

E D U C A T I O N

FORUM

A close-up photograph of two men in business suits. The man on the left is older, with light skin and green eyes, looking slightly to the right. The man on the right is younger, with darker skin and blue eyes, looking slightly to the left. They are both looking towards the center of the frame with serious expressions.

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EDUCATION FORUM 3





Resistance is *not* futile

It is our best chance of survival

Public-sector unions and collective bargaining rights are under unprecedented attack in Ontario, and all of us in the public sector must use every means at our disposal to defend those rights. We are not alone as targets—unions, and particularly teachers' unions, are under attack in almost every state in the U.S. (and have been virtually broken in every Republican state), and if the neo-conservatives are allowed to win, we might as well kiss every hard-won provision, be it salary, benefits or working conditions, good-bye.

In many ways, Bill 115 is many times worse than what the Tories did to public education during the dark Harris years because it virtually eliminates collective bargaining rights that we have under the *Ontario Labour Relations Act*, and that is something that not even the Tories tried to do to us back then. Today, Tim Hudak, the Ontario Conservative party leader, would go much further and turn Ontario into a Right to Work province (which is a misnomer if I ever heard one). In the U.S., in Right to Work states where unions have been eliminated or rendered impotent, employers are pretty much free to do whatever they wish and there is very little that can be done about it.

Our cover feature, "Workers' rights at risk" by Gary Fenn, debunks information about Bill 115 that the government is feeding to the public and the media, and clearly outlines why this Bill is undemocratic: it "takes away the constitutionally protected right to free collective bargaining." Ultimately, Fenn writes, "...if McGuinty and Hudak can do this to educational workers, they can do it to any worker." So it is not just teachers and education workers who should be outraged; every citizen of Ontario ought to be angry.

President Ken Coran's column "Last word" also addresses this very serious situation, and as such, is the other must-read article in this (and indeed every) issue. It is critical that members stay informed and ensure they read all communications that come from the Provincial Office and their District and Bargaining Unit offices.

policies—the notorious "hat rule," for example. As long as all of the teachers and educational workers support and enforce the policies, they will work. Students will, for the most part, follow the rules, and any infractions can be dealt with effectively. When this doesn't happen, students feel empowered to ignore the rules and ignore those who do try

Together we must support the provincial executive and encourage our colleagues to support the provincial strategy to fight back against this undemocratic legislation.

Ever since February, when the government first put its parameters on the table, the provincial executive has been meeting and discussing these issues and strategies at length every step of the way. Together, the provincial executive, the entire negotiations department and our legal counsel have considered this legislation and avenues for response from every conceivable angle in order to develop the strategies that will be effective, and have communicated those strategies to members by various means.

OSSTF/FEESO's response to the passage of Bill 115 is a multi-faceted fight-back campaign and the only way it will work is for ALL members to support it and to participate in the recommended actions. The stronger the support, the more effectively we can fight against this reprehensible legislation and prevail. However, if members don't bother or leave it up to others, we might as well give up.

To put it another way that is perhaps closer to home, consider school

to enforce them. Likewise, if members feel free to ignore their union leadership and continue on with business as usual, the government will assume that teachers and educational workers are not concerned with what Bill 115 has done to them and their rights, and that the union does not have the members' support. They will feel justified in what they have done in Bill 115, and undoubtedly feel empowered to chip away further at salary, benefits and working conditions in the future.

Our OSSTF/FEESO motto is "Let us not take thought for our separate interests, but let us help one another." Every one of us must "Stand Up! Stand Strong! Stand United!" Together we must support the provincial executive and encourage our colleagues to support the provincial strategy to fight back against this undemocratic legislation. If we don't do so now, we will certainly lose this fight and end up in even more dire straits later. ☹





La résistance *n'est pas* futile

Elle est notre meilleure chance de survie

Les syndicats du secteur public et les droits à la négociation collective subissent des attaques sans précédent en Ontario. Nous tous dans le secteur public devons donc défendre ces droits par tous les moyens à notre disposition. Nous ne sommes pas les seules cibles : les syndicats, et plus particulièrement les syndicats d'enseignants, sont attaqués dans presque tous les États du sud de la frontière (et ont pratiquement été démantelés dans les États républicains). Si on laisse le pouvoir aux néo-conservateurs, nous pouvons dire adieu à chacune des dispositions gagnées de longue lutte, qu'il s'agisse des salaires, des avantages sociaux ou des conditions de travail.

