. The Math I learned this week is important: because _____ ☺ ☹ ☒
5. I can help others in Math. ☺ ☹ ☒
6. I can get others to help me in Math. ☺ ☹ ☒

Nick, a quiet, shy, reserved, and, "How-fast-can-I-get-it-done?" student was an enthusiastic participant in math journals. He wrote, "I think this math today is important because math is everywhere, like for example variety stores. Math sometimes is challenging, but I usually get it done. I like math. It's fun but sometimes it stumps me. My sisters like math and I guess it runs through the family."

Students were confidently completing "problem-of-the-day" real-world math questions. When asked to list things that had six, 12, and 60 in their design, one student replied, "An ant has six legs. Roses are sold by the dozen. A large box of Timbits has 60 in them!"

VOICES OF FRUSTRATION

Responses on attitude check lists were a direct reflection on the reinforcement of the math skill at home. In my journal entry of February 24, 1999, I wrote, "Students are very apprehensive about completing multiplication worksheets. Although I have asked parents to assist students with multiplication facts at home in the past two newsletters, students are commenting that they are not receiving assistance at home. There were many groans when I asked students to write in their math journals about multiplication."

I was concerned that parents' math attitudes may have a direct reflection on the attitudes of their children. On the *Parents' Math Attitudes Survey* I asked, "What has your child learned in Math lately?" One parent responded, "That's your job. You're the teacher! Don't you know?" This student, unfortunately, did not show an improvement in his math attitudes.

My peer teachers/critical friends have noticed a definite improvement in the attitudes of my students, not only in math but also in risk taking and problem solving.



CONCLUSION

I am confident that my action research improved my students' attitudes in math. My student-attitude surveys showed an improvement in students' responses to liking math and being good at math. My peer teachers and critical friends have noticed a definite improvement in the attitudes of my students, not only in math but also in risk taking and problem solving. Student math journal comments are positive, incorporating reflection and relating in the responses. Entries in my own journal show growth in the development of positive attitudes in my students.

NEXT STEPS

My *Mathtotes* lending library is in its infancy. It will be interesting to read parents' comments to determine whether we succeeded in reinforcing important math concepts and skills at home. I hope this will encourage positive parent interaction in math. Curriculum planning continues, with math integrated across the curriculum. The teacher librarian is purchasing literacy books that reinforce math concepts and skills and these will be added to our math/literature activity centres for every grade. In the classroom, I continue to reinforce my belief that "attitude is the key to success!"

Heather Knill-Griesser undertook this action research project while teaching grade 3/4 at Graham Bell-Victoria School, Brantford. She is currently Curriculum Assistant, Primary Division, for the Grand Erie District School Board.

This article originally appeared on-line in the *Ontario Action Researcher*, Vol. 3, Issue 1, (2000). For more articles on action research projects, visit the *Ontario Action Researcher* at www.unipissing.ca/oar

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Summer Reading

Fiona Nelson shares her top three books

By Charlotte Morgan

"I can't imagine better preparation for becoming a politician than being trained as a kindergarten teacher," says Fiona Nelson, former kindergarten teacher, school trustee, passionate advocate for children and avid reader.

"Kindergarten teachers know they are starting from scratch, that the children are going to have to be brought along toward some common goals. The best politicians do the same thing. They bring people along and bring them together in the best interests of society as a whole."

While the lazy, hazy days of summer are spreading gloriously in front of us, some thoughts may be turning to a few good books to enjoy in the back yard, the camp site or the cottage. To help make the choice a little easier, I asked Fiona Nelson to name her three favourite books. Here's what she had to say: "In these times when greed and individualism seem to be the rule, reading these books will help teachers defend their work. The writers offer a rationale for maintaining a holistic society that cares for its most vulnerable citizens."

“Did you know that in Toronto, more than 200 teenage moms are raising their babies in strollers in doorways?” she asks. “Some of our homeless families are packed into cheap motel rooms, when they could be properly housed for a fraction of the cost. It just makes me so angry.”

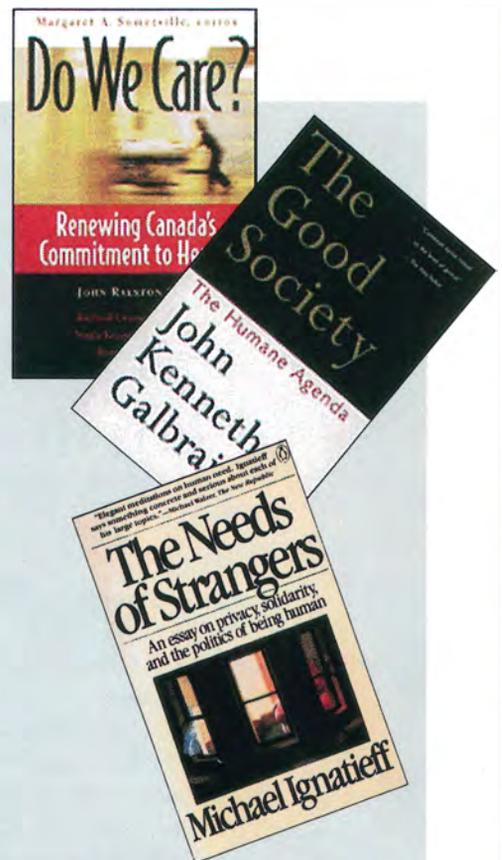
While these comments may seem to be off on a tangent, in fact Nelson’s vision of a healthy society breaks through whatever she is discussing. It is also the tie that binds her three top books together. “In *The Needs of Strangers* Michael Ignatieff discusses the ways in which we have to operate if we want to live in a healthy society. ‘It is because money cannot buy the human gestures which confer respect, nor rights guarantee them as entitlements, that any decent society requires a public discourse about the needs of the human person,’ Ignatieff writes. I couldn’t agree more with the ideas he expresses in this little book.”

Nelson’s next pick is John Kenneth Galbraith’s *The Good Society*. “Galbraith says ‘There is no test of the good society so clear, so decisive, as its willingness to tax – to forgo private income, expenditure and the expensively cultivated superfluities of private consumption – in order to develop and sustain a strong educational system for all its citizens.’ And as the flyleaf says, ‘...Galbraith presents the blueprint for a society that compassionate to the less fortunate and economically feasible for all.’”

Finally, Nelson pulls *Do We Care? Renewing Canada’s Commitment to Health* from her well-stocked bookshelf. “Everything editor Margaret A. Somerville and her six co-authors say about what I term the sickness care system, can equally be applied to education. I particularly recommend Dr. Nuala P. Kenny’s essay *Ethical Dilemmas in the Current Health Care Environment*. Other authors included here are Richard Cruess, Raisa Deber, Bernard Dickens, Bob Rae and John Ralston Saul.”

This kind of summer reading might not be the lightest fare available. However, if you enjoy short, well-written books that restore your faith in human nature, these may well be the books for you. They are probably all available from your local public library. If all three would be too much, pick your favourite and enjoy it.

While the books recommended are all non-fiction, Nelson’s favourite fiction authors include Margaret Atwood, Timothy Findlay, Doris Lessing, Rohinton Mistry and Vikram Seth. “These authors have all left indelible images in my mind,” she says.



Fiona Nelson taught kindergarten in Toronto for 10 years throughout the 1950s and 1960s. She also taught *Early Childhood Education* at George Brown College and served as a school trustee (including Chair of the Toronto Board of Education) for 23 years. She is currently a member of the City of Toronto’s Children’s Action Committee and the Toronto Board of Health’s Food Policy Council. **Charlotte Morgan** is the Editor of the *ETFO Voice*.

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- Somerville, Margaret A., Editor. *Do We Care? Renewing Canada’s Commitment to Health – Proceedings of the First Directions for Canadian Health Care conference*. McGill-Queen’s University Press, Merck Frosst Canada & Co. 1999. 166 pages.

