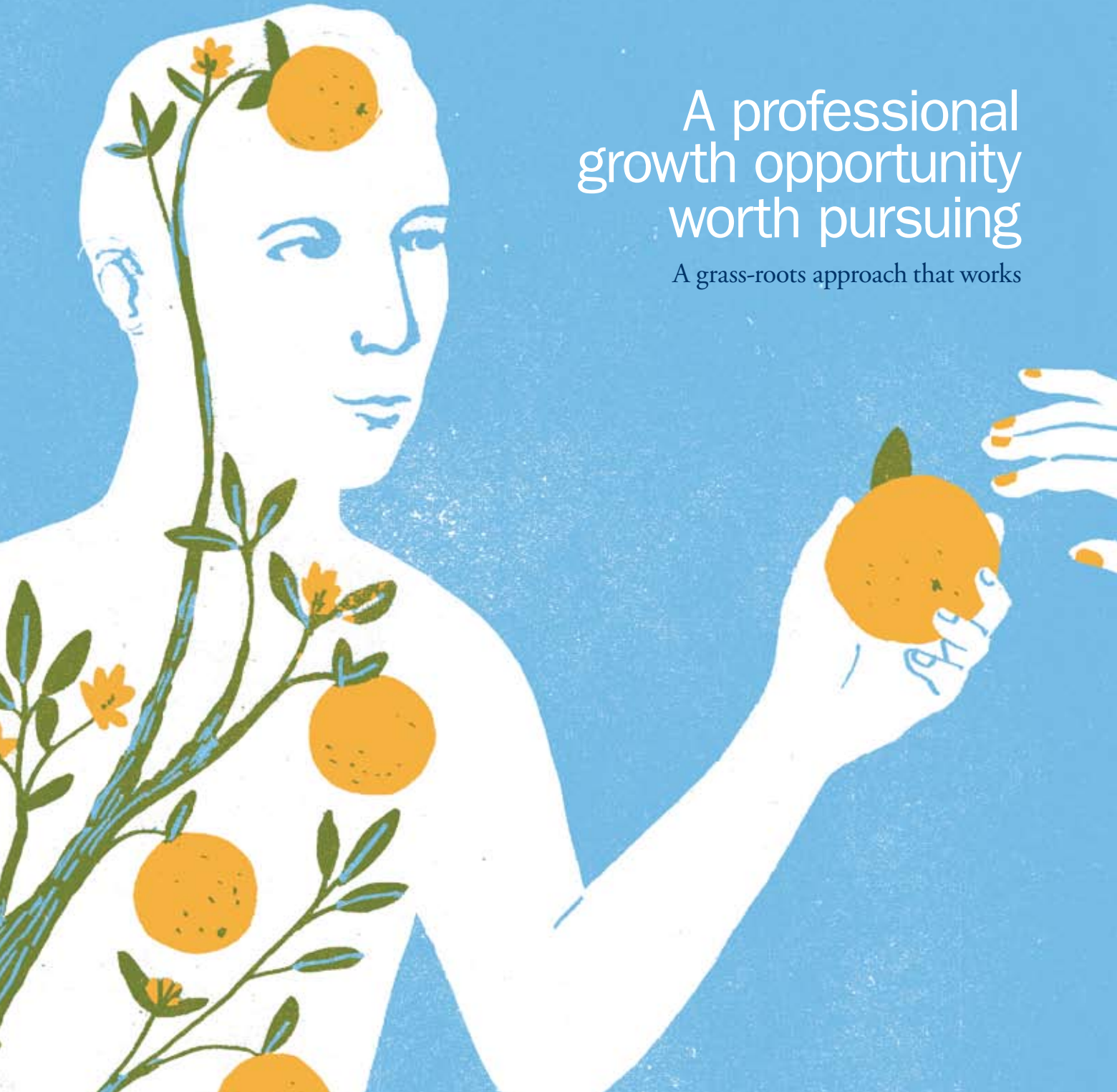


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# Quality and success in public education

What really matters (and what doesn't)

**I**N September, as I began thinking about this column, two things related to education were happening in Toronto that were of interest to OSSTF/FEESO. The two events weren't deliberately linked—I am sure that the scheduling was entirely coincidental—but the fact that they did occur at the same time was remarked upon and prompted several media releases.

One event was the Government of Ontario's education summit called "Building Blocks for Education: Whole System Reform" and one of the keynote speakers was Arne Duncan, the U.S. Education Secretary. Duncan is an ardent proponent of standardized testing, charter schools and teacher pay linked to standardized testing—all of which set off huge alarm bells in the minds of the teachers' federations. The second event was the airing of a documentary film called *Waiting for Superman* at the Toronto International Film Festival. This film laments the sad state of public education in the United States and implies that the solutions are—you guessed it—standardized testing, charter schools and teacher pay linked to standardized testing. Articles about the film called it "a warning for Canada."

Media releases from People for Education, the Ontario Teachers' Federation and the Ontario Public School Boards Association, to name a few, were quick to point out that public education in Ontario is in very good shape, and is world-renowned for its quality. Michael Fullan, Premier Dalton McGuinty's education advisor and the Co-Chair of the summit, said that the film "is not Canada" and that "it is not helpful, directionally, for the U.S." Even Duncan, touring Weston Collegiate with Premier McGuinty, acknowledged that the States have much to learn from Ontario.

Certainly, Ontario is doing a lot right in public education. However, the continued over-emphasis of Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) test scores is not one of them. The EQAO itself says, "The quality of schools should not be judged according to EQAO data alone. EQAO results provide a 'snapshot' of how students are achieving at one point in time and do not fully represent the richness and depth of multi-faceted schools and their students. Every school's staff has access to many sources of data in addition to EQAO reports. School staff and parents need to take into account the complexities of their school by examining their EQAO results along with all of the other information they have about

**"The quality of schools  
should not be  
judged according to  
EQAO data alone."**

student achievement, such as that found in or through report cards, classroom assessments and board assessments."

But year after year, right-wing organizations like the Fraser Institute use those EQAO results to do exactly that—pass judgements on the supposed "quality" of schools by producing rankings that list the schools from "best" to "worst," which does nothing except perhaps raise real-estate prices in the neighbourhoods of the schools ranking highest.

Several of the articles in this issue emphasize what is truly important in terms of ensuring quality in public education.

The cover story, Matt Armstrong's article "A professional growth opportunity worth pursuing," speaks of the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program, now

in its fourth year, which supports teacher-driven professional growth projects that are then shared with others.

"Management over vision" by Ken Draayer recounts how the emphasis on literacy, in and of itself not necessarily a bad thing, has resulted in the crowding out of other, just as important, skills, especially in English courses, which will ultimately ill-serve students.

In a similar vein, Adam Mercer, in his article "A worrying trend," speaks of the lack of opportunities for already high-achieving students because there is so much focus on programs for at-risk students. He argues that public education needs to serve all students, no matter their ability and achievement level, not just those who will raise the scores enough to meet artificial EQAO targets and graduation rates.

The columns "Twenty-first-century skills" by Rod Heikkila and "What really matters in education" by Bryan J. Smith also explore what valuable public education should look like (and what it shouldn't) by critiquing two recent books.

Finally, two articles recount the experiences of two teachers who have travelled to other countries to share their expertise and provide professional development for teachers. Cameron Douglas, who, with his family, spent a year in south-western Africa, tells his story in "Teaching and Learning in Namibia." Connie Collins' article, "Finding hope in the midst of heartbreak," recounts her experiences during a two-week volunteer trip to Haiti.

With a provincial election less than a year away, we hope this issue will begin (or continue) to provide you with some context and background as the various political parties start rolling out their education platforms. ☺





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# La qualité et la réussite

Ce qui compte vraiment (et le reste) dans l'éducation publique

**EN** septembre, alors que je commençais à réfléchir à cet article, deux événements liés à l'éducation et intéressant OSSTF/FEESO se sont déroulés à Toronto.

Le premier était le Sommet sur l'éducation du gouvernement de l'Ontario, intitulé « *Les assises de l'éducation : Réforme systémique* ». Arne Duncan, le Secrétaire à l'Éducation des États-Unis, y était l'un des conférenciers. Le ministre Duncan est un ardent défenseur des tests normalisés, des écoles à charte et de la rémunération du personnel enseignant en fonction des résultats obtenus aux tests normalisés, tous ces points n'ayant pas manqué d'alarmer profondément les fédérations du monde de l'éducation. Le deuxième événement était la projection d'un documentaire intitulé *Waiting for Superman* au Festival international du film de Toronto. Ce film se plaint de l'état lamentable de l'éducation publique aux États-Unis en sous-entendant que les solutions sont, vous l'avez deviné, les tests normalisés, les écoles à charte et la rémunération du personnel enseignant en fonction des résultats obtenus aux tests normalisés. Les articles sur ce documentaire ont parlé d'avertissement pour le Canada ».

Les communiqués de *People for Education*, de la Fédération des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario et de l'OPSBA (*Ontario Public School Boards Association*), pour n'en nommer que quelques-uns, ont vite fait remarquer que l'éducation publique en Ontario se portait très bien et était renommée dans le monde pour sa qualité. Michael Fullan, conseiller en éducation du premier ministre McGuinty et coprésident du Sommet a déclaré que le documentaire « ne portait pas sur le Canada » et « ne montrait pas la voie pour les États-Unis ». Même Arne Duncan, qui visitait alors

le *Weston Collegiate Institute* en compagnie du premier ministre McGuinty, a reconnu que les États-Unis avaient beaucoup à apprendre de l'Ontario.

Certes, l'Ontario s'y prend bien en matière d'éducation publique, mais les surenchères continues de l'Office de la qualité et de la responsabilité en matière d'éducation (OQRE) sur les résultats des tests n'en font certainement pas partie. L'OQRE lui-même déclare que « la qualité des écoles ne devrait pas être jugée uniquement en fonction des données de l'OQRE. Les résultats de l'OQRE donnent seulement un aperçu du rendement des élèves à un moment donné et ne représentent pas pleinement la richesse et la profondeur de tous les aspects des écoles et de leurs élèves. Le personnel des écoles et les parents doivent tenir compte de la complexité de leurs écoles, en examinant les résultats de l'OQRE conjointement avec tous les autres renseignements qu'ils ont sur le rendement des élèves, tels que ceux que fournissent les bulletins scolaires, les évaluations en salle de classe et les évaluations des conseils scolaires. »

Néanmoins, année après année, les organismes de droite, comme l'Institut Fraser, se servent des résultats de l'OQRE justement à cette fin : juger de la « qualité » supposée des écoles en produisant des classements qui dressent la liste des écoles des « meilleures » aux « pires »; un classement qui ne sert à rien, sinon éventuellement à augmenter les prix de l'immobilier dans les quartiers situés près des écoles les mieux classées.

Plusieurs des articles du présent numéro soulignent les points importants lorsqu'il s'agit d'assurer la qualité de l'éducation publique.

L'article-vedette de Matt Armstrong, intitulé : « *A professional growth opportunity*

*worth pursuing* », porte sur le Programme d'apprentissage et de leadership du personnel enseignant, qui appuie les projets de perfectionnement professionnel des enseignantes et enseignants qui peuvent par la suite partager leur apprentissage.

L'article intitulé « *Management over vision* » et signé Ken Draayer retrace comment l'emphase sur la littératie, aboutit à l'éviction d'autres compétences tout aussi importantes, comme les cours d'anglais, ce qui finit par desservir les élèves.

Dans la même veine, Adam Mercer, dans son article intitulé « *A worrying trend* » aborde la question du manque d'occasions pour les élèves exceptionnels du fait de l'accent mis sur les programmes visant les élèves « à risque ».

Les chroniques intitulées « *Twenty-first century skills* », de Rod Heikkila, et « *What really matters in education* », de Bryan J. Smith, se penchent aussi sur ce que doit être une éducation publique utile (et sur ce qu'elle ne doit pas être) en critiquant deux ouvrages récents.

Enfin, deux articles relatent l'expérience de deux enseignants partis dans d'autres pays pour partager leur expertise et assurer le perfectionnement professionnel d'enseignants étrangers. Cameron Douglas, qui a passé, avec sa famille, une année dans le Sud-Ouest de l'Afrique, nous raconte son histoire dans « *Teaching and Learning in Namibia* ». Quant à l'article de Connie Collins, intitulé « *Trouver l'espoir dans la désolation* » relate son vécu pendant ses deux semaines de bénévolat en Haïti.

L'élection provinciale est dans moins d'un an. Nous espérons que ce numéro commencera (ou continuera) à vous fournir des éléments de contexte et des données de base dont vous pourrez tenir compte alors que les divers partis politiques commencent à dévoiler leur programme en matière d'éducation. ☺

## Attawapiskat youth leader dies in tragic accident

It is with deep sorrow that we mark the passing of Shannen Koostachin, the 15-year-old youth leader from the Attawapiskat First Nation who was killed on May 31 in a car accident in northern Ontario when the minivan in which she was travelling was struck by a transport-trailer.

Shannen garnered national attention when, as a Grade 8 student, she helped lead the fight to get the federal government to build a grade school in the isolated James Bay community. For eight years, children had been attending classes in makeshift portables on a massively contaminated brown-field site. When the school was closed in 2000, the government walked away from its commitment to build a new school. Shannen and her classmates decided to fight back.

Shannen had a spark and determination that inspired students across Canada—Native and non-Native alike. Her efforts snowballed into a massive letter-writing and public-awareness campaign that utilized online tools like Facebook and YouTube and garnered the support of thousands of young people across Canada.

The campaign became the largest youth-driven, child-rights movement in Canadian history, and Shannen was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize.

Shannen was passionate about the need to improve educational opportunities so young Cree children wouldn't give up hope. She could be both fiery and vulnerable when confronting indifferent government officials.

Speaking at a conference in 2008, Shannen explained her motivation.

"I would like to talk to you what it is like to be a child who grows up never seeing a real school. I want to tell you what it is like to never have the chance to feel excited about being educated. You know that kids in other communities have proper schools. So you begin to feel as if you are a child who doesn't count for anything.

Liskeard. She often spoke of her sorrow in having to leave her family in order to have an education. She said she was making the sacrifice to leave home in the hopes that her younger siblings would someday have a better opportunity for education.

NDP MP Charlie Angus says Shannen inspired people. "She just wanted to go to school and live the life any normal kid lives. But she was unwilling to live with the substandard conditions that existed for school children in Attawapiskat. So at the young age of 13, she decided to help organize her fellow students. It was an honour to know her."

Angus and the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada are creating a scholarship for Attawapiskat students in memory of Shannen Koostachin.

