

Voice

October 2007
Vol. 10 • No. 1

Annual Meeting 2007

Focus on FSL

Teaching children affected by war



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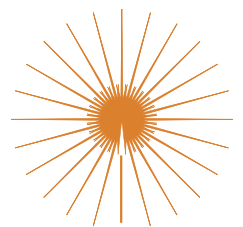
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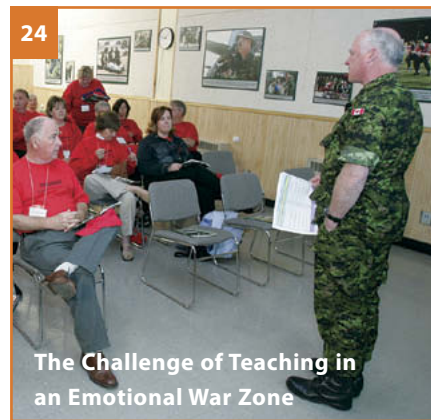
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FROM THE EDITOR

As we go to print, the provincial election has just concluded. Education, particularly the funding of faith-based schools was a major focus in the campaign. Do the election results bode well for public elementary teachers? President David Clegg provides his day-after analysis on page 4.

Going into the campaign, ETFO redirected the focus of its public campaign from one focusing on the gap in funding between elementary and secondary schools to one defending and promoting public education. The general secretary explains the reasoning behind the shift in approach on page 5.

Look for more detailed coverage of ETFO's involvement in the provincial election in the December issue.

David Clegg became ETFO president at the Annual Meeting in August, replacing Emily Noble, who has become the president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation. (Her column appears on page 41.) Annual Meeting coverage begins on page 8.

The April issue of *Voice* was a special issue dedicated to professional learning initiatives taking place in schools across the province. This issue continues the professional learning theme with articles that look at how one school board addressed the learning needs of French teachers (page 20) and one local provided professional development for its occasional teacher members (page 23).

And finally this issue of *Voice* contains our first "letters to the editor" page with readers' responses to past articles. If you have thoughts to share about stories in this issue, send an email to jbrand@etfo.org.

We welcome your feedback.


JOHANNA BRAND

WRITE TO VOICE

Here are some guidelines for the Letters to the Editor column.

- Letters should be short and to the point (150-200 words) and should relate directly to articles in the magazine.
- Member letters have priority. Please provide contact information, including a telephone number and the board where you work, so that your submission can be verified before publication.

You may submit letters by email to jbrand@etfo.org with 'Letter to the Editor' in the subject line. You may also submit letters by mail or fax to The Editor, at the address and fax number on the masthead.



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ROBERT MUNSCH

— Special thanks: Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario —

Re: "The Pervasive Threat of Declining Student Enrolment," June 07

This past year the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board moved a French Immersion school into our building and displaced our students to two other schools. When our students, support, administration, and teaching staff were moved out, we looked to our Federation for support. We found that a situation where one staff displaces another was unprecedented. We were declared surplus and that meant that the process by which we were to secure a position was the same as for teachers who were choosing to make a move from their current assignments.

Mr. Kendall wrote that declining student enrolment will undoubtedly shape the bargaining goals for the next round of negotiations. Vacancy lists should be just that: a reflection of teaching assignments available after contract teachers have positions. Some locals have recognized that a teacher declared surplus is not the same as a teacher wishing to change assignments, and so surplus teachers are placed before the first vacancy list. This should be the practice everywhere. Let's put some protection in place for the increasing number of teachers that will be declared surplus in the near future.

Sara Burke

Fielding Drive Public School
Ottawa-Carleton District School Board



The Eighth Annual ETFO Leadership and Personal Growth Conference for Women

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- Speakers
 - Leadership training
 - Networking opportunities
 - Personal growth workshops
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For information contact Kathleen Loftus at provincial office; email: kloftus@etfo.org

Re: "Pension Strategies for Occasional Teachers," June 07

I was advised by OTPP that limitations on occasional teaching don't apply when one reaches age 71, contradicting the author's statement that "these limits don't apply if you are 69 years or over." Who is correct? I retired from teaching in June, 1999. I expected to have no limitation on my occasional teaching days when I reached age 69, as that was the rule when I retired. I would think that therefore I would be allowed to teach at 69 without limitation even though there might be a new rule.

If the rule has been changed to age 71, I would ask that ETFO make a presentation to the Ontario Legislature on behalf of retired member teachers who are approaching age 69 and wish to continue occasional teaching without limits.

Stuart Ring

Occasional Teacher
Toronto, York Region

Lorraine Stewart explains:

The change in age is the result of the federal government's actions, not the province's. The 2007 federal budget changed the rules relating to RRSP and pension contributions. When the Federal Income Tax Act was amended, the OTPP rules changed automatically to reflect these changes. Since teachers can now contribute to the plan until age 71 the re-employment rules now also apply until age 71. Unfortunately it took OTPP time to review the federal changes and determine how they would affect the plan. Rule changes were not announced until after the June issue of Voice was published.

Re: "It's Elementary"

As a member who is involved with the Elementary Teachers of Toronto's archive committee, I would like to thank Barbara Richter, the author of this four-part series which appeared in last year's Voice. I especially enjoyed the Part 2 article in December's issue (vol. 9, no. 2), which reviewed our federation's history from the early 1800s to 1944. For me, it is important to remember how far we have come from the early days when women worked for less, had to leave the profession once married, and were thought not to be able to handle the discipline of the older grades. I would like to see this series printed into a book or pamphlet so that we never forget our beginnings as a union.

Terry White

Executive Officer
Elementary Teachers of Toronto
SW4 & SW5



DAVID CLEGG
President, ETFO

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Promises Made Must Be Promises Kept

AS we go to press the provincial election has just concluded. The outcome is good news for public education. With ETFO's encouragement, the people of Ontario voted for an education-friendly Liberal party to govern for a second four-year term. The re-election of Education Minister Kathleen Wynne gives us added hope that we will continue to see improvements in our elementary schools.

If you are one of our newer members – that is, if you have been teaching for less than four or five years – you may not fully appreciate how far we have come since 2003. During the two terms of its mandate, the Conservative government led by Premier Mike Harris attacked teachers and their federations and undermined public educa-

tion, reducing school board budgets by some \$2 billion over eight years.

ETFO and its locals worked hard to defeat that government, and when the Liberals came to power in 2003 we saw an immediate change in both attitude and actions. We have witnessed significant improvements in education in Ontario in the last four years and an infusion of more than \$2.5 billion into the system.

Equally important is the sea change in our relationship with the government. Beginning with Gerard Kennedy and continuing today with Kathleen Wynne, Liberal education ministers have demonstrated their respect for public education, and for teachers and their federations.

While there has been much progress, more needs to be done to ensure that Ontario's elementary students receive the education they deserve. In particular we look forward to continued efforts to close the gap in funding between elementary and secondary students. The continuation of a \$711 difference in funding is not acceptable.

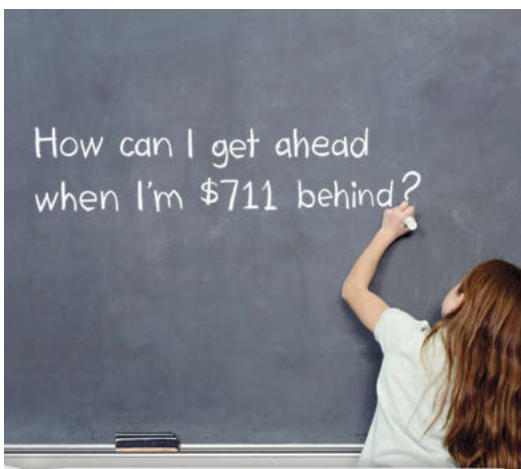
The second phase of our *Close the Gap* campaign indisputably convinced the governing Liberals that the issues of public elementary teachers could not be ignored, and in their election platform they pledged \$150 million "to close the gap."

We will hold the government to account for the commitments promised during the campaign. But we should be under no illusion that helping to re-elect this government guarantees success when we bargain new collective agreements.

During the coming months ETFO will commit all of its resources to ensuring that when collective agreements expire next August they are replaced by agreements that provide you with working conditions at least equal to those of your secondary colleagues and to ensuring that our students have the best possible learning conditions.

Equalizing our working conditions and our students' learning conditions will require elementary teachers to overcome more than a century of discrimination. But this historic discrimination can be ended. Elementary teachers proved for over a hundred years that it was easy to settle for less. Those days are gone forever.

We have helped re-elect the self-styled "education premier" It is our job to make certain that promises made are promises kept. We will work to ensure that this newly elected government and Ontario's public school boards recognize they have no choice but to close the gap.



ONTARIO ELECTION 2007
**ON OCTOBER 10,
VOTE TO CLOSE THE GAP.**

closethegap.ca Ontario's Elementary School Teachers



GENE LEWIS

General Secretary, ETFO

FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

The Evolution of a Campaign Fighting for Better Schools

FOR many decades there has been a funding gap in Ontario's education system. When school boards had some control over education spending they, like the provincial government, discriminated against elementary students and teachers by allocating more dollars per pupil to the secondary panel. When the provincial government took over full control of education funding, that discriminatory system continued. The roots of the problem likely lie with the different qualifications required of elementary teachers decades ago and the lack of understanding of the importance of the early years. Today neither still apply, yet the gap remains.

Although it has shrunk somewhat from the \$1300 it was when the Liberals took power in 2003, the gap still amounts to \$711 per pupil. Imagine the impact on our schools given the fact that there are 1.4 million elementary pupils in Ontario. Compare your school to a secondary school – that gap explains a lot.

Closing the gap will bring significant benefits to elementary students and their teachers: smaller class sizes in grades 4 to 8; more specialist teachers and teacher-librarians; better working conditions for teachers; better learning experiences for students. In short, better schools. In the long run it will also result in improved student performance in the high school years, because we know that the foundation for lifelong academic success is laid in elementary school.

Last winter ETFO decided to take on the funding gap and the inequity it represents for students and teachers. Our campaign began in February with billboards and print ads that told a positive story about the excellent work our members do with students and parents.

We waited for a response from the government, but none was forthcoming. We then increased the intensity of our campaign by directly drawing attention to the funding gap. We used three slogans: I have big dreams but I'm \$711 short. How can I get ahead when I'm \$711 behind? I can't pronounce inequity but I can feel it.

Our billboards went up and we were ready to publish similarly themed newspaper ads and air radio and television commercials at the beginning of the school year. This time our message seemed to produce results. Going into the provincial election, the Liberal Party's campaign platform promised to allocate funds to closing the gap in supports for elementary students. The Green Party also promised to eliminate the funding gap and we hoped that the New Democrats would follow suit.

The Conservative Party meanwhile promised to shift money – as much as \$500 million – into private schools, undermining public education and making public education a major focus in the election campaign.

As a result of these developments we decided to shift our message into one designed to promote and protect public education. Our ads once again emphasized the importance of the work our members do and left viewers and listeners with the message "Ontario's schools: Good and getting better."

Where do we go from here? The President's column outlines our approach in the wake of the provincial election results. Without question we will continue our fight for equity in funding. We are committed to closing the gap.

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Designed by teachers, dietitians and students, **POWER TO PLAY!** easily integrates healthy eating into the Ontario curriculum with a focus on Language and Mathematics. And the program is **FREE!**

Teachers receive:

- DVD featuring seven exciting super missions
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Join the 3,500 classes that have already participated in this exciting program.

"It's probably the best laid out program I have seen in 30 years. The interactive components allow kids to apply the concepts to their own lives. Tasks integrate language, arts, science, health and computer skills. That demonstrates what an incredible program it is!"

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www.teachnutrition.org



Elections for a new provincial executive and the unveiling of the next step in ETFO's *Closing the Gap* campaign were highlights of the 2007 Annual Meeting.

Closing the Gap began in February with billboards and ads featuring the work members do. Delegates to the Annual Meeting saw new billboards and print ads that highlighted the fact that the provincial government provides \$711 less funding annually for an elementary pupil than is provided for a secondary student.

David Clegg, ETFO's new president, outlined what "closing the gap" will mean for elementary schools: "My vision for public education in Ontario is one that has proper class sizes throughout all of the elementary years, not just at primary ... a dedicated librarian and a guidance counsellor in every elementary school [and] returns music, art, technology and family studies programs. But most of all it's a school where elementary teachers are given the time and the resources to do the job right."

Promises to reduce the gap "just won't do," Clegg said, noting that the foundation to academic success is laid in the elementary years and is the underpinning for strategies to reduce the high school dropout rate and improve student literacy and numeracy.