“Operation – World Teacher is my idea of how teachers can think locally to act globally in providing humanitarian aid to colleagues around the world.” Dave Patterson

Operation World Teacher Brings Learning to Life

To celebrate World Teacher Day on October 5, ETFO is encouraging its members to take part in Operation – World Teacher. The goal of the operation is to celebrate teachers by engaging students and teachers in meaningful acts of caring and sharing.

“Operation – World Teacher is my idea of how teachers can think locally to act globally in providing humanitarian aid to colleagues around the world” says Dave Patterson, President, ETFO Hastings and Prince Edward. “In doing so, we can help teachers elsewhere bring learning to life for their students.”

Patterson brought his idea to ETFO’s February 2001 Representative Council, where it was endorsed by the provincial executive and other local presidents, who saw it as an excellent way to celebrate World Teacher Day 2001.

In Operation – World Teacher, each classroom teacher works with students to decide on basic educational tools that are necessary and helpful for teachers to aid in student learning. The class then collects the materials and assembles a shoe box filled with educational tools for use by teachers in developing countries.

“Operation – World Teacher requires partnerships at many levels, local, provincial and federal,” says Patterson. “For example when we undertook this initiative last year, our board allowed us to use its courier service to transport the shoe boxes to our office. Completed boxes, personalized with a class note, were collected at our Local office. From there, we partnered with the Canadian Organization for Development Through Education (CODE). CODE’s Project Love picked the boxes up from us and delivered them to teachers overseas.”

Project Love offers opportunities to send the shoe-boxes to teachers in both English and French speaking countries.

More information on Operation – World Teacher will be sent to ETFO stewards early in September. In the meantime, if you would like to participate, contact your Local president, start collecting empty shoeboxes and think about what you’d like to fill them with. This is something very concrete we can do to help our colleagues in the developing world and a great way to mark World Teacher Day this fall.



A Sample Shoebox. You and your students can fill as many as you choose.

- Lesson outline in a subject area
- A unit of work
- Professional reading material
- Metric tape measure
- Solar-powered calculator
- Magnifying glass
- Pencils and erasers
- Stickers
- Ball of string or butcher chord
- Chalk
- Charcoal drawing sticks
- Elastics
- Duotang with lesson material
- File folders
- Note pads

The Class That READS

Best Practices for Primary Reading

By Etta Kaner, Cathy Miller-Davis, Judith Taylor, Jan Moxey



This curriculum insert offers a preview into the soon-to-be-released ETFO primary reading resource called *The Class That Reads*, written by Etta Kaner, Cathy Miller-Davis, Judith Taylor and Jan Moxey. Connected closely to current curriculum expectations, this resource is a primary teacher's "best practice guide" to the teaching of reading.

Developed as a result of a reading survey conducted by ETFO, *The Class That Reads* offers practical information, management ideas and support for the learner in all areas of the reading program. A reading wheel that displays the components of the reading program and the fundamental factors that affect reading in a primary classroom create a focus for the publication. A planner and parent booklet are also key features of this soon-to-be-released and not-to-be-missed resource.

This *Voice* insert provides a glimpse of one of the 10 reading components from the reading wheel, Independent Reading. Watch your steward's mailings or check the ETFO website at www.etfo.on.ca for ways to order your copy of this outstanding document.

"To say that children learn to read by reading
is not to deny the need to provide explicit instruction
and many demonstrations in the classroom." *J. Braunger and J. Lewis*

Independent Reading

How to do independent reading
Provide a range of materials,
both fiction and non-fiction,
for students to read.

Look for:

- Books that have been used previously in read aloud, shared or guided reading sessions.
- High quality well written texts that students can read independently.
- Books that have powerful illustrations and interesting, provocative text that will interest students.
- A variety of text forms: poetry, concept books, folk tales, fairy tales, picture books, nursery rhymes, pattern books, chants, literature from adventures to classics.
- Real world reading can be introduced through environmental print, newspapers, recipes, maps, brochures and children's magazines.

Establish a Silent Reading Time
During initial independent reading sessions, the teacher demonstrates how to select books and how to read independently.

Some points to remember:

- Allow students time to read the material and get involved with the text.
- Sometimes silent reading is assigned 15-20 minutes at the same time each day. This is referred to as DEAR – Drop Everything and Read, or USSR – Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading.

- Once routines are established some of the time could be used by the teacher to have reading conferences and to monitor student selection of materials.
- Students read their selected materials and record on a reading record form, such as the one accompanying this article. The form uses a colour guide so students can indicate the kind of materials they are reading.

Management of independent reading
Much of the success of the silent reading time will depend on how well the environment and the class is prepared. Here are some things to get ready before you start that will help ensure success.

- Display books with covers showing in order to assist students in finding books of interest.
- Display recent read-alouds, guided and shared reading books in the same place and easily accessible.
- Monitor student involvement and touch base with the students who require some assistance to locate what they want to read.
- Have interesting book displays or bins displayed by topic.
- Set up reading records where books will be recorded. A sample reading record is included here.
- Set up an author study area to display books from a variety of authors.

- Create a climate of support as students extend their efforts by selecting challenging reading materials.
- Have different kinds of books available.

Managing Student Movement and Involvement

Managing student movement as the children choose books to read is of vital importance, as is keeping each child involved in the activity.

- Keep book displays in different places in the room so students don't push or crowd in order to select books.
- Set a routine for selection early in the year so students realize they will not have unlimited time to find their selection.
- Set a predictable routine, such as the time of day, location of reading materials and storage of reading records to reduce the movement around the room.
- Allow students to find selections by table group, sock colour or birth months. This can reduce the frenzy of finding books.
- Have students select several books to keep with them to read. This will avoid needless wandering and exchanging books.
- Provide time for recording books that have been read.

Your Pension and Your Future

As an Ontario teacher, you are a member of the largest teachers' pension plan in Canada.

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan has over 153,000 active members, 77,000 pensioners and over \$73 billion in assets. Your pension entitlement is probably your largest single asset.

By Lorraine Stewart and Bill Martin



Bill Martin



Lorraine Stewart

OTPP Changes 2001

Permanent 85 Factor

Effective April 1, 2001

Teachers can retire with an unreduced pension when their age and qualifying years of service equal 85 or more. The 85 factor is of great benefit to new teachers who now begin their careers at a later stage in life.

10-Year Pension Guarantee

Effective April 1, 2001

Members with survivors can provide an optional 10-year guarantee of the teachers' pension for a nominal reduction to their pension. Single teachers are automatically entitled to a 10-year guaranteed pension at no cost. If Members die within the period of the pension guarantee, the survivor or estate will receive the amount of the pension minus CPP reduction for the balance of the period. After the 10-year period, survivor pensions revert to the percent chosen at retirement.

Reduced Pension at 50

Effective June 30, 2001

Teachers can begin collecting a reduced pension as early as age 50, down from 55. This change gives members who are 50 years or older the option of taking an immediate, reduced pension.

The reduction for immediate pensions would be the lesser of either 2.5% per point short of 85 factor, or 5% per year short of age 65. This provision comes into effect as of June 30, 2001 so as to coincide with the completion of the school year.

Lower CPP Reduction

Effective January 1, 2002

The CPP reduction factor has been lowered to 0.45% from 0.60%. This means more pension income after age 65 (about \$2,000 per year). This benefit also shrinks your available RRSP room in the 2003 tax year and thereafter. The OTPP uses a formula to integrate the Canada Pension Plan (CPP) benefit with the teachers' pension. This calculation results in a reduction in OTPP benefits and is known as the CPP offset.

The CPP offset is calculated on the number of years each member has contributed to both the OTPP and the CPP. It is applied to a teacher's pension at age 65, or when they qualify for a CPP disability pension. Reducing the amount of the CPP offset increases the pensions of both active and retired members. OTF is also changing the number of years on which the offset is calculated from the best three years to the best five years.

Older Pensions to Increase Based on Approximate Best 5 Years' Average

Effective June 1, 2001

Retired teachers with pensions calculated based on the best 7 or last 10 year's average salary will have their pensions increased based on their approximate best 5, from the effective date onward. There are approximately 12,000 members receiving such pensions.