**The Office of Charlie Angus MP**

Timmins-James Bay



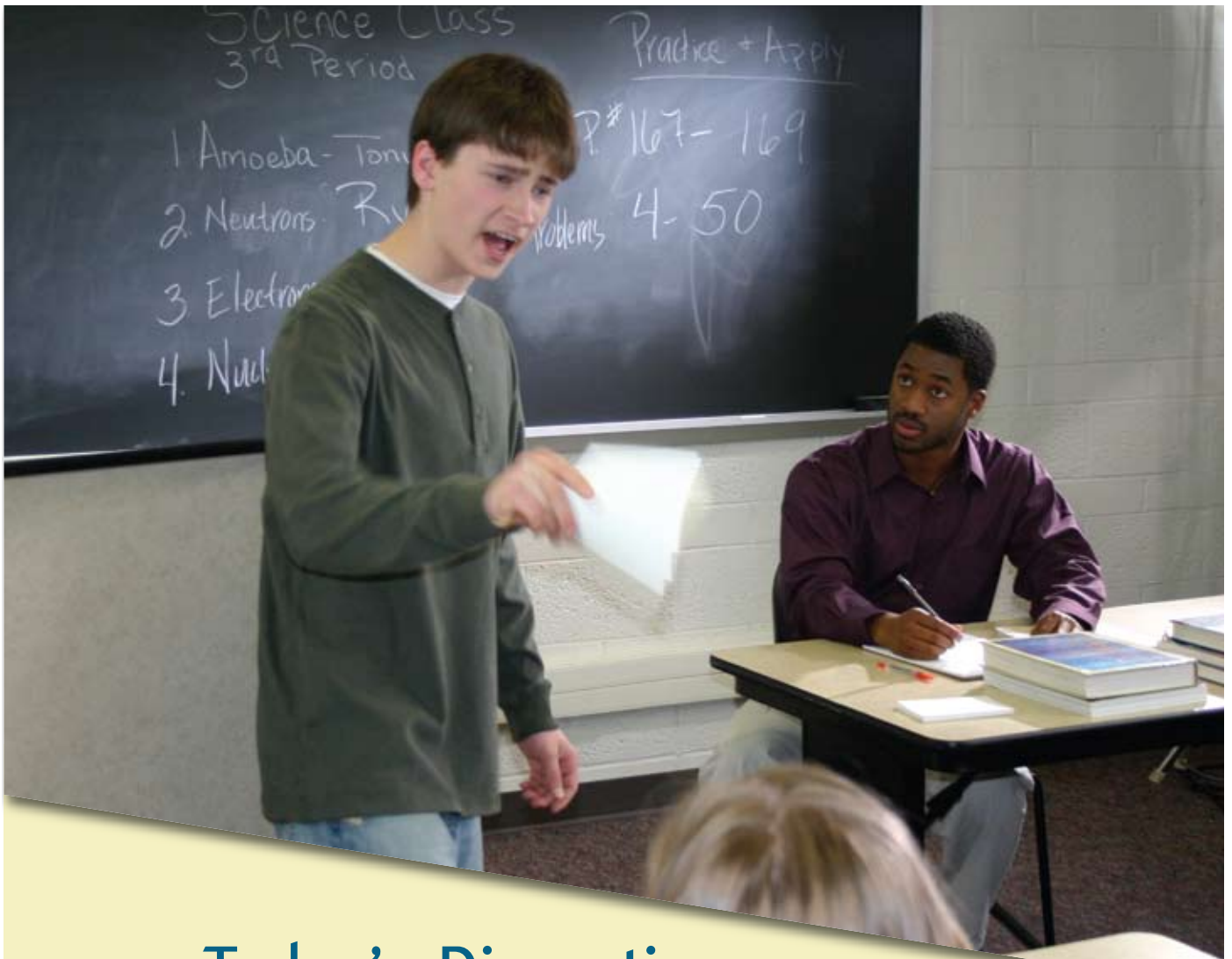
PHOTO: LAM SHARP

That's why some of our students begin to give up in Grade 4 and Grade 5. They just stop going to school. Imagine that. Imagine a child who feels they have no future even at that young age. But I want to also tell you about the determination in our community to build a better world. We are not going to give up. We want our younger brothers and sisters to go to school thinking that school is a time for hopes and dreams of the future. Every kid deserves this."

In Grade 9, Shannen left her fly-in community to attend school in a provincial high school in New

## Editor's note:

The Winter 2010 issue of *Education Forum* featured a story called "Attawapiskat gets a new school" by Colleen Canon. Those interested in making a donation to the Shannen Koostachin Memorial Fund may do so through the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada ([www.fnfcfs.com](http://www.fnfcfs.com)). The provincial executive made a donation of \$3,000 to Heartspeak Productions to support the production of three videos that will highlight awareness about Shannen Koostachin's dream of all children having access to quality education and to have a new school opened in Attawapiskat. According to the *Timmins Daily Press*, the new elementary school is to open in 2012. ☺



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# Twenty-first-century skills

More complex than meets the eye



While there are some useful and inspired suggestions for classroom teachers once one sifts through the jargon, in the end the book fails because it confuses the descriptive with the prescriptive in its effort to appeal to senior administrators and bureaucrats whom it sees as the hope for the future.

The book begins by articulating the problems facing today's students, whom the authors see as lacking the "skills" for the 21st century. While acknowledging loftier goals, such as alleviating suffering and increasing political participation, education is seen largely as a means to supply workers—in other words, students, whom the authors refer to as "education's clients and customers"—for an economy wherein "Learning is Earning." Students, the book proclaims, must be prepared to work at many jobs, the number of which "could easily double to 22 or more jobs in a lifetime!"

That it incorrectly claims today's outdated education systems operate on an agrarian calendar (a notion that is much more effectively explored in Malcolm Gladwell's *Outliers*, 2008) should invite readers to question other assumptions upon which this book is founded. For example, there is the typical yet debatable assertion that being able to adapt quickly to new technologies and new jobs is more important than knowledge itself. It quotes Eric Hoffer's mid-20th-century declaration that "In times of profound change, learners inherit the earth, while the learned find themselves beautifully equipped to deal with a world that no longer exists." Hoffer was a self-educated working-class genius who, thanks to public libraries and, later on, to unionized labour working conditions, was able to read and then write important essays and books. He had little time for ideologues and

**B**ernie Trilling and Charles Fadel's *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times* (2009) is a very earnest American book filled to the brim with figures, tables, anecdotes, parables, rhymes, diagrams and charts. It sees itself as detailing "a 21st-century model of teaching and learning" through a "systemic approach and a spirit of innovation." The CD that comes with it contains some good examples of innovative teachers using current technology with motivated students who solve real-

world problems through group work. It implies that future global recessions might be avoided if the world were to implement the systems and techniques laid out in this book, whereby "a global learning network as powerful and pervasive as our existing business, financial, and communications global networks" supports net-generation students who in turn "experience the freedom and joy of learning without borders" as they become the global hands-on problem-solvers of tomorrow.

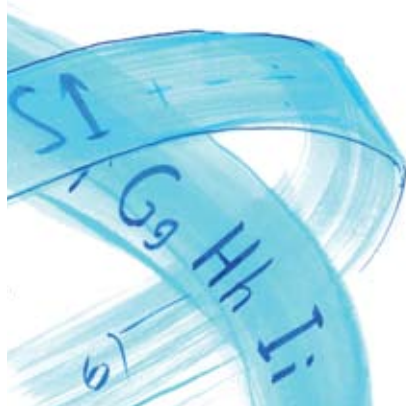
technocrats of any sort and had some legitimate bones to pick with American university elites after World War II. Nonetheless, that subsequent sages would assume that the learned—teachers and scholars—are not themselves learners, and that knowledge from the past is irrelevant to the present or future is a testament to their ignorance of the nature and dynamics of today’s classroom, of teachers themselves and of academia.

There is a short and telling little parable in Chapter Four in which an “extraordinarily far-sighted ruler” named King Wallace and his wife, Queen Nettie, of Lernalot envision and try to implement “one great World Wide Wall,” an awkward symbol of the World Wide Web. Various groups first misuse and then fight against the ideas of the wise king. Curiously, unions are portrayed as obstacles to change in this odd and condescending little passage, as “the protesters were soon joined by the Union of Serf Farmers, whose crops were blighted by the shade from ‘all them bloody walls.’”

The CD characterizes current public education as separating people through streaming, separating hands from minds and separating students from the world beyond. Nonetheless, there are some encouraging signs that the do-more-with-less, transparent-fully-accountable, brave new world mindset of corporate America that Trilling and Fadel appeal to in their book is at last beginning to give way to what frontline educational workers and their unions have been saying for more than 25 years. Despite its limited and limiting view of education as a system of systems run by overworked administrators who oversee educational workers reticent to adopt and adapt to new ideas, the authors acknowledge that “running a good school is no simple matter,” that “often changes are made in one support system, such as a new curriculum, without co-ordinated changes being made in all the other linked systems: the learning environment, teacher professional development, aligned assessments and standards, for example.” The

book comes out against standardized tests, which are expensive and have little educational value. It also advocates for adequate funding for transformation over a five- to seven-year period at least, additional funds for PD and improved technology infrastructure to facilitate easy access to the Internet in the classroom, including sustained investment

...let us remain wary  
of the supposed  
common sense,  
quality and  
accountability  
proffered by  
“wise kings” and  
“far-sighted rulers.”



in laptops and hand-held devices for all students. There is little mention of books, however, even though *21st Century Skills* is itself, of course, a book.

Teachers long faced with having to make do with one or no computers in a classroom, with limitations imposed upon software, limited to no WiFi access and having to compete with colleagues for often outdated and barely functioning computer labs, Smart Boards or data projectors will agree with many of the

ideas in this book. It makes a good case for allowing teachers and students to explore and truly interact with other teachers and students around the world and to exploit the astounding potential of the digital age in a meaningful and fruitful way. Those who already have easy access to technology will benefit from many of the collaborative learning ideas.

Perhaps for many jurisdictions in the United States, this book may be new and revolutionary. In the end, however, many of today’s Canadian educational workers, administrators, parents and students would be served better if they were to read Gladwell’s *Outliers* for some thought-provoking ideas about excellence and success; Don Tapscott’s *Grown Up Digital: How the Net Generation is Changing Your World* for a more informed look at the nature of new technology and how and by whom it is used; Karyn Gordon’s *Dr. Karyn Gordon’s Guide to the Teen Years* for an informative look at the young people in our schools today; and Professor Alan King’s insightful 1990 report. *The Good School: Strategies for Making Secondary Schools Effective* (available through the OSSTF/FEESO Research Library), to see what is required to actually implement these concepts in a meaningful and effective, positive school environment within already existing systems.

Despite the many excellent classroom ideas, well-meaning mood and upbeat tone of *21st Century Skills: Learning for Life in Our Times*, let us remain wary of the supposed common sense, quality and accountability proffered by “wise kings” and “far-sighted rulers.” Many of that ilk—Arne Duncan, Michelle Rhee and Joel Klein, for example—have begun to reign over the education landscape in the United States. Canadian provincial politicians will need to be particularly cautious lest they too be seduced by ideologues and in turn develop wrong-headed, narrow-minded and even punitive policies. ☞

---

**Rod Heikkila**, a long-time Federation activist, teaches English and French at Parkside Collegiate Institute in District 11, Thames Valley.





## Finding hope amidst the heartbreak

A teacher's journal from Haiti

**MONDAY, JULY 5, 2010**

(two days after our arrival)

As we enter the compound, we are greeted by 13 beautiful Haitian women, eager to see us. Balloon banners are festooned over tarps that cover classroom areas. We begin our day collecting bits of broken concrete from the many piles of rubble everywhere. Each teacher writes something she hopes for, something she wants to gain from our two weeks together, on one piece. Then the concrete pieces are formed into a circle in the middle of the room and will remain there for the rest of our time together, a symbol of unity and of what is being created out of this mess.

PHOTO: CHRISTINE DEVINE

/CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Trouver l'espoir dans la désolation

Journal de bord d'une enseignante à Haïti

**LUNDI 5 JUILLET 2010**

(deux jours après notre arrivée)

En entrant dans l'enceinte, 13 splendides Haïtiennes nous accueillent, impatientes de nous voir. Les salles de classe sont recouvertes de bâches festonnées de banderoles de ballons. Nous commençons la journée en ramassant des morceaux de ciment dans les monceaux de gravats ici et là. Chaque enseignante y inscrit un message d'espoir ou ce qu'elle veut retirer de ses deux semaines de collaboration. Avec les morceaux, nous formons ensuite un cercle au centre de la salle. Ils resteront là jusqu'à la fin de notre collaboration, en signe d'unité et pour montrer ce qui émerge de cette dévastation.

/SUITE À LA PAGE 13



Six months after the earthquake of January 12, 2010, Port-au-Prince is still a broken city. Buildings have fallen everywhere and cars are flattened. On our walk to school every morning, we stumble around the rubble piled on the side of the busy road. Haitian work crews, hired by the U.S. government, slowly pick away at the broken buildings with shovels or pickaxes, piling the broken bits into wheelbarrows or pails.

of processing their new understandings, they run out of time to write it all down.

#### FRIDAY, JULY 9

As part of our team's vision, we wanted to do something in the community with the Haitian teachers. Teresa Jean, who has been to Haiti many times, came on this trip for the purpose of going to Mother Theresa Mission of Charity Hospital every day to hold sick and dying babies and so we join her today. None of us has ever done anything like

silence with the teachers. We also ask them to reflect on their time at the hospital on Friday. They had heard about these hospitals and had seen stories of babies like these on TV but they had never taken the time to help. They were very moved by this experience and most said they wanted to go there again.

Teaching went very well today. We do a personality assessment with the teachers. It is so interesting to see how each of the teachers react to the test and their findings.



We came to share our knowledge and ourselves with our Haitian colleagues, but we leave having become richer for the experience.

Words of hope on pieces of rubble: a symbol of unity

Our group, Teaching and Learning with Compassion Canada, from the Waterloo Region, is here for two weeks to bring resources, and to develop and discuss curriculum ideas with the teachers of Three Angels School in Petion Ville, a suburb of Port-au-Prince. Our leader, Joyce Crone, began her work here two years ago. For this trip, she invited teachers Christine Devine, Cidalia Sousa and myself, along with Kim Turner and Teresa Jean, to assist her.

As the week progresses, we realize we will need much more time to get through all that we have prepared to share with the teachers. Our translator tries to get the gist of what we are saying and get it across to the teachers in Creole. These women are smart, passionate teachers who want meaningful activities and conversations with us; their questions are thoughtful. We discuss concepts in literacy and numeracy, learning disabilities and classroom management techniques. We also give them time to reflect on what they have learned. At first this is a difficult thing for them to grasp, but as they begin to understand the importance

this before. The hospital was damaged in the earthquake and is now housed in UN tents. As we approach the tents, we can hear the crying babies and toddlers. As we begin to pick up the very, very sick children and start to cuddle them and bring comfort, they start to smile through their tears. The Sisters are glad to see us, 20 women helping to relieve them of their burden for a while. As the Haitian teachers begin to calm the children, they sing Creole lullabies. It is another incredibly beautiful moment amidst this sadness.