In her goodbye speech, outgoing president Emily Noble challenged delegates to work with members and the public and "get it done." This \$711 gap "defies explanation and devalues the work you and I do and ignores the needs of our students," Noble said. The funding gap will also be ETFO's focus during the next round of bargaining.

Noble highlighted ETFO's many accomplishments during the past nine years. Since the federation was founded it has successfully fought the teacher qualifying test and "tamed" the teacher performance appraisal process. She called ETFO's last campaign, *Campaign 200*, a "truly defining moment for our union." That campaign resulted in every teacher collective agreement providing increased preparation time – to 200 minutes a week in 2008 – and limits on teachers' supervisory duties.

Equally successful, she noted, was the occasional teacher campaign *There Is No Substitute...* which improved the working conditions of occasional teachers.

Noble received a warm and prolonged standing ovation from delegates in recognition of her years of service to the organization.



Annual Meeting 2007

the first day of school and
already \$711 behind.

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Elementary Teachers'
Federation of Ontario
Annual Meeting

I can't pronounce
But I can feel the

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CLOSE THE \$711 FUNDING GAP NOW.
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Photos: Anne de Haas

Annual Meeting 2007

KATHLEEN WYNNE

Looking ahead to the October 10 election, Kathleen Wynne, the minister of education, summarized the changes the Liberal government has made since it took power in 2003. "I am proud of the progress we have made in education," Wynne told the delegates. She acknowledged that the funding gap is a critical issue for ETFO and noted that the gap has shrunk by some \$400 per pupil in the past four years. "We will keep doing that important work of investing in elementary schools and reducing the gap," she said. The minister also noted that "we have heard your concerns around class size and combined classes in grades 4 to 8," and she promised to address that issue if re-elected.



HOWARD HAMPTON

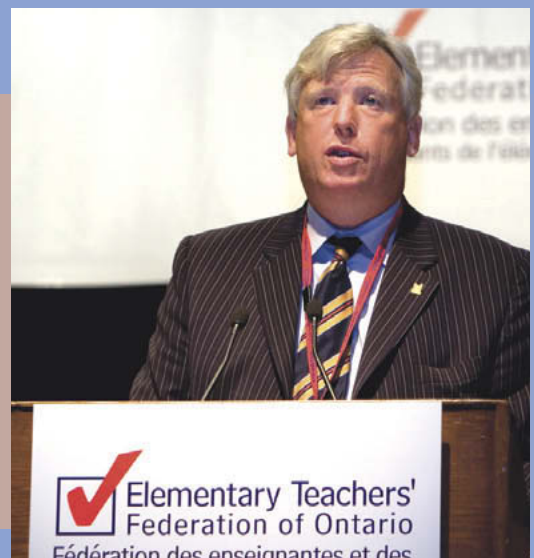
In his address to the delegates, NDP Leader Howard Hampton stressed that "the funding formula has not been fixed." He noted that there is an "explosion of fundraising" in Ontario schools. In 2005-06 school fundraising in 65 of Ontario's 105 boards totalled at least \$567 million. Schools are raising funds for essentials, Hampton said, pointing out that one school organized a skip-a-thon to pay for salaries of occasional teachers. The need to rely on fundraising increases the disparities between schools, with the top 10 percent of schools raising more money than the bottom 80 percent, Hampton said. Maintenance staff, education assistants, continuing education and English as a second language supports are not frills, yet all are in short supply as a result of the flawed funding formula.



DAVID MILLER

Toronto Mayor David Miller showed his support for public education and public services. He noted that the public school system has a significant role to play in a multicultural society in promoting understanding and equality of opportunity.

"Your Close the Gap campaign is ... part of a broader issue. For 25 years neo-conservatives told us public services should not be valued, public servants should not be valued, and that we can have good-quality services for free. You and I know that's not true. We have to make investments so that we can ensure excellent outcomes. Your campaign brings that message back to the forefront."



Act to Stop War, Members Urged

Buying a cellphone or investing in an RRSP are among the ordinary things Canadians do that may be supporting wars around the world. According to Dr. Samantha Nutt, founder and executive director of War Child Canada, "We are connected to war by the very things we do every day." She urged ETFO members to take action.

In her address to the Annual Meeting, Dr. Nutt outlined her experiences in countries ravaged by war, and the impact of war on women and children worldwide. War Child Canada is a charity that helps children affected by war.

Few people are aware that one of the causes of war in the Congo is the struggle for control over the mineral coltan used in the manufacture of cellphones, Dr. Nutt stated. However, more than 3 million people have been killed there since 1997, half of them under 16 years old.

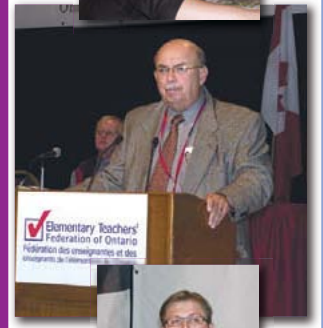
In addition, she said, "Even as we support efforts to rid the world of land mines and cluster bombs, we continue to invest in companies that manufacture weapons." She pointed out that the Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has \$50 million invested in companies that manufacture arms.

Dr. Nutt urged delegates to "demand that financial returns do not triumph ethics," adding that "not knowing where your money goes and who profits is not acceptable."



Dr. Nutt outlined four concrete measures ETFO members can take:

1. Stay informed and connected by accessing and using the teaching resources on the War Child Canada websites, warchild.ca and getloud.ca.
2. Donate to development and assistance efforts overseas and lobby the federal government to keep its commitment to contribute .7 percent of gross national income to overseas aid. Currently the government spends only .27 percent.
3. Change purchasing and investing practices. "Find out if the coltan in your cellphone has been mined ethically"
3. Stop believing that life and loss in our country are more important than life and loss elsewhere.



ETFO Executive 2007-2009



DAVID CLEGG

President

David Clegg comes to the president's job with a long history of serving on the ETFO provincial executive: he served two terms as first vice-president, was a vice-president from 2002–04, and was an executive member from 1999–2002.

Clegg began teaching in 1992 and became involved with ETFO early in his career because he understood the intensely political nature of public education. From 2000–02 he was president of the York Region Teacher Local, ETFO's third largest local with 3,500 members. Before that he served as chief negotiator, political action chair, and local vice-president. As chief negotiator, Clegg held a key position during the turbulent 1998 lockout – the first in Ontario for public elementary teachers – and subsequent strike in York Region.



SAM HAMMOND

First Vice-President

Sam Hammond was first elected to the ETFO executive in 2003 and has served two terms as vice-president.

From 1998–2003 he was the chief negotiator and grievance officer for the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local. He was chief negotiator when the local's 2,300 teacher members went through a 17-day strike/lockout in 2000.

Hammond has worked on numerous municipal, provincial, and federal political campaigns and has been a member of the Hamilton-Wentworth Labour Council for seven years.

He taught physical education and health, from junior kindergarten through grade 8 for 18 years, and has also taught additional qualification courses in physical education and health and in risk management at the Brock University faculty of education.



HILDA WATKINS

Vice-President & OTF Table Officer

A former president of the Greater Essex County Teacher Local, Hilda Watkins served as OTF president last year. Prior to that she was a member of the governing council of the Ontario College of Teachers. She has been a member of the ETFO executive since 2005 and a teacher for more than 30 years.



BARBARA BURKETT

Vice-President

Barbara Burkett has been an ETFO vice-president since 2004. She was president of the Ontario North East Teacher Local for three years and an ETFO executive member for six years, during which time she has served on numerous ETFO committees. She has been a teacher for 25 years.

Executive Members



DOUG COOK

Upper Grand Teacher Local



DIANE DEWING

Upper Canada Occasional Teacher Local



RACHEL GENCEY

Durham Teacher Local



MARTIN LONG

Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local



MIKE LUMB

Limestone Teacher Local



RIAN MCLAUGHLIN

Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teacher Local



SHARRON RAYMOND

Peel Teacher Local



DEB ST. AMANT

Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher Local



SUSAN SWACKHAMMER

Grand Erie Teacher Local



MAUREEN WEINBERGER

Halton Teacher Local

ETFO 2007-08 BUDGET General Fund

REVENUE	\$59,925,773
Fees from Teachers, Occasional Teachers, ESP/PSP & associate members + investments	
Defense Fund	(11,406,987)
Political Action/Public Relations Fund	(1,471,869)
OTF/CTF/EI Fees	(3,530,969)
QEEO Fees	(1,108,776)
OFL/CLC Fees	(833,764)
NET REVENUE	\$41,573,407

Projected Expenditures

OTHER PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS	\$201,900
GOVERNANCE	2,587,211
annual, executive, & representative council meetings & released executive costs	
ETFO LOCALS	17,687,960
fee rebates to locals, local release time, training & materials for locals & stewards	
COMMITTEE, TASK FORCE & WORK GROUP MEETINGS	221,200
two meetings for each	
ASSISTANCE	571,150
awards, donations, scholarships & project overseas	
EQUITY & WOMEN'S PROGRAMS	1,177,001
race relations, employment equity, anti-violence & women's programs*	
PROTECTIVE SERVICES FOR MEMBERS	2,009,350
collective bargaining, professional relations services, health & safety, pensions & legal costs	
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	1,230,001
PD programs, teacher education & conferences, publication & distribution of VOICE, & other communications, pamphlets	
PROVINCIAL OFFICE	2,400,000
rent, maintenance, taxes, phones, equipment, printing & postage & members' records	
STAFF SALARIES & BENEFITS	12,758,386
provincial staff salaries & benefits	
ORGANIZATIONAL SERVICES & SUNDRIES	610,701
legal costs, consultants, insurance & auditors	
TRANSFERS TO RESTRICTED FUNDS	929,987
transferred assets to be accumulated in separate funds to meet long-term goals	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$42,384,847
surplus (deficit) of expenditure over revenue	\$(811,440)

* Each year, ETFO allocates 6% of the annual budget (\$2,437,950) to programs for women. Some of these programs are in the Equity & Women's Programs section but most are spread throughout the budget.

ETFO PRIORITIES FOR 2007-2008

- To protect the collective bargaining rights of all members.
- To defend publicly funded public education.
- To serve the needs of the membership.
- To provide for the professional development of members.
- To promote social justice in the areas of anti-poverty, nonviolence, and equity.
- To support international assistance and co-operation.
- To promote the care and protection of the environment.
- To actively engage members in the Federation.
- To promote and protect the health and safety of members.

Delegates approved two new priorities for the organization:

- To actively engage members in the federation.
This adds to ETFO's priorities a commitment that has been understood but not explicitly stated: namely, to involve and engage members in all aspects of the federation's work.
- To promote the health and safety of members.



ETFO AWARDS

2007



CHILDREN'S LITERATURE AWARD

ITAH SADU's book *A Touch of Zebras* introduces children to Chelsea, a mixed-race child unsure of which world – white or black – she belongs to. She is suffering from a “touch of the zebras.” Illustrated by Stephen Taylor, the book has received the second **ETFO Children's Literature Award**. The award recognizes writing for children in keeping with ETFO's positions on social justice and equity. Born in Canada and raised in Barbados, Sadu has been a writer and storyteller for more than 20 years. She first wove this story as she travelled to elementary schools around Ontario telling stories about Black history and women's issues. She was encouraged by teachers to turn it into a print book. *A Touch of Zebras*, her fifth book, has been recognized by the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Itah Sadu is co-owner of the Toronto bookstore, A Different Booklist.



HUMANITARIAN AWARD

CHRISTINE THRASHER, who is a member of the Avon Maitland Teacher Local, received the **2006 Humanitarian Award for an ETFO Member**, in recognition of her service to education and the community. Trasher is known within the board and the community for her many projects, among them her hand-drumming program. Based on the philosophy of African hand drumming, the program emphasizes co-operation, respect, and community. Thrasher is also active in the community, where her focus is on helping others. She is chair of the board for the Emily Murphy Centre, a second-stage housing facility for women and children in crisis where she has been a volunteer for nine years. As a backup singer to an Elvis tribute artist, she has performed at fundraisers for a support centre for developmentally delayed adults.



SOCIAL ACTIVISM

Windsor resident and lawyer **MARION OVERHOLT** has a long history of assisting women and advocating for those who live in poverty. ETFO has recognized her work by presenting her with the award for **Women Working in Social Activism on behalf of Women and Children**.