LTDI Contributions and Top-Up Waived

Effective Sept. 1, 2001

Teachers who begin long-term disability after September 1, 2001 will have their pension contributions waived. This should lead to lower LTDI premiums. Disabled members on Long Term Disability Insurance (LTDI) have been topping up their contributions to the OTPP in order to improve their average salary calculation to match the current inflation rate. Many of these members on reduced income have had difficulty making the top up payments. With this change, the average salary calculation for members on LTDI will be automatically increased beginning with the 2001-02 school year to keep pace with the rate of inflation.

Simplified Rules re: Purchasing Credit for Absences

Effective Sept. 1, 2001

- Five years to pay on a contributions-plus-interest basis. If you miss the deadline, you can no longer buy the pension credit for your absence on an actuarial-cost basis.
- No return-to-work requirement. Please note that the *Income Tax Act* requires a return to work from deferred salary leaves of a period as long as the leave.

Annual Statement

In the fall of each school year, every member should receive an annual statement from the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board (OTPPB). These statements provide members with information regarding their accumulated credit and contributions to the plan.

Other information includes the projected retirement date for an unreduced pension and pension estimates, assuming that the member continues to teach.

If you do not receive your statement, you should contact the Pension Board to ensure that they have your proper mailing address and correct information.

Occasional and Part-Time Teaching

The single most important factor in the calculation of your pension is your average salary. Mixing casual occasional teaching with part-time teaching negatively impacts on average salary and lowers the amount of pension as a result.

Mixing part-time and occasional teaching is a good thing for teachers early in their careers, because they are able to add to their credited service and the resulting lowering of their rate of pay is unlikely to impact on their eventual pension.

Teachers near pensionable age, however, must be extremely careful since mixing part-time and occasional teaching can lower the individual's best five years of salary.

An occasional teacher near retirement on a long-term assignment should also be cautious since mixing a high long-term rate with a lower casual rate will lower their average salary.

Planning to Retire

Contact OTPPB four months or more before you plan to retire and tell them your expected retirement date. Ask them to send you their kit of pension information and your pension estimate. Once you have given the OTPPB permission to contact your employer to get current salary information, they will send you a Personalized Pension Application and Retirement Statement outlining the amount of your pension. Gather the following required documents well in advance to avoid delays in processing your application: birth certificate; spouse's birth certificate; marriage certificate(s); and certificate of divorce or Decree Absolute, if applicable.

Pension Calculation

Unreduced Pension

Years of credited service x 2% x Best 5 years' rates of pay

Early Retirement Reduction at/after Age 50 for an Immediate Pension

The lesser of
 $2.5\% \times [85 - (\text{age} + \text{qualifying service})]$ or
 $5\% \times (65 \text{ years} - \text{age})$

Early Retirement Reduction at/after Age 50 for a Deferred Pension Deferred after June 30, 2001

The lesser of
 $5\% \times [85 - (\text{age} + \text{qualifying service})]$ or
 $5\% \times (65 \text{ years} - \text{age})$

How Strikes Affect Your Pension

The effect of a strike on your pension depends on whether or not the strike was legal.

Legal Strike

During a legal strike or lockout, your pension is not affected. The employer reports the loss of salary, but does not report your absence. This means that your credited service is not affected. If the strike occurs during one of your best five years for salary purposes, ETFO will contribute to make up for the lower reported salary for members who supported the strike. Members will be notified before retirement if a top up for pension purposes is required.

Other Strikes

During an illegal strike, you lose credit and are ineligible to contribute to your pension during the absence. The 10-day Political Protest in the fall of 1997 was not a legal strike.

RRSP Room

The lower CPP reduction that will take effect January 1, 2002 will lower your future available RRSP contribution room. It is a priority to continue to reduce the CPP offset in the future so that teachers can keep more of their pensions. As a result, RRSP room will be affected in the future.

Types of Pensions from OTPPB

Unreduced

- Age 65, or
- 85 factor immediate, or
- 35 years credited service

Reduced

- Age 50/+

Disability

- 10 years qualifying service;
- Whole or partial disability.

Survivor

- Even if the teacher was not on pension.

Disability Pensions

There are two types of disability pensions available through the Teachers Pension Plan, full and partial. Full disability means that a member cannot work at any job. A partial disability means that a member can work, but not in teaching.

The full disability pension is calculated like an unreduced pension (2% x credit x average best

five years salary). The partial disability pension is calculated like a reduced pension (2.5% reduction for each point short of 85 points, or age 65, whichever is less).

To be eligible for a disability pension, a member's doctor must provide a statement of the individual's medical condition. A medical expert assigned by the Pension Board will review the findings to determine eligibility. A member must have at least 10 years of qualifying service to be eligible. Teachers can begin to collect a disability pension immediately, even if they are not 50 years of age.

Teachers usually use up their sick leave and the Board's long-term disability benefits before applying for a disability pension through the Teachers Pension Plan. In this way, teachers continue to collect pension credit.

You cannot return to any type of employment in education if you are receiving a disability pension. If you return to employment in education, your disability pension will be terminated.

Steps to Buying Credit for Leaves

1. Apply

Fill out the pertinent section of the Application to Buy Credit form (phone OTPPB for the form) and send it to your employer. Your employer will complete the form and will send it to the OTPPB.

2. Cost Estimate

The OTPPB will send you an estimate of the cost of your leave, often within a few weeks.

3. Pay

If you pay during your leave, you owe no interest but you will need to provide a series of post-dated cheques. If you pay after your leave, you will owe interest. You will need to write a cheque for the lump-sum amount, or transfer the amount from your RRSP, or a combination of cheque and RRSP transfer. Once you've completed your payment, your purchase of credit will be added to your total accumulated credit.

4. How this Affects Your RRSP Room

Some time later, you'll receive a Pension Adjustment (PA) statement from the OTPPB, or a Past Service Pension Adjustment (PSPA) statement from Canada Customs & Revenue, indicating how your purchase of credit affects your RRSP contribution room.

All contributions for current service and purchases of credit for service after 1989 are fully deductible in the year they are made provided they are made by the April 30th following the return from leave.

If you pay after April 30th of the year following the end of your leave, the purchase must be certified by Revenue Canada. They may deny your purchase unless you transfer the funds from your RRSP and it could affect your RRSP room in subsequent years.

Vesting

Vesting means you are entitled to a future pension. Depending on when you started teaching, the different portions of your pension benefits might become vested at different times.

In addition, some or all of your vested benefits will be locked in to provide you with an annual income. This means you cannot access your pension benefit other than as an income payable for life, even if you leave teaching.

Credit	Vested After	Locked-In After
Before 1987	10 qualifying years.	10 qualifying years and age 45.
After 1986	2 qualifying years.	2 qualifying years.

Teaching/Employment After Retirement

If you return to teaching after retirement be aware of the number of days you can be employed in education (any job) without it affecting your pension.

You can be employed in education for:

- 95 days in each school year for three years, after that;
- 20 days per school year following 3 years of re-employment.

These rules are expected to change as of September 1, 2001 to allow more 95 day years. If you exceed these limits, your pension will stop at the end of the month you exceed the limit, and your employer will begin deducting contributions. If you are 69 years of age or over (yes, some members are) these limits do not apply.

If you return to teaching for a full year or more after retirement, you can ask your employer to deduct the contributions immediately and contact the Teachers' Pension Plan to stop your pension. When you retire again your pension will be recalculated with the additional credit and using the pension rules in effect when you stop teaching again.

Marriage Break-Up

If your marriage breaks up, it is very important to get advice from a lawyer who is an expert in family law.

A spouse is entitled to half of the improvement in the teachers' pension during the period they were married. This claim can be offset by other assets, such as the spouse's pension, RRSPs, the family home or investments. Most spouses insist on receiving a cash settlement rather than wait until the teacher retires to get their share.

Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan Board
 5650 Yonge Street
 North York, Ontario
 M2M 4H5

Client Service:
 Monday to Friday:
 8:00 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Tel: 416-226-2700
1-800-668-0105
Fax: 416-730-5349
Website: www.otpp.com

Lorraine Stewart and Bill Martin are Executive Assistants at ETFO's Provincial Office. They are available to answer questions regarding your pension – 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836.

The Class That READS



Individual students may need assistance to maintain attention to the task of independent reading. The teacher may need to intervene with individual students to ensure their time is being used productively. Strategies that can assist some students include:

- Having students generate questions that might be answered from reading.
- Leading students in predicting before they read.
- Monitoring task commitment and intervene as necessary.
- Nodding or make eye contact to help some students keep on task.

Making a Productive Reading Environment

Independent silent reading in the early primary classroom is rarely 'quiet.' Depending on the reading stage, many of the students will read aloud or under their breath as they read independently. While allowing a range of reading behaviours it is important to encourage an atmosphere that will allow students to read and focus on their reading.

Any noise should be related to the task of reading. If you are reading or having an individual student conference, sit in a location where you can see with the whole class and monitor their behaviour.

Finding time for Independent Reading

Time for independent reading should not be considered a frill, but an essential component of an effective reading program. Scheduling time for independent reading should be a high priority.

Provide Support for the Learner

Honour all readers and their level of independent reading. Prevent and quickly squash any negative comments about anyone's reading level.

Some ideas for providing additional support for learners:

- Non-readers can participate in independent reading time by reading wordless books or 'pretend' reading.
- A listening centre set up with recordings of recent read alouds, guided or shared reading materials can be used by students who require that kind of help.
- Books that can be read on the computer are also useful for students to read during independent reading time as they provide reading support to students who may need it.
- Provide encouragement as students try demanding new material. If the material is too difficult, let students know that it is all right and they can try that book again later in the year. This is one of the amazing things for students, as they see themselves becoming readers.

Springboards

- Link books that have been read aloud, shared and guided reading materials to the independent reading process whenever possible.
- Publish and display students' choices from independent reading records.
- Encourage students to read part of an independent reading selection when given an opportunity to read aloud to their classmates.
- Have students record the titles of their favourite books read during independent reading time on strips of colourful paper and decorate the room with their recommendations.

- Work with the teacher librarian to display favourite titles in the library under such headings as: 'Number One with Grade One' or 'Tops with the Twos' and 'Terrific Titles from the Threes.'
- Independent reading does not always have to occur during school hours. Reading clubs and home reading programs can engage students in independent reading at other times. A Recess Readers Club is a popular activity at some schools. Bookmark samples and certificates for the Recess Readers Club are included here.

Independent Reading – Reading that Builds

- Builds vocabulary
- Builds fluency
- Builds background

Recommended Resources

Booth, David, Larry Swartz, Megudio Zola. *Choosing Children's Books*. Annotated list of 600 best books selected by Canadians. Pembroke Publishers, Toronto. 1987.

Routeman, Regie, *Invitations: Changing as Teachers and Learners K-12*. Heinemann. 1994.

Professional Relations Services

Summer 2001

Resolving Staff-Principal Conflicts

Conflict is inevitable in our lives, be it our own personal conflicts or conflicts involving peers and those in positions of authority. Conflict has a tremendous impact on a person's attitude towards work, self-confidence and ability to do the job. Everything depends on how conflict is handled. Handled well, it can be a positive and energizing force leading to change for the better. Handled poorly, it can be destructive, leading to resentment, low morale and psychological and physical distress.

Staff-principal conflicts seem to be one of the effects of the increased pressure and demands placed on educators today due to cutbacks, fewer resources, larger class sizes, restructuring, increased accountability and expectations. Some people believe there are only two ways to deal with this type of conflict: react loudly and aggressively, or back off, say nothing, complain to others and be unhappy at work.

There are other choices.

ADDRESSING STAFF-PRINCIPAL CONFLICTS

Every school staff must work very closely together. Differences of opinion that can lead to conflict are inevitable when staff members are working together to address so many issues. Depending on what the issues are, there are various ways to make them known to the principal. It is not enough nor is it always effective to simply confront the principal with everything that the staff opposes.

By assuming a problem-solving approach when discussing sensitive issues, it is more likely that solutions acceptable to everyone will be achieved. All staff members must be prepared to offer alternatives and solutions that everyone can assist in implementing. The principal should also involve staff in the early stages of certain issues to help reduce the possibility of problems developing later.

If the problem has to do with school policies and practices, such as code of conduct, office support for behavioural expectations for planning or report cards, introduce the issues for discussion at a staff meeting in a structured, professional way. Focus on the issue and joint problem solving.

Avoid personal criticisms of the school administration.

If the issue has to do with an individual matter, such as assignment, evaluation or the way you are treated by the principal, it is best handled by requesting a meeting with the principal to discuss the issue. You should also contact Professional Relations Services (PRS) at ETFO and/or the Local president, as it may be advisable to have a Federation representative present in the meeting. The representative can help facilitate the discussion and act as a third party to ensure that both the principal and you are being heard and understood.

Do not assume that because you are in conflict with the principal that you are being harassed. Each of you has a different role and different responsibilities. If you feel you are being treated unfairly, consult with PRS first to check out your perceptions. Harassment is a very serious allegation, and you might wish to check your board harassment policy to see if it applies to the situation. Some collective agreements contain language that would allow you to grieve alleged harassment.

Professional Relations Services by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario

INVOLVEMENT OF A SUPERINTENDENT

In situations involving a group of staff, the school superintendent should not become involved until the staff members have made every attempt to communicate their concerns to the principal. If staff members feel their concerns have not been understood or addressed, they should contact Federation before taking any further action. There may come a point at which it is necessary and appropriate to involve the superintendent, but the Federation should be consulted prior to taking this step.

If at any point in the process the superintendent is consulted, the principal should be advised. Similarly, if a group of staff decides to write a letter to the superintendent outlining their concerns, the principal should receive a copy of the letter.

Although principals are not members of the Federation and are therefore not subject to the OTF code of ethics, the professionalism of the staff and the manner in which these sensitive issues are addressed are important. All teachers and principals are members of the College of Teachers and the professional misconduct regulation clearly addresses the issue of professionalism. Alleged violations of the regulation are subject to the College's investigation and discipline procedures.

ROLE OF THE LOCAL PRESIDENT

Members may wish to contact the Local president to discuss a situation. However, the president should be cautious about becoming involved in staff-principal conflicts. The president should not necessarily pass information on to the principal or superintendent on behalf of the staff. Instead, the president should try to help members deal with their concerns by:

- Suggesting they call PRS directly;
- Suggesting that an individual or small group of staff approach the principal;
- Offering to attend a meeting with a

staff member and the principal to address concerns;

- Discussing options available for dealing with the concerns in a professional way.

The president should also consult with PRS when dealing with staff-principal conflicts.

TIPS FOR RESOLVING CONFLICTS

When attempting to resolve an individual or group conflict, take a step back and try to:

- Consider the issue, not the person and emotions involved.
- See the problem from the other person's perspective.
- Listen attentively and reflect on what is said.
- Determine what degree of compromise you would be willing to live with.
- Specify what each person can do to improve the working relationship.
- Evaluate whether or not expectations are realistic, reasonable and achievable.
- Identify possible alternatives and workable solutions.

WORKING TOGETHER TO FIND SOLUTIONS

Teachers and principals must work together utilizing the strengths and ideas of all staff members to create the best possible working and learning environment. The concerns of the staff need to be raised at staff meetings and openly discussed with the principal.

The principal should know what the specific concerns are and how the staff is willing to assist in improving the situation. Lack of communication and consultation do not allow for the maximum use of the variety of talents and abilities that are a part of every staff.

It is important that staff members try to work with the principal to effect changes that might be necessary to improve the working/learning environment. It is equally important to recognize that change is a gradual process and that not all changes will be immediate.

If, however, there is no commitment to change or no acknowledgement that change is necessary, and if staff members believe that the situation is causing them to be less effective in their jobs, the Federation should be contacted for assistance.

