


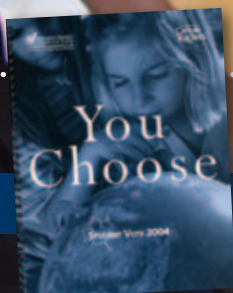
ETFO

JUNE 2011
VOL. 13 - NO. 4

Voice



Vote for Public Education



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Teachers as Researchers

The Long Road to Safety at School

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ON THE COVER: CECILE PRESS and her students at Blaydon P.S in Toronto ran a Student Vote election during the federal campaign. With her are Aaron Blake, Vaishala Thirugnanasampanthar, Sharkim Leonce, Arsh Raza, and Ha Thu Nguyen.
Photo: Anne De Haas.

Supporting Public Education: What more can you do?

Every day, as you work to ensure your students' success, you support public education. Is there more you can do?

Actually, yes! You can support public education by voting for an education-friendly government. In his column President Sam Hammond provides an overview of the positive change that has occurred in Ontario in the last eight years. (Page 4)

Because the vast majority of you are women, you may have an extra impact when you vote for public education. As Mary Morison's conversation with Donna Dasko shows, women's voting patterns are different from men's. (Page 14). All the more reason to make your voice heard.

Ontario's support of public education contrasts sharply with what has been happening in the United States where Republican-led state governments are attacking teachers and other public sector workers. Vivian McCaffrey provides an overview. (Page 12)

You can also support public education by teaching your students about the importance of voting. Cecile Press, the teacher on our cover, did just that. You can start the ball rolling with the lesson on Rights and Responsibilities in the curriculum insert. It is taken from the Student Vote resource *You Choose*. (Page 21) Better yet, in September run a student vote election in your classroom.

When the election rolls around this fall, you may find me working on a campaign, as I have often done in the past. This year I'll have more time – this is my last issue as editor of *Voice*. After seven years, it's time to hang up my mouse and go play.

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to the magazine. They are far too numerous to mention. I want to acknowledge a few special individuals: copy-editor Anne Holloway; photographer Anne De Haas; Ofelia Infante and Juan Escareño, the Artifact design team; John DiClemente, Brian Newell, and the staff at Thistle Printing; and last but not least, my exceptional assistant Adele Bertram, who takes care of the business side of things – consummate professionals all, they have been a pleasure to work with and have tolerated my idiosyncrasies with grace.

Happy (campaign) trails to you all.


JOHANNA BRAND

ETFOVoice

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Member of the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM)
and Canadian Education Press Association

Indexed in the Canadian Educational Index /
Répertoire canadien sur l'éducation

ISSN: 1481-4072

Articles contained herein reflect the views of the authors and do not necessarily express official policy of the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Acceptance of an advertisement does not imply ETFO endorsement of the product or service. Advertising contracts are subject to cancellation if members complain.

Publications Mail Agreement no. 40070000.
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:



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Toronto, ON M5G 1V2
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Printed by Thistle Printing on 50% recycled stock, 25% post consumer content; 75% Canadian-produced pulp.



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When ETFO conducted a survey of members last year, we heard that some members would prefer to access *Voice* electronically only.

To accommodate your preference, we have updated etfovoice.ca, the *Voice* website, so that it now provides all of the magazine's content in an accessible format. When the magazine is mailed to members at their homes, the electronic version of the publication will be available on etfovoice.ca.

If you no longer wish to receive a print copy you can choose to opt out of home delivery and still have access to all of the magazine's content.

To choose electronic delivery go to etfovoice.ca and click on the 'Subscription' link in the right hand column. Follow the instructions.

We will notify you by email when the most recent issue of the magazine is available online. Email notifications will begin with the October 2011 issue of *Voice*.

And yes, you can change your mind. If you find you want to reinstate home delivery, you can do so on the website. Click on the 'Reinstate' button and fill in the form.

Please be patient. It can take up to six weeks to process these requests.



SAM HAMMOND
ETFO President

The future of public education is in your hands!

Critics, especially those on the right, take pride in denigrating public education. They want us to believe that our schools – and by implication, you, our members – are failing our children.

We know that the exact opposite is true, especially here in Ontario where our public school system ranks as one of the best in the world.

Recent international assessment findings confirmed that Ontario's students, your students, perform among the world's best. Ontario students ranked above the Canadian average and, equally important, Ontario is a jurisdiction where students from all socioeconomic backgrounds perform very well.

ETFO members have a lot to be proud of because you are the heart and soul of public education in this province.

In the last eight years many things in public education have changed for the better. Those of you who were in classrooms 10 to 15 years ago will remember that teachers and their federations were reviled by the provincial government of the day. We were made out to be unprofessional, lazy people who required strict monitoring and constant re-testing to confirm our professional skills. You will also remember that our members often said they were reluctant to admit they were teachers.

Pride in our profession is one thing that has taken a huge leap forward in the last eight years. When the current government came into power in 2003 punitive approaches to teacher professionalism were done away with. New performance appraisal systems had the goal of supporting and mentoring teachers and improving their abilities, not punishing them.

Between 1995 and 2003 under a Conserva-

tive government, some \$2 billion was cut from Ontario's public education system. Specialist teachers and teacher librarians felt the brunt as their programs were called 'frills' and slashed. Young people suffered as supports for the most vulnerable were cut.

It has taken fully eight years to slowly bring that funding back. We're not there yet, but the current government has made consistent and significant re-investments in public education. It recognizes that our children are our future. It has shown respect for our members and knows that education is the key to prosperity.

That's not to say everything is rosy in all our schools everywhere. ETFO members know there are many challenges: workload and class size continue to be unreasonable and there are unrelenting demands to test and assess students at the expense of deep-rooted, meaningful education. ETFO members have been clear with us that the salary disparity from the last round of bargaining must be addressed. We have and will continue to push the government hard on these concerns. But only with an education-minded administration will we have any chance of succeeding.

We have had a provincial government that respects the work we do, that believes in the importance of public education, and that – with the new full-day kindergarten program – has given our youngest students an opportunity for a great start in school.

On October 6 Ontarians will go to the polls. As educators we have an important role to play. We have the chance to vote for a strong public education system that gives our children the best chance to succeed. We have a chance to vote for a government that believes in us and the work we do.



GENE LEWIS

ETFO General Secretary

The Ultimate Block Party: Celebrating the importance of play

When the Ontario government unveiled the province's full-day kindergarten program last year, it ushered in a new era in early learning. With teachers and early childhood educators working together in the classroom, Ontario's youngest students benefit from the guidance of two professionals with complementary skill sets.

The government also mandated a play-based curriculum, which further revolutionized learning for young children. ETFO has long been an advocate for play-based learning, so we welcomed the new approach. We have created a variety of resources and professional learning opportunities for our members to help them implement the new curriculum. (To access these please visit the website etfo.ca ► *Professional Learning*)

We went one step further. As you are reading this column we will have staged the largest celebration of learning through play ever held in Canada. The *Ultimate Block Party* celebrated the arts and sciences of play. Thousands of families and children flocked to Toronto's Fort York to play at centers hosted by our 25 partners, an impressive group of non-profit organizations dedicated to demonstrating the importance of play to children's healthy growth. (For a full list of our partners, please visit the website ultimateblockparty.ca.)

Research has shown us that play stimulates children's brain development in important and unique ways. Play is not an adjunct to literacy and numeracy instruction; it develops literacy and numeracy skills in the most effective way. It also fosters many personal characteristics

– the ability to solve problems, flexibility, self-confidence – that are crucial to success in our increasingly high tech world.

There are a host of factors that have reduced the opportunities for today's children to engage in imaginative, self-directed play. The *Ultimate Block Party* highlighted the need to reverse this trend. More, it encouraged the recognition that play is not only an essential vehicle for learning for young children, it is important for effective learning in all elementary grades. The play of a student in grade 8 will not look the same as that of a child in kindergarten, but it is equally critical in engaging learners and in helping them develop the skills they need for a successful life.

We know there are many skeptics in our education system. Many of our schools are staffed with administrators committed to the idea that pencil and paper learning and constant testing are the only ways to educational success. Our children's full educational potential is being stifled as a result and too many of them will tune out and drop out.

Every new program has growing pains, and the full-day early learning program is no exception. But in implementing it with a play-based curriculum, the Ontario government set in motion a new approach to learning. It is to be commended.

And now, summer is here and there is no better time to take the time to play. Visit the website ultimateblockparty.ca and learn about creative ways to engage in play at home with your own children, and with your students when you return to the classroom next fall.

your federation



Members of provincial parliament met with ETFO presidents and executive members at an informal breakfast gathering. The event gave local presidents an opportunity to talk to their MPP about issues in their area. ETFO is gearing up for the provincial election. A campaign to promote the value of public education and the need to elect a government that supports it will be unveiled at the Annual Meeting in August. Shown above with Jim Brownell, the Liberal MPP for Stormont-Dundas-South Glengarry are Marg Merpaw, president, Upper Canada Teacher Local and Sylvia Van Campen, vice-president, Upper Canada Occasional Teacher Local. Brownell is a former ETFO member. Karen Fisk, Hastings-Prince Edward Teacher Local president, is shown with her MPP, Education Minister Leona Dombrowsky.

ETFO's positions are outlined in the platform document ***Building Better Schools***. ETFO has also produced a Building Better Schools pamphlet that members can request. It summarizes ETFO's position on five key issues: more meaningful assessment, greater access to specialist teachers, smaller class sizes, more resources for special needs students, a greater focus on opportunity and inclusion. To get copies call or email Dennis Peter provincial office; dpeter@etfo.org; 416-962-3836 or 1-888-838-3836. Or access these documents on our website: etfo.ca ► *Advocacy and Action* ► *Provincial election 2011*



ETFO local presidents, executive members, and staff attended the ground breaking for ETFO's new office building at the beginning of May. The building is expected to be ready for occupancy in 2013. Designed by Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects (KPMB), the building strives to achieve platinum LEED certification. In both design and construction it will be a leading



The groundbreaking and the liaison breakfast with MPPs were held in conjunction with ETFO's **Representative Council** meeting. President Sam Hammond outlined for local leaders and activists the federation's priorities – the provincial election and the next round of bargaining. He urged members to get involved politically.

"We must actively engage in the political process to advance the rights of citizens and ... to advance the rights of our members," he said. This is particularly important because education today is funded totally by the province and "the actions of provincial politicians in approving the funding

that flows to education directly influence the salaries and working conditions of our members."

Further, Hammond urged local activists to ensure that every MPP knows the issues: the 2 percent salary penalty, board and Ministry assessment initiatives, and large class sizes.

He went on to say that a meeting with Premier Dalton McGuinty in early spring convinced him that the Premier understands the issues and understands that "it would be inherently unfair for ETFO members to be paid less than other teachers. The Premier agrees that a two-tiered system is not acceptable and is prepared to work with us to find a solution.



example of energy efficiency and sustainability. (The general secretary's column in the March 2011 issue of *Voice* provides more details. You can access it here: etfovoice.ca.) The inset shows President Sam Hammond turning the sod.



