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February 2008
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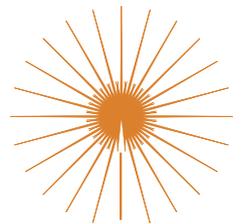
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FROM THE EDITOR

ETFO's slogan for this bargaining year is *Close the Gap*. Improving the funding provided for the elementary panel so that it equals that provided for the secondary panel – closing the gap – would mean an additional \$711 per student.

When current collective agreements expire, ETFO intends to negotiate new provisions that will do just that. In his column President David Clegg outlines the federation's bargaining goals (page 4).

Eliminating the disparity in funding would allow the restoration of many programs and services that elementary schools have lost in the last 10 years. In his column the general secretary points out that lack of funding is one reason why boards are making plans to move students in grade 7 and 8 into high schools, despite plenty of research that shows such a change can be detrimental (page 5).

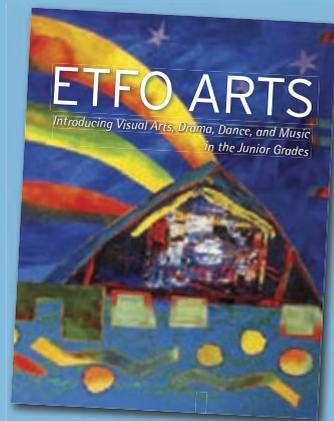
Also affected by funding shortages are specialist teachers and teacher-librarians. According to the community group People for Education, 80 percent of schools had a teacher-librarian in 1997/98. The group's *Annual Report on Ontario Schools for 2007* (available at peopleforeducation.com) points out that in those 10 years the percentage of grade 3 and 6 students who report that they like reading has declined steadily. That teacher-librarians can make a critical difference in schools is illustrated in Jodie Howcroft's article "The Heart of the School" (page 12).

One area the government has pledged to increase funding is in early education. During the provincial election campaign, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that his government would work to provide funding for full-day kindergarten for four- and five-year-olds. In their article "It's Child's Play," Corinne Scarfo and Joan Littleford highlight the research that emphasizes the importance of high-quality early education programs (page 25).

Early education is one factor in helping children from disadvantaged families improve their chances for academic success. Appropriate interventions by teachers of every grade also make a difference. In her article "Beyond the Breakfast Program," Shernett Martin describes ETFO's workshops that show what you can do (page 18). They are part of a multiyear initiative that focuses on overcoming the educational handicaps that result from poverty. Those initiatives will be highlighted in a special ETFO issue in June. Watch for it.

In the meantime, *Voice* is the perfect reading for your March Break. Enjoy.


JOHANNA BRAND



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Check out
selections from this
resource starting
on page 22.

Re: Teachers Deserve a Safe Working Environment

(December 2007)

I applaud Gene Lewis for his article. But I believe his statement "Know your rights" should be "Know your rights and responsibilities." I would like to share an observation that comes from 15 years of inspecting schools as a union representative on our board's health and safety committee.

Most teachers work very hard to provide a stimulating and pleasing classroom for their students. They often hang paper and other art from the ceiling and put it on doors. Unfortunately this violates the Ontario Fire Code. When I do a yearly inspection I often hear people joking about taking signs and other paper off the doors for the day. Teachers and principals are sometimes vocal in disagreeing with my inspection observations about this.

Here is where responsibility comes into play. If an exit door is burning because of paper being there, how do students and staff escape a fire?

While the safety of students does not come under the mandate of board health and safety committees, clearly if we are keeping our students safe as teachers, we are also helping ourselves.

As Mr. Lewis says, know your rights. Listen to your school site representatives when they do classroom inspections, ask questions, ask your principal for health and safety information, voice concerns, get involved – but please, know your responsibilities too.

Tom Forbes

ETFO member, Trillium Lakelands District School Board

WRITE TO VOICE

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

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

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

Re: Defending Public Education (December 2007)

I was disappointed that the article entitled "Defending Public Education" did not provide more information on ETFO member and Green Party Leader Frank de Jong. Not only did Mr. de Jong run for premier, but the Green Party is the only party that is the true defender of public education. During the election campaign, the Green Party called for the elimination of public funding for Roman Catholic separate schools and the creation of a single secular school system for each official language. This was a message that certainly resonated with voters; the Green Party tripled its popular vote.

The Liberal Party policy of exclusive government funding for Roman Catholic separate schools is discriminatory. Canada and Ontario have been condemned twice for this policy by the United Nations. Public opinion polls during the election campaign consistently showed that the vast majority of Ontarians (and by extension, ETFO members) favour a single public school system for Ontario. The Green Party advocates for a single public education system for Ontario.

Bruce Patterson

ETFO member, Upper Canada District School Board

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DAVID CLEGG

President, ETFO

ETFO's Bargaining Goals: Overcoming a century of discrimination

On August 31, less than 200 days from now, every ETFO teacher and occasional teacher collective agreement will expire. It is only at the bargaining table that ETFO can bring about changes that positively affect every member at once.

During the last round of bargaining we entered into a historic and precedent-setting framework agreement. It ensured that over the term of the agreement 200 minutes of preparation time would be phased in and time limits would be set on teachers' supervision duties.

We face an even greater challenge this time, the greatest challenge ETFO has ever committed itself to. Our goal is nothing less than eliminating the \$711 gap in per-pupil funding that exists between the elementary and secondary panels, and by so doing bring about equal working conditions for the elementary panel. To be successful, we will have to overcome more than a century of discrimination that has held back both elementary teachers and their students.

If the accountability agenda demands that elementary teachers deliver the same quality of education as is expected at the secondary level then we must have equal resources. If teachers are held to be accountable, government and school boards must also be. We must demand equal working conditions, and we expect employers to answer the question "Why not?"

Within our overall goal of reducing the funding gap we have specific objectives for this round of bargaining. They are the result of consultation with locals and members and have been endorsed by the Executive and by the Representative Council.

The teacher and ESP/PSP goals are to negotiate:

- Real salary increases
- Compressed grids with improved beginning salaries
- A maximum class size of 20 in grades JK–3
- A maximum class size of 22 in grades 4–8
- Student assessment and reporting time
- Improved preparation time
- Language that guarantees and improves working conditions

- Language that defends and improves benefits
- A significant reduction in supervision time per five-day cycle
- A pregnancy/parental top-up of 100 per cent for 52 weeks
- Language that ensures that vice-principals and principals have no teaching time
- An experience credit that includes all occasional teacher work.

In the last round of bargaining, we also achieved precedent-setting results for occasional teachers. We negotiated significant increases in salaries and ensured that occasional teachers would get the timetable of the teacher they are replacing.

Our goals for new collective agreements for occasional teachers are to negotiate:

- Paid professional development
- An experience credit that includes casual days and long-term assignments
- Language to provide priority hiring for permanent positions
- Language to ensure that all long-term occasional teaching positions are hired from the occasional teacher list
- Language to ensure that each teacher absence is covered by an occasional teacher
- Benefit improvements
- Capped lists
- Real salary increases.

Any success we have ever had at the bargaining table has ultimately been the result of the commitment and solidarity of members being prepared to take action to support their aspirations. No one should underestimate the impact that having 30 overwhelmingly successful strike votes in 30 days had in the last round of bargaining.

ETFO is committing its full resources to *Close the Gap*. We have been building our defence fund. We have set the stage for bargaining by our political action and public relations campaigns. The historic discrimination the elementary panel has endured can be ended. But success in this round of bargaining will happen only if all ETFO members are prepared to stand together as they did in the spring of 2005.



GENE LEWIS

General Secretary, ETFO

ETFO Works to Protect Our Kids

It's spreading: the number of school boards looking at moving grade 7 and 8 students into high schools is increasing.

These plans are not driven by the academic, emotional, or social needs of students. There's plenty of research that shows young adolescents do better in an elementary setting.

Rather, boards are taking this direction as a result of finances. It would appear that the real intent of the boards is to leave elementary schools with so few pupils that the boards can justify closing them based on their reduced enrolments. The attacks on elementary schools appear rampant.

The prime example of this kind of thinking is evident in the Boundary 2020 exercise currently taking place in the Upper Canada District School Board where plans are underway to close a number of schools in small communities, weaken French and French immersion instruction, and transfer grade 7 and 8 students into high school.

Trustees in the Hastings-Prince Edward, Rainbow, and Thames Valley school districts are considering similar approaches.

This chaos is yet another example of the impact of the \$711 gap – the difference in the funding that the province provides for each elementary student and each secondary student. Adequately funded elementary schools would have smaller classes and more specialist programs, including more hands on technology courses, and more teacher-librarians. What is now considered excess space would be fully used.

ETFO has undertaken a public campaign, *Protect our Kids*, to oppose the plans of the Upper Canada District School Board. (See page 7.)

Why are we opposed? There are some who say we are motivated by pure self-interest – an attempt to protect our membership numbers. In fact, our members would remain in ETFO even

if they were teaching their students in a high school setting.

We are opposed because moving grade 7 and 8 students into high school is not in their best interest. These students are at a turning point in their lives. They need the more stable student-teacher relationships that elementary schools foster, and they benefit from the leadership opportunities that come with being the oldest students in a school. Elementary schools are safer, overall, with less bullying. They provide an intellectually stimulating and cooperative environment. Parents are more likely to be actively involved.

Communities suffer when their elementary schools are closed. The presence of a school is important in attracting industry and businesses to small towns and in keeping existing businesses viable. As well, the community loses a space for recreation programs and community programs.

What can you do?

Stand up for your students, your school, and your community. Make your views known. Contact your local school board trustees. If your board is going in this direction, make sure your trustee knows you are opposed. If your board is facing declining enrolment, be proactive and let your trustee know you don't want to see the board try to solve its problems yet again at the expense of elementary students.

REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

ONTARIO'S NEW LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, the Honourable David Onley, (left) spoke to local leaders at the February Representative Council meeting about the challenges of living with a disability. The Lieutenant Governor said the focus should be on accessibility, a concept he defined broadly to extend beyond the removal of physical barriers. He will continue the book drives for Aboriginal communities begun by his predecessor, the Honourable James K. Bartleman, because access to books is critical for the educational achievement of Aboriginal students, just as physical aids are critical for others.



ETFO MEMBER Dwayne Besharah, shown above right with his wife Sara Newman, spoke about the challenges of returning to the classroom after suffering an accident which left him a quadriplegic.



REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL also heard from Kathleen Wynne, Ontario minister of education, who emphasised that in her view teacher working conditions and student learning conditions are inextricably linked. “They are one and the same,” Wynne said, adding that one of her government’s goals is to continue to close the gap in funding between the elementary and secondary panels.

ETFO has created Community Resources posters that provide members with information about a variety of social agencies in their school district. Copies of the poster have been distributed to all schools in the stewards’ mailings. The poster is part of ETFO’s special project that is focusing on ways to increase the academic success of students from low socioeconomic backgrounds. For more information contact Jim Giles at provincial office, jgiles@etfo.org.

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Derek Patrick, an educational consultant and former OISE faculty member, answers questions at a public meeting held to oppose the Upper Canada District School Board's plans to transfer grade 7 and 8 students into high schools. Some 60 community members attended the Kemptville meeting. Patrick outlined the research that shows high schools are not a desirable setting for young adolescents. ETFO's *Protect our Kids* campaign includes billboards, and newspaper and radio ads. For more information visit etfo.ca ► *ProtectOurKids*.

PROTECTING OUR STUDENTS

Young adolescents – students in grades 7 and 8 – belong in elementary schools, not high schools. In early December ETFO launched its campaign to fight the transfer of intermediate students into high schools in the Upper Canada School Board. Moving these students into high schools is “just plain wrong,” President David Clegg told a news conference. “The young students will spend more time on school buses, face the pressure of older, more mature students, and lose the many benefits that can only be provided by elementary schools.” Clegg said that academic research suggests that young adolescents do better in elementary schools. “Students from ages 10 to 15 show gains in mathematics, language, and reading when they attend small schools with lower student–teacher ratios and shared teaching – all factors more common in elementary schools.”



CAMPAIGN FOR PAY EQUITY FOR ALL ONTARIO WOMEN

On January 17, Ontario's Pay Equity Act was 20 years old. While progress has been made, women still earn, on average, 29 percent less than men. ETFO is a member of the coalition that is working to bring pay equity to all Ontario women throughout their working careers and into retirement.

The coalition held a rally at Queen's Park on January 17 and presented postcards signed by thousands of women calling upon the government to end gender-based pay discrimination by supporting, strengthening, and revitalizing pay equity enforcement.