When staff and the principal jointly agree to involve the superintendent and/or the Federation, they are showing a willingness to explore the situation. Sometimes, with the support and commitment of all involved, an outside facilitator can be a very effective resource for assisting the school staff in resolving their problems.

Everyone involved must be willing to be part of the solution by considering compromises and reasonable alternatives. Each staff member must accept some ownership and responsibility for the process. If this is not possible, the individual should perhaps consider a transfer to another school more compatible with his/her professional beliefs and practices.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROFESSIONAL HARMONY

The entire school staff is interdependent. Its members must rely on each other and be able to resolve their differences. There are too many pressures on educators today to allow staff-principal conflicts to erode the professional harmony that is a basic necessity in every effective school.

PRS staff and Local presidents are committed to assisting members in identifying concerns in the workplace and in reaching mutually agreeable solutions.

For further information on conflict management see ETFO's publication *After the Chalkdust Settles*. It may be purchased through "Shop ETFO." Your workplace steward can provide you with more information.

Susan Thede for ETFO's Professional Relations Services Area.

ETFO is proud to announce its 2000-2001 Award Winners. The winners of the ETFO bursaries and scholarships will be announced in June. For more information on nominating a colleague or applying for an ETFO scholarship, see your school's copy of the *ETFO Reference Book* or contact your local president.

2000-2001 ETFO Award Winners

ANTI-BIAS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AWARD

Julia Arnold, Janet Beaver and
Lillian Blakey *Toronto*

EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT/PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT PERSON OF THE YEAR

Frank Rossbottom, *Renfrew PSP*

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD

Jackie Campbell, *Federation staff
for 47 years*
Margaret Couture, *Greater Essex*
Violet Davidson, *Thames Valley*
Carol Harvey, *Greater Essex*
Patricia Kalapaca, *Upper Grand*
Barbara Sargent, *Lambton-Kent*
John Simpson, *Halton*

HUMANITARIAN AWARD FOR AN ETFO MEMBER

Heather Halls, *Kawartha Pine Ridge*

HUMANITARIAN AWARD FOR A NON-ETFO MEMBER

Cathy Wever (posthumously),
Hamilton-Wentworth

INNOVATIVE PROJECTS ON BEHALF OF CHILDREN LIVING IN POVERTY

Niagara Nutrition Partners, *Niagara*

LOCAL LEADERSHIP AWARD

Kelly Hayes, *Hamilton-Wentworth*

LOCAL WEBSITE OF THE YEAR

Cliff Kraeker, *Thames Valley*

MULTI-MEDIA AWARD

Barbara McIlquham, *Kawartha
Pine Ridge*

MULTI-MEDIA AWARD – WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Marla Adamson Barber, *Algoma*

NEWSLETTER EDITOR'S AWARD

Gordon Hough, *Upper Canada
(multi-sheet category)*
Karen McIlwain, *Superior-Greenstone
(single sheet category)*

OCCASIONAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Marian Wong, *Waterloo Region*

OUTSTANDING BUS DRIVER

Betty Ellis, *Kawartha Pine Ridge*

OUTSTANDING ROLE MODEL FOR WOMEN – WOMEN'S PROGRAM

JoAnne Gallaway, *Waterloo Region*

WOMEN WHO DEVELOP SPECIAL PROJECTS IN SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY – WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Sandee Sharpe, *Toronto*

WRITER'S AWARD

Mary Meyers, *Toronto*
Brian Thornton, *Ontario North East*

WRITER'S AWARD – WOMEN'S PROGRAM

Andrea Haddad-Zabaneh, *Toronto*
Margot Southall, *Kawartha
Pine Ridge*

OTF GREER MEMORIAL AWARD

Women's Future Fund
of Media Watch

CTF PROJECT OVERSEAS PARTICIPANTS

Team Leaders

Carla Abrams, *Simcoe, Ghana (Team A)*
Katherine Bennett, *Peel, Ghana (Team B)*
Dave McCourt, *Toronto, India*

Participants

Christiane Bollinger, *Ottawa-Carleton,
Mongolia*
Carolyn Collins, *Hamilton-
Wentworth, Ghana (Team A)*
Dominique Dorn, *Toronto, Guyana*
Janice Gregg, *Kawartha Pine Ridge,
Uganda*
Esther Lauzon, *Simcoe, India*
Nancy MacDonald, *Ottawa-Carleton,
Jordan*

*If you would like to apply for CTF
Project Overseas 2002, ask your ETFO
steward for an application form.
These will arrive in the schools early
in the fall and must be returned to
ETFO's provincial office by mid-
November. For more information,
call **Charlotte Morgan** at the
Provincial Office.*

> **I HAVE SEARCHED THE WEB** for the ultimate site – a site that offers valuable resources for students, teachers, administrators and facilitators alike. I found it at <http://school.discovery.com/schrockguide/index.html> – *Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators*.

> **KATHY SCHROCK'S WEB SITE** is more than a list of curriculum links; more than an information depository; more than a simple teaching aid; and more than a self-training module. *Schrock's Guide* combines all of these services and comes out as a very useful “users’ guide” to the internet. Whether you are new to the internet or a seasoned surfer, the Schrock Guide is the place to begin your search for information.

> **SCHROCK ADVERTISES HER SITE** as a “Guide for Educators [that] is a classified list of sites on the internet found to be useful for enhancing curriculum and teacher professional growth.” This is an understatement. Schrock updates her web site daily. She is devoted to maintaining an up-to-date and valuable site. Although this is an American website, most of the resources can be used by teachers all over the world.

> **THE SCHROCK HOMEPAGE FOR TEACHERS** is divided into three main sections:

- In Subject Access, you can find curriculum links, news and weather links, as well as sports and entertainment links.
- In Search Tools, you are provided with links to some of the popular search engines.
- Finally, Teacher Helpers holds everything else – recommended books, slide shows and presentations, assessment and rubrics, webquest information, and even bulletin board ideas.

One of the most valuable aspects of the Schrock Guide is that it has applications for every person in the school.

Students can

- Find sites that offer art techniques, contacts for ask a science expert, sports statistics, and weather information.
- Watch slide shows to learn about search engines and effective search strategies.
- Use one of a series of web site evaluation surveys created by Schrock specifically for each school level: elementary, middle and secondary.

Teachers can

- Watch a slide show to learn about the differences between search engines and directories for personal knowledge or for ideas when preparing a lesson plan or demonstration on search engines for students.
- Find lesson plans in several subject areas, including technology.
- Access critical evaluation tools to find criteria for teachers to use in evaluating sites for content and web design.
- Watch slide shows on a teacher's role in cyberspace, and how to find it [on the internet] and what to do with it when you do.

School Administrators can

- Access “an extensive list of sample acceptable use policies (AUP's)” to aid in the creation of a school-based AUP.
- Find information that would help in the creation of a School Computer Implementation Plan, e.g. a technology skills matrix from Butte County.
- Peruse lists of reading materials for staff development purposes.



Web Site Review

by Ruth Kobut

Whether you are new to the internet or a seasoned surfer, the Schrock Guide is the place to begin your search for information.



One of the links from Schrock's site takes you directly to DiscoverySchool.com, an initiative of the Discovery Channel.

Computer Heads or Computer Contacts or Site Administrators can

- Do all of the above, in order to refer teachers to this site.
- Watch a slide show on creating a content-rich homepage for your school.
- Access slide shows for teaching, a collection of slide shows for use in internet and technology training.
- Find reading materials on HTML and classroom internet integration.

> **MY REVIEW PROCESS BEGAN** with a search for a website evaluation tool. Where did I look? Kathy Schrock's homepage under Teacher Helpers. Some of the evaluation tools are links to other sites, but Schrock also offers her own evaluation surveys focused on school use. Students could use these surveys in a site evaluation assignment.

Conclusion

One of the reasons I chose to review Kathy Schrock's website is the broad range of areas it encompasses and the training it offers. As a student, I could find links on a variety of subjects or learn about search engines online.