Sous plusieurs aspects, le Projet de loi 115 est bien pire que les mesures prises par le Parti conservateur à l'encontre de l'éducation publique pendant les années sombres du gouvernement Harris, car il élimine virtuellement le droit à des négociations collectives qui nous est conféré par la *Loi sur les relations de travail de l'Ontario*, ce qui est un point que même les Conservateurs n'avaient pas tenté de nous imposer alors. Aujourd'hui, Tim Hudak, le chef du Parti conservateur de l'Ontario, va beaucoup plus loin en transformant l'Ontario en une province sous le joug d'une loi sur « le droit au travail » (ce qui est une fausse appellation, s'il en est une). Aux États-Unis, dans les états qui ont promulgué une loi sur le « droit au travail » et où les syndicats ont été éliminés ou rendus impuissants, les employeurs ont pratiquement le droit de faire tout ce qui leur plaît sans que personne puisse véritablement s'y opposer.

Notre article de fond, intitulé « Les droits des travailleurs menacés » et signé Gary Fenn démystifie l'information sur le Projet de loi 115 que le gouvernement diffuse au grand public et aux médias en montrant clairement les raisons pour lesquelles ce projet est anti-démocratique. En effet, le projet

« vise à nous priver du droit constitutionnel à des négociations collectives libres », ce qui fait avancer à l'auteur : « ... si McGuinty et Hudak peuvent l'imposer aux travailleurs en éducation, ils peuvent tout aussi bien le faire aux autres catégories de travailleurs ». Les enseignants et les travailleurs de l'éducation ne doivent donc pas être les seuls à être scandalisés; chaque citoyen ontarien devrait être exaspéré.

**Nous devons
tous être
« fiers, forts, unis! »**

La chronique du président Ken Coran, dans le « Mot de la fin », se penche elle aussi sur cette situation très grave et, à ce titre, est un article incontournable de ce numéro (comme de tous les autres d'ailleurs). Il est crucial que les membres continuent de s'informer en veillant à lire toutes les communications qui leur sont envoyées par le Bureau provincial et les bureaux de leur district et de leur unité de négociation.

Depuis le mois de février, lorsque le gouvernement a présenté ses propositions, les membres de l'Exécutif provincial se sont réunis pour discuter en détail de ces questions et des stratégies à adopter à chaque étape. Ensemble, l'Exécutif provincial, tout le Service de la négociation, ainsi que nos conseillers juridiques, ont analysé sous tous les angles ce texte de loi et les diverses possibilités de réponses à donner, de manière à élaborer des stratégies efficaces. Ils ont également communiqué ces stratégies aux membres par diverses voies.

La réaction d'OSSTF/FEESO à l'adoption du Projet de loi 115 consiste en une campagne de contre-attaque à volets

multiples qui est le seul moyen pour que TOUS les membres la soutiennent et prennent part aux actions recommandées. Plus le soutien est grand, plus notre lutte contre ce texte de loi condamnable sera efficace et plus facilement nous l'emporterons. Par contre, si les membres ne s'en soucient pas et laissent à d'autres le soin de s'en occuper, autant abandonner la lutte.

Pour l'illustrer autrement, prenons un exemple peut-être plus près de nos préoccupations : la règle notoire sur le port du couvre-chef. Aussi longtemps que le personnel enseignant et les travailleurs en éducation dans leur ensemble soutiennent cette règle et veillent à son respect, elle est appliquée, la plupart des élèves la suivent et toute infraction peut être traitée de manière efficace. Par contre, si ce n'est pas le cas, les élèves se sentent autorisés à ignorer la règle et ceux qui tentent de la faire respecter. De même, si certains membres pensent pouvoir ignorer les décisions des dirigeants de leur syndicat et continuent d'agir comme si de rien n'était, le gouvernement supposera que le personnel enseignant et les travailleurs en éducation ne se soucient pas des répercussions qu'aura le Projet de loi 115 sur eux et sur leurs droits et que le syndicat ne bénéficie pas du soutien de ses membres. Il y trouvera une justification à ses décisions énoncées dans le Projet de loi 115 et se sentira autorisé à écorner davantage les salaires, les avantages sociaux et les conditions de travail dans l'avenir.