For more information go to etfo.ca ► *AdvocacyandAction* ► *WomensIssues*.



2008 WOMEN'S HEALTH MATTERS FORUM

Mould in the workplace and in the home can trigger respiratory conditions and flu-like symptoms. At the Women's Health Matters Forum, ETFO sponsored a workshop with Dr. Om Malik, who spoke about mould and sick-building syndrome, and the health impacts of poor indoor air quality. ETFO volunteers distributed literature about mould in the classroom along with an ETFO-produced pamphlet on depression. The forum was held in Toronto in January.



TEACHERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD visit ETFO provincial office to learn about the programs and services we offer members. This delegation from the Jordanian Directorate of Curricula and Textbooks in the area of humanities heard about early childhood, French language, and arts education, and received copies of ETFO resources.



HEALTH AND SAFETY CONFERENCE

The first ETFO provincial **Health and Safety Conference** held in November was attended by 75 keen health and safety activists and local leaders. Keynote speaker lawyer Howard Goldblatt outlined his commandments for health and safety. (See the General Secretary's column in *Voice*, Dec. 2007.) Other topics included mould in the classroom and violence in the workplace. ETFO has revised its Health and Safety handbook the new edition is available from shopETFO.



ETFO provides members with a variety of professional learning opportunities. These members took part in the **Workshop Presenter's Palette**, a two-day program for those interested in developing and presenting curriculum sessions for colleagues. For more information contact Ruth Dawson, rdawson@etfo.org.

Check out our new updated website
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— Troy Langevine
School Vice Principal
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A Vote for Your Rights

■ by **Christine Brown**

Within the next couple of months you will receive notification that your ETFO local is holding a vote to ratify the preliminary submission for the upcoming round of negotiations. Teacher locals will be holding their votes by the end of April, and occasional teacher locals by the beginning of June. The timing of votes for educational and professional support personnel members will vary because, unlike teacher and occasional teacher collective agreements, their agreements do not all expire at the same time.

A preliminary submission is simply an initial set of bargaining proposals that is tabled for negotiations between the union and the school board. It is the union's statement of intent – its comprehensive list of proposed changes to working conditions, compensation, insured benefits, and other employee rights and entitlements. The submission is an ambitious document. By design and without apology, it sets the bar very high. The vote you will be asked to participate in is the first of many meetings convened during bargaining, and one of the most important.

It has been a long time since you were last asked to vote on a preliminary submission – four years, to be exact. For newer members of ETFO, a four-year collective agreement may seem like the norm, but veterans will recall that not that long ago collective agreements typically ran for two years, or even one.

Ten years ago, the legal framework under which Ontario teachers bargain was dramatically transformed when teachers were brought under the bargaining framework of the *Labour Relations Act* (LRA). It made teachers subject to the same collective bargaining rules as occasional teachers and other school board staff.

Bargaining involves two parallel processes: the

process set forth in the LRA and ETFO's internal process. What follows is a brief review of how the bargaining process works under the LRA. Because it is a summary, of necessity it omits a great many details and possible scenarios.

Bargaining as set out in the LRA

Within a set period before the expiry of the collective agreement, the union gives notice to the employer that it wishes to amend the terms and conditions of employment for its members. By law, the two sides must subsequently meet, and both are subject to a duty to “bargain in good faith.” Meeting this legal test means many things, among them the obligation to engage in meaningful bargaining, as opposed to perfunctory bargaining.

A settlement can happen at any time, even before the current agreement expires, though that is rare. Should a settlement not occur before expiry (i.e., before August 31, 2008), the terms and conditions of the existing collective agreement will remain in force, unless and until certain conditions are met that would alter the status quo.

No matter how heated the exchanges between the parties may become – and they do – it is important to bear in mind that, one way or another, a new collective agreement *will* be concluded. The process is nothing if not inexorable. At a certain point, if either side decides further discussions are no longer fruitful (i.e., an impasse has been reached), it may request third-party assistance from a Ministry of Labour conciliator. Though this individual has no authority to impose acceptance of any given proposal by either party, she or he can sometimes facilitate the discussions.

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

Should this assistance not result in a settlement, either side may request a “no board report”. This document places additional pressure on the parties to settle, in that it starts the clock ticking down to the possibility of a legal strike or lockout. For the union, a strike is the ultimate weapon, and no responsible union ever enters into one lightly. ETFO bargains to reach settlements, not strikes. In legal terms, by the way, a concerted work-to-rule campaign is also defined as a strike. A successful strike vote, one which meets the requirements of the LRA, must be taken before any job action can begin.

Once the parties have reached a settlement, it must be ratified by the members of the local. That is the final vote in which you will be asked to participate. And this brings us back not only to your upcoming vote on the preliminary submission, but to the second process that is in play, namely the political one within ETFO.

The ETFO process

Your presence at the vote to ratify the preliminary submission is part of internal ETFO procedures, and thus is part of a larger process of democracy and transparency in union affairs. Though the timetable varies from local to local, over the course of this school year your collective bargaining committee will have been working toward writing a preliminary submission that reflects the needs and aspirations of members of the local. The submission will also incorporate the provincial bargaining

goals developed last spring by the ETFO Standing Committee for Collective Bargaining, and which were ratified by the Representative Council in October.

Throughout the coming months, your local will keep you informed about the progress of bargaining. Though this communication process varies from local to local, it typically includes bargaining bulletins, meetings, phone trees, and electronic communications. However, a cornerstone of communication during bargaining is the principle that information originates not just from the local or provincial ETFO office, but also from you, the ETFO member. Your active participation is the catalyst that will make a successful round of negotiations possible. Your input and your feedback ensure that your union is on the path that will best meet your needs as an educator and as an employee.

It is safe to say that this round of bargaining will be even more challenging than the last. As school boards impose ever greater responsibilities on staff, and as the work of educating children becomes more complex, the workload and stress levels of members continue to increase. The daily struggle to do what is right for your students, for your family, and for yourself remains constant. As we are all too aware, the inequities built into our education funding model show up in the classroom in very tangible ways.

Fortunately, you have the power to do something about all this. Exercising that power begins with your vote. **V**



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The Heart of



a School

■ Story and photos by Jodie Howcroft

A “day in the life” of a teacher-librarian

“The heart of a school.”¹ Roch Carrier, Canadian author and National Librarian, used this phrase to describe school libraries. Think of a school library you have visited recently. Would you describe it in the same way?

The fact is that if we took a tour across the province there would be a huge discrepancy, from shining examples of the ideal library to libraries that languish in a state of neglect.

Let’s stop for a moment on our imaginary tour at one school: Cathy Wever Elementary School in Hamilton, a school that celebrated its one-year anniversary this past September. It is a model of what every school of today should be: a beacon within its gritty, downtown neighbourhood. The library in Cathy Wever is an example of the ideal – truly the “heart of the school” – and it is here where we will spend the day.



Only 10 percent of Ontario elementary schools have a full-time teacher-librarian, compared with 42 percent 25 years ago.²



7:45 a.m.

By its location within steps of the school's front door, the library signals its status in the school. A sign says "Welcome" and the doors are wide open.

Sue MacLachlan, the school's full-time teacher-librarian, is out making her rounds. She adeptly juggles a tangle of bulbs and wires while making repairs to AV equipment and determining which pieces need to be sent out for repair. Cathy Wever is a school of 654 students, with two floors and a generous footprint, making this a time-consuming task. This multitasking master chats with colleagues at the same time, updating them on new arrivals in the library, planning opportunities to work as a team, and fielding their requests for materials: "Is there a picture book suitable for Intermediate-level students touching on the theme of acceptance?" "Could a collection of books on pioneers be set aside?"

8:30 a.m.

Back in the library, MacLachlan starts pulling books for the staff she connected with on her rounds while bracing for the bell to ring. Ten minutes to go ...

This room shines. Windows cover one full length of the room. The furniture is comfortable, unblemished, and clean. The space allows for

an enviable floor plan consisting of computers, tables, a desk, a carpeted area for read-alouds, comfortable seating, two offices, a professional library, a book room, a circulation desk, and books – precisely organized shelves stocked with a large, current collection.

8:40 a.m.

The bell rings.

Today, like every day, MacLachlan will see students from Primary, Junior and Intermediate divisions. This is her preparation time. She does a quick survey: Lessons planned? Teaching materials organized? Marked work ready to return? She spends some time finishing marking and recording the results. For students in grades 6 to 8 at Cathy Wever, Information Studies is a separate subject on their report cards, for which MacLachlan is responsible.

Just enough time is left in the period to shelve some books. Once again, that stack of new purchases sitting in the office will have to wait to be catalogued. (Cataloguing books is one of the time-consuming administrative tasks for MacLachlan to tackle. After putting a barcode and stamp on each book, she inputs data into the computer for cataloguing at a central board location. Central processing can take up to eight weeks, and only when it is completed is the book ready for circulation.)

9:30 a.m.

Ten sets of eyes watch expectantly. Soon this speech and language class will hear *Z Goes Home* by Jon Agee, but first MacLachlan has a carefully

On April 5, 2006, a landmark study, *School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario*, led by Queen's University educational researcher Dr. Donald Klinger, was released. Among the important findings of this research:

- The presence of a teacher-librarian was the single strongest predictor of reading enjoyment for both grade 3 and grade 6 students.
- Schools with teacher-librarians could be expected to have reading enjoyment scores that were 8 percent higher than average.
- Reading enjoyment is strongly and positively linked to student achievement.
- Schools with professionally trained school library staff could be expected to have reading achievement scores approximately 5.5 percent higher than the average Grade 6 EQAO scores.³

planned introduction to guide them through:

“Tell me where I would find this book in the library.”

“Can you say fiction for me?” and similar questions leading to a discussion of the book itself.

“Let’s look at the back of the book. What information can we get from the back?”

At last, MacLachlan cracks the book open and digs in. This read-aloud is part theatre with the students playing starring roles. They echo, shout, and whisper the letters as they are revealed: “That’s an E!” “F! See the F!” “I found an O!”

Hands pop up. All students at Cathy Wever are learning reading strategies. This month, the strategy is making connections. “This is like the other book with the letters that fall down!” cries Logan triumphantly.

MacLachlan has *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* ready. She continues to model making connections between texts as the class moves through the story. “Here is a palm tree; it reminds me of the coconut tree.”

MacLachlan graciously receives applause at the end of the story – the book was a hit. With MacLachlan’s help, the students reflect by drawing connections they made to the story in their journals. Only 15 minutes remain for book exchange. Not a problem, though. MacLachlan’s routines are embedded: the class efficiently makes their selections and when Mozart is played over the PA system they hustle back to the carpet: time to sign out the books and head back to class.

10:20 a.m.

MacLachlan tosses out terms like “URL”, “DSL”, “Boolean search” and “Google” to a grade 7 class while conducting a brief review of Internet search techniques.



On the surface, today’s lesson seems straightforward. Students are to analyze a website and write a paragraph explaining why they would or would not recommend it to a friend. A criterion is discussed and the class leaps in with confidence.

The website is a hoax site. By the end of the period only a few students are starting to catch on. Evidently, most have never considered that they should think critically about the information they routinely pull from the Internet. MacLachlan will continue to foster this life skill during subsequent lessons.

11:10 a.m.

MacLachlan tidies up and checks to make sure her lessons are ready for the afternoon. She heads off for lunch as the grade 6 boys book club files in with their teacher leaders. Each week across the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, over one thousand boys in grades 3 and 6 participate in book clubs as part of the Read to Succeed initiative. Today they are listening to a read-aloud of selections from the *Lord of the Rings* while painting figures they will use to play a strategy game based on the book. Although shared reading of the rules booklet is scheduled for next week, many have already read through it at home. They leave reluctantly when the bell rings.

Ontario provides funding for one teacher-librarian for every 769 elementary students and 909 secondary students. Only 2 percent of elementary schools have sufficient enrollment to generate funding for a full-time teacher-librarian.⁶

In the late 1990s, the Ontario government made dramatic cuts to education funding. At the same time, it introduced a new per-pupil funding formula to allocate funding to school boards and schools. School library staffing is now funded at a rate of one teacher-librarian for every 769 elementary students within a school board.⁴

“Libraries play an essential role in stimulating students to improve their own achievement and foster a love of reading and learning.”

– Minister of Education Gerard Kennedy, May 26, 2005⁵

20 percent of elementary schools receive \$500 or less per year from their school budget to purchase books and other library resources – sufficient to purchase no more than 20 to 30 books.⁷



11:50 a.m.

