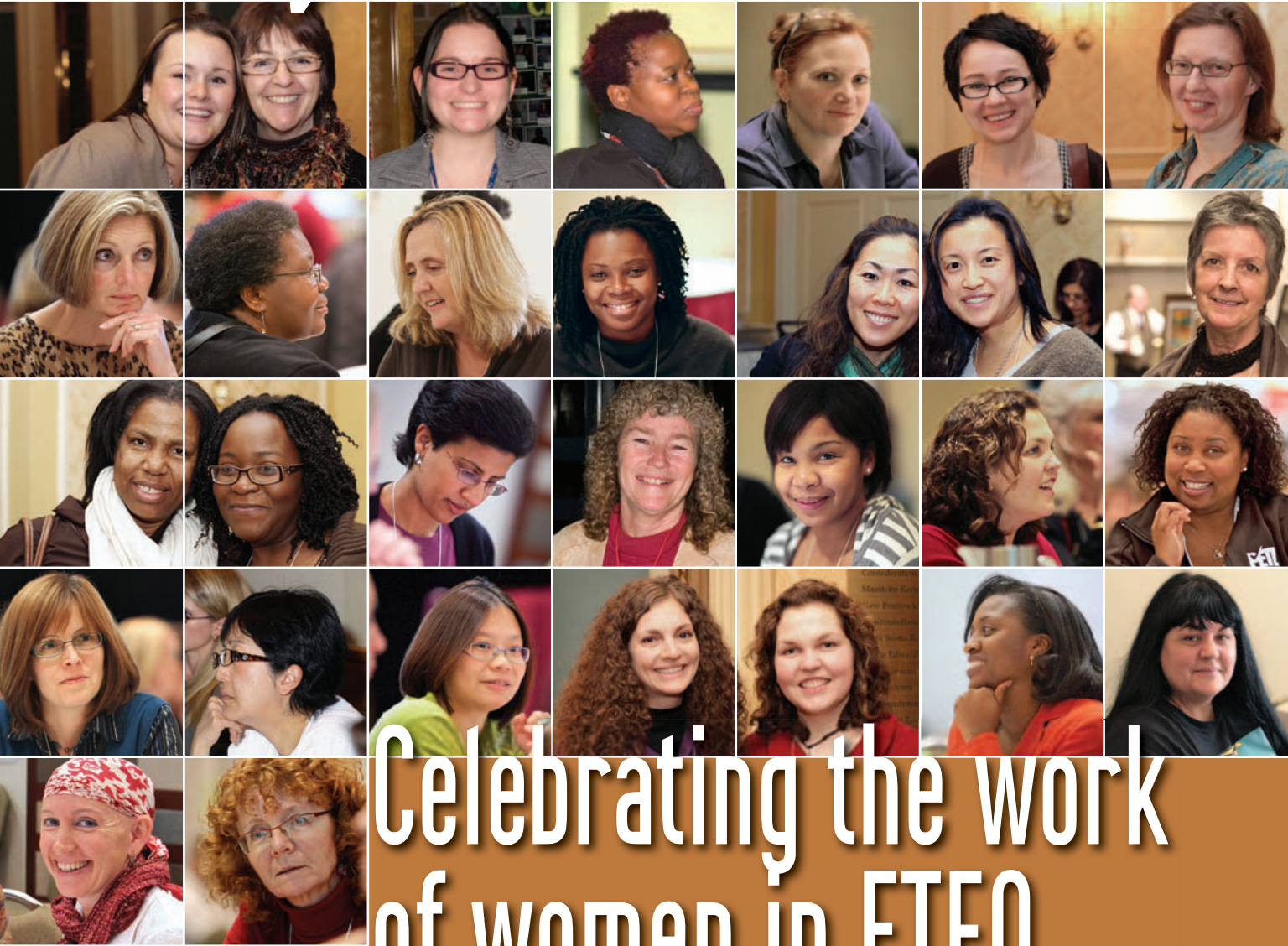


ETFO

MAY 2010
VOL. 12 - NO. 4

Voice



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Meeting the challenges of
full-day kindergarten

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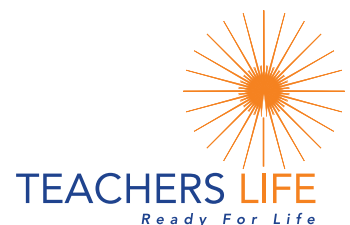
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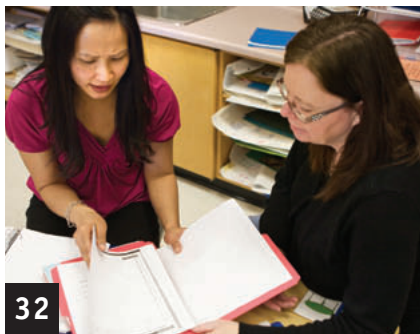
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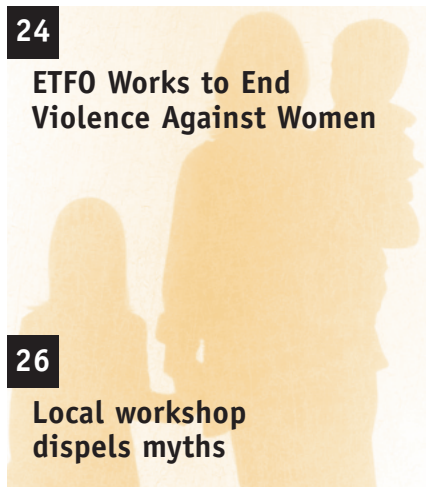
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... and still we rise



Working with Early Childhood Educators



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ETFO Women Work to Make a Difference

This issue of *Voice* celebrates women working to make a difference in ETFO and in their communities.

At last year's annual meeting delegates approved a plan to have ETFO's Women's Programs fund one issue of *Voice*.

When ETFO was formed in 1998 members approved a constitution that provided for 6 percent of the federation's annual budget to be set aside for programs specifically for women members. Every year an insert in the September issue of *Voice* highlights these programs. (To access it go to etfovoice.ca → *Back Issues*.) This is the first time that an entire issue of *Voice* has been part of this program.

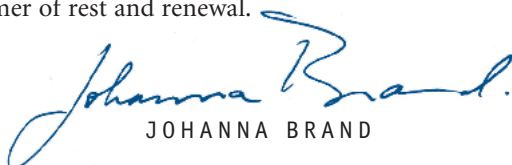
Many ETFO members are themselves are taking part in another first – the launch of the new Early Learning Program (ELP). There are always birthing pains with any new initiative and the ELP is no exception.

As President Sam Hammond points out in his column (page 4), full-time teachers in the ELP classroom represent a victory for ETFO. ETFO members will be working with licensed early childhood educators – and this will be a new experience for many. The article “Working with Early Childhood Educators” on page 32 provides insights into the skills and qualifications ECEs bring with them.

ETFO has also produced a number of resources for members teaching young children. The newest resource to watch for is “A Day in the Life of Early Childhood Educators.” It demonstrates concretely how the kindergarten teacher and the ECE will share classroom responsibilities.

ETFO's Kindergarten AQ has been in great demand. Most of ETFO's courses are. This summer many of you will be attending Summer Academy workshops or taking PQP courses. Still others will be working on ETFO's new online AQs. Smart choices all.

This is the last issue of this publication year. I wish all of you a wonderful summer of rest and renewal.


JOHANNA BRAND

<http://www.etfovoice.ca>

You can access the features in past issues of *Voice* online.
Go to our website: etfovoice.ca

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ETFO Voice

Johanna Brand - Editor
Gene Lewis - Business Manager
Adele Bertram - Advertising Sales
Artifact graphic design - Design

Contributors not otherwise credited:

Anne Holloway, Mary Morison, Marilies Rettig.

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 Toronto, ON M5G 1V2
 Telephone: 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836
 E-mail: etfovoice@etfo.org

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To: jbrand@etfo.org

Subject: Letters to the editor

Re: EQAO (March 2010)

Your articles this month were a welcome sight. I and most of my colleagues agree so much with what you have said. It's nice to see that we are not the only ones who think like that. We too see the stress on the kids' faces; the lack of fun in the school compared to 30 years ago (when I first started teaching) is so different.

I had the opportunity of working two summers for EQAO as a marker (in the beginning years) – needless to say, what a joke. As we were marking someone would come up and tell us, "You are marking too high" or "You are marking too low." The amount of money spent there was unbelievable: my salary (plus meals), the supervisor, those guys from the States with their computers, renting the building, the courier trucks lined up at the door to collect all that paper (tons of it).

Too bad most people in administration seem to think it's the be all and end all (they honestly believe these results), even though I argue that the tests are not standardized and are never the same test each year. This makes them inaccurate.

In any event, keep plugging the message out. People are starting to listen.

I have asked for your pamphlets for parents regarding EQAO and will hand them out at parent-teacher interviews.

Pierre Martel - Ottawa-Carleton District School Board

ETFO's pamphlet, *Talking About Testing*, is available free of charge from shopETFO.



Heather Clayton, an occasional teacher, is surrounded by students from Highbush Public School in Durham. Clayton was the first person to register for an ETFO online AQ, signing up 10 minutes after registration for the new courses opened on April 15. The federation sent Heather a gift to celebrate this milestone and to thank her for her confidence in ETFO AQs.



SAM HAMMOND
ETFO President

Meeting the Challenges of the Early Learning Program

- Jim Grieve, the assistant deputy minister in charge of the ELP, spoke and answered questions at a meeting of all local presidents earlier this month.

As well ETFO has developed a wide range of professional learning resources for those working in the early learning programs: our Kindergarten AQ, various print resources, and the Kindergarten Makeover video on our website. A new resource, “A Day in the Life of Early Childhood Educators,” demonstrates concretely how the teacher-early childhood educator partnership will work in the classroom.

The ELP has been rolled out very quickly and there is much more to be done. For ETFO and our members there are collective agreement concerns. The average class size of 26 students violates the provisions of a number of our local collective agreements. Simply put, this is unacceptable. As well we worked hard in the last rounds of bargaining to increase teacher preparation time. To be successful, the program must be structured to allow both the teacher and the ECE to have planning time together. That time should be in addition to the time provided in collective agreements. (You will find more on both these issues in Christine Brown’s collective bargaining column on page 35.)

The critical relationship between teachers and early childhood educators, and the working conditions for both, are just two of the reasons the ETFO executive has decided to work to become the union representing ECEs. We recognize the important contributions ECEs make and have supported and advocated for them. If ECEs who work in the Early Learning Program are members of our federation we can negotiate provisions that make it easier for both professionals to do their jobs while taking into account the unique role of each. As well, we will be able to make available to ECEs the high quality professional learning we are renowned for. Being able to learn together will enhance the relationship between teachers and ECEs and will enhance the quality of the program they are able to deliver.

We believe that we are the best organization to represent ECEs working in elementary schools. We know the working environment intimately and we know the challenges that will confront ECEs in school boards across the province. We also know that teachers and ECEs will be better able to work together if all are members of ETFO.

When we are successful, I know that all ETFO members will welcome these new members into our federation.

When school begins next September 600 Ontario elementary schools will open their first early learning program (ELP) classrooms. Children will attend full-day kindergarten and, where numbers warrant, schools will offer an extended day, with programs before and after classes.

The decision the government made in October to have a full-time teacher in the ELP classroom for a full-day, was a significant victory for ETFO. As a result of our comprehensive discussions with government, the supporting legislation – Bill 242, the *Full-Day Learning Statute Law Amendment Act, 2010* – confirms that the teacher has primary responsibility for the program. Teachers will not be required to take an additional qualifications course, before and after school programs are not called classes, and principals cannot delegate responsibility for them to teachers.

ETFO has taken a number of measures to make sure our members are ready for the new program.

- The released vice-presidents and I have been travelling around the province speaking at local meetings and hearing from you.
- Our website has a new ELP page and a portal that allows you to ask questions and post concerns, which will be addressed by ETFO staff.



GENE LEWIS
ETFO General Secretary

The Impact of Public Sector Wage Freezes on ETFO Members

Last fall, after reporting that the province is facing a \$24.7 billion deficit, Premier McGuinty and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan began to muse publicly about how to cut government costs. They floated the idea of unpaid days for public sector workers who, they believed, had not experienced the same negative effects of the recession that private sector workers did. “Dalton Days” were the talk of the town for several weeks before the premier put that idea to rest.