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Professional Learning Flourishes at ETFO



A workshop for leaders of ETFO locals that represent designated early childhood educators provided 20 members with training in parliamentary procedure and how to run meetings. The training was designed to demystify Robert's Rules of Order; offer guidance in conducting local meetings; and help these new members participate in ETFO Annual and Representative Council meetings.



Throughout the spring ETFO and its 24 play partners were busy preparing for the first Canadian **Ultimate Block Party**. The June 5 event was expected to attract more than 10,000 adults and children. The UBP showcases play-based learning. As ETFO members know, play-based learning is at the heart of the new curriculum for full-day early learning programs. The UBP not only offered children and families an opportunity to play in unique ways, it provided information on how that play contributes to children's physical mental and emotional growth. As well it showed parents the connection to the Ontario curriculum. The website ultimateblockparty.ca is your source for more information and for pictures and highlights of the event.

In April more than 200 intermediate teachers from across the province participated in ETFO's *Inspiring Today... Transforming Tomorrow* conference. Participants included a cross-section of ETFO members: teachers, occasional teachers, and consultants/coordinators both as participants and as presenters. This was a first-time ETFO experience for about half of them. Motivational speaker Jack Berckemeyer from the National Middle School Association, was a conference favourite because of his ability to relate to both intermediate students and intermediate teachers, through humour. Keynote speaker Damian Cooper described new developments in intermediate assessment and evaluation and the implications for the classroom. Both speakers conducted workshop sessions that expanded upon their topics. In addition, the conference featured a full slate of workshops on topics such as student engagement and motivation, special education, body image, the inclusive classroom, SMART board technology, drama, classroom management for the occasional teacher, and health and physical education. To see photos of the event go to etfo.ca ► *Multimedia*.

your federation

ETFO's *Leading Educators Actively Developing (L.E.A.D.) "Having Hard Conversations"* conference was attended by 50 ETFO members who are consultants, coordinators, facilitators, coaches, and system-wide teacher leaders. There was an extensive waiting list for this popular event.

Dr. Avis Glaze and author and educational consultant Jennifer Abrams delivered the keynote addresses. Dr. Glaze emphasized the importance of the role these members provide in supporting their colleagues, while Jennifer Abrams led participants through having hard conversations. The members who attended this program support most of our other members in their professional learning. This conference provided them with an opportunity to focus on their own professional learning and connect with members in similar roles across the province.

The **Inclusive Curriculum Symposium: From Theory to Practice** focused on the role that leadership plays in infusing equity issues throughout the formal and informal curriculum, and the challenges involved in taking on such leadership roles. Alice Te and Karlo Cabrera delivered sessions on the theory of inclusive practice. This was followed by practice-oriented sessions in which the 37 participants wrote lesson plans, and participated in an online forum.



Etfo.ca - ETFO offers many workshops and conferences throughout the year. You can find detailed listings on our website. Click on *etfo.ca* ► *Calendar* and scroll through the dates; or go to the professional learning pages at *etfo.ca* ► *Professional Learning*.



Etfovoice.ca

The *Voice* website has been redesigned to be more accessible. In response to member requests we have made it possible for members to discontinue home delivery and to have access to the whole magazine electronically only.

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Due South: Attacks on American Unions and Public Education

A cautionary tale for Ontario

BY VIVIAN MCCAFFREY

A severe budget crisis and a president bent on turning public education on its head have given Republican-led states in the United States a convenient excuse to attack union rights, public education, and teachers. As we head toward the Ontario election on October 6, we face the prospect that a right-wing government here will find these policies attractive.

Between 1995 and 2003 the Ontario Conservative government led by Mike Harris and his successor Ernie Eves introduced many regressive policies borrowed from the U.S. Republican Party playbook. These included teacher testing, standardized student testing, and expanded private school funding. U.S.-based policies also informed the Harris government's attack on social assistance recipients and unions.

The election of Barack Obama in 2008 did not result in a new direction for federal education policy – quite the contrary. Under the direction of Education Secretary Arne Duncan, the federal government has become more interventionist and is using its \$4.3 billion in funding for education to leverage support for its reforms. To qualify for federal support, state governments must agree to evaluate teachers according to student test scores, establish merit pay based on standardized test scores, and open the way to more charter schools. The administration is also championing policies that undermine teacher collective agreements.

The high-profile documentary *Waiting for Superman* popularizes the Obama administration's education policy. The film trumpets the merits of charter schools and blames teachers and their unions for low student achievement in underfunded public schools in impoverished neighbourhoods.

MERIT PAY VS. EXPERIENCE AND SENIORITY PROVISIONS

In the context of budgetary deficits, teacher layoffs are occurring across the United States. Republican governors in Florida, Idaho, Indiana, Ohio, Nevada, and New Jersey have all backed legislation targeting teacher tenure and seniority. For example, new Idaho laws allow school districts to unilaterally reduce salaries and benefits; they forbid the

employer from considering seniority in layoff decisions. Education Secretary Duncan lent his support, saying that “layoffs based only on seniority don’t help kids.”

Florida passed legislation replacing salary grids based on experience with merit pay linked to student test scores. Beginning in July 2011, Florida will hire teachers only on one-year contracts. Annual contract renewal will depend on teachers not receiving two consecutive “unsatisfactory” or three consecutive “needs improvement” evaluations. Half of the evaluation score will be linked to student test results. The Indiana state legislature is dealing with laws giving salary increases only to those teachers who receive “effective” or “highly effective” ratings on their evaluations and mandating that experience can count for only 33 percent of salary increases.

American lawmakers are touting merit pay as a tool to support improved student outcomes, but clearly care more about slashing expenditures. The Ohio Office of Collective Bargaining estimated that replacing statutory grid increases with merit pay would save that state \$75 million and its local governments \$393 million annually.

PRIVATIZATION OF EDUCATION

Encouraged by federal policy, states are moving forward with measures to promote the expansion of charter schools and increase access to private education. These initiatives are also designed to undermine unions and public education. Recently, for example, the Indiana House of Representatives voted to establish the largest voucher program in the country, providing low- and middle-income families with funding so their children can attend private schools. A separate bill proposes that only half of the teachers hired in state charter schools would have to be licensed.

BROADER UNION RIGHTS UNDER ATTACK

Right-wing state governments are using the pretext of budgetary pressures to implement full-out attacks on basic union rights. Wisconsin is the most extreme example to date. It has adopted measures to limit public sector bargain-

ing to compensation only and salary increases to the rate of inflation. The new law also ends the automatic union dues checkoff and requires public sector unions to conduct annual votes to confirm their membership. Ohio has also limited the scope of bargaining and similar bills are making their way through the state legislatures of Florida, Michigan, New Hampshire, and Tennessee.

Powerful corporate interests are funding at least some of these attacks. *The New York Times* is one of several media outlets that has reported that the billionaire Koch brothers, owners of Koch Industries, an energy and consumer products conglomerate, contributed heavily to the election campaign of the governor of Wisconsin and were working behind the scenes to provoke an attack on unions.¹

When the Progressive Conservatives under Mike Harris took power in 1995, they began an assault on teachers and on public education that lasted for the next eight years. Teachers were painted as lazy and unprofessional. This was the spirit in which the Harris government

- established the EQAO and provincewide testing
- established the Ontario College of Teachers
- mandated teacher recertification and a qualifying test for new teachers
- threatened to mandate extracurricular activities (and did mandate them at the secondary level).

Education funding was cut by approximately \$2 billion. This meant that

- teachers, EAs, and professional support staff lost their jobs
- music, physical education, guidance, library, and special education programs were decimated
- funding for junior kindergarten was cut in half and offering it was made optional for boards
- a new elementary curriculum was introduced without the necessary resources and teacher in-service.

The government also undermined local governance, creating huge district school boards and removing their ability to raise taxes. School board employees and their spouses were forbidden to run for trustee positions.


To support private schools, tax credits for private school tuition were introduced.

FIGHTING BACK

Mass union protests and petition campaigns are greeting the various Republican-led attacks on unions. Unions across North America are sending messages of solidarity. In Wisconsin there is a legal challenge to the anti-union legislation. In states where the Senate is not dominated by Republicans or where there is a Democratic governor, bills not yet enacted are being amended or may be vetoed. Some observers suggest that the right-wing attack will ultimately strengthen and revitalize the union movement. However, for the present, the overall trend is clear: a concerted right-wing campaign against union rights. Based on Ontario's experience with the former Conservative government, it could take years for the U.S. union movement to regain lost ground.

LESSONS FOR ONTARIO

Clearly it matters which party forms the next provincial government. The leader of the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party has dismissed the suggestion that a future PC government would adopt the budget-cutting measures of Wisconsin. He has, however, consistently pressed the Liberal government to scale back on public sector spending and target public sector salaries. He has also advocated changing Ontario's labour arbitration system, which is currently designed to ensure fairness when contract negotiations reach an impasse.

We have yet to see the election platforms of Ontario's political parties, but ETFO members should heed the turmoil south of the border when considering how to vote and ponder the extent to which they can make a difference in the upcoming provincial election. 

Notes

1 Eric Lipton. "Billionaire Brothers' Money Plays Role in Wisconsin Dispute" *The New York Times*, February 21, 2011. Available at www.nytimes.com/2011/02/22/us/22koch.html.

Andrew Stern: "Analysis: Koch brothers a force in anti-union effort" *Reuters*, Feb 26, 2011. Available at www.reuters.com/article/2011/02/26/us-usa-wisconsin-koch-idUSTRE71P28W20110226

See Also, Jane Mayer. "Covert Operations. The billionaire brothers who are waging a war against Obama." *The New Yorker*, August 30, 2010. Available at www.newyorker.com/reporting/2010/08/30/100830fa_fact_mayer#ixzz1JPzV1PMx

VIVIAN MCCAFFREY is an ETFO executive assistant responsible for government relations.



In Politics Women Do Make a Difference

BY MARY MORISON

Men are more attracted to leadership images when they vote for a party, while women may be making their political decisions more on the basis of the policy directions of parties. ... some folks think that women voters are attracted to strong men when in fact it may be men who are!

“Canada is one of the best countries in the world when it comes to standard of living and quality of life – we always rank in the top ten or so countries according to the United Nations. But when it comes to female representation in politics we do very poorly. Our ranking is always around 50th in the world¹; that means that all these other countries do better than we do. It’s a disgrace for such a great country as Canada!” Donna Dasko

Donna Dasko is uniquely positioned to talk about women and politics. She is the senior vice-president of public affairs at the Environics Research Group, one of Canada’s best known and most highly respected public opinion research firms. She is also the national chair of Equal Voice, an organization dedicated to getting more women elected to public office in Canada.


Offering political training is one of the many ways ETFO supports members. Donna was a keynote speaker at ETFO’s recent Women in Politics Conference; she has spoken often at ETFO events. I spoke with her about women and politics.

MM: Why would we even talk about women and politics as though it were something different from politics in general?

We talk about women in politics, in business, in the professions, in unions, and so on, because we know that women do not have the influence, the voice, or the power that men do in any of these spheres of life. So we have to make that clear, and that is why we pursue it and talk about it. And we do see differences in interests and issues as well.