This is not a library of the past, where hushed voices were de rigueur. Students at Cathy Wever anticipate fun, joy, and sharing when entering the school library – a formula that is working to foster a life-long love of reading.

Thankfully, MacLachlan can be heard over the howls of laughter peeling from this grade 2 class. The story MacLachlan is reading aloud is unbearably hilarious. She manages to read on with dramatic flair while fielding the usual grade 2 distractions of toys poking out of pockets, loose laces, and lost teeth.

“I’m looking for a book about space,” says Max.

“I am looking for something on alligators,” says Nicola.

“Where are the books on art?” asks Meadow.

During book exchange, MacLachlan circulates, helping the students find that “just right” book.

“Mrs. MacLachlan, will you read this book to us?” Two students have cornered MacLachlan and are waiting eagerly for her answer.

MacLachlan settles down on a nearby bench. “Absolutely!” she says.

12:40 p.m.

What can one do with 20 wiggly kindergarten students but wiggle along with them? MacLachlan sings and shakes with this energetic group until they are ready to settle. Soon her dramatic gestures, silly expressions, and repertoire of voices have them drawn into *The Alphazeds* by

Shirley Glasser. The book is carefully chosen to reinforce concepts their teacher is focusing on in class. In this lesson, it’s letter recognition.

During the read aloud, MacLachlan feeds this group the background knowledge they need to transition smoothly through the story. “What letter is this?” “Yes! It is the letter L. This is a labyrinth. Have you ever seen a labyrinth?”

Hands bob in the air. Angie makes a prediction, “Maybe the D will hide!” Ethan makes a connection, “I have the letter E in my name!”

While most of the class head off to exchange books, several students stay back, looking as if they may burst: “Read it again!” “That was fun!” “I saw a gigantic G!” “Can I please take that book out?”

1:30 p.m.

“A glossary is a mini-dictionary,” MacLachlan explains to this group of grade 3 students. “Where do we find the glossary?”

MacLachlan is doing a series of lessons on using nonfiction texts. Today she weaves her way through a sample text touching on features like the glossary, table of contents, bold print, and sidebars. MacLachlan will teach beginning research skills to this group throughout the year, and build on these skills in later grades.

This class has been patient throughout the lesson, but their news cannot wait any longer. Something sad has happened to one of their classmates. MacLachlan’s sympathy is heartfelt. She asks to sign the card the class is making, and then pulls a book from her collection. It is *Trouble in the Barkers’ Class* by Tomie de Paulo. It provides the ideal transition for this sombre group.

MacLachlan starts asking the students a series of questions: “How do we feel when we are

Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that Ontario Liberals will commit \$120 million over four years for additional books and librarians in elementary school libraries.

“This is the most significant investment in school libraries in a generation,” McGuinty said. “It will mean 1.7 million new books each year – more than 430 per school – and additional librarians in schools across Ontario. Most importantly, it will mean high-quality, up-to-date books in the hands of young learners, and that’s great news for their reading, writing, and long-term prospects for success.”⁸



accepted by our friends?” “How do you think this character is feeling?” “How do you know?”

An opening has been provided. As MacLachlan reads, the group seizes the opportunity to share feelings, concerns, and connections to the story. By the time the book is read, the class mood has lifted and the children are ready for their book exchange.

While the book was ideally suited to the mood of this class, MacLachlan had *Trouble in the Barkers' Class* on hand for another reason. The HWDSB initiated a Character Builds program this year that has schools focus on 10 qualities (e.g., honesty, responsibility, courage). This month at Cathy Wever, the focus is on acceptance – a theme central to *Trouble in the Barkers' Class*.

2:20 p.m.

It's the end of the school day for students at Cathy Wever. MacLachlan will be here for another hour and half, at least.

Maja drops in. This grade 5 student is reading a series popular right now and cannot go home without the next book. Several other students drop by to return books and sign out new selections before heading home.

This school has an exercise room, stocked with new equipment – a definite perk for staff. After-school fitness classes are offered, and if she is lucky MacLachlan will make one or two a week.

Typically, though, she stays in the library to plan her lessons and take care of an exhaustive list of administrative tasks, such as organizing

the library, making new borrower cards, checking over dues, repairing books, weeding the library, and processing new resources.

MacLachlan helps with the school choir and the curling club, as well. She is the go-to person for the sound and lighting systems in the gym. She does all of these tasks with insatiable energy and a positive attitude.

MacLachlan has been in the role of teacher-librarian for nine years and has no plans for a change. “I love the opportunity I have to help children become life-long readers of anything – books, newspapers, magazines. I want them to be able to enrich their lives by knowing how to access all the things the world has to offer, to be able to access information, act on it, and use it to make the world a better place.”

Does MacLachlan believe she has the ideal job? “I am extremely fortunate to have this room, the staff, and the supportive principal we have at Cathy Wever,” she says. “If I had one wish, it would be to have a flexible schedule, so I could plan formally with staff and we could work even more as team.”

You will hear no complaints from MacLachlan, however. “Where I am in this school, in this beautiful room, full of wonderful resources is just where I want to be,” she explains.

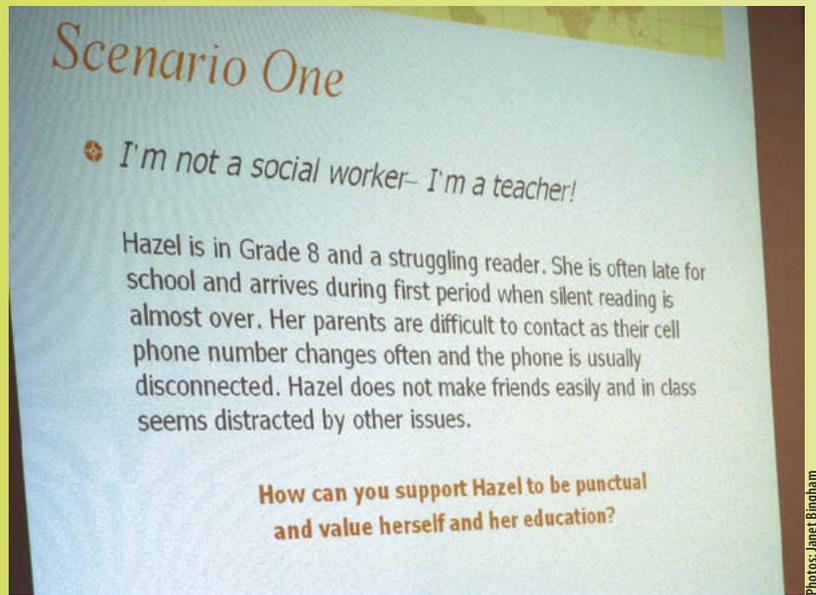
If the heart of Cathy Wever is the school library, Sue MacLachlan may just be the soul. **V**

NOTES:

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2. Ibid, p.11.
3. “School Libraries and Student Achievement in Ontario,” (2006) Toronto: People for Education and Queen's University, pp. 2, 4, 5, 7. Available at peopleforeducation.com
4. Ibid, p. 10.
5. Ibid, p. 8.
6. Ibid, p. 22.
7. “The Annual Report on Ontario's Public Schools” (2007). Toronto: People for Education and Queen's University, p. 2. Available at peopleforeducation.com
8. “Books for Kids, Librarians for Schools: A Big Boost for Child Literacy,” Ontario Liberal Party news release, September 19, 2007. Available at newswire.ca
9. Haycock, p. 10.

In *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries*, University of British Columbia professor Dr. Ken Haycock reported the following findings:

- In all cases, library staffing levels correlate with test scores – students benefit from more access each week to a qualified teacher-librarian.
- Improvements are even more dramatic when teacher-librarians play a leadership role by collaborating with classroom colleagues, teaching information literacy skills, and participating in technology management within the school.
- Higher spending on books and other materials – both for recreational reading and curriculum assignments – correlates with increased reading scores.
- Student achievement is higher in schools where the library is open all day and the teacher-librarian is on duty full-time.⁹



Beyond the Breakfast Program

Addressing the impact of poverty in our schools

■ by **Shernett Martin**

Something amazing happens when teachers openly discuss how to meet the needs of all students. The discussion begins to take the form of a lively debate on what has been tried, what worked, and what needed tweaking. By the end of the discussion, everyone walks away with strategies, ideas, or just simply a different way of looking at their teaching practice.

Among the things participants discuss is that the tried and true approach we have used working with disengaged students and the cookie-cutter teaching style that has worked for years without complaint now seem to warrant deep reflection and perhaps an overhaul. But that is what effective teaching is about. To meet students at their level may mean tossing out the old and ushering in the new. Students living in poverty need to know that although we may not have the power or means to change their situation, we can change the way we address their needs, and in doing so provide more opportunities for success.

This has been the experience of teachers and community partners who have attended *Beyond the Breakfast Program*, an ETFO-sponsored professional development workshop on poverty. The two-hour workshop presents startling statistics on poverty, myths about what poverty looks like, and the impact of poverty on students. It challenges participants to come to terms with their own biases and attitudes about poverty and student achievement. At the end of the workshop, each participant leaves with informative handouts and a DVD of the presentation, which includes lesson plans and a resource book list. As well, each school in the local receives a poster listing community agencies in the school district.

Shernett Martin is a teacher with the Toronto District School Board. Along with Ainsworth Morgan and Joe Leibovitch, she is a *Beyond the Breakfast Program* workshop developer and presenter.



Numerous studies have consistently shown that the strongest single indicator of educational achievement and attainment is the socioeconomic status (SES) of the student's family. Children of families with low SES face significant obstacles to educational success, which in turn threaten other important life outcomes such as stable and gainful employment, income potential, health, and civic participation.¹

Students enter our classrooms every day willing to learn but at the mercy of factors beyond their control that may curtail their learning. Our students are coming to school from shelters and from homes where there is not enough to eat or clean clothes to wear. They are coming from two-parent and single-parent households struggling to make ends meet. Children living in poverty feel invisible and too often they are treated that way.²

Educators cannot wait for the government to fulfill its promises to reduce child poverty before we adopt measures in our schools and classrooms to address the effects of poverty on our students. In each of the communities where the workshop has been held, schools are putting strategies in place that directly serve the needs of their students. In the Upper Grand District School Board, some schools in Guelph have formed an important partnership with West Willow Woods Neighbourhood Group, to provide an after-school program, a snack program, a sports and recreation program and, most importantly, a safe, nurturing environment where students are eager to return each day. Another success story is a school that adopted an "S.O.S" (Save Our Students) philosophy: each teacher voluntarily agreed to mentor 10 to 12 students in their school for the year. Students were able to access their mentors for support, advice, and encouragement.

These programs suited these particular schools. They may not be the right fit for all schools, but the point is that they are finding solutions to combat the challenges facing low-income students at their schools.

The "no child left behind" mantra does not include only literacy and numeracy. Schools across the province are answering the call to action and are working hard to close the achievement gap by acknowledging that they have students who face poverty, providing suitable programs, building supports in the community and with parents, and critically examining what needs to change in order to meet the needs of all students.

Recent Statistics on Poverty in Canada*

In 1989, the House of Commons resolved to end child poverty by the year 2000. But 18 years later the child poverty rate (11.7%) is exactly the same.

- Despite a growing economy, soaring dollar, and low unemployment, one in six children, or 1.13 million kids, are living in poverty, before income taxes.
- A job is not enough – 41% of low-income children live in families where at least one parent works full-time all year.
- The risk of living in poverty is not the same for all children. Poverty affects children in racialized, First Nations, and recent immigrant communities much more often.
- The average two-parent, low-income family lives on an income that is \$11,000 below the poverty line.
- The average low-income, single-parent family lives on an income that is \$9,200 below the poverty line.

* All of the statistics quoted are from "It Takes a Nation to Raise a Generation: Time for a National Poverty Reduction Strategy, Campaign 2000 Report Card on Child and Family Poverty" (2007). Available at campaign2000.ca/rc/rc07/2007_C2000_NationalReportCard.pdf



Shernett Martin (centre) with teachers Maureen Teffer (left) and Kim Hughes, both with the Simcoe County District School Board.

The Eastern Ontario Child Poverty Resource recommends schools develop a plan of action to address child poverty.³ Some of their recommendations include:

- recognizing that poverty is an issue in every school
- creating a plan to address the impact of poverty in your school
- considering how school-related fees affect low-income families and seeking solutions to ease the burden on them
- putting in place supports and programs that help low-income children get the most out of their educational experience
- being sensitive to different times of the year that may be more stressful for low-income children and families

- developing working relationships with local service agencies that address issues affecting low-income families.