At the end of March the government again put forward the idea of public sector workers paying to help reduce the deficit. The budget called for a wage freeze for all public sector employees, potentially affecting workers covered by some 750 contracts. Some of these contracts, like the ones covering ETFO members, will not expire for two more years.

Finance Minister Dwight Duncan was quoted in the *Toronto Star* as saying: “We will not fund any increases in overall compensation as those agreements get renegotiated. That’s an important point to bear in mind.”¹

The *Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act* was tabled on budget day and ETFO sent the legislation to legal counsel to ensure we would be able to answer members’ questions as they arose.

The Act applies to government and quasi-governmental agencies, including school boards.

However, it does not apply to unionized employees, including ETFO members, because the government has said it “will respect all current collective agreements.”²

But the government also said that when current agreements expire and new contracts are negotiated it will “seek agreements of at least two years’ duration that do not include net compensation increases.” Further, “the fiscal plan provides no funding for compensation increases for future collective agreements. It doesn’t matter whether contracts expire next month, next year or the year after that – all employers and employee groups will be expected to do their part.”³

ETFO members *are* doing their part. For the past two years they have been helping to reduce government costs by earning 2 percent less in salary than other education workers. This saves the government at least \$45 million per year. Elementary educators also are short-changed by the gap in funding between the elementary and secondary panels. The elementary system receives less funding per pupil than is provided for students in the secondary panel. In this regard, elementary teachers and their students have saved the provincial government millions of dollars over the years.

For ETFO members, the next collective agreement is two years down the road. In the meantime, the proposed legislation does not contain any mechanism to prohibit salary increases for unionized employees. Our members will rightfully expect the 2 percent salary deficit to be eliminated. That doesn’t mean the government will not bring pressure to bear. It was heavily involved in the last two rounds of education sector bargaining. Potentially it could be even more hands-on next time. It will likely also exert pressure on school boards to take a tough stand.

We face clear challenges in the next round of bargaining. They are challenges ETFO members working together must be prepared to meet head-on.

.....
Notes

- 1 Robert Benzie. “Budget: Ontario vows freeze on public-sector wages.” *The Toronto Star* Mar 26, 2010
- 2 2010 Ontario Budget: FAQ: Public Sector Compensation Restraint To Protect Public Services Act, 2010, available at <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2010/faq.html>
- 3 2010 Ontario Budget: FAQ

YOUR FEDERATION



*Just like moons and like suns,
With the certainty of tides,
Just like hopes springing high,
Still I'll rise.*

— Maya Angelou

ETFO's annual leadership conference for women, *...and still we rise*, celebrated its tenth anniversary this year. The conference takes its name from the Maya Angelou poem, *Still I Rise*. The theme this year was *Working Together to Create Healthy Schools and Communities*. Speakers, panel discussions, academic presentations, and workshops offered a variety of perspectives on how this goal can be accomplished.

The importance of humour as a key component in maintaining a healthy lifestyle was emphasized by plenary speakers Linda Edgecombe, Sue Stephenson, and Meg Soper.

Linda Edgecombe's keynote address set the tone for the conference. She asked participants to look inside themselves. "Are you doing the best you can? *Re-engage*. Are you on a deferred life plan, leaving things for later? *Re-energize*. When was the last time you did something for the first time? *Re-invent*." Participants were inspired to find the meaning in what they do and let go of what's not working.

An award-winning humourist, Edgecombe helped participants take a different perspective

on the challenges life throws at them every day. "Learn. Love. Laugh. If you are not laughing, you are not learning. All successful people in the world have a great sense of humour."

She went on to say that "leadership and getting a life is no more and no less than the spaces you create. Think of the spaces you create around you at home, or in the classrooms." She reminded her audience that life's ultimate goal is happiness and urged them to find out how to spread happiness around.

Life is about what you give to those around you, she said. "It is just a physics equation. Energy in is equal to energy out. So give off the energy to get it back."

Edgecombe is the author of *Shift or Get off the Pot*. All participants at the conference received a copy of the book.

Comedienne **Meg Soper** also focused on the need for humour and balance to meet the tensions of the workplace and the inevitable obstacles of daily living.

"You need humour to survive life. It's your perspective that keeps you from getting knocked off. Wit, fit, and balance – these are the strategies for success," Soper said. She used humour to inspire the participants to reflect on the state of their spiritual, emotional, and physical "fuel tanks."

Like Edgecombe, Soper noted that an individual has the power to change her perspective. "What counts is not what happens to us, but how we react to what happens to us. You can choose to have a good day or not. You can shift your perspective, find humour. Don't take yourself too seriously. Accept what you can't change; change what you can," she said, reminding the audience that not everything can be controlled: "Do not choose to focus on what doesn't go right. You are blessed because you make a difference in people's lives. You can see the difference you make in the self-esteem of a child from September to June. You are in the business of empowering people."

Sue Stephenson began her presentation by asking people to turn to the person next to them and start laughing. The effect was contagious, and that was her point: she believes laughter is a choice. The laughter continued when she showed a video clip of three babies laughing.



“Laughter,” said Stephenson “prevents hardening of the attitudes.” She outlined the physical benefits that result from laughing and focusing on the positive.

Stand Up for Mental Health (standupformentalhealth.com) is a project that gives individuals with mental health issues an opportunity to learn the art and craft of stand-up comedy. In moving performances, three of the project’s participants demonstrated how they used comedy to address painful episodes in their lives. The project is sponsored by the Mood Disorder Association of Ontario (mooddisorders.on.ca).


Sally Armstrong addressed the theme of creating healthy schools and communities from the perspective of confronting injustice. A human rights activist, documentary filmmaker, and award-winning author, Armstrong focused on the need to take action when confronted with injustice. Her book *The Veiled Threat: The Hidden Power of the Women of Afghanistan* is about the struggles of Afghani women during the Taliban era.

Armstrong talked about the awful consequences of looking the other way when you know something is wrong. She said that for years “for politically correct reasons, people looked the other way and said [what was happening to women in Afghanistan] was not their business. But evil thrives on apathy, so apathy is evil. The nature of goodness has a keen resemblance to intervention.” Armstrong stressed that moral courage is an essential quality of those who are willing to change the world.

Together, women can change the world, Armstrong believes. The women of Afghanistan are now coming together. “This is how change begins,” she said, referring to the successful fight by Afghani women against a law that would have legalized rape in marriage and prevented a woman from leaving the house without her husband’s permission.

Jane Bluestein, an experienced educator, provided participants with ideas on creating emotionally safe school environments that allow children to achieve to their maximum potential. Her most recent book, *Becoming a Win-Win Teacher: A Guide for First-Year Teachers*, has just been published.

Bluestein (janebluestein.com) emphasized the importance of setting limits in the classroom and sticking to them. “Kids need structure and limits,” she said. She outlined the characteristics of effective boundaries and gave examples of how to create win-win situations by offering a range of options so that outcomes are acceptable to both teacher and student.

In addition to plenary speakers the conference featured cultural activities, academic presentations, and union panels. The 400 participants attended workshops focusing on topics such as bullying, racism, environmental issues, body image, Aboriginal perspectives in the curriculum, conflict resolution, and time management. Workshop presenters were ETFO members, union leaders, and women from our communities. Evelyne Datl, Liberty Silver, and the Hothouse Band prepared a special musical presentation. 

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Compiled by **JOHANNA BRAND** and **VITUSHA OBEROI**; photos **ANNE DE HAAS**.



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Experienced Players Hooked on Challenge of Negotiations



Like many other ETFO leaders, Julie Stanley brings years of experience to her position as chief negotiator for the Bluewater Teacher Local. Stanley is typical of a unique group of experienced women negotiators leading collective bargaining teams across the province. She was lured by a zest for life-long learning, a deep commitment to improved working conditions, a willingness to accept a challenge, and a belief in the value of building positive relationships.

Stanley joined the bargaining team at a time when she found herself seeking out new challenges. “That tap on the shoulder and encouragement of my local leadership in 1998–99 was one of the reasons I joined the collective bargaining team. We were charged with the task of negotiating the first agreement following amalgamation,” she recalls.

“ETFO offered leadership opportunities I wasn’t getting in my school board unless I wanted to become an administrator. Being on the bargaining team was a good way to stay informed about what was going on within the federation as well as within the board.”

BY CATHERINE A. COCCHIO

Stanley was confronted with a steep learning curve. She says ETFO women’s-only workshops and leadership training, networking with other chief negotiators, and mentorship from her predecessor helped her adjust to the challenges of the game.

Terry Card, president of Thames Valley Occasional Teachers’ Local, also accepted the challenge of negotiating the first collective agreement of amalgamation.

“When the unions were amalgamated, I went to a meeting to see how my life was going to change. That’s when I decided this is really going to affect me, and if it’s going to be that important to me, I really wanted to have a say in what it was.

“I started off by joining the executive, learned that we were working on our first collective agreement, and participated in that process as an observer in the early stages. It takes a while to get your bearings and see the big picture. Once I realized what it was all about, I felt I had something



Ruth McLean, centre, discusses issues with members of the Upper Grand Teacher Local.



Julie Stanley is the chief negotiator for the Bluewater Teacher Local.

to offer. People seemed to appreciate my input, so I stayed on,” says Card.

“The initial agreement was the most challenging one that I ever negotiated. We began in 1998, and signed in May 2000, narrowly avoiding a strike. We had made up our minds to settle for nothing less than we had in any of the former boards.”

Two years later, Card moved into her current role as president and chief negotiator, leading a team whose members were selected because of their experience, talent with numbers, understanding of contract language, and communication skills. She believes not all training is formal: “I learn from everyone. To improve, I watch the staff officer, and talk to peers.”

In the Upper Grand Teacher Local, Ruth McLean could no longer resist the call to broaden her leadership skills by joining the collective bargaining team in 2001, despite a



Terry Card is president of the Thames Valley Occasional Teacher Local.

busy life juggling teaching, single parenthood, and union involvement. “When I started getting interested in negotiating, I realized it was an important part of overall leadership development. It was an area I hadn’t gotten involved in yet. Before that, I had three small children and was a single parent. I could only cope with going to work every day. I couldn’t give a lot of time to the union. I was involved, but I knew negotiations took a lot of after-school time. As the children grew, I had more time, and I could get more involved.” By 2002 she assumed the role of vice-president, moving on to become president of the local in 2004.

“I had a lot of experience in the union with committee work. The summer before I became president, I read books on leadership and women in leadership to prepare myself. I also spent time teaching myself about negotiations and how that whole flow chart works, so I felt pretty confident,” McLean reflects. She also attended provincial workshops. Her local’s past president, Marina Howlett, provided a tough, collaborative, and effective role model.

Experience and skill

Steeped in experience, all three women bring similar skill sets to the table. “Negotiators need good communications skills, mutual respect, a collaborative attitude, and good day-to-day working relationships with the board,” according to McLean. “Good organizational and presentation skills are also key.”

To that list, Stanley would add the ability to solve problems creatively, flexibility, and a good memory. “You have to be willing to take a risk, and able to think clearly with little sleep. And you have to remember that you don’t know everything. I rely on everyone else on the team for input; my president and vice-president definitely.”

Terry Card believes that “having a broad picture of the perspectives of the board, your local membership, and provincial issues is important. Having patience, and an

understanding that progress can be slow and incremental, are essential. Building a strong collective agreement takes time. You also have to communicate so that your members know where you've been, and where you're going."

Communicating with members is important, but it's equally important to communicate with administration, Ruth McLean argues. "Laying the groundwork for negotiations starts years before in labour management meetings, when you're suggesting solutions. It only culminates at negotiations. At that point, you put the suggestions into collective agreement language and bargain them. By then, they're not new to management. They're used to it and expect to see it at the table."

"I'm not one to butt heads," McLean continued. "I have a strong belief in the power of positive relationships; that may be seen as more of a feminine trait but I'm sure there are some men who approach it this way too. Once you get the other side to understand the problem, there's mutual goodwill to come up with a solution."

"When things get difficult, I'll be tough," Card adds. "I'll stick to what I think, but to be effective, you have to be collaborative. You have to understand the other side's problem. When you can show them you do, they appreciate it. Then you try to explain your side and get at what can be done to address the issue. Not everyone has that style. No matter how collaborative you want to be, if management doesn't, you're stuck."

Card agrees that differences in the way people approach negotiating are more often related to personality than gender: "I've only worked with one male staff officer, the rest have been female." Julie Stanley can't comment on differences between male and female negotiating styles, since in the last few years all of her table teams have been women only. Provincial numbers indicate that about 60 percent of chief negotiators or presidents serving as such are female, so it's not so surprising these three locals have limited experience with male negotiators and/or staff officers.