MM: What is the position of women in Canada politically?

Women, of course, form a large and significant percentage of the population – over half! Women



Donna Dasko, speaking at ETFO’s Women in Politics conference

MARY MORISON is an ETFO executive assistant.



vote in numbers equal to men. Women have more influence than they used to in the past, I am convinced of that. There was a time that we could not vote or be elected or hold positions of influence. Today, individual women may have influence and power, but it is far from what it should be.

We rank 50th in the world in terms of the percentage of women holding elected office – behind the Scandinavian countries, and Afghanistan, Rwanda, South Africa, Iraq, Spain, Portugal, Mexico, Mozambique, Costa Rica, among others.

MM: Why do you think this is the case?

It's not a difference of views and beliefs; Canadians are not more sexist than many of the countries that do better than we do. But many of those countries have different electoral systems that promote more women, either through proportional representation, legislated seats for women, or some other form of recognition. That would be the main difference and main explanation.

**MM: Would it make a difference to have more women holding office?
Do women make different political decisions than men?**

Here are the differences that I have found in my research and reading.

First, women tend to lead with different styles than men; women are more consensual.

Second, there is usually a gender gap in federal politics especially, in the parties that women and men vote for. Women are less likely to vote Conservative and men are more likely to do so; women are more likely than men to vote Liberal and New Democrat.

Third, there is a gender gap in the issues and concerns. Women are more supportive of spending on health care, education, and social programs than men; men are more interested in the economy and its related issues. Women are generally opposed to military ventures, going to war, and related initiatives; men are more supportive. Women tend to cluster around the middle of the ideological spectrum; men are more likely to be right-of-centre and further left-of-centre.

Fourth, in some of my polling research I have found that men are more attracted to leadership images when they vote for a party, while women may be making their political decisions more on the basis of the policy directions of parties. I have not done enough research to verify this beyond a doubt but I find it quite intriguing to think about, especially since some folks


think that women voters are attracted to strong men when in fact it may be men who are!

However I must stress that these are tendencies and not absolutes by any means. There are individual women, and in some cases substantial minorities of women, who may hold different views from a majority of women. There are regional, age and socio-economic differences among women that may affect their views. I always keep this in mind because we cannot assume that women hold the same views. We know this just by thinking about the women we know!

**MM: And what about different candidates?
Are women more likely to vote for other women?**

We have certainly asked about this in our polling. Yes, women are more likely to vote for women than men are, but most significantly, the vast majority of all voters, men and women, are quite willing to vote for women. Why? Because people at the federal or provincial level are voting generally for a political party, and if the party they like has a female candidate, they will vote for her. It's that simple. So if the political parties nominated more women in their winnable ridings, we would have more women in the House of Commons.

MM: If you were advising a woman about running for office, what would you say to her?

Well there many things that office seekers do. Follow the issues of interest to you. Get involved in your community and your profession. Get to know people. Get involved. One thing I learned recently from some U.S. research is that women tend to undervalue their credentials to run, while men with similar credentials tend to think that they are well qualified! Isn't that interesting? So do not short-change or your view of yourself. That means you have to go for it! 

For more information go to equalvoice.ca.

Notes

- 1 Canada is 48th according to the Interparliamentary Union data; available at www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm



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ETFO PQP PQP Courses 2011*

Principal's Qualification Program – Part 1

Summer: [York Region](#)

Fall: [Halton](#), [York Region](#), [Upper Grand](#)















































































































Principal's Qualification Program – Part 2

Summer: [Toronto](#)

Fall: [Peel](#)

* Please check www.etfo-aq.ca for PQP registration, course dates, locations, and fees.



| ETFO  AQ Course Schedule*  indicates online  indicates face-to-face | | Summer 2011 | Fall 2011 |
|--|--|---|--|
| NEW! | Adapting Curriculum for Second-Language Learners |  Online |  Online |
| | 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 | ----- |
| | Inclusive Classroom – Part 1 |  Online |  Online |
| | Inclusive Classroom – Part 2 |  Online |  Online |
| NEW! | Inclusive Classroom – Specialist |  Online |  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 | ----- |
| NEW! | Junior Education – Specialist |  Online |  Online |
| | Kindergarten – Part 1 |  Online |  Online |
| | |  Kawartha Pine Ridge, Niagara, Greater Essex |  Upper Canada, Greater Essex, Simcoe |
| NEW! | Kindergarten – Part 2 |  Online |  Online |
| | | ----- |  Niagara, Durham, Kawartha Pine Ridge, Peel |
| NEW! | Kindergarten – Specialist | ----- |  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 | ----- |
| | Mentoring |  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 |
| NEW! | Science and Technology, Primary and Junior – Part 2 |  Online |  Online |
| NEW! | Science and Technology, Primary and Junior – Specialist |  Online | ----- |
| | Science and Technology, Grades 7 and 8 |  Online | ----- |
| | Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Part 1 |  Online |  Online |
| NEW! | Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Part 2 |  Online |  Online |
| NEW! | Social Studies, Primary and Junior – Specialist |  Online | ----- |
| | Special Education – Part 1 |  Online |  Online |
| | Special Education – Part 2 |  Online |  Online |
| | Special Education – Specialist |  Online |  Online |
| | |  Lambton Kent | ----- |
| | Teaching First Nation, Métis, and Inuit Children |  Online |  Online |
| | Teaching Combined Grades |  Online | ----- |
| | Teaching and Learning Through e-learning |  Online | ----- |
| NEW! | Use and Knowledge of Assistive Technology |  Online |  Online |
| | Writing – Part 1 |  Online |  Online |
| | Writing – Part 2 |  Online |  Online |
| | Writing – Specialist |  Online |  Online |



BY ELLEN CHAMBERS PICARD

The Long to Safety

N

ovember 2003 seems like a long time ago, and I could never have predicted then where I would be now, or what has been accomplished.

Having a son who is gay has been one of my greatest joys, yet one of my greatest sorrows – sorrow because I know that because of my son's sexual orientation, there are people who hate him and there are places where he will never be safe. My journey began on the November day that my son Gabriel was suspended for fighting in high school. From that day forward I could no longer ignore that my son was not safe at school, and never really had been.

Gabe's journey began when he was a little boy of eight in public school. By the time he was in grade 12, he had been living with homophobia every day since he started high school. The day he had enough and physically fought back was the day I stopped hoping he would be okay in school.

I pictured myself as a teacher who tried to understand the circumstances of all of the children in my class. I knew that, statistically, one in three girls will be sexually abused, that one in six children live in poverty, and I always tried to reach out to those children who were having the most difficulty. But at the same time, I missed what was happening to my own son. At age eight he was already being targeted by some in his school and later was harassed every single day of his high school career. When he finally told me what was happening to him, it took another four years before the school system acknowledged it. He came forward knowing he would never benefit. But how could I have missed what he was going through?

Statistics from the *First National Climate Survey on Homophobia in Canadian Schools, Phase I – January 2009* compiled by EGALE Canada, bear witness to the reality of being gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, two-spirited, questioning, and queer students (LGBTQ) or being perceived as such in Canadian high schools. Three-quarters of all participating students reported hearing expressions such as “that’s so gay” every day in school. Half heard remarks like “faggot,” “queer,” “lezbo,” and “dyke” daily.

Six out of ten LGBTQ students reported being verbally harassed about their sexual orientation. Three-quarters of LGBTQ students and 95 percent of transgender students felt unsafe at school, compared with one-fifth of straight students.

Over half of LGBTQ students did not feel accepted at school, and almost half felt they could not be themselves, compared with one-fifth of straight students.



Road at School

Most telling are the comments from students who responded to the survey, of which these two are typical:

“The teachers know it’s going on, but they rarely pipe up and protect me or others. I guess they figure it’s a lost cause. It takes a lot of energy to defend yourself all the time.”

“I am not out because if I was I would probably get beat up emotionally, physically, and verbally. Because of these beatings my life would be hell and there would be no safe place for me to go. Everybody would hate me, call me names, beat me up maybe even to the point of hospitalization. I may even end up gay-bashed and dead.”

These statistics and these comments are heart-breaking. While the issue of homophobic and transphobic bullying has been in the news lately, for students the reality is changing too slowly. As elementary teachers, we are in a position to have an impact by working with children when they are young.

When Gabe came home after being suspended, it was clear that something needed to be done. He endured daily comments – “that’s so gay,” “faggot,” “fag,” “f—g fag” (and worse epithets that that can’t be printed here) – without once having any adult intervene. He begged me, “Please make it end and don’t let any other kid live through this.”

His father and I went to the school. We were taken seriously but it was very evident that the administration did not know what to do. I prepared a binder of best practices, documen-



Gabe Picard, speaking at ETFO's conference ...and still we rise!

Six out of ten LGBTQ students reported being verbally harassed about their sexual orientation. Three-quarters of LGBTQ students and 95 percent of transgender students felt unsafe at school, compared with one-fifth of straight students.

tation of legal responsibilities, and examples of school policies. We had a meeting at the school and the principal asked me if I expected him to do everything. I replied that I expected the board to shoulder its legal and moral responsibilities. However, I was never allowed to meet with anyone beyond the principal: no superintendent would meet with me, and the director left a message through her assistant. Every door was shut in our faces. In April 2004, Gabriel filed a complaint with the Ontario Human Rights Commission.

Schools are considered to be service providers and as such are obliged by law to provide a safe place for everyone. In Gabe’s case they did not.

We waited for our complaint to be addressed. Gabe, his father, his sisters, and I worked behind the scenes. I wrote letters to my employer, the Lakehead District School Board, the minister of education, kept asking for meetings and found allies – in Thunder Bay, my union and across Canada. Members of the LGBTQ community had been trying for years to have harassment in schools addressed. We formed a community group, and called a media conference in December 2004. My son was outed on the front page of the newspaper, we received provincial and national coverage, and the school board was put on notice.





A mediated Human Rights Settlement was reached in June of 2005. Gay-Straight Alliances were to be facilitated in all high schools, anti-homophobia training was to be provided for teachers. *Erasing Prejudice for Good* and many other resources were purchased. The board formed a diversity committee. There were many good things in the settlement, some were implemented, and we thought we were done!

However, in 2006, when it became clear that not all the provisions of the settlement were put in place, Gabriel went back to the Human Rights Commission. We learned to never give up. It took a relentless resolve to make sure that the settlement was fully adhered to.

Fighting this battle was an all-consuming part-time job on top of my teaching duties and, in recent years, my job as local president. I have had some low moments in the eight years since my son and I ventured into the world of activism, but more importantly I have experienced unforgettable milestones, some of which will make lasting change in the lives of students.

My board now has GSAs in all high schools. The young people who are members and the adult facilitators are creating open and accepting environments. Administrators report that those students are the leaders in their schools, making change by being proactive. They have pink days, a Day Against Homophobia, movie nights – and the board supports them. This board is now embracing these students and is trying hard to make a difference with proactive measures.