Although she is not a member of a union, Overholt has been social justice representative of the Windsor and District Labour Council Executive since 2001. She was elected to bring her legal expertise to address community social justice issues in partnership with the Labour Council. Overholt graduated from the University of Windsor law school in 1981 and was appointed a staff lawyer at Legal Assistance of Windsor in 1988 where, among other things, she mentors and counsels students. Her community service work began with one of her earliest placements as a lawyer with the Hiatus House Complainant Support Program. She has been a board member for the Downtown Mission, the Unemployed Help Centre, and the Well-Come Centre, and chairwoman of the Homeless Coalition of Windsor-Essex.

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP AWARD



CHRIS LOFTS was president of the Lakehead Teacher Local for seven years. Since beginning her teaching career in 1977, she held a variety of union positions including ETFO provincial executive member and OTF governor.



FRED MAYOR was a negotiator in the York Region Teacher Local for many years. He is now an occasional teacher in Thames Valley. During his 45 years of service to his union he has always been involved in collective bargaining. He also helped organize occasional teachers.



ARTIE COOPER, a teacher for 36 years, served as president of the Superior-Greenstone Teacher Local for 18 years. He served on every local negotiating team since 1976 and held every position on the local executive.



KATHY SMITH was active in the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations as a negotiator and as a director for eight years. She served on many provincial committees and task forces.

PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT – ETFO locals made donations to offset the impact on the environment of their attendance at the Annual Meeting. The Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher and Occasional Teacher Locals, the York Region Teacher and Occasional Teacher Locals, and the Ontario North East Teacher Local each made donations to environmental organizations of about 25 cents per member.

ETFO ACTIVISTS HONOURED

ETFO honours local activists for their contribution in a variety of categories.



SHELLY JAN, Peel Occasional Teacher Local (left), **Local Leadership Award**.
DIANE PERSALL, Grand Erie Occasional Teacher Local, **Occasional Teacher of the Year**.

GREG WEILER, Waterloo Region Teacher Local, **ETFO Local Website of the Year Award**;

DIANE DEWING, Upper Canada Occasional Teacher Local, **Newsletter Editor's Award** (multi-sheet category);
GARY OSLEY and **ADELINA CHECCHIN** Greater Essex Teacher Local, **Newsletter Editor's Award** (single-sheet category).

Other activists who received federation awards are:

RUTH ANN MORLEY, Thames Valley Teacher Local, **Health and Safety Activist Award**
ANDREA KURTZ, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local, **New Teacher of the Year Award**.



ETFO VP **HILDA WATKINS**, staff member **JIM MCMAHON**, and former *Voice* editor, **CHARLOTTE MORGAN** received OTF fellowship awards.

PRESIDENT'S AWARD

ALICE PAIGE, president of the Renfrew County Teacher Local, received the **2007 President's Award**. The award, chosen by the president, goes to someone who has made an outstanding contribution to the federation during the past year.

Alice Paige is one of the local presidents who has worked to bring to the attention of ETFO members the hardships Canada's participation in the war in Afghanistan has created for members, their families, and students. She helped to bring about the tour of CFB Petawawa that highlighted the need for services to help those affected cope with stress.



DETAILS ABOUT DEADLINES FOR APPLICATIONS FOR ETFO AWARDS are available from Mark Fallis at provincial office mfallis@etfo.org

Information is also posted on our website: etfo.ca/BeingAMember/MemberServices/AwardsandScholarships. Or watch for the Awards flyer in the steward mailings.

2006-2007 AWARDS

Aboriginal Women in Education Award—Women's Program

CANDICE JOBE

non-ETFO member

AMANDA JAN BLAKELY

non-ETFO member

CARE ANGEL RUSSELL

non-ETFO member

DENEEN MONTOUR

Grand Erie Teacher Local

Anti-Bias Curriculum Development Award

GRACE MATHIESON

Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local

Arts and Culture Award

RALPH SAVAGE

Grand Erie Occasional Teacher Local

Bev Saskoley Anti-Racist Scholarship Award

DIANA ANDREWS

Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

Curriculum Development Award

THOMAS MARTIN

Halton Teacher Local

Curriculum Development Award—Women's Program

SANDEE CARSON ELLIOT

Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

Multimedia Award

JIM CARLETON

Simcoe Teacher Local

Multimedia Award—Women's Program

DANA AVERY

Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local

Women Who Develop Special Projects in Science and Technology Award—Women's Program

STEPHANIE REABURN-GIBSON

Limestone Teacher Local

Writer's Award—Published Work

CHRISTOPHER DINSDALE

York Region Teacher Local

Writer's Award—Unpublished Work

DAN FISHER

Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

Writer's Award, Women's Program—Published Work

KIMBERLY PETERS

Durham Teacher Local

ETFO AWARDS 2007

ETFO SCHOLARSHIP AND BURSARY RECIPIENTS

Doctoral Scholarship

HILARY BROWN, Halton Teacher Local

Doctoral Scholarship—Women's Program

KAREN BRAUN, Waterloo Region Teacher Local

Master's Scholarship

SONIA KADELA, York Region Teacher Local

ERIK SORENSEN, Durham Region Teacher Local

ROSALINA GALLIPPI, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

JENNIFER MARLAND, Simcoe County Teacher Local

CHRISTY THOMPSON, Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher Local

SARA NEALL, Keewatin-Patricia Teacher Local

ROBERT DUROCHER, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

Master's Scholarship—Women's Program

DIANE BROWN, Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local

KELLY GODDARD, Limestone Teacher Local

LYNN WILKINS, Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local

DEBORA VERLINDE, York Region Teacher Local

JENNIFER BRIDGETT, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local

SUSAN GARDNER, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local

MARLA VANDENBERG, Simcoe County Teacher Local

Educational Support/Professional Support Person

Bursary

TRACEY MACKENZIE, Renfrew County ESP Local

Bursary—Persons with a Disability/Visible

Minorities/Aboriginal Persons

RHONDA RATTRAY-PINSENT, Renfrew County ESP Local; JAMIE CATON; JAMIESON DYER.

Bursary—Persons with a Disability/Visible Minorities/Aboriginal Persons Award, Women's Program

LYDIA WONG, NATALIE GONPUTH, ELISA TRAFICANTE, GENITA CAMPBELL

Bursaries for Sons And Daughters of ETFO Members

ALLISON DICKIE, daughter of Donna Dickie, Bluewater Occasional Teacher Local

HEATHER LEE, daughter of Patricia Lee, Algoma Occasional Teacher Local

DAVID SIMPSON, son of Anita Simpson, York Region Teacher Local

SASHA CHARNLEY, daughter of Suzanne Charnley, Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local

AMY BAGSHAW, daughter of Don Bagshaw, York Region Occasional Teacher Local

NICOLE RONALD, daughter of Cynthia Ronald, Waterloo Region Teacher Local

KERI KAUFMANN, daughter of Mary Kaufmann, Greater Essex County Teacher Local

JANINE DAVIES, daughter of Audrey Davies, Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher Local

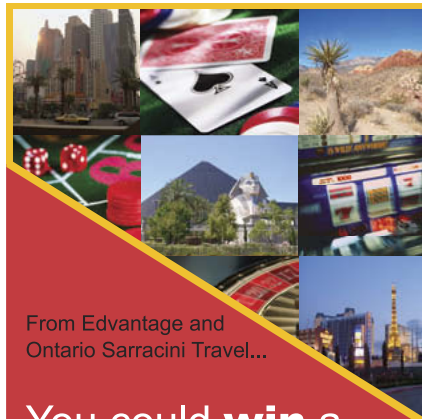
DEANNE CLARA, daughter of Annamarie Clara, Lakehead Teacher Local

FREYA ROACH, daughter of R. Yvonne Koves, Waterloo Region Teacher Local

OTIP BURSARY WINNERS

Five children of ETFO members have each received \$1,000 bursaries through the OTIP Bursary Program. They are:

- JOSHUA BACH, Collingwood
- MAVELINE MAYO, Toronto
- DAVIAN HART, Guelph
- JACQUELINE TURNBULL, Hamilton
- ANNE RUNCIMAN, Orangeville



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Meeting the Professional Development Needs of FSL Teachers



Sharon Richardson with her art class.

Photos: William Launderville

What could be more important in an increasingly global community than to be able to communicate effectively with as many people as possible? Language teachers hold a critical key to unlocking global understanding. As French teachers we have always sought to provide students with the ability to communicate with a broader audience. Furthermore, research and experience confirm that learning a second or additional language strengthens students' abilities in their first language.

■ by Sharon Richardson

Sharon Richardson was the curriculum coordinator for languages in the Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board from 2003 to 2007. She has returned to the classroom to teach elementary FSL this year.

Despite the value of learning additional languages, teachers of French as a second or additional language (FSL) sometimes feel marginalized, as though they are working just outside of the main focus of our educational system. However, the current emphasis on literacy should encourage FSL teachers as their role in promoting literacy becomes more widely understood. The key to supporting language teachers lies in helping them to recognize their valuable contributions to developing lifelong, literate learn-

ers and in providing ways for them to advance their practice to encourage success for all students. In the Hastings and Prince Edward District School Board in eastern Ontario, we have taken steps to do just that.

Many of the schools in our board are far apart and FSL teachers are often the only second-language teachers in their schools; these two conditions, which are common to many Ontario boards, may serve to heighten feelings of isolation for FSL teachers. But we have found that there are ways to navigate and bridge the distances between schools and between classrooms. Progress along the winding road toward enhanced professional development for FSL teachers has involved many events and has been marked by several stages. Here are some of the places we have travelled along the way.

Meeting the Professional Development

Determining the needs

Four years ago, as the board's curriculum coordinator for languages, I visited each school to meet with FSL teachers and discuss their wants and needs. I found that these French teachers wanted to know about the latest research in teaching and learning. They wanted to network with colleagues and to find other teachers from whom they could learn. They wanted opportunities to explain what works in their classrooms and what needs to work better. They wanted up-to-date resources and the training required to use them to their full advantage. They wanted a forum for discussion that recognizes the value of their work and the effort that goes into it.

Initial discussions with teachers revealed that they had many questions about accommodations and modifications for FSL students with special education needs. To provide an immediate response, we organized after-school sessions about programming. These workshops were well attended, and they prompted the development of half-day workshops later in the year, with release time provided for one "key teacher" per school. A focus on program delivery and the development of overall literacy skills through the teaching and learning of French emerged during these sessions. This focus became the basis for additional half-day and some full-day sessions over the following two years.

Teachers came forward to lead sessions. Some did so for the challenge of presenting to other teachers, some for the sheer joy of sharing something vitally important to them.

Three summer institutes were organized to provide additional, more casual opportunities for core French and immersion teachers to come together for professional learning. Teachers learned about new methodologies and materials for teaching French, about how the brain works, about integrating daily physical activity into their French lessons, about reading skills, and about each other.

A variety of projects, large and small

- Information sharing among FSL teachers has been complemented by related projects that have enabled small groups of teachers to come together to write report card comments, create unit plans, pilot software and other resources, and develop workshop sessions for other teachers.
- Two years ago a combined elementary and secondary writing team created a grade 9 Applied course plan to meet secondary curriculum expectations by building on effective elementary strategies.

- Additional links between teachers have been forged through the creation of the Teacher Networking Program, now also a key component of the board's New Teacher Induction Program.
- A French Language Advisory Committee (FLAC) made up of teacher representatives from all FSL programs now helps to coordinate projects and addresses the need for additional and more up-to-date resources and methodologies in core, immersion, and extended French programs.

Professional learning communities for FSL

A few years ago, a group of schools in the board, led by their principals, created a professional learning community (PLC) project to focus on literacy skills. They included FSL teachers and classes in the project – not necessarily an easy fit, but a positive message for the FSL teachers and a move toward aligning the instructional strategies of teachers of all subjects. The positive experience of this PLC led to the creation of specific PLCs for FSL teachers in 2006–07.

We offered levelled readers to any teacher willing to pilot their use and to take part in a related professional learning community project. We also expanded a gesture method pilot project that had begun three years earlier. For both of these projects, teachers were invited to implement materials and approaches, prompting the development of an "implementation by invitation" approach.

The PLC kickoff occurred during a two-day summer institute in August 2006. There were followup meetings in early winter and again in early spring. Planning teams met in-between to determine how best to guide teachers in the use of materials, prepare feedback about the use of the readers in class, and report back to other FSL teachers.

Ups and downs

The journey has not always been easy, nor has the pace always been steady. This year there were two large-scale meetings of French teachers, down from three the year before. However, a considerable amount of money was spent on resources, with a large number of teachers involved in PLC projects, French immersion renewal, and new or pilot programs. A delay in funding meant the number of meetings originally planned for the French PLCs was reduced. After a late initial planning meeting, those who were most excited about the projects

Needs of FSL Teachers

their groups identified carried on and completed the outlined tasks. Others continue to develop their use and understanding of the new materials and the French connections to overall literacy. A French book club about differentiated instruction was well received but succumbed to the mounting time pressures on all teachers. A small but interested group met only a few times to discuss the book, but had the opportunity to attend an evening presentation with a leader in differentiated instruction.