> **AS A TEACHER**, I could watch a slide show to give me ideas on how to weave the internet into my curriculum or link to The Computer Teacher's Resource Page for "ideas, activities or lesson plans for using computer technology in the different disciplines." As a school administrator, I could provide resources to help my staff in computer integration. As a computer head, computer contact or site administrator in my school, I could peruse AUPS and keep current on the newest technologies.

> **IT IS NOT REMARKABLE** that this information can be found on the internet. It is remarkable, however, that it all can be found at one site – *Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators*. The name is not a misnomer – it truly is an "Educators' Guide."

> **IT IS OUR JOB TO PREPARE STUDENTS** for the future, but are we prepared for the future? The future is now!

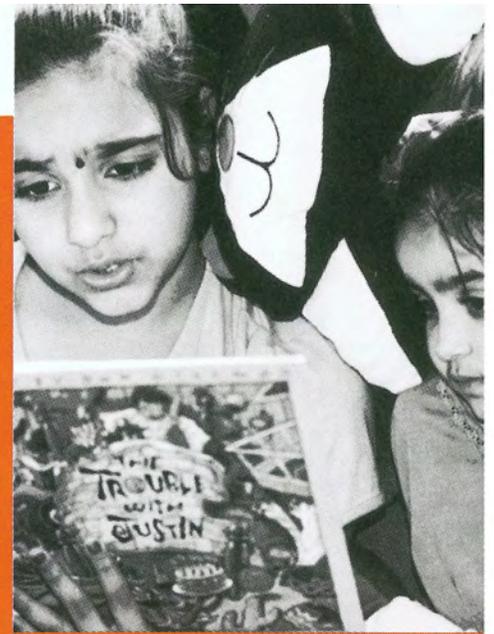
*Ruth Kohut is a Computer Consultant with the Lambton Kent District School Board.
kohutru@lkdsb.net*

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By Karen Sigston

Telling Tales in School



Storytelling in the
Grade 2 Classroom

Relating an event of the day over dinner – repeating a joke to peers at the water cooler – ghost stories around the campfire – a stand up comedian – a storyteller. From the very simple acts we all partake in everyday of retelling parts of our day to the more complex, rehearsed and refined act of a storyteller like Stuart McLean, we all tell stories. Storytelling or the oral tradition is a very effective tool in teaching and its history extends as far back as our language.

In ancient Greece the oral tradition was recognized as a very powerful tool in learning. The philosophers Socrates and Plato recognized that people memorize facts, but that true understanding is gained through questioning and dialogue (Allen, 1985). Socrates in particular was very skilled in his ability to inspire discussions that led to understanding, although he seemed to be best skilled at directing discussions that led to further questioning.

As teachers we must use every tool at our disposal to help students learn. As teachers of an increasingly diverse population of students we need to explore methods that will not exclude our students who are trying to learn a new language as well as the curriculum. The Ontario curriculum in language states that grade 2 students need to be able to “retell a story in proper sequence, identify the main idea and characters and discuss some aspects of the story.” The theme of retelling, relating and reflecting upon literature occurs throughout all grade levels in the curriculum. It may seem as though the act of retelling stories would require a skill in the subtleties of the language that ESL students cannot be expected to have developed. However, what better way to communicate and to teach than with the one forum with which every culture is familiar? From learning to hunt or cook to learning to read and write, the oral tradition is a powerful medium of teaching to which we have all been exposed. Most of us could recite very little of the periodic table, but it is common knowledge that W. L. Mackenzie King used psychics and made

political decisions based on what he thought his dead mother or dog were advising. Why do we remember these obscure pieces of information? I believe we are all more interested in real-life stories than we are in dry facts. That is probably why soap operas have such loyal viewers.

Prompted by taking an additional qualification in literacy development through York University, as well as one in ESL the year before, I decided to try out a unit in storytelling on my grade 2 class. My experiment was to use the oral tradition to help my ESL students in particular to perfect the art of “retelling” stories as required by the curriculum.

Not having tried out storytelling before, I made the job easier for myself by choosing two stories with which I was already familiar and which had a lot of natural repetition in them. I selected *Something From Nothing*, by Phoebe Gilman and *Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper* by Tololwa M. Mollel. These stories are both folktales, and neither book needed the illustrations in order to obtain the full meaning. The diversity of the stories appealed to me, as I hoped they would to my diverse class. *Something From Nothing* was inspired by a Jewish folktale and *Rhinos for Lunch* is an African folktale.

Something From Nothing is about Joseph, a little boy who receives a blanket from his grandfather. The blanket gets old and his mother suggests he throw it out. Joseph decides that a better solution would be to have his grandfather fix the blanket. The grandfather ends up making it into a jacket. When the jacket gets old it is made into several things until the final button is lost. Joseph resurrects his beloved blanket by making a story out of it.

Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper is about a hare who is frightened away from a cave by a booming voice claiming to be a monster. The hare enlists the help of several other larger animals (including a rhino and an elephant). All are frightened by the voice. Finally when a small frog manages to intimidate the owner of the voice into leaving the cave the animals are surprised to see it belongs to a tiny caterpillar. It was the echo in the cave that made the voice so loud and frightening.

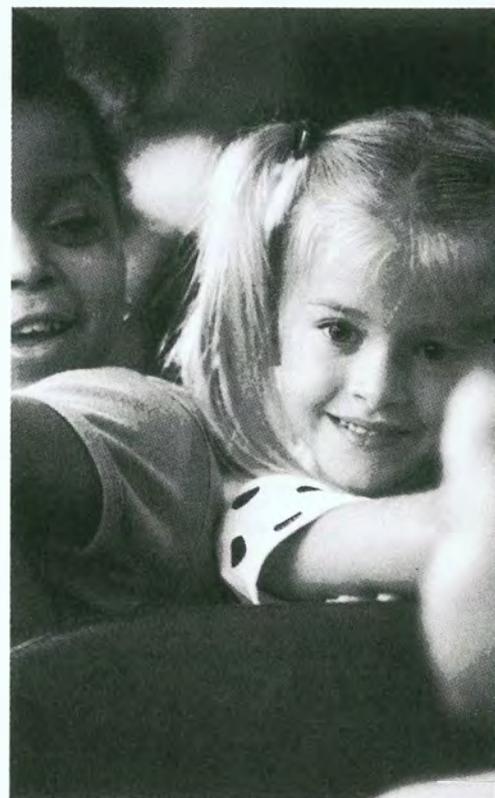
Planning the unit

I planned the unit in the following manner. I would begin with *Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper*, followed by *Something From Nothing*. After the initial telling of each story, I would ask the students to consider the beginning, middle and end of the story and the important events that could represent these major parts of the story and to illustrate those events. We would use these pictures as a way to remind ourselves of the rest of the story.

After I had told the story for a second time, I would ask the students to complete a “bones” activity. This would consist of a sheet that had the outline of six bones on it. These outlines were to be filled in with a single word or phrase that would follow sequentially. We would discuss how our bones are the things that give our bodies our shape and that we surround them with muscles and veins and skin and the details that round us out. In the same way, I would be looking for the essential bones of the story, not details, because the bones would remind us of the details that would round out the story. Ultimately, I would ask the students to learn a story of their own choosing and to share it with the class.

The first day

On the first day I began with a game of “Mystery Animal.” The students are familiar with this game and know what to do. When my animal, a rabbit, was guessed, we discussed the fact that a rabbit can also be called a hare, as they would hear in *Rhinos for Lunch*. I wanted to ensure that before we got started on the two stories I had chosen, the ESL students particularly would understand the vocabulary used.





Telling Tales in School

I also decided to use a visual cue. I chose a badge. I discussed with the students what badges are for, what badges they had and why. We discussed how badges signal things; they tell that you are a swimmer, etc. I told the students that my badge means I am about to tell a story and what that information should tell them about their role if they want to hear the story. This worked better than expected as the students began to demand the badge any time they were about to hear a story, whether I was telling it or it was from a book.