I hold two little girls on my lap. They are lethargic and very hot. I too start to sing little nursery rhymes, and when I sing "Frère Jacques" they look at me with big eyes. They recognize the song coming out of this big white woman. I start to laugh and amazingly, so do they. It is heartbreaking to leave as the children start to cry again. We realize there has been no crying for the few hours we have been there.

#### MONDAY, JULY 12

Today, on the six-month anniversary of the earthquake, we have a moment of

We then have them think about how they could use this with their students to further understand who their students are and how they learn. We also have great math lessons using manipulatives, and teach them the strategies of Sudoku. Again, we enjoy rich discussions around how to use these ideas with their students.

#### FRIDAY, JULY 16

Today is our last day with the teachers. It is our last walk to school this morning. I savour every smell and sound as we walk along. We have become part of the street's busy morning routine, this gaggle of white women, and people greet us with smiles and "Bonjour." We have seen progress with the rubble clean-up in these two weeks; the work crews have made a dent in the mountains of broken concrete.

We are having a celebration and a graduation party. We are greeted at the school by all of the teachers clad in red and white! It is a beautiful expression of their love for us and Canada. We listen to them sing songs of thanks and

PHOTO: CHRISTINE DEVINE

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Six mois après le séisme du 12 janvier 2010, Port-au-Prince est toujours une ville dévastée. Des immeubles se sont effondrés partout, écrasant les voitures. Sur le chemin de l'école, tous les matins, nous trébuchons sur les gravats empilés le long des rues passantes. Les équipes de déblaiement haïtiennes engagées par le gouvernement américain dégagent lentement les amas de gravats des immeubles à l'aide de pelles ou de pioches et les jettent dans des brouettes ou des seaux.

Notre groupe, *Teaching and Learning with Compassion Canada*, originaire de la région de Waterloo, est ici pendant deux semaines pour faire don de ses ressources, élaborer des idées de programme scolaire et en discuter avec les enseignantes de l'école *Three Angels* de Pétiion-Ville, dans la banlieue de Port-au-Prince. L'enseignante qui nous encadre, Joyce Crone, a commencé son travail ici il y a deux ans. Pour le présent séjour, elle a invité les enseignantes Christine Devine, Cidalia Sousa et moi-même, ainsi que Kim Turner et Teresa Jean, à venir l'aider.

Alors que la semaine s'écoule, nous comprenons que nous aurons besoin de beaucoup plus de temps pour terminer tout ce que nous avons prévu de partager avec les enseignantes. Notre interprète tente de leur faire comprendre l'essentiel de nos dires en créole. Ces femmes sont des enseignantes intelligentes et passionnées qui veulent avoir avec nous des activités et des conversations pertinentes. Leurs questions sont sérieuses. Nous discutons des concepts de littératie et de numératie, des difficultés d'apprentissage et des techniques de gestion de la salle de classe. Dans un premier temps, elles ont quelques difficultés d'appréhension, mais au fur et à mesure qu'elles commencent à saisir l'importance de traiter leurs nouvelles connaissances, elles finissent par manquer de temps pour tout noter.

#### VENREDI 9 JUILLET

La vision de notre équipe veut notamment que nous aidions la communauté en collaborant avec les enseignantes haïtiennes. Teresa Jean, qui a séjourné souvent en Haïti, s'est jointe à notre groupe dans le but de se rendre tous les jours au *Mother Theresa*

*Mission of Charity Hospital* pour assister les bébés malades et mourants. L'hôpital a été endommagé pendant le séisme et a été relocalisé sous des tentes des Nations Unies. En approchant, nous pouvons entendre les bébés et les tout-petits pleurer. Dès que nous prenons des enfants gravement malades pour les bercer et les réconforter, ils commencent à sourire à travers leurs larmes. Les Soeurs sont heureuses de notre visite : 20 femmes qui les soulagent pendant quelques heures. Tout en calmant les enfants, les enseignantes haïtiennes leur chantent des berceuses en créole. C'est un moment d'une rare beauté dans toute cette tristesse.

J'ai deux petites filles sur mes genoux. Elles sont léthargiques et très fiévreuses. Je commence à leur chanter des berceuses. Dès que j'entonne « Frère Jacques », elles me regardent les yeux écarquillés : elles reconnaissent la chanson fredonnée par cette grande femme blanche. Cela me fait rire et, miraculeusement, elles font de même. Nous avons le cœur brisé de devoir partir et d'entendre de nouveau les enfants pleurer. C'est alors que nous réalisons qu'ils n'ont pas pleuré pendant les quelques heures de notre visite.

#### LUNDI 12 JUILLET

Aujourd'hui marque l'anniversaire du sixième mois du séisme. Nous observons une minute de silence avec les enseignantes. Nous leur demandons aussi de réfléchir au temps passé à l'hôpital vendredi. Elles avaient entendu parler de ces hôpitaux et vu des reportages sur ces bébés à la télévision, mais sans jamais

prendre le temps de les aider. Cette expérience les a bouleversées. La plupart déclarent vouloir y retourner.

L'apprentissage se déroule très bien aujourd'hui. Nous effectuons une évaluation de personnalité avec les enseignantes. C'est intéressant de voir la réaction de chacune d'entre elles aux tests et leurs résultats. Nous leur demandons ensuite de réfléchir aux moyens d'utiliser ces résultats auprès de leurs élèves pour mieux comprendre qui ils sont et comment ils apprennent. Nous passons ensuite aux leçons de mathématiques à l'aide de matériel tactile et leur apprenons les stratégies du Sudoku. Là encore, nos discussions sur les moyens d'utiliser ces notions auprès de leurs élèves sont des plus enrichissantes.

#### VENREDI 16 JUILLET

Notre dernier jour en compagnie des enseignantes est arrivé. Ce matin, nous nous rendons pour la dernière fois à l'école. Sur ma route, je ne veux rien manquer des odeurs et des sons. En l'espace de deux semaines, le déblaiement des gravats a avancé et les équipes ont bien entamé les montagnes de ciment brisé.

Nous célébrons aujourd'hui la fin des cours. Toutes les enseignantes, vêtues de rouge et de blanc, nous accueillent à l'école! Elles expriment ainsi leur amour pour nous et le Canada. Nous les écoutons entonner des chants de remerciement et d'appréciation et rions lorsqu'elles présentent à chacune d'entre nous des poèmes humoristiques... Elles nous croient un

/SUITE À LA PAGE 14



## PRINCIPALS—TEACHERS Looking for the Ultimate Cultural Experience?

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12/

appreciation and laugh as they present us with funny poems about each one of us. They think we are a little “*fou*” (crazy). We give each a certificate and a card with a very special gift inside. We know that this will go far to alleviate some of their needs. We have accomplished a lot in our short time here, but there is still so much that we could do.

Since it is our last day, we take our translator, Carl, out for a special lunch to one of the ritziest hotels on the side of the mountain. We cannot believe how beautiful it is. We walk out onto the terrace of the restaurant to a spectacular view of the city below—a sharp contrast of the two worlds here. Afterwards, we walk down to meet the van. We walk past gated mansions and beautiful gardens, breathing in the fresh air, relishing the beauty. We get to the bottom of the street and are instantly hit with the noise, the heat and the chaos of the main road. I think this is how I will remember Haiti. It hits me over and over again: the beauty and the squalor, the extremes of life here, the insanity of poverty and wealth side by side.

We came to share our knowledge and ourselves with our Haitian colleagues, but we leave having become richer for the experience. Never did I expect that I could have received so much from trying to give. ☺

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**Connie Collins** teaches English and Special Education at Glenview Park Secondary School in District 24, Waterloo.

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peu « folles ». Nous leur remettons un certificat et une carte contenant un petit cadeau d’appréciation, sachant que cela les aidera beaucoup à combler leurs besoins. Nous avons beaucoup fait en deux semaines de visite, mais il reste tant à faire.

Puisque c’est notre dernier jour, nous invitons Carl, notre interprète, à déjeuner dans un des hôtels les plus luxueux adossé à la montagne. La vue d’ici est splendide. De la terrasse du restaurant, nous avons une vue spectaculaire sur la ville en contrebas : un contraste saisissant entre les deux mondes qui se côtoient ici. Après le déjeuner, nous redescendons vers le fourgon en passant devant des résidences entourées de grilles et bordées de jardins magnifiques, respirant l’air frais et goûtant la beauté des lieux. Au bas de la rue, le bruit, la chaleur et le chaos de la rue principale nous surprennent instantanément. Ce sera le souvenir que je garderai de Haïti et qui me revient sans cesse : la beauté et la misère la plus noire, les extrêmes de la vie ici, la folie de la pauvreté et de la richesse dressées face-à-face.

Nous avons partagé ce que nous étions, nos connaissances et notre matériel avec nos collègues haïtiennes et nous repartons riches de notre expérience. Je n’aurais jamais pensé recevoir autant en essayant d’aider. ☺

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**Connie Collins** enseigne l’anglais et les programmes d’éducation de l’enfance en difficulté à l’école secondaire de Glenview Park, District 24, Waterloo.

## ANNUAL CHARITY GOLF CLASSIC



## OTIP Annual Charity Golf Classic raises \$89,000 for the OTIP Community Fund

OTIP's 21st Annual Charity Golf Classic hosted over 280 golfers whose donations, along with the contributions of numerous sponsors, raised an incredible \$89,000 for the OTIP Community Fund. The OTIP Community Fund will donate a portion of the proceeds to SickKids Foundation, Beautiful Minds and Perinatal Bereavement Services of Ontario (PBSO). Over the past 21 years, OTIP (Ontario Teachers Insurance Plan) has raised a total of \$1,201,783.23 for these important charities.

“Our golf classic is an impressive gathering of community, from generous sponsor donations, to fellowship on the course and dedication on the part of our volunteers.” said Randy McGlynn, OTIP Chief Executive Officer.

### Mark your calendars!

**The 22nd Annual Charity Golf Classic will take place on Friday, August 26, 2011**, at the Cardinal Golf Club in Kettleby. With the continued support of our generous sponsors, it promises to be another success.

# What really matters in education

Critical thinking not test scores



The right would love to privatize public education out of existence; the left would demand egalitarian education where everyone gets a gold star for effort, regardless of the quality of the product; and—surprise—there’s danger from the self-described middle, too, when merit is equated with money-making.

Penny’s argument for the social and cultural benefit of far-sighted education is not a new one. What is novel and fascinating in her book is the examination of anti-intellectualism at work, in Canada and the United States, in the media, in politics and in popular discourse, where bullies are deemed strong leaders when they promulgate lies about post-doctoral students with degrees in philosophy who are driving taxis. Education, she says, is a political football when reasoned discourse is delivered up in sound bites.

Some of the questions she sees as needing a full discussion are given very short shrift in election years, coming to Ontario in October 2011. Though a staunch ally of public education, she says we need to understand the results of privatization, vouchers and charter schools. How many members of the public or our profession are aware of the problems associated with educational giant Edison Schools? If schools are all about competitive edge in the world, Penny wonders who has a clear picture of the shape of the future in the long term. The Conference Board, largely perceived as favouring training over education, in fact lists more requirements from the humanities than from specialized (and idolized) fields of study in its description of the work skills of the future.

Writing with the economic collapse of 2008 in the foreground, she advises us to avoid some of the prognosticators

**L**aura Penny’s recent book, *More Money than Brains: Why Schools Suck, College is Crap and Idiots Think They’re Right*, intrigues; the title and subtitle are both colloquial and provocative. From a university lecturer, we’d expect seriousness, even dullness, wouldn’t we? Penny would agree. Our expectations, shaped by the repeated cant of talking-head critics of education, tell us that education is dull, boring and most of all, pointless in a world where the competitive edge depends on training, not abstruse

studies of Kantian philosophy.

Don’t be fooled, though, by the jocular-ity of Penny’s terms for anti-intellectuals: “talkradio yakflappers,” “market-teering mammonists,” “paranoiac 9/11 conspiracy theorists,” “self-helpist narcissists,” even “condescending vegans.” According to Penny, there is good reason to wage a word war against those who’d destroy the credibility of intelligence, study and reason. Think-tanks have systematically been doing just that since back in the day. Worse, she says, the enemy is on all sides.

who got us, and more so, our American friends, into the current financial mess. Too often schools are accused by the business community of being organs of socialist indoctrination. Conversely, critics on the left question the promotion of capitalism, even the industrial structure of the institutions whose goal is to produce passive employees in the vanishing “dark mills” of the North American heartland.

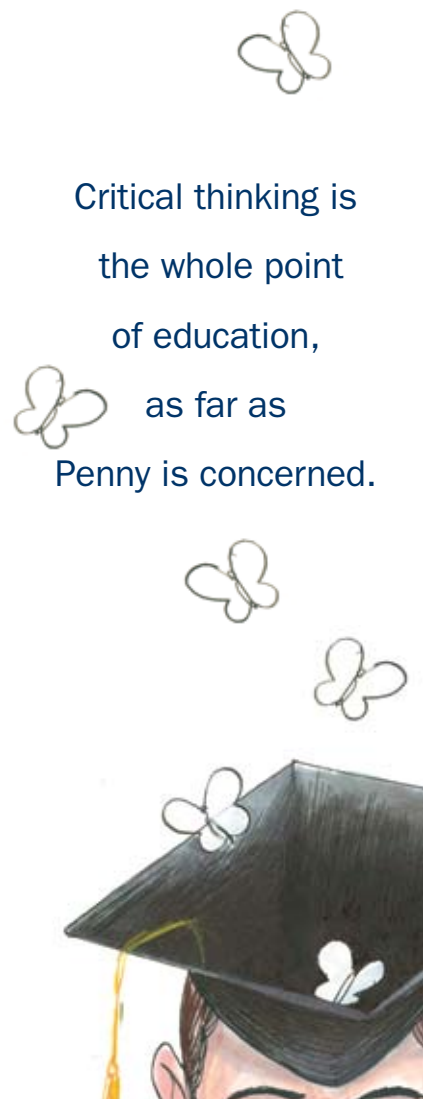
Penny offers some excellent insights. Students today, she says, consider school a game and “bray that they made it through the school system...without even reading a book.” Buying and stealing work is rampant in schools and universities, where at least some students would claim, “It’s not a crime until you get caught” and where educators often require that work be scanned by software to detect these illicit borrowings. Students, misunderstanding the meaning of the name they use for themselves, would rather be told facts they then regurgitate on a test than be asked to think. “Couldn’t you just tell us what the poems and novels mean, then test us?” she paraphrases their plea.