La devise d'OSSTF/FEESO est « Ne pensons pas à nos intérêts individuels, mais plutôt à nous entraider ». Nous devons tous être « fiers, forts, unis! » Ensemble, soutenons l'Exécutif provincial et poussons nos collègues à appuyer la stratégie provinciale de lutte contre cette loi antidémocratique. Si nous ne le faisons pas, nous perdrons sans doute cette bataille et finirons dans une situation encore plus désespérée. ☹

The gift of learning

I was reading, with great interest, the Spring 2012 issue of *Education Forum*. While I'm heartened to see such a focus on Aboriginal issues, I would like to send along a few suggestions, particularly in regard to the article "The gift of learning."

The picture in the header, of someone's bundle (consisting of medicines and sacred items), should have had a note attached to it denoting that the elder or traditional person who carries it gave permission for it to be photographed, which I hope they did.

This may seem to be a trivial concern, but I assure you that it is a fundamental lesson in respect for the photographer, the author, editors and readers.

Another note that may appear trivial,

but is not, is the use of the phrase "Canada's first peoples" on page 11, first column. Placing indigenous peoples within and after the construct of Canada in this statement can be read to infer paternalism and ownership. I'm certain that this was not the intent of the author or editors, but could have been simply changed to "first peoples of Canada" or "first peoples in what is now Canada," for example, which would drastically change the meaning.

Thanks for hearing my concerns. I hope to hear from you soon regarding your response.

Andrew Snowball

Education Policy Analyst—
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Friendship Centres

Response from the writer

Open dialogue is an essential element of solidarity work and I welcome this opportunity to learn from Andrew Snowball. I extend my thanks to OSSTF/FEESO and the editor of *Education Forum* for encouraging this exchange.

Like Mr. Snowball, I take language use seriously because our words, as well as our actions, can reveal both systemic structures of power, oppression, colonialism and racism, as well as the politics of resistance, agency and solidarity. I acknowledge that constructions such as "the first peoples of Canada" or "the first peoples in what is now Canada" are generally preferred and I normally use them for the very reasons identified by Mr. Snowball.

In choosing to use "Canada's first peoples" where I did, as part of the specific sentence in question, I intended to emphasize to the mostly non-Aboriginal readers of *Education Forum* that not only were we latecomers but that we had responsibilities as parties to the treaties and the truth and reconciliation processes. In other words, I was trying to emphasize that agreements and reconciliations are relational and involve us all. I thank Mr. Snowball for acknowledging that he did not think I meant to convey paternalism and ownership. I did not, but I accept that the phrase can be read that way, even in the fuller context of the sentence.

The teaching bundle pictured in the header belongs to Kim Wheatley, the Aboriginal Program Co-ordinator for the Turtle Island Conservation Programme at the Toronto Zoo. It is used by her for sharing purposes during the workshops she conducts. We did have permission from Ms. Wheatley to photograph the teaching bundle and, following further discussion with her as a result of Mr. Snowball's letter, she has agreed that we can include



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this information with the photograph in the online version of the article.

Dr. Rebecca Priegert Coulter
Director of Aboriginal Education
Faculty of Education, Western University

Beware of band wagons

After reading the article “Beware of band wagons” in the Spring 2012 issue of *Education Forum*, I had to comment on some of the assumptions inherent in the article itself. Adam Mercer asks us to “apply our own critical thinking to all the new ideas we hear every day.” This is good advice; however, I believe that it should also be applied to old ideas and old assumptions, a number of which can be found in Mercer’s writing.

As an English teacher I have had many discussions about teaching Shakespeare. What I find most interesting in these discussions is the sincere belief that Shakespeare is vital to our students’ education. The claim that “the themes he [Shakespeare] dealt with are universal, lasting and can resonate with almost anyone” is a generalization. Any claim of universality must be challenged. At my department meetings, I do not challenge the teach-



ing of Shakespeare because “the kids don’t get it.” In fact, I have every bit of faith that they can and will “get it.” I challenge the teaching of Shakespeare because he is offered not as an option but an obligation. There is no other author who must be taught at each grade level, and though Shakespeare is left out of the official curriculum documents, he squarely checks off the reading strand that identifies texts of different time periods. As a critical thinker, I must ask, “Why is Shakespeare the only English-language playwright whom everyone must read?” Shakespeare’s reign over the literary canon does not mean his work is the most relevant to my 3C English class or the best way to teach them reading and writing skills. I am not advocating for the retirement of Shakespeare, but his plays need to be scaled back and examined critically.

