



ETF0

DECEMBER 2010  
VOL. 13 - NO. 2

# Voice

## Making Disabilities an Asset in the Classroom

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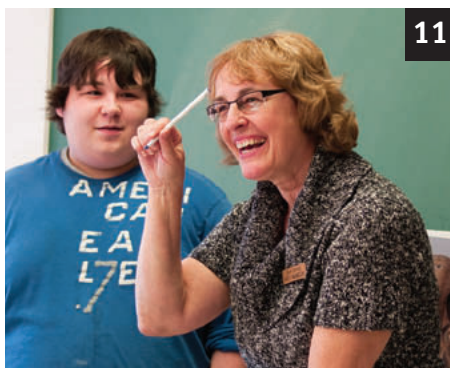
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**ON OUR COVER:** CHERYL MACMILLAN, a member of the Niagara Teacher Local, conducts the junior choir at her Port Colborne school. Photo: Johanna Brand

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## The Minority of Everyone

**D**avid Lepofsky, an activist for rights for persons with disabilities, was an inspirational keynote speaker at ETFO's annual leadership conference. Among his thoughts that continue to resonate was this: if you don't have a disability now you will eventually have one. That makes persons with disabilities "the minority of everyone."

There are a significant number of people – about one in six – for whom living with a disability is a lifelong challenge. Their disability appeared at birth or early in life. For the rest, disabilities lie in wait for that moment when circumstance, age, and/or genetic make-up work their magic. And so, as Lepofsky points out, the accommodations made for persons with disabilities tend to help everyone, both immediately and in the long term.

Two ETFO members, Cheryl MacMillan and Kari Buie, share their experiences of living with a disability in this issue. Both have turned their challenges into assets that benefit their students. Both lead by example. (See page 11.)

Our curriculum insert (page 21) is a lesson based on a Robert Munsch story. Presented in both English and French, it will be particularly useful for early learning educators.

And finally, you will find inserted in this issue a tear-out copy of ETFO's "See Ability" bookmark. It features ETFO member Victoria Nolan, a grade 5 teacher in Toronto. Nolan is also a champion rower. The photo shows Nolan (*centre*) and her team after they won the gold medal this fall in the adaptive event at the 2010 World Rowing Championships in New Zealand.

This issue is packed with thought-provoking articles for you to enjoy during your break.

Wishing you a very peaceful and relaxing holiday season.



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Special thanks to  
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To: jbrand@etfo.org

Subject: Letters to the editor

## Re: New Teachers' and Occasional Teachers Columns October 2010.

I would like to commend you for the launch of these two new columns. We are after all striving for equity and collegiality in all of our professional relations with each other. We share a common goal – success for each student we encounter.

However, occasional teachers do face different challenges than contract teachers. For us each day can be like the first day of school. As a result, we can feel a sense of isolation and, sadly, even a lack of support from other members of the educational team in the schools where we teach. I hope that columns such as these will narrow the gap.

The useful strategies you mention are ones that I use regularly. I find that the chart is especially effective. Students seem to get a great sense of achievement from seeing their names on a chart posted in the classroom for their regular teacher to see. I also use the chart to brainstorm with students about ideas for individual or group behaviour expectations, putting “Yes I Can” and “Yes We Can” in alternate corners at the top of the chart. At the end of the day I write “Together We Did” with a “Thank You For A Great Day” at the bottom of the chart. The resource that these strategies are excerpted from is well worth owning.

I have also dispensed with the words “supply” and “occasional”; when I introduce myself I simply say “I am your teacher” for the period/morning/afternoon/day. This sends a much more positive message.

Kudos!

**Etelka Louisa Haagaard** - Durham Occasional Teacher Local

*Voice gives members an opportunity to provide their opinions on articles published. Letters reflect the views of the authors and are not necessarily the official policy of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.*

## etfovoice.ca

In response to requests from members we are making the full edition of *Voice* available electronically. As a first step, most articles are available in PDF format on our website [etfovoice.ca](http://etfovoice.ca). Over the next few months we will be developing a format for our online edition that meets accessibility standards.



## Give Teachers the Time to Teach

**SAM HAMMOND**

ETFO President

**Over the past several years** there has been a significant increase in the number of literacy and numeracy initiatives that ETFO members are expected to implement. These initiatives come from the Ministry of Education, individual school boards, families of schools, or individual administrators. The list is endless. They are EQAO-driven and meant to improve student achievement. But there are so many that what they actually do is diminish the capacity of teachers to provide all students with a well-rounded education.

Both in 2009-2010 and this year the Ministry has limited its system-wide initiatives. However, it now provides funding that lets boards create their own specific programs. These vary significantly from board to board and even from school to school. That makes them harder for ETFO to identify and track – but in no way reduces the demands placed on our members.

At the end of the last school year, ETFO conducted a survey of our locals to gather information about the various initiatives in place in schools. We heard that teachers are spending far too much time administering and marking tests; that students are test-weary by the Intermediate years; that some trustees are prepared to have their board administer only ministry-mandated initiatives, but are unable to determine which are required and which are optional.

During the last election the Liberal government publicly committed to increasing EQAO test scores. However, its singular focus on literacy and numeracy is limiting the ability of our members to provide students with the best possible, well-rounded education. Other subjects, particularly the arts and technology, don't receive the same resources or system support and often go by the wayside; and students whose interests and aptitude lies in these areas are being short-changed as teachers' time is taken up with testing.

The provincial government allocates \$100 million to support the administration of EQAO tests and the vast number of data-driven literacy and numeracy initiatives. In the meantime, there is inadequate

funding for teacher librarians, specialist teachers, and the many supports and resources needed to ensure a quality public education for all students. At ETFO's 2010 annual meeting delegates passed a motion calling for a two-year moratorium on EQAO tests. The motion received considerable media attention and there is little doubt that the government is aware of our concerns.

ETFO has asked the ministry and the Minister of Education numerous times to address this issue. Our survey will allow us to compile a profile of literacy and numeracy initiatives that we will use in our ongoing lobbying of the provincial government. We will highlight our concerns in our pre-budget submissions and in our pre-election survey of political parties. We will put them front and centre in all our deliberations with education stakeholders. As well, we are encouraging local leaders to lobby their directors of education, trustees, and MPPs.

Teachers need time to do what they do best – teach. To help their students succeed they need to be able to tailor their program to meet the needs of all their students. The singular focus on literacy and numeracy may well be undermining the very improvement in student achievement that the government is hoping for.



**GENE LEWIS**

ETFO General Secretary

## The Fall Report Card: A good idea poorly executed

**When the Ministry of Education** announced that the formal fall report card would be replaced with an interim, informal report, ETFO applauded. We did caution the ministry that implementation might be a concern. This was based on our members' experience with the last report card roll out. We were assured that all would go smoothly.

We had been telling the ministry for some time about the problems created by three full report cards: the timing of the first report card was such that teachers barely had time to get to know their students before they had to begin collecting marks. The reports themselves were unclear and were hard for students and parents to understand.

We saw the new informal report card as a positive change. Teachers were no longer required to assign a mark early in the school year. Positive also were the changes planned for the two remaining formal report cards. We believed these developments would support more practical and efficient assessment practice for teachers.

However, the ministry roll out of the new report card has fallen short of expectations. The ministry guidelines for the report are clear; ETFO supports them. Unfortunately, they were not issued early enough. That opened the door for individual boards and administrators to take their own approach. Many did just that, creating confusion and undermining the intent of the new report.

Some district school boards worked with ETFO to put procedures in place. In many of these boards the roll out was relatively smooth. But, even when ETFO and boards had agreed on how the report cards should be implemented, some administrators took it upon themselves to create their own rules. They gave teachers directions that contradicted ministry guidelines even after these had finally appeared. The ministry itself seemed powerless to ensure compliance with its own Growing Success document.

The second problem with the implementation of the new report card had to do with technology. Teachers are expected to fill out report cards electronically. We have told the ministry repeatedly that schools do not

have the appropriate technology in place to do this effectively.

Our schools lack technological capacity and sophistication because the system has been starved. As new technology comes on stream, users don't receive the training or support they need. Some schools do not have enough computers or adequate software; others do not have a robust enough network to support the user community. During the reporting period system crashes were commonplace. Another example: kindergarten teachers were expected to fill out a version of the new report card in Microsoft Excel. This caused considerable problems in those schools that had only one computer with that software.

These technological shortcomings will create problems all over again when the next report card is due.

It is time that the ministry recognized the importance of technology in our schools and ensured that educators have the training and the tools to do the work they are expected to do.

These two factors – poor execution and inadequate technology – have undermined what should have been a success story.

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# your federation

## LEADERSHIP 2010

### Persons with disabilities: The minority of everyone

You may not have a disability now but you will probably have one eventually. That makes persons with disabilities “the minority of everyone,” says David Lepofsky.

Lepofsky, a lawyer and activist, was the keynote speaker at ETFO’s annual leadership conference. He has a master of laws from Harvard and holds two honorary doctorates. For many years he has been a leader of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act Committee, now the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) Alliance. The group waged a decade-long campaign for laws to improve accessibility for persons with disabilities. He is also blind.

Lepofsky argued that the human-created environment creates disabilities. To illustrate his argument he told the story of a power blackout that occurred in the midst of a court case he was involved in. He said that before the blackout those in the courtroom might have noticed one person with a disability, “with an earphone or bumpy notes [i.e., notes written in Braille].” However, when the power failed “there was only one person who could proceed” – the person with the bumpy notes. “The change in the in human environment had created a disability for the rest of those in the room.”

As an activist, Lepofsky has spearheaded moves to make the created environment less disabling. He has twice sued the Toronto Transit Commission to force it to announce station stops, the first time on subway routes and again to get announcements on buses and streetcars.

Lepofsky pointed out that changes that help persons with disabilities help everyone. For example, the announcement of station stops on the



David Lepofsky



**Singer-songwriter Justin Hines performed at ETFO's annual leadership event. Hines has Larsen syndrome, a rare genetic joint condition that keeps him wheelchair bound. Visit his website [justinhines.com](http://justinhines.com) for more information.**

transit system helps those who don't know the system, those who can't read, and those who can't see their stop because buses are crowded.

“The world is full of barriers and many of them are dumb,” Lepofsky said. “They don't help anyone.” Citing electronic kiosks, inaccessible websites, and new electronic payment cards, he said, “New barriers continue to be created.”

He urged his audience to ensure that their students are exposed, at least once during their school careers, to lessons that help them understand the importance of accessibility.

For more information please visit the website, [aodaalliance.org](http://aodaalliance.org).



This fall, ETFO and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association have collaborated on two professional learning projects focused on the arts.

Students in grades 3 to 8 in 33 communities in northern Ontario saw the play *Spirit Horse*. It was adapted from the successful Irish play, *Tir Na N'Og*, by celebrated Ojibway playwright Drew Hayden Taylor. First Nations actors star in this story about two Aboriginal youths caught between their traditional ways and contemporary urban culture. The play serves as a catalyst for professional learning in drama, dance, music, and visual arts. To follow the progress of the tour and read a blog with student responses visit [SpiritHorse.ca](http://SpiritHorse.ca).