As the workshop continues to make its way across the province, meeting with educators who want to make an impact on how they program for students from low-income families, the lively discussions will continue. It is my hope that along with the discussions we will work toward ensuring that our schools and classrooms are places where our most vulnerable students will hear the message that “Yes, we see you. You are not invisible here.”

For further information about *Beyond the Breakfast Program* workshops, contact Jim Giles at provincial office: jgiles@etfo.org. **V**

NOTES:

1. Ben Levin, “Poverty and Inner-City Education” (2004). Policy Research Initiative paper. Available at policyresearch.gc.ca/page.asp?pagenm=v7n2_art_08
2. Poverty is a global challenge. According to the organization Make Poverty History (makepovertyhistory.org), every three seconds a child dies from extreme poverty somewhere in the world.
3. “10 Things You Can Do in Your School to Address Child Poverty,” Eastern Ontario Child Poverty Resource Network publication (n.d.). Available at spcottawa.on.ca/EOCPRN/PDFs/PrincipalsTenThings.PDF

Using Bottled Water?

■ by **Antonino Giambrone**

Maybe it's time to think again

Bottled water is everywhere these days: we use it at home, at our professional meetings, and in our schools. In fact, 30 percent of Ontario schools have contracts with bottled water companies¹ and three in 10 households in Ontario with a municipal water supply drank primarily bottled water in 2006.² Globally, 154 billion litres of bottled water were consumed in 2004, up 57 percent from five years earlier.³

Many people believe bottled water is purer and safer than tap water. But is that true? And what are the hidden costs?

Here are three reasons to consider curbing your use of bottled water:

1. Consider the quality

- Bottled water is less stringently regulated than municipal drinking water.⁴
- Bottling plants are inspected only once every three to six years, while municipal sources are regularly inspected. (City of Toronto water is inspected every four hours.)
- Industry treatment processes do not guarantee safety. In 2004, Dasani (a Coca-Cola company) withdrew half a million contaminated bottles. Some scientific studies have found concentrations of arsenic and mercury in bottled water.⁵
- Some bottled water comes from municipal water supplies making it essentially “water transformed into water.”⁶
- Bacteria in water can multiply rapidly when stored over long periods or exposed to heat.⁷

2. Consider the impact on the environment

- Making plastic bottles for North America alone consumed 17 million barrels of oil.⁸
- Manufacturing a plastic bottle generates 100 times more toxic emissions than making a glass bottle.¹⁰
- The bottling process produced more than 2.5 million tonnes of

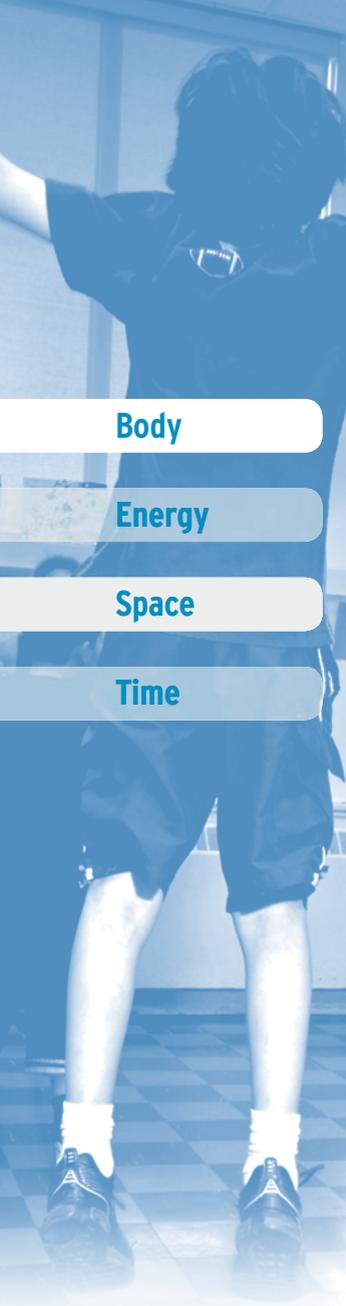
carbon dioxide in 2006,⁹ in addition to the emissions created by transporting water.

- Plastic water bottles have become the fastest-growing form of municipal solid waste in North America. In Canada, only 15 percent of water bottles are recycled.¹¹
 - The bottling industry draws up to 18 billion litres of water per year from Ontario's water supply, much of it from underground aquifers that are the source of water for nearby streams, wells, and farms.¹² Residents in Tweed, Northumberland, Mono, and Grey Highlands have officially expressed their concerns about the impact on their underground water sources.¹³
- ### 3. Consider the cost
- Bottled water can cost between 240 and 10,000 times more than tap water, even though a significant portion comes from municipal taps, and companies pay little or nothing for water taken from aquifers.¹⁴
 - Through exclusivity contracts in schools, Coca-Cola (Dasani) and PepsiCo (Aquafina) attempt to turn students into life-long consumers of their products, and foster the corporatization of student space.¹⁵ ♡

NOTES:

1. Froese-Germain, Bernie et. al. *Commercialism in Schools: Who's Calling the Shots*. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Teachers' Federation and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2006, p. 9
2. *Households and the Environment*. Ottawa, ON: Statistics Canada, 2006, Catalogue no. 11-526-XIE, p.10
3. Arnold, E. & Larsen, J. *Pouring Resources Down the Drain*. Earth Policy Institute, February 2, 2006. Available at earth-policy.org/Updates/2006/Update51.htm
4. *Bottled Water FAQs*. Toronto: Canadian Environmental Law Association, 2004, Available at cela.ca/faq
5. Clarke, Tony. *Inside the Bottle: An Exposé of the Bottled Water Industry*. Ottawa, ON: Polaris Institute and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, 2005, p. 4
6. *Ibid.* p. 39
7. *Questions and Answers on Bottled Water: What is Safe Storage and Use of Bottled Water*. Ottawa, ON: Health Canada, August 7, 2007 Available at hc-sc.gc.ca/fn-an/secure/facts-faits/faqs_bottle_water-eau_embouteillee_e.html#A4.
8. *Is Bottled Water Better?* Union of Concerned Scientists, June 2004. Available at ucusa.org/publications/greentips/is-bottled-water-better.html
9. “Bottled Water and Energy Factsheet.” Oakland CA: Pacific Institute, 2006. Available at pacinst.org/topics/water_and_sustainability/bottled_water/bottled_water_and_energy.html
10. Eaton, Janet M. *Bottled Water – Environmental Issues and Other Concerns in Canada and Beyond*. Sierra Club of Canada, June 2004, p. 55. Available at sierraclub.ca/atlantic/programs/economies/water/SCCCorpWPPublicWaterApril2005B.pdf.
11. *Ibid.* p. 56
12. *Ibid.* p. 37
13. *Ibid.* pp. 32-37
14. Clarke, p.4
15. Froese-Germain, p. 9

Antonino Giambrone is a teacher with the Toronto District School Board and a member of ETFO's environment committee.



Dance

Body

Body includes the action of all parts of the body.

Body

Energy

Space

Time

In dance work it is important to encourage the use of many parts of the body in three main ways:

- non-locomotor movements;
- locomotor movements;
- a variety of shapes.

Non-locomotor movements are done in one place, and include such actions as stretching, bending, twisting, rising, falling, circling, swaying, swinging, turning, pushing, and pulling. Locomotor movements involve travelling in space, and include such actions as walking, running, jogging, leaping, jumping, galloping, and sliding. The shapes that a body can take on are varied, and include such shapes as curved, angular, and twisted. Dance activities, including the warm-up, should encourage a variety of head-to-toe movements. Here are some activities to get you started.

INTRODUCTION TO BODY MOVEMENT—Play music and talk students through gentle, repetitive, isolated movements that begin with the head and work down to the toes. A progression might include the head, shoulders, arms, wrists, fingers, ribcage, hips, legs, knees, ankles, and toes. Do each movement for a count of 8 beats (e.g., eight shoulder shrugs, eight arm circles, etc.). Initial warm-ups like these can be non-locomotor, and work well when a student or teacher leader is at the front, or in a circle, modelling.

EXPLORATION OF BODY PARTS—Ask the students to move to a steady percussion beat or instrumental piece of music using a particular body part. For example, you might suggest that students try every possible way to: move their shoulders; move just their arms; move only their toes, etc.

VISUALIZATION ACTIVITY—Guide students through a visualization with or without music. Tell the students to imagine that they have a paintbrush attached to various parts of their bodies, such as to



Excerpted from: *ETFO ARTS: Introducing Visual Arts, Drama, Dance, and Music in the Junior Grades*

Written by: Bonnie Anthony, Carol MacKenzie, Jane Wamsley, and Jennifer Zeitz.

CURRICULUM INSERT

a finger, a toe, a knee, the forehead, etc. Explain that they will be painting their name in large letters across a huge wall with the paintbrush as you suggest different body parts.

SHAPE FREEZE—Use a tambourine or drum to count students through walking in space for 8 beats and then freezing for 8 beats. Once they can do this with no talking, have them freeze in a particular shape (e.g., twisted shape) for 8 beats. Repeat the walking for 8 beats and then ask the students to freeze in a new kind of shape (e.g., angular, round, balanced, worried, scared, bold, etc.). Students can also change the way they move. For example, they could slide for 8 beats and then freeze in a wide shape for 8 beats.

BODYSTORMING—Encourage students to “bodystorm” as often as possible. This means giving them the opportunity to try out different ways to use their body to communicate something. For example:

- Invite students to communicate the idea of freedom using just their hands (or their whole body). Ask them what shape or movement would be effective.
- Challenge students to devise three interesting twisted body shapes to demonstrate different emotions (e.g., angry, puzzled, etc.).



Teaching Tips

- Consider using these tracks from the music CD enclosed in this resource: *Rain Forest*; *Deception*; *Dragon Fly*.
- Always start a dance session with a warm-up and stress the importance of warming up the body and the mind. This provides a natural opportunity to make the transition into movement and dance exploration.
- Make sure that students understand that dance is not just about foot movement. Use a variety of music from different cultures or a simple tambourine or drum beat to encourage experimentation with various body parts. A good warm-up should wake up all body parts and remind students to open up to possibilities.
- The use of instrumental music rather than music with words encourages students to focus on their body movement and personal interpretations rather than on the messages in song lyrics.

Assessment Tips

- Are students focused on body movement and not on talking? In other words, do they speak with their bodies instead of their voices?
- Do students experiment with many possible ways to move different body parts (bodystorming)?
- Are students able to follow warm-up suggestions?
- Do students show leadership ability in being able to lead a warm-up that includes a range of body parts?
- Do students move their bodies on the spot (non-locomotor) as well as in space (locomotor)?
- Can students move to a steady 8-beat count?

Dance

Space

Space refers to the area in which the body moves.

Body

Energy

Space

Time

Dance includes movement within two types of space. Personal space is your own space and general space is a group's shared space. Body levels (high, medium, low), sizes, directions, and pathways (direct or indirect) can occupy space. The following exercises will encourage experimentation with varying types of movement in a space.

PERSONAL SPACE EXPERIMENTATION—Ask students to determine their personal space (kinesphere) by standing on the spot and identifying with arms outstretched in all possible directions the invisible bubble they are in. Call out high, medium, low, thin, wide, tall, and small to encourage experimentation with levels, sizes, and variation in movement within their personal space. The use of slow-moving music helps students focus on possibilities. Encourage the students to bend body parts and reach with hips, shoulders, knees, etc. without travelling outside of their personal space.

GENERAL SPACE EXPLORATION—Have students move "silently" through the general space in a room without touching anyone or anything in the room. Encourage a pathway that includes all areas of the space in the room. Ask the students to try moving slowly, quickly, directly, and indirectly in the space. Clap or drum a beat and call out to indicate a change in direction or a change of height (high, medium, low). A caution – it is wise to insist that students avoid talking so their focus remains on the movement.

SYMBOL-GENERATED MOVEMENT—Make cards like the ones shown on the opposite page. The cards should show simple symbols (e.g., /\\//\\//\\) that suggest pathways or qualities of movement. Hold the cards up one at a time and ask the students to travel across the general space in these ways. Have the students respond to the same symbols in their personal space. Later, groups may wish to create a group dance based on a set of symbol cards. Students can decide the order of the movements and the use of general and/or personal space.