"We always try to have at least one man on our committee," Stanley says, "but they seem to have other things come up and they're unable to stay on. We train them, but before they really get to sink their teeth into it, they're on to something else. Having men on the committee is not so much a question of equity, it's a matter of representation of your membership."

Challenges and rewards

Each of these leaders is energized by the challenge of meeting the demands of her position. For McLean one of the biggest challenges is creating a solution that's doable and acceptable to the other side on issues like workload. Her greatest reward, and one of the reasons she enjoys negotiating, is seeing areas of concern get addressed and the local's ideas come to fruition: "We worked for years to get gains in our top-up for maternity leave, and an increase to eight hours from seven for EI. Finally, this round was successful. That was gratifying."

According to Terry Card, "Negotiating isn't much different than occasional teaching. If you've prepared the best you can, then you enter negotiations with confidence. You anticipate responses from the board, so you can develop strategies." Card takes advantage of every opportunity to educate the board about issues unique to occasional teachers. With each changeover in administration, the education process begins again. But seeing how each agreement builds toward improvement keeps her in the game. Keeping her eye on the prize is key, Card acknowledges: "The biggest reward is always getting a good agreement."

Julie Stanley agrees. "In the end, the biggest reward is reaching a deal, and knowing you've helped make positive changes in a collective agreement that's going to improve members' working conditions. Every day when you answer questions, you know you've helped someone." But Stanley admits it's sometimes difficult to keep things in perspective. "Juggling school, ETFO obligations, and personal life is difficult during negotiations. You have two jobs. I could go a whole year and not be at school five days in a row, yet I was still preparing, evaluating, and doing report cards as a full-time teacher. Now I have .4 release time. That has made a huge difference. I now schedule time for myself on Tuesday nights to play volleyball."

Comparing negotiating to a game in which everyone plays a role, Stanley explains that the team gets to know each other's strengths and weaknesses and learns to recognize how they complement each other. "There's a lot of wait and see. There's making a wish list, and being willing to let go of certain things in order to get what you really need out of a deal," she says. In the end, debriefing with chocolate and humour helps the Bluewater team keep its perspective. It's a strategy few would argue against. 



Connecting with the Community to Help Women in Need

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The 150-year-old Federation House serves as a hub for local groups.

BY KAREN FISK

In Hastings-Prince Edward the Elementary Teachers' Federation Teacher Local (ETFO H-PE) has become more than an organization for its members – it is an integral part of the community. The ETFO office, known as Federation House, is a 150-year-old house purchased in partnership with OSSTF, District 29. It is located in a residential area and offers meeting space to the Labour Council, Workers' Help Centre, United Way committees, affordable housing groups, political action groups, and many other organizations that assist the community. ETFO H-PE also supports local groups through charitable funding to Coats for Kids, United Way, People Helping People, women's shelters, and food banks.

As a result of our central location and connection to many organizations, the ETFO H-PE local has become known for its willingness to work on community issues. This is what led Shawn Susan Doyle, a registered social service worker and facilitator of adult learning, to request a meeting with me last March. The meeting was the beginning of a unique undertaking to address the issue of women and poverty in Belleville. Shawn wanted to establish an outreach program directed at empowering marginalized women. "Downtown Chat" would involve reaching out to women who frequent Belleville's downtown core. Women would be invited to a safe non-judgmental (downtown) environment where they could come together, talk about their hopes and dreams, and share their stories. Shawn would facilitate the program and help women recognize the skills and abilities they have acquired through life experience.

.....
Photos: **Karen Fisk**



Katharine Davis, Shawn Doyle, and Karen Fisk.

Education and support services must come to the street. Programs must be women-centred: that is, designed specifically for women.

Support from ETFO

Intrigued by Shawn's desire to learn more about how to help these women, I applied to ETFO provincial office for funding. As identified in its constitution, ETFO is committed to promoting social justice in the areas of anti-poverty, non-violence, and equity. This project fit these ideals to a T. The funding helped Shawn to carry out her investigation. For the next 32 weeks, she gathered assessment data. In November, when she was finished, a summary report of the project, *Downtown Chat: A Community Scan of Marginalized Women in Downtown Belleville*, was submitted to ETFO.

The results of Shawn's work were overwhelming. The stories the report told were poignant and motivating. Shawn used her skills creatively to reach street-involved women. She approached them with respect and acceptance. She said she learned that what was required was "inclusive thinking and action and not a mentality of 'us and them'." This group of people is not going away and are an important part of our community. An anti-bias inclusive 'we' attitude needs to be adopted by all service providers and members of our community in order to find solutions to problems experienced by street-involved women."

Shawn found that "traditional outreach strategies have failed and new ways of reaching homeless, transient, and street-involved women had to be established and tested." Education and support services must come to the street. Programs must be women-centred: that is, designed specifically for women.

A key partner identified in the report was the Organic Underground, a progressive, grassroots, downtown café. Founder Katharine Davis is a compassionate leader who lives social justice every day. She and her partners in the co-operative strive to address the needs of the downtown community and provide numerous programs and projects to help people combat isolation, inequity, and injustice. The Organic Underground

offers women a safe space to meet. Here they receive free meals, shelter and street health advocacy services, and access to health care professionals, community resources, and information. Katharine Davis's spirit and dedication have inspired many, including me.

Next steps

The investigative work Shawn Doyle did identified a need for action. Her report advocated a not-for-profit women's community centre for the downtown core, operated by community partners working together. It also saw street-involved women themselves as the key to success.

While many community partners indicated an interest in helping out, a more organized effort was required. In January ETFO H-PE's equity and social justice committee sponsored and funded a community forum at a local church. Over 100 people attended to learn about "Downtown Chat." Shawn presented her report and experiences. Katharine talked about the work already happening through the Organic Underground. Jody, a woman who has experienced life on the streets first-hand, related her story. I spoke about ETFO's involvement and the federation's commitment to addressing the issues of poverty and interest in finding

Women's stories



- Because rent, hydro, and baby formulas are her priority, Lucinda's food is limited to soda crackers, Mr. Noodles, and cereal (dry because there is no milk). When she is at the Organic Underground (OU), she has several "5s & 4s" (five sugars and four creams) in her coffee for energy. Her new apartment is small and clean, but her landlord took advantage of her by providing a refrigerator that was cracked on the inside with the insulation falling out and covered in black mould. In spite of her hardships, Lucinda says that without the help of Katharine and all the people at the OU she would not be here.
- Miss Eva lives in an upstairs apartment in a building that often houses dangerous people in dangerous situations. She is elderly, on a fixed income, deaf, and very lonely. She is subjected to living among people with addictions, mental illness and violence, but these are her friends. She frequents the OU, where she is safe to sit down and enjoy her milk and toast. She needs the OU even more now because the city has removed the benches from Behrens Park, where Miss Eva and her friends used to meet and socialize in the mornings.
- Lily, a woman suffering from addictions, is dependent upon her controlling and often violent partner for shelter and drugs. She spends the daylight hours in the downtown core where, in public view, she is relatively safe. She is able to get a drink of water at the OU when she experiences her bouts of vomiting and is alone on the street in the mornings. One day she was wearing a ski jacket in 27-degree weather. When asked if she would like help to take it off, she was afraid to because her partner insisted she wear it.
- Nadine is working downtown but does not make ends meet and has multiple challenges. She also has relationship problems and is often in abusive relationships with men who take advantage of her good nature. The hydro and heat in the apartment where she has been living for the past eight years were cut off recently. Her friend next door ran an extension cord over to her house so she could have some heat. Her friend's landlord found out and now she has been charged with theft.
- Nevada spends much of her time on the street selling her handknit dish cloths. She is deaf and alone. She tells me she is bullied by her peers much of the time and says she doesn't even let people know that she has a place to live because somebody would overpower her and move in. She said she has been trying to get another job washing dishes – she likes washing dishes. She was badly treated by her last employer and so she gave him attitude and he fired her. She knows she cannot give attitude if she expects to keep a job but it is hard when you are being abused in the workplace.

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Adapted from:

"Downtown Chat – Phase One – A Community Scan of Marginalized Women in Downtown Belleville, Including Outcomes And Recommendations," by Shawn Susan Doyle.
The women's names have been changed.



ways to support children living in poverty. Participants were challenged to consider their own perspectives on poverty, and to reflect and examine stereotypes and assumptions.

It was also time to consider next steps. Roundtable discussions looked at who was at the table. We considered the idea of creating a not-for-profit organization for the purpose of establishing a centre for women and children in downtown Belleville. We looked at barriers to initiatives and what individuals, organizations, or groups could contribute. There were many positive comments and creative ideas. There was overwhelming evidence of interconnectedness.

To maintain the momentum and synergy, regular communication has continued with the participants. Numerous community partnerships have been formed, with the Organic Underground as a flagship organization.

What's next? Our small group continues to meet and plan. We are actively working toward finding sustainable funding sources and colla-

borative community partners who are willing to contribute to the creation and operation of a centre. Positive discussions with professionals experienced in creating not-for-profit workers' cooperatives are underway. In the meantime staff at the Organic Underground are donating their time and are continuing to expand vital services and education to women, children, and youth in downtown Belleville.

In spite of the barriers and challenges, we are making progress: meetings happen, meaningful dialogue continues, and spirits are raised. There is joy and hope; there is vision and potential; there is dedication and community. As teachers and local leaders, we are a community. We know we need to continue to raise awareness of poverty and the importance of education in alleviating poverty. We are actively involved and we *are* making a difference. ✓

To learn more

A copy of "Downtown Chat: A Community Scan of Marginalized Women in Downtown Belleville" can be viewed at etfohp.on.ca → News.

Information on the work of Shawn Susan Doyle is available at ALFICan.ca.

The Organic Underground is located at 255 Front Street, Belleville.

KAREN FISK is the president of the ETFO Hastings-Prince Edward Teacher Local.



Benin Big Book Project

Creating books for young learners

BY ANNE RODRIGUE AND JOAN LITTLEFORD

“The more you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you’ll go.”

— Dr. Seuss,
“I Can Read with My Eyes Shut!”

“We want to learn how best to teach young children to read but we don’t have any books,” said the teachers working in schools piloting an early years program in Benin.

During the summer of 2008 we were working in Benin, in partnership with Right To Play, the Benin Ministry of Education, and the Benin teacher union, SYNAEM, to develop and implement a new curriculum. The Benin government has undertaken a pilot program to establish play-based early learning programs in its schools. Its new curriculum document encourages teachers to apply reading strategies appropriate for beginning readers that include shared reading. Teachers in our program asked for some specific professional development focused on the emergent reader.

How to teach young readers without books was a real dilemma for these teachers. Our goal was to meet their needs, so we revised our training schedule and quickly put together some ideas on how to make our new training plan work. At the local bookstore we found some French fairy tales, some Dora books, and a few texts written in South Africa, which we used as examples of why they needed to write their own books. We explained teaching/learning strategies geared to young children, and showed the teachers how to write texts that were simple, clear, and culturally appropriate.

Posters promote education for young people.



Students staged scenes to photograph for their books.



The Big Book Project is launched

In the course of our work with these teachers, we realized we needed a plan: this was the first step in the ETFO Big Book Project, which aims to produce books created in Benin. The project has evolved over time. We received generous donations from the Reading for the Love of It outreach program; the Alpha Gamma Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa, an international sorority for women; ETFO locals; and members who attended the 2009 ETFO annual meeting.

We assembled kits containing a digital camera, printer, adapter, two memory cards, and extra ink and paper for the printer. Each item in the kit was carefully labelled so that it could be shared and tracked.

Retired teacher Jeff Young offered to contribute his expertise in design and photography. Young is the co-founder of Village Galleries (villagegalleries.org) and in 2007 spent 10 days in the Monduli District of Tanzania conducting workshops in storytelling using photography.

We went back to Benin in March. For a week, 18 teachers from across Benin convened in the SYNAEM office, in the city of Cotonou, to start working on the Big Book Project. They spent their mornings learning to develop texts appropriate for the beginning reader and their afternoons learning how to take photographs that helped to tell the story.



Students took photos of scenes in their community.





Back in class, students compare photos.

We quickly understood that few, if any, of our group had handled a camera before. There were many shots of ceilings and floors and even their own faces as they learned the art of taking clear photos. However, by the second day, teachers were photographing everything in sight. We sent them to the streets to shoot photos of people buying and selling. We set up the printers around the training room, and when the teachers returned they were astonished to see their beautiful photographs become a concrete reality.