In southern Ontario, the two federations offered a six-part professional learning series based on the book *ETFO Arts: Introducing Visual Arts, Drama, Dance, and Music in the Junior Grades*. The two initiatives were funded by the Ontario Ministry of Education.

**Building Better Schools** outlines ETFO's education agenda for the 2011 Ontario provincial election. By releasing the document ETFO hopes to raise the profile of education in the next provincial election, and get parents and the public thinking and talking about what's needed to make Ontario schools the best they can be. ETFO's proposals focus on more meaningful student assessment, greater access to specialist teachers, small classes for all elementary students, more resources for special needs students, and greater focus on equal opportunity and inclusion. The document is available on our website, [etfo.ca](http://etfo.ca).

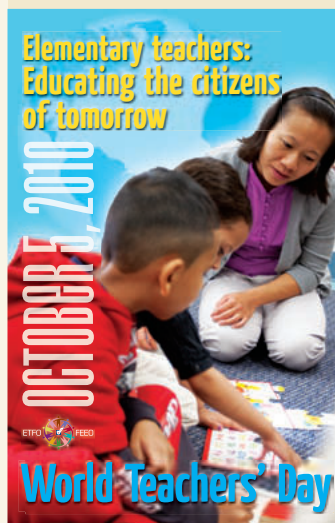


## Representative Council

brings together presidents and executive members of ETFO locals three times a year to discuss policies and issues facing the federation. The meeting is chaired by the first vice-president, Susan Swackhammer. Those attending the October meeting received updates on the provincial consultations relating to the proposed wage freeze and a common benefits plan for all ETFO members.



**Early childhood educators** took their place in Ontario kindergartens this fall as the new Early Learning Program began. Designated early childhood educators (DECEs) in eight Ontario school boards are now members of ETFO. The new members shown here are with the Toronto Catholic District School Board. They attended an introductory session at provincial office designed to acquaint them with ETFO and their new rights and responsibilities as union members.



## ETFO's World Teachers' Day

poster featured kindergarten teacher Cindy Lum and her students at Lord Dufferin Public School in Toronto.

## Local Funding Supports Global Education

BY JANET BIGHAM

In October 2009, ETFO members Mali Bickley and Jim Carleton approached the Simcoe Teacher Local executive about becoming involved with the 17<sup>th</sup> annual iEARN International Conference and Youth Summit. The conference, hosted by iEARN Canada and TakingITGlobal, brought educators and students from over 40 countries to Georgian College in Barrie in July 2010.

Participants were encouraged to “Come to Canada ... Catch the Dream.” Each year, iEARN conferences bring educators and young people together to share their experiences and to learn how educators the world over are internationalizing their classrooms. Their students are going beyond learning about the world to learning with their peers around the world, enhancing their learning, and building a more peaceful and just world.

Participants explained how they used technology to enhance teaching and learning and to build global understanding. The conference featured technology and curriculum presentations, cross-cultural experiences, and the development of new project partnerships.

Because the event was held in our region, the Simcoe Teacher Local was honoured to sponsor an international teacher to attend this year’s conference. It was a first for our local. We select-

ed Rohan Perera, an IT teacher from Royal College in Colombo, Sri Lanka, to receive the Simcoe Teacher Local scholarship. The scholarship paid for conference fees, accommodation, and meals.

For the past seven years, Rohan has been the IT teacher at Royal College, the largest boys’ school in Sri Lanka. He told us that his “most encour-

email accounts of its adventures, travels, and activities.

iEARN has programs in over 130 countries and involves over 38,000 member classes and 2 million students daily in collaborative online project work. iEARN is an award-winning, international, non-profit network; since its launch in 1998 it has enabled over 15 million students to engage with their global community in meaningful educational interactive projects. iEARN is unique in the field of educational technology. It is a global community of education innovators who share the vision that online, collaborative, project-based learning provides twenty-first-century skills that will prepare students to be effective global citizens.



ETFO members Mali Bickley and Jim Carleton with Rohan Perera (centre)

aging event with iEARN was when Ruty Hotzen from Israel addressed Sri Lankan students in a live video conference about [a] UNESCO World Heritage Project.” Rohan Perera is currently partnering with 10 schools in Great Britain, the United States, Poland, and Canada in the Teddy Bear project. This project encourages cross-cultural understanding and acceptance by pairing schools that exchange a teddy bear or other soft toy. The bear sends home

### Resources

To learn more about school partnerships with iEARN, see “A School Without Borders” by Jim Carleton, *Voice*, Winter 2006 and “The Power of Global Collaborative Learning” by Mali Bickley, *Voice*, February 2008. Both are available at [etfovoice.ca](http://etfovoice.ca) ► *past issues*.

More information about the conference is available at [iearn2010.org](http://iearn2010.org).

For more about TakingITGlobal go to [tigweb.org](http://tigweb.org). The iEARN website is [iearn.org](http://iearn.org).

JANET BIGHAM is the president of the Simcoe County Teacher Local.

# your federation

## The Power of a Dime

BY MARY MORISON

ETFO members have always been generous when it comes to responding to tragic events around the world. They have donated as individuals and as locals to AIDS work in Africa, and to the victims of the Haitian earthquake and the Indian Ocean tsunami. They have held bake sales and collected school supplies. And they have worked to set up the ETFO Humanity Fund, a fund that “uses the resources of ETFO members to support children and their teachers around the world, enriching their lives and the lives of their communities.”

When the ETFO Humanity Fund was created in 2000, ETFO members joined with thousands of members of other unions that have created funds to support social justice internationally and at home. These funds include

- Steelworkers Humanity Fund, the original such union initiative, with an annual budget of almost \$1.5 million
- Canadian Autoworkers (CAW) Social Justice Fund
- Communications, Energy and Paperworkers (CEP) Humanity Fund
- Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Global Justice Fund, with an annual budget of \$250,000
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Live and Let Live Fund that supports persons with HIV/AIDS in Ontario and South Africa and the OPSEU Social Justice Fund that supports projects in developing countries
- OSSTF's and BCTF's international support funds.

Some of these funds are negotiated into collective agreements; others are funded by decisions of the organization. In all cases, members decide where the money will go.

.....  
**MARY MORISON** is an ETFO executive assistant.

## The ETFO Humanity Fund

Why did ETFO and other unions decide to establish social justice and international development funds? Why not just let members decide themselves where to donate? It's for the same reason people have organized into unions: Working together and sharing resources means you can do more.

The 10 ETFO locals that have joined the Humanity Fund together contribute \$72,000 a year. The cost to each member is a dime a day, \$20 a year.

Other locals that have not joined the Humanity Fund make contributions by donating honoraria, in memoriam contributions, and charity auction proceeds. Individual ETFO members and staff also contribute.

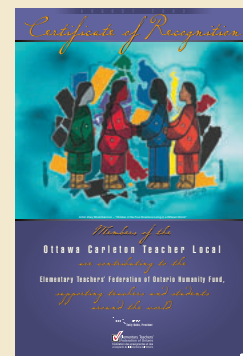
Over half the money collected every year goes to ETFO's signature charity, the Stephen Lewis Foundation. The Humanity Fund has also supported other charities, many recommended by members. The fund gave money to support earthquake victims in Haiti, new classrooms in Nicaragua and Niger, and teacher resources and training in Uganda, Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The fund has made donations to War Child Canada, Médecins Sans Frontières, and the International Red Cross.

ETFO members are making a difference. But think how much more we could do if every member contributed – if every local belonged. The annual budget would be over \$1 million. This would bring with it great responsibility and great opportunity. It would allow ETFO to make a major contribution to the lives of children, teachers, and communities around the world.

.....  
For more information about the Humanity Fund visit [etfo.ca](http://etfo.ca), talk to one of the involved locals, or contact Mary Morison at provincial office.



Less than a penny  
a day can make a  
world of difference





Kari Buie



Cheryl MacMillan

# Disabled or Enabled?

## Turning challenges into an asset

BY JOHANNA BRAND

Kari Buie photos: **Rachele LaBreque/CP Images**

Cheryl MacMillan photos: **Johanna Brand**



# Cheryl MacMillan

**When Cheryl MacMillan was 11 years old she and her family discovered she was deaf. The revelation changed her life — not for the better. “I was playing with a group of kids at the end of the street,” MacMillan explains. “My mother called me. All the kids turned to look at her, except me. That’s when it hit her.”**

MacMillan’s hearing loss had not been obvious because, she says, “I had adapted so well: I read lips and body language.” Her family was used to the unusual way she spoke. (She subsequently spent a year with a speech therapist who taught her the mechanics of pronunciation.) She adds: “If you can’t hear you don’t know what you are missing. I sometimes wondered, but not enough to realize something was wrong.”

MacMillan had been an accepted part of the group in her Port Colborne neighbourhood and at her school. “Until then nobody harassed me, but then I got that awful hearing aid. Suddenly I was a freak and I endured much bullying — some of it by the same kids who had accepted me before.”

The discrimination was not confined to childhood or to children. Today MacMillan teaches music at McKay Public School in her home town, Port Colborne. She has nothing but praise for her current principal. But she says, she has had colleagues “who ridiculed me” and “ignorant principals” who made negative comments. As she speaks MacMillan counts them off on her fingers. She says at least six out of 14 principals she has dealt or worked with have made negative comments, such as “I can’t have you at my school; you can’t even hear.”

This prejudice has been hurtful, despite a

life of accomplishment and success. MacMillan has always been musical. As a teenager she was so determined to learn to play the piano that she made an agreement with her parents: they would let her take piano lessons if she also continued with the violin. At 18 she won an Ontario-wide violin competition. She turned to teaching after having run her own music studio for many years.

## The gift of silence

MacMillan’s first full-time teaching job was as a special education teacher but, she says, “When they found out I had music they made me the music teacher.” MacMillan’s hearing loss — the result of an antibiotic she was given as a newborn — is not total. She can hear sounds, but has difficulty distinguishing words and nuances. As a child she never heard a bird sing, but today intense concentration plus the help of more advanced hearing aids enable her to work with the school choir, which has a long history of success in local festivals.

She believes her disability has given her a gift—the gift of silence and of taking time and paying attention. These are strategies she uses in the classroom. “I had grade 2s who were drawing lollipop trees, sticks with balloons,” she says by way of example. “I took them outside and taught them how to pay attention and take time. They came back with the most wonderful drawings of trees.” Similarly, she takes the time to help students find their singing voice. There is no one who can’t sing, she says.

MacMillan is up-front about her disability with her students. She asks them to be her ears when announcements come over the PA system. Kids accept her totally, she says. And she emphasizes that “I have never been harassed at this school.” Her principal even changed the fire alarm signal to accommodate her. ....

