

Voice

Spring 2006
Vol. 8 • No. 3

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Student Vote:
Election Day

.....
ETFO leader profile: disability enriches perspective

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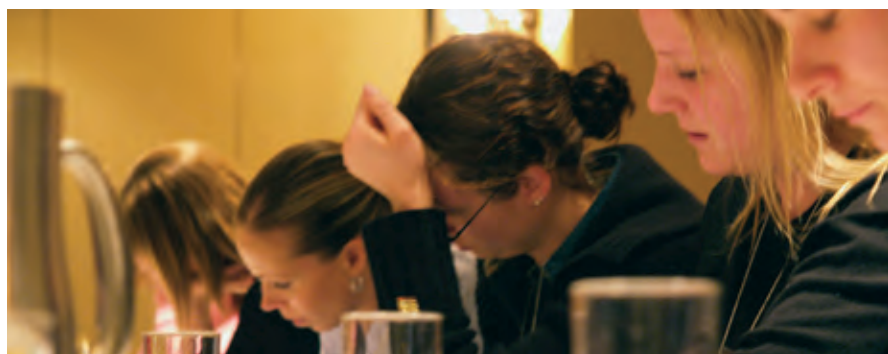
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■ ETFO Voice

Johanna Brand - Editor

Gene Lewis - Business Manager

Lori Kuzela - Advertising Sales

Artifact graphic design - Design

■ Contributors this issue:

Scott Berry, Mary Bricco, Christine Brown, Winston Carter, André Charlebois, David Clegg, Anne Holloway, Peter Harrison, Dave Kendall, Joan Littleford, Jo-Ann Mathon, Vivian McCaffrey, Jeff McMillan, Jan Moxey, Vitusha Oberoi, Marg Roberts, Linda Rowatt, Rachel Soini, Rich Tamblyn, Hilda Watkins.

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480 University Avenue, Suite 1000

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Telephone: 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836

E-mail: etfovoice@etfo.org

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In the past year some issues have surfaced that, while not related to directly elementary education, nevertheless resonate for elementary teachers.

There has been concern about the high dropout rate among secondary school students in Ontario. The challenge for teachers is to keep school meaningful for students by creating an educational environment that challenges them and meets their education needs. Not a simple task. In "Taking a Walk on the Real Side," ETFO members Jeff McMillan and Rich Tamblyn describe one way of making school relevant for students moving into their high school years.

ETFO is one of the many groups concerned about students before they start formal schooling. We were among the organizations that applauded when the province and the federal government signed an agreement to fund child care. The agreement allowed for the expansion of Best Start programs which integrate junior and senior kindergarten programs with child care. There were to be 25,000 new child care spaces in the province over the next five years.

Now all that is in doubt. One outcome of the recent federal election is that Prime Minister Stephen Harper has cancelled that agreement and thrown the plans of communities and school boards into disarray. In his column the General Secretary underlines the importance of member action to keep the funding in place.

During the election there was concern about voter turnout. Researchers say students who receive civics education are more likely to vote. There's not much doubt that the students who are now in Christina Huang's grade 5 class will be lining up at the polling booth a few years from now.

Huang used the ETFO resource "You Choose" (see our curriculum insert), which is also distributed by Student Vote Canada, to make the election come alive for her class. The curriculum guide provides you with the tools you need to follow her example.

This election is over but there will be plenty of electoral opportunities coming up. This is a minority government and the next federal election may not be that far away. As well, this fall there will be municipal and school board elections – a prime opportunity to give your students hands-on election experience.

This edition also describes the work of two ETFO political leaders: First Vice-President Dave Clegg outlines the responsibilities of his position; and, in our ongoing series on leaders from diverse backgrounds, we profile Hanno Weinberger, chair of the Disability Issues Committee.



JOHANNA BRAND



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Provincial Stability Commission Should Ensure Student Safety

EMILY NOBLE

President, ETFO

Teacher supervision schedules have been the subject of debate and dispute this past winter. The implication has been that because the federation has negotiated caps on supervision time, students will be less safe. Nothing could be further from the truth.

All stakeholders in public education, not just ETFO members, share the responsibility for student safety. The Minister has expressed concern that no additional resources can be provided. From my perspective, school boards don't need additional resources; they simply have to allocate existing resources in a more equitable and responsible manner.

However, we now have a mechanism that can help, and that will hopefully lead to a speedy resolution of supervision time disputes.

Last spring ETFO led the way in teacher bargaining, successfully negotiating a provincial framework agreement that provided our teacher members with improved working conditions and salaries. Included was a staged reduction in supervision time. (In spite of the lethargy of boards, we continue to make equally significant gains in bargaining this year for our occasional teacher members.)

Our four-year collective agreements supported the Minister of Education in his stated goal of achieving peace and stability in the education system. However, during the provincial dialogues, the Minister listened to our concerns about the viability of long-term collective agreements and the difficulties of solving issues that would arise over the course of four years. The proposed solution was the creation of a Provincial Stability Commission (PSC) to "review potential system-wide issues arising out of a four-year collective agreement."

I am pleased that we have now reached an agreement with the province and the Ontario

Public School Boards' Association (OPBSA) on how it will work and what it will do.

The PSC is intended to be primarily a problem-solving body that works quickly to seek consensus to resolve labour relations issues. It will have equal representation from both ETFO and the OPBSA and a mutually agreed-upon neutral chair.

The PSC could provide support to principals who are struggling with the implementation of the revised supervision schedules. We intend to use it as the primary vehicle for resolving supervision disputes, where possible and practical. Where both sides agree, the PSC may also deal with other system-wide collective agreement issues. Problems that cannot be solved may be settled through a PSC adjudication process or sent to arbitration.

This is a major change to the way we have done business: traditionally, we have relied on the more formal grievance and arbitration process to resolve disputes. As you know, that process can take a very long time. We have not abandoned the right to use it, but we have made a commitment to work with the PSC.

Like the negotiation of the provincial framework agreement, we are taking a risk. I believe it is a risk worth taking. If all those involved make a real commitment to doing business in a manner that respects the rights of our members, the PSC will be successful. You will benefit from a faster resolution of problems that affect both your workload and work life.

ETFO is once again leading the way and helping to create peace and stability while at the same time making sure that your rights are protected and that you will reap the benefit of the improvements negotiated in your collective agreement.



FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Child Care: You Make the Difference

GENE LEWIS

General Secretary, ETFO

The federal government's decision to cancel the child care agreements signed with Ontario and other Canadian provinces is a shameful act. It is a blow to all of us working for the establishment of a national system of early childhood education for our children.

For many years ETFO has been a member of coalitions fighting to establish the kind of day care system that the federal-provincial agreements would have created: the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care, the Ontario Federation of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress, and the Canadian Teachers' Federation (ETFO President Emily Noble is a CTF vice-president).

We work with these organizations to improve child care because we care about children and their education. Research shows that the first years of their lives are critical for children's intellectual and emotional development. The gains children make in these early years help them throughout their school years.

The Ontario government's expansion of its Best Start program is in jeopardy. That successful model, located in schools, integrates early education provided in junior and senior kindergarten with licensed child care. It depends on federal funding.

The federal-provincial agreements would have provided \$4 billion in federal funding over five years to set up a national child care and early education system, the first new national social program in many years. It would have created 25,000 additional child care spaces in Ontario. The need is great: in this province 70 per cent of parents with children under the age of six require child care.

In the January election that gave Prime Minister Stephen Harper his very tenuous minority, almost two-thirds of Canadians voted for other parties committed to creating a national child

care program. The organizations we support have been working hard to press this fact on our newly elected leaders.

It is a fact of political life, however, that coalitions and lobby groups don't vote. Public campaigns can draw attention to issues. Their job is to motivate us as individuals to take action. And that is what each of us must do now.

The only thing that will convince the Prime Minister to reinstate child care agreements is the pressure exerted by hundreds of thousands of parents, grandparents, teachers, and concerned individuals. People like you and me. It is our individual pressure on our federal MPs that can have an impact.

Code Blue, the campaign of the Child Care Advocacy Association of Canada, is currently distributing an open letter to the Prime Minister through its website www.buildchildcare.ca.

Here are three things you can do to support your children, your grandchildren, your students.

1. Sign the open letter to Stephen Harper and provincial premiers urging them to honour the federal-provincial agreements on child care.
2. Contact your local MP and MPP: call, write a letter, send an e-mail. Encourage your friends to do likewise.
3. Raise awareness in your community by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Lobby groups and unions make a tremendous difference in our society, but it is the voices of individual citizens that sway politicians the most. It will take your personal voice to save Canada's national child care program.

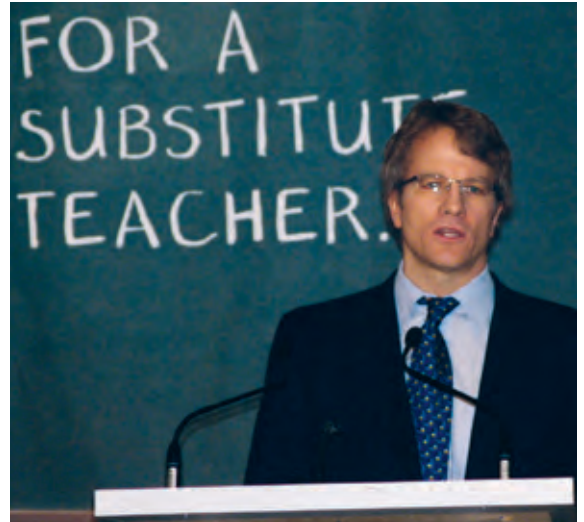
Is the future welfare of Canada's children an issue important enough to get you to act? I hope your answer is yes. Millions of children are depending on you to make a difference.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

Representative Council brings together presidents and delegates of ETFO's teacher, occasional teacher, and professional and education support worker locals. Council meets three times a year.

At the winter meeting of Representative Council, Education Minister Gerard Kennedy spoke about the need to build a strong constituency for public education. He called on ETFO members to work in partnership with parents and the government to solve problems in public education and create a system that inspires public confidence so that "no government can trifle with it the way the last government did."

Kennedy challenged ETFO leaders to be "leaders not just for your membership but for education and public services generally." He spoke about the need to strengthen public services and noted that public sector workers can now once again be proud of where they work. ETFO local presidents (photo below) had a number of questions for Kennedy.



■ Literacy Camp Challenge

Leaders attending the Representative Council meeting viewed *Summer of Hope*, a video about the literacy camps founded by Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable James Bartleman. Each local received a copy of the DVD.

When Ann Hoggarth, president of the Simcoe County Local, showed the video to her executive, "they were so moved we passed a motion to sponsor four students to attend one of these camps (\$1200)." Hoggarth has launched a challenge to other locals "to do the same or better. If we collect enough donations we could sponsor a camp." This would be in addition to the literacy camp sponsorship approved by delegates to the 2005 ETFO annual meeting.





Bluewoman Group is made up of musicians who oppose the anti-union tactics of the Blue Man Group. (see *Voice*, Winter 06). Shown after their performance at Representative Council are group members Margaret Stowe, guitar, (band leader); Michelle Josef, drums; Evelyne Datl, keyboard; Rachel Mela, bass; Sarah McElcheran, trumpet; Kathryn Moses, saxophone; and Shakura S'Aida, vocals.

■ First ETFO member elected to the House of Commons



Photo - Wayne Cuddington, The Ottawa Citizen

Paul Dewar became the first ETFO member ever elected to the House of Commons in the federal election in January. He represents Ottawa Centre, taking over the riding from former New Democratic Party leader Ed Broadbent. Dewar has been a teacher for 12 years and was the first vice-president of the Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local. Dewar, shown with his wife, Julia Sneyd, and son Nathaniel, is the son of former Ottawa mayor Marion Dewar.

Other ETFO members who ran for office in the election are: Russ Aegard, Green Party, Thunder Bay-Rainy River; Kathy Austin, NDP, Simcoe-Grey; and Donna Reid, NDP, Cambridge.