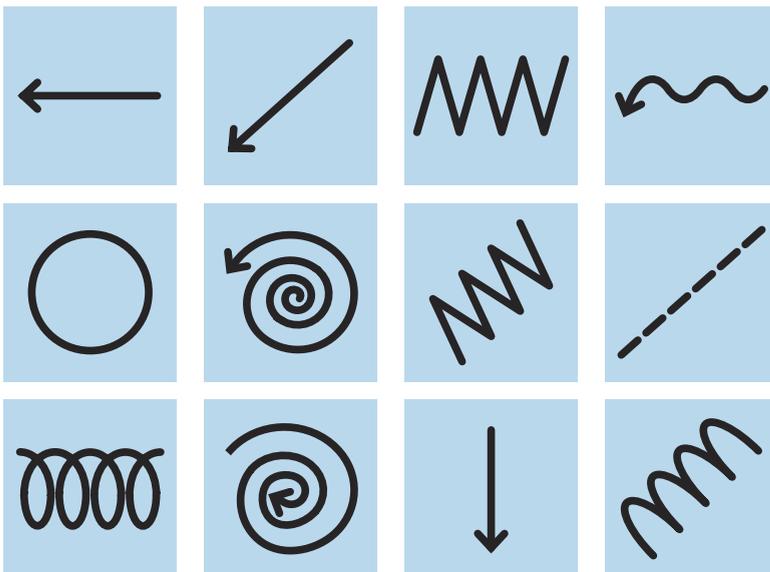


CURRICULUM INSERT

MOVEMENT WITH SHAPE VARIATIONS—Pair students, and designate one as “A” and the other as “B.” Instruct “A” to travel an interesting pathway in the room and then freeze in an interesting shape. Tell “B” to travel in a new way to the place where “A” is frozen and make a shape that somehow relates to the shape made by “A” but at a different level. Shapes can touch but it is not mandatory. Next, tell “B” to hold the shape, while “A” travels to a new space and takes a new shape. Finally, tell “B” to travel to the spot occupied by “A” and respond with another shape at a different level. Repeat this activity with the other partner going first, as well as with new movement and shape variations. For example, “A” could communicate a shape that shows fear and “B” could join this shape with a shape that communicates hope.

BODY SHAPE CHAINS—Line the students up in groups of four or five, standing one behind the other and facing the same direction. Ask the students at the back of each line to travel to the front of their line and take a shape. Instruct the next students at the back of each line to come to the front of their line and make a shape at a different level than the student behind them. Have students repeat moving in this way and taking new shapes so that each line moves across a space in a chain of varying levels of body shapes. Encourage the students to hold their shape until they are at the back of the line again waiting to move back to the front to take a new shape. Try this activity to a live or recorded percussion beat to encourage travelling in an interesting way.

Sample symbol cards



Teaching Tips

- Consider using these tracks from the music CD enclosed in this resource: *Rain Forest*; *Grief*.
- It is helpful to post and discuss the following vocabulary: personal space (kinesphere), general space, pathway, indirect movement, direct movement.
- Space is sometimes at a premium in schools and moving in space will be defined by the available space in rooms or hallways. Experimenting with personal space can be done even in small spaces. Sometimes pathways will be defined by the furniture and/or obstacles in a room.
- Use any of the suggested activities to generate movement that relates to a theme or concept being studied or explored. Some examples include: war and peace; earth, water, fire, and air; principles of flight.

Assessment Tips

- Can students identify and describe how space is used in their own or in others' dance work?
- Do students demonstrate the ability to sustain concentration in dance work?
- Can students work co-operatively in a group to create a dance sequence based on visual symbols?
- Are students able to use a variety of pathways and movements in both general and personal space?
- Do students apply their knowledge of space and other elements in their own creative work?



It's Child's Play

Photos: Anne de Haas

Teaching children in the early years is a challenge and an opportunity. It can be one of the most rewarding teaching jobs, as very young children experience enormous learning curves. This leap in learning is made possible by allowing children to do something that comes naturally to them – playing with sand, water, and blocks. By setting up an environment in which children manipulate, explore, and experiment with a variety of new materials, the teacher provides them with tools for learning.

Corinne Scarfo is an occasional teacher with the Lakehead District School Board.

■ by **Corinne Scarfo**

The play-based classroom

In a well-planned and adequately equipped play-based setting, children have access to a wide range of learning materials. They can move freely through centres and explore activities that interest them. The class timetable is set up to have at least 60 minutes available for free play each day. Activities are organized so that they are open ended and change over time as children's skills and interests develop. Different children may take an interest in a centre when its focus changes.

The sand and water tables allow children the opportunity to explore the properties of these materials: how does sand change when water is added, how does water flow through a thin tube or a fat tube? The play changes as props are added or removed. When the water wheel is put away and sea creatures are added to the water centre, the focus changes, sometimes from science to an imaginative narrative; similarly, the children's vocabulary changes while they are at play.

In the home centre, children act out what they know about family life as they experiment with roles and add to the play by using their imagination. They learn to create narratives, to understand role perspectives, and to develop empathy for characters in their play. In the block centre, children learn proportional reasoning and spatial perspectives as they build towers and towns, and create objects that are significant to them. They develop their vocabulary and grammar as they use oral language skills and share stories; friendships and social skills as they work together and share materials, and foundational skills for mathematics development as they construct. When relevant books and writing materials are added, children have the opportunity to demonstrate their independent knowledge and application of letters and words.



..And It Matters!

Early childhood is a time when children combine their imaginations and fantasies with personal experiences to think above and beyond normal activities, use their creativity, and strengthen their memory. They demonstrate their personal knowledge and their ability to make sense of the world. As they interact with others, they experience fresh new perspectives and perceive new meanings, and merge these with a background of familiar experiences.

Oral communication is a critical component of play. Children will use and hear others use descriptive and specific vocabulary, which helps them to increase their own vocabulary. Play gives children a chance to communicate with other children and to solve problems. It helps them to understand how social skills rely on effective communication.

Play is the independent work of children

The importance of early child development and its effects on the later stages of life have been clearly demonstrated by research and recognized by major organizations around the world. Children of kindergarten age are still in a critical period of active brain development, which begins to wane after age six. Play is considered to be so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a child's right. The Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) recognizes play as being necessary for all children and states that play is critical to optimal growth, learning, and development in children from infancy through adolescence. The absence of play deprives the child of healthy development and learning.

*The Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain*¹ provided a great deal of information about children's early development. Evidence from neuroscience showed that the years from conception to age six, particularly the first three years, build the base for competence and coping skills that affect learning, behaviour and health throughout life. There is also evidence that when children are given opportunities to develop the multiple sensory pathways in their brains by solving problems during play (as compared





Play is undervalued

Some adults have misconceptions about the importance of play in school and about the goals of the kindergarten program. Sometimes when adults see a child using school time to play, they believe that little or no learning is taking place. It is easier for them to see results that are measured through marks and scores acquired when children read aloud or do work in their seats.

But it is far more significant for a teacher to observe children as they independently record their learning or their thoughts, read and discuss with a friend a book related to the topic they are exploring, and develop their vocabulary as they interact and share thoughts and ideas with others. These activities demonstrate the child's application of skills learned independently.

As teachers of kindergarten children, we need to demonstrate to colleagues, administrators, and parents why play is important and what children are actually doing and learning during play. The materials in each centre have been carefully chosen to develop specific skills. The role of the teacher is to facilitate and extend learning, but children need to explore materials at their own level and their own pace. The manipulatives in the kindergarten classroom should be viewed as the textbooks and science labs of other divisions.

Child's play? Yes. Frivolous? No. Sand, water, and blocks are the tools that children use to build their learning future. ♥

to completing a single and isolated task), they are laying the foundation for healthy brain development. Children need a variety of different experiences to facilitate this development. As growth is nurtured, the speed of processing, memory, and problem solving is strengthened.

The follow-up study, *The Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action*,² states that an individual's capacity to learn is predetermined by the neural wiring that has developed in the earlier years of life. Further evidence shows that the connections that take place within the neurons also affect the ability to attend to lessons, the speed at which information is processed, and the capacity to absorb information. Play provides the educational experience that strengthens and supports the connections between the neurons and provides a rich opportunity for children to grow and develop. Play is essential in the development of cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children.

The Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning concludes that in Canada one quarter of children entering grade 1 are vulnerable.³ They have learning, health, and behavioural problems that are likely to interfere with their ability to learn, their ability to form relationships, and their academic success. Early identification of issues and additional support for families and children can assist in reducing these difficulties.

NOTES:

1. McCain M., and Mustard, F. *Early Years Study: Reversing the Real Brain Drain* (1999), pp. 5-6
2. McCain M., Mustard F. and Shanker S. *Early Years Study 2: Putting Science into Action* (2007), p. 19
3. Best Start Expert Panel on Early Learning (2006). *Early Learning for Every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario's Early Childhood Settings*, p. 9



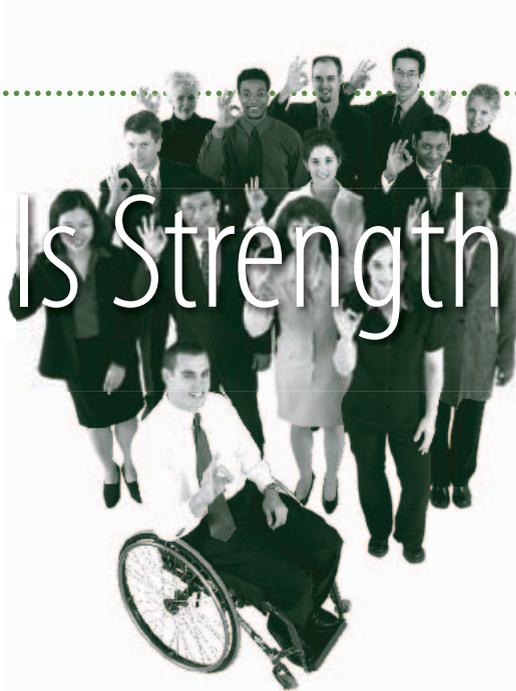
When KG teachers Melanie and Vanessa realized their classroom environments did not match what they knew about how young children learn, they came to ETFO for help.

Kindergarten Makeover showed them how to make simple, well-thought-out changes that improved their students' learning.

Kindergarten Makeover provides the tools to help you re-structure your classroom.

View the video webcast at etfo.ca ▶ Multimedia.

There Is Strength in Numbers



■ by Christine Brown

Good public policy making often begins with good information. Numbers are powerful things.

Though an ETFO member living with multiple sclerosis or depression may beg to differ, there are signs that as a society our collective awareness of disability issues has risen. One reason is the simple fact that we have far better information today than we did a decade ago. In December, Statistics Canada began releasing data from its second Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS). The survey derives from a telephone poll conducted after the 2006 census; the respondents were chosen based on their answers to filter questions in the census itself.

Statistics Canada is among the most respected information-gathering bodies in the world. Still, all surveys have their limitations, and this one is no different. For one thing, the information was self-reported, and disability is still a much stigmatized aspect of the human condition. In addition, the survey excluded persons living in institutions and on First Nations reserves.

Nevertheless, the data are illuminating. Since the first survey in 2001, the number of people reporting a disability has risen by 21.2 percent. Canada's population is aging, so some increase is understandable. But reworking the data to eliminate the impact of our collective aging accounts for only 40 percent of the increase.

Where does the other 60 percent come from? Statistics Canada analysts suggest that one factor may be that in today's social climate more individuals are comfortable reporting that they have a disability.

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

Here is a sample of what the numbers say:*

- For adults (15 and older), the disability rate increased from 14.6 percent to 16.5 percent. One dramatic change has been in the number of adults reporting a learning disability. Between 2001 and 2006, this figure rose by nearly 40 percent.
- For working-age Canadians (age 15 to 64), the most common form of disability is pain, followed by limitations in mobility and agility.
- The incidence of mobility-related disabilities was less than 2 percent among those age 15 to 24, rising to 44 percent among those 75 and older.
- Among children (age 5 to 14), 3.2 percent reported a learning disability.
- Around 5 percent of the adult population reported a hearing-related disability, 3.2 percent a vision-related disability, and 1.9 percent a speech-related disability.
- Working-age women were more likely to report that they have a disability than were men.
- Overall, the reported disability rate in Ontario is slightly higher than in Canada as a whole.