*Cont. on page 14*



# Kari Buie

In Sault Ste. Marie Kari Buie is also working in a teaching position that challenges her physically. Buie is an insulin-dependent diabetic and she has a rare neuromotor disease that affects the dexterity and strength in her hands, and the strength and range of motion in both arms. Cold weather makes her condition worse. She cannot raise her arms above her head, and in the cold, can't hold a pen. Her left arm is particularly affected.

The disease (monomelic amyotrophy) set in when she was about 19 and got progressively worse until it stabilized seven years later. To deal with it, the left-handed Buie taught herself to write with her right hand on the chalkboard.

As a classroom teacher she has difficulty writing above her head on the board; she often uses her right arm to support her left. There are also challenges getting dressed because, for example, she cannot touch her abdomen with her left hand. Putting on boots and coats, tying shoelaces – these everyday actions all pose challenges and take much longer.

Nevertheless, after eight years as a classroom teacher Buie agreed to take a position as an itinerant specialist travelling to three different schools. She teaches physical education, visual arts, music, drama, and dance to students from Primary to Intermediate.

Demonstrating what she wants students to do is a challenge. “I get kids to listen a lot more; I tell them to do as I say not as I do.” Or she will ask students to demonstrate and finds that “kids are really good about that.”

## A better teacher

Buie, who “looks normal outwardly,” explains her disabilities to every new group of students. She lets her students ask questions and finds them accepting. Some will ask privately how she manages with everyday tasks. She explains the contortions required to put on a sweater or pull up a zipper.

Her disability is an asset, Buie says. “It makes me a better teacher. I am able to convey to my students that everybody needs help at some time. It helps them to understand it’s okay to ask for help.”

She adds: “I’ve become an excellent problem solver. I focus on what it is that I can do, not what I can’t do.” She models this attitude for her students with special needs. “We work on the idea of doing what you

---

**“Many adults are uncomfortable with people with disabilities. If they can be comfortable with me, perhaps they will be more comfortable with people with a more visible disability.”**

---

— Kari Buie

can do with what you have. My disabilities help me understand when they have difficulties and frustrations,” and they give her credibility when she explains to students that “there are ways to overcome our challenges. We need to sometimes take a moment to breathe and think through the situation and overcome the challenge.”

## Asserting her rights

Buie says principals and colleagues have been understanding and supportive. When outdoor supervision in cold weather became a hardship, her principal arranged for her to supervise inside. When she needed a parking spot close

.....  
*Cont. on page 14*



**Cheryl MacMillan**

### Becoming an activist

But harassment in previous positions led MacMillan to take action. At the ETFO annual meeting in 2000 MacMillan brought forward a motion to establish a Disabilities Issues Committee. “I stood up and told my story,” she recalls. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to set up the committee.

At this year’s annual meeting MacMillan thanked speakers for standing to the side of the microphones so that those watching the overhead screens could read their lips. She continues to act as an advocate for colleagues with disabilities.

One member who asked for help was a teacher who had suffered from polio as a child and had one leg that was shorter than the other. Her principal assigned her to a kindergarten class. Getting down to the children’s level was a constant challenge. She was close to tears when she asked for help, MacMillan said. The solution – a wheeled chair that allowed her to navigate her classroom easily. The bill for the chair was presented to the principal.

“Boards spend money to accommodate children with special needs,” MacMillan points out. “They also have a responsibility to accommodate teachers.” She is proud of having been a driving force behind the Disabilities Issues Committee. And she is proud of her federation. “ETFO is a leader in equity and social justice. Other organizations look to ETFO and adapt what ETFO does. There is more accommodation and acceptance of diversity now because of ETFO.”

MacMillan says she has never let her disability stand in her way. All her life she has been involved in community organizations, music groups, and clubs. “That’s my way of giving back,” she says.

During MacMillan’s break, two former students come into her classroom to ask her to sign a form. “She’s an awesome, wicked teacher,” says a 16-year-old wearing his baseball cap backwards. “I loved being in her class and I come back whenever I can.”



Kari uses an extender when she needs to demonstrate an action that would require her to raise her arm.

**Kari Buie**

to the school entrance to minimize her time outside and to make it easier to carry things in, she asked for and received a disabled parking spot—which, she points out, should already have been in place.

Buie has taken quiet but decisive action to assert her rights. She left a board-mandated PLC to take her scheduled preparation time. “I was the first person to take preparation time during a PLC. I took it because I could do the reading activity on my own time, and I needed to prepare for a replacement,” she explained. “It takes me longer than other people to put together materials. I was entitled to my prep time, but I also physically needed the time to get things done.” She was questioned by administration, and she wonders if the superintendent would have been as understanding if she had not had a disability.

With three schools to travel to, Buie knew she would have problems meeting her schedule during cold weather. “The transition time was barely enough during the warm fall. In winter I am affected more and it takes more time to get on my coat and boots. I was faced with asking all the principals and the superintendent to give me more time. I reworked my schedule and they approved it within days.

“Maybe they’ll start understanding that the transition time is also not enough for people without disabilities. I hope others will start to stand up for more travel time.”

Buie was a participant in *Leaders for Tomorrow*, where she learned that if she wanted to have administration solve a problem it was best to go with a solution in hand. She has been a school steward most years and has chaired her local’s professional learning committee. As a unit representative for the local, she is the first point of contact for stewards from six schools. Last year she presented her first *Access Without Borders* workshop to occasional teachers in Halton.

# Inching Towards Accessibility and Inclusion

*“Slowly but surely we are leaving behind antiquated ideas of disability as tragedy.”*

— Helen Henderson, *Toronto Star*, July 3, 2010

## Support from ETFO

- ETFO's Disabilities Issues Committee was established in 2000. Members discuss policies and issues and make recommendations to the executive.
- ETFO has provided training for stewards and has produced a manual, *Access Without Borders*, that assists locals in creating accessible meetings.
- *Access Without Borders* workshops, presented by trained members, explore disability issues, attitudes, policies, and barriers, and works to dispel myths.
- The workshop *Focus on Ability: Promoting an Inclusive Work Environment* focuses on members' rights and the union's responsibilities. It highlights the four A's of Accessibility: Advocacy, Awareness, Accommodation, and Ability.
- The Disability Connections Incentive Fund provides support for members organizing a conference, workshop, sport competition, or cultural event featuring artists who have disabilities.
- ETFO also produces posters and the *See Ability* bookmark, included in this issue of *Voice*.

**I**n March 2010 Canada became the 82nd nation in the world to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, an international human rights treaty, at the United Nations.

Among other things, the treaty calls on nations to eliminate barriers to equal access to public spaces, workplaces, housing, and transportation; and to provide equal and fair access to the justice system, health care services, and employment. Above all it promotes increased respect for the rights and dignity of persons with disabilities.

Canada's ratification of the treaty "ushers in a new era where people with disabilities are viewed as full citizens with exactly the same rights and responsibilities as other citizens of Canada," said a spokesperson for the Council of Canadians with Disabilities. The treaty requires Canada to report every four years on the steps it has taken to improve access and inclusion. For persons with disabilities it represents one more step forward.

Rights for persons with disabilities became a focus of activism in the 1970s, spurred by the civil rights and women's movements of the time, and by the fact that large numbers of Vietnam war veterans were returning with disabilities.

Canadian activists, including law student David Lepofsky (see page 7), worked successfully to have disability rights included in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms that came into effect in 1982.

The decade from 1983-1992 became the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. At the end of that decade December 3 was proclaimed as the International Day of Disabled Persons.

In the years since then, activists have continued to push for laws to force the elimination of social and physical barriers. The most recent Ontario legislation, the *Access for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (2005)*, sets standards that aim to achieve accessibility by 2025.

For persons with disabilities the struggle continues. The Ontario Federation of Labour first called on the provincial government to take action on employment barriers more than 40 years ago. Today employment remains one of the major hurdles for people with disabilities. About half of Ontario's 1.5 million persons with disabilities live in deep poverty and subsist on poverty-level payments from the Ontario Disability Support Program.



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# Collective Agreements and the *Human Rights Code*

BY CHRISTINE BROWN

**Quick quiz – how long is your collective agreement? 25 pages? 60?**

**W**hatever your answer, it is an underestimate, because there is the part of the collective agreement you can see or read, and the part that you cannot. If you are a member with a disability, this “hidden” section is a big part of what protects you against discrimination and harassment in the workplace, and requires your employer to recognize your right to a workplace accommodation.

Your collective agreement may well contain provisions that prohibit discrimination or harassment in the workplace, or refer to specific statutes or duties under law. Even if it does not, however, the relevant employment-related sections of Ontario’s *Human Rights Code* are “read into” your collective agreement – meaning they are *deemed* to be there, even if they are not there explicitly.

## THE IMPACT OF THE *HUMAN RIGHTS CODE*

The legal aspect of accommodation is the easy part. A member who requires a workplace accommodation because of a disability has recourse, and the process is straightforward.

- Your employer must recognize the duty to accommodate a staff member with a disability and the duty to ensure a discrimination and harassment-free workplace.
- An employment-related complaint of discrimination or harassment can be taken through the grievance procedure under your collective agreement.
- The arbitrator who will eventually hear that grievance, should it get that far, is empowered to apply the *Human Rights Code* in arriving at a decision. This power is part of Ontario’s *Labour Relations Act*.



# Collective Agreements and the *Human Rights Code*

## CLAIMING YOUR RIGHTS

One of the enduring challenges for ETFO as a union is how to convince members with disabilities to come forward in the first place and claim their right to accommodation and freedom from harassment and discrimination. There are many reasons for this. Some members are still unaware that they have these legal rights – and they are rights, not a “gift” granted by the employer.

Members with disabilities also fear workplace stigma. This is especially the case when a disability is connected with mental, as opposed to physical, health. Members may worry that any changes made in the workplace to accommodate them will be seen as special treatment, even by their colleagues.

Finally, in a workplace culture which fosters a climate of just getting on with things no matter what the personal costs, educators tend to be their own worst enemies. An educator might fully support accommodating the needs of a child with a disability, and fight very hard to help ensure those needs are met, but be reluctant to come forward when the disability is her/his own.

## EMPLOYERS HAVE A DUTY TO ACCOMMODATE

Employers must accommodate employees with disabilities up to the point of “undue hardship.” Hypothetical examples of undue hardship would be an accommodation measure so costly it drove the employer to the brink of bankruptcy, or that jeopardized the health or safety of others in the workplace, or that had the effect of radically changing the way the employer’s business was conducted.

In practice, undue hardship is a difficult case for employers to prove. The average cost of job accommodations is modest (if there is a cost attached at all). Far from causing disruption, accommodating employees means that they can continue to be productive members of the workforce.

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**CHRISTINE BROWN** is ETFO’s coordinator of Protective Services.

## COOPERATION IS REQUIRED

Employers, not individual employees or the union that represents them, are responsible for designing specific workplace accommodation measures. Still, an employee requesting an accommodation must assist – for example, by providing the medical documentation that may be required.