By the end of the week, teachers had chosen eight Big Book topics and drafted texts. They went out again to take photographs – two for each of their books. They were gone for so long we wondered what they could be doing, but when they reconvened we marvelled at the results.

Helping girls stay in school

One of the goals of the early learning program is to increase the number of girls attending school. For one thing, when young children attend school their older sisters aren't required to stay at home to care for them. The book project furthers this goal by providing models for the girls and by highlighting, for their parents, the importance of letting girls stay in school. Two of the books the teachers produced were specifically geared toward young girls. One was the Cinderella-like story of Baké, a poor little five-year-old girl sent to work for her aunt. Evocative photography, props, secondary characters, and wardrobe

Benin Big Book Project

changes brought the story to life.


Other books also dealt with topics of importance to the community. *Water Is Life* will become an important environmental text that reminds children that all living things require water and that it is a resource to be treasured. The teachers included photographs of a poster they found showing how a child becomes dehydrated when not given enough water.

Yet another group set up outside our training room to create a procedural book demonstrating proper hand washing – an important daily task at school and necessary to protect children against disease.

Beniniwood!

We admired the persistence and ingenuity of these teachers. We coined a new phrase: there is Hollywood, Bollywood, and now Beniniwood! These industrious and creative teachers felt privileged to be part of the Big Book Project and thanked their ETFO colleagues every day. They are currently completing the texts, reshooting some photos, and developing lesson plans to accompany their books.

We cannot let them down. We have some funds to begin producing the books. However, our goal is to raise enough money to distribute complete sets of Big Books to all 500 publicly funded schools in Benin and to sell sets to the 300 private schools. If we are able to do so, young children in Benin, will – for the first time – see themselves, their homes, their customs, and their communities reflected in books. Reading resources will be available for all to access.

Thank you to all who have contributed to the Big Book Project. Please continue to help us make this dream a reality for our colleagues in Benin. 

For Women with Disabilities, Numbers Tell a Story

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, the phrase “living wage” is a highly theoretical notion.

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, you have lots of company – over 2.3 million people, in fact. You are a part of the 17.7 percent of women in the adult population who report, as Statistics Canada phrases it, an “activity limitation.” The comparable figure for men is 15.4 percent.*

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, you may have a learning disability, a sensory- or mobility-related disability, a disability related to mental health, or a disability of another kind. It is possible that pain is a part of your daily reality. For working-age adults with disabilities, the most common activity limitations are pain and discomfort. These affect 74.4 percent of working-age adults with disabilities, and are more common for you than for your male counterpart who has a disability.


If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, you may be one of the 24.8 percent to have a college diploma, or the 5.7 percent to have attained a bachelor’s degree. Your male counterpart will be less likely to have either (18.3 percent and 5.1 percent respectively), but will be more likely than you to have a trades or registered apprenticeship certificate (19.2 percent versus 10.8 percent).

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, you are much less likely than your female counterpart without a disability to participate in the labour force (that is, to be working or looking for work), or to be employed. You are part of a group of women whose employment rate is 52.1 percent. Your next door neighbour without a dis-

ability is part of a group whose rate is 70.1 percent.

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, you might take part in volunteer or unpaid work. Working-age women are more likely to volunteer than working-age men, though among seniors the rate is the same.

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, the phrase “living wage” is a highly theoretical notion. Your average salary is \$24,720, while that of a man with a disability is \$36,240. It will come as no surprise to you that your employment income is not only significantly less than that of a man with a disability, but that both of you earn significantly less than your respective counterparts without disabilities. You may, however, be surprised to learn that between 2001 and 2006, your average income increased by \$1,010, while that of a man with a disability decreased by \$890.

If you are a woman with a disability living in Canada, and you also happen to be a union member, you are part of a fortunate minority. Your employment income is still significantly less than that of your male counterpart with a disability – \$35,677 versus \$49,152. On the other hand, the non-unionized woman with a disability who works in the office across the street from you earns \$21,983. She could use a union. 

*All data are based on 2006 figures. Sources include: Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, “Advancing the Inclusion of People with Disabilities,” 2009, and other data from Statistics Canada’s Participation and Activity Limitation Survey, 2006.

CHRISTINE BROWN is ETFO’s coordinator of Protective Services

Bill 168:

Groundbreaking Protection from Harassment and Violence

BY PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS SERVICES STAFF

Bill 168 provides you with important new rights and recognizes that you have the right to be protected from harassment and violence.

Over the last several years the provincial government has launched various safe schools initiatives. Studies were conducted and safe school teams established. There was greater recognition of and emphasis on the harmful effects of bullying and cyber bullying. The government put in place new policies and approaches focusing on protecting students from violence.¹

Now, the legislative focus is squarely on the safety of workers. Bill 168 amends the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)* and comes into effect June 15. The amendments provide workers with increased protection from workplace violence and harassment. ETFO members should look for information and training from employers about their new rights and protections.

Bill 168 creates new rights for workers

While the amendments bring about many changes four are key for education.

Employers must keep records about persons with a history of violence (this includes students). They must provide this information to those who may encounter these persons in the course of their duties and who may be at risk of injury as a result of workplace violence.

Employers must put in place new policies and

programs that deal with workplace violence and harassment. This must include measures to assess and control risks.

Employers must provide information that tells workers how to get immediate help, how to report violent incidents, and how they will address incidents.

Employers must consider domestic violence and take every reasonable precaution to protect workers when there is a risk of injury in the workplace.

Definitions of workplace violence and harassment

The definition of workplace harassment in Bill 168 is quite broad. It now encompasses more than harassment as defined in the *Human Rights Code*, since it is not based on prohibited grounds – for example, race or gender. Bill 168 states:

“‘Workplace harassment’ means:

Engaging in a course of vexatious comment or conduct against a worker in a workplace that is known or ought reasonably to be known to be unwelcome.”

Workplace harassment may include bullying, intimidating or offensive jokes or innuendos, displaying or circulating offensive pictures or materials, or offensive or intimidating phone calls.²

This new definition should capture bullying and cyber bullying (which are of particular concern to ETFO members) and other types of psychological harassment.

Workplace violence

Bill 168 distinguishes between harassment and violence and sets out different rights and obligations for each. Employers are obligated to protect workers from violence even if it is unintentional and the perpetrator may not appreciate the nature of her/his actions. The definition of workplace violence is focused on actual or threatened physical force and injury.

“Workplace violence’ means:

- (a) the exercise of physical force by a person against a worker, in a workplace, that causes or could cause physical injury to the worker
- (b) an attempt to exercise physical force against a worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker
- (c) a statement or behaviour that it is reasonable for a worker to interpret as a threat to exercise physical force against the worker, in a workplace, that could cause physical injury to the worker.”³

The Ontario Ministry of Labour has published some very basic guidelines, resources, and draft policies on harassment and violence. These are available on the Ministry of Labour website (labour.gov.on.ca).

Risk assessments

Bill 168 also mandates that employers assess the risks of violence that may arise from the nature of the workplace, and the type and conditions of work. Assessments must take into account circumstances that would be common to similar workplaces as well as those unique to a specific workplace.

Employers are to report the findings of assessments to joint health and safety committees. They must reassess as often as necessary to ensure the workplace violence policy continues to protect employees. Workplace joint health and safety committees are entitled to copies of the risk assessment.

Domestic violence

Bill 168 requires employers to take every reasonable precaution to protect workers from incidents of domestic violence that would likely result in physical injury in the workplace. The bill does not define the term domestic violence and emphasis is


placed only on physical injury. School boards should draft policies, create websites, and distribute information that encourage workers who have experienced domestic violence to report their circumstances to a designated person so that safety plans can be developed. Educators who are experiencing domestic violence and who fear that it may follow them into the workplace should report it and ask that the school board develop a safety plan to protect them at work and in work-related sites, such as parking lots.

Disclosure of information about persons with violent history

Another key aspect of Bill 168 is the obligation of employers to provide information, including personal information, about a person with a history of violent behaviour. This disclosure requirement is triggered if employees could be expected to encounter the person in the course of their duties, and if there is a risk of workplace violence likely to result in physical injury. School boards are not permitted to disclose more than is reasonably necessary to protect staff from physical injury.

From our perspective, safety takes priority over confidentiality. There are no clear rules yet about how this type of sensitive information will be disclosed, but it is clear that it must be disclosed.

The right to refuse unsafe work

Section 43 of the OHS Act grants workers the right to refuse unsafe work. Bill 168 adds that workers may refuse to work, or do particular work, “where workplace violence is likely to endanger [them].”⁴ However, teachers may only exercise their right to refuse work if their students are not in jeopardy. Students cannot be left unsupervised and, in the case of a work refusal, alternative supervision should be arranged. 

Notes

- 1 See PRS Matters, vol. 51, “Bill 157 - Keeping Our Kids Safe at School Act” and vol. 43, “Changes to the Safe Schools: Act Bill 212: What you Need to Know.” Available at etfo.ca → *Advice for members* → *PRS Matters Bulletins*.
Also see Policy/Program Memoranda 144 and 145, available at edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm.html
- 2 labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/sawo/pubs/fs_workplaceviolence.php
- 3 *ibid.*
- 4 labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/wpvh/violence.php

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Mathematics, Primary and Junior - Specialist
Mathematics, Grades 7 and 8
Media – Part 1
Media – Part 2
Mentoring
Primary Education – Part 1
Primary Education – Part 2
Reading – Part 1
Reading – Part 2
Reading – Specialist
Science and Technology, Grades 7 and 8
Special Education – Part 1
Special Education – Part 2
Special Education – Specialist
Teacher of Native Children
Teaching Combined Grades
Teaching and Learning Through e-learning
Writing – Part 1
Writing – Part 2

ETFO Works to End

BY CAROL ZAVITZ

As recently as 40 years ago, violence against women* was an unmentionable subject in Canada.

From 1967 to 1970, members of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada travelled around the country, charged with “inquir[ing] into . . . the status of women in Canada . . . to ensure for women equal opportunities with men in all aspects of Canadian society.” They held hearings, hired researchers, and heard from thousands of Canadian women. Their report, published 40 years ago, included 167 excellent recommendations, covering a vast range of areas where action should be taken to improve the status of women. Not one mentioned violence against women as an issue affecting women’s equality in Canada.

By 1982, our official knowledge of the issue of “battered wives” had advanced to the point that NDP MP Margaret Mitchell called on the federal government to take action on violence against women. In her book *No Laughing Matter* (Granville Island Publishing, 2007), she described her experience in the House of Commons:

On May 12th I rose in the House to raise the urgent need for government action on a serious and widespread issue. “The parliamentary report on battered wives states that one in ten Canadian husbands beat their wives regularly,” I began. Before I could continue, an uproar of male shouts and laughter erupted, making it impossible for me to be heard. A nearby Tory joked, “I don’t beat my wife. Do you, George?” When the Speaker finally got order, I rose again in fury. “Madam Speaker, I do not think this is a laughing matter. What action will the Minister responsible for the Status of Women undertake immediately at the federal level to protect battered women?”

*This article contains information about the abuse of women by their intimate male partners. We recognize that abuse can exist in any familial setting: men experience violence and abuse by female partners, and abuse also occurs in same-sex relationships.

The terms “violence against women,” “woman abuse,” and “gender-based violence” are used interchangeably here.

Today, though we have a greater understanding of the seriousness and extent of violence against women, women are no less vulnerable. Each day seems to bring new accounts of horrifying abuse of women and girls – in war zones, in repressive political and religious regimes, in our institutions, and in our homes. Woman abuse occurs in every country and every culture. It arises from and perpetuates the social, economic, and political inequality of women.

The motivation for abuse is power and control. The abuse can be physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, economic, and spiritual. Abusers use fear, humiliation, and intimidation. ETFO is a union committed to social justice, with a particular commitment to activism to improve the status of women. Eliminating violence against women has always been one strong focus of ETFO’s advocacy work. ETFO honours and supports the work of the many underfunded community agencies, shelters, and second-stage housing providers that assist women and children whose lives are affected by violence.