■ Wal-Mart campaign

Andrew MacKenzie, organizer with the United Food and Commercial Workers, spoke to Representative Council delegates about the union's campaign to organize Wal-Mart workers. For more information about that campaign and to view the video, *Justice at Wal-Mart*, visit walmart-workerscanada.com



■ Teacher Librarian honoured



ETFO member Pat Elliot received the 2006 Teacher-Librarian of the Year award at the Ontario School Library Association's annual conference in February. Elliot has been a teacher-librarian since 1989.

"Dedicated educator," "excellent mentor," "devoted teacher-librarian," and "passionate literacy advocate" were some of the words speakers used to describe her.

Her nomination was supported by all teacher-librarians in Simcoe County. Accepting the award on behalf of her colleagues, Elliot said, "You can make a difference. We are a team."

She is shown with OSLA Vice-President Michael Rosettis, and OSLA President Anita Brooks Kirkland.

■ ETFO trains workshop presenters



ETFO members who want to become workshop presenters took advantage of training offered at provincial office this winter. The Workshop Presenters' Palette trained 20 members interested in leading such programs as Presenters on the Road. Another 16 members took part in training to present workshops at the Information and Communication Technology Conference for women to be held in May. For information on professional development opportunities at ETFO visit etfo.ca>Professional Development.

Sharing of Documents – Good News for Internationally Trained Teachers

Teachers may now request from the Ontario College of Teachers copies of documents to be sent directly to QECO for evaluation.

Under the College's Voluntary Privacy Code (announced in the Registrar's Report in *Professionally Speaking*, December 2005), copies of documents already on file with the College can be requested and subsequently issued to a third party for a fee of \$25 per document.

Instead of requesting transcripts and other academic reports from the issuing institutions, copies of the same pertinent documents, if already held by the Ontario College of Teachers, can be used for QECO evaluations. This new practice may be especially beneficial to teachers who are internationally educated (outside of Canada and the United States) and who may have difficulty accessing multiple copies of original documentation.

Internationally educated teachers should re-apply to QECO for an evaluation if:

1. they hold a valid Ontario College of Teachers Certificate of Qualification with no entries in the Degree section; or
2. they have already received an evaluation and were placed in Category A1.

Please follow the steps below, and request from the College, in the Documents to Third Parties section, "copies of all pertinent documents, used solely for the issuance of an Ontario Certificate of Qualification and for degree equivalence."

To request a release of personal information from the Ontario College of Teachers to be submitted directly to QECO, follow these steps on the web:

1. Go to www.oct.ca,
2. Click on *About the College*,
3. Click on *College Privacy Code*,
4. Click on *Request for Release of Personal Information*.

■ New Teacher Workshops



Toronto occasional teachers in their first five years took part in a series of after-school professional development workshops led by ETT member Jim Giles and ETFO staff officer Ruth Dawson. This is one of a number of new teacher professional development opportunities offered by provincial office in partnership with locals across the province.



In February ETFO President Emily Noble met Canada's new Governor General, Her Excellency Michaëlle Jean, at an event sponsored by Ontario Lieutenant Governor, the Honourable James K. Bartleman.

Applications for ETFO Credit Course Instructor Positions in the Hastings & Prince Edward, Limestone, and Simcoe locals

Application forms for paid ETFO credit course instructor positions are now available from provincial office. Candidates from the Hastings & Prince Edward, Limestone, and Simcoe locals should call Jim McMahon or Melanie McClelland at 1-888-838-3836 or e-mail mmclelland@etfo.org for an application package.

Each candidate must:

- have a Master's degree
- have a strong desire and ability to instruct peers
- make a commitment to promote the courses within the local
- be willing to attend the Instructor Training Session from July 10 – July 14, 2006 at Brock University in St. Catharines
- make a commitment to conduct at least one course during each calendar year.

The fee for new instructor candidates is \$350, which includes accommodation, meals, instruction, and materials (mileage reimbursed).

PD funding may be available through your ETFO local.

The following courses will be offered at the 2006 Instructor Training Session:

1. Differentiated Instruction for Today's Classroom
2. Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms
3. Purposeful Learning Through Multiple Intelligences.

As well, ETFO is determined to ensure that its leadership positions are open to all members. ETFO will make additional spaces available in the training program for members of any of the following groups who meet the selection criteria and who have self-identified: Aboriginal, disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and visible minority.

Applications must be received no later than May 15, 2006.

You never know where or when opportunities to make a difference will happen

■ by Dave Clegg

What it means to be the First Vice-President of ETFO

The job of ETFO first vice-president blends responsibility with opportunity.

Doing the job well also means keeping a bag packed.



As first vice-president I have the opportunity to represent the interests of public elementary teachers – our members – in dealings with the government, opposition parties, and the provincial stakeholders in education.

Last spring, as part of *Campaign 200*, the greatest of opportunities presented itself when I was part of the ETFO team that negotiated and created the historic framework signed with the provincial government and Education Minister Gerard Kennedy. I took the lead for ETFO at the table where the key issue of supervision time was settled.

You never know where or when opportunities to make a difference will happen.

As we approached the June deadline for negotiations imposed by the government, I was listening to Gerard Kennedy's comments in a scrum at the end of question period. This led to an invitation from the Minister to an informal one-on-one meeting on a bench outside the legislature to further discuss the implications of a cap on supervision duty, which in turn led to a breakthrough at a local bargaining table and another settlement.

This ability to be flexible and respond to issues as they arise is as important in this job as it is for any classroom teacher. When the president's day changes – as it can with the next phone call – so too does mine.

And because I am required to formally represent the president and the organization on short notice, it is important to have knowledge across

the entire spectrum of elementary and public education issues as well as a complete understanding of how ETFO works. Fortunately, the formal responsibilities of the position provide the knowledge and experience needed to successfully serve our members.

As chair of the budget committee, the first vice-president is responsible for the ETFO budget and must understand fully how the resources of the organization are being used, and why. The first vice-president must also be a parliamentarian, chairing Representative Council meetings and the pre-Representative Council meetings of occasional teacher presidents.

The job requires me to travel across the province to make presentations to pre-service teachers at faculties of education. I liaise with the ETFO provincial collective bargaining, occasional teacher, and teacher education/faculty liaison committees.

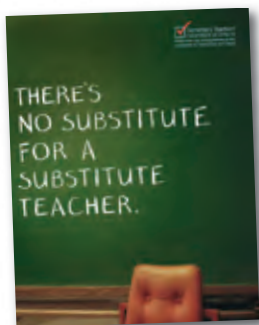
The first vice-president is also responsible for ETFO appointments to external bodies. In addition, the first vice-president is a governor of the Ontario Teachers' Federation and a vice-president of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

The best part of this job, though, is the opportunity to travel the province meeting our members, providing you with a provincial perspective and, most importantly, seeing and hearing your perspectives. Without question, what my position requires most of all is knowing what you, the members, need and delivering it. ♣

Occasional Teachers Set New Standards



■ by Dave Kendall



This round of bargaining has definitely created a new era for our occasional teacher locals. Negotiations have improved the working conditions in many areas, have established a number of significant gains, and have also revealed some challenges for reform.

The 2004 annual meeting provided unprecedented support to our occasional teacher (OT) locals in their quest to achieve gains in this round of bargaining. Delegates at the meeting endorsed a resolution to support each local, up to and including strike actions, to ensure that every OT collective agreement includes the following language:

The timetable for an occasional teacher shall be the same as the timetable of the teacher who is being replaced.

Our OT locals have succeeded in making gains in a number of other areas that will provide a solid foundation and help set the agenda for future negotiations.

Salary gains

Our preliminary submissions did not contemplate salary settlements breaking 24 per cent over a four-year collective agreement. Before this round of bargaining there was a \$47 per day gap between the highest and lowest paid OTs. The pattern for this round of negotiations is diminishing this gap dramatically and by the time the dust settles it will be less than \$15 per day.

Our bargaining goal has been to reach 1/194 of Category A-1, Step 0 on the teacher salary grid for the casual rate. During this round of bargaining, we saw that this ratio had little relevance for some of our locals; it would have produced a salary lower than what bargaining achieved.

The 1/194 ratio appears to be a solid basis for bargaining. However, there is now a significant variance – of over \$7400 – between the highest and lowest Category A-1, Step 0 teacher salary levels. During the next two years occasional teacher negotiators will need to reflect on this objective and possibly revise the premise from which we operate.

Reaching long-term status

During the past several years OT locals have worked to reduce to 10 the number of days it takes to reach long-term status and be placed on the teacher salary grid. At least one local has been successful, but many others continue to work toward this goal. Ten locals have achieved reductions this time. We need to remind ourselves that this 10-day target is only a stopover on the road to what many believe is the appropriate target – three days.

Dave Kendall is coordinator of Protective Services.

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Administered on behalf of ETFO by OTIP.

Report cards

The processing of report cards is a normal part of a teacher's life; for occasional teachers, not so. Occasional teachers need to be concerned about the timing of a long-term assignment as it relates to preparing report cards, training to prepare report cards, and possibly having to return to the school after completing their assignment to help finish them. Far too often, occasional teachers are dropped into a long-term assignment just weeks prior to the preparation of reports cards. A number of our occasional teacher locals successfully negotiated collective agreement language in this round. Future negotiations will continue to address this area.

Member evaluation

For teachers, legislation provides for a complicated and time-consuming performance appraisal; but there is no such requirement for OTs. Yet, for them evaluations are the vehicle for getting a long-term assignment or a teaching position. The challenge OTs face is convincing busy principals to take the time to provide an evaluation for someone who is not at their site frequently. This becomes a recipe for frustration. Six more OT collective agreements now contain language dealing with evaluations.

Benefit plans

During the last two years our teacher locals have reviewed and consolidated their benefit plans. Many occasional teachers are covered by a partner's plan and thus place less importance on benefit plans. Benefit plans for occasional teachers usually are limited to those who have completed two or three months of a long-term assignment. Very few agreements contain language about the continuation of benefits after the long-term assignment ends.

Recently locals have begun to negotiate a daily dollar amount, either for those in long-term positions or, in some cases, for all members. As an organization striving for equity, we should carefully examine the degree to which we are creating an impossible situation for those members who are self-supporting and not able to finance a



benefit plan without assistance. Eight locals have improved their benefit provisions in this round of bargaining.

Professional development

The Ministry of Education has legislated an additional two professional activity days for teachers trying to meet the demands of new curriculum initiatives, evaluation (of both students and teachers), and other administrative procedures. However, many boards have given just lip service to professional development for OTs by allowing them to attend teacher workshops only if there is available space.

Some of our OT locals have negotiated funds to provide their own professional growth programs for members. These funds usually are insufficient. Again, in this round of bargaining, our locals have broken ground by achieving paid professional development days for their members. These successes will be a boost for future negotiations.

Educating school administrators about the needs of occasional teachers and the provisions of their collective agreements will be an ongoing challenge. Negotiations, in conjunction with the ETFO public relations campaign, have certainly highlighted the role of OTs and increased recognition of the importance their work.

OT locals have the resolve to succeed. During the next two years we need to critically assess these gains and then set the parameters for the next stage in improving the working lives and status of these members. **V**



■ by Vivian McCaffrey

Mid-term report: Liberals have achieved education peace and stability, but will it last?

With the next provincial election set for October 2007, the Liberal government is well into the second half of its first term of office. How well is the government doing in keeping its promises? What initiatives do we anticipate in the months ahead?

Respect for teachers

A number of the Liberal election promises focused on demonstrating respect for teachers and restoring morale in the classroom. So far, the Liberal government deserves fairly high marks in keeping these commitments.

Teachers applauded when Education Minister Gerard Kennedy cancelled the recertification program and, a year later, gave the axe to the Ontario teacher qualifying test.

One of the Minister's most effective initiatives has been the establishment of the Education Partnership Table that brings together a broad representation of education stakeholders, including ETFO, to provide input into key policy directions. These are essentially no-cost initiatives, but they have helped create an atmosphere of respect in teacher-government relations.