The affected employee does not have the right to dictate what the precise accommodation measure might look like. The employer’s obligation is to provide an accommodation that meets an employee’s *needs*, but not necessarily her or his *preferences*. An appropriate accommodation is one that results in equal opportunity and respects the individual’s dignity. There may be more than one workplace solution that meets this test. Accommodations do not need to be perfect, but they do need to be reasonable.

The union, for its part, must cooperate as well. ETFO has a great deal of expertise at the local and provincial levels in assisting members who require either a temporary or permanent accommodation measure. In the vast majority of cases, the matter is resolved simply through discussions involving the employee, employer representatives, and union representatives. It is relatively rare for an accommodation issue to be referred to arbitration or to come before the Human Rights Tribunal.

## KEEPING AN EMPLOYEE AT WORK

The actual words in the *Human Rights Code* which set forth the duty to accommodate have not changed much in recent years. On the other hand, the human rights case law – how those words have been interpreted by arbitrators, tribunals, and the courts – continues to evolve.

One of the more common misconceptions about human rights in a unionized environment is that somehow collective agreements suddenly become irrelevant in the face of a human rights complaint. The jurisprudence simply does not bear this out. Arbitrators agree that the best accommodation is to keep an employee in her or his job, and modify the job or work environment. This can be done through adaptive software or hardware, ergonomic adjustments or specialized equipment, or alterations in some job duties. Substituting another activity for yard duty is one example.

Sometimes, a job accommodation entails moving an employee out of an existing position into another. Seniority rights can become a factor. Yet arbitrators who adjudicate such cases have held that employers must first seek a staffing arrangement that least disrupts the existing rights, including existing seniority rights, of other employees. Interfering with the employment rights of others is a last resort and in some cases can be viewed as undue hardship on the union. Such cases are rare; good faith and creativity usually yield results.

The *Human Rights Code* exists to protect employees, and so does your collective agreement. These two documents are allies, not enemies.

**GRADE ONE****Focus: Ability**

Title: **Zoom!**  
 Author: **Robert Munsch**  
 ISBN: **0439187745**

**Suggested Activities****Pre-reading**

- Use “think, pair, share,” to discuss what makes someone a hero.
- Share with classmates the characteristics we look for in a hero.
- Discuss biases and stereotypes.

**Post-reading**

- Students share with classmates what happened in the beginning, middle, and end of the story (see Reproducibles).
- Name the main character in the story. How was she able to help others by being in a special wheelchair?
- Discuss types of special needs of various groups. What actions can we take to be inclusive and mindful of special needs?
- Describe the main character.
- Work in small groups to make structures that meet a specific need (e.g., chair, bridge, wheelchair, walking stick, glasses).

**Extensions**

- Invite a person with special needs into your classroom to share accomplishments and challenges.
- Ask students to watch the Special Olympics and decide which events are most interesting to them.
- Students can participate in activities or events that help raise funds for the Terry Fox Run, War Amps, local associations for community living, etc.

**MATERIALS**

- chart paper
- markers
- paper
- pencils
- crayons
- reproducible

**CURRICULUM LINKS****Oral Communication**

- 1.2 demonstrate an understanding of appropriate listening behavior by using active listening strategies in a few different situations.

**Reading**

- 1.4 demonstrate understanding of a text by retelling the story or restating information from that text, including the main idea.
- 1.6 extend understanding of texts by connecting the ideas in them to their own knowledge and experience, to other familiar texts, and to the world around them.

**Writing**

- 2.1 write short texts using a few simple forms.

**Media Literacy**

- 3.4 produce some short media works for specific purposes and audiences, using a few simple media forms and appropriate conventions and techniques.

**Science and Technology****Everyday Structures**

- design and make structures that meet a specific need.

**The Arts****Visual Arts**

- produce two- and three-dimensional works of art that communicate ideas for specific purposes.

**RELATED RESOURCES**

- *Focus on Ability* poster, ETFO
- “Splash: Here Comes a Dolphin,” *The Power of Story, Vol. 2, ETFO*
- *Every Girl Every Boy* poster, [reachandteach.com](http://reachandteach.com)
- Website: [specialolympics.org](http://specialolympics.org)
- *Don't Call Me Special: A First Look at Disability*, Pat Thomas. ISBN 9780764121180

Focus: Ability

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Beginning	
Middle	
End	

What happened first?

What happened next?

What happened last?

## GRADE ONE

## Focus: Personnes de toute capacité

Titre : **Vroum**  
 Auteur : **Robert Munsch**  
 ISBN : **0-7791-1433-7**



## Activités Suggérées

## Avant la lecture :

- Poser la question : « Quels attributs font un héros ou une héroïne ? » Avec un partenaire, les élèves font un remue-méninges et écrivent leurs idées de verbes, d'adjectifs ou d'actions qu'une personne fait pour devenir un héros ou une héroïne. Après deux ou trois minutes, partager les remue-méninges (de tous ou de quelques partenaires) avec la classe.
- Est-ce que les élèves connaissent quelqu'un(e) qui utilise un fauteuil roulant ? Est-ce que votre école/ votre salle de classe est accessible aux fauteuils roulants ? Comment leurs vies seraient-elles changées si les élèves étaient tous en fauteuils roulants ?

## Pendant la lecture :

- Regarder le vieux fauteuil roulant de Laurie au début de l'histoire. Comparer celui-ci aux autres fauteuils dans l'histoire. Comment sont-ils pareils ? Comment sont-ils différents ?
- Est-ce que Laurie est capable de marcher ? Qu'est-ce qu'elle utilise pour l'aider à marcher ?
- Faire une liste d'animaux qui paraissent dans les illustrations. Les enfants, peuvent-ils trouver : l'écureuil avec les béquilles ? l'écureuil qui porte une écharpe ? les écureuils avec les planches à neige ?

## Après la lecture :

- Demander aux élèves ce qui s'est passé au début, au milieu et à la fin de l'histoire. Noter l'information sur un grand papier. Demander aux élèves de noter leurs sentiments sur le questionnaire intitulé « Mes sentiments à propos de l'histoire ».
- Demander aux élèves de nommer le personnage principale de l'histoire et comment elle a aidé quelqu'un avec son fauteuil roulant.
- Discuter comment certains parmi nous ont des besoins spéciaux et comment ces personnes sont incluses dans nos vies de tous les jours.

## Extensions

- Écrire des lettres au conseil scolaire pour noter les besoins des personnes en fauteuils roulants et pour leur demander de rendre votre école plus accessibles aux fauteuils roulants.

## LES ATTENTES CURRICULAIRES

Immersion 2<sup>ième</sup> année :

2i2, 2i4, 2i8, 2i14, 2i17, 2i18

Intensif 4<sup>ième</sup> année :

4x1, 4x3, 4x8, 4x19, 4x20

Cadre 4<sup>ième</sup> année :

4f2, 4f7, 4f15, 4f17

## Focus: Personnes de toute capacité

### Mes sentiments à propos de l'histoire

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Décris tes sentiments à propos de l'histoire. À côté de chaque description, dessine ton visage montrant ton émotion.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

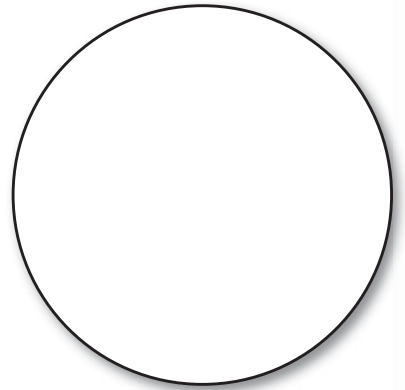
\_\_\_\_\_

parce que \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



### Mes sentiments au milieu de l'histoire

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

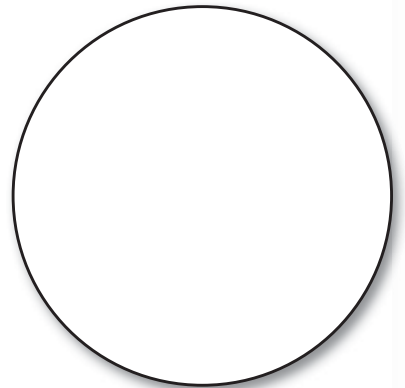
\_\_\_\_\_

parce que \_\_\_\_\_

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### À la fin de l'histoire, mes sentiments

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

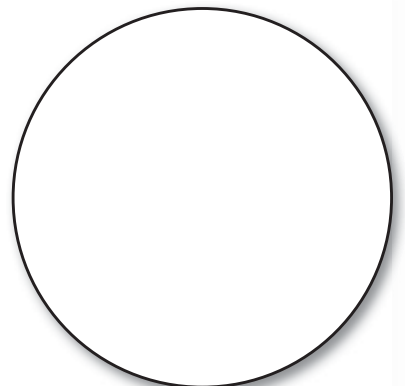
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parce que \_\_\_\_\_

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# Thinking It Through

BY JOAN LITTLEFORD

In the kindergarten classroom playing is learning; it is the work of young children.

Open the door of an effective kindergarten classroom and all of your senses will be engaged. Colourful bulletin boards provide the backdrop to bold paintings; student posters advertise the class restaurant. An alphabet frieze is set low enough for children to see, and children are playing in all corners of the classroom.

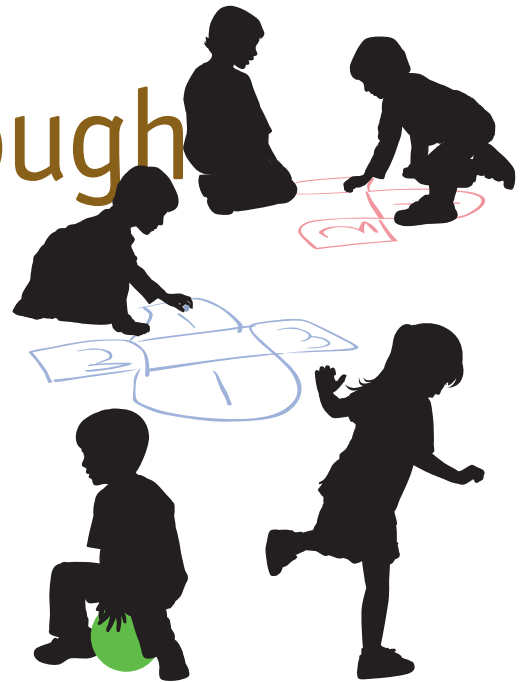
The furniture in this classroom is not typical of that in other Primary or Junior classrooms. Desks or work tables are replaced with spaces for kindergarten learning – the sand box and the water table provide independent exploration of science properties and the house centre provides the setting for the development of an oral narrative of parents coping with a hungry baby. The children negotiate their roles and show empathy for their hungry infant.

Sieves, magnifying glasses, funnels, miniature cooking utensils, reading wands, and magnetic letters and numbers replace the textbooks that guide the learning in other classrooms.