Choosing to disclose a disability is purely a personal decision. If it is indeed the case that a growing number of people are comfortable reporting that they have a disability, what are the larger implications? Specifically, what kinds of leverage in the realm of political action and advocacy might this self-reporting help create? Good public policy making often begins with good information. Numbers are powerful things. **V**

* All data are taken from Statistics Canada, *The Daily*, December 3, 2007. Statistics Canada will be releasing further reports based on the PALS survey throughout the year. To learn more about PALS, go to: statcan.ca and search "Participation and Activity Limitation Survey 2006."



Photo: John Hasyn

Teachers as Leaders: A powerful force

■ by Jerry DeQuetteville

In my second year of teaching I was provided with a powerful professional opportunity when I became part of the leadership team for a new, not-yet-opened school. The four of us met regularly with the principal and helped to determine the school's general philosophy. When the remaining staff was hired, we met as grade teams and made decisions about how the school's overarching ideals would be transformed into the reality of our everyday classrooms.

Later when the school opened, some community members were faced with unfamiliar instructional practices. Our administrator supported us fully, giving parents the message that the teachers were knowledgeable professionals who made sound instructional decisions. This support provided us with the freedom to take risks.

Jerry DeQuetteville is coordinator of ETFO's Professional Services department.

Teams met regularly, during and outside the instructional day (although time to meet during the day was the administrator's general goal), to set our goals and to discuss our classroom practice and our instructional decisions, always focusing on the academic and social development of students. The principal ensured that we had the resources we needed. We were a professional learning community without being told we were one.

There is no doubt about the impact this experience had on us: we became more confident, and were better able to articulate our classroom practice and the rationale for our decisions. With increased confidence came a desire for more knowledge and the cycle repeated itself. We clearly were teacher leaders within our school. Later, many of us became leaders in other venues, and it is only now, on reflection, that I appreciate the full impact of the decision to empower the staff to become leaders.

Teacher leadership takes many forms

My experience was an excellent example of how teacher leadership can be fostered, although at the time very few people were talking about this concept. More traditionally, teacher leadership was defined as an assigned role – a team leader or literacy coach, for example. Today teacher leadership is seen more comprehensively. It can be fostered in many ways, all of which can lead to personal development and growth, enhanced teaching and student achievement, collegiality and professionalism, and ultimately to school growth and improvement. All teachers can be leaders if they choose to take the journey and get the necessary supports.

At its heart, the concept of teacher leadership recognizes teachers as dedicated professionals, engaged in continuous improvement and reflection. There is a growing recognition that teachers need to be given more control over how they teach: they need opportunities to work as a group and to ask challenging questions about the instruction in their school.

The province plays a positive role

The Ontario government is partly responsible for the current emphasis on teacher leadership in this province. It has heralded teachers as professionals and has been providing more opportunities for them to take control over their professional lives.

The recently released *School Effectiveness Framework* provides an opportunity for teacher leadership. The purpose of the framework is to allow an examination of the climate and instructional practices of the school and to foster decision making about how to optimize instruction.

As with other such initiatives, implementation is key. A strong administrator will provide staff with opportunities during the day to talk about the indicators the framework describes. A strong administrator will emphasize repeatedly that this process is not about evaluation and will not be part of any teacher's performance appraisal. A less competent administrator might hand the framework to the staff and tell them that they need to use it as a guide to examine their own instructional practices and report back during the TPA process. Any teacher would be apprehensive about that!

The strong relationships that ETFO local leaders have developed with school board officials, as well as the relationships between the various stakeholders at the provincial level, will work to ensure that the implementation of the framework goes as planned. It will be important for teachers who have concerns to communicate with their ETFO local leadership.

The Ministry of Education has committed \$5 million to the Teacher Leadership and Learning Program to fund projects for experienced

classroom teachers who seek a leadership role in curriculum development, instructional practice, or in supporting other teachers. This is a powerful example of teacher leadership!

Again the key is implementation. We have learned that some school boards will allow only projects that focused on literacy or numeracy to go forward. This was not the ministry's intention. The application process for projects to begin next fall will get underway soon, and it is hoped that issues that arose during the pilot phase can be resolved at that time.



Photos: Anne de Haas

ETFO promotes teacher leadership

ETFO's Professional Services department has long recognized the importance and benefits of teacher leadership and offers a number of programs for members who are encouraged to share their learning with colleagues.

- **Teachers Learning Together** supports teams of teachers pursuing action research while working with staff from education faculties.
- **Reflections on Practice**, now in its fourth year, encourages an examination of instructional practice. (For a description see "Reflections on Practice," *Voice*, Winter 2006)
- **ETFO Union School** participants are engaged this year in professional learning, reflective practice, and are completing a practicum assignment exploring the concept of effective local leadership.

We are on the cusp of a remarkable change in how teachers and teaching are viewed in this province. As the push towards teacher leadership continues, teacher unions like ETFO have a complex and challenging role. We will have to ensure that the necessary conditions for teacher leadership exist and are protected in collective agreements, that programs respect the rights of participants, and that opportunities are available for all teachers. We will need to work to protect funding for these projects so that they can be sustained over time.

Any such dramatic change has incredible promise as well as inherent risk. It is incumbent upon us all to ensure that the risks are communicated, managed, and diminished so that the promise may be realized. ♥

Understanding Changes to Safe Schools Legislation

■ by Professional Relations Services staff

Bill 212, the new *Safe Schools Act*, came into effect on February 1. It modifies the existing system of suspension and expulsion of students while keeping elements of the existing discretionary and mandatory suspensions in the *Education Act*. The list of infractions that may lead to suspension will now include bullying – an important step in achieving safe schools. The new system builds in flexibility and progressive consequences for infractions, and provides students with programs while suspended and expelled. Bill 212 also changes the decision-making structure so that teachers no longer have the authority to suspend students.

Policy/Program Memoranda

Four key Policy/Program Memoranda (PPM) have been issued to assist school boards in implementing these programs. They require boards to develop and implement policies, with teacher input, on progressive discipline, and on bullying prevention and intervention. Once these policies are developed, boards must communicate them to everyone in the school community.

You should consult these memoranda, which are available on the Ministry of Education website: edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm.html.

Suspended students

PPM 141 deals with school board programs for students under suspension. Boards are expected to provide homework packages for students who have been suspended for fewer than six days. In the case of long-term suspensions (six days or more), boards must offer at least one program for suspended students. Boards must encourage suspended students to participate in these programs, but cannot compel student participation.

A Student Action Plan (SAP) must be developed for every student on a long-term suspension who commits to attend a suspended student program. It will outline the objectives for the student and be tailored to meet his or her specific needs. Teachers should consult this memorandum for details on the requirements of each SAP.



Expelled students

PPM 142 deals with school board programs for expelled students. Boards are required either to:

- a) provide at least one program for students who have been expelled from all schools of the board, or
- b) assign a student who has been expelled only from his or her school to another school of the board.

Boards must encourage expelled students to participate in these programs, but cannot compel them to participate. However, expelled students who wish to return to school must complete an expelled student program.

Stopping bullying

PPM 144 deals with bullying prevention and intervention. Bullying has been added to the list of infractions for which suspension *must be considered*. Bullying is defined as

a form of repeated, persistent, and aggressive behaviour directed at an individual or indi-

viduals that is intended to cause (or should be known to cause) fear and distress and/or harm to another person's body, feelings, self-esteem, or reputation. Bullying occurs in a context where there is a real or perceived power imbalance.

Board policies must include several statements regarding:

- the adverse effects of bullying on students
- that bullying will not be accepted in any circumstance (including online) where it will have a negative impact on the school climate
- a prevention strategy that includes expectations for appropriate student behaviour
- teaching strategies that reflect prevention policies
- procedures for students to report bullying incidents safely and in a way that will minimize the possibility of reprisal
- support for students who have been bullied or have bullied others, and for those affected by bullying they have witnessed.

Each school is required to have a "Safe School" team in place that is responsible for school safety. This role can be assumed by an existing school committee that meets the requirements outlined in this memorandum.

Progressive discipline

PPM 145 deals with progressive discipline and the promotion of positive student behaviour.

When a student engages in inappropriate behaviour, the discipline imposed should be both corrective and supportive. Schools are to use a range of interventions, supports, and consequences that include learning opportunities, while helping students to make good choices. These include meetings with parents, volunteer service to the school community, conflict mediation, peer mentoring, and/or a referral to counselling.

In addressing inappropriate behaviour the following should be considered:

- the particular student and circumstances
- the nature and severity of the behaviour
- the impact on the school climate.

Board policies and procedures on progressive discipline must include several specific elements outlined in this memorandum. Teachers should consult the memorandum for details.

TIPS for teachers

- The board should provide release time for teachers who prepare generic packages for suspended students (writing teams) and who help develop school policies. Teachers should not be required to prepare homework packages, student action plans, or policies on their own time, in addition to their usual workload.
- Every substantiated incident of bullying should be documented on the OSR via a Violent Incident Report and raised with the principal. There should be clear and prompt consequences for students who bully teachers or others in the school community.
- The board should have a policy regarding bullying. It should include a prohibition against students bullying teachers or others in the community and should include all of the information set out in the PPM materials as well as an appropriate and clear investigation procedure.
- If you are aware of student conduct occurring outside of school hours that may have an impact on the school environment, raise it with the principal so that a decision can be made about suspending the student. This conduct could include personal attacks against teachers or students via electronic means such as Facebook, blogs, or other Internet sites.
- You may be asked to provide input into educational materials or notices to students and parents in the school community about increases in bullying of teachers and students, the gravity of such conduct, and the consequences that will result from engaging in it.
- The board should provide training on new policies for all teachers, and make it available during paid release time.

For further information contact your local ETFO office. You may also contact PRS staff at provincial office. 

PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS SERVICES staff provide confidential advice and support to assist you. They deal with a wide variety of issues: the performance appraisal process, work-related conflict, College of Teachers investigations, and human rights issues, including harassment and discrimination, professional boundaries, and allegations. Call 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836 and ask to speak to the PRS counsellor on call.

International Women's Day

Why we march

■ by Carol Zavitz

Each year on March 8 – International Women's Day (IWD) – women around the world take time to celebrate the achievements of women, to reflect on our current status, and to demand legal and economic equality and freedom from violence.



Marion Mutton, Toronto Occasional Teacher Local president, at the pay equity rally.

International Women's Day has its roots in the international labour, socialist, and peace movements that were active early in the twentieth century. IWD has been celebrated on March 8 since 1917 and is a national holiday in many countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

Like Labour Day, International Women's Day provides a focus for the necessary activism of the day. In 2008, the Canadian Labour Congress launches a year-long campaign on women's economic equality. In 2000 and 2005, the World March of Women launched its global campaigns.

Why march in Canada?

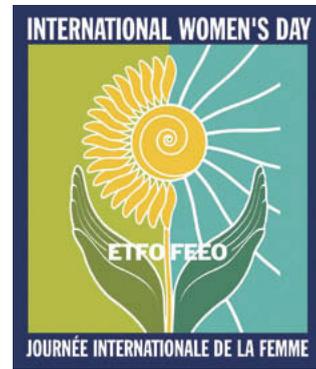
In 1967, following intense lobbying by women's groups around the country, the Canadian government created a Royal Commission on the Status of Women. The Royal Commission's 1970 report made 167 recommendations for improving the situation of women in Canada. Many have been fully or partially implemented – among them, access to birth control and maternity leave, family law reform, more educational opportunities, better pensions for women, and more equitable taxation.

But today, almost 40 years later, other recommendations are still not realized or have been implemented and then lost again. Consider the following issues.

Status for Aboriginal women

Before the *Indian Act* (the law pertaining to Aboriginal persons who have treaty status) was amended in 1985, Aboriginal women lost their status if they married someone without status. Aboriginal men had always retained their status no matter whom they married. The amended law allows women to confer status only on their children, not their grandchildren.

Sharon McIvor has been challenging this injustice for many years, and last summer the British Columbia Supreme Court ruled that the differential status was discriminatory under our Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Now the federal government has decided to appeal this decision. With the elimination of the Charter Challenges fund (a program cut by Stephen Harper's Conservative government), it is almost impossible for McIvor, or any citizen, to enforce their rights through the courts. ETFO has contributed \$20,000 to support McIvor's legal costs.



A national subsidized child care program

Quebec has a province-wide program that costs parents no more than \$7 per child per day, but although promised repeatedly by governing federal parties, there is no national, accessible, not-for-profit, developmentally appropriate child care program in the rest of Canada in 2008.