So the model is not set in stone. Professional development for French teachers is evolving and differentiated. Ongoing diagnostic assessment of the needs and wants of French teachers continues to provide the basis for the professional development program. Regular checks help to keep the focus on instruction and student success in the language classroom. Information is shared. Opportunities are created. Teachers are involved in small and large projects that resonate with them. At a full-day meeting for all French teachers in the board this spring, teachers celebrated that “French Class Is the Place to Be” in HPEDSB by sharing the results of almost 20 different projects.

Encouraging results

What choices are French teachers making and what impact are their choices having? Using an “implementation by invitation” approach has served students and teachers well. The pilot project using the gesture method in Junior core French classes has grown from 13 teachers to over 30 in three years. Teachers involved report higher levels of student participation and accelerated language acquisition. Three quarters of the elementary schools in the board participated in initial forays into PLCs using the levelled readers. For one of the projects developed by a PLC group, students used selected readers as mentor texts, incorporating practices from the ministry’s guides to effective literacy instruction. Several secondary French teachers remarked on how positive and well-prepared their grade 9 classes were this year.

For students, as for their teachers, the key to success has been found in positive interactions and learning experiences. Ultimately teachers want to travel the professional development road that has meaning for them, as they prove the old saying “Once a teacher, always a student.” The road toward enhanced professional development for FSL teachers in Hastings and Prince Edward is still under construction, but teachers are building it together. **V**

Transformer sa pédagogie

Ce document de base pratique et d'actualité à l'intention des enseignantes et enseignants de français langue seconde aux élèves de 4^e, 5^e et 6^e année fournit des renseignements importants sur les plus récentes stratégies d'enseignement et d'apprentissage.

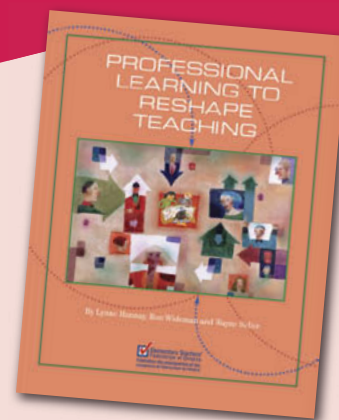


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French's Sad Lament?

Photos: Johanna Brand

Renée Meloche

■ by **Renée Meloche**

Imagine the scene as Madame Bonprof goes through her day: the gas tank in her car is full in anticipation of the drive to the two schools where she teaches core French; her plastic milk crate contains all of her materials – flashcards, CD player, CDs, a set of textbooks enough for half the class, and students' notebooks, each grade indicated by colour.

The entry bell rings, and she starts class in Room 1, at the end of the main hall. But wait, the red file of flashcards for this class is missing – she probably left it in the car when she reorganized her supplies. Madame looks for space on the chalkboard to illustrate vocabulary but notes and chart paper cover the walls, and there is no room to demonstrate the lesson.

The bell to end class finally rings, and Madame proceeds to climb the stairs, milk crate in hand, to get to Room 26, at the other end of the school. The principal stops her along the way to confer about a parent issue, and she arrives five minutes late, reducing her colleague's preparation time. This grade 7 class runs a little more smoothly, although she has to deal with two ESL students who have just registered.

Class over, Madame now heads to her other school, but a train crossing puts her behind schedule, and she again arrives late, this time for outdoor duty.

At least tomorrow is a PD day. Then it occurs to her: the morning agenda calls for a session on using manipulatives in math, and the afternoon will focus on team planning. Where does core French fit?

The challenges of FSL

Recent studies and surveys have verified the discouraging state of FSL teaching and learning.¹ Unfavourable conditions for FSL (especially core French) relative to other “core” subjects reflect its diminished status. Teachers and students are expected to make the situation work, and to achieve high standards that require considerable resources and support, even when these are in short supply.

The issues are many: itinerant assignments (between classrooms and schools); lack of designated classrooms; limited support for IEP and ESL students; scarce resources; requirements

to provide preparation time and supervision duties; isolation in school and board communities. Added to the list: expectations to integrate technology despite insufficient software and computer access; few professional development opportunities (for the most part sessions are offered only after school); and a lack of an autonomous budget and funding. Is it any wonder that almost 40 percent of respondents to a survey done by the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT) have considered leaving FSL teaching, at one time or another?²

FSL is not a ministry priority

Support at the ministry level is also lacking: currently, there is one FSL portfolio at the Ministry of Education for the entire province. The result is missed opportunities and insufficient curriculum support. The message from the ministry appears to be that the FSL curriculum (the chief vehicle for teaching and learning our other official national language) and the related classroom environment are less important than other programs.

For example, Ontario teachers and students have missed out on interprovincial programs such as the Summer Language Bursary Plan because there

Renée Meloche teaches French in the Halton District School Board and is the chair of EFTO's FSL Standing Committee.



À la carte teachers Angela Harthun and Scott Dempster.



are not enough ministry staff to handle the administrative duties. There is little curriculum support for French immersion classrooms. Immersion teachers must individually adapt curriculum support materials intended for English-language or francophone schools. Neither is appropriate for the immersion classroom, and because teachers translate in isolation there is a great deal of duplication of effort.

Tracking provincial funding for FSL is also problematic. Although information is available about the FSL allocations for each school board, it is not possible to determine how these funds are actually spent, or whether they actually reach the FSL classroom.

Accessing federal funds

Ontario has also been slow to avail itself of federal funding. Although the federal government announced Action Plan 2013 for improved French-language education in 2004,³ it was only in the spring of 2006 that Ontario school boards were invited to submit project proposals (on extremely short deadlines) to fulfill the mandate of the action plan – that is, to double the percentage of bilingual students graduating from high school by 2013.

A variety of initiatives have been (and will be) implemented with limited chance for success. These innovative and exciting endeavours will be carried out in the context of the everyday FSL

teacher's experience – no designated classroom, no support for challenging students, and continued demands to cover preparation time and supervision duties. Again, FSL teachers (especially core French teachers) will be expected to make the action plan work and to achieve the results anticipated by the mandate of the grants.

FSL teachers can have an impact

As professionals with an important national and social mandate (to provide quality official language education to our citizens and immigrants), individual French teachers also have an important role to play. Yes, professional development sessions are offered for the most part after school, but if French teachers don't show up, the message will be that we aren't interested. Yes, we have no designated classrooms, yet if administration doesn't hear about the deficiencies of this arrangement, they will assume that we are satisfied with the situation. Yes, we all have challeng-

ing students, yet their success in French is as important as their success in any other curriculum area. Teachers must be determined in seeking support for students with special needs. And yes, none of this is just – why do we have to spend so much time and energy advocating for ourselves and for our students?

ETFO's FSL Standing Committee is working hard to improve the prospects for our members who teach French. We have met with members of other groups interested in improving FSL education in Canada and hope that ETFO will become part of a strong FSL network in the province, intent on improving the learning and teaching conditions for everyone.

We all are responsible for raising the marginal status of FSL, and for suggesting solutions and alternatives. With the consistent support of ETFO (ask your local to establish an FSL committee to help raise the profile of our issues), we can make changes. It is time to organize and consolidate our efforts to achieve quality teaching and learning conditions: our teachers and our students deserve better! ♥

Notes

- 1 A. Mollica, G. Phillips, & M. Smith (2006), "Teaching and Learning French as a Second Language: Core French in the Elementary Schools of Ontario," Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association and Brock University; S. Kissau (2005), "The Depreciated Status of FSL Instruction in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy*, no. 44; Canadian Parents for French (2006), *The State of FSL Education in Canada 2006 Report*; CASLT (2006), *First National French as a Second Language Teacher Survey*; ETFO FSL Standing Committee (2006), *Survey of Local Presidents Regarding FSL*.
- 2 CASLT Teacher Survey.
- 3 Kissau (2005).

FSL Advocacy: What you can do

■ by **Renée Meloche**

FSL teachers in the Halton Teacher Local set up an ad hoc committee that began meeting two years ago. We will soon be submitting a resolution to the local to become a permanent FSL standing committee – our time has come.

During the past two years, we identified and began to address issues particular to FSL education in our board. We formed subcommittees to focus on specific areas of concern: promoting French as a core subject; mentoring; professional development and networking; newsletter; policy and procedures (e.g., special education students); French immersion timetable (and parent interviews); and dual-track vs. single-track schools.

At this point, we are polishing a presentation to use at school staff and parent council meetings to raise awareness of teaching from a cart. We have circulated three issues of our newsletter and provided three workshops – one each for core French, Primary immersion, and Junior/Intermediate immersion. We also subsidized a networking session for immersion teachers. We have had, and will continue to have, conversations with school board officials about operational procedures and programming policies.

Our own sense of professional esteem has increased as we have begun to organize ourselves and to take steps to increase the respect and support necessary to improve the working and learning conditions for FSL teachers and their students. We encourage everyone to take action and participate in the process.

What are some things you can do?

- Write letters: the ministry needs to hear about the impact our working conditions have on student learning and achievement.
- When collective agreement bargaining surveys are circulated, express your views and offer suggestions for negotiations.
- Ask your ETFO local to start an ad hoc FSL committee; participate in the discussions and voice your opinions.
- Ask your ETFO local to organize professional development and networking sessions for FSL teachers and be sure to attend.
- Ask your school board consultants to provide these sessions, along with meaningful activities during school-based PD days.
- Participate on school committees, especially those dealing with literacy initiatives.
- Make the French language visible around your school; use posters and student work for visual displays, and student presentations for schoolwide assemblies.
- Keep your administrators informed of your challenges and document your attempts to solve problems.
- Promote your subject: attend a parent council meeting and distribute materials from Canadian Parents for French, Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association, and the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers.
- Join Canadian Parents for French; this organization's support and lobbying efforts often have a significant impact on FSL teaching and learning. **V**

Resources for FSL Teachers

ETFO curriculum resources

Transformer sa pédagogie is a practical resource for grades 4 to 6 FSL teachers that provides up-to-date teaching and learning strategies.

Effaçons les préjugés pour de bon is a comprehensive, literature-based anti-bias curriculum resource.

Le Cercle du savoir discusses how Aboriginal people are portrayed in the media.

These are available from shopETFO.

Go to etfo.ca ► shopetfo or call 416-962-3836; toll-free, 888-838-3836.

Other resources

Monthly five-minute podcasts featuring research concepts and strategies to support FSL programs are available (in both English and French) in the online newsletter on the website of the **Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers** (CASLT), caslt.org.

eworkshop.on.ca/atelier.on.ca provides feature modules in both English and French on numeracy and literacy. Included are printable classroom resource materials and links to additional educational resources. Also included are materials on health issues and daily physical activity.

The **Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers** journals are available on its website acpi-cait.ca.

Canadian Parents for French, cpf.ca

Ontario Modern Language Teachers Association, omlta.org

FSL/FI Professional Development Engaging Occasional Teachers

French teachers on itinerant assignments often feel somewhat isolated and disconnected from colleagues. Many times, they may be the only teacher with that assignment at a school and will have no colleagues to network with. They also sense that some students and their parents don't value French instruction. It's no wonder that occasional teachers list core French and French immersion assignments as ranking high on the anxiety scale – even when they have FSL/FI additional qualifications.

The recognition that this segment of our membership has specific professional development needs recently prompted the Hamilton-Wentworth Occasional Teacher Local to access ETFO FSL incentive funding. We formed a steering committee that included the board coordinator for FSL/FI, ETFO executive staff, and the local.

The committee brainstormed numerous initiatives and ideas for FSL/FI, but felt the best starting point was to ask the occasional teachers themselves for input. Integral to the success of all events was our commitment to draw on the strengths and experience of the members themselves by inviting them to share their best practices with colleagues.



The Bonne Année French Café event occurred early in January. All OTs, including those with FSL/FI qualifications, received individual invitations to the event. The gathering featured a light supper, a social mixer *en français*, and a guided activity whose purpose was to draw out the PD needs of OTs who are willing to teach French. Each participant received a gift package of FSL/FI materials.

The committee identified several areas where members wanted support. In response to member needs, we organized a *marché*. Suppliers brought their wares, experienced OTs shared their best units and resources, and snacks were provided, all in storefront style. The final event for this school year was a Make 'n' Take called *Jeux français*. Members were invited to participate in developing practical games and activities for use across all grades (with no cost for materials). A pizza supper was provided.