But in the kindergarten classroom there are books too, everywhere, in all areas. Books about aquatic animals, the water cycle, and how plumbing works in our homes are placed strategically next to the water table. Books about castles, beaches, or fairy tales to be retold are near the sand table. And colourful recipe books guide the ingredients in the home centre or the kindergarten restaurant. Some books are displayed as though in a library and children come in and browse the stacks.

In planning their classroom schedule, the early learning educator allows large blocks of time for independent work at these learning centres. In the kindergarten classroom playing is learning; it is the work of young children.

It is the work of the early learning educators to design the classroom and their program to facilitate the best learning opportunities for their students. The new ETFO resource, *Thinking It Through: Teaching and Learning in the Kindergarten*



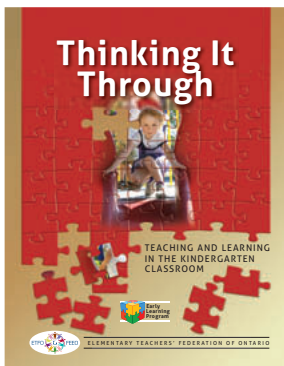
*Classroom 2010* will help them accomplish this goal. It is a single book that addresses the whole kindergarten program.

Many professional resources have been written by others for educators of young children, some directed at the educational sector and some for the child care sector. Most are very specifically written on one aspect of the early learning program. Until now, it has been almost impossible to find a resource that addresses the kindergarten program in a holistic way.

*Thinking It Through* includes individual topics such as deepening our understanding of child development, understanding literacy and mathematical development, setting up dynamic learning centres, planning for assessment and assessing the learning children demonstrate in their day-to-day interactions and in the way they manipulate classroom materials, and much more.

This new resource is made up of 11 chapters that can stand alone but, more importantly, interconnect to help educators plan their whole program. Together, they will help early years educators to plan dynamic and stimulating learning experiences for their students. *Thinking it Through* is now available from *shopETFO*.

.....  
**JOAN LITTLEFORD** is an executive assistant at ETFO whose work focuses on early learning.



# Merit Pay for Ontario Teachers?

## An idea without merit

BY BEN LEVIN

Teachers in Ontario are currently paid based on experience and qualifications. Recent debate in the United States about the desirability of merit pay has led to similar discussions in Canada. In this article, merit pay is defined as a scheme that links some portion of teachers' pay to their students' academic achievement. An extensive review of research in education and other sectors supports my argument that this is not a desirable policy. Here are eight reasons why.

### ***1. Few people in the labour force are paid on the basis of measured outcomes***

Paying people based on the outcomes of their work is quite a rare practice. In many fields, earnings have much to do with reputation, but reputation is not the same as a measured outcome.

### ***2. No other professional group is paid based on a measured outcome***

Nurses, lawyers, engineers, architects, or even aircraft pilots are not paid based on outcomes, though their pay may be based on volume of work. Even where there is pay for performance, the performance measures are not primarily related to measures of client outcomes.

### ***3. Most teachers oppose such schemes***

Surveys consistently show that teachers strongly oppose merit pay schemes. (70 percent or more are against.) Since improvement in education depends critically on teachers' commitment, anything reducing that commitment is likely to be unhelpful to achieving better outcomes.

### ***4. Pay based on student achievement is highly likely to lead to displacement of other important education purposes and goals***

When people have a financial incentive to achieve a score, that incentive may displace other, more desirable goals. Research by psychologists shows that extrinsic rewards can act to displace intrinsic motivation; thus, for some teachers merit pay schemes could reduce their desire to do the job well simply because that is their professional responsibility and wish.

As well, the outcomes that are measured to determine pay are likely to get more attention than those that are not, such as achievement in subject areas not tested, interpersonal skills, or the ability to motivate students.

If merit pay is individual and competitive (as is often the case), teachers will have incentives not to cooperate with colleagues. They may even have reasons to be glad that colleagues are ineffective.

### ***5. There is no consensus on what the measures of merit should be***

Merit pay seeks to link teachers' pay to student outcomes; however, deciding which outcomes will determine merit is highly problematic. In addition to academic achievement, we also value such things as students'



ongoing ability and desire to learn, ability to work with others, creativity, and citizenship skills. Factoring in these goals would make merit pay schemes too complicated.

**6. *The measurement of merit in teaching inevitably involves a degree of error***

In merit pay schemes, teachers' merit is being inferred from student performance, but any measure of student performance, whether a classroom assessment or a standardized test, will have some error in it. The total measurement error in any merit pay scheme is likely to be quite large, making the results unreliable.

**7. *The details of merit pay schemes vary widely, yet these details have great impact on how such plans are received and their effects on teachers and schools***

Merit pay schemes can involve many different options that produce widely different consequences. Choosing a merit pay scheme means making decisions about

- which teachers to include
- whether the measure is applied to each teacher or to groups of teachers
- whether merit pay is restricted or whether all teachers can potentially receive it
- the amount of money involved
- whether additional pay is built into base salary or not.

These important choices could have significant impacts on how a plan works and how teachers feel about it.

**BEN LEVIN** is a former deputy minister of education in Ontario and a professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

**8. *The evidence for merit pay for teachers is weak; many schemes have been tried but few have lasted***

Merit pay plans have existed for more than 100 years. However, there has been little careful empirical study. Some of the studies currently cited to support the concept were conducted in jurisdictions with very different education contexts (India, for example), and the findings may have little relevance for Canada.

Furthermore, though various American jurisdictions have adopted merit pay schemes in the last 20 years, few have lasted. For one reason or another they have not been sustainable. There are good reasons to be guarded about any policy for which the supporting evidence is weak and which results in a negative experience.

A common conclusion of all the analyses of merit pay is that "new pay plans can't be summarily imposed on teachers . . . teachers need to be part of the process of development, and they need to own the pay plan that emerges."<sup>1</sup>

**Note**

1. Julia E. Koppich, "Teacher Unions and New Forms of Teacher Compensation," *Phi Delta Kappan*, vol. 91, no. 8, May 2010, pp. 22-26.

The full article and references can be found on the ETFO website at: [etfo.ca](http://etfo.ca) ► *issues in education*

BY JOHANNA BRAND AND ANNE RODRIGUE

# Sharing, Teaching, Learning



**E**very year thousands of ETFO members take part in a rich form of professional learning, learning that takes place in their own classrooms. It's a learning opportunity that happens when they agree to become associate teachers.

Associate teachers are those who volunteer to have a student teacher in their classroom for practicum placements, which can total from 40 to 60 days.

We asked some associate teachers to share their thoughts about taking on this responsibility.

## Why they do it

Associate teachers say they find it rewarding to share their love of teaching. They are giving back to the profession that has provided them with a career they love.

*"There is no better job than working with children, and being able to share knowledge and ideas is awesome."*— Sheila Smith Jones

*"I had wonderful associate teachers myself, who I continue to emulate. I know how much their guidance and experience meant to me, and I hope that I am helping a pre-service teacher to discover their own philosophy and methods."*  
— Renée Herron

*"It helps me to remember why I got into teaching. Teacher-candidates often have great enthusiasm and an untainted passion for teaching. I find their exuberance refreshing."* — Robyn Colvin-Smith

## A chance to reflect on practice

Associate teachers say preservice teachers bring with them new ideas and practices and particularly knowledge of new technology. Working with them provides associate teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their own practice.

*"It can make the teacher more aware of her/his own teaching style – how different personalities can still produce positive results. An example is that I, who am fairly loud as a teacher, find softer-spoken people can still be very effective in classroom management."* — Judith Maeck

*"Being an associate is a chance to share our own experiences with individuals new to the profession, but more importantly, it is a chance for us to be metacognitive about our own teaching practices."*  
— Calvin Makela



Photos: Catherine Cocchio

## Challenges

Without question, having a student teacher in the classroom brings challenges. Many associate teachers long for more time to do this work.

*"It can be challenging to completely give control of your classroom to another person. They may handle situations in different ways than I would. Many times I have felt like jumping into situations to 'rescue' the student teacher. But over the years, I have found that it is a better learning experience for them, the less I interfere."* — Robyn Colvin-Smith

*"It is still a challenge to find the time to mentor a candidate and to make sure that the day-to-day realities of the teaching profession are addressed."* — Calvin Makela

Not all student teachers are created equal. Associate teachers say those who are struggling could particularly benefit from more time in the classroom.

*"[We need] more time to sit down with student teachers to give appropriate and timely feedback . . . This is especially important when you have a student teacher who is struggling."* — Sheila Smith-Jones

*"It can be uncomfortable addressing issues when a student teacher's skills are not where one would expect and when they are not fully prepared to teach the assigned lesson(s). It can also be more challenging when the student teacher has not covered a topic in their school learning that is needed for the practicum."* — Sheila Cade

*"It is very worrisome when student teachers come to the profession thinking that they will always have all the answers and that there is only one way to do things. As teachers we always have to learn and grow."* — Dawn Stefani

## Improving the experience

Associate teachers want forms that are easier to fill out. They want recognition of the additional time they spend. But most of all they want time to work with student teachers and for student teachers to have more time to practise their new profession.

*"Observing once or twice a week for a few weeks before the practicum begins would allow the teacher-candidate time to learn about the class as a whole as well as the individuals who comprise the class. Time and energy could then be devoted to planning and delivering engaging lessons."* — Sheila Cade

*"I would also like more time to co-plan; even an extra period a week would be wonderful to acknowledge the increased work load of accepting a student teacher. This would benefit both of us."* — Renée Herron

Associates also have specific advice about what the faculties of education could do to improve students' success in the profession.

*"Teacher-candidates are often juggling school assignments along with lesson plans during a practicum. The practicum should be the only assignment for the teacher-candidate."* — Sheila Cade

*"The time learning in the classroom environment is training in the real world. To come in for two weeks is just not a feasible way to do things. The student teachers only start to get their 'footing' at the two-week mark as they learn from the children and find out their strengths, needs, and learning styles."* — Dawn Stefani

*"I would change it back to having the last three weeks as 100 percent teaching. Only one week of 100 percent teaching responsibility does not let the teacher-candidate get over the anxiety of full responsibility for a classroom. In my observation, by the end of the third week, the teacher-candidate feels at ease with his/her responsibility and is better prepared to enter the profession."* — Robyn Colvin-Smith

*"I would like to see a return to three different placements so that the student teacher can experience three schools, three associates, three sets of students, etc. The practicum seems to be too short, and this, in my opinion, is where the most valuable learning takes place. There should be a mandatory one-week Resource or Students-at-Risk placement."* — Renée Herron

*"Effective classroom management skills are important at any grade level and contribute to productive days in the classroom. Ensuring teacher-candidates have many opportunities to build their skills in this area is important. Teacher-candidates need time to observe and discuss a variety of situations requiring different classroom management strategies."* — Sheila Cade

*"The teacher-candidate who is working with the associate teacher should have the opportunities to visit other teachers in the school."* — Calvin Makela

ETFO Executive Assistant **ANNE RODRIGUE** coordinates faculty of education visits and presentations.

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**Winter registration closes  
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































































Registration dates for face-to-face courses may be different.