The Liberals also promised to make the regulatory body, the Ontario College of Teachers, truly self-governing. On March 2, the Minister introduced Bill 78, an

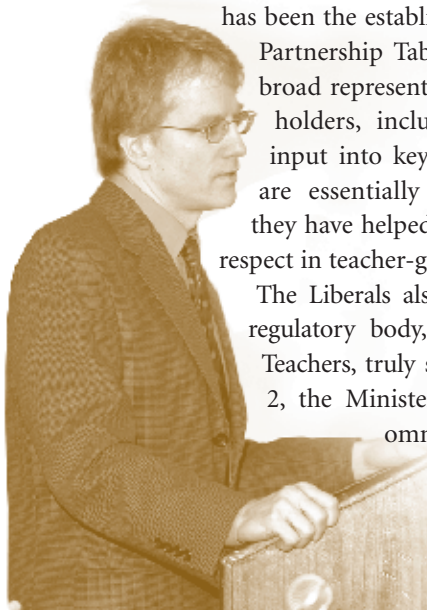
omnibus bill that proposes to add six elected teacher positions to the governing council of the OCT, a change that will improve rep-

resentation for the vast majority of members who are regular classroom teachers. The bill also proposes to make teacher federation representatives ineligible to run for these elected positions. ETFO will lobby against this latter provision in the bill arguing that the government is unnecessarily interfering with the self-governance of the College.

Peace and stability in education

The government is determined to deliver on the election promise to achieve "peace and stability in our schools." Central to this commitment was the ground-breaking provincial framework agreement that the Minister, the teacher federations, and school boards signed last April. It sets the parameters for four-year collective agreements that expire in 2008 and guarantees there will be no strikes by regular classroom teachers before the next election.

There still remains much to do, however, to ensure real peace and stability for the next two years. True peace and stability will only exist when all ETFO members have a signed collective agreement. At press time there are still some 10 OT locals without agreements in place. As well, some school administrators and boards are balking at the provisions that reduce teachers' supervision. This problem may be solved by the



Provincial Stability Commission, provided for in the provincial framework settlement.

The ongoing structural problems with the education funding formula may also threaten peace and stability. The Liberals promised to correct the “flawed” funding formula and to create a fair model to reflect the local needs of diverse communities. Since taking office, they have provided additional funds to address the needs of at-risk, English as a second-language, and special needs students, and small rural schools. They have also allocated funds to reduce primary class size and increase the number of specialist teachers. These are all areas that need attention, but the government has yet to tackle key structural problems in the formula, such as the benchmarks for teacher compensation and capital grants for building, renovating, and maintaining schools.

This structural under-funding is causing a number of larger urban school boards to go into the red. Rural and northern boards are still struggling with school closure issues. If it fails to correct the funding formula so that it reflects the actual costs school boards incur, the Liberal government could face the same situation that confronted the previous government – school boards unable to meet the legal requirement of balancing their books.

School reforms

The Liberal platform promised to replace the assessment process for identifying special needs students. The Ministry of Education recently suspended the Intensive Student Amount (ISA) pro-

cess for assessing special needs students and has promised to introduce a more streamlined assessment process. This should mean a significant improvement to the workload and function of special education resource teachers.

ETFO has also lobbied for a reduction in the number of formal reporting periods and the number of curriculum expectations. The ministry has been slow to take action, but in a recent discussion paper, the government proposed to “reform” the provincial report card and reduce the number of curriculum expectations. ETFO will continue to press for quick action on these proposals.

Support for teachers

Bill 78 includes many of the long-awaited initiatives the Minister promised would be coming to support teachers. The bill, if passed, will revoke the Ontario teacher qualifying test, streamline the teacher performance appraisal process to make it less onerous for both new teachers and the evaluating principal, introduce an induction program for beginning teachers that includes mentoring. It will also enable the government to restore two of the five professional activity days eliminated by the previous Tory government.

Safe schools

To address the issue of safe schools, the Liberal platform promised to implement anti-bullying policies for students, establish a school safety hotline, and install surveillance cameras in schools where needed. In September 2005, the government announced it was moving



forward with these initiatives. In addition, the Safe Schools Action Team, led by MPP Liz Sandals, held public consultations last November on a review of the *Safe Schools Act*. The increase in the number of student suspensions resulting from the act’s discipline provisions received much of the review’s attention.

A 2005 survey, which included ETFO members, identified harassment of teachers by students, parents, administrators, and other colleagues, as a significant concern. ETFO is urging the government to go beyond the focus of student bullying and address broader school safety issues related to workplace harassment.

Challenges ahead

Clearly it is easier for governments to implement changes that simply involve cancelling an initiative like the recertification program or teacher qualifying test. Making progress with other policies that affect schools or teachers’ professional lives is more complex and costly. Repairing the structural problems of the funding formula poses challenges that, if unresolved, may unravel the coveted peace and stability the government has won to date. **V**

Training for leadership— anywhere

It's called the principal's qualifications program (PQP) but it's not just for those who aspire to be administrators.

Participants in ETFO's PQP courses have found they are a valuable learning experience for anyone who wants to become an effective leader, be it as a consultant, union activist, or classroom teacher.

PQP (parts I and II) are offered by ETFO through innovative partnerships with several school boards. In courses offered annually in York Region, for example, teachers from a variety of area boards gather with practising administrators who guide their exploration of issues requiring legal, operational, theoretical, and interpersonal skills.

Each participant brings a wealth of knowledge to the PQP course. Participants in the York Region PQP II course held last May had a total of 185 years of teaching experience. Almost all had previous leadership roles, such as lead teacher, division head, or special assignment teacher. Many had chosen teaching as their second career, bringing a range of skills and talent to their teaching and to the profession.

Participants truly become a community of learners who are encouraged to support one another in acquiring new knowledge, and exploring how it can be best applied in a school setting. Within two to four classes, the instructors can count on hearing, "I had no idea how much principals had to know!" from the course participants. By the end of the course, participants are pleased to report their success in finding answers to questions they had at the beginning, as well as the answers to a variety of issues that arose during the classes.

PQP participants discuss case studies from real-life situations, read articles and books, perform action research at their school, explore online resources, and make presentations to their colleagues. They engage in simulation games to explore how to successfully introduce change in a school and in a school district.

"I leave each session understanding the bigger picture and already see a skill in how I tackle issues at school," said a PQP I participant.

Said another: "The assignments have made me look at my current position and school more objectively."

Course topics include leadership theory and practices for learning organizations, student-focused leadership, and the creation of safe school environments. Participants soon learn about the myriad of resources and supports leaders can draw on to help them make informed decisions.

Past participants have noted that, "lots of hands-on and practical experience from instructors made it timely and pertinent." Theoretical discussions and course assignments are woven in with the daily observations garnered from classroom, school, board, and union level activities.

Course work in PQP part I is followed by a practicum in which participants focus on strategies to improve student learning. Upon successful completion, they are eligible to take part II.

PQP course participants continue the exchange of ideas begun in class by taking part in online discussion groups. Participants have an opportunity to job shadow administrators, often choosing a school with a student population different from their own, so that they can expand their knowledge of the many ways to foster student learning.

While successful completion of PQP parts I and II is a requirement for principals and vice-principals in Ontario, it is also an important step in becoming a fully cognizant teacher who understands the issues that arise in schools and how they can be handled effectively. Participants become skilled at working with others to find solutions to problems. They learn a tremendous amount about school administration and gain an understanding of the larger environment in which they teach.

"I think that every teacher would benefit from the course even if they weren't planning to be an administrator," said one course participant. "It would make them a better teacher." **V**

Contributors: Marg Roberts, PQP presenter; and PFS staff members Joan Littleford, Jan Moxey, and Johanna Brand.

ETFO reaches out

ETFO members in Algoma and Sault St. Marie residents were able to take advantage of a unique opportunity last December to learn more about enhancing student learning by building children's self confidence.



Algoma ETFO, in partnership with the provincial federation, held a regional *Positive Kids* conference attended by one member from each of the board's schools and by community residents.


"We wanted to connect with parents, local agencies, and the community in general," said Gayle Manley, Algoma Teacher Local president. "It highlighted our members' professionalism and allowed the public to see the professional side of the federation."

The conference began with a Thursday evening address by Barbara Burrows, a syndicated columnist who writes on parenting issues. She spoke on "Discipline Not Punishment." Invitations were sent home with children. Flyers went out to local agencies and news releases were sent to local media. In all 150 people, including 55 ETFO members, attended the discussion.

Burrows was also part of a community panel on "raising positive kids." Other panellists and workshop leaders included Aboriginal elder Conrad Bobiwash, public health nurse Maddy Kasubeck, and ETFO members Dan Cheletti, Heather Jessop, Carolyn Lewis, and Joanne Myers.

"It's the first time we had a public component," Manley said. "The feedback was very positive."

Media partner, the *Sault Star*, donated advertising space for the event. There were a variety of displays. A silver collection, the price of admission for Thursday night, collected about \$200 for a local charity – Christy's Light Foundation an organization that raises awareness about eating disorders.

For more information about ETFO's *Positive Kids* conferences contact Jan Moxey, at provincial office: jmoxey@etfo.org. 

ETFO PQP

Training for leaders in Ontario schools

Summer 2006

PART I:

Weekdays, August 1 - 11 (apply by July 21)

PART II:

Weekdays, July 4 - 14 (apply by June 23)

Offered in partnership with the Bluewater DSB

OCTOBER – NOVEMBER 2006

PQP PART I

Offered in partnership with the Halton and the York Region DSBs.

For details and application forms go to etfo.ca ► *Professional Development* ► *Conferences and Workshops*;
or contact Joan Littleford at provincial office: 416-962-3836;
toll-free 1-888-838-3836; jlittleford@etfo.org.

Taking a Walk on the

■ by Jeff McMillan and Rich Tamblin

As intermediate teachers, one of our major concerns is motivating our students. How can we engage our students in meaningful learning experiences and, at the same time, create a lifelong love for learning? Ontario has an alarming dropout rate.


At Commonwealth Public School in Brockville, we are attempting to address this growing problem by giving our students the opportunity to become totally engaged in their learning experiences.

Commonwealth is a small, urban-centred school of about 300 students from a variety of socio-economic backgrounds. We encounter our fair share of high needs. Our intermediate division has two grade 7 and 8 classrooms with 65 students who have a wide range of learning styles and learning abilities. Our teaching team is made up of one full-time educational assistant and two full-time teachers – one with 10 ten years experience and one with 28 – who share a similar philosophy and approach to teaching.

We believe strongly in developing good citizenship, using differentiated instruction, assessment through awareness of students' multiple intelligences, and involving all students in meaningful real-life experiences. We have embraced experiential learning as a model for learning in today's world.

In this model, the student is the centre of his/her education, and our role as teachers is to facilitate learning by returning the responsibility to the student. As teachers, we blend enduring understandings (curriculum/knowledge), essential questions, authentic challenges, and assessment targets, while connecting to the world beyond the walls of the school.

In 2004 our new administrative team gave us an opportunity to broaden the scope of our teaching philosophy. Our new principal, Olga Grigoriev, understood its strengths from her own experience as a teacher. We visited several "alternative" schools in Toronto to see how others made real-world connections.



If our job as teachers is to prepare our students for the world beyond school, then why do we confine student learning to the insides of our classrooms and school?

“Real” Side



Our program, which we coined “The Current Experience,” has taught us a great deal. We began our curriculum planning by looking at project-based learning focused around central themes. For example, this year’s program consists of three themes: environmental issues, media and technology, and social injustice. Within each of these themes, we plan authentic challenges that connect curriculum to real-life experiences. As these connections are the essential components of experiential education, it is necessary to develop strong ongoing partnerships with professionals in the community who become the “expert” resources for students. This is not a “field trip” but an ongoing professional partnership that students can access throughout the school year.

From theory to practice

Our first term began with students exploring environmental issues. Establishing community partnerships was much easier than we anticipated because professionals enjoy working with knowledgeable, engaged students. Our partners included the Ministry of Natural Resources, Leeds County Stewardship, Cataraqui Region Conservation Area, Environmental Connections, and the Frontenac Arch Biosphere.