Because of Gabe's Human Rights complaint, the board now has LGBTQ resources in the instructional materials centre for teachers, LGBTQ community consultations for policy and procedures, and human rights on the agenda at every staff meeting. The board has provided human rights training for CUPE members and some teachers, and presented regional

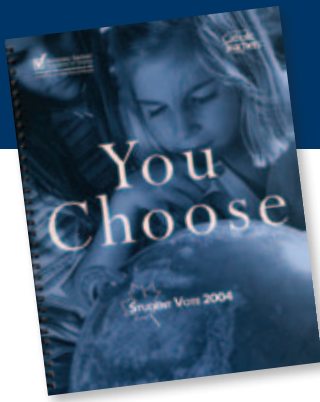
ELLEN CHAMBERS PICARD is the president of the Lakehead Teacher Local.

workshops on homophobia. It has a team of 10 teachers, administrators, and educational assistants trained to present anti-homophobia workshops. I am pleased to be among them. Specific policy dealing with homophobic harassment is still being worked on.

Is our work done? No. Will it ever be enough? I don't think so, because as long as there is still one child who is harassed and bullied because of his or her sexual orientation or perceived sexual orientation there is still work to do. Fighting homophobic bullying is sometimes so critical that it may save a young person's life. I always keep that thought in my mind and have told the board the same message over and over.

Teachers and administrators need the skills and tools to effectively address homophobia. We are often the only ones who will accept children for who they are. This type of discrimination is different from others in one way: students may not know if they will be accepted if they come out to their parents. I tell educators in workshops that it is our individual responsibility to ensure that all students are safe. It is also the law.

My mission has been to make sure that no one experiences what my son did. We are getting there. I thank Gabe for showing me the way. 



Celebrating Rights and Responsibilities

The inherent rights and responsibilities of its citizens are key to a democratic government. Before students can learn about the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, they should be able to discuss what a “right” and a “freedom” are and the responsibilities that are inherent in both. When they apply the idea that every right carries an inherent responsibility, students begin to think on a deeper level about the rights they have identified in their co-operative groups.

A right is “an abstract idea of that which is due to a person or governmental body by law or tradition or nature.”¹ An example of a right we all have is the right to an education. With every right comes a responsibility. A responsibility is “the social force that binds you to your obligations and the courses of action demanded by that force.”² If we have the right to an education, then the responsibility we have is to work hard and respect others’ right to learn.

Notes

1. cogsci.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/bwn?stage=1&word=right
2. cogsci.princeton.edu/cgi-bin/webwn?stage=1&word=responsibility

PURPOSE

Students work in co-operative groups while investigating the concepts of *rights* and *responsibilities*.

CURRICULUM EXPECTATIONS

Social Studies (Grade 5)

- demonstrate an understanding that for every right (e.g., the right of democratic governance) there is a responsibility (e.g., the responsibility to vote)

Language: Oral and Visual Communications (Grade 5)

- express and respond to ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately
- contribute and work constructively in groups.

MATERIALS

- chart paper
- markers
- LM1.1.1 – Rights and Responsibilities Chart
- LM1.1.2 – Summary Assessment Sheet – Rights and Responsibilities

| RIGHT | POSITIVE | NEGATIVE | RESPONSIBILITY |
|--|--|---|--|
| You have the right to choose your own friends at school. | It is important to have good friends you can trust. | Sometimes friends can pressure you to do things you would not otherwise do. | You must stay true to yourself and make decisions based on your own comfort and not someone else's. |
| You have the right to speak in class. | It is important to be able to state and defend your opinion. | You must be respectful of others and be reflective about the opinions you hold in order to determine if the opinions you hold can be hurtful to others. | You must take into consideration the appropriateness or truthfulness of the opinions you hold when sharing these opinions with others. |
| You have the right to a safe classroom. | In a safe classroom, you can take risks and push yourself to be the best you can be when you are in a safe environment. You will not be bullied, made fun of, or threatened by others. | Sometimes, taking risks can be intimidating and you may be criticized. | You must be willing to speak up for others and stop bullying in the classroom by reporting it to an adult or simply standing up to the bully yourself. |

Lesson Outline

1. In a whole group brainstorming session, ask the students if they know what a “right” is. Examples may be the right to speak in class, the right to choose our own friends, the right to practise any religion, and the right to a safe classroom.
2. Record all responses so that students can see their responses (This can be done on a chart, overhead, digital projection system, etc).
3. Ask the students to reflect on the responsibilities that go with each of these rights. For example, the right to speak in class is associated with the responsibility to listen to others and be respectful and considerate when expressing an opinion. The right to choose our own friends is associated with the responsibility to make good decisions when associated with a particular group of friends. The right to a safe classroom is associated with the responsibility not to bully others and not to stand by while others are being bullied.
4. Divide class into three groups. Assign one of the following to each of the three groups: home rights, peer rights, and school rights. Each group will brainstorm and record the rights they feel they should have either at home, within their peer group, or at school.
5. Present groups’ ideas to the whole class once groups have completed their lists.
6. Using the lists of rights, students will work in pairs to complete LM1.1.1 Rights and Responsibilities Chart, indicating the right, a positive and negative aspect of that right, and the responsibility that goes along with the right.

Assessment Strategies

Students may be assessed on their ability to work within a group, their understanding of rights and responsibilities, as well as their ability to communicate these understandings clearly and concisely.

Modifications And Adaptations


When forming cooperative groups, it is essential to determine a variety of strengths and learning styles present in each group. Students may complete the charts according to their ability.

Extensions

Technology: This lesson can be extended into the use of computer databases to record, store, and access the information.

Language: Novel studies or book talks from the suggested resources can inform the students of particular issues related to rights and the implications when these rights are taken away. The chart created can be extended to include the rights and responsibilities in each of the texts.

Current Events: Create a bulletin board which depicts each of the rights in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and/or the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*. Students can review the daily newspaper (or news websites) to find stories about rights denied to Canadian citizens and people around the world. These stories can be posted on a bulletin board.



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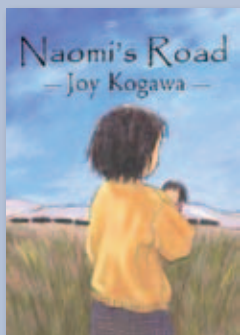
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Resources

Naomi's Road

Joy Kogawa. Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 2003, ISBN 0773757694.

Naomi's Japanese Canadian family is uprooted from Vancouver during the Second World War. Naomi and her brother are sent to internment camps and lose contact with their parents. An aunt and uncle must keep the family memories and customs.

Sadako

Eleanor Coerr. PaperStar Book, 1993, ISBN 0698115880.

Sadako Sasaki develops leukemia resulting from the bombing of Hiroshima. While in hospital, her closest friend reminds her of the Japanese legend that if she folds a thousand paper cranes the gods might grant her wish to be well again.

Sadako and the Thousand Paper Cranes: A Webquest for Grades 3-5

www.studyplans.com/webquest.htm

Find out why Sadako is a heroine to the children of Japan.



Bineshiinh Dibaajmowin/Bird Talk

Lenore Keeshig-Tobias. Toronto: Sister Vision: Black Women and Women of Colour Press, 1991, ISBN 0920813895.

This is the story of a First Nations girl who is teased at school about her identity and heritage. She is strengthened by her mother's support through the telling of First Nations stories and explanations around the truth of Christopher Columbus.

The Diary of a Young Girl

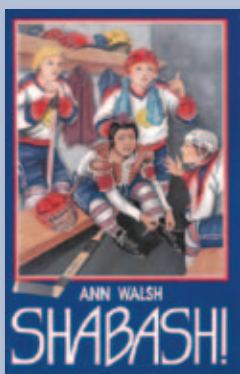
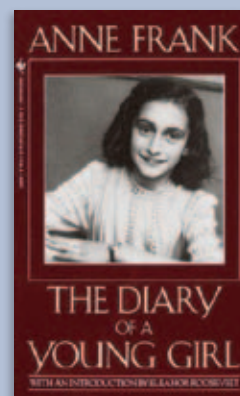
Anne Frank. Bantam, 1993, ISBN 0553296981.

This diary, originally published in 1947, documents the struggles of an adolescent girl in hiding during the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam in the Second World War.

The World Around Anne Frank Webquest

<http://cte.jhu.edu/techacademy/web/2000/jordon/final.html>

This Web Quest takes the user on a journey through many issues related to the Holocaust, its victims, and its survivors to better understand the world of Anne Frank.



Shabash!

Ann Walsh. Beach Holme Publishing, 1994, ISBN 0888783558.

This is the story of a young Sikh boy who wants to play hockey in a small mill town in British Columbia. His determination changes his life and those around him.

Home Connections

Students can discuss with parents and/or siblings the rights they feel are most important at home and negotiate the responsibilities associated with these rights. Some examples might be:

Teacher Resources

The Rights Revolution
Michael Ignatieff. Anansi, 2000, ISBN 0887846564.
Beginning with the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* created in 1948, this text reviews the “Rights Revolution” including the issues related to Aboriginal rights and the linguistic rights of French Canadians. The dichotomy of individual versus group rights is also reviewed.

| Right | Responsibility |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The right to a clean and and organized home.• The right to three proper meals.• The right to a safe home. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsibility to clean organize his or her room.• Responsibility to eat properly and healthfully.• Responsibility to be kind to all members of the family. |

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES CHART

Name:

| Right | Positive | Negative | Responsibility |
|-------|----------|----------|----------------|
| | | | |

SUMMARY ASSESSMENT SHEET - RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

| Student Name/ Expectation or Activity | Student demonstrates an understanding that for every right there is a responsibility. | Student expresses and responds to ideas and opinions concisely, clearly, and appropriately. | Student contributes and works constructively in groups. | Student participates in classroom discussion. | Student completes the chart reflecting understanding and insight around the rights and responsibilities either at home, school, or with peers. |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1. | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | |
| 4. | | | | | |



Teachers as Researchers

ETFO provides professional learning programs that allow members to conduct in-depth action research. In this article, participants in Reflections on Practice (ROP) and in the Teachers Learning Together (TLT) programs reflect on the impact their involvement had on their students, their teaching practice, and their professional lives.

BY JOHANNA BRAND

Lyndsay Buehler, a member of the Waterloo Teacher Local, studied the impact of partnered reading in grade 1. Naaznin Jetha Ismail, a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local examined whether participative classroom management techniques could improve student engagement. Amy Jensen, a member of the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local, investigated the effect of using the Language of the Virtues™ (specific language used in character education) on grade 1 students attitudes to problem-solving in mathematics. Their studies are published in the book *Reflections on Practice, Participant Research, Vol. 4*.

The TLT team of Lisa Johnston, Mae Gatschene, and Mike Crawford conducted their math-focused action research project over two years at Lyn Public School in the Upper Canada District School Board. In the comments below Johnston speaks for the team.



Mike Crawford, Mae Gatschene, Lisa Johnston

ETFO members who undertook action research were sometimes surprised to discover that their work had unanticipated benefits and that these benefits continued after their study had ended. Lasting changes in classroom practice, a stronger professional voice and increased confidence, and a greater leadership role in their schools and locals were among the unanticipated consequences of their participation in the program.