The committee has received extremely positive feedback from members. Some comments from participants included “Finally, somebody’s doing something for us,” “*Mille mercis*,” and “I didn’t know who to ask for help and here you are!” One member even pleaded her case with her administrator to allow her to attend the afternoon *marché*!

In October the *marché* will be included in the local’s “Get Stuff!” storefront event for new teachers and will feature the use of technology in enhancing FSL/FI instruction. As well, the committee will offer the French version of Mind Games. There is also talk of a mentorship program.

The committee members are Rian McLaughlin, Tammy Clark, and Gisele Portelance, assisted by ETFO executive staff member Jennifer Mitchell. ♥

■ by Catherine Allen



Photos: Patrick Doyle, CP Images

The Challenge of Teaching in an Emotional

For the average Canadian teacher, the war in Afghanistan seems remote. It is a news story we can turn off and ignore. And we can argue about Canadian participation in this mission with impunity because it has little impact on our daily lives.

But for teachers working at schools in and around Canadian military bases, the war is a reality that cannot be ignored, and its impact on their lives and those of their families and students is incalculable.

CFB Petawawa, located in the heart of Renfrew County, is a case in point. It is home to 5,400 military personnel, 45 of them spouses of the 440 teachers and occasional teachers employed by the Renfrew County District School Board. Since the deployment to Afghanistan began in 2005, 20 Petawawa soldiers have been killed and another 80 injured. In a small town of 15,000, such statistics are truly staggering and have far-reaching consequences for the entire community.

Although less than a two-hour drive from Ottawa, CFB Petawawa is light years away in its psychological climate. "I don't think that the rest of Ontario or Canada has really figured out that we are at war," observes Renfrew Teacher Local president Alice Paige. "I'm hearing from teachers all the time who are totally stressed and worried about their spouses who have been gone for several months; they're concerned about how they're going to manage their own children and go into school every day to do their jobs and face their students who are worrying about their moms and dads currently serving in Afghanistan."

Project Petawawa

To gain more insight and to provide support for teachers and students in Renfrew, ETFO President Emily Noble and other members of the provincial executive, local leaders and provincial staff, representatives from OSSTF and OECTA, and senior Renfrew County District School Board staff attended briefings at CFB Petawawa in May.

Project Petawawa began with a tour of the military base. Commanding Officer Lt. Col. Dave Rundle provided the group with an overview of the base. He described the mission in Afghanistan and the military support programs that assist soldiers and their families during the deployment and reintegration process. He acknowledged that since November 2005, when the active phase of military engagement began, the number of military families seeking psychological services has jumped more than eight-fold.

Catherine Allen teaches in the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board and is also a freelance writer/editor.



War Zone



Supporting military families

A key component of support for military families is provided by the Petawawa Military Family Resource Centre (PMFRC) situated on the base. It offers a wide range of services for children, youth, and adults, including crisis intervention, childcare, parenting skills instruction, and help with issues related to deployment.

Canadian and American military research on the emotional cycle of deployment has identified seven distinct, recurring emotional stages that can play havoc with family members' emotional well-being. These include anticipation of loss, detachment and withdrawal, emotional disorganization, recovery, and stabilization. Megan Egerton, a teacher whose husband is currently serving in Afghanistan, explains: "We talk about deployment, but it's really important to understand that the time extends well beyond the six-month tour of duty."

Families of members of special task force units may suffer additional trauma, because these soldiers are not allowed to share even the most basic information about their tour of duty.

Reunion can be equally problematical. The anticipation of homecoming is often followed by the need to renegotiate relationships and reintegrate the family. When spouses come home, many different conflicts can occur. According to Egerton, "The reunion period can be difficult because you get into routines and then your husband comes home and wants to take right over again."

And there is the "What if?" factor. According to Michelle Belec, coordinator of the PMFRC's school-based deployment pilot project, many families experience a heightened state of anxiety because they fear that their loved ones are not going to come back or may return with serious injuries.

Teaching children in stress

During the town hall meeting organized by the Renfrew locals for ETFO members, the delegation heard firsthand accounts of the stress that teachers working in schools on or near the base experience. The personal and professional challenges they face are daunting.

All agreed that many of the children of military families are in crisis. One mother/teacher described how her youngest daughter refused to speak to her father for two months after his redeployment. "She's not the same little girl she used to be," said Velita Richards. "She's very sad and worried that her dad will be hurt."

Colleen Finn, a school support counsellor in the Petawawa family of schools, focuses on deployment issues and has firsthand experience with these home-front casualties. She described working with children who refuse to participate in the Red Friday Campaign because for them it evokes images of blood and death.¹ Others become terribly upset on special occasions like birthdays and Christmas if a parent is not there to join in the celebrations.

Communication with the absent parent can be equally upsetting, according to Finn. "It's never a quiet call. There is always lots of noise – helicopters, shouting, and gunfire in the background. It's really hard, especially if their parents are front-line. There's also a time lag during the conversation so the child doesn't get an immediate answer. Some of the kids are so excited with the first few calls that they talk too fast and don't hear what Dad is saying. That in itself becomes stressful."

Notes

1 The Red Friday Campaign, was initiated on military bases in the U.S. in 2005 as a way to support the troops. Military wives on Canadian bases picked up on the idea and have promoted it across our country; everyone is asked to wear something red each Friday.



Low EQAO scores in schools on and around the base are an additional source of concern. Several teachers described the frustration of struggling to raise literacy and math levels in an environment where students and staff are subject to daily anxieties related to the war. As one teacher pointed out, educational researchers do not know how stress affects students' short-term memory and executive function but it seems logical to assume that emotional turmoil might contribute to poor academic performance.

What teachers can do

Many of these teachers are actively engaged in making a difference. Remember those kids whose parents are overseas for such significant events as birthdays and important holidays? Colleen Finn helps to make these occasions meaningful in other ways. "We try to focus on the positive things, even though they may not feel that positive," she says. Currently, she is working with Care Canada to get local kids involved in a variety of humanitarian projects.

School counsellor Michelle Belec and her colleagues from the PMFRC offer workshops for teachers, attend school staff meetings to discuss deployment issues, and work with children in crisis. "We want to have ongoing contact with principals and teachers whether it be through phone contact, visits, or newsletters going out to the schools throughout the year."

Megan Egerton has developed a series of curriculum resources on deployment issues. Both practical and imaginative, they cover a wide range of topics and suggested activities. A couple of examples: a schoolwide project enables students to "Walk to Afghanistan" as part of their physical education fitness program; maintaining a "Feelings" graph allows kids to monitor their emotions at school in a supportive atmosphere.



The board's response

Many teachers say they have been disappointed by the lack of compassion displayed by the Renfrew County District School Board. They spoke of being denied leave to spend time with spouses returning from Afghanistan and of being refused permission to attend memorial services for slain military personnel.

Recently, the RCDSB has begun to recognize that teaching staff affected by military deployment require special consideration when it comes to leave. According to Renfrew local president Alice Paige, teachers can now successfully apply for this leave.

ETFO takes steps

At the provincial level, ETFO executive members have developed a series of recommendations, several of which deal with collective agreement language that would provide members who have immediate family in active military service access to paid leave.

In addition, ETFO plans to organize a regional conference in cooperation with military personnel and the PMFC during the 2007/2008 school year with a focus on classroom strategies and stress management techniques designed to support members and their students. ETFO also intends to lobby the provincial government to make sure there is adequate funding for services.

"Provincially, I think that we can be doing a lot more," says Emily Noble. "In school boards where there is trauma, there must be adequate funding for the children and the people who work with them."

For several years now, in and around Canada's military bases, teachers, their families, and students have been operating in an emotional war zone that is poorly understood and under-appreciated by those of us not directly involved. Increasing our understanding is one way we can all show our support. **V**

Celebrating 100 years of studies in education at the University of Toronto 1907-2007

The 100th Anniversary

During 2007 the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE) hosts the 100th anniversary of studies in education at the University. We are celebrating OISE and its antecedents: Faculty of Education, University of Toronto (FOE); University of Toronto Schools (UTS); Ontario College of Education (OCE); The Institute of Child Study (ICS); College of Education, University of Toronto (CEUT); Faculty of Education, University of Toronto (FEUT); Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE); and Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto (OISE/UT).



OCE alumnus, Major (Ret'd) Roy Oglesby

A Century of Inspiring Alumni

OISE celebrates alumni - accomplished leaders who have contributed to the world of education, literature, politics, the arts and communities around the world. The Inspiring Alumni exhibit, located in the main floor library at OISE, features portraits and stories of some of our outstanding alumni, celebrating their excellence. OISE invites you to share your stories of exceptional alumni. Email 100years@oise.utoronto.ca

The Centennial Legacy Scholarships

To mark the 100th anniversary celebrations, OISE created the Centennial Legacy Scholarships for both teacher education and graduate students. With our support, a new generation of students will have the opportunity to continue the tradition of excellence in education for the next 100 years and beyond. For more information on how you can make a donation visit www.100years.oise.utoronto.ca.



OISE alumna Michelle Jenkins



Professor Rosemary Tannock

The Centennial Lecture Series

Wednesday, November 7, 2007 at 6 pm
2007 R. W. B. Jackson Lecture
SPECIAL EDUCATION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE VIEWS
Speaker, Professor Rosemary Tannock
Canada Research Chair, Special Education and Adaptive Technology,
OISE and Hospital for Sick Children

The Centennial Celebration Birthday Party

On Friday, November 16, 2007 OISE will host an anniversary party as a wrap-up to the full year of centennial celebrations. RSVP now at www.100years.oise.utoronto.ca



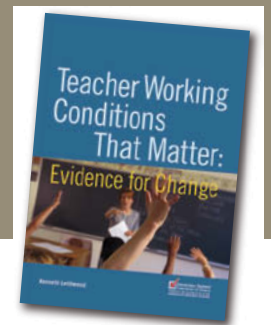
Photo: Mary MacDonell

OISE

ONTARIO INSTITUTE FOR STUDIES IN EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



Improving Working Conditions and Learning Conditions... for teachers and students



■ by Anne Rodrigue

Last year ETFO commissioned OISE/UT professor Ken Leithwood to examine the current research on what teacher working conditions will improve student learning. Leithwood's book, *Teacher Working Conditions that Matter*, was the starting point for a symposium held in June that brought together researchers and leaders of teacher unions from Canada, the United States, and England, along with Ministry of Education and school board staff and trustees.

Dr. Leithwood presented a short synopsis of his findings on how teachers feel and how what they know affects what they do. The systems in which they work influence their feelings and their knowledge. He observed that "the constant stream of changes that we've introduced into schools [have] a pretty damaging effect on the amount of confidence teachers feel and their ability to actually do this work. They are constantly being deskilled by the change initiative."

Certain working conditions matter more

Using his research from North Carolina, Eric Hirsch showed how the five categories of teacher working conditions that matter – professional development, empowerment, leadership, time, and facilities and resources – are directly linked to teacher retention and satisfaction.

Alma Harris from the University of Warwick, England, made her message very clear: "School leadership matters." Harris sees school leadership as "transformative, widely shared or distributed, and [something that] creates new ideas about instruction." She believes that optimizing the structures, spaces, and time for teachers to collaborate is an essential teacher working condition. Equally important is the creation of opportunities for teachers to lead innovations in teaching and learning.

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Anne Rodrigue is an executive assistant in ETFO's Professional Services department.

Photos: Johanna Brand





Joseph Murphy of Vanderbilt University examined the topic from another perspective. He acknowledged, as did the other speakers, that the role of the principal is key. The principal is a facilitator but the impetus for change comes from teachers themselves. In his view the transfer of organizational power to teachers, a focus on positive collegial relationships, and the creation of structures to support teacher interaction and teacher learning are the engines that drive this new era of school improvement.

In Britain, in spite of increased funding and multiple initiatives, the emphasis on test results and the introduction of business models into schools have caused a crisis in leadership and retention difficulties, according to Christine Blower from the National Union of Teachers. She stated, “A narrow focus on scores is linked to the alienation and truancy of many children, unhappiness, and a failure to develop self-discipline and the soft skills.”

The need for self-directed teacher learning

In workshop presentations Bruce Sheppard, of Memorial University, Newfoundland, and Karen Seashore Louis, from the University of Minnesota, focused on professional learning communities, a term familiar to many of us. Interestingly, their definitions and their research on how to effectively implement PLCs differ significantly from those that are presently being used in many jurisdictions. For them the important elements are collaboration, sharing, trust, action learning, and cultures that support teacher learning. These concepts have often been left out of discussions around how professional learning communities should be organized and run.