Critical thinking is the whole point of education, as far as Penny is concerned. Students’ unwillingness to engage in this practice is a significant problem for schools and our culture. Anyone familiar with current pedagogy and Ontario’s Achievement Charts would be shocked by students’ requests for lectures rather than activities that require their participation. To spoon-feed students the answers would result in moving all learning out of the thinking category and dooming all students to a Level 3 at the very best. The basest form of the quantification of education appears as the mere granting of credits without significant learning. However, bucking the trend of giving credits, rather than calculating earned credits, casts the teacher who requires original and quality work as a “potential impediment” to “success.”

Penny scrutinizes universities and colleges, too. She’d have the first educate, with the latter as training institutions. In fact, the training branches of universities today—the business schools and hospitality programs, for instance—

she finds better suited to a college. She wryly notes that the arts and humanities students, who are most often vilified by politicians and other instant experts, are in fact subsidizing the science programs that our society values so highly.

Penny’s prescription for education: national standards, more learning, “texts instead of tests” and teachers who truly have a passion for the subject they teach. She speaks out against the trend



to praise teachers whose major focus is on the socialization of the students and who allow students to proceed to a higher grade whether they are equipped to do so or not. By contrast, the committed teacher, Penny says, is like the pool instructor who, when faced with a parent who argued a child should move up to the next level of swimming, despite being unable to stay afloat, responded

trenchantly, “We don’t put them in the deep end unless they can swim.”

Penny would like honesty about the results of such international tests such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), which penalize jurisdictions that retain students rather than allowing them to drop out of school and miss the test. In Canada, Alberta’s voracious oil-patch appetite for labour skews results heavily. Students can drop out but still get good work. As a result, those students are not taking the tests and therefore Alberta’s results are artificially high. Compared to a province like Ontario, where huge job losses in industry have resulted in a dearth of employment opportunities and where the Ministry of Education has legislated education to age 18, many more students are in school and therefore taking the tests. As such, there is a wider range of results and thus a massive bias in the data between the two provinces.

Penny also takes a run at the General Educational Development (GED) tests, the high school equivalency offered to high school drop-outs. She doesn’t speculate on whether its existence encourages high school students to drop out, but instead notes that in pursuit of this “credential,” students “log less class time and test their way to a diploma,” resulting in them doing “about as well in the workplace as drop-outs.” Those institutions that offer GEDs, according to Penny’s argument, are little more than dubious diploma mills who bilk students of their money for little of value.

Penny can sling an epithet with the best of them. Better still, she brings insight to purpose of education. Inspired by her favourite philosopher, Immanuel Kant, she’d like to see some clear categories, broad knowledge and critical thinking. “The last thing I want to see in a paper,” she says, “is what I think.” This book may not be what you’d expect. It is, however, thought-provoking. ☺

**Bryan Smith** is a teacher and human rights activist at College Avenue Secondary School in District 11, Thames Valley.



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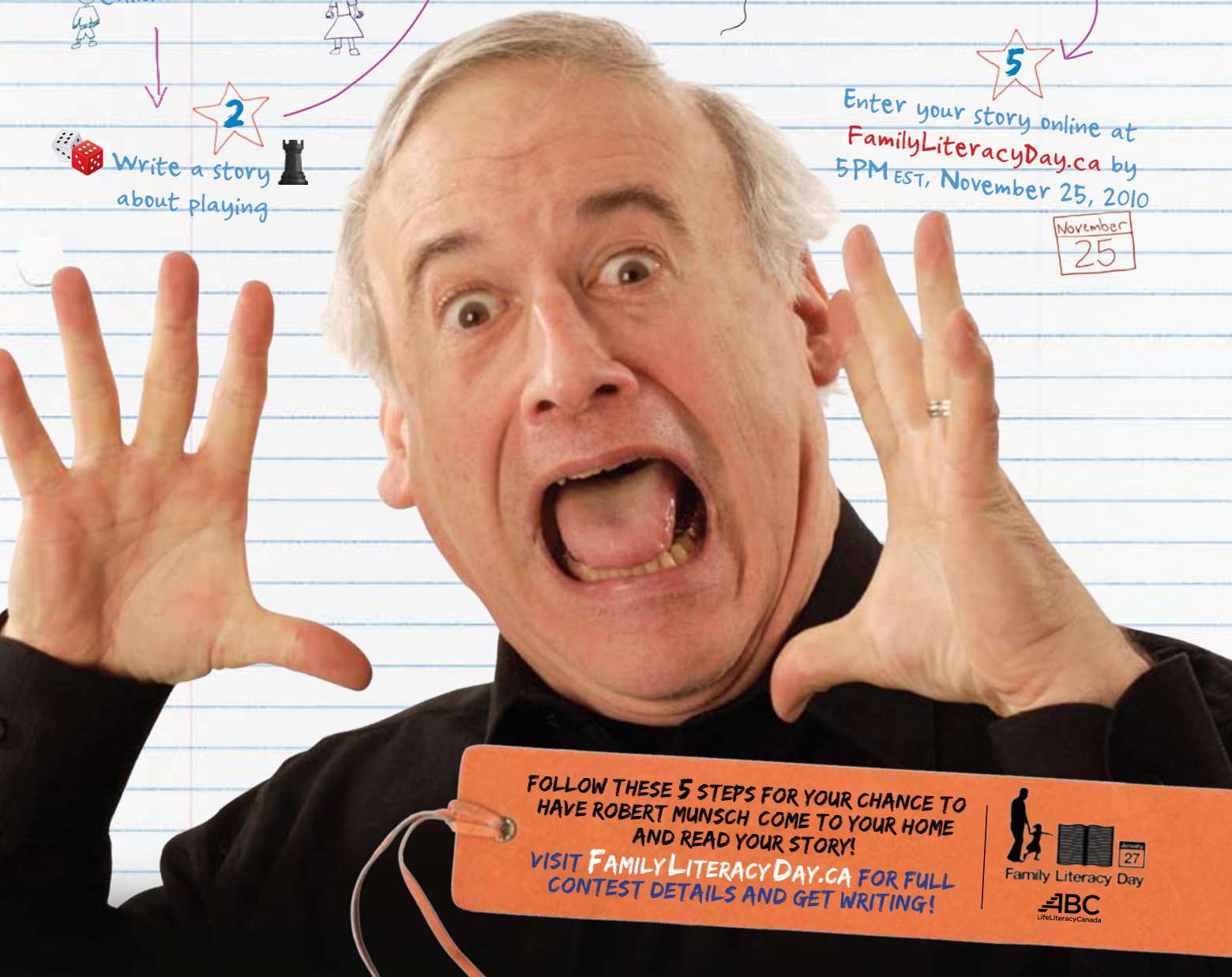
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November 25

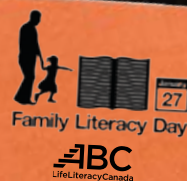
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SPECIAL THANKS TO EDUCATION FORUM







# A professional growth opportunity worth pursuing

A grass-roots approach that works

By Matt Armstrong

Three years ago my principal called me into her office. I wasn't scared...yet. But as a new department head at a new school, it was certainly possible that I had messed up and needed some on-the-job training.

"Matt," she said, "how would you like to write a proposal for a Ministry of Education program called the TLLP? There is lots of money attached to this initiative."

I didn't know what the TLLP was, but I also didn't know if I should know what it was. Better to keep a poker face, I thought, and see if she'll play her hand first.

"Sounds interesting," I said

neutrally. "How much money can we get?"

"Well, that depends on your proposal. Do you know what the TLLP is?" she asked.

Busted. "Not exactly, no," I said.

"Let me fill you in on this exciting new program," my principal said, "and then we can talk about your proposal." So she told me. Thank goodness, too, because the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program, or TLLP, has directly led to some phenomenal opportunities for personal and professional growth that I consider to be the most invaluable of my career.

### WHAT IS THE TLLP?

The TLLP offers experienced teachers an opportunity to get funding (usually somewhere between \$1,000 and \$10,000) for project-based professional learning. The TLLP allows teachers to engage in personally selected advanced professional learning, and then to share that learning. Put plainly, it is teachers (and, depending on the project, educational workers) leading their colleagues

is the kind of teacher who continually refines her own teaching practice. She's probably taught *Macbeth* a dozen times, but I'll wager she's never taught it the same way twice because she is always finding a better way to do it the next time. Anne is the unassuming, quiet professional, the teaching equivalent of a shot-blocking defenceman in the NHL playoffs who gets little credit but has a lot to do with a team's success.

end, they had created a piece of visual media based on their chosen graphic text. Finally, all students in class host a book-club talk, using both their poster board and their graphic novel. The beauty is that no two students read the same text, so each student would be the only expert in the room on his or her chosen title.

The benefits of Heather's brilliant project are several. The graphic novel project is both rigorous and fun, meaning teachers and students alike enjoy the time and effort spent on this summative task. It builds in differentiation by allowing students to choose an appropriately challenging text that is also of personal interest to them. The wide variety of available titles allows students born outside Canada to see themselves and their cultures represented in the graphic novels they choose to read. The project also effectively covers all four strands in the English curriculum, as students must demonstrate reading, writing, oral communication and media literacy skills.

Students routinely comment that this is the most interesting and most useful part of the course. The fact that all students tend to complete this task by the appointed due date, that attendance in class is excellent throughout the summative work periods and that engagement levels are high support this claim. It's refreshing when no student in class asks the dreaded "Why are we doing this?" question.

Our TLLP group created a graphic novel binder, including an original graphic text written by an Adult High School student, and we had our board's printing services department make several dozen copies of this binder. With the help of Elaine Rose in Curriculum Services at the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB), we were able to host a workshop for secondary English and ESL teachers from each of the board's high school sites. Anne Doorly, an ESL specialist, created a modified graphic novel project that is suitable for ESL students. (It bears mentioning that this additional support provided by the OCDSB was above and beyond



in meaningful professional development. The leadership model espoused by the TLLP is also the polar opposite of the usual top-down approach that has a tendency to rub like sandpaper. Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that this program has been so successful.

### OUR GROUP'S TLLP PROJECT

I count myself as fortunate in many ways, and none was more evident than in my first semester as a Department Head at Adult High School in Ottawa. I was, quite literally, surrounded by brilliant teachers, and my new colleagues helped and supported me through many challenges. Two of these colleagues, Heather Spence and Anne Doorly, graciously allowed me to join with them in writing a proposal for a TLLP project. Heather

We decided to write a proposal tied into a classroom project on graphic novels that Heather had developed as a summative performance task for her ENG2P students. With teacher guidance, students select a graphic novel either from our school's library or from the public library and read it. Next, students complete a series of writing tasks, including a summary, a review, a character sketch, a synopsis and a warnings section based on mature themes or content present in their respective texts. Students then type, print and glue their completed writing tasks to a poster board. Next, they add all kinds of artistic decorations and eye-catching pictures from their graphic novels (colour photocopies) to the poster boards so that, by the



our TLLP funding. We were fortunate enough to receive it in part because our group's objectives were closely linked to the board's objectives in terms of promoting literacy for at-risk learners. You never know where unexpected help may come from.)

At the board-sponsored workshop, participants received their own graphic novel binder with ready-to-go reproducible as well as a poster board of a completed project to use as an exemplar in their own school. Our objective was to give teachers not just the theory behind using graphic texts—which, by the way, suggests quite convincingly that graphic texts can be used to help turn reluctant readers into engaged, proficient readers—but to provide educators with practical, classroom-tested materials that could be implemented immediately upon returning to their schools.

Our TLLP proposal also included release time for visiting other schools, and we were able to visit with other English and ESL teams at their department meetings to provide further support for the implementation of the graphic novel project. Time is often the scarcest resource in a person's life, so it was a treat to be able to provide ourselves with the release time in order to see our project through to fruition. We didn't need to beg our principal for a day off—we had that time provided by the Ministry of Education through our TLLP grant. It wasn't stressful having to present to other teachers; rather, it was fun, because we budgeted for and received the much-needed release time to prepare for and deliver effective workshops.

#### TECHNOLOGY AND THE GRAPHIC TEXT

One challenge we had to face was how best to incorporate technology into our graphic novel project. Fortunately, there are fun, user-friendly software packages out there—Comic Life and Bitstrips are two excellent examples—that enable teachers and students to create their own graphic texts.

The OCDSB purchased a licence for Comic Life ([www.comiclife.com](http://www.comiclife.com)) so all networked computers could install the software. This program is extremely

easy to use, even for technology neophytes. At Adult High School, we have many students who are new to Canada and have had very few opportunities to use a computer. Comic Life has proven to be a hit with our students due to the ease with which they can get up to speed. It really is as simple as uploading some images and selecting a background or layout, and then students are ready to create their own comic.

#### FINAL REFLECTIONS ON THE TLLP EXPERIENCE

Water-cooler talk can sometimes take the form of criticism of the “powers that be” in education. I understand that; the system isn't perfect. However, as a teacher in a publicly funded school in Ontario, I know I am extremely fortunate to have had the opportunity to be a part of the Teacher Learning and Leadership Program.

#### How can I learn more about the TLLP?

The best place to learn more about the TLLP is its website: [www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/tllp.html). There you will find the program overview, guidelines and FAQs, as well as a search engine containing an archive of projects completed by teachers across the province. The list of projects is quite impressive, covering a wide variety of themes ranging from technology to students with special needs, and from media literacy to gender-based learning. Contact information for each of the project leads is provided to facilitate communication between teachers. If you have an idea for a project of your own, there is information on the application process as well as sample application forms. Essentially, the website is one-stop online shopping for all matters TLLP, and it is a great place to begin if you want to learn more about this terrific program.

**Editor's Note:** TLLP proposal selection at both the board and provincial levels is done by committees that must include Federation representation. Each board selects two proposals that are sent on to the provincial level, where final selection is done. The due date for eligible teachers to submit a TLLP application for 2010-2011 to the Director of their district school board is November 12, 2010.

Bitstrips for Schools ([www.bitstripsforschools.com](http://www.bitstripsforschools.com)) has been licensed to all publicly funded schools in Ontario. This site allows teachers to set up a virtual classroom specifically for their own students, and to keep that classroom secure. Teachers can assign students some of the activities that already exist at the site; there are dozens and dozens of different activities to choose from, and themes range from the arts to social studies to literacy. Students can also create their own comic strips, both of which are fun and easy to do, and then share these creations with their classmates. Like Comic Life, Bitstrips has made it easy to create a comic regardless of one's ability to draw.