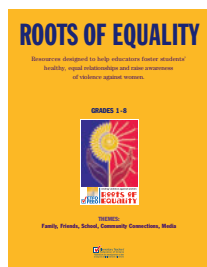
BREAKING THE SILENCE

Working in partnership with Springtide Resources, ETFO has offered its women members *Breaking the Silence* workshops since 1999. Participants learn about the dynamics of woman abuse and explore what women in violent situations need from us, as educators and as sisters. We know from this experience that many ETFO members are themselves survivors of woman abuse, and that others are currently living in abusive situations. Recognizing that violence against women cannot be eliminated by women alone, in 2005 ETFO developed a *Breaking the Silence* workshop that includes men.

Members attending these workshops describe how their female students continue

Violence Against Women

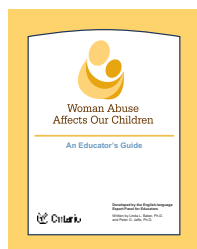
to believe they are not equal to boys. They describe how many boys and young men act out scripts of male dominance and entitlement. Participants consistently express a need to work creatively with their colleagues, parents, and students to identify and prevent violence and abuse, and they ask for classroom resources that will help raise students' awareness about woman abuse, counter gender stereotyping, and educate about respectful, equal relationships.



ROOTS OF EQUALITY

In response to these needs, we developed the *Roots of Equality* project, which was made possible in part by the Ontario government's decision, in 2004, to make outreach to elementary

teachers and students a priority as part of its Domestic Violence Action Plan. Between 2006 and 2008, in partnership with Springtide Resources and with financial support from the Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD), ETFO members created English-language lesson plans, tip sheets for educators and parents, and workshops for grade 7 and 8 girls' conferences. In 2010, French-language materials will be available (including the lesson plans in this issue of *Voice*). These materials are all available free of charge on the ETFO website etfo.ca → *Resources* → *For Teachers*.



WOMAN ABUSE AFFECTS OUR CHILDREN

The focus of *Woman Abuse Affects Our Children* is to help those working with elementary students identify and provide support for children affected by woman abuse. In

addition to resources for use in English-lan-

guage elementary classrooms in Ontario, the OWD has provided funding for the workshops that ETFO has been delivering for the past three years.

Members have been sharing their learning with colleagues around the province (see the article by Clare Nixon, page 26). In the fall of 2008, all Ontario publicly funded elementary schools received copies of *Woman Abuse Affects Our Children: An Educator's Guide*. All the materials, including instructional videos and resource lists, are available free of charge at curriculum.org/womanabuse.

We recognize the contributions of the OWD in helping elementary students learn to recognize and value healthy, equal relationships, and in helping elementary educators recognize and assist children living with woman abuse.

STILL WE RISE

It was women's activism that led to the creation of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women in Canada in 1967, and since then women's activism has led to many positive transformations in all our lives. Working with our brothers and with our community partners, we celebrate our achievements, and each other, because the work against woman abuse still needs doing! As educators, ETFO members are in a powerful position to do violence prevention through teaching and modelling respectful relationships. ✓

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

Ending Violence Against Women, Executive Summary. Report of the Secretary-General. United Nations, 9 October 2006. un.org/womenwatch/daw/vaw/launch/english/v.a.w-exeE-use.pdf.

.....
CAROL ZAVITZ is an executive assistant in Equity and Women's Services at ETFO.

Local workshop dispels myths

BY CLARE NIXON

Fact Not Fiction

51 percent of all Canadian women have experienced at least one incident of sexual or physical violence. Close to 60 percent of these women have survived more than one incident of violence.

Six out of 10 victims who reported being sexually assaulted were under 17.

80 percent of sexual assaults occur at home.

49 percent of assaults occur in broad daylight.

Statistics taken from Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children, "Statistics Sheet: Sexual Assault." Available at metrac.org → *Prevention Programs* → *Violence Against Women and Girls*.



Clare Nixon

A SHOCKING REVELATION

Can you imagine? An upset student discloses that, after years of sexual abuse, her father has impregnated her? A student is withdrawn and anxious and his grades drop. Discussions reveal his mother is regularly beaten. Would you know how to help these students?

ATTENDING A WORKSHOP CHANGED US

In January, Paula Carmichael and I attended the *Woman Abuse Affects Our Children* workshop in Ottawa and returned all fired up. We wanted the information we had received to get to our members, who teach primarily in small rural communities in a geographically large board. We put together a list of goals for a possible workshop and arranged to speak at our next executive meeting. We hoped that

- teachers would gain a better understanding of woman abuse and its effects on children
- develop a greater comfort level in dealing with children and families in distress
- understand that they are very often the first source of help and it is their duty to report
- understand the role of the Children's Aid Society (CAS) and the work it does.

TEAMWORK

Our presentation was enthusiastically received, and our president, treasurer, and professional development committee met to discuss funding and assign tasks to make the workshop a reality. We have a policy in our local of having as many paid PD workshops for our members as possible. Among other things, this encourages members to take a risk and attend PD that is not curriculum-based.

Photos: Sylvia van Campen



Paula Carmichael

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

Twenty members attended the workshop we organized. We kick-started the sessions by listing some myths and facts about woman abuse. That woman abuse crosses all social boundaries was an important realization for many.

Next, Jackie MacWilliam, child and youth outreach coordinator at Lanark County Interval House, discussed possible behaviours exhibited by children with abused mothers and strategies to help these children. It surprised many to learn that some abusive spouses will deny their partners access to hygiene articles, money or bank cards, or a phone.

Many participants commented that this speaker's presentation would help them to recognize signs of abuse in their students, while others noted how woman abuse can affect a child's overall ability to learn. Knowing how to support these children not only helps them but often improves the classroom they are in. A student told one of our speakers that she loved going to school even though she didn't actually like school itself. Sometimes school is a child's only safe space. A letter from a child of a formerly abused woman urged us, as teachers, to take action when woman abuse is suspected. Many of us were moved to tears.


After lunch, Christine Kealy, who is with the Lanark Children's Aid Society, shared statistics and background and, more importantly, discussed the requirement to report. Section 72 of the *Child and Family Services Act* lays out the reporting requirements clearly. **Any person who notices a child in distress and suspects abuse has a legal obligation to report to the CAS themselves.**

Barb Lotan, public education coordinator for the Lanark County Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Program offered information about the medical treatments these families can require. We were amazed to learn that the cost of abuse runs into the billions. We did not realize that hospitals in our area are now asking people over the age of 16, "Do you feel safe at home?" Many were shocked to learn the legal age of consent to sexual activity is 16.

FEEDBACK

Participants' comments revealed their appreciation of the opportunity to attend this workshop.

"I really enjoyed the 'myths and facts' session because it did highlight one of my own misconceptions, one I can work at correcting."

"The speakers were great and they talked about what's going on, what's happening, and it's real." 

Resources

Woman Abuse Affects Our Children: An Educator's Guide and Woman Abuse Affects Our Children: A Facilitator's Manual are available at curriculum.org/womanabuse.

To inquire about workshops contact Carol Zavitz at provincial office; czavitz@etfo.org.

CLARE NIXON is chair of the Status of Women Committee of the Upper Canada Occasional Teacher Local

Les racines de l'égalité

1^{re} année - French Immersion

Teddy Slater

Les ennuis de Julie

Scholastic, 2007

ISBN 978-0-545-99895-6

Synopsis

Que ferais-tu si on intimidait un de tes amis? Une histoire qui démontre que même les meilleurs alliés et les meilleures alliées peuvent être impuissants devant une situation où un ami ou une amie est victime d'intimidation.

Attentes du curriculum

Oral Communication

- Extend understanding of oral texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge and experience.
- Use visual and verbal cues (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, tone of voice) to communicate needs and express feelings.
- Give a short presentation.

Reading

- Express their reactions to text.
- Respond to written materials, relating the content to their own knowledge and experience.
- Extend their understanding of a story through follow-up activities.

Writing

- Create short written texts for specific purposes.
- Organize information so that the writing conveys a clear message (e.g., describe events in proper sequence).

Objectifs

- Apprendre à ne pas juger d'après les apparences, à apprécier les différentes qualités de l'autre.
- Prendre conscience que nous avons tous des qualités différentes et que cette réalité fait la richesse de nos vies.
- Savoir juger des dangers de certaines situations et discuter des choix.
- Comment agir devant l'agression?

Matériel

- Papier grand format
- Crayons-feutres

Activités suggérées

Lire le livre en laissant de côté la question à la fin de l'histoire.

Demander aux élèves de raconter dans leurs mots ce qui vient de se passer. Écrire les réponses sur une grande feuille de papier divisée en trois, en précisant si cette partie appartient au début (présentation de Julie, présentation de Marianne), au milieu (apogée avec la montée de la violence), ou à la fin de l'histoire (la question).

Une augmentation de la violence se produit à l'apogée de l'histoire. Pourquoi pensez-vous que cela a été possible?

Faire prendre conscience aux élèves que l'auteur n'a pas encore écrit le dénouement de son histoire. Pourquoi pensez-vous que l'auteur n'a pas conclu son histoire? Par groupes de deux, discuter d'un dénouement possible, l'écrire et le présenter sous forme de sketch. Utiliser la question du livre : « Et toi, que ferais-tu si ton ami(e) se faisait agresser? »



Prolongements

Regarder la première partie. À quoi correspond-elle? (présentation de Julie) Pourquoi est-il important de présenter Julie dès le début?

Dans la deuxième partie, la présentation de Marianne, quels sont les traits de Marianne qui la rendent différente? Demander aux élèves de plier une feuille de papier deux fois afin d'obtenir quatre sections. Dans chaque section, chaque enfant écrira et dessinera une de ses qualités. Discuter des qualités par groupes de deux.

Ressources supplémentaires

Jane Bingham

La colère

Soline, 2007

ISBN : 978-2-84892-073-3

Note : À la fin de ce livre, de nombreuses activités de réflexion sont offertes aux parents et au personnel enseignant.

Claudie Stanké Barroux

Non, non, c'est non!

Le Seuil, Les 400 Coups, 2004.

ISBN : 2-89540-186-1

Grade 4 - Core French

Teddy Slater *Les ennuis de Julie*

Scholastic, 2007
ISBN 978-0-545-99895-6

Synopsis

C'est l'histoire d'une jeune fille, Julie, qui est victime d'intimidation par d'autres jeunes de l'école. Son amie, Marianne, ne la défend pas parce qu'elle a peur de se faire aggraver à son tour.

Attentes du curriculum

Oral Communication

- Ask very simple questions, and ask for repetition to clarify understanding.

Reading

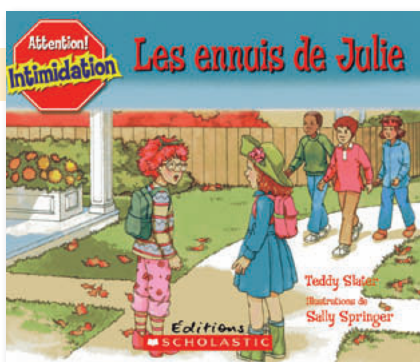
- Read aloud familiar material, using correct pronunciation and intonation.

Writing

- Write responses to very simple questions.

Objectif

- Faciliter une discussion avec les étudiants sur le fait d'être l'observateur ou l'observatrice d'une agression et de ne pas intervenir.



Matériel

- Les feuilles d'exercices *Faire partie du problème/Faire partie de la solution*.

Activités suggérées

- Faire une description de Julie et une description de Marianne sous forme de listes.
- Poser des questions simples au sujet des différences et des similitudes et discuter de la façon de traiter quelqu'un qui semble « différent ». (*Discussion in English*)
- Demander aux élèves de lire à haute voix une page chacun.
- Compléter les feuilles d'exercices *Faire partie du problème/Faire partie de la solution*. (*Do this in English, if your students do not have enough French vocabulary yet.*)

Prolongement

- Faire une entrevue avec Julie au sujet de ses expériences à l'école.