For information about registration dates, specific face-to-face course dates and locations, check [etfo-aq.ca](http://etfo-aq.ca)



\* This schedule is subject to change. For more information refer to the ETFO AQ website [etfo-aq.ca](http://etfo-aq.ca). ETFO reserves the right to cancel programs due to low enrolment. There will be a full refund of registration fees should ETFO cancel the program.

\*\* For details on PQP registration, course dates, locations, and fees, please check [etfo-aq.ca](http://etfo-aq.ca)

Education Law	 Online	 Online
English as a Second Language – Part 1	 Online	 Online
English as a Second Language – Part 2	 Online	 Online
English as a Second Language – Specialist	 Online	 Online
French as a Second Language – Part 1	 Online	 Online
French as a Second Language – Part 2	 Online	 Online
French as a Second Language – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Geography, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
History, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
Inclusive Classroom – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Inclusive Classroom – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Inclusive Classroom – Specialist	—	 Online
Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Integration of Information and Computer Technology in Instruction - Specialist	 Online	 Online
Integrated Arts	 Online	 Online
Junior Education – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Junior Education – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Junior Education – Specialist	—	 Online
Kindergarten	 Online	 Online
Librarianship – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Librarianship – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Librarianship - Specialist	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Primary and Junior - Part 1	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Primary and Junior - Part 2	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Primary and Junior - Specialist	 Online	 Online
Mathematics, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
Media – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Media – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Media – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Mentoring	 Online	 Online
Primary Education – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Primary Education – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Primary Education – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Reading – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Reading – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Reading – Specialist	 Online	 Online
Science and Technology, Primary and Junior - Part 1	 Online	 Online
Science and Technology, Primary and Junior – Part 2	—	 Online
Science and Technology, Primary and Junior – Specialist	—	 Online
Science and Technology, Grades 7 and 8	 Online	 Online
Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Part 2	—	 Online
Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Specialist	—	 Online
Special Education – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Special Education – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Special Education – Specialist	 Lambton Kent	 Limestone
Teaching Aboriginal Children	 Online	 Online
Teaching Combined Grades	 Online	 Online
Teaching and Learning Through e-learning	 Online	 Online
Writing – Part 1	 Online	 Online
Writing – Part 2	 Online	 Online
Writing – Specialist	 Online	 Online

Principal's Qualification Program – Part 1	Peel	Toronto
Principal's Qualification Program – Part 2	—	Halton, York Region, Upper Grand

# The Evolution of Access Without Borders

BY SHELLEY WHITTAKER

**I**n 2006, as the social justice chair of my local, I attended the ETFO annual leadership conference. The two-day event ignited my interest in equity work. From that point forward, I began seeking additional opportunities to learn and to evolve in my awareness and understanding of equity issues. I regularly attended workshops and conferences offered by ETFO's Equity and Women's Services. After three years as a participant, I was asked if I would be willing to assist in facilitating a workshop on disability issues for ETFO members.

When first asked to be a workshop presenter, I felt reservations. I was acutely aware that I was not an expert or a specialist. I have been a teacher for 13 years; for seven of these I have had the privilege of teaching in a special education classroom, and I believe passionately in the ability of my students. But I found myself wondering if I would have enough knowledge to facilitate a group of colleagues. I quickly realized I would need to set aside my fears and trust in the processes of active inquiry and collaboration.

I was paired with a colleague, Victoria Nolan, one of the creators of the first ETFO disabilities issues workshop, *Access Without Borders*. Vicky and I were provided with a day to meet and begin planning for our upcoming workshop. We were presenting to new teachers – teachers with five years of experience or less. We decided to focus on providing a basic framework for participants to assist them in furthering their understanding of the various categories and types of disabilities and of the IPRC (Identification, Placement, and

Review Committee) and IEP (Individual Education Plan) processes. We would also share information on the tools available to provide support for students with special needs and at-risk learners. In addition, we would provide participants with an assortment of take-home resources to assist with the development of an IEP – specifically, tools to assist with the development of annual goals, learning expectations, and accommodations.

In planning our initial workshop, Vicky and I agreed that interaction and dialogue would be key to our success and to active participant engagement. As time has passed, and both Vicky and I have ventured off to present our own ever-evolving versions of *Access Without Borders*, active engagement of participants has remained a constant. Time for dialogue and discussing scenarios is essential, and gives participants the chance to learn from one another, to seek new strategies and ideas, and to reframe their thinking around specific students and student needs. In all sessions participants have been ready and willing to ask difficult questions, seek answers, and look for ways to best meet the needs of the learners in their care.

One recurring challenge that members raise is providing effective programming for students with special needs when the classroom teacher is away. Occasional teachers attending our workshops often tell us that one of the greatest challenges to their day is the lack of information available about students with special needs. Occasional teachers consistently communicate

It would be wonderful to see ETFO further explore the challenges surrounding accessibility of resources and funds to support students with special needs.

SHELLEY WHITTAKER is a member of the Greater Essex County Teacher Local.

the importance of classroom teachers leaving behind detailed information that clarifies needs, strengths, and strategies for success, as well as triggers to avoid when dealing with students with special needs and exceptionalities. This can make a difference for the individual student and teacher, and have a positive impact on students and on the overall integrity of the classroom learning environment.

While the *Access Without Borders* workshop is a wonderful introduction to the basic framework of meeting the needs of our learners with special needs, there are many additional challenges relating to resources, accessibility, funding, and community support.

Students with special needs, their families, teachers, and allies continually find themselves in the role of advocate. This can be challenging, demanding work. It would be wonderful to see ETFO further explore the challenges surrounding accessibility of resources and funds to support students with special needs, to contrast rural and urban challenges, and to work with our own members who self-identify as having a disability to determine what would make our schools more equitable and inclusive, not only for our students, but for our members.

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# If It Happens to You

BY PROFESSIONAL RELATIONS SERVICES STAFF

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**Do *not* give anyone a written or verbal account of the incident. This applies even when you know exactly what the allegation is, who the students involved are, and that you are innocent.**

---

**M**any of you will have read the Robert Munsch story, *Thomas' Snowsuit*, to your students. When Thomas refuses to put on his snowsuit to go out to play at recess, his teacher and his principal try to force him into it. The story is a classroom hit, but have you ever thought about what would happen if such a situation occurred in your classroom?

Thomas might tell all his friends that you had yelled at him and wrestled him to the floor. He might say that he ended up wearing your dress while you stood there in his snowsuit, and that when he left, you and the principal were fighting each other.

When it became known, the incident would be reported to the Children's Aid Society (CAS). Since it involves a possible physical assault on a student and possible sexually inappropriate behaviour, the incident might also be reported to the police. You would most likely be suspended from teaching pending the outcome of these investigations; if you were charged by the police, you would be suspended until criminal proceedings were concluded. Then the school board would want to meet with you to determine what, if any, discipline to impose. The board might move to fire you. Finally, there could be a complaint to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT), which could result in discipline. This might include the college suspending or revoking your licence to teach in Ontario. All of these outcomes could affect you personally and professionally.

What would you do if this happened to you?

Allegations can arise from any number of teaching situations, even when there has been

no deliberate or obvious misconduct. Professional Relations Services staff at ETFO have the following advice.

## **DO NOT PROVIDE ANY STATEMENTS**

Do *not* give anyone a written or verbal account of the incident. This applies even when you know exactly what the allegation is, who the students involved are, and that you are innocent. Anything you say about an allegation – including a denial – is a statement. If your principal asks for a written report, say that you want to speak to ETFO first. It may be helpful for you to make notes about the incident while it is fresh in your mind; however, do not show your notes to *anyone* until you have an opportunity to get some advice.

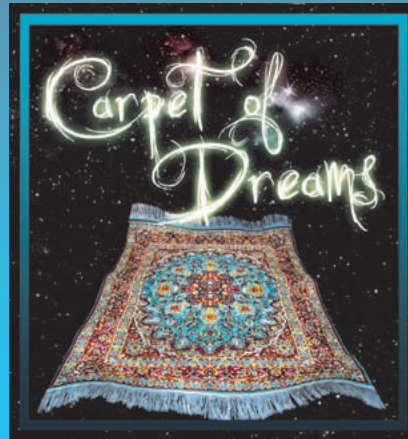
In some cases, you will have no idea what the allegation is and will be tempted to speak to the police or the CAS to find out. Resist that temptation. Let your union or its legal counsel get this information for you.

Many allegations are referred to the police for investigation, either directly or by the CAS. You will not necessarily be told that the police are involved. If they are, understand that a criminal charge is possible. Do not assume that talking to the police and explaining “your side of the story” will necessarily end the investigation; talking to the police could, in fact, work against you.

If you are contacted by the CAS or the police, or if you are being asked by anyone else to respond to an allegation, you should say that you want to co-operate, but that you wish to speak to the union first.

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**Tales and Tunes for  
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*Carpet of Dreams* is a brand new show for elementary school students. Performances in Hammerson Hall of The Living Arts Centre in Mississauga will be preceded by in-school visits by professional musicians and supported by a Teachers Curriculum Guide. Come and hear enchanting Persian Fairy Tales about Princes and Kings and dragons and magic horses, set to traditional music of Persia and classical chamber music. The music, by young Canadian composer Kevin Lau, is scored for clarinet/bass clarinet, violin, cello, harp, percussion and traditional Persian instruments: taar, kamanche, rabaab and tombak.

School performances on Thursday and Friday May 5 and 6, and a public family show on Saturday May 7, 2011 in  
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[www.chambermusicmississauga.org](http://www.chambermusicmississauga.org)



**CONTACT ETFO**

ETFO is your union and has experienced staff available to help you. If you are at school when you learn about an allegation, tell the principal you need to call ETFO immediately. Ask to make the call from a private office. This will allow you to have a frank discussion about your situation and get advice about handling any investigations that may be underway.

Where appropriate, ETFO will provide you with a lawyer who can explain and defend your legal rights, contact the investigating officers or caseworkers on your behalf, and act as your advocate throughout the process.

If you are contacted by the police or Children's Aid Society regarding an allegation

Do not participate in or consent to an interview.

Make no statement to anyone regarding the allegation.

Say, "I am willing to co-operate but I am unable to comment until I contact the federation and legal counsel."

Call Professional Relations Services staff at 1-888-838-3836 or 416-962-3836.

# Building a Classroom Community



*"Education is a social process. Education is growth. Education is not a preparation for life; education is life itself."* — John Dewey

BY JOANNE LANGUAGE AND JIM STRACHAN

What we teach is curriculum, but who we teach are students.

If you are a new teacher, you have just completed your first term in the classroom. Take a minute to look back at the beginning of the school year. Before classes started you probably spent a lot of time setting up your classroom, creating name tags and labels, getting ready the correct number of notebooks and Duo-Tangs, and more.

However, that preparation only took you to the first day of school. It was when the names on your class list arrived as real people on that first morning that the classroom began to take shape. What you did from then on determined the character of your classroom community.