This type of groundbreaking program just doesn't exist elsewhere. If there are other educational institutions putting hundreds of thousands of dollars into professional development that is researched, designed and delivered by classroom teachers, then I must have missed that headline. We, the teachers in Ontario, are the envy of educators in other provinces and countries. We are the beneficiaries of some very forward-thinking people at the Ministry of Education. My suggestion would be to take advantage of this opportunity and submit your own TLLP proposal. I am very happy that my principal encouraged me to do so. ☺

**Matt Armstrong** is a teacher at Adult High School in District 25, Ottawa-Carleton.







## Teaching & Learning in

# NAMIBIA

A volunteer experience of a lifetime By Cameron Douglas

“Please wait—I want to get out my best teaching resource before you take the photo.” So said Principal Mr. Mathews before we took his photo with his students at Tare Junior Primary School in northern Namibia. Mr. Mathews then went into his stick and thatch classroom and came out with a piece of flip chart paper with the days of the week written on it in the local language, and fastened it to the stand in front of his 12 Grade 1 and 2 students, who sat on logs placed in the sand. Tare Primary School does not have desks or chairs, nor does it have a blackboard or sports equipment. Electricity is 25 km away. Students share pencils. Mr. Mathews is the only teacher and professional in the village, and his family lives 650 km away. Upon arriving in the village to begin teaching, his first task was to build his own house out of sticks, mud and thatch. Nevertheless, Mr. Mathews shows up for work in pants, shirt, tie and dress shoes.

Finding teachers who are working against extraordinary odds became rather commonplace for me, my wife Yvonne and our daughter Kaia (nine) and son Jake (seven). Yvonne and I had been accepted by Canadian University Service Overseas-Voluntary Service Overseas (CUSO-VSO; [www.cuso-vso.org](http://www.cuso-vso.org)) to teach and to teacher-train in the Mpungu “circuit” of the Kavango region in northern Namibia in south-western Africa. We had decided to share one volunteer position so we could be available for our children if things did not work out at the local school they would attend. We were based in the village of Mpungu and did most of our work at Himarwa Iithete Senior Secondary School. We also worked for one or two days a week with teachers and students at other schools within an 80 km radius of our village. Ninety per cent of our 450 students at Himarwa lived in the school dormitory because their home villages were up to 50 km distant.

Jake, Kaia and  
Yvonne atop the dunes at  
Sosusvlei, Namibia (top)  
and teaching “I am sleepy”  
to the Grade 4 class at  
Simanya Combined  
School (left)



Namibia had been under the control of the apartheid regime of South Africa until it fought for and finally gained independence in 1990. The country has the dubious honour of ranking No. 1 on the United Nations' index that measures the gap between the richest and poorest citizens of a country. The new government rejected Afrikaans as the language of the oppressor in favour of English as the new country's official language and the language of school instruction. However, this presented enormous challenges for the school system because virtually none of the students and few teachers spoke English.

Fast forward 20 years and I find myself trying to explain electromagnetic induction to my Grade 12 physical science class and I see 25 blank stares coming back at me. Challenging concepts in physics are not the main problem. Poor comprehension of spoken and written English most certainly is.

Students in Grades 10 and 12 must write and pass standardized national exams in order to proceed with their education. Success rates at the schools we worked at are only about 20 per cent, so there is, understandably, a considerable amount of attention and pressure on the superintendents, principals and especially teachers to improve results. Our principal relentlessly told teachers they needed to work harder and longer. Weekend and holiday classes were instituted without discussion with teachers (they had a very weak union). In addition, the teachers' capacity to teach effectively was often limited by their own understanding of their subject area and by the lack of student-centered methodology and modelling presented during their teacher training programs. Most lessons involved only chalk, blackboards and lengthy notes copied out of teacher resource books.

I co-taught senior physical science with Rauha Homateni who, until that point, was trained only for the junior level of that subject. Ms. Homateni (colleagues addressed each other this way) was a bright teacher with about 10 years' experience who jumped at any opportunity to broaden her understanding of her

subject. She embraced the science lab and computer training that Yvonne and I offered to the teachers. In return, she lent us her "eyes," which allowed us to look more deeply at the culture that surrounded us. She explained family, village and national politics, provided insight into the basic challenges of being a teenager in rural Namibia and helped us manage our extensive garden. Yvonne co-taught senior mathematics with Carolyn George who, like Ms. Homateni, was dedicated but

MANY OF OUR  
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struggled with some of the subject material in her syllabus.

Many of our teaching rewards and challenges were found outside these day-to-day responsibilities. We did basic observation/recommendations and provided weekly computer training to teachers in four different schools. Many of these teachers had never set hand on a mouse before. But the rollout of computer labs in the region had begun, and we wanted teachers to be in a position to help their students make use of them.

I set up a 10-computer lab in a teacher resource centre in our village where primary teachers were beginning to come for training, and I also updated and maintained the labs in the other three schools. I worked very closely with our junior-level geography teacher, Mr. Sachuma, to bring the regional geography curriculum to life through digital photos and hands-on mapping. I created an extensive PowerPoint program featuring the country's physiographic and vegeta-

tion regions, mountains, rivers, resources and tourism sites. Mr. Sachuma had his students collect and combine clay from the valley with the ample sand found everywhere in Namibia to create a very large 3-D, labelled map of Namibia. He was thrilled with the results. Together, we then ran a day-long workshop for all geography teachers in the region to share some of these successes. At this workshop I introduced the teachers to an extensive geography video library I had built up and to a fantastic computer-based teaching/learning resource I had found in the software installed in the new labs.

With financial help from my school in Peterborough, Ontario, I helped my Grade 11 and 12 students construct a large solar oven and a solar hot-water heater. Most students apparently had never had the opportunity to use a screwdriver or handsaw, and they lined up for their turn to rip a 2.5-metre piece of 7/8" plywood with a dull saw (I willingly stepped aside!). Imagine, then, how their faces lit up when presented with the chance to hold a soldering torch, electric drill and especially an angle grinder, which sent sparks in all directions! I was thrilled when, three weeks into the project, all my female students showed up to join in. I had to push the boys aside to let the girls near the power tools, but they ended up making their share of sparks. The solar oven worked beautifully and cooked the bread that Yvonne made daily. Ms. Homateni will use it with her classes to come.

Kaia and Jake attended Mpungu Primary School, which shared a fence with our house—we could look out our window and see into their classroom. They were the first white children ever seen by most of their schoolmates. We were anxious to see what they were learning, not because we were worried about them falling behind their classmates back in Peterborough, but because we were interested in understanding how teaching and learning at this level played out. Their teacher, Mr. Handiba, was a gentle, caring young man with a huge smile, but he was the first to admit he had no idea how to teach English, math or any other subject to his 40 students who, starting in Grade 4, spoke not a word of English (except to utter the word "IAmFine-





HowAreYou” to the new white faces in town, without any idea what it meant). In the absence of any better strategy, he copied long excerpts out of the syllabus onto the chalk board and then waited the 20 to 30 minutes it took for the students to copy these incomprehensible words down. What does a Grade 4 student do with the words “infrastructure” and “strategies for economic development” when they can’t say or understand “the book is on the table”?

Kaia and Jake had by this point become our computer lab assistants. They were happy to help with mouse clicks and retrieving deleted text, and the teachers were amused and often impressed by their confidence. Children in this traditional, rural area of Namibia learned to respect age and authority at all times (no need for classroom management!) and not to talk when among adults unless called upon. It was excruciating as teachers to get them to respond to oral questioning—especial-

Life was simple in Mpungu, but the setting provided us with quality family time. We ate three meals together every day. We shared our triumphs and frustrations. We laughed a lot. I had told the kids before we left Canada that they would almost certainly beg to come home at some point during the year. I was wrong. They returned home to Canada willingly, but they were never anxious to go back. Both have grown up in ways that I am still discovering. Their biggest disappointment



PHOTO: CAMERON DOUGLAS

The Douglas family on the brink of Namibia’s Fish River Canyon, second only to the Grand Canyon in depth

Yvonne could only watch this for so long before she sprang into action, with a new purpose to her life in Namibia. Outside of her responsibilities training math teachers, she devoted her time to working with Grade 3 to 7 teachers, helping them with teaching methodologies. She is a French teacher in Peterborough and an advocate of the “gesture approach” (pioneered by Canadian teacher Wendy Maxwell) to second-language instruction. We would arrive at a new school and after brief introductions, she, with help from Kaia and Jake, would have between 10 and 50 students in a classroom standing, talking and gesturing such things as “I am happy” and “the book is under the chair.”

This culminated in her leading a two-day-long workshop for her “converts” where they looked a little deeper into the pedagogy of the gesture approach, shared resources, learned games and developed classroom materials in the computer lab.

ly the girls. So imagine their reaction to a seven- and nine-year-old who were only too happy to strike up conversations and help problem-solve in the classrooms!

Namibia is a land of stunning but stark beauty, and we made the most of teachers’ 10 weeks per year holidays. We had purchased a Toyota 4x4 upon arrival, and managed to explore the far reaches of the country and many parts of neighbouring Botswana. But our favourite adventures played out in the many wildlife parks. At one point we were literally surrounded by 30 elephants, including a baby no more than half a metre tall. We took two of our senior students with us to Etosha National Park on our last weekend. They had never seen wildlife before, and were as much in awe as we were when we watched the spectacle of about 500 zebras, oryx, springbok, giraffe, elephants, rhinoceros and others jostling for drinking rights at a water hole.

was their difficulty in forging meaningful friendships with their peers—the language gap was too great to be surmounted in a one-year stay.

I have returned to Peterborough Collegiate & Vocational School but I suspect I will feel quite alone without my teaching partner, Ms. Homateni, beside me. I really miss my colleague friends in Mpungu. I will be surprised when the girls put up their hands and confidently answer my questions. It will seem rather indulgent to turn on the new Smart Board in my classroom. I hope my students forgive me if I seem a little distant, with glazed-over eyes that are seeing not their faces but instead, those of 35 brown faces smiling back. In every respect, it was a brilliant year. ☺

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**Cameron Douglas** is a teacher at Peterborough Collegiate & Vocational School in District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge.









# management over

# VISION

English under siege By Ken Draayer

The Harris government's educational reforms were an astounding "shock and awe" assault on schools and teachers, and were well documented in John Ibbitson's *Promised Land: Inside the Mike Harris Revolution* (1997). The neo-conservative movement in the late '80s and the '90s shifted all political party decisions about the delivery of government services sharply to the right. The Harris team moved quickly to centralize decisions and funding, to rewrite curriculum and to establish language testing as a condition of graduation. The new standards in every subject area consisted of dozens upon dozens of course content statements defining exactly what students were supposed to know and be able to do. They were central to the reform and made teaching look like the footprints painted on the floor of an Arthur Murray dance studio, circa 1950.

Ontario education was swiftly transformed into a corporate business, and together with the new curriculum, this had profound implications for English. In *Voltaire's Bastards: The Dictatorship of Reason in the West* (1992), John Ralston Saul describes the intellectual pedigree of those who conceive of learning as a measurable phenomenon, and whose rational excesses give it such precise and analytical packaging. He traces the rise, since the Age of Reason, of a "corporatist" culture with an ideological fervour and a misguided sense that reason—"which is no more than structure"—can solve all problems. That corporatist culture is led by a class of managers and technocrats devoted to the

NO ASSESSMENT OF THE MARGINALIZED ROLE OF THE HUMANITIES TODAY IS POSSIBLE WITHOUT FIRST ADMITTING THE COMPLICITY OF THOSE IN THE FOLD. OUT-MANNED, OUT-FUNDED, PERPETUALLY ON THE DEFENSIVE, WE'VE ADAPTED TO THE HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT BY EMBRACING A NUMBER OF SURVIVAL STRATEGIES, AMONG THEM CAMOUFLAGE, MIMICRY, AND—ALTOGETHER TOO BELIEVABLY—PLAYING DEAD.

MARK SLOUKA, "DEHUMANIZED: WHEN MATH AND SCIENCE RULE THE SCHOOL"

social sciences, who thrive on data, achieve a "heroic" status through quick and efficient problem solving and whose measurement of quality reduces it to quantities.

Ibbitson describes the Harris ideologues in action:

"The small group of friends who had helped Harris win the leadership...would be the new premier's trusted advisers....They were devoutly neo-conservative...would give the government the air of cohesion and competence it enjoyed from its opening days [but]...would also, in their more strident moments, convey the sense of ideological fervour, of harshness, of lack of compassion or forethought, that would darken the government's record and alienate some of its core supporters."

Writing in the September 2009 issue of *Harper's*, Mark Slouka's article, "Dehumanized: When math and science rule the school," describes the transformation in values wrought by a market economy view of education:

"...by bringing education to heel, by forcing it to meet its criteria for 'success,' the market is well on the way to controlling a majority share of the one business that might offer a competing product, that might question its assumptions. It's a neat trick. The problem, of course, is that by its success we are made vulnerable. By downsizing what is most dangerous (and most essential) about our education, namely the deep civic function of the arts and the humanities, we're well on the way to producing a...world made safe for commerce, but not safe."



A corporate vision specifically for English was expressed in a 1994 article by Dr. Willard Daggett. The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) Speakers Bureau website says: “Dr. Willard Daggett, president of the International Center for Leadership in Education, is recognized worldwide for his proven ability to move education systems towards more rigorous and relevant skills and knowledge for all students.” Dr. Daggett founded the International Center for Leadership in Education in 1991, and was “the creator of the Application Model, a practical planning and instructional tool for determining the relevance of curriculum and assessment to real-world situations.”

Notice the emphasis on Dr. Daggett’s almost heroic managerial powers to move entire systems towards so-called enlightenment. Notice, too, that as a manager his heroics were based on models and tools. Sounds very much like one of Saul’s technocrats. Here’s what Dr. Daggett had to say about English as a subject in “Today’s Students, Yesterday’s Schooling,” published in the June 1994 issue of *The Executive Educator*:

“[Everyone] must share the responsibility for teaching students to read, write, speak, and listen....What’s left for the English teacher? Literature, of course, which—like the fine arts—is an important part of any child’s educational experience. [But]...once students leave school, reading and writing for personal response will be the skill they use least. Except in their leisure time. In other words, what we teach the most of now (how many schools don’t require three or four years of English?) is what students will use least.”

Dr. Daggett’s neat split between English literature and literacy is part of the fundamentalist reform, as well as about standardization and measurement.

Industrial standardization begins with things like nuts and bolts. If I want to replace some plumbing hose in my sailboat, I depend on the fact that the hose from China will fit the brass fittings from Mexico. In plumbing, standardization has a clear value, but the story of its spread in the 20th century is an expanding one that doesn’t stick to nuts and bolts. Stan-

dardization began in the West in the early part of the 20th century and received a big boost after each of the two world wars, culminating in the formation of the now enormous International Standards Organization (ISO), from which model educational standards have devolved.

Admittedly, the same problem of inconsistencies that frustrates plumbers has also come up in standards in education. For years before the reform, universities

denly, we became like plumbing hose. When you make things measurable, you have to change their nature to suit the measurements. And ergo, what you can’t measure doesn’t matter.