Ressources supplémentaires

Dre Catherine Dolto et Colline Faure-Poirée

Ça fait mal la violence

Gallimard Jeunesse/
Giboulées, 2008
ISBN 978-2-070-61867-5

Jane Bingham

La Tristesse

Editions Soline, 2007
ISBN 978-2-84892-071-9

Jane Bingham

La Colère

Editions Soline, 2007
ISBN 978-2-84892-073-3

Mano Gentil et Frédérick Mansot

Papa : profession... héros

L'Élan vert, 2008
ISBN 978-2-84455-111-5

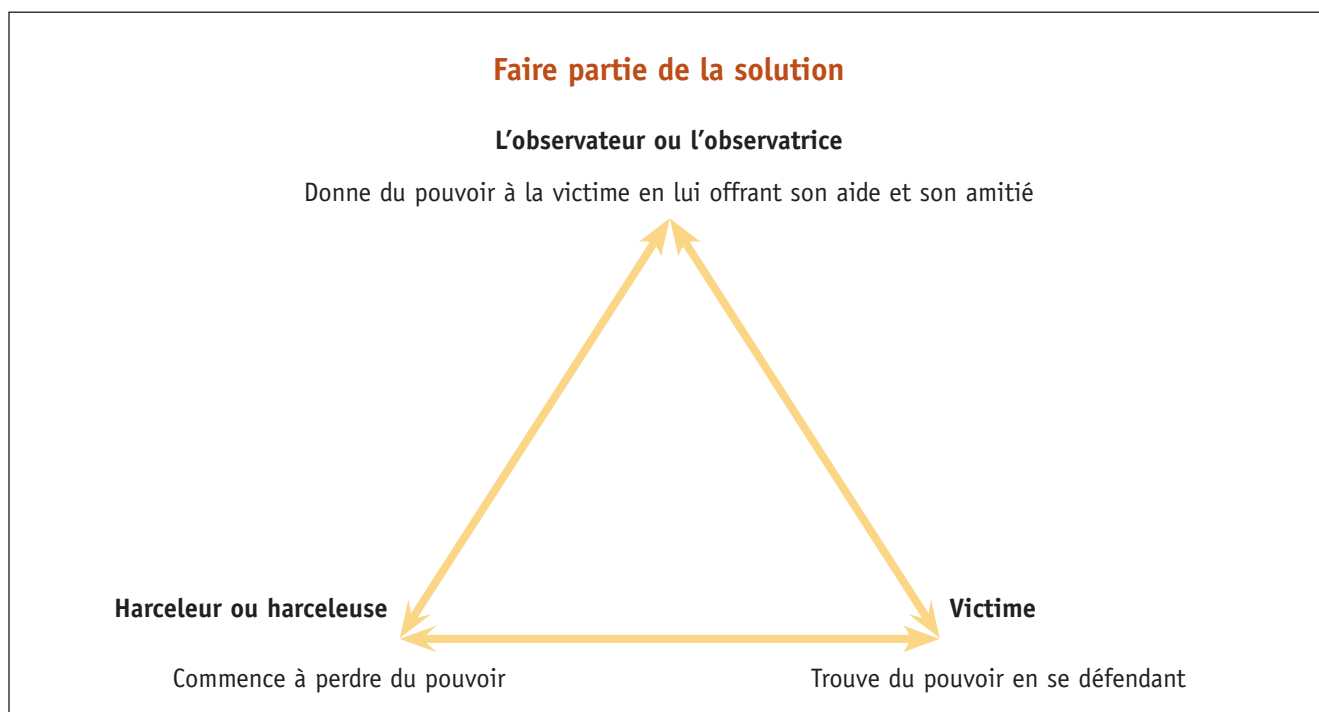
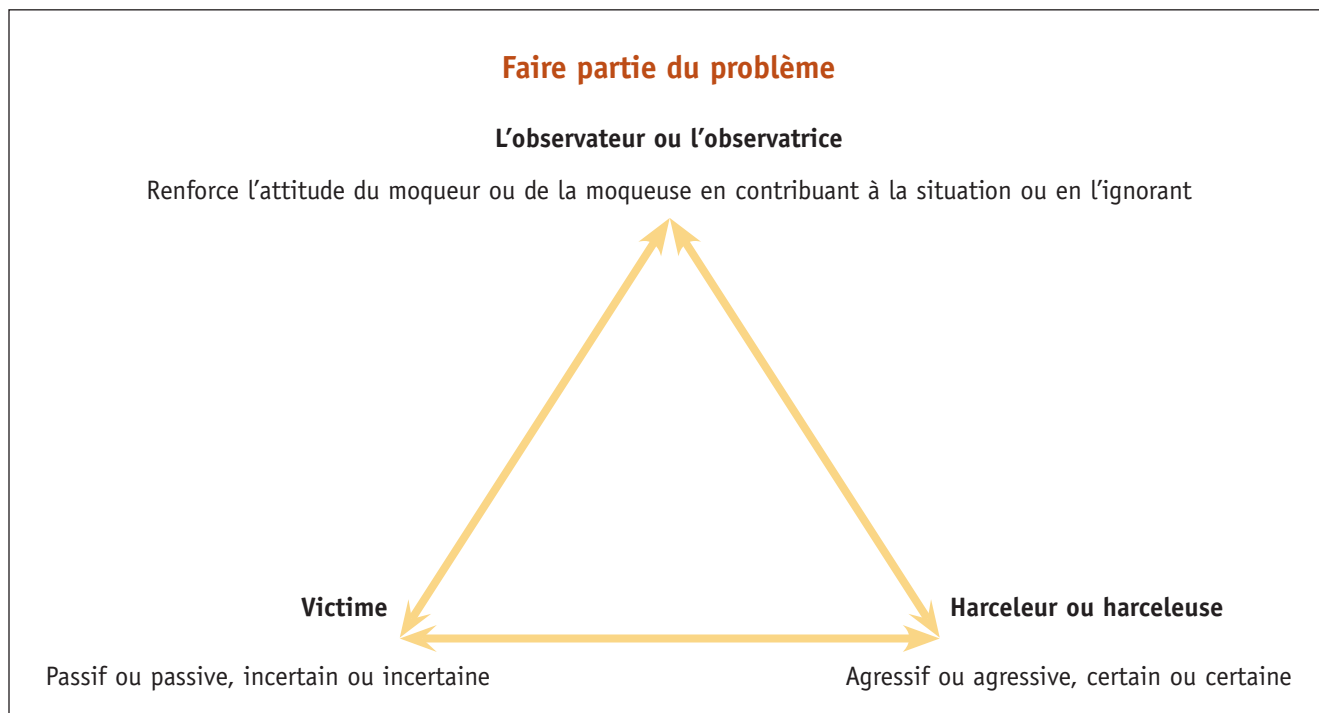
Christian Merveille et Josse Goffin

Petit Cube chez les Tout Ronds

Éditions Mijade, 2000
ISBN 2-87142-352-0

Les racines de l'égalité

Feuille d'exercice





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Working with Early Childhood Educators



A new partnership for teachers

.....
Teacher Vicky Grace and ECE Jayne Dickson plan together for their early learning class at Parkland Public School in York Region.

BY JOAN LITTLEFORD AND JOHANNA BRAND

Ontario is embarking on a bold new early learning program, one that will see teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs) working together in the classroom. It's a plan that will benefit children.

After hearing from Charles Pascal, the premier's early learning advisor, the government decided that the program would be staffed by teacher/ECE teams. These kinds of early learning teams are not entirely new to Ontario kindergarten classrooms. However, systemwide expansion of this model means many of those involved will face new challenges.

.....
Photo: Jeff Young

UNDERSTANDING HOW YOUNG CHILDREN LEARN

It is now widely understood that learning begins at birth and life is the young child's classroom. A child's earliest experiences lay the foundation for knowledge acquisition and set trajectories for health and behaviour.¹ The growing science of early human development underscores the importance of learning through play.

This is the kind of learning environment that forms the basis of ECE training. Throughout their education ECEs focus on creating environments that capitalize on young children's natural curiosity to explore and discover themselves and the people and communities around them. Effective early childhood programs provide children with play-based opportunities that contribute to their self-confidence and a positive attitude toward learning.



For some years now kindergarten teachers pursuing best practices have understood the importance of play-based learning.² ETFO continues to provide resources and learning opportunities to support them. The complementary skill sets of the two professions will enable the teacher and the ECE to create a learning environment that supports the holistic development of young children.

APPROACHES TO CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

In the training ECEs receive, children are viewed as independent agents who can have an active role in shaping their learning. ECEs are trained to enrich and extend learning opportunities, based on their knowledge of child development, observations, and documentation of the child's activities. This skill set complements that of teachers. ECEs are also trained to work with the child's family and the broader community.

Often termed "social pedagogy," this approach appreciates that younger children learn differently from older children. Social and emotional connections with other children and adults are critical to giving young children a sense of security, a secure attachment that helps them become successful learners.

Social pedagogy stands in contrast to the academic approach to early learning favoured by some administrators and boards.³ The academic approach tends to emphasize detailed goals and outcomes that influence curriculum decisions about what and how children learn. The focus is on academic skills. Learning expectations are related to school readiness



tasks and skills, in preparation for entry into grade 1. (The new program will be supported by the ELECT, Early Learning for Every Child Today, document, which maintains the same expectations in place previously but changes the approach to one based on a recognition of children's development, readiness to learn, and learning through play.⁴)

The skills teachers bring to the development of curriculum complement those of ECEs. Teachers' knowledge of and experience with curriculum requirements, lesson planning, observation, and assessment help provide structure, coherence, and focus to the play-based program. Teachers also bring experience and knowledge of what children need in grade 1 and beyond.

WORKING WITH PARENTS

A partnership with parents is an important focus of ECE training. Parents are considered essential partners in their children's learning. Their insights into their own children inform programming and parents are encouraged to extend learning opportunities into the home. Meeting parents at the start and end of every day gives ECEs extended opportunities to have conversations with them about their children. This is particularly important if parents are struggling with life circumstances or perhaps are new to Canada.

At its best the relationship between parents and ECEs enhances a sense of trust and belonging for the child and the family. In small, community-based, nonprofit early learning centres parents often play a role in governance, which enhances their sense of involvement and belonging. By contrast, the school system is much larger and more complex; however, effective schools also work hard to engage parents and the community. To cite just one example, parental and community engagement is an important focus of the Toronto District School Board's Model Inner City Schools program (described in the June 2007 issue of *Voice*⁵). Involving

parents in their children's education is a recent Ministry of Education priority. Ministry policy requires that all school boards have parent involvement committees and the ministry has created a special division devoted to fostering parental engagement.

PROFESSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Like teachers, ECEs are now regulated by a professional college. The 2007 *Early Childhood Educators Act* established the College of Early Childhood Educators, which now governs 25,000 registered educators.

Ontario's community colleges offer a two-year ECE diploma. The curriculum combines theory with field experience in a variety of settings, including licensed child care centres, school classrooms, and early identification and family resource programs that serve children ages six weeks to 12 years and their families. Students complete course work in early childhood development, observation and planning, early identification and intervention, health and safety, curriculum development, policy development, working with families, and understanding their diverse and complex experiences.


Teachers' academic education is complemented by time spent observing and learning

in classrooms. Once on the job, new teachers have access to a mentoring program and the wisdom and knowledge of experienced colleagues. Teachers prepare an annual learning plan, as members of ETFO and as school board employees, they have access to a broad range of professional learning opportunities.

SUPPORTING NEW PARTNERSHIPS

Teacher/ECE teams in kindergarten classrooms will need considerable professional support to make the program work. They will need time for joint planning, curriculum preparation, and professional learning. These opportunities will have to be provided within the context of the collective agreement rights of teachers and ECEs. (Some of the challenges of meeting teachers' collective agreement requirements are detailed in Christine Brown's column on page 35.)

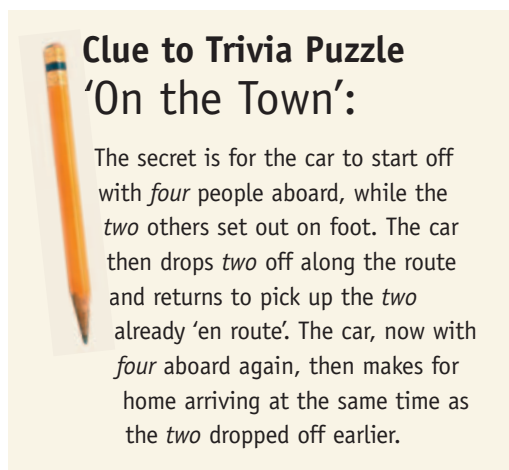
Many of the tools to support the early learning team are in development. New legislation supports a teaching partnership that assigns the teacher primary responsibility for the program but respects the knowledge and skills of both professions. The newly released curriculum reflects best practice from both the Kindergarten Program, 2006 and the ELECT documents. Joint training for teachers and ECEs has begun.

Teachers and early childhood educators have much in common, most of all their commitment to the well-being and development of young children. They have much to learn from each other and much to give their young charges. The success of the Early Learning Program depends on their willingness to work in new ways, to learn from each other, and to be prepared to grow daily alongside their young learners. 