The students’ challenge was to help restore a fish habitat in one of our local streams. To prepare, we began by having them acquire background information on streams, fish habitats, and environmental restoration projects. We invited stream biologists and other environmental professionals to speak about the health of our local streams and how the students could assist with the restoration project. Students then prepared for the physical work in and around the stream, which included building stream deflectors and establishing shoreline buffer zones.

Once in the “field,” we became aware of the endless opportunities to integrate other areas of the curriculum. We asked students how they could use our stream experience as a way of exploring real-world math concepts – such as volume, perimeter and area, density, velocity, random

sampling, and data management. The excitement the stream study generated carried over as they worked in teams developing and designing real-life math activities.

We asked student teams to use technology in the presentations of their findings. These included a television show created with a digital camcorder and iMac digital editing, and computer presentations using a variety of math software. We coached and debriefed as the students became fully engaged in their learning.

Student research

A key component of our instructional strategy is an independent research project. At the beginning of each term, students explore a theme-based topic that interests them. They are required to develop a process portfolio that shows their planning, research notes, and rough drafts of their written report. The finished product involves three key components: local, national, and international contacts; a written report; and a multimedia presentation – a two-day environmental symposium in which students present to the class and members of our community. Students wrote synopses designed to encourage others to attend their presentation. We were amazed at the depth of their knowledge and understanding.

In the course of their independent studies, students were asked to make contacts with people



working in their area of research. One student studying global warming established a partnership with Environment Canada. In addition to providing key information, his contact invited him to attend a United Nations-sponsored international conference in Montreal. Hearing this we worked with our administrators so that a few of our students could attend. They took photographs and made videotapes, and made a presentation to their peers on their return.

This experience went way beyond our expectations. It exposed our students to an international perspective on global issues. They became very impassioned about such environmental issues as the Kyoto Protocol, nuclear waste, endangered species, and pollution. The knowledge they gained was much deeper and richer than we could ever have provided using a traditional approach to teaching.

As our students developed a passion for the environment, they quickly realized that because of their knowledge and understanding, they now had a “voice” to share with others, and that they, as individuals, could make a difference. They began to comprehend the power of knowledge, and soon they were writing editorials and letters to people in power. We couldn’t stop smiling as we heard them suggesting ways of reducing greenhouse gases and slowing down global warming.

The energy and momentum this approach to learning created further reinforces our belief in it. Passion for learning cannot be taught; it is something each student must experience. Authentic experiences give students the opportunity to explore their passions, which in turn “hooks” them into becoming life long learners.

As the school year progresses, we are building on this momentum and passion, and the students’ desire to learn. Excitement is rising as we begin our exploration of media and technol-

ogy, a theme close to every student’s heart. Some students are exploring web page design by taking over responsibility for the school site. Another team has started a television talk show and is interviewing key community people. They have already interviewed our director of education about the board’s connection with the Frontenac Arch Biosphere.

Experiencing rewards

As teachers, we have never been so challenged, yet so fulfilled. The energy students create has motivated us to continue to build this program, and to provide enriched experiences for all.

Some teachers may find this approach difficult because the learning experiences and challenges do not necessarily follow the sequential flow of a textbook. There is often an element of the “unknown” because of the variety of student interests, abilities and learning styles. Flexibility and teamwork are essential ingredients in teacher planning when working with the experiential model.

Colleagues ask how we maintain control of students and how this style of teaching affects our classroom management strategies, but we have found that with careful planning, and when all students are engaged and motivated, behaviour management takes care of itself.

Assessment is another consideration. Experiential education can be very difficult to evaluate conventionally. Our assessment and evaluation strategies include the use of achievement chart targets from ministry documents, qualitative analysis, process portfolios, and exhibitions. One of our challenges is to match the learning taking place with the curriculum expectations because students take part in such a wide variety of learning activities and situations often involving team and partner collaboration. We encourage students to show their understanding of content in ways that are comfortable for them by reflecting on their multiple intelligence strengths and learning styles. We also encourage them to explore other areas of their “M.I.” as ways to strengthen those skills.

Finally, it is important that all people involved believe in the benefits of this approach to learning and the continued support of our administration has been a vital component its success.

If we encourage our students to take risks, then we, as educators, must be willing to do so as well. All students want to know how school relates to the real world. If we are to help students become life long learners, it is our responsibility to provide a meaningful context where they can make that connection. ✓

Students Make History

“Every human being, of whatever origin, of whatever station, deserves respect. We must each respect others even as we respect ourselves.”

U Thant: Former Secretary-General of the United Nations

■ by **Scott Berry**

Students, teachers, administrators, and parents in Prince Edward-Hastings are celebrating the success of their second annual elementary school Model UN. They organized the first Canadian elementary school Model UN last year.

“It really is a milestone,” said Aruna Alexander, founder of the Quinte United Nations chapter. The Model UN session is designed to give students hands-on experience and get them involved in international issues.

Susanna Moodie School principal Gail Brant and Quinte Mohawk School principal, Kathleen Manderville worked with Alexander to get the project started in 2004. Once an outline was in place, grade 6 teachers Scott Berry (Susanna Moodie) and Edith GrosLouis (Quinte Mohawk) developed and completed the program with their grade 6 classes in 2004. This year’s project included a third school, Albert College.

On the first day, students travelled to Quinte Mohawk School for a school tour, a regional history lesson given by Chief R. Donald Maracle, a display of First Nations’ culture – such as crafts, food and dancing – and an exchange of ideas.

Over the following two days, the students gathered at Susanna Moodie to work in groups and research indigenous people and cultures from around the world, including the Maori of New Zealand, Hmong of Laos, Aztecs of Mexico, and the Sami of Finland. They then forged a resolution, wrote a position paper, and created a display for their indigenous group.

On the fourth and last day, the students took part in a Model UN assembly at the Orange Lodge on the Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory. Each group represented one indigenous nation and their country. Reynolds Mastin, 2003 co-winner of Magna’s national “As Prime Minister” award, addressed the students on the issues of indigenous peoples, the subject of his winning paper.

Each group gave a short presentation and read a paper outlining their posi-



Grade 6 teacher Tracy Ford (Quinte Mohawk) acted as the chair of the model UN assembly; Scott Berry (Susanna Moodie) and Atsuko Nakanishi (Albert College), served as vice chairs. At left, Edith GrosLouis, Quinte Mohawk School.

tion. They answered questions about the history of their country, its indigenous people, and current issues. They then voted on resolutions dealing with two major native issues, choosing between land rights and respect for aboriginal people. Their teachers chaired the model assembly.

Students received an in-depth view of how the UN works. They dealt with real world issues, discovering that finding and agreeing on solutions is not easy. Once they voted on the resolutions, students showed visitors their projects, answered questions, and discussed the success of the event.

“I feel really proud of the students. They’ve worked hard, met new friends, and have more respect for the community,” said teacher Edith GrosLouis.

The main goal of this project is to build respect. We hope that students will learn a lot about how to act towards others by doing this project. If we give them these skills they can become role models in the future.

The friends, memories, and lessons they have learned will last a lifetime. This real-life experience is active learning at its best. **✓**

Student Vote

■ by Johanna Brand

They were deeply involved in the federal election. They met the candidates. They researched party platforms and positions. They argued and debated. Then they organized an election and voted.

But, though they probably know more about each party's position on the environment than most of us, their vote did not affect the election outcome.

Nevertheless the kids in Christina Huang's grade 5 class at Finch Public School thought the whole thing was "a good experience."

The class took part in the parallel election coordinated by Student Vote Canada, an organization dedicated to "building students into citizens, one vote at a time." The organization provides teacher resources for this hands-on activity, including curriculum resources for elementary students. It distributes to all Ontario schools *You Choose*, the curriculum ETFO created in 2004. (See curriculum insert.)

Huang's students ran a full election. She divided her class into four groups, one for each major national party. The students campaigned for their party. And they learned how to run an election, serving as returning officers, poll clerks, and scrutineers.



"I was surprised about how much there is to learn and about how much thought and focus goes into the party's platform," said Sergey Sapelnyk.

For Christina Huang, having her class take part made natural sense. Huang herself grew up in a political family but the effect was to make her "resist active involvement in politics."

Until, that is, she took part in the Teachers' Institute on Parliamentary Democracy, which "was amazing, the best professional development I've ever had." Each November the program brings together 70 Canadian teachers for a week on Parliament Hill.¹

The student vote election got Huang's class equally excited. During their campaign three of the four candidates in the Willowdale riding – Jim Peterson (Liberal), Rochelle Carnegie (NDP), and Sharolyn Vettese (Green Party) – took time to visit the school and answer questions about their positions. This was a highlight that taught students about the power of personality and personal contact.

"I changed my mind after seeing each candidate," said Annie Shi. "When someone comes in you are sympathetic to them, until you see the next person."

She was not alone. "At the beginning I thought the Conservative Party would be the most suitable for me," said Ross London. "But after I met the Green Party I decided it was more suitable."

The debate didn't stop when students left the class. Dinner table arguments were common. "We disagreed a lot," said Annie Shi. "In the end my parents said you make your own decision."

The project could well have lasting impact for these students. According to the Canadian Council on Learning, these students will be more likely to vote when they grow up.

In its paper *Falling Voter Turnout: Is It Linked to Diminished Civics Education?* the CCL points out that civics education correlates positively with higher voter turnout at election time, particularly among those who are not inherently interested in politics.² ✓



1 See www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/education/teachers.

2 See Lessons in Learning at www.ccl-cca.ca/english/resources/carnet.asp

Student Vote: Election Day

■ *Written by*

**Renée Belhumeur
Debbie Donsky
Wendy Hughes
Karen McGillivray**

Overview:

In order to raise their civic awareness for political participation, students need to understand the election process and have an opportunity to participate in a simulated election.

Purpose:

Students will participate in a federal, provincial or municipal election in conjunction with Student Vote.

Curriculum Expectations:

Language: Reading (Grade 5)

Overall Expectations:

- read a variety of... non-fiction materials for different purposes

Specific Expectations: Vocabulary Building

- use specialized terms in different subject areas, as appropriate



Language: Oral and Visual Communication (Grade 5)

Overall Expectations:

- communicate information, explain a variety of ideas and procedures, and follow the teacher's instructions
- ask and answer questions on a variety of topics to acquire and clarify information

Specific Expectations: Use of Words and Oral Language Structures

- use appropriate words and structures in discussions or classroom presentations

Social Studies:

Canada and World Connections: Aspects of Government in Canada (Grade 5)

Overall Expectations:

- identify and describe the electoral process

Specific Expectations: Understanding Concepts

- demonstrate an understanding of how governments are elected in Canada
- identify current political leaders (local, provincial, and federal)

As part of Student Vote, we are encouraging you to get the whole school involved in this election.



Materials:

LM4.3.1 Roles of Election Officials Handout

LM4.3.4 Election Ballots
Pencils, pens

LM4.3.2 Voter Information Card
(adapted from Elections Canada)
Voters List (prepared by returning officer)

LM4.3.3 Vote At Poster

Lesson Outline:

1. Lead students through the process of voting in an actual election, from ensuring their names are on the voters list to casting their ballots:
 - a. Draw up the voters list according to the school's involvement. Students will need to use a class list for each class participating. Draw a line through the names of any students who will not be present on election day.
 - b. Determine the time and place of the vote.
 - c. Prepare the voter information cards.
 - d. Prepare the ballots using the names of the candidates in the school riding.
 - e. Review the procedures for election day.
 - f. Set up one or more polling stations.
 - g. Distribute LM4.3.3 **Vote At Poster** around the school well ahead of time.
2. Assign students roles and discuss what the various jobs entail.
(See LM4.3.1 **Roles of Election Officials**)
3. Hold the election, using the Student Vote 2004 Kit.
 - a. Count the ballots and record the results on tally sheets.
 - b. The returning officer announces the results.





Resources:

The following professional resources:

Canadian Government: Grades 4-6. Demetra and Renee Perry-Watson Georgopoulos (2002). London, Ontario: GeoWat Innovative Teacher Publishing Inc.; ISBN:1-89452711-9

www.elections.ca

This bilingual site has a youth link that contains a game and an election kit. A CD can also be ordered through this site.

www.kidsvotingcanada.com has all you need to know about participating in Student Vote.