I was part of the writing team for the new English standards (“expectations” in Ontario). The “vision” was to take all that could be learned in English and parcel it out according to some sense of the scope of that learning, and the sequence in which the writers thought the learning should occur—as though all that can be known or learned in an English classroom can be defined by, and confined to, a number of standard statements for a course.

It seems to me there is enormous hubris in this. If there was ever a time for us to know what we didn’t know, it was then. But we wrote the standards very dutifully, according to the tendered contract (posted on MERX, the government website requesting quotations for all contracted services—plumbing comes to mind) and in the allotted time. Cajoled and coerced along the way, there were those of us who were awkward in the writing of these hundreds of statements that had to begin with measurable verbs, and which began to sound quite ridiculous, repetitive and without human value.

In constructing the new English standards, there was an audacious attempt to reinvent and reduce the subject. What once we felt we owned and gave shape to was now in the hands of provincial managers and accountants. How did this happen?

The Ontario Council of Teachers of English (OCTECLA) imploded in 1994 after clashes within the executive. English remains the only subject in the province without the voice of a provincial teacher organization. The views of consulting staff for English were also diminished by government management decisions. Harris amalgamated boards and slashed budgets, resulting in endless rounds of reshuffling of central office personnel that left many boards without an English consultant. Meetings of the provincial English consultant’s organization, the English Language Arts Network (ELAN), were increasingly attended by consultants with amalgamated responsibilities (some as odd as English, French and Phys Ed).

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and colleges in Ontario were frustrated by variations in high school teacher-based marks on which they tried to base admissions. Theirs was a statistical problem. They wanted to correlate marks from high schools with student success rates in first year university and college. They needed to know that an 80 represented the same achievement in school A as it did in school B. But it didn’t. Managers of the corporate educational system needed a solution, and decided to implement one in the secondary schools by introducing standards and policies that would produce such consistencies. Sud-

Further loss of leadership in the subject occurred at the school level where, with reduced finances, boards began to take a look at headships. What the reforms wrought was a choice between retaining headships (but without either the time or monetary incentive to do the leadership work) or the creation of what were called “umbrella” headships covering a basket of subjects. The end result of all this was that throughout the system, from school to provincial organizations, the possibilities for dissent were greatly reduced.

And so as quickly as you can say “Dr. Daggett,” English became cordoned off from literacy. There was a kind of duplicity in the Ontario Ministry’s insistence, as it developed the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) and the literacy test, that this would not be a test of “English.” There was a sigh of relief among English teachers, who felt they were appropriately off the hook, in part because the test mainly measured ability acquired during the previous eight years in the elementary system.

But there was a trade-off. While we were off the hook for test results, we had surrendered “literacy” to the education corporation for its own purposes.

Then the money began to flow. “The government is continuing to improve literacy and numeracy through an additional investment of \$8-million in 2008-09, bringing the total annual investment to \$65-million” (2008 Ontario Budget). The EQAO has a \$15-million annual budget to conduct its operations. Local boards, wanting a piece of this pie, are keen on literacy projects, and need people to develop and run them. Those long-ago English consultants are now by default, if not by an actual change in title, Literacy Consultants. Both secondary and elementary schools have to set targets for improved test scores, creating additional pressure for central office to establish a literacy consultant, not to mention pressure at the classroom level to incorporate literacy, to the point that literacy committees, mock tests, test preparation curricula, literacy courses and school targets have

all become standard features of secondary school culture. English professional development focuses a great deal on literacy skills, strategies and assessment.

We need to revive democratic discussion of this new state of our subject, to reassert our collective voice and to reclaim the term “literacy” to embrace personal and cultural understanding, as well as visual and written language that serves the human desire for imaginative experience (central to authentic change). Those who question why we would ever subject students to the study of poetry (and can’t see how to measure the experience) now own the podium and create the context for the diminution of education and of our subject. Judging from the shape of “reformed” English curriculum across the country, we have a national issue. ☹

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**Ken Draayer** is a retired English teacher and consultant from District 22, Niagara. He still teaches Additional Qualifications courses at Brock University.



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# A worrying trend

Does the focus on underachieving students disadvantage others?

By Adam Mercer

“Our best students will learn in spite of the teacher” was a statement often made by an administrator I met early in my career, but it is a sentiment that seems to be pervasive in education in Ontario, and we have to stop it. The leaders of tomorrow are going to come from the top-level academic kids whom we see in our classes, and we are doing less and less for them while we do more and more for the kids at the bottom end of the ability continuum. Granted there will be exceptions to that generalization, but by and large, I think most people would agree that our future leaders are not the kids who are so determined to flunk out that even the money we throw at them cannot stop failure from happening.

Let’s turn the thinking on its head and approach it from the other way around and say, “Our worst students will fail in spite of any effort we make.” It might sound harsh, but is it really any more ridiculous than the idea that our best kids are somehow not deserving of our efforts? In other words, the effort required to push them harder, to make them better and therefore more prepared for the challenges of university and ultimately life beyond that.

Lee Iacocca wrote a book in 2007 called *Where Have All the Leaders Gone?*

It was a valid question, but my greatest fear is that in the future, we will all be asking, “Why did we not make any great leaders?” I can imagine those of us who are just now moving into power positions in business and politics looking back in 10 or 15 years and wondering what we missed in terms of bringing up a generation behind us that is capable of taking up where we left off.

Statistically speaking, unless an intervention changes the numbers, about 30 per cent of the students who start out in Grade 9 will not graduate. There are a number of factors that contribute to this, and none of them is particularly pleasant: drugs, broken families, violence, gangs, addictions of all sorts, teen pregnancy and a litany of other factors combine to make it impossible for some kids to be successful in the school system. Apathy doesn’t help either.

Here in Ontario, the Liberal government has become fixated on that 30 per cent number and has tried to come up with all sorts of initiatives to combat it. In fact, the government website that deals with “Student Success/Learning to 18” specifically points out that between the 2003-2004 school year and the current one, the graduation rate has increased from 68 per cent to 79 per cent.

ILLUSTRATION: TRACY WALKER







The site additionally states that the provincial Ministry of Education's goal is a graduation rate of 85 per cent. This is a laudable goal, and nobody in education or anywhere else wants to write off a child who finds learning difficult. Yes, we should and must do what we can to help them, but at some point is it not also prudent to accept that fact that throwing money and new programs at the problem is not the whole answer? Especially when we are at the point where those programs are rolled out at the expense of those at the other end of the continuum from which our future leaders will come?

The reasons for pouring money into the lower strata of student achievers is right there on the website as well. The government cites the loss of wages to those

order to graduate with their peer group; the Ontario Literacy Course is offered for students who are not successful with the literacy test. This list is incomplete, but it should give a sense of how much time, money and effort is being put forward to help the lower academic achiever to graduate.

But there is more. The ministry has also spent huge amounts of money to specifically target particular groups or interests. For instance, under "Aboriginal Education Strategy" on its website, the government is currently boasting that there are 10 courses offered in the Ontario curriculum that deal specifically with Native Studies. Again, Native Canadians are a group that has faced and continues to face

like many of the others that have been mentioned—it does seem to play to a political agenda rather than looking to meet the needs of academic rigor that would make our best kids even better. Again, it is not so much that the government is trying to get the education system to deal with all these issues as it is that they are doing so at the expense of our future leaders. Should our future leaders be sensitive to gender issues? Yes, but is there not a better way? Or, at the very least, could we not try to get that same lack of bias in our curriculum by ensuring that even our future leaders have courses that will help them develop intellectually too?

Clearly the plan is to reach out to the students who have the hardest time being successful in our school system, but what about those other kids, the ones who are at the top end and consistently get grades in the 90s? What are we doing to push the kids who actually buy in to the education system, work hard, study, do homework and read some things on their own that are not just the popular novels of the day?

There is a gifted program offered for students who are intellectually ahead of their peers. Generally speaking, the students in the gifted program are identified as gifted in a formal process that can take years to complete. Identifying gifted students is not a high priority, though. There is the sense that the need is to reach the kids who are struggling and might need assistive technology or other help just to make 50 per cent. Quite often the gifted student is identified by a private consultant at the cost to the parents.

In addition, there are other options out there for students who are at the high end in terms of their intellectual development, in that we offer Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) programs. Universities give successful AP and IB students a bit of an edge over the kids who graduate from Ontario high schools without them. Both programs tend to treat Grade 12 students as if they are already in their first year of university and as a result, push students to do more. However, both of these programs were developed outside Canada, which can make it difficult to win



What are we doing to push the kids who actually buy in to the education system...?

who drop out before graduating, the cost to social assistance programs and the high number of non-graduates who are represented in the prison population. Has it occurred to anyone that the habits that have put these people in prison are the habits that mitigated against their success in school, and no matter how much money you allocate to programs for them, they are still going to engage in those activities?

So how is the government spending tax dollars in order to improve education for the students who are not considered academically successful? The list is long and varied. Specialist High Skills Majors allow kids to focus on a career, earning more credits and getting workplace experience; Cooperative Education programs have grown to allow multiple credits from work placements; E-learning allows kids to learn at home at their own pace; dual credits allow kids to earn high school and college credits at the same time; credit rescue and credit recovery courses allow students to regain lost credits and time in

significant challenges in their communities, and I do not begrudge them an opportunity to learn about their own past, tradition and languages. It is interesting to note, however, that the public education system has endeavored to keep other groups from doing exactly the same thing with regard to their religion, culture and heritage—but that is another article entirely.

The most interesting aspect of this new strategy was that, for a time, the government offered pay for this program in any school in Ontario if as few as eight students signed up to take the course. In a school like mine, with one student who self-identifies as being Native, this expense seems a little extravagant.

At the beginning of the next school year the government will have curriculum in place for a course in Gender Studies, which will also highlight a specific group/issue. As much as this course is unlikely to be one geared to the struggling or unsuccessful student—un-



acceptance, and the way we semester classes can make these programs difficult to run. Plus these programs are not universally available, and the schools that offer them are required to provide some proof that they are teaching to a curriculum that is well over and above what typical Grade 12 students are getting.

To summarize briefly: The government is willing to provide staff and development funding to 11 programs aimed specifically at helping students who are at the lower end of the achievement spectrum. In addition, there are 10 courses open to those who want to take Native Studies, and the offer was on the table to fund those courses, even if they are patently undersubscribed, as opposed to any other elective course. The government is also looking at Gender Studies and probably several other programs that target specific groups or causes. The balance to that is supposed to be the gifted program or possibly AP and IB programs. Meanwhile, the ratio of programs

for those students who do poorly to those who do well is something on the order of 7:1, depending on how you count it.

For me, the strangest part of the research process for this article was that, for the most part, those who are developing the curriculum and driving the changes in the system used to be top-end achievers themselves. The same could be said of the legislators who set the big-picture policies. All of them are rapidly becoming fans of the “have-not” club. One has to ask what the reasoning is behind their seeming neglect of high-achieving students when they themselves were just that in their own school careers.

In the current climate, with enrollment dropping in many boards, non-compulsory courses are already starting to see significant cuts. That constriction is likely to continue into the foreseeable future, and we have to ask, “Which programs will be cut first?”

Hopefully someone will realize that kids who are intelligent, and driven and

will achieve great things deserve more than to be treated like they can teach themselves, with the corollary being that nobody cares what direction they take. What they do is important because it will impact our future in terms of leadership and standards.

“Our best students will learn in spite of the teacher”—or in spite of the minute efforts we are taking to push them to be more and do more.

If we do not address this issue, a well-known leader in the future will write a book condemning our shoddy efforts to ensure the leaders of their generation were encouraged to excel. That future writer will be upset that instead, we put forth incredible efforts to prepare kids who struggled but we ignored the kids who did well, and in so doing, doomed their generation to a standard of profound mediocrity. ☹

**Adam Mercer** is a teacher of history and geography in District 13, Durham.

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Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. receives support from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.



## Joy and beauty

**D**aniel Martin, an OSSTF/FEESO member in the Sudbury Student Services Consortium in District 3, Rainbow, is Québécois by birth but has lived in Ontario since 1967. Over the years, he has taken thousands of photographs as he hones his skills as an amateur photographer. Whether candid shots of people, close-ups of nature or sweeping landscapes, Daniel's photographs are diverse and breathtaking. Two of the photographs were taken during 1983 when Daniel spent the year in Cape Dorset on Baffin Island in the North West Territories; he had been hired by the West Baffin Eskimo Co-Op as the manager of the General Store. The other two photographs were taken at Lake Kagawong on Manitoulin Island, a popular holiday location. More of Daniel's photography can be viewed at his website galleries at [www.pbase.com/dansudbury](http://www.pbase.com/dansudbury). ☺

Clockwise from top left:  
Sauter avec des amis; L'été à  
Cape Dorset; Couché-de-soleil  
sur le lac Kagawong, île Manitou-  
lin Ontario; Belle enfant Inuit.









# A hangar full of history

The highlights of Toronto's and Canada's aviation accomplishments

The date is March 25, 1958. Emotions run high with excitement and pride as the first flight of an aircraft, considered by many to be the most advanced technical and aerodynamic achievement in Canadian aviation industry, takes off. The Avro CF-105 Arrow was designed and built in Malton by Avro Aircraft Limited (Canada) to serve the Royal Canadian Air Force. The goal is to prove the plane's ability to reach Mach 2 speeds at altitudes surpassing 15,000 metres in less than five minutes.

But the excitement of the test flights and the hope for the future of this amazing Canadian creation died just under a year later when, for political and financial reasons, John Diefenbaker's government announced the Arrow's cancellation on February 20, 1959. This date is marked by those in the aviation industry as "Black Friday."

The end of the CF-105 Arrow was also the end for approximately 14,500 Avro employees who were now out of work; another 15,000 outside sources were also affected with job losses. Sadly, although there was interest internationally in the Arrow and its high-powered Iroquois engine, nearly everything connected to this project was destroyed. The cockpit and nose gear of RL-206, the first Mk 2 Arrow, and two outer panels of RL-203's wings were saved and are on display at the Canada Aviation Museum in Ottawa, alongside an Iroquois engine.

There have been a few impressive replicas of the Arrow created, and one of them is featured at the Canadian AIR & SPACE Museum. The replica was built by volunteers with assistance from aerospace firms, and the landing gear was constructed by the original Arrow landing-gear sub-contractor, Messier-Dowty.