An additional assumption is that Bloom’s taxonomy is “fundamental.” Ritchhart, Church and Morrison’s *Making Thinking Visible* challenges the hierarchy of Bloom’s taxonomy as problematic: “These ideas were just a theory and were not based on research on learning... Rather than

concerning ourselves with levels among different types of thinking, we would do better to focus our attention on the levels or quality within a single type of thinking” (6-7). Mercer’s comment that we need to get back to Bloom’s taxonomy assumes that it is the only way to think about thinking.

Finally, I will address the assumption that the old ways of learning are the best. They are how we learned and we are proof they work. I am not as confident in the old ways. Did they work for many teachers? Yes. Do they work for everyone? I believe current statistics about literacy, numeracy and dropout rates prove they do not.

I agree that “we have to challenge those who claim to have new knowledge about how to educate.” I agree that the use of technology for technology’s sake is a mistake; however, I also believe we must critically evaluate our practices to determine if they are truly sound and effective. Reflecting and critically evaluating new research and past practices are necessary if we are going to reach all of our students.

Colleen Court

Literacy Facilitator/English Teacher
Hamilton–Wentworth District School Board



Rr



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This is Our Time

An innovative social justice project with a global reach



November 30, 2012 is This is Our Time—Time Project Day, and all secondary schools in Ontario and beyond are welcome to participate with 300-plus other schools from around the globe to share ideas, discuss international issues and debate mock United Nations (UN) resolutions. Students from Huron Park Secondary School (HPSS) in Woodstock will be participating in a unique program spearheaded by Joe Sheik, a Thames Valley District School Board principal whose trademark correspondence closing, “All smiles,” demonstrates his overall optimism for the transformative nature of education.

Time Project is a fantastic way to connect students from around the world. It promotes international co-operation based on sustainability and equality by facilitating the participation of schools

with few resources. Participation is free of charge. The range of the ages of participating youth is from 10 to 19 years old. It is a fast-paced, multilingual and intercultural global communications project for elementary and secondary schools, initiated for and developed in co-operation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Associated Schools Project Network (ASPnet). This is Our Time was originally launched to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the UN and UNESCO on November 16, 1995. During a 24-hour online lesson marathon, 40 schools from over 20 countries joined in Time Project activities, exchanged information, and learned about and from each other.

Since then, Time Project has evolved into a global online network of over 300

dedicated and motivated schools, youth groups and UNESCO clubs. During its history, tens of thousands of youth from over 1,000 schools, organizations, youth groups and communities from 99 countries have participated in Time Project. Time Headquarters is in London, ON, in partnership with e-link in the Netherlands, as well as our main e-learning partner, Taking It Global. With regional home bases, Time Headquarters communicates with participating schools and organizations and develops activities that we hope you will find challenging and of interest to your students.

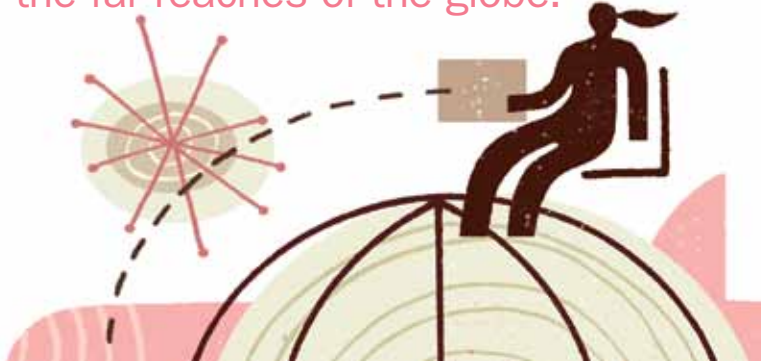
Students from Huron Park Secondary School’s UN Club have participated in the Time Project three times, mainly in the Unite the Nations activities. In May 2012, the first model United Nations activity took place between students from Huron Park and a high school in the Netherlands. Huron Park’s UN Club has agreed to help write the resolutions for this year’s Time Project Day.