The importance of building a cohesive classroom community is one of the powerful themes that emerged when more than 2,500 teachers were asked to describe what contributes to their success in the classroom. What do they do that has the most impact?

These teachers' ideas are the basis for a new resource that ETFO is developing – *The Heart and Art of Teaching & Learning*. It will offer practical ideas and resources for beginning teachers – in fact, all teachers.

Members told us it was crucial to remember this: what we teach is curriculum, but who we teach are students. Students come with their own personalities, interests, abilities, challenges, and backgrounds. The skilled teacher ensures that everyone, including him/herself, is involved in shaping what becomes a unique classroom community where everyone belongs.

Teachers may feel some tension between building an inclusive classroom culture and the pressure to get on with the curriculum. This is not

an either/or proposition. When you build a learning-focused classroom culture where the thoughts and contributions of all students are valued you will actually create more time for teaching and spend less time managing students' behaviour.

The usual get-to-know-you games and fun first day activities serve to introduce everyone to each other, but they are only the beginning. You build a community in a classroom by providing regular opportunities for students to

- function in groups and teams
- participate in classroom meetings where decisions are made and problems are discussed
- learn co-operation by working collaboratively
- accept each others' strengths and weaknesses.

This means that when you decide how to set up your room, you don't make all the decisions ahead of time. After the students arrive, you ask them for input on how the space will function best. This gives them some shared ownership of their classroom environment. As well, don't decorate the classroom with store-bought laminated posters. Post the students' work and art. Within a few days they will see themselves as connected and part of the classroom.

What students remember about their time with you as their teacher is not the innovative way they learned long division or the unit on Early Civilizations, but who you were as a person, and how the classroom felt. Students who are part of a classroom community remember that experience and learn life-long lessons from it.

JOANNE LANGUAGE is an executive assistant in Professional Services at ETFO. JIM STRACHAN is Program Coordinator, Beginning Teachers, with the Toronto District School Board and a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local.

# Connecting with Colleagues



**W**orking as a daily occasional teacher is exciting, rewarding, challenging, and stressful all at the same time. You may feel isolated, even though you are working in environments filled with people and bustling with activity. Each day may take you to a new assignment, leaving little time or opportunity to make professional connections. You will seldom receive any feedback about your work with students. Taking steps to reduce your isolation will help make your role as occasional teacher more satisfying.

## Reducing isolation

Making connections in your daily work environment is important. You can reduce the isolation by

- speaking with colleagues, even if you have to speak first
- eating lunch with staff, if possible
- leaving a note for the absent teacher
- making contact with the administrator and/or school secretary at the end of the day, thanking them for the work, and indicating that you are available for more assignments.

## Initiating conversations

At times, you may need to start the ball rolling. Greet other staff in the hallways. A polite “good morning” sends the message you are friendly and approachable. At lunchtime, ask to join a table. It can be very isolating to eat your lunch in a room full of people who are engaged in socializing with each other but who neglect to include you. By taking the first step, you may not only enjoy a pleasant lunch hour, you will also show you are one of the staff.

## School activities

You are a teacher interested in education and interested in what is happening in the school. If you have the time and the opportunity, enjoy the school’s extracurricular activities. Watch games in the gym; comment on hallway and bulletin board artwork. Greeting parents who come into the school shows an interest in the life of the school community.

## The note to the teacher

While this note is meant to inform the absent teacher about what took place during the day, it also gives you an opportunity to take stock of the good things you experienced with the class. Take the time to share these. Leaving a note or having a discussion after school allows you to connect as one professional to another and reinforces your position as an important part of the teaching staff. It allows the classroom teacher to follow up on the events of the day. Keep the note brief and to the point. Include

- an explanation of any changes made in lesson plans
- a description of how the lessons went
- the location of any collected work assignments
- attendance reports, if not already sent to the office.

The classroom teacher will appreciate information about students who were struggling and those who were learning well, as well as concerns about behaviour. Be sure to also note students who were helpful and worked well.

Finally, leave a thank-you note, if appropriate. For example: “*Thank you for leaving such a well planned day. It made my day easier.*”

These simple steps will reduce your isolation and leave the impression that you are a concerned and competent professional colleague.

.....  
Adapted from *I Am the Teacher: Effective Classroom Management for Occasional Teachers*, published by ETFO and available from shopETFO.



BY MARY-LOU DONNELLY

# Connecting classrooms to the community



UNESCO describes the role of education for sustainable development as helping people “develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge to make informed decisions for the benefit of themselves and others, now and for the future, and to act upon those decisions.”

This is the core of a new CTF program, *Imagineaction*, which offers subsidies for projects that connect classrooms to the community.

*Imagineaction* aims to help educators use a critical-thinking model to teach citizenship by having students actively participate in community-based projects.

*Imagineaction* builds on the successful Green Street program by enhancing what was a strictly environmental focus to include six broader themes:

- Connect (relationships)
- Engage (participatory citizenship)
- Thrive (health and wellness)
- Lead (leadership)
- Live (environmental sustainability)
- Care (poverty)

Each of these themes is intertwined in a program geared to facilitate action after teachers and students have engaged in a critical-thinking exercise about the issue that they want to take on.

*Imagineaction* will offer support by providing

- funding subsidies to help get projects started
- access to a database of individuals and organizations willing to share their expertise and help with a local project

- web-based professional resources to help teachers initiate social action projects tied to both curricular and co-curricular activities
- an electronic showcase that will enable project teams to publicize their work and let them search for new and innovative ideas related to sustainable development.

Teachers were able to start registering their projects and apply for funding as of September 2010. Visit the website [imagine-action.ca](http://imagine-action.ca) to start your project. Click on “Teacher” and create a profile. Once you are approved, you will have access to professional resources and funding opportunities.

It is our hope that *Imagineaction* will serve as a catalyst to inspire teachers and their students to think critically about the world around them and to act to make their community a better place. Imagine the possibilities!

For more information, please visit:  
[imagine-action.ca](http://imagine-action.ca).

## May 2–8, 2011: Global Action Week The Big Story! Education for Women and Girls

CTF encourages all teachers to take part in the 2011 Global Campaign for Education, offered in partnership with the Canadian Global Campaign for Education ([cgce.ca](http://cgce.ca)). The theme is storytelling. Women and girls will share their personal stories about the impact education, or the lack of it, has had on their lives. Men and boys are also invited to tell their stories as they relate to women's experiences and why all women and girls must have the right to a quality education. In the coming weeks more information will be provided on the websites [ccgce.ca](http://ccgce.ca) and [ctf-fce.ca](http://ctf-fce.ca).

CTF's online magazine, *Perspectives*, aims to be the authoritative Canadian source for articles and research on a broad range of topics related to education and the teaching profession. Subscription is free. The magazine is distributed via email to teacher organizations, education partners, individual teachers, and various organizations in Canada. To subscribe go to [ctf-fce.ca](http://ctf-fce.ca) ► [Resources](#) ► [Perspectives e-publication](#).

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

# OTF works to represent the profession



BY RIAN MCLAUGHLIN

"It is not enough to be busy. The question is: What are we busy about?" When Henry David Thoreau made this remark he was not relating them to the activities of OTF, but his words resonate.

## Federation days

OTF continuously advocates for the profession. A significant initiative every year involves our liaison with future teachers – future members – and the deans of education at Ontario universities. Teacher-candidates and newly certified teachers deserve to know from the outset that federation is there for them.

In conjunction with the affiliates, OTF facilitates federation day visits to each of Ontario's 15 teacher education programs in the 13 publicly funded faculties of education and provides access to free resources and support, such as the *Survive 'n' Thrive* website.

Each Ontario teacher federation has a teacher education liaison committee (TELC). The chairs of these committees serve on a provincial committee coordinated by OTF. OTF provides funding so that the TELCs can provide a rich and engaging program of activities and information to our future members. OTF works to ensure that the federation maintains a positive partnership with our university colleagues.

Many ETFO members have taken on the voluntary and important roles as members of the TELC and many ETFO local leaders have attended federation days at the faculties of education. On behalf of OTF, thank you!



**Federation presidents met with the Minister of Education, Leona Dombrowsky, at the annual meeting of the Liberal party. From left are Benoit Mercier, AEFO; Minister Dombrowsky; Rian McLaughlin, OTF; James Ryan, OEFTA; and ETFO President Sam Hammond. Not shown, Ken Coran, OSSTF.**

## Curriculum Forum

For many years the OTF Curriculum Forum has facilitated professional interaction among subject, division, and special interest associations. It includes the voices of more than 40 associations; for example, the Ontario Association of Junior Educators (OAJE), the Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (OCEC), and the Consultants'/Coordinators' Association of Primary Educators (CAPE).

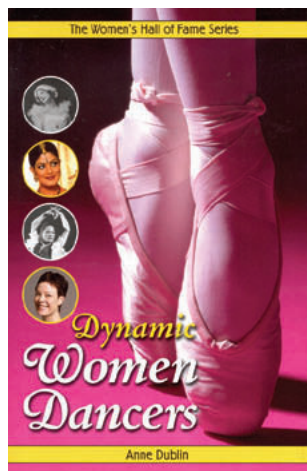
The Curriculum Forum also represents an active and important liaison between the associations and the Ministry of Education. If you belong to a curriculum association, encourage it to apply to join the forum if it hasn't already done so! The forum continues to grow every year and is always keen to welcome new member associations.

## Political lobbying

Recently, OTF hosted a hospitality suite at the Liberal Party convention. Our advocacy in these informal settings puts all affiliates front and centre with government officials and politicians. Many critical topics are discussed individually and in small groups at these types of events. The casual atmosphere often allows us to build networks and make allies. For instance, we continue to lobby to have the Teachers' Pension Plan treat members receiving WSIB payments and long term disability benefits fairly and equally. We discuss such topics as our support for the Lieutenant Governor's Aboriginal Literacy Camps and safe and inclusive schools, lobby for more support for English language learners and special needs students, promote the authenticity and merit of assessment performed by teachers, and reiterate our opposition to EQAO testing.

In answer to the question posed at the outset, we have been busy promoting you, your professionalism, and your rights. And we are relentless!

RIAN MCLAUGHLIN is ETFO's representative at OTF and is the 2010-2011 OTF president. Photo: Vivian McCaffrey



## Dynamic Women Dancers

Anne Dublin

Toronto: Second Story Press, 2009

128 pages; \$10.95

★★★

Reviewed by Catherine West

This is the fourteenth title in Second Story's *Women's Hall of Fame Series*. It profiles 10 prominent twentieth-

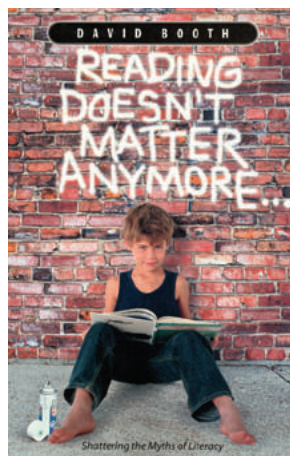
century women dancers from around the world who have made a difference in the wider community, providing a short biography and one or more photos of each. Canadians Judith Marcuse and Karen Kain are included.