Teacher Notes:

If there is no election taking place during the year (federal, provincial, or municipal), there are several issues which could serve as the basis for an election. For example: the abolition of the monarchy, the reform or elimination of the Senate, the separation of the country, environmental issues, Aboriginal self-government. Some of these issues are appropriate for Grade 5 students, while others are more suitable for an older age group.

Home Connections:

Teachers may ask students to talk to their parents and family about the election, the issues, and whether they will vote. Students need to understand that the election is an invaluable way for people to show their civic duty. They should also understand that party positions influence how people vote.

Teacher Reflections:

What worked well during the teaching of this lesson? What would you change if you were to teach this lesson again? Do you have any ideas for extensions to this learning activity or have you come across any additional resources worth noting?

(To fill out as follows)

Voter Information Card

Student Name: _____

This notice will confirm that your name has been included in the list of electors prepared for the pending election. You must vote in the school.

POLLS ARE OPEN ON ELECTION DAY FROM _____ (fill in)

ELECTORAL DISTRICT _____

The name of your electoral district

Poll Number	The Polling Place Will Be at or Near	
The Poll Number	The Address	This space left blank
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Roles of Election Officials

The Returning Officer:

- Draws up the voters list, which includes everyone who is entitled to vote
- Prepares the ballot listing the candidates in alphabetical order

The Deputy Returning Officer: (one for each polling booth)

- Hands out the ballots to the voters
- Counts the ballots after the polling station has closed

The Poll Clerk: (one for each polling booth)

- Crosses out the names of the voters as they vote
- Tallies the ballots counted by the deputy returning officer

The Scrutineer: (several – one for each party at each polling booth)

- Party representatives observing the voting process
- Present, as observers only, during voting and counting of ballots

Vote At Poster

STUDENT VOTE

VOTE TODAY

Date:

Room:

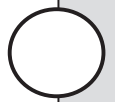
Time:

BALLOTS

BALLOT CARD

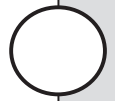
PARTY NAME: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____



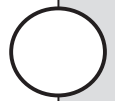
PARTY NAME: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____



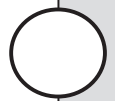
PARTY NAME: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____



PARTY NAME: _____

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____



BALLOT CARD

ETFO Leader Profile

■ by Vitusha Oberoi

The kindergarten kids at Tom Thomson PS are ready to leave for the day and Hanno Weinberger is a busy man. Many children need help with their jackets, a few have misplaced either their gloves or their caps, and one particular child has decided to use the washroom at the last minute. As parents troop into the yard, Weinberger lets the children out one by one, hitting a power button by the door, his crutches firmly under his arms as he bids goodbye to his wards.



Hanno Weinberger

Weinberger is doing what he loves best—teaching kindergarten children. Just three years ago, he thought he might never be able to teach again, or for that matter, walk again. On a holiday in Germany, where he had gone to attend a family wedding, he woke up one day to find that he could not move. A type of West Nile virus had paralyzed him. Overnight, the 50-year-old Halton teacher turned from a healthy being into a disabled person.

Till then, Weinberger had lived life in the fast lane. He was on the Halton Teacher Local executive from its inception, having been a member of the transition team when OPSTF and FWTAO got together to form ETFO. He had served on the Human Rights Committee, the Status of Men Committee, and several ad hoc committees. (His wife, Maureen Weinberger, currently president of the Halton Teacher Local, was just as involved in union activities.) He had been teaching for 30 years, the last 13 as a kindergarten teacher. It was a job he loved, one that kept him on his toes every single minute of the day. But now, life had come to a standstill—wrapped around a wheelchair and a pair of crutches.

“Everything changed, every aspect of my life. When I first came home after a month in the hospital, I couldn’t have a shower on my own. Someone had to be there to get me on to the bath seat and out of the bath seat. I couldn’t go up and down the stairs. I had to sit there and go up on my bum and slide down on my bum,” Weinberger says. The most horrific aspect of his ordeal was his complete dependence on others for the basic needs of daily life. “I was 50 years old when this happened to me, a father of three

children. My wife had to help me in and out of the shower. As a parent, it was horrifying to show that level of weakness to my children,” Weinberger says. What added to the trauma was the fact that his disease was not diagnosed till August last year. “I didn’t know if I would get better or if the disease was degenerative and would continue to get worse.”

The tremendous support he received from his family, friends, colleagues, and his union local took some of the edge off his ordeal. “My wife has always been there for me. When this happened to me, her attitude was: get better, come home, and we will deal with whatever has to be dealt with, together.” The road to recovery was slow and often frustrating, but Weinberger did not give up, helped along by his physiotherapists and kinesiologists. Once he was able to get around in a wheelchair, he decided to return to part-time teaching at Tom Thomson.

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Vitusha Oberoi is an ETFO staff member and freelance journalist.

“As much as I would love to walk again, if walking meant giving up the experiences of the last three years, of what I learnt about myself, and of the many positive things which have happened to me, if that were the tradeoff, I would not do it.”



“Teaching KG is a very physical job and I was advised to teach older kids so I could sit in a chair the whole time. But I felt that KG is what I love doing and I couldn’t give it up without a try. The kids I started out with in the first year were incredible with me. They were understanding, supportive, and they never treated me any differently than how I was getting treated before. I let them know from the very beginning that their legs work in a certain way and mine don’t work that way. Because of that I have a wheelchair, because of that I have braces or crutches,” he says.

As a teacher, Weinberger had always integrated special needs children in his class. “In many ways, now I feel they are accommodating me, a special needs teacher, into their ranks. I find they do not see me as disabled and they do not look at me any differently than they do any other teacher in the school,” he says.

The transition to disability changed Weinberger’s physical realities, but it also made him realize his own inner strength. All through his illness, he was supported by others, and once he had recovered sufficiently, he wanted to give back some of what he had received. He became a member of the Disability Issues Committee of ETFO and is currently its chairperson. “I feel I have something to offer and that I can be a voice for a group of people who may be needing an advocate. I had an advocate when I needed one, when I was physically incapable of fighting for myself. Hopefully, I can advocate for others now.”

Weinberger is keen to reject the stereotyping of a disabled activist as a person who brings only a single point of view to the table. “It is completely conceivable that what I have gone through would have narrowed my focus on just me and my obstacles but it hasn’t done that. To the contrary, my disability has broadened by perspective. I sit on the Disability Issues Committee but I sit on many other committees in Halton. I don’t see myself as the voice of disability on these committees. My disability is part of who I am but it is not all of me. It doesn’t totally define me.”

Weinberger attributes the defeat at the annual meeting of Resolution 5, which sought designated positions on the ETFO executive, to the inability of people to understand that representatives on these positions won’t bring only one point of view or perspective to the table. “I don’t want other people to see me as just being that disabled person on that executive who is only going to be a voice for that disability. That’s just a part of who I am. I bring a much broader focus, a much broader range to anything I do now than I did before because of what I have experienced in the last three years. People need to see that those who represent designated groups are more than a disabled person, or a black person or a gay person. We are more than that and you need to see we are more than that. That’s the message which we on the Disability Issues Committee and other equity-seeking committees are trying to put forward,” he says.

Even though he is on crutches and even though there are days when the inequities of life all but overwhelm him, Weinberger is determined to make the world of the disabled a better place than when he found it. In addition to his union activities, he has helped the students of orthotics and technicians at Sunnybrook Hospital design a leg brace.

“This experience has strengthened the positive aspects of my personality. I have a level of peace and a level of calm that I have worked very hard over the past few years to achieve. As much as I would love to walk again, if walking meant giving up the experiences of the last three years, of what I learnt about myself, and of the many positive things which have happened to me, if that were the tradeoff, I would not do it.” ♥

When injuries and disabilities strike: what you need to know about income replacement

■ by **Mary Bricco**

When you are injured or disabled, long-term disability benefits (LTD) and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board benefits (WSIB) can help you financially.

Most members know these plans exist. But unlike dental or other extended health care benefits, LTD and WSIB are probably the least understood. Members struggling to deal with a medical illness or injury often find themselves overwhelmed by the associated paperwork. A little insight can go a long way in helping to alleviate the stress that invariably accompanies filing for benefits.

LTD

Disability is something most people don't like to think about and consequently they know little about LTD and what it involves. As well, the process of applying for LTD can be confusing and overwhelming. Often members assume that paying premiums means they are automatically entitled to benefits. Unfortunately, LTD does not operate like car insurance. Members sign up for LTD coverage but a member with a disability must *apply* for LTD benefits.

The LTD process is made more difficult by the fact that members are understandably very private about personal health issues. When they have to stop working due to a disabling medical condition, members often believe they will be returning to work soon and so won't likely need to apply for LTD.

Comforted by a bank of sick leave credits, some will remain off work but will not actively pursue the medical help or treatment that might allow them to return

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Continues on page 30

WSIB

Unfortunately, teachers are one of the most notorious groups for *not* reporting workplace accidents/injuries. They often forego seeking immediate medical attention, opting instead to “tough it out” and hoping the injury will just go away. Some believe that maintaining silence about a workplace accident and just “carrying on” is noble and proves their worth to the employer. Such notions allow the conditions that caused the accident to go unchecked and thus can leave colleagues vulnerable to having a workplace accident as well.

Steps to follow in case of injury

Report any workplace accident/injury promptly to the appropriate school board personnel. In most schools this is the principal. Report all accidents/injuries that occur on the worksite or that arise out of or in the course of employment, no matter how trivial. This includes student injuries. Request that a report be submitted to the WSIB.

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Mary Bricco is an ETFO staff officer.

to work sooner. And unfortunately, some are also so ill or devastated by the news of a disabling illness that they simply cannot focus on applying for LTD and do not realize that their local and/or school board can help them.

Steps to follow if applying for LTD

If you wish to apply for LTD benefits you must do so no later than 6 months from the date of disability, which is the last date you worked on a full-time basis.

Before benefits begin you must serve a waiting period, varying from 60 to 120 working days or the expiration of sick leave, whichever is longer, and depending on the LTD policy.

Insurance carriers generally recommend filing an LTD claim after 20 days of absence from work. Pulling together the necessary medical documentation for the claim and allowing for the insurer to adjudicate it takes time. Applying for benefits in a timely fashion is wise to avoid a gap between the end of the waiting period and the start of LTD benefits.

Early Intervention program (EI)

Most LTD carriers have an optional Early Intervention program that gives you a number of alternatives focusing on your needs and enabling a timely return to work, all before the finalization of an LTD claim. Most EI programs (such as the one developed by the Ontario Teachers’ Insurance Plan) provide medical referrals, funding for equipment and support programs, referral to a rehabilitation counsellor, and other forms of assistance and resources as authorized by the insurance company. The program is confidential and entirely voluntary. Your school board may also have an early intervention program.

LTD Claims Kit

The LTD claims kit contains three pieces of documentation that must be completed and returned to the insurer.

The Plan Administrator’s or Plan Sponsor’s Statement contains information about your salary and benefits, job history, and a description of the work performed at the date of disability. The employer completes it; in many ETFO locals, a local representative completes this statement in consultation with the school board.

The Plan Member’s Statement allows you to report the nature of the disability, the severity of symptoms, and an

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Continues on page 31

The key to the success of any WSIB claim is seeking medical attention immediately, or as soon as possible following the accident or injury. Any delay may result in unnecessary delays further down the road.

How to apply for WSIB benefits

There are four ways to initiate a WSIB claim.

The employer completes *Form 7*, the official accident report, in triplicate. Sometimes this form will be completed at the board offices and the school will use a general accident reporting form. You have a right to, and should request, a copy of the completed *Form 7*.

Advise your health care practitioner that the injury was work-related. Your physician must then complete and submit a *Form 8* based on his/her examination of you. It is imperative that you report all symptoms to the doctor.

You may also make your own report to the WSIB using *Form 6*, which the WSIB provides at your request. This form is your opportunity to describe the workplace accident and the injury suffered.

Form 1492C is an alternative way to apply for WSIB benefits and to consent to the release of functional abilities information. However, if you complete *Forms 6, 7 and 8* you will not need *Form 1492C*.