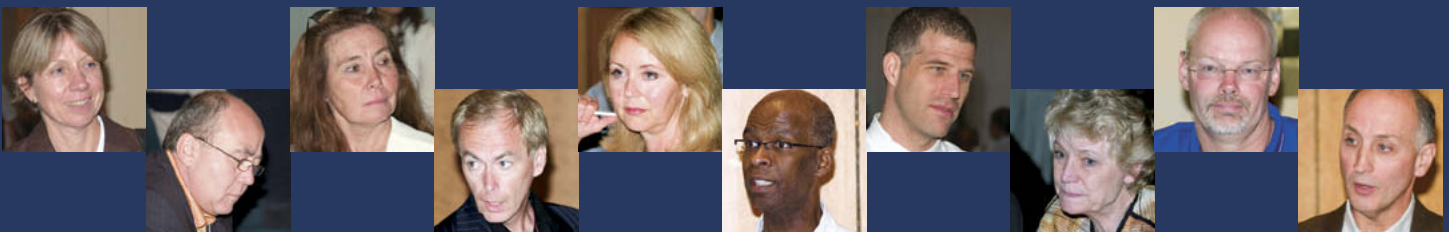
Ron Wideman, one of the authors of ETFO’s *Professional*

Learning to Reshape Teaching, believes our schools need to focus on teacher learning. He believes a teacher’s work is not just about teaching but about learning. Schools must be places where teachers have flexibility to experiment and innovate, where leadership is distributed, where time and resources are available for teacher learning, and where teachers focus on knowledge creation and dissemination. He states that developing a culture supportive of knowledge creation will require an understanding that learning is “part of the job.” In his presentation, David Dibbon of Memorial University underlined the importance of teachers also being knowledge creators.

The theme of the symposium – *Teacher Working Conditions that Matter* – is a very important one for ETFO as we seek to understand how to improve the teaching and learning conditions of our members. To make the most of the speakers and their presentations and to provide an ongoing resource for learning in ETFO and its locals, all keynote sessions and selected workshop presentations were videotaped. Companion guides to the videotapes will be available in the fall for use in ETFO training sessions.

The symposium had an important goal: to bring together the major partners in education to examine, understand, and discuss the current research about those teacher working conditions that improve student learning. The evidence is clear. We know what matters and we have ideas about how to make it work. The question is do we, as education stakeholders, have the collective political and organizational will to act collectively on our knowledge?

Teacher Working Conditions that Matter and *Professional Learning to Reshape Teaching* are both available from etfo.ca/shopETFO. **V**



Nature Abhors a Vacuum

■ by **Christine Brown**

According to a recent report from Statistics Canada, the amount of time that Canadians spend with their families and friends during a typical workday has declined significantly over the past 20 years.¹ On average, Canadians spent 45 minutes less per workday with their families in 2005 than they did in 1986. “Family time,” for purposes of the study, includes a wide range of activities, such as helping children with their homework, watching television together, and having dinner as a family.



While there are many factors driving this phenomenon, the author of the study notes that “the amount of time spent at work is the factor that correlates most strongly with time spent with family: as work hours rise, family time falls.”

As educators, you will hardly find this conclusion surprising. Consider the following scenarios:

1. A teacher leaves her school, where she has been completing report cards, and goes to pick up her teenage daughter from a babysitting job. It is 11:30 on a Friday night.
2. A principal schedules four staff meetings in a month, and informs the staff that anyone with children at home can leave at 5 p.m.
3. An occasional teacher is asked to stay after school to assist with an extracurricular activity. As an OT dependent for her livelihood on the day-to-day goodwill of the powers that be, she is reluctant to say no.
4. Board practice is that running records about pupils be done three times per year. A principal asks staff to produce them every month instead.
5. A teacher whose board is moving to Web-based report cards sets her alarm for 2 a.m. Experience has taught her that the system is less likely to crash between 2 and 6 a.m., as it has not been designed to handle the traffic it receives during normal hours.

6. A professional learning community initiative that is supposed to be teacher driven and teacher directed has been taken over by the principal, who proceeds to assign “homework” to the staff.

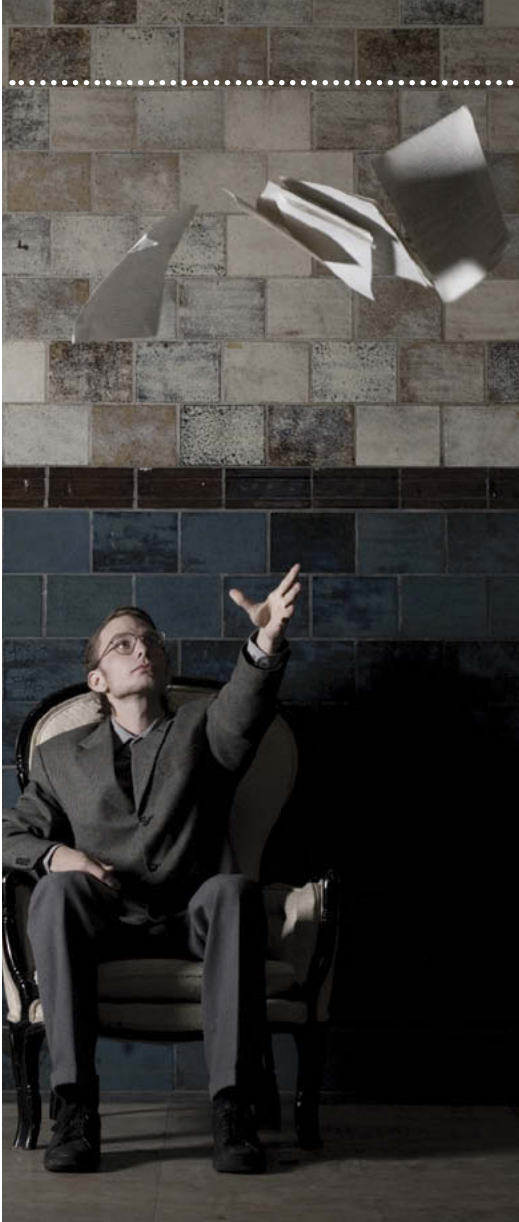
These are egregious and outrageous battle stories from the workload front. Sadly, they all have actually happened. In those cases where the ETFO local was informed in time, it was able to successfully intervene.

The reluctance to say “No”

How do such ridiculous situations even arise? The answer is neither simple nor straightforward. In part, it is because teachers are socialized from the very beginning of their careers to sacrifice themselves in the cause of education. Young teachers, who are typically less familiar with their rights than their more experienced colleagues, may be especially reluctant to “just say no” when confronted with an unreasonable request. Yet all educators, committed as they are to education and to their students, are sensitive to the charge that saying no might be construed as not being “professional.” Indeed, there are even those who will tell you that “professionals have no business belonging to unions.”

We need to take a long, sober look at this very

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Christine Brown is the
coordinator of ETFO's Protective
Services department.



loaded word. It is everywhere we look, it pushes everyone's buttons, and it is too often used to guilt teachers into impossible situations. *Professional* is not used only to categorize certain types of workers, and its opposite, *unprofessional*, is an insult to any worker, no matter what the occupation. It is no accident that the College of Teachers named its magazine *Professionally Speaking*. For the record, it is not "unprofessional" to say no, nor to assert your legal rights as an employee. Far too many teachers every year find themselves on stress leave when their jobs simply overwhelm them.

The origins of overload

But teachers are not the primary authors of their workload problems. There are many underlying causes, and it is not possible to address them all here. One is the most recent incarnation of

the accountability-in-education fad. Accountability in education is, of course, a very good thing. The problem is in the way it is implemented. For example, there has been a massive shift in the thinking underlying assessment and reporting. Quantitative measures make for better sound bytes than do qualitative ones, even if the latter are inherently better suited to the complex business of assessing a student's progress. Standardized testing results generate headlines, benchmarks, instant comparators, and fabulous charts.

Similarly, ministry and school board personnel are quick to adopt the latest in professional learning trends from other jurisdictions. Again, there is nothing wrong with this per se, as long as the programs that result are meaningful, voluntary, teacher directed, properly resourced, and implemented on the board's time – not the teachers'.

The same can be said for technological change in the education workplace. By all means institute Web-based report cards (assuming that the information is appropriately secure and protected). But don't design a system that causes teachers to lose sleep, literally and figuratively.

Collective bargaining brings relief

In the last round of collective bargaining, teachers supported their negotiating teams' efforts to increase preparation time and reduce supervision time. Occasional teachers backed their own negotiators in the fight to achieve appropriate timetables. And you won: a small window opened onto the gloom that is teacher workload.

That window, that measure of extra, self-directed time, was designed to help alleviate your existing workload. But nature abhors a vacuum, and so do school boards, apparently. New school improvement plans, new board improvement plans, new reporting mechanisms, shiny new diagnostic toys, and new "voluntary" PD have increasingly rushed in to fill the alleged void.

Your union can help, but only if your local is aware of what is happening. Talk to your school steward, talk to your local executive members; tell them what is going on, and find out what your rights are.

By doing so, you will also help prepare the ground for the next bargaining round. In a matter of months, your collective agreement will expire. You can expect that workload will, once again, be a major issue in negotiations. You demonstrated in the last round just how powerful the united voices of educators can be. Your commitment and solidarity will be needed even more in the next round.

In the meantime, bear the following truths in mind. Your time on this earth is short. Your work should fit into your life, and not the other way around. ♥

Note

1 Martin Turcotte (2007), "Time Spent with Family during a Typical Workday, 1986-2005," *Canadian Social Trends*, no. 83.

Provincewide Professional Growth Program Launched

■ by Jane Bennett

Teachers from across the province came to Toronto in August to take part in ETFO's new *Teachers Learning Together* program. They arrived in teams that were grade specific, division specific, role specific, and cross-divisional, and represented almost every board. This groundbreaking initiative is one of several projects ETFO is facilitating using the professional learning funds provided by the Ministry of Education.

This unique program connects classroom teachers, occasional teachers, consultants, ETFO staff, and faculty members from five universities (Brock, Lakehead, OISE/UT, Trent, and Windsor). Fifty teams will be engaged in an action research project of their own choosing. They intend to investigate a wide range of topics that include supporting oral language development in Aboriginal students, implementing the new kindergarten program, exploring strategies for differentiated instruction, implementing inclusion, and investigating classroom management practices.

Participants were welcomed to the two-day kickoff symposium in August by ETFO's newly elected president, David Clegg, who emphasized the importance of this model of professional development and highlighted what a valuable opportunity this project is for ETFO, our university partners, and our members. On Tuesday evening the teams worked with keynote speaker Joanne Quinn, an advocate for collaborative learning, to learn about working together and developing a team vision. Participants indicated that Joanne's speech was "interactive and engaging, a great jumping off point for team building and creating vision belief statements. It really connected our group." They said the session provided "dynamic strategies to have us participate and understand the global project. The activities and group interactions were stimulating."

The next day Ontario action research experts Megan Borner and Sandra Fraser led the teams through the stages of action research and began the team's journey. Participant feedback reported that the presenters were "very clear and dynamic and had practical step-by-step ideas that were easily applicable to our action research plan and helped our team to focus our efforts." Still others observed that "Megan and Sandra gave our team a great starting point. They made us think about our question and how to make sure it was valid and useful."

Photos: Anne de Haas



Teacher teams were then introduced to the university facilitators who will be working with them throughout the school year. Participants appreciated the opportunity to work as a team and to be supported by their university partners. “This is so exciting! We are receiving much needed encouragement from our university partners; we’ve been reminded not to rush – to have confidence in our learning and to be positive,” said one. Another stated, “Prior to the symposium I was unfamiliar with action research; now I am feeling comfortable with our research plan and feel we have a clear focus. Our university partners were a great help and provided their expertise and wisdom.”

Fifty teacher-directed professional learning communities will be established in schools provincewide, or across several schools if the team members involved are in a role-specific project (e.g., core French, special education, itinerant music teachers, or consultants). Teacher members will develop leadership skills as they work through the project with their team and share their learning with colleagues from across the province. Working with the university faculty will enhance teachers’ professional knowledge as they examine content areas and research-based practices. Most importantly, we are confident that as the teachers explore, examine, and reflect on their own learning, and refine their teaching, their students will also benefit.