Deciding to take part

A frequent reason for participation in a program like ROP or TLT is the opportunity to network with colleagues from across the province and to learn and grow as a teacher. Participants also had specific pedagogical goals as they chose their research topics.



Naaznin Jetha Ismail

“My vision is to teach my students to become lifelong learners, to help them enhance their achievements, and engage them to take responsibilities for their own learning. I am always trying to understand my students’ disengagement and lack of interest in learning . . . Having grown up in the Congo, I have first-hand knowledge about how a human being’s life can be affected and manipulated with-

out education. So my quest has been to search for an answer to the issues I faced in my classroom.”

—Naaznin Jetha Ismail

“I needed some new direction for how to structure independent reading time in my grade 1 classroom and couldn’t find anything that worked for me or my students in the books and articles I was reading.”

—Lyndsay Buehler

“I strongly believe that all children can learn math and be successful. However, I learned through speaking with parents that their own negative experiences could impact their children’s attitude towards math. I wanted to learn if incorporating character education into curriculum would have a positive impact on students’ attitudes towards mathematics. There was little information or research on my topic so I thought it might be an innovative study.”

—Amy Jensen

“We wanted to be part of professional development that would help us focus on becoming better math teachers using collaboration. What we didn’t realize was that this project would allow us not only to learn about math instruction, but also to direct our *own* learning through action research. We were motivated by the fact that we could tailor our project to the needs that we saw in our own classrooms.”

— Lisa Johnston

Conducting their research

The teacher-researchers used a variety of strategies in their studies: observing students; literature reviews; surveys of students, colleagues, and parents; experimenting with teaching practice in their classrooms; and reflective journaling. Participants found their research produced positive results and changed their classroom practice.

“The lasting impact on my classroom management routines was a result that I was not expecting. The purpose of using character-trait language was to give specific feedback to students when problem solving in mathematics. Interestingly, I realized the feedback could be used throughout the day in my classroom management routines. The impact has been profound, as I have found students extremely responsive to specific feedback, even looking for ways to use the language amongst themselves.”

—Amy Jensen



Amy Jensen

“The research impacted my perceptions of my students. I realized that their behaviour issues were a trigger to their needs and weaknesses and that I could make a big difference in their education by teaching them to reflect on their work and engage them more effectively in their own learning. I found Participative Classroom Manage-

ment to be very powerful as it provides positive feedback through metacognition [and as a result] my students are empowered and their behaviour and attitudes toward learning and their work habits change . . . This process minimizes the need for discipline as students are now personally constructing their knowledge.”

—Naaznin Jetha Ismail

“I became more aware of students’ needs and motivations and I became more aware of the value of “kid-watching.” I also recognized the value of taking time to pinpoint why something worked or didn’t work and to identify next steps for fixing the problem or continuing with a successful strategy.”

—Lyndsay Buehler

“We became more in tune with what our students could achieve independently as well as where they needed support. For example, math clinics became part of our practice to support students, much like guided reading and guided writing. We realized that we needed to be more like a coach using students’ ideas. We needed to stand back and let students take the lead more. The way we plan, instruct, and assess is now very different. For example, we now ask more questions to guide students to use strategies to find solutions, rather than parachuting in the moment they have difficulty.”

—Lisa Johnston

Beyond the classroom

The impact of action research projects has spread beyond the classroom.

“Working as a team provided us with constant support, the opportunity to share ideas and responsibilities, the chance to visit each other’s classrooms and model for each other. We were able to give each other valuable, focused feedback and keep each other motivated . . . We are still a team and we are still using the resources we

developed together, reflecting on them and supporting each other. We now know that collaboration is not just ‘nice’; for us it is necessary.”

—Lisa Johnston

“I grew in my confidence as a professional. As a new teacher, it helped me to demonstrate that I took my teaching role very seriously. Since my involvement in the project, I have taken on more leadership roles within my school, including leading book clubs and serving on committees.”

—Lyndsay Buehler



Lynday Buehler

“I was so impressed with the professionalism at ETFO that I wanted to become more involved at the local level. The following year I became our school steward and joined the new teacher committee. When I completed my research with ROP I applied to become a facilitator for the program and was accepted. It has been a fantastic journey to work with other teacher-researchers across Ontario.”

—Amy Jensen

“Having realized the value of such personal professional growth, I’ve become actively involved in the Professional Learning Committee of my ETFO local. This year, I’m the committee chair. We’re looking for ways to bring action research into our professional development opportunities for our members.”

—Lyndsay Buehler

“I reconfirmed for myself how important it is for teachers to be learners in the classroom both formally and informally. The wonderful thing about teaching is that there are opportunities to do this. I realized I am a learner and a teacher and that these roles are symbiotic.”

—Amy Jensen



My Place Amongst Trees

BY MARY SPRING

Muskoka is an ideal place for an outdoor classroom. Algonquin Park lies just beyond our small town and its trees tower over the back of our schoolyard.

My commitment to taking my students outside every day is supported by Richard Louv, author of *Last Child Left in The Woods; Saving Our Children From Natural Deficit Disorder*, who states, “Children need nature for the healthy development of their senses, and, therefore, for learning and creativity.” Outdoor classroom experiences are not just for rural students. City children can benefit from the rich experiences offered in local parks and neighbourhoods.

To model my love of the outdoors and inspire my grade 1 class to experience nature regularly, I took them on a year-long inquiry called “My Place Amongst Trees.” Our outdoor classroom, the wooded area behind the school, became the place where they observed and sketched trees. When art was integrated into the other curricular areas (science, math, health,

physical education, social studies, reading, and writing), magical things began to happen. Children with fast-paced lives outside of the classroom began to slow down and look closely and think about what they were looking at. This deepened their learning.

I began by reading *Old Elm Speaks* by Christine O’Connell George, an illustrated collection of prose and poetry with a strong voice and much imagery that the children responded to immediately. Reading materials were available in text sets, including both fiction and non-fiction books, poetry and magazines. I used picture books such as *Leaf Man* by Lois Ehlert and *Sky Tree* by Thomas Locker to promote different types of writing and to encourage discussion about the changes in trees throughout the year.

Following an excursion into the woods, or an experience of tree art, children’s writing became prolific. Their language and vocabulary became richer with each new experience. When children look closely at something in art, their writing is not only richer in vocabulary

MARY SPRING is a recently retired member of the Trillium Lakelands Teacher Local. She would like to thank her sister, Andrea Bell Stuart, who enthusiastically supported her classroom efforts and also contributed to the writing of this article.

and better organized, but is filled with the enthusiasm of an expert. The Ontario curriculum expectations for grade 1 reading and writing were easily met.

I planned several art lessons with trees as the focus in collaboration with Andrea Bell Stuart, a teacher with a grade 1/2 multi-age classroom in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Students sketched and painted trees. They were inspired by the work of Canadian artist Tom Thomson, who painted the trees and foliage of Algonquin Park using thick paint and obvious large-brush expressionist strokes. My students sketched in hard-covered, coil-bound sketchbooks in our own little park

lesson. She had four old warming trays covered with foil. There were 200 crayons with the paper peeled off, sorted into seasonal colours. Students used small paintbrushes and melted wax to reproduce their sketches of trees onto a 10 by 10 inch piece of cotton fabric. (A one-inch masking tape border kept the edges clear of wax.) Students used warm wax to paint in the colour and texture. They used the deep rich colours of pure food colour (liquid water colour could also be used) to represent the woods behind the trees. Andrea removed the masking tape borders and sewed the squares together in seasonal quadrants to make



on the schoolyard. Back in the classroom, they worked on large pieces of water colour or cartridge paper, using a variety of art techniques to express what they knew about trees.

We undertook a multi-media art project in early January. Equipped with cartridge paper on a clipboard and a sketching pencil, the children headed out to the woods to sketch, yet again. The instructions were simple: choose a tree and sketch, filling the page with the one tree. Once finished they were to look very closely at the colour and texture of the tree. Back in the classroom, they added colour and texture using oil pastels.

Using 8½ x 11 inch Manila tag card stock for backgrounds the students were asked to think about the colour and texture of winter. They created backgrounds by gluing onto the tag paper a variety of recycled materials – fabric, paper, tissue, foil, and yarn. They cut out and glued the trees they had drawn to the background. Their art beautifully represented the colour, texture, shape, and scale of trees in winter. It adorned the classroom and the school walls throughout the year.

While talking about the science of daily and seasonal cycles one day, the students wondered again about the way trees change throughout the year. This necessitated another trip to the woods to look at the trees and another look at pictures and books. It resulted in another tree sketch.

Andrea visited the classroom and conducted an art

a Four Season Quilt which we hung on the classroom wall. We took digital photographs and the students wrote a class book documenting the quilt-making process. The book was shared with one family each night.

Assessment took place throughout the inquiry. I kept anecdotal records. The students kept a portfolio with their writing, reading records, science explorations, and art projects. They helped to write rubrics for the seasonal research. Several pieces of writing were shared in class and with parents in student-led conferences.

The culminating activity that tied the year-long inquiry together was a day-long trip to Algonquin Park. Students recorded their visit in sketchbooks. They visited a bog, hiked trails, observed a tree with bear claws, played nature games, and spent time in the park's visitors' museum.

When they returned, the children were inspired to write and represent what they had experienced. This included recounts, letters, and a lovely collage. They wrote another class book with photographs and sketches, which was also shared with each family.

Through numerous outdoor experiences, the children learned to use their senses to experience their surroundings and to communicate their understanding in a variety of ways. The inquiry provided opportunities for cross curricular links to different subject areas. Best of all, the children now feel more connected to the place where they live. ▮



Attendance Management Programs: Keeping the wolf

BY PRS STAFF

Rather than addressing job-related issues (excessive workload, large class sizes, poor management techniques) that may be contributing to absenteeism, Ontario school boards have decided to “assist” their employees by implementing attendance management programs (AMPs). But behind the seemingly benign face of a board’s AMP lurks a wolf whose intent may be far from harmless. It is important to know your rights when confronted by this wolf.

What is an AMP?

The term *attendance management program* encompasses a diverse range of activities used by employers to manage workplace attendance. AMPs monitor “innocent” absenteeism – absences caused by factors outside the employee’s control (e.g., illness, injury, transportation breakdown, family problems). AMPs generally consist of progressive degrees of intervention with the goal of improving the attendance of employees who exceed a certain threshold of absenteeism.

School boards claim that AMPs are nondisciplinary and a benevolent way of ensuring ailing teachers get the support they need. However, ETFO members report experiencing stress, intimidation, lowered morale, and a sense that their privacy is under assault during their encounters with AMPs. For some, particularly those with disabilities, chronic health conditions, and child care or elder care issues, the increasingly intrusive scrutiny traps them in the jaws of a predatory program that can conclude in termination of employment.

ETFO’s concerns

AMPs were developed without consultation with or input from unions and employee groups. The number of absences that activate scrutiny is arbitrary and varies from board to board – in one board, it may be 10 absences during a school year, while in another it takes 20 absences before an employee is contacted. Because school boards have been reluctant to share their data, it has been difficult to determine how they are compiling information about absences or whether the data they are using are relevant. It’s impossible to know whether, for example, a board is counting partial days of absence as full days or including injuries sustained at work.