Ensure that you provide consistent information on all of the forms as any inconsistencies – in accident information, dates and areas of injury, and lost time days – will cause long delays in the adjudication of your claim and can even result in it being disallowed.

Functional Abilities form (FAF)

Under WSIB rules every employee injured at work must consent to the release of functional abilities information. This information is used to assess whether you can return to your regular assignment or if you need accommodations. The school board will give you the FAF, which your physician will complete.

Obligation to cooperate and early and safe return to work

The *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* sets out a duty of cooperation that obliges injured workers and employers to contact one another as soon as possible after an accident occurs. You and the board must maintain communication throughout the process to ensure your early

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Continues on page 31

explanation of why you cannot return to work. It is very important that the information you provide be consistent with that provided by your physicians.

The Attending Physician's Statement gives the insurer with specific medical information about your illness or injury and prospects for returning to work. Your physician completes it in consultation with you. If you are seeing a specialist as well as a family doctor, you may also want to have the specialist complete a statement.

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation, the process of helping you return to work, may start during the waiting period (before benefits start) or anytime after benefits begin. A vocational rehabilitation consultant will contact you to discuss your options.

A return-to-work plan may include a full or a gradual return to your pre-disability work, modified hours, a temporary alternate assignment, or a new assignment. The plan is based on the medical restrictions and limitations provided by your physician. In some cases, you can continue to receive benefits while you are involved in a rehabilitation plan. As the employer, the school board will be part of any return-to-work discussions. You should also make sure the local ETFO office is involved.

Appropriate care and treatment

It is crucial to the success of your LTD claim that you are receiving care and treatment from a licensed medical practitioner, continuous from the date of disability. The family physician plays a pivotal role in coordinating your care; however, all LTD policies stipulate that you must be receiving treatment from a medical specialist in the area of the illness. For instance, treatment for mental health conditions must be provided by a psychiatrist or registered psychologist.

Appealing a negative decision

Most insurance companies have an internal appeal process, and there are strict time limits for appealing or initiating a legal action against an insurer. In the event a claim is denied, you may submit new medical evidence as part of an appeal package. You will receive a letter outlining the reasons for the decision and providing direction and guidelines regarding an appeal. Share this letter with your doctor and/or specialist in order to understand what additional information is required.

and safe return to appropriate employment.

The school board must attempt to provide suitable and available employment consistent with your functional abilities. You must assist the school board as required with identifying such work. Contact your ETFO local or a counsellor in Professional Relations Services with any questions or concerns about this process.

Appealing a negative decision

The WSIB system internal appeals process allows you to appeal negative decisions. But there are time limits – you must appeal a return-to-work decision within 30 days. You must appeal all other decisions within six months.

ETFO has established guidelines for helping you when an LTD or WSIB appeal is denied. Depending on the circumstances of your case the provincial office may be able to assist you in advancing a claim to arbitration or litigation.

Please contact the LTD/WSIB counsellor-on-duty at 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836 for further information.

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS SERVICES CONFERENCES FOR MEMBERS

APRIL 22 – OAKVILLE

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A regional conference for new teacher members of the Halton, Peel,

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9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Glenn Abbey High School, 1455 Glen Abbey Gate

MAY 13 – GUELPH

Managing Difficult Workplace Situations: Do's and Don'ts

A conference for women from the Avon Maitland, Bluewater, Thames

Valley, Upper Grand, and Waterloo locals

9 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. (Registration and breakfast begin at 8 a.m.)

Holiday Inn Downtown

For information on these events contact **Diane Balanyk-McNeil** (dbalanyk@etfo.org) or **Valentina Fetterly** (vfetterly@etfo.org) at provincial office.

Defining disability

■ by Christine Brown

The new wave of activists took the medical model and turned it upside down. Don't focus on the individual, they said – focus instead on the built and social environments in which the individual must function.

How do you define “disability?” It depends on why you are asking. For potential grievances, you may want to consult section 10 of Ontario’s *Human Rights Code*. This definition is fairly technical and constantly being interpreted and reinterpreted. It is important, of course, but perhaps not as important as the definition we hold in our minds.

Traditionally, “disability” is something that has been widely viewed as an individual, medical problem afflicting an individual. Why is Linda unemployed? Because she is deaf, or blind, or cannot use her legs. The source of the problem, in other words, is her. Perhaps if science can eventually cure her deafness (etc.), she will be able to get a job. In the meantime, there are always telethons.

This line of thought is generally called the “medical model” of disability. It is a very powerful notion, one that colours our perceptions, and shapes our view of what constitutes normality. In the world of work, it is especially prevalent. If you are an educator who, for whatever reason, applies for long-term disability insurance benefits, you will be faced with all kinds of questions about your own “functional limitations.”

About 30 years ago, however, a new line of thinking emerged as part of a wave of human rights activism amongst people with disabilities. One of the pioneers in this movement was the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation in Britain. UPIAS published a short tract called “Fundamental Principles of Disability”

which, ever since, has been cited as a watershed in the evolution of thinking about disability issues.

The new wave of activists took the medical model and turned it upside down. Don’t focus on the individual, they said – focus instead on the built and social environments in which the individual must function. Don’t tell us about Linda’s functional limitations – tell us about the physical and attitudinal barriers at the school where she would like to teach. Tell us about inaccessible public transit. Tell us about two-story schools with no working elevators. Tell us about a room filled with expensive computers and other electronic equipment, all of which lack screen-reading software or sound and font enhancing capacity.

As Catherine Frazee, activist and former head of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, once noted: Disability is not intrinsic, but rather extrinsic.

This new way of thinking about disabilities is called the “social model.” It refuses to define a physical or intellectual impairment as a defect or pathology. It speaks not of disabled individuals, but of disabling surroundings.

In recent years, this rights-based approach has slowly gained ground in our legal system and public policy framework. The concepts of barrier removal, social handicapping, and design by inclusion were once alien, but are not so today. Perhaps one day we will be able to open a dictionary and find the following:

disability (n); an array of physical, social and attitudinal barriers which result in discrimination against individuals whose physical, sensory or intellectual characteristics do not fit an arbitrarily-imposed norm – barriers which prevent these individuals from full and equal participation in society. ♡

Christine Brown is an ETFO research officer with an interest in disability issues.



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...and still we rise 2006



Keynote speaker Trey Anthony.

■ by **Rachel Soini**

As a teacher of three years and a current participant in ETFO's Leaders for Tomorrow program, I am truly impressed with the opportunity I have to gain new insight to the issues that we, as women, face and the progress we have made. The leadership program has given me a new sense of confidence, and an urge to satisfy my professional and personal goals as a teacher and Aboriginal woman by getting more involved not only with my local or provincial union, but also with my local school board.

Last week I had the privilege of attending the *...and still we rise* conference. I had no idea as to what to expect – quite honestly I hadn't

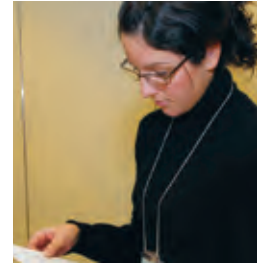
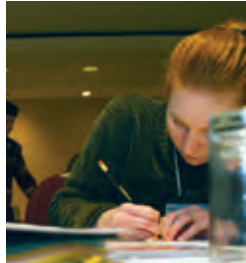
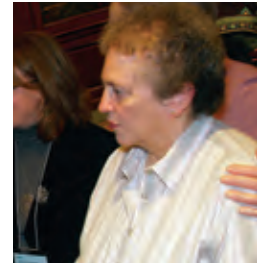
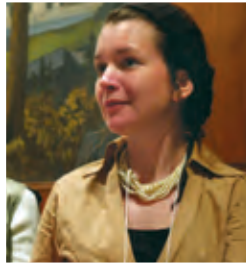
really thought about it. Ultimately I was very impressed. The plenary speakers, Judy Rebeck and Trey Anthony, were powerful presenters, especially when sharing their personal journeys and experiences. It was moving and interesting to hear how they overcame barriers that they faced, and how they continue to challenge new ones.

Listening to these wonderful women has inspired me – and other women as well – to really look into our lives, find what we have to offer, and determine how to set a strong foundation in conquering barriers and attaining all that we believe in. I would recommend this conference to all women teachers.



Rachel Soini is a teacher in Dryden, Ontario, Keewatin-Patricia DSB.

Jo-Ann Mathon is a French Immersion teacher in Newmarket, York Region DSB.



■ by Jo-Ann Mathon

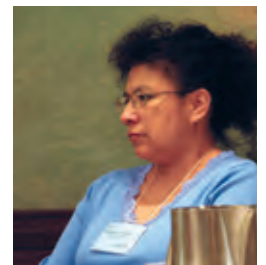
I am neither a new teacher nor a seasoned one. The week before this conference was a stressful, demanding, and emotional one for me. Part of me was excited and looking forward to participating, but part of me was craving time to finish marking, doing my report cards, playing with my kids and my partner.

What I have seen, heard, and experienced at the *...and still we rise* conference, has left me wanting more! This conference is essential to women teachers. It was powerful, energizing, empowering, and just plain wonderful. I feel very fortunate to have been part of this awesome experience: hearing beautiful words come from strong and powerful women such as Judy Rebeck and Trey Anthony; seeing over 300 women spontaneously get up, sing and dance to the song “I

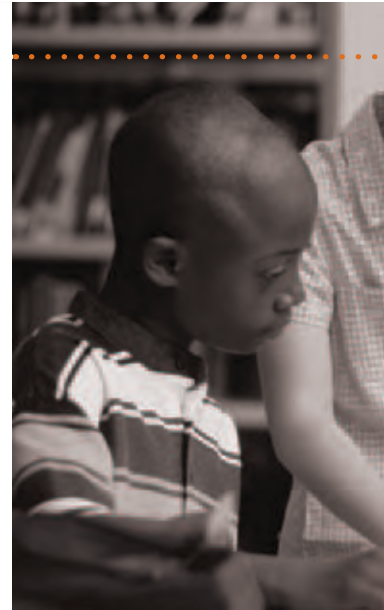
Will Survive.” This experience has left a profound effect on me both professionally and personally.

I left the conference with a strong commitment to be true to myself – to be seen and heard as a whole person (woman, mother, lesbian, aboriginal, and teacher). I will challenge myself to truly integrate diversity in my classroom – not just pay lip service to the idea. I will use the skills I learned in the workshops to keep my life more balanced so that I am fully present for my students, my three kids, and my partner. I feel empowered to further my involvement with ETFO. By this involvement, I make a difference in both the lives of teachers and in society as a whole.

Thank you to Equity and Women’s Services for the gifts of empowerment and rejuvenation.



Photos - Anne de Haas



« Il était une fois, dans la classe de français de monsieur Demers, un groupe d'élèves qui décida d'aller faire une visite à l'arcade du centre d'achats afin de jouer à un nouveau jeu vidéo : *La maison hantée*. Rendu à l'arcade de jeux, Tommy, un garçon brave, met de l'argent dans l'appareil, pousse le bouton de départ et ... pouf! ... plus de Tommy! Où est-il?, se demandent ses amis. »



■ par **André Charlebois**

Ce conte basé sur une part de vérité est en réalité le fruit de l'imagination de l'auteur. La question est lancée, et il ne reste au lecteur ou à la lectrice qu'à en créer la suite.

Le conte, qui à l'origine est une tradition orale dans la culture, redevient populaire auprès de la population francophone.

Le français langue seconde, puisqu'on y attache tant d'importance à la communication orale, devient une didactique pouvant s'adapter à ce courant. Le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario encourage ce volet de la langue : « The program should give students numerous opportunities to use French for real purposes and in real situations, for example: listening to French spoken by live and recorded voices, and by people of different ages, speaking in different accents and at different rates. »¹ Il en est de même pour les programmes intensifs et d'immersion française.²

Les enfants de tous les âges adorent se faire raconter des contes, et la culture canadienne-française en regorge. Par exemple, on y retrouve les légendes de la chasse-galerie, d'Alexis le Trotteur et de Jos Montferrand. Plusieurs autres contes décrivent la vie du conteur, aussi appelé le

« conteux ». Fred Pellerin, un jeune conteur de la région de la Mauricie au Québec, raconte la vie des gens de son village. Grâce à son imagination fertile, à son langage coloré et à sa présence captivante sur scène, il transporte l'auditeur dans son univers et transforme les villageois en personnages de conte.³

On peut se servir du conte traditionnel dans la classe de français langue seconde pour amener les élèves à raconter aussi une histoire .