Pay equity

Pay equity (or “equal pay for work of equal value”) legislation is in effect at the federal level and in Ontario, but for many women, particularly those in unorganized workplaces or who work part-time, pay equity is not a reality. The federal government has failed to act on recommendations to improve its own legislation, and in Ontario women have had to enforce pay equity the long, hard way – through the courts. Women in Ontario are currently paid 29 percent less than men. ETFO is a member and financial supporter of the Pay Equity Coalition. The coalition held a news conference and rally in January to mark the twentieth anniversary of the *Pay Equity Act*.

Government financial support for women’s organizations

Following the report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, the federal government created several institutions – both within government and at arm’s length – to conduct research, advocate for women, and support nongovernmental organizations promoting women’s equality. Recently, these institutions have been systematically dismantled. The Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women was eliminated in 1995. The funding available through Status of Women Canada to women’s organizations doing research and advocacy to promote women’s equality was cut in 2006. Many women’s organizations have been left without essential funding. Several unions, including ETFO, have increased their financial contributions to struggling women’s groups.

Women’s political representation

When it comes to women in politics, Canada ranks forty-seventh in the world, behind most European nations and many less developed countries such as Mauritania, Uganda, Rwanda, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Just 21 percent of federal MPs and 27 percent of Ontario MPPs are women. The United Nations says that a critical mass of at least 30 percent women is needed before legislatures produce public policy representing women’s concerns.

Violence against women

Violence against women was not even on the public radar until 1982, when MP Margaret Mitchell tabled a report in the House of Commons on the subject and was laughed at by other MPs. Reaction from women to the incident brought the issue of violence against women to national attention. Statistics Canada reports that 30 percent of all women currently or previously married have experienced at least one incident of physical or sexual violence at the hands of a marital partner. **V**

SOURCES:

- *Women in Canada: A Gender-Based Statistical Report, 5th ed.* Ottawa: Statistics Canada, Catalogue no. 89-503-XIE. Available at: dsp-psd.pwgsc.gc.ca/Collection-R/Statcan/89-503-X/89-503-XIE.html
- Ricardo Hausman, Laura Tyson, and Saadia Zahidi, *The Global Gender Gap Report 2007*. Geneva, Switzerland: World Economic Forum. Available at: weforum.org/en/initiatives/gcp/Gender percent20Gap/index.htm
- Robin Fitzgerald, *Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 1999*. Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1999. Catalogue # 85-224-XPE Available at: statcan.ca/english/freepub/85-224-XIE/0009985-224-XIE.pdf

TAKE ACTION

Websites of interest

- AdHoc Coalition for Women’s Equality and Human Rights: womensequality.ca
- Springtide Resources, Ending Violence Against Women: springtideresources.org
- Equal Pay Coalition: equalpaycoalition.org
- Equal Voice: equalvoice.ca
- Sharon McIvor: fafia-afai.org/en/help_win_equality_for_aboriginal_women
- Child care: buildchildcare.ca
- Roots of Equality: etfo.ca/Resources/ForTeachers/
- World March of Women: worldmarchofwomen.org

Célébrons



La Semaine nationale de la

Every year in Canada, les Rendez-vous de la francophonie (rvf.ca) provides opportunities for Canadians to celebrate the francophone communities throughout the country. Numerous events and activities allow community members to learn about the folklore, traditions, and culture of the Canada's 9 million francophone people.

■ by **André Charlebois**

This year, les Rendez-vous de la francophonie are held March 7–23. To make this event even more relevant for Canadian students, l'Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française (ACELF) organizes la Semaine nationale de la francophonie. By organizing numerous activities for students, the ACELF hopes to create an awareness of French culture in communities and give francophone students a sense of belonging to the French culture in Canada. The ACELF provides teachers with a resource document, *Concours et activités pédagogiques pour le primaire et le secondaire*, that contains suggestions for activities, including some blackline masters, on such topics as culture, music, tourism, and so on. This downloadable document can be accessed at acelf.ca.

For teachers of French as a Second Language, la Semaine nationale de la francophonie is an opportunity for students to become involved in authentic communication situations. Through their participation, FSL students can enjoy some of the *joie de vivre* that these activities create.

.....
André Charlebois is a retired coordinator of French programs with the Upper Canada District School Board. He is currently working as an educational consultant and as a teacher at the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa.



Why not have a Semaine de la francophonie in your school?

Une Semaine de la Francophonie à la hauteur de mon école!

Monday – La bannière française de mon école

Invite students to imagine and create a banner or a flag that represents some of the French features in their school and their community. Students could make a number of smaller banners – one per class – or one large banner that represents all the classes.

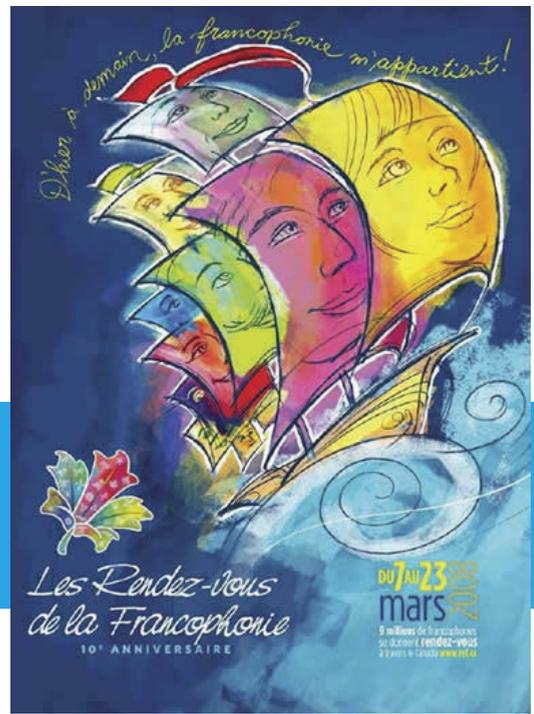
Suggestions for the banner:

- French names from the community
- examples of French characters in literature, cartoons, graphic novels
- logos from other flags that represent French culture.

Ask students to present their class banner and explain it to other students.¹

Tuesday – Je te raconte mon conte!

French teachers often use well-known stories and tales as part of the regular French program or during read-aloud. Invite students to choose one of those stories and ask them to become an additional character. For example, Gabrielle, a grade 4 student, would become an additional character in the story *Les trois petits cochons*. To add variety, imagine that Gabrielle has a GPS navigation system that she uses to get to the three pigs' houses: a traditional story becomes a tale with a modern twist. Let students' imagination dictate how the story develops.²



francophonie!

Adaptation of the activity:

Provide students with partial dialogue from a well-known story. Ask them to present a completed dialogue with a partner, imagining and creating questions that match the provided script.³

This is a fun and non-threatening activity that allows students to put into practice their knowledge of the French language.

Wednesday – Le 400^e anniversaire de la fondation de la ville de Québec

This year's celebration of the 400th anniversary of the founding of Quebec City is a milestone in the history of Canada. You can use this special occasion to provide students with some insight in the creation of Canada, its cultures, and their evolution.

The Government of Canada official website, quebec400.gc.ca, provides information and numerous links to other sites that contain ideas, historical facts, and information about the many activities taking place to celebrate this major event.⁴

Thursday – Préparons un mets traditionnel!

This delicious activity will allow students to enjoy everything from a nutritious snack to a typical traditional meal. It is not necessary to be celebrating la fête de la Ste-Catherine to enjoy *la tarte*, a treat that was (so the story goes) created by Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys to entice young Aboriginal students to attend school. With the help of older students, French teachers can make some of this delicious toffee and share it with younger students afterwards.⁵

Friday – Une franco-foire

La franco-foire, a display of numerous French activities done by students, would be the culminating event of a week of celebrating la Semaine nationale de la francophonie.

In an appropriate location in the school, such as the gymnasium, the cafeteria or other large enough room, students set up their projects, a selection of snacks, and several tables with French games for students to play and enjoy.

Why not set up a table where students can play Scrabble? Or use an area on the floor or on a large table where students write as many French words as possible in a crossword format?

There should also be a performing area for students to present the play, skit, or dialogue they created earlier in the week.

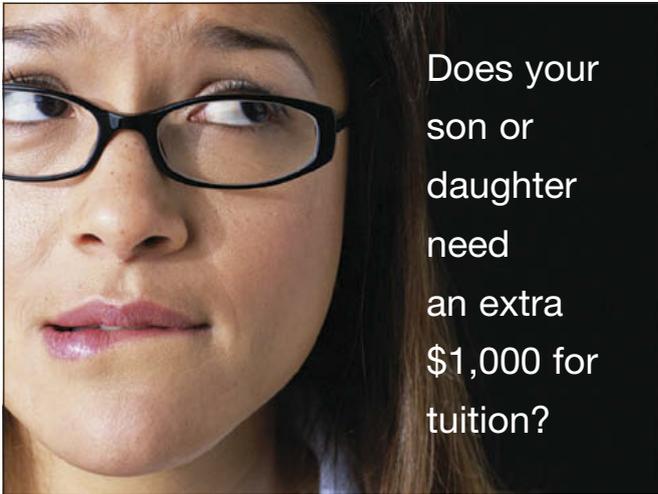
Invite guests from the school community, parents, trustees, superintendents, and other students to join in this celebration.

As teachers of French as a Second Language, let's use la Semaine de la francophonie as a wonderful opportunity to increase our students' knowledge of and respect for Canada's culture and everything it has to offer to its diverse citizens.

Amusez-vous bien durant la Semaine de la francophonie! ♥

NOTES:

- « Concours et activités pédagogiques pour le primaire et le secondaire ». Available at acelf.ca
- Adaptation from Banque d'activités pédagogiques, acelf.ca/c/bap
- Transformer sa pédagogie*, Toronto: ETFO/FEEO, 2007.
- Debout! Guide national d'animation culturelle*. Ottawa: Canadian Teachers' Federation, 2002; Banque d'activités pédagogiques, acelf.ca/c/bap
- « Projets éducatifs, français langue seconde – Champ d'expérience: les francophones du Canada, niveau intermédiaire ». Ottawa: Canadian Association of Second Language Teachers, 2004; Banque d'activités pédagogiques, acelf.ca/c/bap



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“ ”
I think all of us

as volunteers came in acknowledging that, yes, we may have skills, but we're also going to learn a lot.

– Michele Hillier, Sri Lanka



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New PD tools from OTF

by **Hilda Watkins**



During the past year the OTF website, *otffeo.on.ca*, has become a new source for teacher professional development.

Teachers intuitively understand that effective professional development is founded on a few basic principles: it is self-directed, reflective of the students' needs and mindful of the school's improvement plan. Furthermore, effective professional learning opportunities must be flexible to guarantee accessibility. Research clearly demonstrates the tangible educational benefits realized when educators are provided with time to dialogue and collaborate and therefore some provision for such activity should be provided for during the instructional day. There is no one-size-fits-all model for effective PD. In short, if professional learning is to be meaningful then teachers must take the lead. OTF's PD tools make this possible.

In the 2005-2006 school year, OTF received funding from the Ministry of Education for member professional development. This investment clearly acknowledged members' commitment and expertise relative to their professional learning. During the fall of 2006, OTF conducted a needs assessment survey to analyze what teachers perceived as their professional development needs.

Teaching Matters, a multi-faceted project designed to deliver innovative professional development, was launched last spring at the OTF conference *Taking the Lead on Our Professional Development*. To further assist members in their professional learning, OTF has developed several programs, all of which can be seen on the OTF website, *otffeo.on.ca*. These professional development tools are designed to address the needs of our diverse membership – from novice teachers to seasoned educators seeking opportunities to share their expertise.

Searching for a Relevant PD Event?

OTF's online PD calendar is just a click away. Simply visit the PD web centre of the OTF website, click on "PD calendar" and sign in. The calendar can be searched by type of event, region, topic, grade level, or date. Teachers can sign up for email notification of similar opportunities as they are added to the calendar.

Does a hectic schedule restrict your ability to access PD?

Try on-line and on-demand digital PD videos.

Visit the OTF website and access at your leisure in-depth professional development workshops from leading educational producers. These videos are available until October 31, 2008. The programs cover the curriculum from kindergarten to grade 12, and include arts, education, foreign languages, history, literature, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, as well as other professional development topics such as ADHD and conflict management. These outstanding programs are available 24 hours a day.

Last fall, OTF released two companion pieces – *Beyond PD Days from PD that Works*. This book and DVD are training tools to assist members involved with planning professional learning opportunities for teachers. All local PD chairpersons received copies. To access both contact your federation local or purchase a copy from OTF.