ETFO has learned that some managers of these programs lack the experience and training necessary to counsel members in an appropriate and sensitive manner. They are not informing ETFO members of their right to union representation during the AMP process, and are asking unnecessarily personal and intrusive questions about medical history, home life, and lifestyle choices.

You do not lose all your privacy rights simply because you are absent from work

Although it’s generally permissible for employers to expect regular attendance and to monitor the use of sick days, there are restrictions on the degree of scrutiny they can use. In most cases, the employer is limited to receiving only enough information to confirm that there is a medical issue that justifies an absence from work or that

at bay

confirms the requirement to accommodate a disability. Employees are not required (and should not) supply information to an employer about medical history, test results, medical conditions not directly related to the absence, or the names of treating physicians. An employer is *not* entitled, in most circumstances, to ask an employee to reveal the name of their illness or the nature of their disability. **Contact the federation as soon as possible if you receive such a request.**

Disabilities must be considered

AMPs must operate within the confines of Ontario's human rights legislation; so, for example, employers cannot treat workplace absenteeism of employees with disabilities or chronic medical conditions in the same way as they do the absenteeism of the rest of the workforce. School boards have a legal duty to accommodate persons with disabilities and recurring illnesses, to the point of undue hardship.

The courts and human rights tribunals have agreed that applying the same attendance expectations to disabled and non-disabled employees is discriminatory because disabled employees are more likely to end up progressing through the levels of the AMP. Courts and human rights tribunals have also determined that AMPs must


- adhere to the *Ontario Human Rights Code*, privacy legislation, and collective agreement provisions
- safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of an employee's medical information
- avoid including in an employee's absenteeism rate absences due to workplace injury, pregnancy, and holy day leaves
- use a flexible and nonpunitive approach to attendance management that takes into account personal circumstances, family status, or disability.

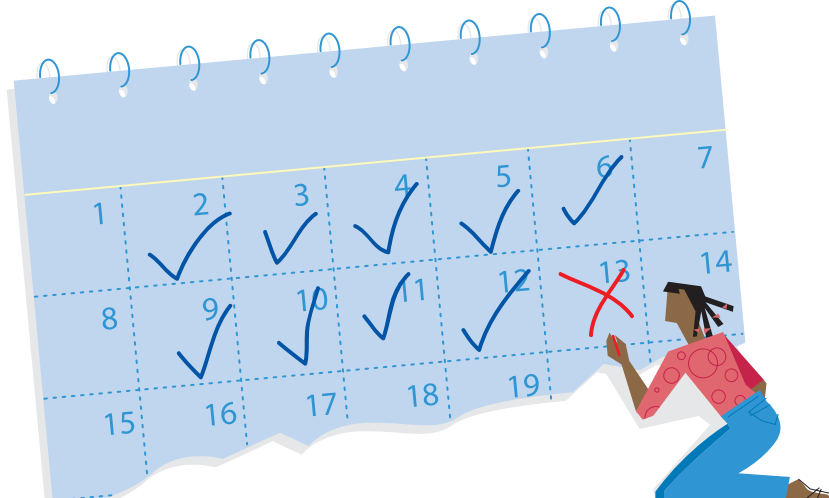
Know your rights

ETFO collective agreements provide members with paid sick days. Members may use sick leave in accordance with the provisions of those collective agreements. These sick days recognize that teachers are exposed to many germs and can pass on their own germs to many others. Remember SARS? The avian flu? Public health officials tell us, "if you are sick, stay home." At the same time, keep in mind that innocent absenteeism can result in job loss, so be cautious when board personnel ask you how you are using sick leave.

You are advised to

- keep records of absences and ensure that the board's record is accurate
- contact your local president or the provincial office as soon as possible if a board staff member asks you about your use of sick days
- safeguard your right to privacy by not disclosing more medical information than an employer is entitled to receive
- consult with ETFO before signing any document related to your use of sick days
- refrain from signing open-ended authorizations allowing a school board to obtain personal medical information
- attend any meeting about absenteeism accompanied by a local or provincial ETFO representative
- politely excuse yourself from meetings that unexpectedly turn out to be about your use of sick days and state that you would like the meeting postponed until federation advice and/or representation is available.

Becoming familiar with your legal rights, your human rights, and your collective agreement entitlements is critical, given the potentially serious consequences of workplace absenteeism. Forewarned is forearmed when the goal is to keep the AMP wolf at bay. 



School boards claim that AMPs are nondisciplinary and a benevolent way of ensuring ailing teachers get the support they need. However, ETFO members report experiencing stress, intimidation, lowered morale, and a sense that their privacy is under assault during their encounters with AMP programs.

"Enough!"

This Working Condition Has To Change."

BY VALENCE YOUNG

As ETFO educators, we want to make a difference in the lives of our students. We expect challenging and rewarding careers. What we don't expect are working conditions that push stress levels toward burnout. Of course, we deal with normal stress every day. Normal stress is part of the energy we bring to mastering a new assignment, planning curriculum, and attending a case conference. We recognize the signs of normal stress in quicker breathing, tensed muscles, or a knot in the stomach. When the stress is over, we can relax.

In contrast, toxic stress is beyond our control. It does not stop. We simply cannot relax. We may experience anxiety, irritability, and depression. We become more susceptible to infection because the immune system weakens. Physical symptoms such as stomach problems and heart palpitations emerge. Muscle tension in the back, shoulders, and neck becomes painful.

ETFO educators are reporting unprecedented levels of stress caused by working conditions

that seem beyond individual control. Often longstanding, these working conditions are both hazards and stressors. Powerful examples include the risk of physical assault; mould that aggravates asthma; and overwork that weakens the immune system. Stress becomes toxic when hazards such as these remain in the workplace: the new safety plan fails to prevent another assault; the mould problem isn't solved; work overload continues.

Accept or shift?

Each of us has a choice to make when we are faced with a working condition that is both a hazard and stressor. We can accept the burden or we can shift the burden. To be sure, neither choice is easy. Shifting the burden starts when the educator says, "Enough! This working condition has to change." Here are six stories that reflect the experiences of educators who have either accepted or shifted their working conditions. How do these stories relate to your own experiences?

Workplace violence

ACCEPT

Next week, I'll be starting a long-term occasional contract in a special education classroom. The classroom teacher was assaulted by one of the students and took a leave of absence from work. The student has been suspended. I know that this student has a history of violent behaviour and I'm worried that I will be assaulted too. The principal has explained the new behaviour plan to me and an educational assistant has been assigned to the class until things settle down. I know I can call for help if I can't manage. But I'm not sure help will get here fast enough.

SHIFT

Before I start this contract, I know that certain things have to be in place. The principal has already informed me about the risks of working with the student who assaulted the teacher. The behaviour plan explains how to reduce challenging behaviour. It's helpful, but I also know that we need a safety plan for crisis management. The safety plan must outline exactly how everyone who comes into contact with this student will be protected from the risk of violence. I've asked my union president and my steward for help to make sure the safety plan is in place before I start working in the classroom.

Indoor air quality

ACCEPT

I'm teaching in a portable this year, and my asthma has never been this bad. I use my puffer almost every day. I had a sinus infection in October. The portable is very old. It smells mouldy. During March break, the school board replaced some insulation in the wall and some tiles in the floor and the ceiling. I've been told to keep the window partly open with the heat turned up until the weather improves. I'm still using a puffer and the sinus infection is flaring up again. There is no alternate classroom in the school. I could ask to teach my students in the library, but that would be disruptive to everyone's schedule.

SHIFT

When I walked into the portable at the end of the summer, I knew something was wrong. It smelled bad. Floor tiles were lifting. There was mould in a corner of the ceiling. I wrote "Health and Safety Hazard" at the top of a piece of paper and reported my concerns to the principal with a copy to both my steward and local president. I told the principal I was worried about my health and that I didn't want to work in the portable until the mould problem was fixed. To cut a long story short, I started the school year teaching in the library. It turned out that the mould problem was too severe to fix. The portable had to be replaced. It took more than a month before the new portable was set up. Was it worth the hassle? Sure. I'm healthy.


Workload

ACCEPT

I teach a grade 3/4 split this year and the job is overwhelming me. Five of my students have individual education plans. I've just finished conducting the second round of literacy assessments. After the first round, the principal asked me to add small guided-reading groups for every student, twice a week during the literacy block. I'm on evaluation this year, so I said yes. I feel like most of my prep time has been spent compiling assessment results or planning for the literacy block. I don't have time to get to the staff room. I had bronchitis over the Christmas holiday. It's cleared up but the fatigue remains. I am so very tired. Track and field coaching starts soon.

SHIFT

This split grade has its own set of challenges. When my principal first mentioned adding an intensive guided-reading schedule to the literacy block, I resisted even though I'm on evaluation. It just seemed like too much. I talked to my local's president about my concerns and she gave me the confidence to show the principal how the literacy block already supported individual student progress. Some days I do feel overwhelmed, but I've made a point of taking the time to get to the staff room for my lunch. Just relaxing with my colleagues means a lot. We support each other. As for coaching track and field, it's my choice and I haven't decided yet.

Choosing to shift the burden of a working condition takes enormous courage. The action itself can add more frustration and stress before change takes hold. When an ETFO member gets help and support from colleagues and federation, the action is primed for success. The next time you have a conversation about a difficult working condition, consider identifying the hazards and stressors. How will you shift the burden? 

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VALENCE YOUNG is an ETFO executive assistant responsible for health and safety.

Lessons from My First Year



BY MICHELLE BEAUMONT


Tossing and turning, staring at the ceiling, and worrying. What if the students don't like me? What if I am too mean? Or worse, what if I'm too nice?

The night before my first day of teaching I was nervous! I was also extremely excited! I was going to be living my dream: teaching my own students, working in a fantastic school as part of an already wonderful staff.

Since that long, sleepless night in September, I have learned some very valuable lessons, some from more experienced teachers, and some I learned the old-fashioned hard way. Here they are.

1. **Don't reinvent the wheel.** Your colleagues are more than willing to help you prepare anything you might need. Talk to a teacher who has taught your grade before; chances are they will have some resources for you to copy.
2. **Parents are not scary** and neither are parent-teacher conferences. Most parents just want to ensure their child is happy – learning is an added bonus. Don't be afraid to communicate with a parent. Chances are this isn't the first time they are hearing what you have to tell them.
3. **Use your prep time wisely.** Resist the temptation to use it answering your e-mail. Take all the time you have to make sure you are prepared for the periods ahead.
4. **Team teaching is amazing!** If you have the opportunity to collaborate with a grade partner or another member on staff TAKE IT! You will learn a lot about your own teaching style and will observe new strategies that you can incorporate into your own programming.
5. **Have a life outside of school.** It may seem impossible at first, but it's necessary. Take at least one night a week off to relax and unwind. You will be better able to interact with your students when you are feeling refreshed and calm.
6. **Learn to say "No!"** For a new teacher this is difficult and most important. You feel the need to please everyone. Need someone to attend a workshop? to coach soccer? to run chess club? You blink and suddenly you are at school early, giving up your recesses, AND staying after school. You need to pace yourself. Take on too much and everyone loses out! Your attention will be scattered and you will be two steps away from burn-out. Exercise your right to sometimes say "No, thank you." A good idea is to look at the activities offered at your school, and focus your energy on one activity per term.
7. **You are never alone!** You have a full support system made up of teachers and administrators who want you to succeed and grow as an individual, and as a teacher.