PHOTO: RONDA ALLAN

Detail of Avro Arrow Replica: full size, all metal  
Arrows flew faster 50 years ago than our CF-18 fighters can fly today







PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

Tiger Moth trainer, built in the museum building in 1942 to teach future Air Force pilots the basics of flying an airplane





PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE CANADIAN AIR & SPACE MUSEUM

Canadair Tutor, a type used by Snowbirds. This is a memorial, bearing the livery and numbers of the plane flown by Capt. Vandenbos of Whitby, who died in a training accident





The Canadian AIR & SPACE Museum was founded in 1997 and is housed in the original 1929 building of de Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd, the oldest surviving aircraft factory in Canada. The history of this Downsview factory has been varied, from using wood and fabric to manufacture open-cockpit planes in the 1920s to being part of creating space-age technology in the 1960s. At this site, engineers assembled and tested the first Canadian satellite, Alouette I, and the Beaver and Otter bush planes were conceived there. It was Toronto's air force base for 50 years. A better setting could not have been chosen for the Canadian AIR & SPACE Museum to showcase and honour Canada's success in aerospace science and technology.

Your visit to the museum will leave you and your students amazed and in awe of the artifacts and full-size aircraft on display. Along with the Avro CF-105 Arrow, the exhibition includes sport aircraft and trainers, piston engines and Toronto-made jet engines. As well, students can have access to flight-training simulators used in the 1940s and 1950s. A visitor can imagine the men and women who built the parts to create these massive flying machines, thanks to the museum's displays of the original shop equipment used to build 1,200 Curtiss JN-4 biplanes in 1917-18.

The museum has staff actively working on the restoration of aircraft. One of the more extensive projects is that of the Avro Lancaster bomber, which began in 1999 and is still in progress. This aircraft was on display near Toronto's waterfront, not far from the Canadian National Exhibition, for 36 years.

The Canadian AIR & SPACE Museum is dedicated to and focused on highlighting Canada's and Toronto's accomplishments and contributions to the aviation industry, and it has great plans for the future. Among them is creating a home for the Avro Arrow replica in the Avro Canada Gallery,

placing the Lancaster bomber in the Aviation of Defense Gallery and creating a classroom area known as the Science Flight Centre.

School tours can be customized to meet a variety of needs. The tours are created in conjunction with the Ministry of Education's Ontario curriculum. Headed up by the museum's Educational Director, John Harper, tours can be designed for students and

visitors based on a wide variety of subjects such as history, physics, engineering and many types of technical training. With aircraft simulators on site, students can also experience being in an actual aircraft.

For program dates or to book a customized tour, please contact John Harper, Educational Director, at 416-638-6078. You can also visit the museum online at [www.casmuseum.org](http://www.casmuseum.org). ☺



Silver Dart Replica, which flew at Baddeck, N.S. on the 100th anniversary of the first flight in the British Commonwealth



The Avro Lancaster Bomber's forward fuselage interior, built by Victory Aircraft at Malton (now Pearson) Airport in 1945

PHOTOS: RONDA ALLAN





# Keeping you in the loop

Reviews, conferences, PD opportunities and other items of interest

## BOOK REVIEWS

**Philosophy With Teenagers: Nurturing A Moral Imagination for the 21st Century**  
by Patricia Hannam and Eugenio Echeverria

Published by Network Continuum Education

208 pages, \$43.95

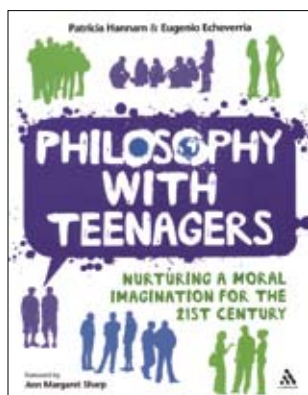
Reviewed by James Clyde

*Philosophy With Teenagers: Nurturing A Moral Imagination for the 21st Century* is not just a guide to introducing philosophy into the classroom and school but also an intricate, moral and reason-centered pedagogical approach to develop multi-layered thinking in students and address student apathy and disengagement. Divided into three sections, each dealing with various aspects of philosophy for children in the classroom, the book describes how to develop the skills that will bring the atmosphere in the school to a new level of thinking and comprehension.

In the first section, the authors consider the questions “What kind of society is desirable and what kinds of people should be coming out of our educational system?” The answer to both, they suggest, is a society of people with a keen ability to reason and resolve conflict and, ultimately, to develop skills for increased co-operation. They call this Philosophical Enquiry (PE). Insisting that students must project, comprehend and be able to manipulate various perspectives presented in discussion, the authors

suggest PE will allow for the development of richer engagement and supply necessary opportunities for students to adjust their initial perspectives. They quantify this ability through the underpinning of skills involved in four types of thinking: critical, creative, caring and collaborative.

Critical thinking is the ability to understand that each situation relies on new perspectives and approaches to make sense of a variety of circumstances. Creative thinking goes beyond what is already there; the student will weigh the rational and the emotional and decide on a balance that works for them.



Caring thinking is described as engaging in attentive listening and respecting various opposing opinions. It relies heavily upon empathetic approaches to the variety of perspectives found in most classrooms. Collaborative thinking, building on the other three kinds of thinking, uses a team approach to achieve a common goal and is aimed at developing and maintaining inclusive classroom atmospheres.

The second section of the book outlines various parenting styles and how they relate to individual identity development of students. It describes “authoritarian families” with clear, fixed rules; “inconsistent families” with strict rules and flexible decision-making often interchangeable; and “authoritative democratic families” that

allow for safe, secure surroundings with an emphasis on communication.

The final section of the book describes how to embed philosophical enquiry into secondary school life and includes examples for numerous subjects, as well as training needs for educators attempting to expand the realm of their subjects. This section is particularly valuable, with many ready-to-use applications for educators who want to implement some of these techniques.

*Philosophy With Teenagers* is worth reading for those interested in energizing their classroom, deepening the comprehension of their subject in concert with the student body and creating stronger citizens. ☺

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**James Clyde** is a teacher in District 3, Rainbow, and is the Chair of the provincial Human Rights Committee.

**Managing Very Challenging Behaviour, Second Edition**  
by Louisa Leaman

Published by Continuum International Publishing Group, 2009

144 pages, \$32.95

Reviewed by Matthew Gilbert

At one time or another, every teacher faces a classroom where a number of students exhibit challenging behaviour that test the limits of the teacher’s training. Louisa Leaman’s *Managing Very Challenging Behaviour* helps teachers with different levels of experience successfully deal with all sorts of misbehaviour in the classroom. Leaman, a British behaviour support teacher with experience in both special education and mainstream classrooms, uses her wealth of experience and sense of humour to convey her advice. She explains modern classroom issues and how teachers can look for behavioural warning signs that could lead to mild or even dangerous behaviour like violence and gang activity.

According to Leaman, “in order to really address challenging behaviour we cannot just punish it, we need to understand its existence and tackle it from this basis.” Within this context, the first four chapters introduce topics such as why students misbehave; the backbone of behaviour management; and how to get ahead of the challenge. Each remaining chapter begins with Leaman defining a misbehaviour then describing proactive ideas to prevent or at least minimize it in the classroom. She then describes reactive approaches to take in order to stop the misbehaviour, but she emphasizes the tremendous importance of following up on



the issue to try to prevent its reoccurrence.

Because the book is British, some of the terminology is a bit different from that used in Ontario classrooms. However, because of Leaman’s careful explanations, Ontario teachers should not have any problems understanding it. At about 140 pages, the book is easy to use and includes an index and even an appendix outlining causes of disruptive behaviour. Teachers could read it on the weekend and have a fresh new perspective for Monday’s challenging class.

Perhaps the strongest aspect of the book is that despite her tales of being kicked, punched, head-butted, strangled and spat on over the course of her teaching career, Leaman explains what to do without invoking a sense of fear of these situations in the reader.

One of Leaman’s best reminders to teachers who have experienced very challenging behaviour is that “there is no such thing as evil.”

Louisa Leaman’s *Managing Very Challenging Behaviour* is an accessible guide for teachers to understand why students act out, and how teachers can best prevent, react to and follow up on difficult classroom behaviour. ☺

**Matthew Gilbert** is an occasional teacher in District 11, Thames Valley, working towards a full-time contract position.

**Overschooled But Undereducated:  
How the crisis in education is  
jeopardizing our adolescents**  
by John Abbott with  
Heather MacTaggart

Published by Continuum

336 pages, \$29.95

Reviewed by David Roberts

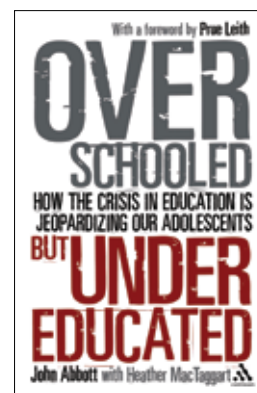
“I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.” Mark Twain

The 21st Century Learning Initiative is a not-for-profit organization that seeks to develop more appropriate teaching techniques and learning environments for young people with the goal of enabling adolescents to have confidence in their abilities as life-long learners. John Abbott is its director. Though he speaks predominantly from the perspective of the British school system, much of what he has to say is applicable to Ontario.

Abbott maintains that our current school system is outdated and needs to be radically altered if we have any hope of engaging adolescents and turning them into responsible citizens. As a result of parenting, societal influence, technology and media, today’s student is primarily concerned with his/her individual needs, and Abbott stresses the importance of realigning students’ thinking so they see the bigger picture and focus on society and their place within society.

In a very relaxed writing style, Abbott provides the political, social and educational history necessary for us to understand how we got to this point. He cites the various educational reforms along the way, and highlights the missteps and missed opportunities that led us to today’s educational reality.

Today’s schools, Abbott says, are teacher-focused. They are set up on the basis that students need to be taught, and that the results of that teaching should be measurable. Under this model, it is each student for himself/herself. With the advent of easy data collection, this has led to a preoccupation



with analyzing the statistical data and letting that drive how students are taught. Abbott deplores the tendency towards standardized testing because it focuses the attention of school administrators on a myriad of potentially confusing statistics as opposed to having their energy focused on creating the best atmosphere for learning.

Abbott contends that we should be making our schools student-focused. Instead of focusing on teaching, he believes we should be focused on establishing the right conditions for learning. Adolescents, he maintains, are naturally curious, but that curiosity is stifled under the current system. We need to enable students to wean themselves from their dependence on teachers so they are able to work things out for themselves.

The almost lost art of apprenticeship is a model for the sort of learning-centered approach Abbott advocates. The apprentice initially takes on the non-skilled tasks of his/her trade, and while doing these tasks, he/she is watching the more experienced apprentices doing a higher level of work, and the certified tradesperson at the apex of the craft. As the apprentices learn more, they can take on more responsibility and are able to set the pace at which they take on more responsibility. In this model, the apprentices see the whole process and see where they fit into the process.

Just as the apprentice never truly masters his/her craft but continues to develop his/her skills, Abbott hopes that by emulating this model, we will be able to create a school system that will foster life-long learning. ☞

**David Roberts** is a teacher in District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge, and a member of the Faculty of Education Work Group, and the Educational Services Committee.

## CONFERENCES

### November 8, 2010

Region 4 (Toronto)

### November 23, 2010

Region 3 (London)

### 11 février, 2011

Francophone (Toronto)

### April 7, 2011

Region 5 (Ottawa)

### May 6, 2011

Region 1 (Thunder Bay)

### May 26, 2011

Region 2 (Sudbury)

OSSTF/FEESO Regional Symposia  
OVERLOADED: Strategies to Stay Healthy  
in a Stressful World  
SURCHARGÉ : Stratégies pour rester en  
santé dans un monde plus stressant

Competing demands have become the norm rather than the exception, and we are paying the price. Increased stress levels can have physiological, emotional

and behavioural effects and contribute to symptoms of depression and anxiety in otherwise healthy individuals. Françoise Mathieu, M.Ed., CCC., a certified mental-health counsellor, compassion-fatigue specialist and an engaging and dynamic speaker will present the most recent research on anxiety and depression and explore the consequences of chronic stress. She will present strategies to identify warning signs and offer concrete ideas to help us regain better emotional and physical balance, both at work and at home, and to support one another in our challenging work environments. Registration details will be posted at [www.osstf.on.ca](http://www.osstf.on.ca) prior to each event.

### November 12-15, 2010

#### Conscious Communities

The fall conference of the Canadian Centres for Teaching Peace will aim to advance the cultivation of peaceable communities at two scopes: local communities and communities of common interest. The local communities' scope will include the core educational needs that must be satisfied to allow all members of a physically local community to flourish. Topics explored may include but are not limited to: "transition towns" movement, local and organic foods, ecological literacy, renewable energy, arts, living wages, conflict transformation, Peace Cafés, School Peace Program, social entrepreneurship, education in local histories, storytelling and democratic participation. The communities of common interest scope will explore the unique challenges and needs of individuals who are not necessarily physically close to one another but share common experiences. Topic areas explored may include but are not limited to: social networking, online collaboration methods, solidarity work, the exchange of best practices between communities, social entrepreneurship, new media, marginalized communities, fair trade, literacy, access to education

and more. For more information, visit [www.schoolpeaceprogram.org](http://www.schoolpeaceprogram.org).

### December 1-3, 2010

#### CESBA Conference—Leading by Example: Passion, Diligence, Integrity Courtyard by Marriott, Downtown Toronto

The annual CESBA fall conference provides valuable professional development for educators and administrators involved in all aspects of adult, continuing or alternative education, whether it be adult credit, adolescent alternative, ESL/FLS/LINC/CLIC, LBS, IE, IL, PSW or ESD programming. Full-day pre-conference sessions targeted to specific adult education program interests will be presented on December 1, and the main conference, with 35 workshops, will be held on December 2-3. The opening speaker on Thursday will be the Honourable Leona Dombrowsky, Minister of Education, and the closing speaker on Friday will be the Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration. In addition, a special stream to train school board LBS managers in the implementation of the new Ontario Adult Literacy Curriculum will be integrated into the conference. For workshop descriptions and registration details, please visit [www.cesba.com](http://www.cesba.com).

### March 3-5, 2011

Big Ideas and Mathematics Instruction  
Holiday Inn—Toronto International Airport  
Teachers, consultants and coaches should attend this conference to identify and link the big ideas and instructional decisions to student learning and teaching; to share best practices in order to see, hear and experience mathematics in a classroom; to determine ways to integrate available resources that are effective in building mathematics understanding; and to discuss and share thoughts and views on current emergent ideas and issues with other educators. For more information, visit [www.oame.on.ca](http://www.oame.on.ca).