Les critères suivants aideront l'élève dans cette tâche :

- 1-une imagination fertile,
- 2-une connaissance minimale du français,
- 3-un gabarit afin de créer « un conte collectif ».

Le conte collectif

Le conte collectif est une stratégie qui permet aux élèves de créer un conte qui sera le reflet de leur connaissance de la langue française et de leur imagination. Tout aussi important, il sera le résultat d'un travail de collaboration entre les membres d'une équipe et même de toute une classe.

André Charlebois enseigne à l'Université d'Ottawa. Il était précédemment coordonnateur de l'enseignement, langues secondes, au conseil scolaire du district Upper Canada.



Les étapes à suivre

Les étapes qui suivent se veulent des suggestions que l'enseignant/e saura adapter selon les besoins de ses élèves.

Formation de groupes de travail

- 1-Créer des groupes hétérogènes de trois à quatre élèves, ce qui donne à chaque élève la chance d'apprendre de ses collègues.
- 2-Si l'enseignant/e choisit de créer des groupes de façon aléatoire, il/elle peut le faire en se servant de la stratégie de la ligne et des dates d'anniversaire.

Matériel nécessaire

- 1-Découper des petits cartons ou papiers, sur lesquels on écrit les éléments que le conte doit raconter.
 - a) Les personnages : chaque élève du groupe est un personnage; par exemple, un chat, un cheval, un hibou. On peut se servir de papiers ou de cartons de couleurs différentes pour qu'ils soient plus faciles à repérer.
 - b) Le lieu : un lieu précis pour situer le conte; par exemple, au supermarché, dans un château, à la plage.
 - c) La trame (facultatif) : ceci permet de guider les élèves qui n'ont pas d'idée sur le contenu de leur conte; on veut que les élèves puissent imaginer ce conte autant que possible.
 - d) Les mots-clés : les mots qui faciliteront le récit du conte; par exemple, « il était une fois », « ensuite », « tout à coup », « enfin ».

Le déroulement de l'activité

- 1-Distribuer une enveloppe contenant les mots importants à chaque groupe.
- 2-Chaque élève prend un carton de personnage. On place les autres cartons sur la table.

- 3-Les élèves discutent ensemble du contenu du conte, selon les détails fournis.
- 4-Après cinq minutes de discussion, inviter chaque groupe à présenter son conte oralement à la classe.

Variantes


Les possibilités de variantes pour cette activité sont nombreuses.

- 1-Rassembler le conte de chaque groupe et créer un conte collectif pour toute la classe.
- 2-Inviter les élèves d'immersion et du programme intensif à écrire le conte et à créer un recueil de contes.
- 3-Inviter les élèves du programme de français de base à illustrer le conte et à créer un recueil de contes.
- 4-Présenter le conte sous forme de saynète.
- 5-Donner des noms de personnages aux élèves. Ils doivent imaginer ce que le nom du personnage représente.
- 6-Inviter les élèves à partager des contes propres à leur culture.

Critère important : L'IMAGINATION

Le premier critère dans cette activité est l'imagination. Il faut amener l'élève à comprendre que le conte est un reflet de son imagination. À certains moments, le conte peut être quelque peu farfelu, comique, triste et même abracadabrant. Ce qui importe, c'est que l'élève ait la possibilité de s'exprimer librement.

Au fur et à mesure que les élèves s'habitueront à imaginer, à créer et à raconter, le conte deviendra un reflet de leur personnalité et de leur culture.

Un pas de plus sur le chemin de l'apprentissage du français! 

1 *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language: Core French, Grades 4 – 8*

2 *The Ontario Curriculum, French as a Second Language, Extended French: Grades 4 – 8, French Immersion : Grades 1 – 8*

3 *Dans mon village, il y a belle Lurette... Contes de village*, Fred Pellerin, Planète rebelle, 2001; www.planeterebelle.qc.ca

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Advocating for publicly funded education



■ by Hilda Watkins

Universally accessible, quality, publicly funded education is the fabric of democracy and the cornerstone of a just society. Nevertheless, over the last decade, Ontario has witnessed an unprecedented growth in the number of private schools. Much of it can be attributed to the gutting of education by the Tory government: it took \$2 billion out of the system. However, some of the increase in privatization is due to public misconceptions.

OTF aims to make Ontario residents aware of the fact that teaching in publicly funded schools involves more than curriculum development and delivery.

OTF's mandate is to advocate for teachers, the profession and publicly funded education. Indeed, it is critical that OTF be vigilant in this regard. As a federation, we must constantly strive for innovative means to highlight our profession and the benefits of public education.

To this end, OTF is undertaking an advocacy campaign. The initial phase involved province-wide focus group meetings with teachers and members of the public to probe what they value in publicly funded education. We will use the information gathered in our next step – the publication of a special newspaper supplement to coincide with Education Week in May.

OTF is also focusing on another effective means of advocacy – the establishment of partnerships. It is estimated that worldwide there are 110 million children who have absolutely no access to primary school, and another 250 million children who are forced to leave school before they have basic literacy skills.

At the winter Board of Governors meeting, the Honourable James Bartleman, Ontario's Lieutenant Governor, shared an appalling reality: tragically, due to inadequate resources and programs, Aboriginal children and youth throughout northern Ontario face similar conditions to those of children in impoverished countries around the

world. To remedy this situation the Lieutenant Governor has established literacy camps in these northern communities. OTF has committed resources to support his Honour's initiatives and will sponsor a literacy camp in an effort to assist these children and youth to secure a better future.

Literacy Links is a recent initiative that OTF is undertaking in partnership with Frontier College. It is funded by the Ministry of Education. Founded in 1899 by a small group of university students, Frontier College began by sending student volunteers to the frontiers of Canada. They worked alongside workers during the day and taught literacy skills in the evenings and on the weekends. Over the years, the College gradually moved from its frontier focus and developed a series of programs to address the needs of those in both urban and rural communities.

Seven communities – Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto, Hamilton and London – will participate in this new initiative which brings together families, communities, and schools in an effort to increase student literacy levels. These are areas where Frontier College is active and has a volunteer base. Through its elementary affiliates in these communities, OTF will recruit teachers who will provide support and a school/curriculum context for Frontier's volunteer training and for its community-based parent education programs. As a result of this partnership, parents and community agencies will learn more about what teachers and public schools are doing to support student success.

OTF aims to make Ontario residents aware of the fact that teaching in publicly funded schools involves more than curriculum development and delivery. These initiatives will help make the public appreciate that teachers go beyond their duties in the classroom. By donating both their time as volunteers and financial resources through OTF they contribute to their communities, and to the creation of a just society. ♥

Hilda Watkins is the OTF Table Officer for ETFO.

A new federal government – opportunities and challenges for teachers in Canada



■ by **Winston Carter**

The election of a new federal government has opened the door to both challenges and opportunities for the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF). The composition of the House of Commons will undoubtedly require the minority Conservative government to re-evaluate its policy platform and attempt to find common ground with opposition members.

Issues such as tax cut proposals, respect for provincial/territorial jurisdiction, the fiscal imbalance, child care initiatives, government accountability mechanisms, international cooperation including foreign aid and trade, immigration settlement resources, minimum sentences for serious crimes, Aboriginal issues, copyright legislation and health care waiting times offer potential for compromise and agreement between the government and one or more of the opposition parties. Such agreements and compromises may impact public education.

This is why it will be critical for CTF and member organizations including ETFO to monitor and influence policy development as our issues are raised in the sitting of the House of Commons.

An essential part of our work will consist of studying the perspectives of the new government, opposition parties, members of their political staff, and the bureaucracy. To position teacher issues so that they resonate with decision-makers, the CTF executive and board will develop a strategy which will include key messages and a communication plan.

Our current priorities focus on ensuring that CTF, as a national voice for teachers, advocates for public education here and abroad. Issues related to the health and well-being of children, youth, and their families, as well as international development are paramount to CTF and its member organizations.

Our concerns include Aboriginal youth education, copyright and the use of the Internet in the classroom, children and youth with physical and mental challenges, Francophone children in a minority context, immigrant and refugee children, international trade agreements, and Canada's commitment to the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals. CTF and its coalition partners will be working to sustain and augment levels of development assistance to meet Canada's global responsibilities.

CTF issues that run parallel with the federal government's agenda have potential support from one or more of the opposition parties. We will need to develop more sophisticated long-term strategies to help build public support for those issues where there is no clear ally in the House.

CTF looks forward to working with ETFO and other member organizations to monitor policy development and to remind the federal government of the promises made to Canadian teachers during the campaign. These were published in our report, *Federal Party Leaders: Our Questions – Their Replies*, which is posted on the 2006 federal election page: www.ctf-fce.ca/bilingual/Election2006/Election.htm. You can also contact us for a PDF copy of the entire document by email: info@ctf-fce.ca

Collectively, our work will promote the need for quality public education. These actions will undoubtedly have a positive ripple effect on our members' efforts to improve learning conditions for students and working conditions for teachers in Ontario and across Canada. ✓

We will need to develop more sophisticated long-term strategies to help build public support for those issues where there is no clear ally in the House.

Winston Carter is President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.



The second in a series on privatization in our schools

Our Schools for Sale?

“Schoolhouse commercialism includes a wide range of corporate marketing activities. It entails the use of schools by businesses as a venue to promote their products and services to students and their families as well as to reinforce the value of consumption as the golden road to happiness.”¹

■ by **Pat McAdie**

We are hearing more and more reports about the presence of corporations in our schools: Scholastic book clubs, Campbell’s Labels for Education, and more recently McDonald’s healthy living program, Costco’s reading program, and Indigo’s Love of Reading fund.

In addition, some corporations and industry associations develop curriculum units for use in our schools: the Dairy Farmers of Canada support resources on nutrition; the Mining Association of Canada has curriculum units on mining; the Atomic Energy of Canada association has developed curriculum units on nuclear energy. What questions does this raise?

The Canadian Teachers’ Federation, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and the Fédération des syndicats de l’enseignement recently conducted a national survey on commercialism in Canada’s public schools (see “Our Schools for Sale?,” *Voice*, Winter 2006). The survey included questions about corporate presence in our schools including advertising, exclusive contracts, learning materials, and magazines. Here is what we found is taking place in Ontario elementary schools:

- 6 per cent have sold advertising space
- 28 per cent have ads in hallways, cafeterias, and on school supplies
- 24 per cent have an exclusive contract with either Coke or Pepsi

- 12 per cent have a partnership or sponsorship with a corporation or business to provide such services as tutoring, extracurricular programs, and academic courses
- 71 per cent have Scholastic learning materials and book clubs
- 17 per cent subscribe to *Kidsworld*, an Ontario-based magazine promoting products and curriculum guides written by other corporations (for example, a healthy lifestyles guide from *Kidsworld* and *Wonder*).