Notes:

- 1 J. Shonkoff and D. Phillips, eds., *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development*, Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 2000).
- 2 This has not always been supported at the school or school board level, as a data-driven agenda resulted in a more didactic approach to instruction. ETFO continues to provide resources and learning opportunities to support teachers in planning play-based learning.
- 3 John Bennett, "Curriculum Issues in National Policy-Making," *European Early Childhood Education Research Journal* 13:2, pp. 5-23. Bennett's review of national curriculum policy frameworks provides an excellent discussion of social pedagogy and the "pre-primary" method commonly used in Anglo-American countries.
- 4 Ontario, Ministry of Children and Youth Services, "Early Learning for Every Child Today" provides the framework for a play-based program.
- 5 Available at etfovoice.ca > Back Issues.

JOAN LITTLEFORD and JOHANNA BRAND are ETFO executive assistants.



Clue to Trivia Puzzle
'On the Town':

The secret is for the car to start off with *four* people aboard, while the *two* others set out on foot. The car then drops *two* off along the route and returns to pick up the *two* already 'en route'. The car, now with *four* aboard again, then makes for home arriving at the same time as the *two* dropped off earlier.

The Challenges of the New Early Learning Program

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

Next September, elementary teachers in the new Early Learning Program (ELP) will welcome thousands of young learners into their classrooms. By 2015–16, when the program is fully phased in, there will be no more traditional kindergarten classes as we know them. Next year, for the first time, kindergarten students will be in classrooms staffed by both teachers and early childhood educators (ECEs), classes in which the program, as mandated by the Ministry of Education, is fully play based. Where demand warrants, an integrated before- and after-school program staffed by ECEs will also be available. There is a certain precedent for this new model: there are already some 180 public elementary schools that offer full-day all-day kindergarten; some teachers already use a play-based model; some teachers also have experience in working with ECEs. The difference is one of scale. In this respect the Early Learning Program is the most dramatic transformation in the structure of elementary education that we have seen in years.

One thing that the provincial government, teachers, school boards, early childhood educators, and parents agree upon is the need to ensure that the new program is successful. Teachers will face a number of challenges as this new program rolls out.

UNDERSTANDING THE KINDERGARTEN TEACHER

In labour relations, understanding members' rights and challenges begins with understanding who they are. So – who are kindergarten teachers?

According to ETFO's internal survey data, in many ways, kindergarten teachers are no different from the elementary teacher population as a whole. They are similar in age, experience, and family profile. Where kindergarten teachers differ significantly from their colleagues is in gender. Overall some 81 percent of elementary teachers are women, but for kindergarten teachers the figure is 95 percent. To put this in perspective, this is roughly the same percentage of women as is found among Ontario's nurses; in other words, teaching kindergarten is a highly feminized profession.

Kindergarten teachers are also more likely to work part-time: 25 percent compared with 12 percent of teachers overall. This is not surprising given that women overall are more likely to work part-time than men (though other factors also come into play).

What are the implications of these characteristics for members' rights and collective agreements? The rights of part-time teachers have been a point of contention at the bargaining table for decades. Scheduling, access to insured benefits, experience credit, attendance at meetings, and the ability to move between part- and full-time assignments are just a few of the issues. In addition, as is the case for many occasional teachers, there are kindergarten teachers whose part-time status is a choice they have made, not something that has been imposed upon them. Yet we know that some boards are now pressuring part-time kindergarten teachers to work full-time. We can expect these and related issues to continue to surface as we move toward the 2012 round of bargaining.

One thing that the provincial government, teachers, school boards, early childhood educators, and parents agree upon is the need to ensure that the new program is successful.



COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT CHALLENGES

In any new initiative, especially one this far-reaching, a key challenge is making sure there are appropriate resources underpinning the program expectations.

While teachers will retain their duties under the *Education Act*, they will face a major adjustment in sharing the classroom with another professional, someone who is also highly qualified and has significant program responsibility. This change presents challenges in both human relations and labour relations. The two categories often overlap, but it is the latter that concerns us here.

After decades of struggle, including several strikes, elementary teachers now have preparation time that exceeds 200 minutes. Collective agreements state that preparation time is to be used for professional activities as determined by the teacher. Teachers need every minute of this time (and then some) *for their existing duties*. Implementing the ELP will require additional prep time for both teachers and ECEs. At a minimum, the individual teacher and the ECE(s) will need time together to plan, share strategies and concerns, and discuss programming, assessment, communications with parents, class-

room management, and many other issues. Such meetings constitute significant new, additional duties that will require additional paid time to complete. Existing preparation time must not be eroded because of them.

Some boards will undoubtedly try to download this extra work, knowing that teachers have long experience in just “making it all happen.” We all want the new program to function smoothly, but a work speed-up is not the answer. Stress-related long-term disability rates among teachers are far too high already.

Furthermore the ministry’s staffing plan for ELP classes is based on an average class size of 26 students. In practice, this means some classes could reach 30 – despite the ministry having for years extolled the virtues of small classes in Primary grades. Early learning research does not support classes this large, nor do school infrastructures (especially with a play-based model), and the health and safety implications are numerous. These are questions of pedagogy and planning, teacher and ECE well-being, workload, and other terms and conditions of employment.

As with any new program, there are other hurdles. Will there eventually be coaches, lead teachers, or similar positions for the ELP? How will individuals be chosen, how will they be compensated, what will their working conditions be? The principal is the supervisor of both teachers and ECEs. Will boards be tempted to use information gathered from coaches and lead teachers in evaluating staff?

Collective bargaining will be key in addressing these and other thorny questions. The first year of the ELP will require vigilance to ensure that existing rights are upheld. It will also be a time to gather the detailed, classroom-specific information that can be used at the bargaining table in 2012. **V**

CHRISTINE BROWN is coordinator of Protective Services at ETF0.

What Motivates Teachers To Do **Social Justice Work?**

BY NINA BASCIA AND SHERRY RAMRATTAN SMITH



Dr. Nina Bascia

Teachers who work collectively for the advancement of social justice often provide each other with strength and inspiration.



Sherry Ramrattan Smith

Why are some teachers driven to question the way things are in their schools? Why do some refuse to tolerate injustice when they notice it? Why do they advocate for marginalized colleagues or students: those whose first language is not English, racialized populations, recent immigrants, children with special education needs, or other teachers experiencing difficulties?

Some teachers who advocate for social justice have a cultural background or historical experience where teaching was understood as important social transformational work. For example, in some Caribbean countries, teachers are expected, and themselves expect, to work toward the social, economic, moral, and physical advancement of their communities. Teaching is not just a paid job; it's a social vocation.

Some teachers have had personal experiences with marginalization themselves – in their school experiences as children, when immigrating to a new country and learning a new language, or later in life when confronted by limitations created by other people's perceptions of them. For example, some women teachers make the difficult discovery that traditional gender role expectations can limit their access to positions of leadership. This type of personal experience with marginalization can be very painful, whether it occurs first in childhood or in adulthood. However, personal experiences can sensitize some people to other instances of discrimination or injustice.

Sometimes, a life-long interest in travel or different cultural experiences enables some teachers to feel comfort with and curiosity about social differences that may make others cling to the safety of the familiar. Such teachers may find themselves stepping in to smooth the way when they observe cross-cultural "collisions" that may be harmful to students or peers.

There are some teachers who may find themselves working with stigmatized student populations (for example, in schools in low socio-economic communities) and soon discover that much extra work and advocacy is required to ensure that their students' needs are met. These needs may go unnoticed by people whose familiarity with the context has desensitized them to the day-to-day obstacles that have to be overcome.

What Motivates Teachers To Do Social Justice Work?

Teachers sometimes look for a new challenge or a change in mid-career. Working in a new assignment, at a new school, or in a new teaching role can open their eyes to differences in students' and colleagues' experiences that previously went unnoticed. Often such a change occurs because someone acquires new knowledge about a particular social justice topic.

A chance conversation with another teacher may lead to the discovery that perceptions once thought unique are, in reality, more common. As we find ways to put our concerns into words and realize that our ideas are shared by others, we can inspire one another to take action in new ways.

The challenges of social justice work

What challenges do teachers face when they engage in social justice work?

Teachers may feel isolated and different from their peers. Some may feel "marked" as the lone teacher expected to take action when situations are unfair or when others are reluctant to step forward.

For further reading on this topic:

Bascia, N. & Young, B. (2001). "Careers beyond the classroom: Understanding women educators' work." *Curriculum Inquiry* 31(3), pp. 271-302.

Henry, A. (1998). "Contextualizing Black women's lives and activism." In *Taking Back Control: African Canadian Women Teachers' Lives and Practice*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press, pp. 69-88.

Thiessen, D., Bascia, N., & Goodson, I. (Eds.) (1996). *Making a Difference About Difference: Life Stories of Racial Minority Immigrant Teachers*. Toronto: Garamond Press.


NINA BASCIA is a professor in the department of Theory and Policy Studies, at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto. Her focus is teachers' work, teacher unions, and educational policy.

SHERRY RAMRATTAN SMITH is the coordinator of Equity and Women's Services at ETFO.

Some teachers may feel as if they are expected to do more than their colleagues, and they may expect more of themselves. Teachers who do social justice work often feel they need to keep learning new things as they continue to become aware of the complexity of social issues. Social justice work is so demanding that it's difficult to feel like the work is ever done. It is difficult to set limits on this kind of work, and it is easy to burn out.

Teachers who work collectively for the advancement of social justice often provide each other with strength and inspiration. They make time to share their experiences and learning because they recognize that supportive relationships greatly enhance their individual efforts.

Questions to ask yourself

What's your story? Are there teachers who work for social justice in your school or community? What might you do to support that work? Are you one of these teachers yourself? If so, what might you do to make the work of confronting injustice better understood? As we learn to situate and critique our experiences with difference, we can become more mindful of the choices we make in advancing a social justice agenda. 



By RIAN McLAUGHLIN

OTF Supports Teachers and Students

Advocacy and social justice work at the Ontario Teachers' Federation takes many forms. OTF has a long-standing interest in supporting teachers and students not only across the province but also nationally and internationally. Each year, OTF funds a number of projects that specifically assist women and girls. As an affiliate of the Canadian Teachers' Federation, OTF has participated in several of CTF's women's bursary and network projects across India, Southeast Asia, and Sierra Leone. OTF joins many of our sister federations in Canada to provide this type of ongoing support.

OTF also supports numerous individual international projects that provide school fees and supplies for girls' education and ongoing financial support to those who wish to become teachers. As well, OTF continues to support many projects that assist abused children in various countries. In a future column, I will highlight some of these special projects and the work of the OTF International Assistance Committee.


Here at home, OTF is engaging members from all affiliates in its social justice work. Recently, OTF established a professional learning community to discuss and research issues related to equity and inclusion. Teams established at face-to-face meetings are now working online sharing their personal and professional experiences related to racism, sexism, and homophobia. Each team has chosen one area of these broad topics for its focus. Over the next several months they will be creating lessons, mini units, workshops, or presentations to share with students, colleagues, and their school communities. As well, there will be scheduled online sessions where all teams

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 RIAN McLAUGHLIN is the OTF Table Officer for ETFO.

together will probe topics such as power and privilege in society. They hope to enhance awareness and stimulate commitment to creating classrooms and schools where fairness and belonging are priorities. Nancy Hutcheson, a member of the Waterloo Region ETFO local, is the project manager. She is enthusiastic about the potential of this online learning environment and the extensions to the work that has already been done on preventing bullying.

SAFE@SCHOOL

In my column in the December 2009 issue of *Voice*, I talked about the *Safe@School* bullying prevention project that OTF and its partners, COPA and the Ministry of Education, had spearheaded. There is good news to share! Phase 2 of the project, *Change Our World*, which focuses on inclusion — specifically addressing issues of homophobia, racism, and gender — is now complete. Kits are being distributed to all publicly funded schools across the province! The kit was originally intended for distribution to secondary schools only. However my lobbying through OTF, lobbying by our ETFO local presidents, and support from the deans of the faculties of education had results. Modifications were made to the materials to meet the needs of all elementary students, and the ministry has extended the funding. The kits are also available in French for our FSL and FI teachers!

As the school year begins to wind down, watch for information on OTF's World Teachers' Day appreciation events and the Word on the Street Festival by visiting otffeo.on.ca. 



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 Darline Pomeroy (Kawartha Pine Ridge) left, Deanne Hallman (Bluewater), and Gord Dunbar (Upper Grand) are three of four ETFO participants in OTF's Equity and Inclusion program. Not pictured is Annette Cloutier (Ontario North East).