To support the teams ETFO is providing several resources. These include:

- four days of release during this school year to work as a team on their project
- the kickoff symposium
- a step-by-step guidebook for action research




- a website that will have a variety of webcasts and will also allow participant discussion
- the university faculty facilitators to act as guides
- a resource for school administrators that suggests how they can support teams
- a celebratory symposium in the fall of 2008 that will give teams an opportunity to share their project and learning.

This program will also help to support Ontario’s new educational research agenda. Our initial literature review indicated that there is little research available with a sample of this size – approximately 200 participants – that examines teacher-led action research supported by educational researchers. This unique partnership provides an excellent opportunity to explore this issue. All participants will be completing a survey that will gather data on teachers’ learning about action research, and on their level of collaboration, confidence, and efficacy in action research. Fifteen teams across the province will also participate in a case-study research project that will investigate the action research process and teacher collaboration in greater depth.

Commenting on the importance of this project, one of the participants reminded us that “investment in teachers as professionals is very encouraging. It is great to be in charge of our team action plan research project and to have choice in our learning, with time granted within the workday to work together as a team. Thanks ETFO for valuing us as professionals.”

It is going to be a busy year ahead but one with wonderful opportunities to grow and share and work together.

For further information, contact ETFO executive assistants Jane Bennett, jbennett@etfo.org, Nancy Baldree, nbaldree@etfo.org, or Ruth Dawson, rdawson@etfo.org. 

Jane Bennett is an executive assistant in ETFO’s Professional Services department.



Violence Against Women Also Affects Children

■ by **Carol Zavitz and Marsha Sfeir**

Teachers play a critical role in the socialization of our children. It is nearly impossible today to be an effective teacher without knowing about violence against women and the impact it has on children. To respond to or prevent this violence effectively, we need to begin with the understanding that a major root cause of the abuse is the social inequality of men and women, which begins at a very young age.

An in-depth United Nations study on all forms of violence against women states:

Violence against women is a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It causes untold misery, cutting short lives and leaving countless women living in pain and fear in every country in the world. It harms families across the generations, impoverishes communities and reinforces other forms of violence throughout societies. Violence against women stops them from fulfilling their potential, restricts economic growth and undermines development. The scope and extent of violence against women are a reflection of the degree and persistence of discrimination that women continue to face. It can only be eliminated, therefore, by addressing discrimination, promoting women's equality and empowerment, and ensuring that women's human rights are fulfilled.¹

In workshops that ETFO delivers in partnership with Springtide Resources as part of the *Breaking the Silence* program, teachers frequently talk about how their female students continue to internalize a code of conduct that promotes gender stereotypes and inequality. They describe how many young men act out of a code of male

dominance and entitlement. Participants consistently express a need to work creatively with their colleagues, parents, and students to identify and prevent all forms of violence and abuse.

The following statistics reveal some of the gendered aspects of intimate partner abuse and the reality of many women's lives.

- Women are almost eight times more likely to be victimized by a spouse than are men.²
- Children in 416,000 homes saw or heard spousal violence in Canada during the five years preceding the 1999 General Social Survey on Spousal Violence. In Ontario 69 men were accused of killing their current or ex-wife.³
- 30 percent of all women currently or previously married have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner.⁴
- 45 percent of incidents of violence committed by a man against his wife resulted in injury to the wife.⁵
- Over the past two decades, three times more wives than husbands were killed by their spouses.⁶
- Women's wages are disproportionately lower than men's; women are much more likely than men to work part-time with no benefits.⁷
- Lone-parent families headed by women continue to constitute a disproportionate share of all children living in a low-income situation.⁸

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Carol Zavitz is an executive assistant in ETFO's Equity and Women's Services department; Marsha Sfeir is executive director of Springtide Resources.




Woman Abuse
Affects Our Children



These are the facts we must come to grips with as a society. We have made great strides in recognizing that violence against women is one of the many social issues caused by inequality and injustice. We must be proactive and present a consistent message at all levels of school and community that violence, in all its forms, is wrong. We must work together to achieve equality between boys and girls, men and women.

ETFO members recognize this need and have developed resources as part of their commitment to students and to a more just and equitable society. These include:

- Lesson plans tied to the elementary curriculum for grades 3, 4, and 5 that focus on helping children make healthy choices in their lives at home, with friends, in the school and community, and in their choice of media and entertainment.
- Workshop materials, for use at grades 7 and 8 girls' conferences. The workshops cover building equal and healthy relationships; supporting a friend affected by woman abuse; understanding gender-based violence; and gender stereotypes in advertising.
- Multilingual tip sheets for parents and educators.

These materials can be downloaded from the ETFO website, etfo.ca or obtained from provincial office at no cost. Contact Althea Jensen at ajensen@etfo.org; or telephone 416-962-3836; toll-free, 1-888-838-3836. 

Woman Abuse Affects Our Children

The Ontario Women's Directorate has provided funding to support elementary educators in recognizing and assisting children who are experiencing domestic violence at home. This program, coordinated by Springtide Resources, will offer two-day training opportunities for ETFO members.

Sessions will be offered in Kingston, London, Sudbury, Toronto, and Thunder Bay in the fall of 2007 and spring 2008. For more information and registration details, check out the website, etfo.ca, or contact Carol Zavitz at 416-962-3836; toll free, 1-888-838-3836.

Related ETFO resources, available from shopETFO:



Notes

1. United Nations (2006), *Ending Violence Against Women: From Words to Action. Study of the Secretary-General, Executive Summary*. Available at un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/launch/english/v.a.w-exeE-use.pdf
2. Robin Fitzgerald (1999), *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile*, Ottawa: Statistics Canada Catalogue #85-224-XPE. Available at statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/0009985-224-XIE.pdf
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4. Fitzgerald, 1999.
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6. *ibid.*
7. Target Groups Project (2005), *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report*, Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 2006. Catalogue #89-503-XPE. Available at statcan.ca/english/freepub/89-503-XIE/0010589-503-XIE.pdf
8. Fitzgerald, 1999.

Planning Accessible Meetings

■ by Darren Cooper

As the 2007–08 federation year gets into full swing, both the provincial office and ETFO locals will begin planning and holding numerous conferences and meetings. But will these events be fully inclusive and accessible for ETFO’s members living and working with a disability?

As members who self-identify as persons with a disability become more involved in our organization, it is important to take issues surrounding workplace accommodations and overall accessibility into consideration. No longer is it acceptable to hold a meeting in a venue where members using wheelchairs or scooters have to be carried up several flights of stairs. Moreover, simply installing a ramp to the front door does not make a venue accessible if the door frame is too narrow or the door isn’t equipped with an automatic opener.

How do our members determine whether their venue and/or meeting room is accessible, and if the venue and/or meeting room is thought to be inaccessible, what measures need to be put in place?

One way to answer these questions is to obtain a copy of ETFO’s new protocol on planning accessible meetings, *Access Without Borders: Plan-*

ning Accessible Meetings in the Local. This document, along with the supplementary brochure, provides organizers with explicit strategies and recommendations on how to plan and conduct an inclusive and accessible meeting.

The structure of the protocol is framed by three central questions:

- Can the member enter the meeting space?
- Can the member navigate the meeting space?
- Can the member fully participate in the meeting?

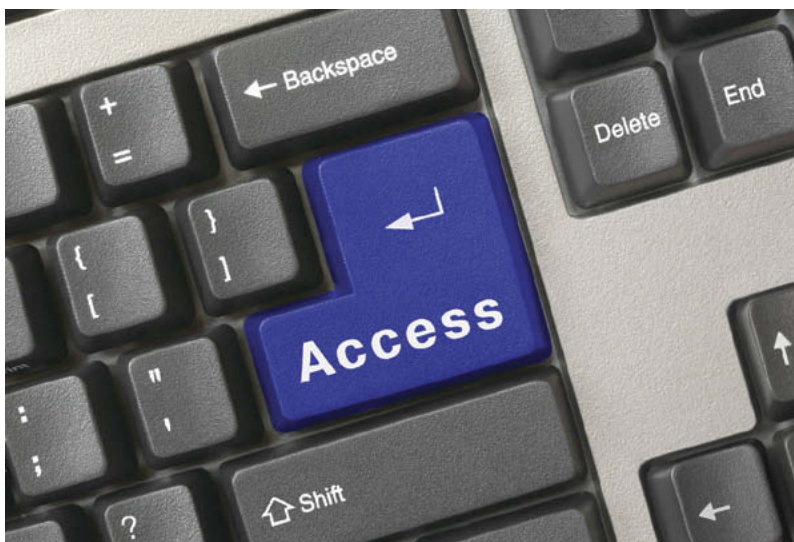
The recommendations set out in the protocol will be put into place in two phases. In the first phase, organizing committees will make every attempt to schedule all meetings and events in a venue that meets basic accessibility standards (e.g., ramps, automatic door openers, Braille signage, elevators, etc.). Beyond these standards, the onus is on the member to request additional accommodations. The second phase sees a shift from members requesting accommodations to a concept of universal design.

The protocol document also contains a number of appendices, which provide specific information about accessibility, including ETFO’s disability policy; a resource list of local, provincial, and national disability organizations; an accessibility checklist; a template for creating accessible registration forms; and costs for several key accommodations.

Every local president received a copy of the protocol document and brochure at the 2007 Annual Meeting. As well, those attending the 2007 Fall Leaders’ Training learned how to use these documents effectively.

If you would like to obtain a copy of the protocol document and brochure, please contact your local ETFO office or visit etfo.ca, click on *Advocacy and Action* ► *Social Justice and Equity*, to download an electronic version of *Access Without Borders*. ♣

Darren Cooper was an executive assistant in ETFO’s Equity and Women’s Services department in 2006–07.



Think Before You Click

You may be checking your email quickly to respond to a family member. Or you may be checking the weather, reading the news, buying tickets, or replying to a request to “add a friend” on Facebook. There may or may not be anyone else in the room. Whatever the circumstances, if you are using a school computer, you can be sure that you are not alone.



■ **by Professional Relations Services staff**

Aside from your physical fingerprints on the keyboard and the mouse, you are also leaving behind various digital fingerprints, markers, and log entries that allow your employer to monitor your time and activity on that computer. When using your employer’s property – the board’s computer and Internet connection – you are not “clicking” in private: it’s as though your principal were sitting beside you. Your principal and board can, and often do, have access to your every move.

For this reason your use of the Internet at work must at all times be in accordance with school board policy.

Boards must have policies

School boards are required to establish rules around the use of the Internet in order to achieve the following goals:

- To safeguard students from potential harm caused by teachers using computers inappropriately (e.g., to produce and/or distribute pornography)
- To stop boundary violations by teachers or others in a position of trust
- To limit infringements on human rights, civil and criminal liability for sexual harassment, bullying, criminal harassment, illegal downloading, and the accessing of child pornography

click-click



- To discourage or stop copyright infringements or theft of materials
- To ensure that unauthorized Internet and email use does not expose individual computers and networks to viruses
- To ensure that Internet bandwidth is not used disproportionately by any individual user
- To ensure that teachers avoid unauthorized use of the Internet/email for nonemployment-related purposes (efficiency reasons)
- To ensure compliance with specific use policies and codes of conduct.

Inappropriate use of the Internet could include:

- Downloading illegally posted commercial movies
- Downloading music in violation of copyright
- Visiting inappropriate websites, such as those offering “adult” content or those promoting racist views
- Excessive chatting during working hours on social networking sites such as Facebook. (City of Toronto and Ontario government employees have been banned from accessing Facebook at work.)

The consequences of violating board policies can be severe: you could be disciplined or fired. Depending on the infraction, you may also be reported to the CAS, the police, and/or the College of Teachers.

Your employer can check

Even if employers do not monitor computer or Internet use as it is occurring, they can always do so after the fact. They can work with information technology staff or hire an external company to provide data recovery services and a digital forensics report.

A “forensic” audit of the computer’s hard drive will show second-by-second Internet use, including all sites visited, length of visit, and downloads. Such audits can also recover deleted emails. Remember that *nothing* is ever truly deleted. Unless you erase the computer’s hard drive with special equipment, the forensic audit will uncover information about your use of that computer, including material you may think you have deleted.


Engaging in the following behaviour may lead to discipline:

- Spending inordinate amounts of time accessing email during hours when students are at school
- Constant text messaging
- Surfing the Net in your classroom while students are present
- Taking pictures of yourself and sharing them over the Net
- Displaying computer pictures of yourself in inappropriate dress
- Emailing students at their personal email addresses, or giving out your personal email address and using it for interaction with students.

Use your good judgment

Teachers are expected to lead by example, and they hold a special position of trust in relation to their students. You may be seen to be violating these obligations if students are in any way exposed to inappropriate material or communications as a result of your computer use – be it your own computer or the board’s.