Corporations, whatever their motives, know that being in schools is good for business. A recent US survey found that 83 per cent of respondents had a more positive image of companies that support causes they care about; 65 per cent said they would switch brands on this basis.² Some businesses are primarily concerned with increasing profits. The CEO of Coca-Cola Enterprises in the US has stated: “The school system is where you build brand loyalty.”³

As a way to be involved in schools some corporations and industry associations sponsor curriculum materials, not all of which, unfortunately, are problem-free. A US study of corporate-sponsored curriculum units found that almost 80 per cent are biased, incomplete, or contain inaccuracies.⁴

When does corporate involvement in education extend beyond acceptable limits? This is a difficult question. We know that many companies are committed to education – not just for the children of their employees but for the community at large. Does that give them the right to place ads in our schools? Should they be involved in writing curriculum units that promote their products? Does donating money and resources to schools absolve corporations of other behaviours such as questionable labour or environmental practices? While there are differing opinions on these issues, we need to have the discussions and debates. Privatization goes to the heart of the purposes of our education system. **V**

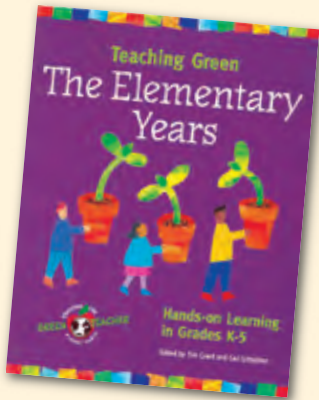
1 Molnar, Alex and David Garcia, *Empty Calories: Commercializing Activities in America’s Schools, The eighth annual report on schoolhouse commercialism trends: 2004-2005*. Commercialism in Education Research Unit, Education Policy Studies Laboratory, Arizona State University, 2005. edpolicylab.org

2 Fogel, Elaine, *All Cause-Related Marketing: Does corporate America genuinely care?* January 25, 2005, MarketingProfs.com. www.marketingprofs.com/5/fogel2.asp

3 Quoted in Alex Molnar, *Virtually Everywhere: Marketing to children in America’s schools, The seventh annual report on schoolhouse commercialism trends: 2003-2004*. Education Policy Studies Laboratory, 2004, p. 71.

4 Consumers Union, *Captive Kids: A report on commercial pressure on kids in school, 1998*. www.consumersunion.org/other/captivekids/index.htm

Pat McAdie is an ETFO research officer.



Teaching Green: The Elementary Years

Edited by **Tim Grant and Gail Littlejohn**

New Society Publishers, 2005
242 pages

www.greenteacher.com

RATING: *****

Reviewed by **Chris Vert**

This “best-of” collection of 50 articles from *Green Teacher* magazine is a rich resource for those wishing to improve or begin environmental education in their classrooms and schools.

The book includes background information and instructions for practical projects and activities in six areas: exploring nature, plants and animals, environmental issues, building community, global awareness, and imagination and celebration. The table of contents suggests grade levels but many of the activities and strategies can be adapted for older or younger students.

The articles, updated and revised since their original publication, offer strategies for nurturing children’s wonder and curiosity about the natural world, and describe hands-on activities

for learning about ecosystems, exploring environmental issues, and engaging in local environmental stewardship projects.

Very well organized and teacher-friendly, each of the book’s articles begins with an outline of the subject connections, key concepts, skills to be developed, and, if appropriate, the time, materials and location for the activity. A wealth of creative tips and techniques to enhance environmental literacy and effect positive change. Also available from *Green Teacher* are *Teaching Green: The Middle Years*, *Greening School Grounds*, and *Teaching About Climate Change*.

.....
Chris Vert is a kindergarten teacher at the Island Public/Natural Science School in Toronto. He is also working towards his doctorate in Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Readers who wish to order the film *The Peace Tree* reviewed in the Winter 2006 issue of *Voice* may contact the film maker, Mitra Sen, by e-mail at films@sandalwoodproductions.com.



Where’s Mom’s Hair? A Family’s Journey Through Cancer

Debbie Watters,
w/ **Haydn & Emmett Watters**

Photographs by **Sophie Hogan**

Toronto: Second Story Press,
2005

32 pages

www.secondstory.ca

RATING: *****

Reviewed by **Vera C. Teschow**

Where’s Mom’s Hair? blends non-fiction with narrative to tell the story of a white Anglo-Saxon family dealing with cancer.

The story frankly chronicles the family’s hair-cutting party (to prepare Mom for losing her hair to chemo), a visit to the hospital, a discussion with a (male) nurse, the operation and chemo treatment, and finally a “post-chemo” party to celebrate the return of Mom’s hair and health.

The text is very matter-of-fact; these are children speaking – their voices come through.

The often humorous black and white photos are worth a thousand words; this book is a great example of visual literacy.

While the font is somewhat tricky to read, the text itself provides some exceptional models for teaching effective use of language to junior students. For example: “The clippers feel like a bunch of bees buzzing on your head.”

Is the story forced? The humour contrived? It’s hard to say. But encountering a challenge like cancer in the immediate family must be devastating to a child, and so any materials that makes an honest attempt at “normalizing” the situation is helpful.

This book would be an asset to a junior classroom library, and is an excellent example of a recount text at that level. It would also be a useful resource for discussing photography and other media in the junior/intermediate grades.

.....
Vera C. Teschow is a program resource teacher with the Peel DSB.



Seven Steps to Successful Writing

By **Graham Foster**

32 page flipchart

Pembroke Publishers Limited

2004

RATING: ****

Reviewed by **Catherine Allen**

Good writing may seem effortless but it is not, as any English or language arts teacher will attest. In fact, teaching effective writing practices is a perennial challenge. While instructional materials abound, selecting the most comprehensive resource book or writing program can be a time-consuming process.

Graham Foster, a private consultant and writer who worked

for many years as a language arts consultant with a major school board, has authored several books focused on helping teachers develop practical classroom approaches to all aspects of language and learning.

With *Seven Steps to Successful Writing*, Foster has produced a book that specifically and explicitly demonstrates practical strategies to transform writing instruction practices into best practices. The book is written in a concise 32-page flipchart format that provides the busy English teacher with a structured, easy-to-read guide to assist students in becoming better writers.

Beginning with a succinct rationale outlining the importance of effective communication through writing, the author moves through the main stages of the writing process including such essential elements as pre-writing strategies, strategic drafting, authorial voice, revision and feedback that clearly correspond with language arts strands from the Ontario curriculum. In each

section, examples and illustrations are provided that place theoretical information within a practical context.

The section addressing writer's block is particularly helpful in providing teachers with tangible strategies to apply in the classroom. For example, Foster suggests that students who are experiencing difficulty in getting started on a writing task begin with the second paragraph, reserving the introduction for later. To sustain the writing flow, he further recommends that students be encouraged to leave blank spaces when a specific word fails to come to mind

and to defer concern for spelling accuracy until after the first draft is completed.

This book appears to be directed primarily at teachers in the junior and intermediate grades as a reference guide.

Throughout, the tone of the book is upbeat, practical and eminently readable – a useful addition to the professional resources of the classroom teacher of English or language arts.

Catherine Allen is a grade 2/3 teacher with the Ottawa Carleton District School Board and a freelance writer/editor.

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Teachers' Trivia

Meeting Deadlines

■ by Peter Harrison

Five ETFO members are arriving in Toronto shortly for a meeting.

All have different first names, specialties, numbers of children. They play different sports, come from different parts of the province and are scheduled to arrive at different times.

We are piecing together some important information about them, extracted from e-mails, (including the latest arrivals forecast) as follows:

1. Jan's five children are on holiday in Disneyland.
2. The parent of the four year old will be third to arrive.
3. Den is planning an art exhibition of his students' work.
4. The delegate from Ottawa will be the last to arrive.
5. The member with four children comes from Peterborough.
6. The French teacher will be the last but one to arrive.
7. Jen is due to be second.
8. The member who teaches physical education is expecting twins.
9. The swimmer from Peterborough has a sprained ankle.
10. The squash player arrives immediately before the member with two girls and a boy.
11. The badminton player has a new car and is expected first.
12. The arrival from Hamilton is hoping that giving up smoking will improve his tennis performance.
13. The science specialist has just completed a two-year tour in Windsor.
14. The tennis player will get in just ahead of the golfer.
15. Dan's arrival is due exactly three behind the science teacher's.
16. The squash fan should be here just ahead of the French teacher.

Please help us! We urgently need to know:

- A. *What is the first name of the music teacher?*
- B. *What sport does Don play?*
- C. *What subject does the Sudbury member teach?*

Answer to our last puzzle: In Numerical Order

**First AID; Second NATURE; Third
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Sixth SENSE; Seventh HEAVEN**

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Maralyn Hoffman, Judith Delahunt,
and Ivor Thompson

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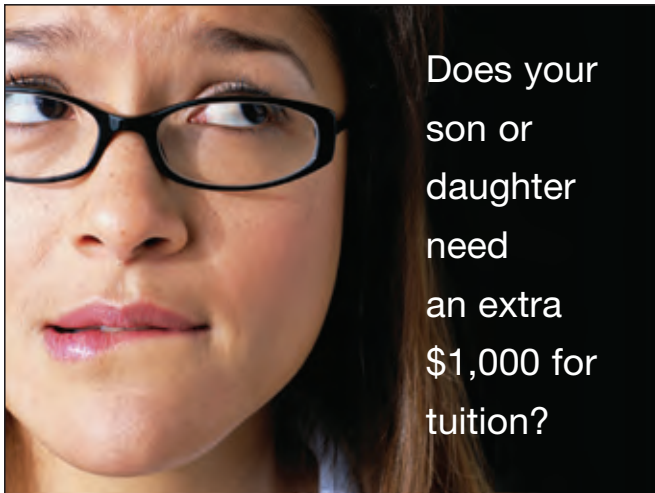
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The following members of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO) have been disciplined for failure to support collective bargaining initiatives in accordance with Article VI - Code of Professional Conduct and Article VII – Disciplinary Procedures of the ETFO Constitution.

All of the following penalties apply to the member(s) listed below.

- Publication of the name of the member and the finding of the Executive in regard to the complaint in a Federation document;
- Suspension of the right to hold local or provincial office in the Federation for a period of three years, effective February 6, 2006 to February 5, 2009; and
- Denial of any or all services normally provided by the Federation, except for such services as must be provided by law, for a period of three years, effective February 6, 2006 to February 5, 2009.

Disciplined Members – Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local

- Hardy, Juanita - a, b, c
- Poad, Elizabeth - a, b, c
- Toth, Miklos - a, b, c

Disciplined Member – Limestone Teacher Local

- Highet, Andrew - a, b, c



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or visit: historysociety.ca

May 4 - 7, Toronto**Language Acquisition and Bilingualism: Consequences for a Multilingual Society**

Ontario Association of Speech-Language Pathologists and audiologists (OSLA)
Courtyard Toronto Downtown,
475 Yonge St, Toronto.

Information and registration at: osla.on.ca

May 11 - 13, London**Everyone Counts**

Ontario Association of Math Educators 2006 Conference
Hosted by WOMA.
Fanshawe College, London.
Information and registration at: oame.on.ca.

May 12 - 13, Toronto**Dyslexia Demystified: Strategies for Effective Intervention**

2006 Annual Conference of the International Dyslexia Association, Ontario Branch (ONBIDA). Keynote speaker: Dr. William Mahoney, McMaster's Children's Hospital, "Biological and Neurological Underpinnings of Dyslexia".

89 Chestnut St.
Contact: 416-716-9296; info@idaontario.com
or visit: idaontario.com

May 25, Canada wide**The SpecTAGular National School Challenge**

Last year, 260,053 students yelled "Tag! You're It!" in a giant game of tag. This year our goal is to reach 300,000 participants playing tag for a minimum of 30 minutes – are you game?

Register online at: cahperd.ca

May 25 and 26, Toronto**Cooperative Learning Conference: Learning Together**

Great Lakes Association for Cooperation in Education

Crowne Plaza Toronto Don Valley Hotel
Contact: 705-432-8088;
acanavan@glacie.ca or visit: glacie.ca

June 25 - 27, Vancouver, BC**Educating a Generation to Create a Culture of Peace**

2006 Peace Education Forum of the World Peace Forum

Contact Jane Turner: jturner@bctf.ca

July 1 - 9, Kirkland Lake**The Farewell to KLCVI Reunion**

Register and visit us at: klcvireunion.com.

MAY 12 - 13, TORONTO**Maad'ookiina wiji Nijaanisag: SHARING WITH ALL CHILDREN**

An Aboriginal education regional conference sponsored by ETFO in partnership with the Indigenous Education Coalition, Toronto District School Board and the Faculty of Education at York University. Includes workshops on best practices in Native language instruction and the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives across the elementary curriculum.

York University, Toronto

Contact Jan Beaver

416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836, ext. 2245;
jbeaver@etfo.org;

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