I put on my badge and proceeded to tell *Rhinos for Lunch and Elephants for Supper*. The students were a little restless at first, but soon settled down and listened well. When I was finished they applauded (they often did then when they have particularly enjoyed the story, whether I told it or it was read aloud). At this point I introduced the activity in which they would have to divide a piece of paper into three and in each section draw the beginning, the middle and the end of the story. To make sure everyone understood, I modeled the assignment using another story with which they were familiar.

Ravi (not his real name), a student from India, drew a cave with a hare standing outside for the beginning. In the centre picture he drew the rhino. The last picture was very interesting because he drew the animals laughing at their own foolishness. The last picture was my favourite. Ravi clearly understood the message of the story and why it was funny.

The following day I retold the story and the children were asked to complete the “Bones” activity. Jeremiah (not his real name), a boy who was born in Canada but whose first language is Spanish, accomplished the assignment in an interesting way. In each bone he listed the animal and what they did. For example, he wrote, “Hare ran,” “Fox ran” ... until the last bone,

where he wrote “Caterpillar laugh.” He demonstrated a higher level of understanding since he showed not just that he could regurgitate when the animals appeared in the story, but also what significant action they performed.

After repeating these activities with *Something From Nothing*, I had the students plan their own stories. We discussed how telling a story is different from telling about a story. I wanted them to tell their stories as stories not “this happened and then this...”

We discussed how difficult it is to remember things word for word, but it is much easier to remember basically what happens. I stressed that it would be easier to pick a story they knew well and not try to memorize it word for word.

All of the students managed to tell their stories as stories. A few students opted to tell their story to a small group, but most did it for the class. The students were disappointed when we were finished, as they enjoyed hearing each other’s stories. Jeremiah told a story that he had made up himself. He said he found it easier to remember since it was his own. Ravi was a little shy about telling his story, but he managed to get through it following the instructions that were given. Overall I was very pleased with how well they did with a difficult task that required them to speak in front of their peers. In our informal interview afterwards, most of the children expressed pride in their success at having stood up in front of everyone to share their stories.

The goal of my research was to determine how storytelling could help my ESL students in particular with their own retelling of stories.

Continued on page 33

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The Year in Review



Local presidents gather at ETFO's Fall Representative Council.



No Logo author Naomi Klein and ETFO First Vice-President Emily Noble at the Women's Conference.



Local presidents gather at ETFO's Fall Representative Council.



Above: ETFO Vice-President Ken Collins, standing, chairs the Selection Committee. This committee recommends appointments to other committees.

Below: Teachers in Lambton-Kent kept their spirits up as their strike/lockout, which began April 24, continued into May.



Above: Hamilton-Wentworth teachers endured a one day strike and a 16-day lock out from October 30 to November 21 inclusive.

Below, left to right: Phyllis Benedict, President, ETFO; Nancy Nix, President, Lakehead Occasional Teachers; Christina Lofts, President, ETFO Lakehead, picket the Board office.





Nancy Riche, Secretary-Treasurer of the Canadian Labour Congress, and ETFO Vice-President Ruth Behnke at ETFO's February Representative Council.



Each year, members of the Steering Committee set the agenda for ETFO's three Representative Councils.



ETFO's 2000-2001 Provincial Executive pauses for a group photograph.



The Aboriginal Committee meets to discuss a variety of issues.



Above: Late April's Women in Action workshop focused on leadership strategies for women.

Below: Participants enjoy 'Leadership from the Roots Up' workshop in May.



Above: Local leaders gather at ETFO's Fall Representative Council.

Below: Teachers in Keewatin-Patricia were on strike for two days and locked out for eight days in January.



Occasional Teachers Deserve Respect

*A regular column in Voice,
examining collective bargaining
issues for our members.*

On March 23rd, Lakehead elementary occasional teachers achieved a feat which no other ETFO Local has yet managed – a 100% vote in favour of strike action. They did this (with a good turnout for the vote, by the way) in the knowledge that they are the only ETFO Local without a collective agreement since before Bill 160. That kind of vote proves the determination of a group of educators unwilling to accept second-class status. Unlike teacher bargaining, occasional teacher bargaining hasn't made many headlines in this second round of post-Bill 160 negotiations. This is so for a very good reason – school boards continue to drag their heels when it comes to negotiating with occasional teachers. Often they are the last bargaining unit within a board to be “gotten around to” by board negotiators. In fact, only six occasional teacher settlements

have been reached since September. This means that 19 occasional teacher Locals are currently working under expired collective agreements. By comparison, only four ETFO teacher Locals are working under expired agreements.

What has made the news, however, is the acute occasional teacher shortage across the province. As *The Toronto Star* noted in December, “...the shortage of full-time teachers and qualified substitutes has been exacerbated by the province's early retirement program, which has led to an exodus from the profession. Boards looking to recruit permanent replacements often turn to their lists of qualified occasional teachers, reducing the ranks of supply teachers.”

Moreover, ETFO's own recent school-based survey found that 53% of schools reported an increase over the past year

in the number of teacher absences not covered by an occasional teacher. Interestingly, only 17% of these stated that this was due to budget restrictions, while 78% cited a lack of occasional teachers.

There is no question that there is a teacher shortage in absolute terms. However, the supply and demand question with respect to occasional teachers has other elements. If individual school boards want to attract more occasional teachers to their lists, perhaps they could start by paying them more and treating them better. In particular, in a tight labour market it is ludicrous for employers to assume that occasional teachers should be content to settle for lower wage increases than their full-time colleagues in the next classroom. Equally ridiculous is the notion that an occasional teacher who has taught steadily and successfully in a board for years on end is somehow undeserving of insured benefits of any kind.

Some boards have indeed been forced to acknowledge the need to re-direct more of their resources to these issues. It wasn't that long ago when a significant number of occasional teacher collective agreements contained daily rates of \$140 or less. Today, there are ten school boards in which the starting rate

for a daily occasional teacher exceeds \$160.

Raising daily rates, however incrementally, has entailed not only political pressure from occasional teacher Locals, but creativity in structuring wage rates as well. Bluewater occasional teachers bargained a daily rate which reflects actual category placement, and which ranges for teachers with degrees from \$159.49 to \$189.32. Thames Valley occasional teachers negotiated a clause which automatically triggers an equivalent increase in the daily rate (currently \$161.32) whenever their ETFO teacher colleagues negotiate an increase. Toronto has long had a formula which recognizes length of service for purposes of calculating the daily rate, which currently ranges from \$149.67 for a new teacher to \$171.07 for a teacher with at least 200 days' service since September 1989.

Collective bargaining is about money, and working conditions, and rights. But, as the five ETFO teacher Locals that have taken job action so far this school year have shown, it is also about respect. Whenever teachers have fought for respect this year in negotiations, occasional teachers have demonstrated their solidarity with their teacher colleagues.

This has entailed being supportive of teacher work-to-rule job actions, attending rallies, donating to strike funds and joining in pickets. In the case of Lambton-Kent, Keewatin-Patricia and Hamilton-Wentworth, it has also meant significant financial sacrifice on the part of occasional teachers supporting those teacher strikes.

Respect, unfortunately, is a quality often in short supply when school boards deal with their occasional teachers in bargaining. The boards' own interests, however, dictate that such a state of affairs is no longer tenable. Occasional teachers, without whom no school system can function, are dedicated professionals and deserve to be treated as such.

Christine Brown for ETFO's Collective Bargaining Services Area.



Marilies Rettig, President of CTF

Since Seattle, a world-wide movement has developed dedicated to the fight for public services, democratic institutions, and quality education. Citizens have come together to try to ensure that international trade agreements respect fundamental human rights, the environment, labour standards and protect critical public services, including public education.

As the national voice of over 240,000 elementary and secondary teachers in Canada, CTF has a strong and proud tradition of promoting and advancing the cause of children and for speaking out on behalf of teachers and for a strong public education system, both here and abroad.