These materials are a few of the tools featured in Volume I of OTF's *Teaching Matters* newsletter, which was distributed to schools in October. OTF will publish a second issue of the newsletter in spring. In the meantime, I encourage you to visit OTF's PD web centre and to continue taking the lead in your professional development. **V**

Hilda Watkins is an ETFO vice-president and is ETFO's OTF table officer.

Class Composition: A growing concern for all teachers

■ by **Emily Noble**



There's no such thing as a teacher who doesn't have a diverse classroom in one form or another. We have a world of children from all over the globe in our classrooms.

As teachers, we are expected to understand all our students and to give them the best education we can. We are fortunate to have a public education system that embraces this rich diversity.

In the last 20 years, the concept of diversity has evolved well beyond the more traditional definition of special needs. It includes children manifesting behavioural challenges as well as children with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, languages, cultures, religions, and sexual orientations.

As a result, teachers have had to change their teaching to accommodate their students' learning. The expectation that comes with inclusion is that teachers will customize their program for the individual student. This expectation has transformed the way we teach: more time is

required for preparation, for meetings with specialists and parents, and for planning with a special education assistant – if you are lucky enough to get one.

We are now teaching several classes at once, while trying to keep things going in one direction at the same time. The classroom has become more like the old one-room schoolhouse, but with a wide range of abilities rather than ages.

A 2007 national teacher survey funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and conducted by the Université de Montréal showed that 85.9 percent of teachers said inclusion of special needs students had a major impact on their work. In addition, 84.5 percent of teachers surveyed said a reduction in human resources also had an impact on their work.

The issue of students with special needs will not disappear unless there is a major shift toward more funding, additional supports, and new approaches. Behaviour issues are surfacing because students' needs are not being met. That's why teachers talk so often about class composition as their biggest challenge. They support inclusionary practices if they have the supports to make them work.

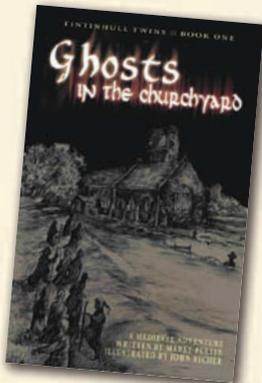
The issue of class composition has been declared a priority by the Canadian Teachers' Federation. Over the next few years, the federation is recommending, among many proactive measures, that collective agreements include language relating to class composition and the extra work required to include children with special needs.

As we strive to make our public education system work for all our children, we need to make sure our teachers are challenged, but not overwhelmed, by their workload and the demands we place on them. ♥



[Diversity] includes children manifesting behavioural challenges as well as children with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds, languages, cultures, religions, and sexual orientations.

Emily Noble is president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation.



Ghosts in the Churchyard, Teacher's Guide.

Julie Richer and Marty Pullin.
Sheffield, ON: Sheffield
Museum Publishing, 2005
\$49.99 ; \$34.99 each with class
set of 21+ novels

Reviewed by **Heather Combaluzier**

Julie Richer's *Teacher's Guide* to the novel *Ghosts in the Churchyard** is a detailed and well-thought-out resource that connects many grade 4 curriculum areas through the study of medieval times. Because the guide is based on the premise that teachers will use a class set of novels Richer has given ideas to help readers who require more assistance. If a class set is not available the teacher could read Pullin's novel aloud.

The *Teacher's Guide* provides lessons for the subject areas of language, social studies, science and math, and the arts. These are organized sequentially and contain examples and suggestions for modifications. Each lesson includes the objective, curriculum expectations, a 40-minute time frame, a list of "required" materials, preparation needed before, during, and after activi-

ties, and evaluation and assessment ideas.

Detailed plans for organizing a character festival and banquet appear after the curriculum lessons, but the wise teacher will look at these before beginning the unit, as there are important details that should be taken care of early during the teaching of the unit.

Twenty-seven appendices supplement the lessons, including illustrations by John Richer, a timeline, a hierarchy chart, maps, activity sheets, games, and checklists. Whether you are new to teaching this subject or wish to have some new ideas to supplement your unit, you should definitely check out this resource.

**Ghosts in the Churchyard: A Medieval Adventure Novel* by Marty Pullin; Illustrated by John Richer. Sheffield, ON: The Sheffield Museum of Rural Life. 151 pages. \$9.99 ; \$8.99 each/class set of 21+. Available from Sheffieldmuseum.ca

~~~~~

*Heather Combaluzier is a teacher with the Simcoe County District School Board.*



## 1212: Year of the Journey

Kathleen McDonnell  
Toronto: Second Story Press,  
2006  
\$9.95, 288 pages

Reviewed by **Catherine Allen**

At first glance, the year 1212 would seem to have little relevance for young people of the twenty-first century. Yet in her novel *1212: Year of the Journey*, Toronto-based award-winning author Kathleen McDonnell has achieved a rare confluence of elements: an historical novel rich with everyday details of life as it might have been lived in an almost unimaginably distant past, peopled with plausible characters who are compelled to grapple with life-and-death issues that have resonance for today's youth.

The Middle Ages was a time of religious turmoil and social upheaval when crusades and holy wars created conditions of unparalleled suffering and dislocation for ordinary people. Against this tumultuous backdrop, Kathleen McDonnell recounts the tale of three young people caught up in the Children's Crusade, a peaceful crusade to the Holy Land in 1212 led by children from France

and Germany. In the course of this crusade, the three multifaceted protagonists face many daunting challenges as they confront their own religious convictions and attempt to make sense of their lives.

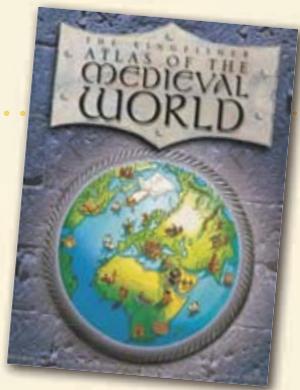
From a pedagogical perspective, the content presented in *1212: Year of the Journey* dovetails seamlessly into the grade 4 medieval times curriculum expectations. Although many students at this grade level would find the book somewhat challenging as an independent read (the targeted age range is 10 to 14), as a shared read-aloud, this novel has tremendous potential.

Thanks in large measure to McDonnell's vivid recreation of medieval society, young students have the opportunity to gain real insight into the daily lives of ordinary people and into some of the ways that different religions – Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam – shaped medieval society. The account of the day-by-day progress of the children as they travel across Europe toward Jerusalem is particularly riveting, credible and immediate and it will genuinely enthrall all learners.

As a teaching resource, *1212: Year of the Journey* is a welcome addition to the array of materials available on medieval European societies at the Junior grade levels.

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



The Kingfisher Atlas of the Medieval World

Simon Adams

Illustrated by Kevin Maddison

Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2007

\$21.95

47 pages

Reviewed by **Quinn Carter**

This is a beautifully rendered pictorial passport to the medieval world that provides readers with a detailed account of major his-

torical events dating from A.D. 500 to the mid-fifteenth century. What is refreshing is that it deviates from the standard and limiting perspectives that focus exclusively on medieval England. Rather, *The Kingfisher Atlas of the Medieval World* captures life in the Middle Ages from a global perspective, including the spread of Islam and the influence of Islamic culture, and events in medieval India, China, Southeast Asia and Central America, to name a few.

There is a two-page overview for each country. The reader's attention is captured by the strong marriage of text and visuals. Adams and Maddison delight the senses with a balanced montage of snippets of information

strategically and cleverly juxtaposed with illustrated maps that contain miniature drawings of artifacts, figures, structures, or renditions of ancient cities carefully placed to help identify their location. The detailed miniatures help further reinforce the book's strong visual appeal. Each page contains a convenient timeline that provides a summary of additional key historical dates.

The Kingfisher Atlas of the Medieval World would make a wonderful resource for the medieval times unit of a grade 4 social studies program. The many images would inspire visual arts ideas and projects on artistic works from around the world. The book could also be used for a wide vari-

ety of creative writing projects or for shared or guided reading sessions for language arts.

The text is reader friendly for teachers, and with some assistance and explanation of key terms, grade 4 students could read it independently. The information in the atlas would adapt well to a series of diverse centre-based activities that emphasize the cultural, social, and artistic differences among various countries throughout the Middle Ages. This book lends itself to a myriad of possibilities and perspectives and is a highly recommended resource for any junior classroom.

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*Quinn Carter is a teacher with the Halton District School Board.*



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# Teachers' Trivia

■ by Peter Harrison

## The Tryingle

Joanne has been trying out some new ideas for her class.

She started by selecting six different numbers, at random, and writing them down in a row across the page, for example 1, 5, 3, 7, 2, 9. Then, above them, she wrote another row of numbers, which were the sums of the pairs of numbers below them, in this case, 6, 8, 10, 9, 11; (where  $6=1+5$ ,  $8=5+3$ ,  $10=3+7$  etc). She then repeated the process for another row above and then three more above that, until she had produced a pyramid of numbers as follows:

|             |
|-------------|
| 145         |
| 69 76       |
| 32 37 39    |
| 14 18 19 20 |
| 6 8 10 9 11 |
| 1 5 3 7 2 9 |

This was easy enough. Any child could do it, she thought

In this case the number 9 appeared more than once. So Joanne tried again to choose numbers in the bottom row which led to no duplications at all.

After trying a number of times, Joanne formed a triangle where all the additions were correct and where no number appeared more than once. In fact, however many further attempts she might have made, Joanne could not have created a triangle with a lower number at its apex.

After all this trying, she called her special triangle "The Tryingle"

Please send in Joanne's 'Tryingle'



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Send your answer to [ETFOVoice@etfo.org](mailto:ETFOVoice@etfo.org) with the word "Trivia" in the subject line. You may also mail your entry to Editor, ETFO Voice, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all the correct entries received by March 28, 2008.

### Solution to our last puzzle

"The Money Game": 24 cents.

Winners are chosen by lottery from all the correct answers received. They are:

- Kathy Balec, Lakehead
- Eric Hammell, York Region
- Shailaja Pasumarty, Toronto

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# calendar

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[acelf.ca/c/activites/semaine/default.html](http://acelf.ca/c/activites/semaine/default.html)

**APRIL 3-5, Toronto**

## **Languages-our natural legacy / Les langues-notre heritage naturel**

The Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association 2008 Conference  
Information at [omlta.org](http://omlta.org)

**APRIL 12, Kitchener**

## **ECOO Elementary Spring Conference, Differentiate IT**

The Educational Computing Organization of Ontario  
Information at [ecoo.org](http://ecoo.org)

**APRIL 20-22, Mississauga**

## **Synergy: Connecting for Tomorrow**

The Ontario Cooperative Education Association 2008 Conference  
Delta Meadowvale and Conference Centre  
Information at [occa.on.ca](http://occa.on.ca)

**APRIL 21-25**

## **Spirit of Mandela Week**

The Nelson Mandela Children's Fund (Canada) invites schools to participate in a week of learning and fundraising to commemorate the first free election in post-apartheid South Africa, 27 April 1994. Information at [mandela-children.ca](http://mandela-children.ca).

**APRIL 21-27**

## **Global Action Week 2008**

"Quality Education to End Exclusion!" The Global Campaign for Education campaign for free, quality, public education for all children by 2015.  
Information at [campaignforeducation.org](http://campaignforeducation.org)

**UNTIL APRIL 25**

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Information at: Canada's National History Society, [historysociety.ca](http://historysociety.ca)

**MAY 2, Hamilton**

## **Beauty and the Beast**

Spring Conference of the Ontario Association for Geographic and Environmental Educators. Information at [oagee.org](http://oagee.org)

**MAY 2-4, Haliburton**

## **2008 Ontario Society for Environmental Education Conference**

Bark Lake Leadership Centre  
Information at [osee.org](http://osee.org)

**MAY 8-10, Richmond Hill**

## **The Path is Made by Walking**

The Ontario Association of Mathematics Educators 2008 Conference  
Sheraton Parkway North  
Information at [oame.on.ca/oame2008](http://oame.on.ca/oame2008)

**MAY 8-10, Alliston**

## **Technological Education: Knowledge You Can Use**

Ontario Council for Technological Education 2008 Conference  
Information at [octe.on.ca](http://octe.on.ca)

**MAY 24, Toronto**

## **Dimensions of Dyslexia**

International Dyslexia Association, Ontario Branch 2008 Conference  
89 Chestnut Street  
Information at [iaontario.com](http://iaontario.com)

**LE 27 MAI, Ottawa**

## **Symposium sur l'adolescence en milieu minoritaire francophone**

Lord Elgin Hotel  
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