By MARY LOU DONNELLY

Challenges and Victories Mark the Long Road to Equity

Whenever I consider the lives of my three adult daughters, I cannot help but feel pride in the victories my generation has won while at the same time wondering at the many challenges women still face in achieving equity. It is at these times that I fully realize my responsibility to be a role model and mentor to a new generation.

For much of my adult life, I have worked within my union to provide protection, improved salaries and working conditions, and professional growth for my colleagues in education. But young women today are looking for more – they want an acceptable balance between personal life and work, and they want to be a part of shaping a better world.

Young women's aspirations can significantly advance the cause of teacher unions. They bring enthusiasm, skills, and a drive for social justice to the table, but we, the organizations' leaders, must provide them with equal access to leadership positions.

More than 72 percent of Canadian teachers are women, yet we remain underrepresented in leadership roles in our professional organizations. Nevertheless CTF has established an international reputation as a leader in the fight for gender equity. CTF supports women's networks in Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The Girl Child Project in Uganda addresses the barriers many female students face, and our work with Latin American unions helps develop non-sexist curricula and teaching practices.

Discussing women's issues

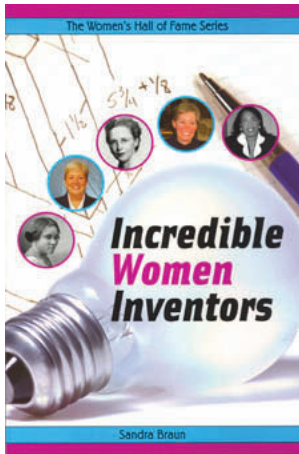
We were delighted that for the second consecutive year ETFO hosted the CTF Annual Women's Issues Symposium in Toronto on February 9-10. ETFO's generous support, both financial and in-kind, has made our annual event a successful one attended by over 50 women teacher leaders from across Canada. We heard powerful speakers such as Marina Nemat, once a political prisoner in Iraq, who now lives in Canada, and who has written a book about her story. Rebeca Sevilla of Education International spoke about women's issues in the global context.

Canadian teachers – including ETFO leaders – were active participants in Beijing+15, the 54th session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, in early March. The event was called to review progress on gender equity 15 years after the adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

From May 19 to 22, Education International will convene its first World Women's Conference, "On the Move for Equity," in Bangkok, Thailand. More than 300 leaders of teacher unions from around the globe will participate in this forum, which seeks to create a common understanding of the state of progress toward equality in unions, education, and society.

We should each take pride in our victories and recommit ourselves to the challenge of engaging our daughters in the fight for true equality especially in our profession. **✕**

MARY LOU DONNELLY, past president of the Nova Scotia Teachers' Union, is CTF president for 2009-2011.



Incredible Women Inventors

Sandra Braun
 Toronto: Second Story Press,
 2006
 112 pages: \$10.95
 ★★ ★
 Reviewed by **Jodie Howcroft**

This motivating and inspirational book offers the lesson that with hard work and determination we all can accomplish great things.

Part of the “Women’s Hall of Fame Series,” the book features 10 biographies – each about 10 pages long – of women inventors from a variety of cultures, age groups, and backgrounds. Black and white photographs and sidebars with interesting facts are included.

The stories are interesting and well written. The accomplishments of the women featured are impressive, especially given the challenging circumstances they faced throughout their lives. These women simply did not give up – ever.

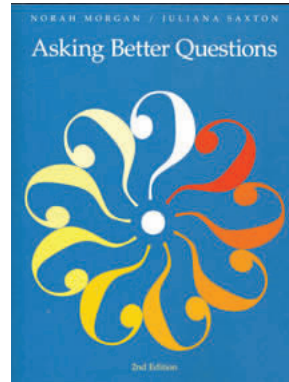
Wendy Murphy invented a specialized stretcher for transporting preemies, called the WEEVAC. Bette Nesmith Graham invented Liquid Paper. Gertrude Elion, among other accomplishments, became a cancer researcher and a Nobel Prize recipient. As great as these accomplishments are, the women received little recognition in their lifetimes.

Incredible Women Inventors is appropriate for students in grades 5 to 8, but I think it would appeal more to Intermediate-level students. It connects to the science curriculum, specifically the Structures and Mechanisms strand. For example, in the grade 7 Structural Strength and Stability topic students are to “recognize the importance of researching needs and opportunities for sale before proposing ways of developing a product.” Several of the stories in *Incredible Women Inventors* can be connected to this expectation.

Intermediate-level teachers could use this book when discussing biography and for shared reading or read-aloud. Character education traits, such as perseverance and courage, could be highlighted easily. The issues of gender bias and discrimination in these women’s lives would lead nicely to a class discussion.

Overall, *Incredible Women Inventors* is a high-quality, interesting read.

Jodie Howcroft is member of the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local.



Asking Better Questions

Norah Morgan and Juliana Saxton
 Markham, ON: Pembroke
 Publishers, 2006
 158 pages; \$24.95
 ★★ ★★ ★
 Reviewed by **Nancy Niessen**

I began reading this book out of a desire to use questioning more effectively in my teaching practice, and now I’m truly excited about doing so! The introduction hooked me: it puts the importance of questioning into a societal context, making me even more committed to improving my skills.

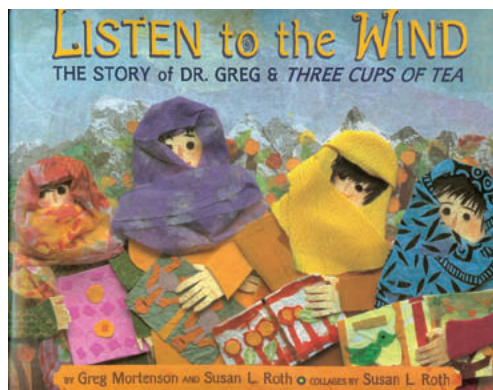
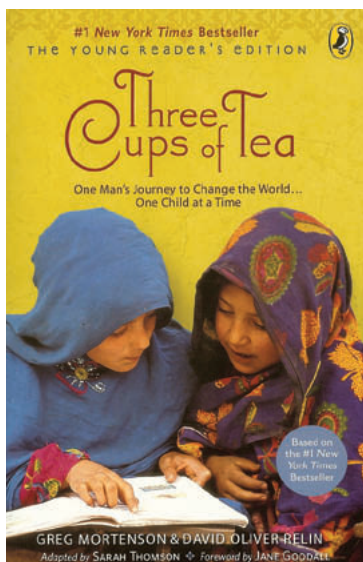
Teachers in the Primary grades through to high school and beyond who want to improve their use of questioning skills, and who also want to increase student engagement in learning, will find this a useful resource. It is very timely: the authors address why some teachers don’t use questioning more in their practice and identify the causes as overloaded curriculums and standardized testing, both of which result in teachers feeling pressured to get through the curriculum.

The authors include a very helpful balance of practical ideas and examples. The chapter on Bloom’s taxonomy is well done. While Bloom’s taxonomy is not new, the simple way that the authors present it is useful and illuminating. They suggest that the taxonomy is not a recipe for asking questions and if followed too strictly it can actually “inhibit natural inquiry.”

Morgan and Saxton give many useful sample questions for both Primary and Secondary students. One of the chapters includes a thought-provoking Taxonomy of Personal Engagement and goes on to highlight the importance of the “feeling climate” in a classroom as an indicator of student learning. The authors outline how the types of questions that we ask our students engage them emotionally and the importance of that emotional connection to their learning. It’s nice to see the need for this type of connection explicitly addressed in a resource, especially when it is mixed with practical ways to foster that engagement.

Asking Better Questions is an easy read, packed full of information. Overall, I found this revision of an old classic to be an extremely useful resource, one that I’ll definitely refer to often.

Nancy Niessen is a member of the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local



Three Cups of Tea

Greg Mortensen and David Oliver Relin

Adapted by Sarah Thomson

Puffin Books (Penguin), 2009

209 pages; \$11

Listen to the Wind

Greg Mortensen and Susan L. Roth

New York: Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin), 2009

16 pages; \$21

★★★★★

Reviewed by Gurmeet Gill

"Before our school was built, we had lessons outside. We wrote with sticks on the ground."

Listen to the Wind is a real story that will inspire your students to connect to the big idea of compassion. They will meet students from Khorpe, a poor village in a remote part of Pakistan, who tell the story of how a lost mountaineer, Greg Mortensen, ended up in their village. He was tired, hungry, cold, and sick. The villagers provided him with food and shelter.

When it came time to leave, Mortensen promised the villagers a school. With his help the men, women, and children of Khorpe built that school. Pictures on the back of the book depict the hard work. Today, students no longer have to sit outside in the open, freezing fields. They no longer have to write with sticks in mud; they have pencils and paper.

Mortensen knew that building schools would promote peace and he has worked hard to collect money and build schools in other remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan.

When students are involved in global issues they not only exhibit more interest, they also develop their critical thinking skills. This book clearly states how our small efforts can impact the lives of others. Through books like these we can encourage our students to become global citizens.

An organization called "Pennies for Peace" is mentioned at the end of the book. Students from all over the world are collecting and donating pennies, an initiative that supports the construction of more schools in remote areas and the provision of school supplies.

In addition to getting across the big idea of compassion, the picture book connects to the curriculum. You can use it with grade 2s when talking about Communities Around the World and with grade 3s in teaching the Rural and Urban unit.

Three Cups of Tea tells the same story but with more detail and in chapter form, for Junior students. As they read they can visit the villages in the mountains of Pakistan and experience the lifestyle of the villagers. The book includes maps, photos, a glossary, and some discussion questions and research activities. It's a great book for literature circles, to help students develop their understanding of the world around them. By taking on different roles in the activities, students will hone their critical thinking and communication skills.

Both of these books are excellent additions to your school or class library.

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Gurmeet Gill is a member of the Peel Teacher Local.



trivia

BY PETER HARRISON

On the Town

Six young teachers, Anna and Annika, Brooke and Breanna, Chloe and Claire, must make the 10 km trip back home with only their four-seater car to carry them.

Each of the six can drive it at a steady 45 km/h carrying three of the others but the remaining two must travel on foot.

Fortunately, Anna and Annika can each run at 15 km/h, Brooke and Breanna can both jog at a brisk 9 km/h whilst Chloe and Claire will happily walk at 5 km/h.

By cleverly combining these resources, they have worked out how they can reach their destination in the minimum possible time.

How many minutes is that?

Clue: If you would like a tip on how to get going, see the clue on page 34.

Send your answer to ETFoice@etfo.org with the word "Trivia" in the subject line. You may also mail your entry to The Editor, *ETFO Voice*, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all correct entries received by June 30, 2010.

SOLUTION TO OUR LAST PUZZLE

Trishkaidekaphobia:

25 delegates attended the conference.

We received no correct answers to this puzzle.

Good luck this month!

How did they get the answer?

You can now find solutions to Trivia puzzles on our website. Go to etfovoice.ca.

Member Discipline

The following member has been disciplined in accordance with Article VI – Code of Professional Conduct and Article VII – Disciplinary Procedures of the ETFO Constitution. All of the following penalties apply to the member listed below.

- a. A Letter of Discipline issued by the General Secretary to the member to remain on file for a period of four years effective April 9, 2010 to April 8, 2014.
- b. Publication of the name of the member and the finding of the Executive in regard to the complaint in a Federation document.

DISCIPLINED MEMBER:

NIAGARA OCCASIONAL TEACHER LOCAL - Gary Anderson

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DISCIPLINED MEMBER:

NIAGARA OCCASIONAL TEACHER LOCAL - Mark Carter

calendar

JULY 5-10, STRATFORD CODE Camp

Council of Ontario Drama and Dance
Educators – code.on.ca

AUGUST 24, WATERLOO The Kodaly Society of Ontario Music Workshop

Wilfrid Laurier University
kodalysocietyofcanada.ca

OCTOBER 21-23, TORONTO Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities

Opeha and Physical and Health
Education Canada National Conference
Early registration deadline: June 25
Westin Harbour Castle – phecanada.ca

NOV. 1 AND 2, HUNTSVILLE

6th Annual National Character
Education Conference
Deerhurst Resort – ncec.ca

AUGUST 10-12, OTTAWA
Building Bridges to Success
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Aboriginal Culture - Moving Forward
An interactive professional learning
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jmitchell@etfo.org

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