For all of these reasons, remember to “think before you click.” Your expectation of privacy is diminished while using the Internet on school board property. Exercising caution and good judgment when checking email or surfing the Internet at work will help you to maintain your privacy and forestall any criminal investigations, professional discipline, and/or discipline by the school board.

Visit etfo.ca and click on *Advice for Members PRS Matters Bulletins, volumes 25 and 9*, for information on related issues. 

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS SERVICES staff

provide confidential advice and support to assist you. They deal with a wide variety of issues: the performance appraisal process, work-related conflict, College of Teachers investigations, and human rights issues, including harassment and discrimination, professional boundaries, and allegations.

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Members Speak Out on Pension Issues

by Hilda Watkins



Delegates to the ETFO Annual Meeting re-elected me to the position of OTF table officer. After serving for a year as OTF president, it is my pleasure to be able to continue to inform you about issues pertinent to the 155,000 teachers employed in Ontario's publicly funded schools.

In April, Pollara conducted a survey of approximately 3,000 members of the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan. The survey participants reflected the demographics of contributing plan members. You may recall that in filing the 2005 pension valuation, the parties – OTF, the government, and the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) – also agreed to commission a member survey and to study the assumptions used by the OTPP in valuing the plan.

The survey results told us that members support the OTF executive position that **benefits should not be reduced**. Further, members told us that they are willing to contribute more to their pension plan to maintain this current level of benefits. Members were only willing to choose a benefit reduction when forced to rank three: changing the 85 factor to a 90 factor; reducing the amount of the monthly pension cheque by 10 percent; or making pension inflation protection variable. When compelled to make a choice, the greatest number of members chose the final option. This trend is also fairly consistent across career groupings. The one exception is those already eligible for an unreduced pension; they rarely chose this option.

The preparation of a non-biased survey required numerous hours of discussion with the three parties as well as several focus groups

to ensure the use of terminology that would resonate with the membership. The hard work of your local presidents, the OTF executive, the OTF pension committee, and OTF staff in preparing the membership for this survey bore fruit in the results.

We were also heartened to learn that teachers had a greater understanding of their pension plan than they showed in earlier testing, an improvement we attribute to the pension education program, *Looking Ahead*. This valuable resource provides a wealth of pension information for members in all stages of their careers. Indeed, portions of the resource would serve as an excellent introduction of the plan for our new teachers. For your convenience the resource can still be found at otffe.on.ca.

We want to express our appreciation to all those who participated in the telephone survey. Your input will inform future decisions that OTF makes about your pension.

The panel of world-class experts commissioned to review the actuarial assumptions used by the plan continued its work throughout the summer. Several of their discussions revolved around the actuarial changes in the mortality tables. At the time of writing, we were expecting to receive their report imminently. I will have more on this report in my next column.

At the annual board of governors' meeting in August, governors paid tribute to Claude Lamoureux, the president and CEO of the plan. The standing ovation he received recognized the plan's performance under his leadership since it was established in 1989. When he retires later this year he will be replaced by Jim Leech, senior vice-president of Teachers' Private Capital. ✓

...members told us that they are willing to contribute more to their pension plan to maintain this current level of benefits.

Hilda Watkins, ETFO's table officer at OTF, was the 2006-2007 OTF president.

French Language Teachers Need Support

■ by **Emily Noble**



The Canadian Teachers' Federation has long advocated that students in elementary and secondary schools should have access to FSL programs and that French as a second language teachers should be fully supported in their work. A pan-Canadian survey of FSL teachers shows that much more needs to be done.

In 2006 CTF partnered with the Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers (CASLT), and the Canadian Association of Immersion Teachers (CAIT) to conduct a national survey of French as a second language (FSL) teachers. Heritage Canada funded the survey.

The survey was completed by 1,305 FSL teachers who teach immersion, core, extended, and intensive French. They answered questions about their perceptions of resources, support from key stakeholders, teaching conditions, and professional development opportunities. The results of the survey were presented to the CTF board last spring.

Here is what we heard.

The majority of teachers say that

- commercial materials and library resources are “poor” or “adequate”
- funding for activities is a concern
- the availability of French-speaking supply teachers, consultants for students with special needs, and French-speaking nonteaching staff are also concerns
- teaching conditions are “slightly” or “somewhat” manageable (“Class diversity” was the challenge most often mentioned.)
- the community in which they teach is the “least supportive” of their work while school administration is “very supportive.”

Significantly, more than 40 percent of teachers do not have a classroom dedicated to FSL or an FSL consultant to help them with their teaching.

Professional development is also a great concern. Most FSL teachers say that although they participate in PD activities, more funding, relevant topics, sessions during school hours, and the availability of French-speaking supply teachers would make PD more accessible.

The bilingual and bicultural character of Canada is an historical, constitutional, and social fact of the highest importance to the Canadian confederation. French as a second language education makes an important contribution to the building of our national character.

CTF believes FSL should be an integral part of the basic curriculum in Canadian schools, not an afterthought. Conveying French language and culture within an English-dominant environment is a great challenge. Dedicated classroom space and quality resources are required, opportunities for professional development are essential and, most importantly, acknowledging FSL teaching as important and valuable work is fundamental.

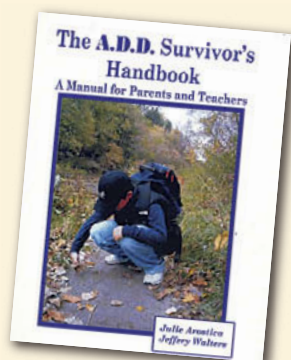
CTF will take an active role in working with our partners at CASLT and the CAIT to develop and help implement an action plan that addresses the needs so clearly expressed in this survey.

CTF is committed to encouraging the support required to ensure optimum FSL teaching and learning environments in Canadian schools. ✓



French as a second language education makes an important contribution to the building of our national character.

Emily Noble, past president of ETFQ, is currently president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.



The A.D.D. Survivor's Handbook : A Manual for Parents and Teachers

Julie Arostica and
Jeffrey Walters
Bowmanville, ON: Open
Window Publishing, 2007
\$24.95
117 pages

Reviewed by **Marjan Glavac**

The *A.D.D. Survivor's Handbook* describes in easy-to-understand language what attention deficit disorder (ADD) and attention deficit hyperactive disorder (ADHD) are and what they are not, as well as possible causes and symptoms. Three quarters of this book is aimed at parents; the remainder is for teachers.

Parent Julie Arostica concisely describes the stages she went through with her ADD son. Readers learn about various medications, the pros and cons of medicating, nutrition concerns, and detailed tips and strategies on parenting ADD children. The parenting section also includes a helpful description of the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) process, and offers advice about what to do when the principal

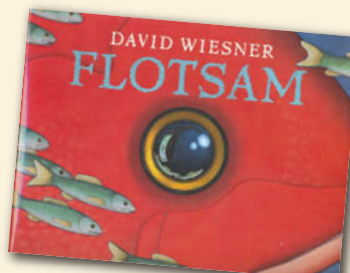
calls and about parent-teacher meetings.

The teachers' section, written by elementary teacher Jeffrey Walters, is much shorter than the parenting section but makes up for its brevity by offering many practical suggestions. These include teaching strategies, and classroom environment and management tips. The overall recommendation for teachers is to "look after yourself first, and then you will be ready to look after others."

The book also includes a useful appendix entitled "Teacher Jargon Glossary and Report Card Speak." This is a great section for both parents and teachers.

The book is supported by a website at addhandbook.com

.....
Marjan Glavac is a teacher at Wilfred Jury Public School in the Thames Valley District School Board. His book How to Make A Difference: Inspiring Students to Do Their Best can be found at: howtomakeadifference.com



Flotsam

David Wiesner
New York: Clarion Books, 2006
\$20.95
40 pages

Reviewed by **Stephanie Bell**

Flotsam is an imaginative and intriguing picture book that easily captures the enthusiasm and interest of primary students.

In typical Wiesner fashion, the story is told by way of vibrant, detailed illustrations, without the use of a single word of text. The illustrations are mostly arranged in a filmstrip, with clues and mysterious details included in each frame. Wiesner incorporates a selection of large, up-close illustrations that extend the suspense and coax young readers to read on.

The story begins with a family outing at the beach. The reader is introduced to a curious young boy who enjoys investigating sea life and discovers an old underwater camera that has washed up on shore. Like any true adventurer, he is instantly attracted to his new find, decides to have the roll of film inside the antique camera developed, and embarks on a journey to unravel the his-

tory that the old camera holds.

One of the most valuable features of this book is the way it inspires creative and critical thinking in primary students. I introduced *Flotsam* to my own grade 3 students and was amazed by their reactions as I "read" to them without saying a word! The children invented a story to accompany each illustration, building upon each other's ideas and opinions. Most importantly, my ESL learners especially enjoyed the activity, because they were able to be just as actively involved in decoding and comprehending it as the other children were. This shared reading activity led to them retelling the story in their own words, inspired them to write their own seaside adventures, and taught us the importance of expressive illustrations as a means of sharing our thoughts and ideas.

In *Flotsam*, David Wiesner shares his artistic gift, inspires children of all languages and backgrounds to actively participate, and proves that a picture really is worth a thousand words!

.....
Stephanie Bell is a grade 3 teacher at Rawlinson Community School in Toronto.



Jazz

Walter Dean Myers
 Illustrated by Christopher
 Myers
 New York: Holiday House,
 2006
 \$23.95
 48 pages

Reviewed by **Catherine West**

*It's a field-holler melody
 Dressed in a three-piece suit
 A lifetime of could-have-beens
 Sliding through a silver flute
 It's our song.*

Fifteen poems in this lively picture book celebrate the history, fecundity, iconoclasm, and stylistic diversity of jazz. Somewhat in the style of the much-loved *Charlie Parker Played Be-Bop* by Chris Raschka (1997), the poetry is not only about jazz; it also gives us the experience of jazz through pictures, colour, and handwritten words that jump off the printed page, and an elliptical, improvisational, sassy, rhythmical style that begs to be performed out loud.

Each poem presents a different jazz tradition: Dixieland, ragtime, blues, stride, swing, bebop, fusion, and more (though not in historical order). The bold

illustrations represent African-American jazz musicians, some identifiable (Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker, Billie Holiday), and others generic.

In music class, this book could be used by a wide age range as part of a unit study on jazz. An accessible introduction, glossary, and timeline provide context for the poems. The poems would pair nicely with listening experiences, perhaps as pre- and post-listening activities. Students in upper elementary through high school grades would enjoy creating their own stylistically appropriate presentations of these poems through spoken word, choreography, body percussion, singing, or playing instruments.

These poems could also find a place in the language arts or social studies programs. The concise, cool style would appeal to upper-grade reluctant readers or ESL students, although younger ones would also enjoy the rollicking rhythms and rhymes, and the lively illustrations. The poems might also be presented over the PA system, one a day, as part of Black History Month celebrations, in combination with listening to jazz recordings.

.....
Catherine West is an instructional leader in music for the Toronto District School Board, the director of Orff teacher training for the Royal Conservatory of Music, and a senior associate with Connexionarts, an arts-in-education consulting company.



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Teachers' Trivia

■ by Peter Harrison

Answer to the June puzzles:

Decode: Sally

Elemental origins: laniard (formed from air & "land" = earth) = the same meaning as "lanyard".

There was only one correct answer. Congratulations to Carol Sheardown.

In the Balance

Five children are experimenting with weighing themselves, but the only scales available give reliable readings only for weights of 50 kg and above. So the children decide to weigh themselves in pairs in every possible combination. Each child weighs a different whole number of kilograms and every weighing gives a different total within five kilograms of 80 kg. Had all the children tried to weigh themselves at once, they would have broken the scale's 200 kg limit!

How many kilograms did each child weigh?

.....
Send your answer to ETFOVoice@etfo.org with the word "Trivia" in the subject line.

You may also mail your entry to Editor, ETFO Voice, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all the correct entries received by November 15, 2007.



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October 13, Kingston, ON

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9:30 - 4:30; Lancaster Drive Public School; \$198

Visit www.ltta.ca to register and to view the online flyer.

November 5-9

National Media Education Week

A partnership of Media Awareness Network (MNet) and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) promotes media literacy and the integration of media education into Canadian schools, homes, and communities.

For information on how you can take part visit mediaeducationweek.ca.

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Home Country: Canada

U.S.A. Placement: Georgia

Professional Goal: Broaden my overall teaching experience

Personal Goal: Go whitewater rafting on the Chattooga River

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