There is a short glossary and a resource section that identifies resources specifically for children. The cover photo of very pink ballet feet *en pointe* on a strident pink background is, no doubt, intended to attract the young female reader, but it belies the contents, which include a wide spectrum of dance styles.

Readers learn that many of the dancers (some of whom emerged from childhoods of great deprivation) had to struggle to define and establish their careers, and that these careers were marked by constant uncertainty, punitive schedules, and much travel. They also learn about many forms of social activism: supporting immigrant communities, redefining dance to include all people (not just the young and slender), creating dances about racial equality or gender equity, taking dance to poor or rural communities, establishing dance troupes that explore innovative, original forms of dance, and founding schools of dance for communities not served by traditional dance schools.

The writing style is sometimes flat-footed and poorly organized, with too much unexamined information packed into the short space, but is at its best when describing a particular vivid event in a dancer's life – such as Carmen Amaya dancing for pennies in Spanish bars as a four-year-old. The portraits of Harlem Renaissance dancer Pearl Primus and the nearly blind Cuban dancer Alicia Alonso are particularly memorable. The dancers and dance styles all merit further study and could be worthy subjects for Senior school projects using the suggested online resources. The book could be helpful for delivering the grade 8 dance expectation A3.1: "Describe how social, political, and economic factors influenced the emergence and development of a dance form or genre of their choice (e.g., factors: funding to artists, the commercialization of dance, support for dance programs in schools; genres/forms: modern dance in the early twentieth century, etc.)."

Catherine West is a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local and the director of Orff Teacher Training at the Royal Conservatory of Music.



## Reading Doesn't Matter Anymore

David Booth

Markham, ON:

Pembroke, 2006

160 pages; \$16

★★★★★

Reviewed by

Debra Menary

What a great, ironic title for a book whose message is actually the opposite. David Booth is not advocating we abandon our high regard for literacy. However, he is telling us that we must look at reading with fresh eyes and strong beliefs in order to make it happen efficiently and painlessly.

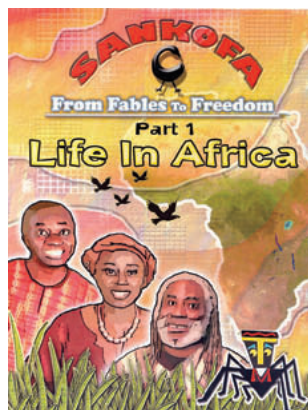
Personal anecdotes and descriptions of believable teaching scenarios make this book an enjoyable and meaningful read. I was especially pleased to recognize names of professionals whom I have met and heard speak throughout my own teaching career. These references to real people left an even more positive impression on me as an educator.

David Booth emphatically states that meaning is everything in literacy. Teaching reading is a practice whose form is fluid and fascinating. Often it's not easy and it's not always fun, but Booth points out the many rewards if we can get it right most of the time. We get it right by creating meaningful lessons, discussions, opportunities and, of course, reading materials for our children and students.

This author does not miss out on the opportunity to welcome parents into the fold. At the end of the book there is a list of 101 Literacy Events. There are suggestions for teachers, parents, and children, which emphasizes that literacy should be a team effort. They are authentic ideas that are useful and practical.

I recommend this book for parents and educators not only because it is well written, readable, and at times amusing, but also because it teaches us (not in a preachy way) that reading certainly *does* matter and that we make it matter by ensuring it means something on many different levels to children of all ages.

Deborah Menary is a member of the Simcoe County Teacher Local.



**Sankofa: From Fables to Freedom Part One: Life in Africa**

Authors: **Joe Gombocz, Peg Hobbs, Kelly Dodge, Bruce Graff**

Animators: **Brad Goodspeed, Aaron Davis**

Presenters: **Adwoa Badoe, Fule Badoe, La'Ron Williams**

Publisher: JIG Video Productions, 2009

A DVD video series that includes a teacher's guide and a box of rubber stamps of West African symbols. \$120.00

Available at [www.jigvideo.com](http://www.jigvideo.com)

★★★★★

Reviewed by **by Ruth Boughan**

*Sankofa* is a complete, self-contained product that tells stories and teaches songs, dances, and games from West Africa. It is easy to use, even for those who do not feel comfortable leading students in music. The purpose is "to present a difficult social history with honesty of voice and with the hope of giving context to the very diverse society in which we live." The stories and songs are well presented and feel very authentic. Two of the presenters are Ghanaian.

The blending of the arts with the lessons encourages students to look at themselves as they learn about the African story. The teacher's guide is comprehensive with guiding questions and choices of activities.

Though the teacher needs to run the DVD for each lesson, there are lots of opportunities to pause to ask questions or have the students practise what they have learned.

The stamps of West African Adinkra symbols add a visual arts dimension to the resource that students would enjoy using to create and share their own stories.

This resource is aimed at grades 1 and 2 and includes Ontario curriculum connections with rubrics in the areas of Language, Music, Critical Thinking, Visual Arts, and Media Literacy.

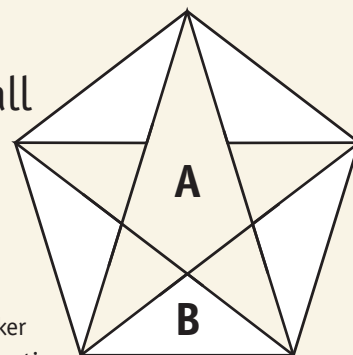
If I were teaching grade 1 or 2, I would use this program and I will definitely share it with the primary teachers at my school.

**Ruth Boughan** is a member of the Waterloo Region Teacher Local.

# trivia

BY PETER HARRISON

## Conference Call



At a recent health and safety conference, a speaker screened a pictogram indicating the relative numbers of teachers with disabilities in a specific region.

The pictogram used was a regular pentagon with another pentagon inscribed within.

The speaker said area A represented the number of disabilities of type 'A' in the region while area B represented the number of disabilities of type 'B' in the region based on the same scale.

She explained that B was exactly equal to 45.

**How many disabilities of type 'A' are there in the region?**

Send your answers to [ETF0voice@etfo.org](mailto:ETF0voice@etfo.org) with the word "Trivia" in the subject line. You may also mail your entry to The Editor, *ETF0 Voice*, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all correct entries received by January 28, 2011.

### SOLUTION TO OUR LAST PUZZLE

**The letter in the square occupied by '?' is 'O'.**

The winners are chosen by lottery. They are:  
**Richard Greer**, Upper Canada Teacher Local  
**Marina Lee**, York Region Teacher Local  
**Yvonne Leicht**, Kawartha Pine Ridge Teacher Local

*Congratulations!*

**How did they get the answer? Find solutions to Trivia puzzles on our website. Go to [etfovoice.ca](http://etfovoice.ca).**

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Find more details and application forms at [etfo-aq.ca](http://etfo-aq.ca)  
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# calendar

**Calendar:** Up-to-date event listings are available on our website, [etfo.ca](http://etfo.ca). If you are a non-profit organization you may publicize a professional learning event on our website, or in our newsletter, @ETFO/FEE0.

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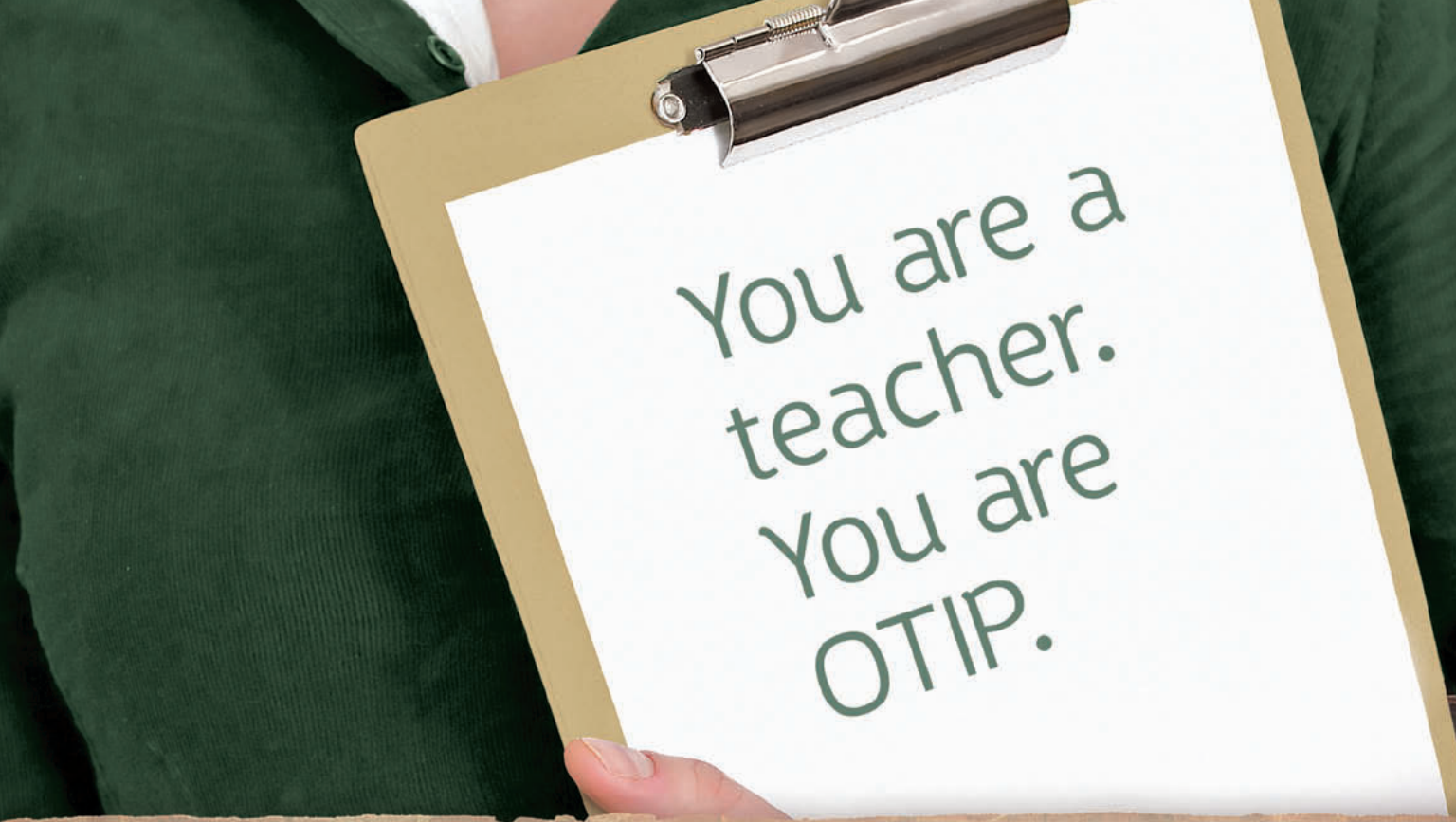
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