## February 2-5, 2011

### The Power of C—Collaboration Ontario Library Association Super Conference

#### Metro Toronto Convention Centre

The Ontario Library Association is Canada's largest library organization and OLA's Super Conference is Canada's largest continuing education event in librarianship, offering 235 sessions and the country's largest library tradeshow. The program is a tribute to the ability of OLA members to balance the cutting edge and the practical in a way that can satisfy an increasingly diverse number of member interests and needs. For full details and conference registration information, visit [www.accessola.com/osla](http://www.accessola.com/osla). ☞

## OTHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Teachers' Gateway to Special Education

Developed by OTF with funding from the Ministry of Education, the new website provides specific strategies and resources to help teachers address the unique needs of students from Kindergarten to Grade 12. Well organized and extremely user friendly, the Teachers' Gateway to Special Education includes links to board special education plans, Ministry documents and other helpful resources. The Gateway includes definitions of key special education terms, and can be used as a practical guide for teachers building Individual Education Plans (IEPs). To access the Teachers' Gateway to Special Education, visit OTF or go to [www.teachspeced.ca](http://www.teachspeced.ca).

### 21st Century Pathfinders

By Jan Reynolds

School libraries have traditionally created "pathfinders" to organize information linked to the curriculum. Now, by using a variety of web 2.0 tools there are new and exciting ways to gather quality content from multiple sources,

e.g., databases, websites, e-books, smart boards, podcasts, videos, wikis, search engines and other multimedia sources. These web 2.0 pathfinders use the power of widgets to allow teachers, along with their students, to create customized pathfinders for research topics.

The Association of Library Coordinators and Consultants of Ontario (TALCO) has created several examples of such pathfinders for Grade 10 subjects using the teacher edition of Pageflakes. Pathfinders for the Group of Seven (Grade 10 art), civics, substance abuse and OSSLT Literacy can be found at [teacher.pageflakes.com/fraserr/29365076](http://teacher.pageflakes.com/fraserr/29365076). Teachers can use these pages as a model to follow, or even use them as a foundation for their own customized version.

Teacher Pageflakes is free, accessible to everyone and easily linked to school library pages. Ease of use is ensured because it is based on a dashboard system,

which many people are now using for blogs or for their personal information portal e.g., iGoogle. The page is built using "flakes," which is another name for widgets. The most helpful "flake" is the "Anything Flake." In addition, the school's physical book library can be blended with the virtual library by listing some of the relevant titles in the school collection. This is not a one-size-fits-all project, and pathfinders are easy to customize. Students can contribute to the process by adding content in the form of podcasts, videos etc. Using RSS feeds means the content is continuously updated and the content can be locally relevant. In addition, widgets for the students to log in to a school's paid databases can be added to the page, thus bringing together a wide range of a school's best resources.

Taking research online is a paramount goal for teacher librarians, and

## International Teaching Opportunities

### Teachers' Overseas Recruiting Fair

28-30 January 2011

- 70-80 international schools from 40-50 countries
- Several hundred positions K-12
- Placements for August/September 2011
- Most contracts for 2 years
- Minimum 2 years experience required
- Well organized event, comfortable size
- Limited space, register ASAP

#### CONTACT

Education Career Services  
Faculty of Education  
Queen's University, Kingston, ON,  
Canada K7L 3N6  
Tel 613.533.6222  
E-mail [ed.careers@queensu.ca](mailto:ed.careers@queensu.ca)



<http://educ.queensu.ca/careers>



# You deserve the best...

TALCO wanted to combine its pathfinder with another web 2.0 tool. The interactive nature of a wiki was chosen because it permits conversations between a variety of people, including teachers, librarians, peers and mentors. Other desirable aspects of a wiki are that they are easily edited and links can be preserved. A wiki was created to go along with the substance abuse pathfinder.

Pathfinder resources are located on the TALCO website, and more initiatives are being planned for the fall. Visit [www.talcoconnections.ning.com](http://www.talcoconnections.ning.com). The Pathfinder project is the work of Rola Fraser, Stacey McLaren and Kate Shields of the Near North District School Board. ☺

**Jan Reynolds** is the Co-Chair of TALCO and a teacher librarian in District 4, Near North.

## Give your financial literacy a boost

Everyone can benefit from increasing their financial literacy. Whether you're buying a home, saving for children's education or planning for retirement, the better your financial speak, the more you'll benefit—and that's a fact.

As educators to the education community, Educators Financial Group provides financial literacy tools as well as professional financial services.

Get into the financial literacy loop and get answers to questions often people don't ask but that are key to financial planning. For example, why should your dating status weigh in on mortgage options? Are you eligible for an HST rebate on a home purchase or renovation? How can you invest your tax refund for a maximum return towards your financial goals? What's the difference between an RRSP and a Tax-Free Savings Account (TFSA), and which is better for you?

In addition to this series of webinars, Educators Financial also provides a series of financial videos and articles through our Learning Centre, an educational resource that was developed in partnership with Moolala™, a personal financial resource.

To access the webinars or the Learning Centre, visit [www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca](http://www.educatorsfinancialgroup.ca). ☺



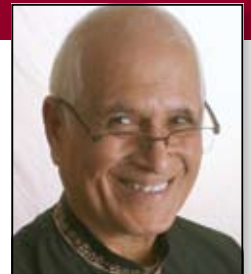
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Last word

by Ken Coran, President

Mot de la fin

par Ken Coran, président

## Meeting the challenges ahead

With resolve and an informed position

**W**elcome back to a new school year. I hope that you had a smooth start.

With less than a year to go until the next provincial election, this year will be a challenge. As always, OSSTF/FEESO positions itself to be as strong and unified as possible. It is for this reason that we constantly look at how we can improve so that members receive the best services possible from their union.

Our job as leaders is to keep an open mind and remember our OSSTF/FEESO motto: “Let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another.” As such, we need to position ourselves perfectly to be the winner at the end of the game. We may deal with setbacks along the way, but we are strong and will overcome them.

Two immediate challenges affect all 60,000 members.

First, pensions are on everyone’s mind these days, and our members are asking more questions in order to understand what is happening to pensions in general and theirs in particular. OSSTF/FEESO has been active in pension issues that apply to all our members, whether they are enrolled in OMERS, OTPP or a university pension plan. We will keep all members informed of relevant developments as they occur.

The other major challenge concerns the Public Sector Compensation Restraint to Protect Public Services Act, 2010, known as the Compensation Restraint Act, introduced in March by the Liberal government as part of its budget. On July 14, OSSTF/FEESO received an invitation, along with other public sector unions and employers, to attend a meeting with the Finance Minister Dwight Duncan. He announced that the government would soon facilitate a series of consultations designed to implement the wage-freeze agenda wherein any new collective agreement would be two years in length and have net compensation increases of zero per cent in each year.

It is fair to ask the question, “How many are affected by this initiative?” Approximately 16 per cent of Ontario’s workforce is in the public sector, over one million workers—350,000 non-unionized workers and 710,000 unionized workers.

In his presentation to the public sector unions, Duncan indicated that from 2003-2008, the average revenue increased

## Relever les défis à venir

Avec fermeté et en toute connaissance de cause

**L**a nouvelle année scolaire a commencé. Je vous souhaite donc un bon retour au travail et j’espère que la rentrée s’est bien passée.

Puisqu’il reste moins de douze mois jusqu’à la prochaine élection provinciale, cette année représentera un véritable défi. Comme toujours, OSSTF/FEESO se positionne pour être aussi fort et uni que possible. C’est pour cette raison que nous cherchons constamment des moyens de nous améliorer afin que nos membres bénéficient des meilleurs services syndicaux possibles.

En tant que dirigeants syndicaux, notre travail consiste à garder l’esprit ouvert tout en nous souvenant de notre devise : « Ne pensons pas à nos intérêts individuels, mais plutôt à nous entraider. » Nous devons par conséquent nous forger une position idéale pour gagner le match. Même si nous trébuchons de temps à autre, notre force nous permet de nous relever.

Deux défis touchent en ce moment même nos 60 000 membres.

Tout d’abord, la retraite est un sujet qui interpelle tout le monde. Nos membres posent de plus en plus de questions pour comprendre ce qui se passe au niveau des retraites en général et de la leur en particulier. OSSTF/FEESO s’est montré actif sur les questions de retraite qui touchent tous ses membres, qu’ils adhèrent à OMERS, au RREO ou à un régime de retraite universitaire. Nous tiendrons tous les membres au courant de l’évolution de la situation.

L’autre grand défi a trait à la *Loi de 2010 sur les mesures de restriction de la rémunération dans le secteur public* visant à protéger les services publics, également appelée *Loi sur les restrictions salariales*, et présentée en mars par le gouvernement libéral dans le cadre de son budget. Le 14 juillet, OSSTF/FEESO a reçu une invitation, tout comme d’autres syndicats et employeurs du secteur public, pour assister à une réunion avec le ministre des Finances. Dwight Duncan a annoncé que le gouvernement organiserait sous peu une série de consultations visant à mettre en œuvre un gel des salaires par lequel toute nouvelle convention collective durerait deux années et comprendrait une augmentation des salaires nets de zéro pour cent par an.





by 8.7 per cent per year, and program-sector spending increased by an average of 6.6 per cent per year. Wage settlements from 2004-2009 totalled 18.8 per cent in the public sector and 13.7 per cent in the private sector, while the Consumer Price Index was reported to be 10.7 per cent.

Since then, however, revenues are way down and program expenses continue to grow, which means the gap is growing. The government wants to eliminate the deficit entirely by 2017-18. Its revenue projections don't solely solve the gap between program

**OSSTF/FEESO follows a strategy  
that has proven time and time again  
to be successful: we plan, prepare,  
inform and then execute the plan at  
the time when it is most effective.**

spending and revenue, and thus it wants to reduce the growth in program spending to 4.8 per cent for 2008 to 2012 and further to 1.9 per cent between 2012 to 2017.

The government has stated that it wants to protect public services and not cut them, and they have concluded that the only solution is a wage freeze. The government has planned three phases of consultations, each involving different unions and employer groups. OSSTF/FEESO, along with the other education unions, is scheduled for Phase Three of the consultations, which were to take place towards the end of September.

This is very reminiscent of a scenario that played out 17 years ago in 1993, when Bob Rae was Premier and Floyd Laughren was Treasurer. Then the reported deficit was \$9.0-billion, not \$19.7-billion. The NDP had 74 seats, PC 21 seats, Liberals 34 seats and there was one independent. The next provincial election, in 1995, gave us the Mike Harris government with 82 seats, which proceeded to wreak havoc on public education for the next eight years.

OSSTF/FEESO has reviewed the proceedings, from March 30, 1993, when the announcement was made to negotiate a Social Contract; to July 6, when the legislation passed; to August 1, when the deal was signed; to that fateful 1995 election. And that research will inform how we approach the current situation in order to arrive at the best possible outcome for our members.

As always, OSSTF/FEESO follows a strategy that has proven time and time again to be successful: we plan, prepare, inform and then execute the plan at the time when it is most effective. You, our members, can count on us to look after you and your interests. We will not let you down! ☺

On peut, en toute bonne foi, se poser la question à savoir qui est touché par cette initiative. Environ 16 pour cent de la main-d'œuvre ontarienne fait partie du secteur public, soit plus d'un million de travailleurs, parmi lesquels 350 000 sont non syndiqués et 710 000 sont syndiqués.

Lors de sa présentation aux syndicats du secteur public, Dwight Duncan a précisé qu'entre 2003 et 2008, le revenu moyen avait augmenté de 8,7 pour cent par année tandis que les dépenses liées aux programmes/secteurs avaient augmenté en moyenne de 6,6 pour cent par année. Les augmentations obtenues par règlements entre 2004 et 2009 ont atteint en tout 18,8 pour cent dans le secteur public et 13,7 pour cent dans le secteur privé, tandis que l'indice des prix à la consommation était de 10,7 pour cent.

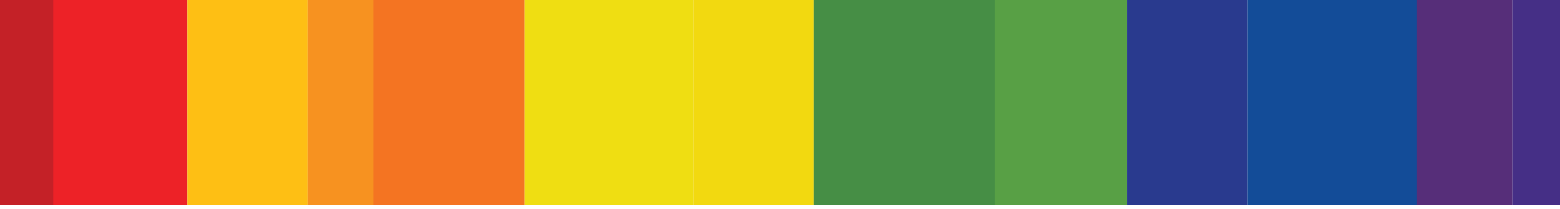
Néanmoins, depuis lors, les revenus ont nettement baissé tandis que les dépenses liées aux programmes ont continué d'augmenter, ce qui a creusé l'écart. Le gouvernement veut éliminer complètement le déficit d'ici 2017-2018. Puisque ses projections de revenu ne suffisent pas à combler l'écart entre les dépenses liées aux programmes et les revenus, il veut réduire l'augmentation de ces dépenses de 4,8 pour cent de 2008 à 2012, puis de 1,9 pour cent de 2012 à 2017.

Le gouvernement a déclaré vouloir protéger les services publics sans les amoindrir et a donc conclu que la seule solution consistait en un gel des salaires. Il a prévu trois phases de consultations, chacune en présence de différents syndicats et groupes patronaux. OSSTF/FEESO, tout comme d'autres syndicats en éducation, doit participer à la phase trois des consultations, prévues vers la fin septembre.

Cela rappelle beaucoup le scénario qui s'est déroulé il y a 17 ans, en 1993, lorsque Bob Rae était premier ministre et Floyd Laughren, ministre des Finances. Le déficit officiel était alors de 9 milliards et non de 19,7 milliards de dollars. Le NPD comptait 74 sièges, les Conservateurs avaient 21 sièges, les Libéraux, 34 sièges, auxquels s'ajoutait un indépendant. En 1995, suite à l'élection provinciale, le gouvernement de Mike Harris, avec ses 82 sièges, a dévasté l'éducation publique pendant les huit années qui ont suivi.

OSSTF/FEESO a analysé les instances en cours entre le 30 mars 1993, lors de l'annonce de la négociation du contrat social, et le 6 juillet, lors de l'adoption de la loi, puis entre le 1<sup>er</sup> août, lors de la signature du contrat, et l'élection de 1995, si dommageable. Ces recherches nous diront comment aborder la situation actuelle de manière à garantir les meilleurs résultats possibles pour nos membres.

Comme toujours, OSSTF/FEESO suit une stratégie qui a fait ses preuves maintes fois : nous planifions, préparons, informons et mettons en œuvre le plan au moment où il est le plus efficace. En tant que membres, vous pouvez compter sur nous pour vous défendre et défendre vos intérêts. Nous ne vous laisserons pas tomber! ☺



# creating spaces embedding equity in education

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