This is why, on April 17 and 18, as part of the People's Summit in Quebec City, CTF and the Centrale des Syndicats du Québec (CSQ) co-hosted the Hemispheric Education Forum. The 280 forum participants, including a delegation from ETFO, represented millions of people throughout the Americas who work in education every day. Their purpose in coming

together was to propose inclusive social and educational policies to benefit all peoples in the Americas and to present these alternatives to the heads of state.

The two days of discussion resulted in a seven-page Joint Declaration, including a comprehensive plan of action, which was presented to the heads of state through Maria Minna, Canada's Minister for International Cooperation. The Declaration emphasized the need to respond to the future hopes and aspirations of the children and youth of our hemisphere. It also said that education must never be reduced to a market place commodity for inclusion in an international trade agreement.

A year ago, leaders and representatives from countries throughout the world gathered in Dakar for the World Education Forum. At that forum, Education International's Tom Bediako spoke on behalf of more than 200 non-government organizations when he promised, "We will not go away. If you don't see us you may see our shadows. We expect everyone to be accountable to the commitments made here. We will continue to campaign at the local, the national and the international levels. We will see you in the villages, towns and cities."

Today, there are more than five million children attending school in Canada. Children's education is free and compulsory. However, this is not the case for all children in other parts of the world – or in other parts of this hemisphere.

One hundred and twenty-five million children have no access to school. Twenty million of these children live in this hemisphere. A further 110 million children, youth and adults are forced to leave school before they have gained basic literacy skills. Close to 40 million of these children live in this hemisphere.

As teachers, we have a social and moral responsibility to speak out on behalf of children. We must assert that all governments must live up to their responsibility to provide free, high-quality, compulsory education for all children.

Education is nothing less than an investment in the development of the human spirit – a right which should be accessible to every child, youth and adult throughout this hemisphere.

We urge you to contact your federal member of parliament. Ask him or her to support the Joint Declaration issued by the Education Forum of the Peoples' Summit. The Declaration can be found at www.ctf-fce.ca.

Calendar of Events

DU 2 AU 13 JUILLET MONTRÉAL
Thème: Intégrer la littératie, la littérature et la culture en pédagogie immersive
Coordonnatrice:
Estelle Magny
téléphone: 514-398-6727
télécopier: 514-398-5595
estelle.magny@mcgill.ca
www.education.mcgill.ca/
institut_acpi

JULY 9-13 TORONTO
Towards an Inclusive Curriculum
5th Annual Summer Institute
York University, main campus
4700 Keele Street
Tel: 416-736-2100,
ext. 40204 for information

JULY 22-24 VANCOUVER
4th International Reading Recovery Institute
Hyatt Hotel, Vancouver, B.C.
Every three years Reading Recovery Teachers, Teacher leaders, Trainers and their Administrators have the opportunity to network with others from across the world. For more information visit the ETFO website
www.etfo.on.ca, Professional Development section

JULY - AUGUST TORONTO
Adult Education in the Arts Program
For Information contact:
Susan Brown
The Artists' Garden Cooperative
345 Balliol Street
Toronto, ON
M4S 1E1
Tel: 416-487-0705

AUGUST 19-24 AUSTRALIA
New Ideas in Mathematics Education
Palm Cove, Tropical North Queensland
Contact: Dr. Alan Rogerson
Tel: +48-61-6620528
E-mail: arogerson@vsg.edu.au

SEPTEMBER 2001 TORONTO
School Reunion - Toronto Normal School
Class of 1949-50
354 Victoria Park Avenue, Toronto
Contact: Jack Teggart
Tel: 416-690-5999
E-mail: teggart@window-net.com

SEPTEMBER 8
International Literacy Day

SEPTEMBER 15 BRAMPTON
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www.peel.edu.on.ca/~glendale

SEPTEMBER 20-22 TORONTO
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Contact: Barbara Richter or Wendy Matthews
1-888-838-3836, or 416-962-3836
e-mail: brichter@etfo.org
wmatthews@etfo.org

Telling Tales in School

Continued from page 26

I believe I was able to help my students to retell stories logically. I think the natural repetition within the stories benefited the ESL students as did my repeating each story. Part of retelling is to put the events in their proper sequence. Most of the students had very few or no difficulties in completing the drawing and bones activities. Every student enjoyed some success in his or her own storytelling.

Through this unit I learned how much we all like to listen when there is something of interest being said. I learned how much students enjoy sharing with each other and appreciate each other's work. However, possibly the most significant thing I learned was what a powerful tool stories, especially oral ones, are in the learning process of our students. I was astonished by the way they responded immediately to my stories and to the stories of their peers.

I learned a tremendous amount during this experiment, and I hope the students did too. Jeremiah thought of the idea on his own to tell a story he had made up. I thought this showed initiative, and he was absolutely right that it is easier to recall and tell one's own stories. Besides, telling the stories of our own lives is what we as humans do. It reminded me of the wise character in Rohinton Mistry's novel *A Fine Balance*, who said "you must tell ... your ... full story ... It's extremely important because it helps to remind yourself of who you are."

However much I learned as an educator, I would like to think that my students and I were able to "remind ourselves of who we are," and that is probably the most important lesson of all.

Karen Sigston teaches grade 8 Language Arts for the Ottawa Carleton District School Board.



Barbara Sargent, ETFO's OTF Table Officer and Past President of OTF

Membership Fees

On December 6, 2000, Roger Régimbal, President of OTF, wrote to tell you that, as of October 31, 2000, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) was in default in its payment of fees to OTF.

By resolution of a Special Executive Meeting of OTF, and in accordance with OTF Bylaws, OSSTF's voting and participation privileges in OTF were suspended effective December 14, 2000. This resolution means that, until all fee amounts due are paid in full, OSSTF's suspension will continue.

Since December, OTF has proceeded with legal action to ensure that OSSTF pays the full OTF fee and all fee arrears. OSSTF has countered with a suit contesting OTF's authority to make its own by-laws. The matters will be before the courts in July 2001.

OTF continues to communicate with, and to serve its members who are also members of OSSTF.

Pensions

On March 8, 2001, OTF's Board of Governors approved a package of pension benefit improvements which will be implemented over the next two years.

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) is co-sponsored by OTF and the Government of Ontario. Under an agreement made between the Ontario Government and the OTF in 1998, the government was allowed to use \$8.4 billion in plan surpluses to eliminate its outstanding liability to the plan. This unfunded liability had existed since 1991, when the plan was established as a partnership between teachers and government.

The 1998 agreement provided \$2.2 billion in benefit improvements, and provided that, as of April 1, 2001, the OTF could use the next \$6.2 billion in plan surpluses to improve benefits. Among the benefit improvements are:

- enacting a permanent provision allowing teachers to retire when age plus years of service equals 85;
- recalculating the pensions of those who retired before 1983 on the average of the best five years of salary, rather than the best seven or ten years;
- guaranteeing that a pension will be paid to a retiree or to the retiree's survivor or estate for a period of ten years following retirement; and
- removing the requirement that teachers on leave must return to work for 70 days before retirement in order to obtain credit for the leave period.

For details and implementation dates for the improvements, visit www.otffeo.on.ca.

Teaching After Retirement

OTF is proposing to review the OTTP rules related to teaching after retirement. Currently, retired teachers are limited to teaching for 95 days for three years after retirement, without affecting their pensions. In the face of a looming teacher shortage, relaxing the restrictions on retired teachers could increase the number of qualified teachers available. Several options are being discussed at the OTTP Partners Committee.

Summer Institutes

Again this year, OTF and the Affiliates are offering a series of Summer Curriculum Institutes to support teachers in implementing the Ontario Curriculum. The program is supported by \$1.75 million from the Ministry of Education.

Helen Penfold is the operational manager for Summer Institutes 2001. Ruth Dawson (ETFO) and Diane Newman (OECTA) are the Elementary Coordinators.

Farewell

On a personal note, this is my last report as your OTF Table Officer, and as the OTF Past President. I would like to say how much I have enjoyed representing you. Thank you for the opportunity to do so. The role OTF plays in representing all the teachers of Ontario is an important one. I encourage you to continue to support OTF as a unified voice for Ontario's teachers.

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