These days, I look forward to going to sleep at night – not just because I'm exhausted – but because I know that in the morning I am going to wake up, feeling refreshed, and excited to start my day.

In the classroom, no two days are ever the same, and you will have many stories to tell of your students' daily adventures and triumphs. I truly feel that I have the best job in the world. How many people truly look forward to going to work every day? How lucky is that! 

MICHELLE BEAUMONT is a member of the Elementary Teachers of Toronto Local.

Positive Interactions and Risk-Free Teacher Responses



Reinforcing positive behaviour is a far more effective strategy for creating a positive learning environment than challenging a student's behaviour through negative reinforcement. Positive and authentic praise, smiling, nodding, and other appropriate gestures have a direct effect on your relationship with your students.

Don't let your emotions rule

In challenging situations, recognize those that trigger certain responses in you and avoid being trapped by your emotions. This is far easier said than done. Mentally rehearse your responses. Remember you are learning a new strategy; it may take time and practice to master this new behaviour.

When you are confronted with challenging situations you don't know how to deal with, do *not* overreact. Walk away, count to 10, and take a deep breath. You are the professional. The time spent regaining your composure may seem like an eternity, but is quickly forgotten by the waiting students. When you do respond be clear that it is the behaviour, not the student, that upsets you. You might say: "You may think that's funny. I think it's disrespectful behaviour. The consequence for further comments like that will be working on your own."

Report extreme student behaviour to the office or another teacher. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* protects you from violence and harassment.

Consequences are more effective than punishment

When dealing with students remain firm, fair, and consistent. Recognize the difference between consequences and punishments and act accordingly. Consequences must be relevant, immediate, and fair.

Engage students

Encouraging student involvement that is designed to meet one or more of your students' basic needs will always help your classroom management. Used appropriately, response opportunities and active participation by students contribute to student achievement and class harmony.

The more you can involve students in the daily program the more engaged they will be.

You could

- encourage students to contribute to the class
- allow students to be helpers
- give students choices in creating the classroom environment
- give students the opportunity to comment positively about each other
- ask a student to repeat what has been said
- direct a student to the correct response.

Sometimes students will respond incorrectly, foolishly, or unintelligibly on purpose to gain attention. Do not be trapped by this negative behaviour. Try to overlook the response and immediately redirect the class to the lesson or the activity. Responding to the inappropriate message will only reinforce the behaviour and cause further problems. ✓

| Consequences | Punishments |
|--|--|
| • are known ahead of time | • are imposed after the fact |
| • are fair and reasonable | • are excessive |
| • are best when they are natural or at least relate to the offence | • are often unrelated to the offence |
| • may be developed with help from students | • are imposed by the teacher |
| • are imposed without emotion | • are imposed in anger |
| • result in conformity to the expectation | • results in resentment, rebellion, resistance, and escalation |

The Changing Face of Canada's Classrooms

BY KELLY HAYES

Canada is changing: we are rapidly becoming a more diverse country. Our population, our students, our communities, and our workforce look much different than they did a mere two decades ago. Canada is touted as the land of fairness, opportunity, and equality. Immigrants often cite these qualities as the reasons they choose Canada as their new home. The data, however, paint a very different picture.

Despite an increasingly diverse population and years of unprecedented economic growth, Canada's labour market is colour coded.¹ Access to jobs and the wages workers earn vary according to race and ethnicity. Sheila Block and Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi, authors of *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market: The Gap for Racialized Workers* used 2006 census data to determine that within Canada's labour market there is indeed a hierarchy when it comes who gets paid how much.²

The data show that all racialized Canadians are willing to work but that more often than nonracialized Canadians they find themselves on the unemployment line (with the exception of those who identify as Japanese and Filipino). Members of racialized groups earn lower incomes and have far less access to secure, well-paying jobs.

First-generation racialized Canadian men earn only 68.7 percent of what their non-racialized counterparts earn. For women the gap is even bigger: for every dollar non-racialized male immigrants earn, racialized women immigrants earn only 48.7 cents. Racialized Canadians are overrepresented in the hard-hit manufacturing sector, working at precarious, low-paying jobs, but underrepresented among those who make government policy. The vast majority – 92 percent – of public administration workers are nonracialized.

Moreover, Canada has a low birth rate and an aging population, with more seniors and fewer children than in previous decades. Nearly half of Canada's 17 million workers are eligible to retire within the next 10 years. Where will the new workers come from to replace the retir-



Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi

ing boomers? Karl Flecker, national director of antiracism and human rights at the Canadian Labour Congress, cites three sources for worker replacement: Aboriginal people, immigrants, and younger Canadians.

Aboriginal communities:

Aboriginal people are the nation's youngest and fastest-growing human resource. The Aboriginal population is young: 48 percent are 24 years of age or younger, compared with 31 percent of all Canadians. Many fewer have jobs: 61 percent of First Nations adults are employed compared with 82 percent of non-Aboriginal adults. The median annual income for First Nations workers is \$18,962, 30 percent lower than that of the non-Aboriginal population.³ At the current rate of progress, it will take 63 years for this income gap to be erased.

Immigrants and newcomer communities:

In March 2007, the *Globe and Mail* front-page headline read "All immigration by 2030." The article reported that Statistics Canada projected that by 2030 immigrants will be the sole source of our population increase.⁴ The vast majority are racialized: currently 80 percent of immigrants to Canada come from the Middle East, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific Region. They are also a principal source of our labour force and economic growth. According to Dr. Galabuzi, the "workers of colour cohort will generate nearly \$80 billion in real GDP growth between 1992 and 2017 despite being underpaid by nearly 15 percent."

Generations X and Y:

There are 7 million 18-to-34-year-olds in Canada of whom 20 percent are racialized. Furthermore, children between the ages of five and 15 form the



Karl Flecker

most racially diverse cohort in Canadian history – one in three is racially visible. Generations X and Y are educated cohorts: in 1961 fewer than one in 10 of young people ages 20 to 24 attended post-secondary institutions; by 2001 the number had jumped to nearly half. Racialized 25-to-44-year-olds are better educated: 40 percent of those who are Canadian-born and 31.5 percent of those who are internationally-born have a BA or higher degree. For nonracialized Canadian workers the figure is 19.1 percent.

As educators, we need to make meaning of the data and ask questions. What do these statistics mean for our classrooms? For our students? For ourselves? How do we reach out to Aboriginal communities, immigrants, newcomer communities, and younger Canadians?

Given that our classrooms are going to look different, our assumptions, curriculum, teaching methods, and interactions with parents also need to look different. But what does different really look like?

Dr. Galabuzi stresses the importance of applying an antiracism lens to everything we do in our classrooms and communities. For many of us this represents change. For example, if we use this lens when we choose literature we have to ask ourselves questions like: Who are the characters in our books? Who are the heroes/heroines? What do they look like? When decorating our classrooms the antiracism lens raises the question of who is represented on our posters. The lens affects our choice of language: Are we including same-sex families? Are we using gender-neutral terms when we communicate with students? Are we respecting different cultures and their histories?

There are many ETFO resources to assist educators with the task of doing things differently.

Workshops (to access through your local):

- *Beyond the Breakfast Program* (exploring poverty issues)
- *Learning and Understanding: Cultural and Religious Differences*
- *Roots of Equality* (exploring equal relationships)
- *Les racines de l'égalité*
- *Woman Abuse Affects Our Children*
- *Imagine a World That Is Free from Fear* (issues related to homophobia and heterosexism)
- *Access Without Borders: Exploring Disability Issues*

Notes

- 1 This article highlights data analyzed from the 2006 Census and from Statistics Canada, and reviews research done by three prominent activists in the labour movement – Sheila Block, Dr. Grace-Edward Galabuzi, and Karl Flecker. See *The Canadian Workforce: A Changing Canvas*, Canadian Labour Congress; changingthecanvas.org.
- 2 Sheila Block and Grace-Edward Galabuzi. *Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market: The Gap for Racialized Workers*. Toronto: Wellesley Institute and Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, March 2011. Available at wellesleyinstitute.com.
- 3 Daniel Wilson and David Macdonald. *The Income Gap Between Aboriginal Peoples and the Rest of Canada*. Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, April 2010. Available at policyalternatives.ca/issues/aboriginal-issues.
- 4 *Globe and Mail*, March 14, 2007.




The following curriculum resources can be ordered from shopETFO:

- *Imagine a World That Is Free from Fear*
- *Connections*
- *The Power of Story*
- *Status of Women binder*
- *Year of the Métis*
- *Roots of Equality*
- *Les racines de l'égalité*
- *Racism Hurts*

ETFO also has numerous posters and pamphlets suitable for classrooms and schools.

Dr. Galabuzi states that knowledge is important only if you do something with it. Doing something small is more effective than waiting for the revolution to happen. By attending a workshop or using ETFO resources in your classrooms, you are doing something with your knowledge – you are validating, supporting, and empowering your students.

It is also important to recognize that racism will not be resolved within the confines of our classrooms. It is historic and systemic and the solutions need to be systemic. Block and Galabuzi discuss changes to labour law and employment standards as examples of solutions needed to bring about change. Bringing labour legislation into the twenty-first century, making it easier to unionize, and increasing minimum wage to a living wage are all imperative.

Action cannot happen without acknowledgement. First, Canadians must acknowledge our racism – then we can implement action. One step at a time. 



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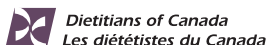
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BY RIAN MCLAUGHLIN

OTF Supports Teachers and Children Abroad and at Home

For over 50 years, OTF's International Assistance Program has built schools, purchased learning materials, funded professional development programs, strengthened teacher union capacity, and helped countless numbers of the world's poorest children to stay in school, placing textbooks firmly in their hands and school uniforms proudly on their young bodies.

In recent years, the fund has been inundated by requests: last year alone it received over 300 requests for assistance. OTF allocates 1.8 percent of its net fee revenue annually to funding as many worthwhile requests as it can. Committee members representing all affiliates oversee the fund and are clear on its priority areas: support for special needs students, projects involving victims of HIV/AIDS, school water purification and sanitation projects, and all educational projects benefitting girls and women.

Here is a small sample of six of 30 girls' and women's projects supported directly by OTF in 2009-2010 and 2010-2011.

- **Social Action for Abused Kids** in Liwasang Bonifacio, Manila. Funding supports tuition fees and other educational needs of 165 girls who have been victims of sexual abuse, neglect, and abandonment.
- **arvajana Seva Sadan** in Kadapa District, Andhra Pradesh, India. Funding supports the education of 40 girls aged 10 to 16 years. By tradition, girls are not encouraged to pursue an education and are expected to stay home and look after the family. The organization convinced the parents of the target group to send their girls to school.
- **Guiding Eyes for the Girls' Welfare Home** received funding to support the education of 180 girls aged 3 to 18 years old in an orphanage in Antipolo City, Philippines.
- **Apoolo Na Angor Vocational Skills Academy** in Mbale, Uganda receives funds to buy basic furniture such as cutting tables and sewing stools for a crafts centre that teaches tailoring and agricultural skills to rural women and girls.



- **Rahamath Mahila Mandali.** OTF funding supported the construction of washroom facilities and the purchase of games materials for 120 girls aged 5 to 14 years at the S.S. Niketan English Medium School in Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh, India.
- **Members Association Social Service (MASS)** received funding to hold a one-day workshop for 500 senior students, police officials, and psychologists in Chittoor District, Andhra Pradesh, India to bring awareness of and find solutions to the problem of 'eve teasing' – the harassment of young girls.

You can access more information on OTF's International Assistance Program by visiting otffeo.on.ca.

I would also likely to briefly highlight OTF's ongoing support for the *Shannen's Dream Project* and Heartspeak (an organization that engages youth in video production) here at home. A documentary chronicling the courageous life of Shannen Koostachin and her dream for equitable funding and support for schools for First Nations children in Ontario and beyond has now been produced. I encourage you to visit the website heart-speak.ca and engage in making Shannen's Dream a reality!

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



BY MARY-LOU DONNELLY

CTF Voice Heard at First-Ever International Summit on the Teaching Profession

On March 16, I attended the first-ever International Summit on the Teaching Profession in New York City. The summit was organized by the U.S. Department of Education, together with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Education International (EI), to help spread effective policies and practices and to strengthen and elevate the teaching profession in ways that improve educational outcomes for children in all societies.

The event marked the first time education ministers, union leaders, and policymakers from around the world convened in the United States to discuss challenges and opportunities in building a world-class teaching force. I was joined at the table by the Honourable Doug Currie, minister of education for Prince Edward Island, who represented the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC). Along with Canada, foreign delegations from high-performing and rapidly improving educational systems, including Belgium, Brazil, the People's Republic of China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Singapore, Slovenia, and the United Kingdom held sessions focused on teacher recruitment and preparation; development, support, and retention of teachers; teacher evaluation and compensation; and teacher engagement in education reform.

Throughout the summit, common themes emerged around successful practices. Participants voiced shared interest in elevating the professional status of teachers, partnering with teachers in education reform to produce successful outcomes, and building collaboration between unions and education leaders to ensure overall progress.


"To achieve a high-quality education system, education and union leaders must join together to debate the different roads and draw a consensus around how we achieve our shared goals," said EI General Secretary Fred van Leeuwen.

The summit provided the opportunity to learn from one another how to support teachers in ways that strengthen a nation's education system and to share our current strategies and practices with neighbouring nations. The discussions were frank and open, with a sense of collaboration among the

participants. Common threads were that increasing teacher participation is vital to educational reform and that it is important for education ministries and teacher organizations to work together to improve education. It was recognized that education unions are important pillars of democracy and guardians of the teaching profession, and that there needs to be a joint effort to advance the quality of education worldwide.

Through the remarks of many participants, Canada emerged as having one of the most successful education systems in the world. Comments from the Canadian delegation spoke to our highly educated teaching force, the importance of professional development, the ongoing relations between ministries of education, and the importance of public education in Canada.

In the closing session entitled *Where Do We Go from Here?* it was agreed that the summit had been an important step and starting point to international co-operation on the teaching profession and education. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan committed to hosting the summit in 2012, and the Netherlands made a commitment to hosting in 2013. EI members will further discuss the impact and follow-up of the Summit at the Education International World Congress in Cape Town, South Africa in July of this year.

To see an interview with PEI Education Minister Doug Currie and CTF President Mary-Lou Donnelly go to neatoday.blip.tv/file/4923629. 

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



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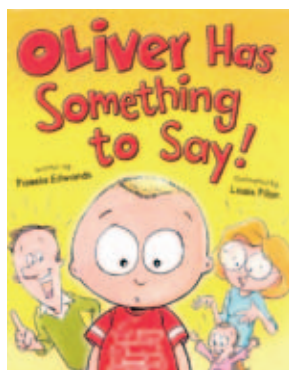
Available from agnesbellegris.com

★★★★★

Reviewed by **Megan Nowiski**

Absolute Alphabet is filled with entertaining tongue twisters for each letter of the alphabet. The author teaches alliteration by using descriptive, high-level vocabulary. Some examples: *Melissa mouse's melodeon's music is melodious*; *The Quinn quadruplets quibble over a quarter*.

Unionville High School students provided the beautiful illustrations. These drawings make this book a great resource for visual arts, as they are detailed and reflect many different styles. The use of artwork created by secondary students will show younger students that they too can be part of creating and publishing a beautiful piece of literature, regardless of their age. This book would be an excellent addition to any class library for read-alouds or guided reading.



Oliver Has Something to Say!

Pamela Edwards

Illustrator: Louis Pilon

Montreal: Lobster Press, 2007

24 pages; \$18.95

★★★★★

Reviewed by **Megan Nowiski**

Oliver is a young boy who is about to start junior kindergarten. The only problem is that he does not talk. This story takes the reader through Oliver's daily life. Although it appears that Oliver never says a word, when he tries to speak for himself others answer for him.

When Oliver goes to school the teacher asks him some questions and, with nobody there to answer for him, he doesn't know what to say. A few seconds pass until he answers the teacher . . . he has found his voice! From this moment on there is no turning back: Oliver becomes a regular chatterbox.

This is an excellent book for Primary students. It has a simple lesson and is accompanied by adorable cartoons.

.....
Megan Nowiski is a member of the Ottawa-Carleton Teacher Local.



Essay Writing: Teaching the Basics from the Ground Up

Jock Mackenzie

Markham: Pembroke

Publishers, 2007

94 pages; \$23.95

★★★★★

Reviewed by **Cory Woodrow**

Teachers who are looking for a how-to manual for essay writing will find it here. Jock Mackenzie has put together a compilation of what he considers to be best practices developed over a lifetime of teaching. His is a common-sense approach that will appeal to teachers hoping to improve student skills in this area.

This resource has a wide variety of visuals to help concepts come alive. It offers a number of very useful strategies. One example is to have students act out the essay, with each student representing a sentence.

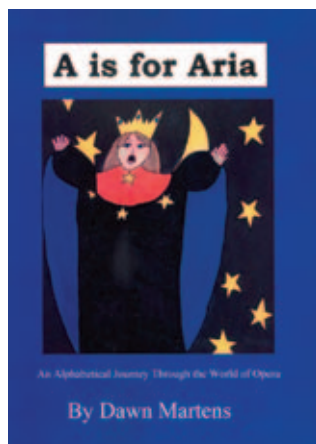
The emphasis on brainstorming before writing begins is a fantastic inclusion. The chapter on writing beginnings and endings is extremely helpful. There is a strategy for self-assessment of completed writing, and an excellent reference tool on joining words and transitional devices.

The most impressive feature of this resource is the user-friendly layout. There are time-savers throughout, the writing is concise, and frequent subheadings help the reader find information quickly. There is also a handy "teaching tips" box at the end of each strategy to highlight the most important points.

As with any resource, teachers need to know their own students and adapt and refine as necessary. They must also decide about how much time to spend on each of the skills discussed. Time spent on essays takes away from the teaching of a multitude of other forms of writing.

Formal essays are not a large part of elementary curriculum, but the ideas here for developing the structure of writing can be put to excellent use, without completing a lengthy essay each time. Many of these teacher tips could be modified to help students with short-answer, open-response tasks that are more appropriate to the elementary student.

.....
Cory Woodrow is a member of the Lambton Kent Teacher Local.



A is for Aria: An Alphabetical Journey Through the World of Opera

Dawn Martens

Victoria: First Choice Books,
2009

50 pp; \$15

★★★★

Reviewed by **Lisa Perrin**

A is for Aria is a wonderful teaching tool to introduce students of any age to the world of opera. It is an alphabet book: one page has a letter of the alphabet and a rhyming verse, and the facing page contains clearly written factual information about the corresponding facet of the opera.

The illustrations were done by grade 5 students from the Hamilton area. Although the pictures are not sophisticated or rich in colour or technique, they do serve to make the topic approachable to younger students.

It is hard to say which parts of the book I liked best: the humorous, yet informative rhymes, such as

*A is for aria,
A speech sung, not said
By someone in love . . .
Or soon to be dead!*

or the background pages, which not only explain the concepts further, but give ideas for opera selections to play for your students to enhance the learning experience.

It is probably fair to say that opera is not especially familiar to many educators. However, this book makes the subject approachable and fun. Dawn Martens is a member of the Hamilton-Wentworth Teacher Local who writes for *Opera Canada* magazine. Her passion for opera and for teaching makes this book a very useful resource for exploring forms and cultural contexts in the overall expectations for music in the Ontario arts curriculum.

Lisa Perrin is a member of the Simcoe County Teacher Local.



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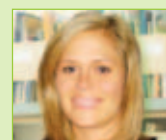
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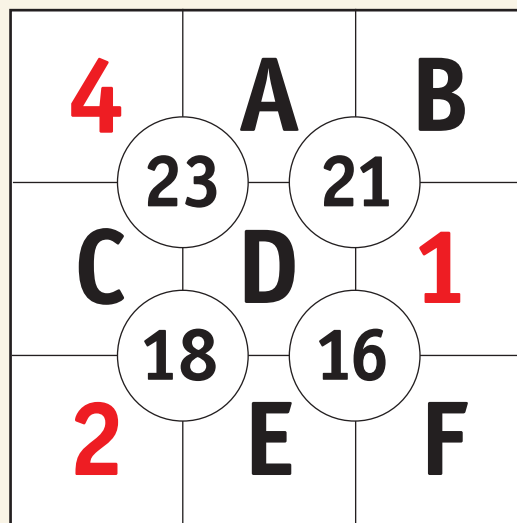
BY PETER HARRISON

Sujiko

In recognition of the indomitable spirit and resourcefulness of the Japanese people following the devastating earthquake and tsunami in their country, we are presenting a Sujiko puzzle which may be new to some readers.

In this example, I have entered the digits 1 – 9 in the nine squares of the above 3 x 3 grid, replacing some of them with the letters A – F. The numbers in the circles are the sums of the numbers in each of the four surrounding squares.

Although the principle is simplicity itself, working out the missing digits may not prove as simple as it might appear.



What (in the correct order) are the digits replaced by A, B, C, D, E & F?

Send your answers to ETFOvoice@etfo.org with the word "Trivia" in the subject line. You may also mail your entry to The Editor, *ETFO Voice*, at the address on the masthead. Three winners will be drawn from all correct entries received by August 30, 2011.

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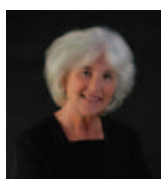
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