Matthew Miller, the current Secretary-General of the HPSS UN Club, notes, “We believe that Time Project is an excellent way to connect with kids in other countries.... A lot of us only read about these countries in textbooks and through the news, so connecting with a student around our age in another country would be a way of learning about the world from a first-hand source.”

Miller adds, “So many students want to travel but...jobs, school, economic issues or family issues may prevent us from seeing the world.... The world was never able to unite so quickly and powerfully before the Internet. Why don’t we take advantage of this unique opportunity and bring together a world full of unique and intelligent people to shape the world of tomorrow?”

Time Project offers a number of

Join us in building global interest, awareness and connectedness while having fun and learning what other students think about from the far reaches of the globe.



e-learning and sharing possibilities. Each year, topics of student interest are selected, questions are developed and lesson plans are placed online. Each topic explored by your students can be shared through a number of online tools and developed activities. Students can video-conference or blog with other participating schools worldwide.

What makes Time Project unique is that students connect and share on a single date—Time Day—based upon similar topics and similar online formats. Time Project seeks effective and innovative ways to enable young people from many different cultures and countries to meet one another in our virtual school, interact and communicate in a synchronous

environment on current issues such as human rights, peace, social justice and related topics of global concern.

For example, students who are just learning how to video-conference can show and share the research information they have uncovered about a topic. A more involved video-conference sees students showing their Social Justice Take Action project inspired by one of our topics. For those students who wish to debate, Time Project offers a House of Commons-style debate and a Model United Nations structured debate.

Another very popular way students learn about the world around them is through the Unite the Nations activity. The 24-hour research competition is an online quiz created by youth for youth. Participants do research about their own country under the five topic areas: history, geography, arts, sports and current events. They develop five multiple-choice questions for each of the five areas. Participating students, through their teacher, submit their questions on behalf of their country. On Time Day (this year, November 30, 2012), the quiz is released to participants and schools have 24 hours to research and respond as a school to the quiz, with only one entry allowed per school. The names of the top five to 10 schools are posted at www.timeproject.org. International bragging rights last for a year, until the next Time Day.

We invite you to open the world to your students on Time Project Day on Friday, November 30, 2012. Join us in building global interest, awareness and connectedness while having fun and learning what other students think about from the far reaches of the globe. For more information and to register, e-mail Time Project headquarters at timeproject@yahoo.ca. You will receive the activity booklet as well as registration procedures for our e-learning environment.

Time Project will celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2015—how time flies! ☺



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Aleisha Howlett teaches history at Huron Park Secondary School in District 11, Thames Valley. **Joe Sheik** is the principal of University Heights Public School in TVDSB and is the Project Co-ordinator of Time Project.

Experiencing diversity first hand

A unique urban/rural student exchange



Many students in small rural communities have very limited experiences with diversity. The question is: In such a situation, how does one teach about diversity, immigration and culture? To address this at North Middlesex District High School (NMDHS), we developed the Urban & Rural Exchange Project to give our rural students the experience of cultural diversity and, conversely, to highlight our small farming community for students living in the city. In the 2011-2012 school year, 15 NMDHS students were paired with 15 Westminster Secondary School students, all selected based on school and community involvement. This group then came together on two exchange visits to celebrate diversity. We also invited many Grade 9 students to participate in the hope that in future years, they will take on leadership roles in the exchange.

Part One of the exchange, The Farm Tour, took place in October, and consisted of six farm visits, three in the morning and three in the afternoon. Each farm represented a different part of agriculture in Canada and showed the longevity of family history, emphasizing that what was once a new country to the settlers is now made up of generations of descendants. The six NMDHS students on the exchange whose families owned the farms were proud to share life on the farm with their peers and partners from Westminster.

The first stop was a local apple orchard whose owner was one of the first Grade 9 students to attend NMDHS. Son and current NMDHS student John is the fifth generation in the family to run the farm. Many students visiting from Westminster, themselves first-generation immigrants to Canada and starting their own roots in a

new country, found this to be an interesting phenomenon. Students enjoyed a taste of the farm's crops, right from the basket!

The second stop, a chicken farm with horses and goats on the side, was presented by Jacob, whose parents own the farm. He, having learned how farming and livestock trading work from an early age, described the process of raising goats and selling them to market, while his sister, Olivia, showed off her horse.

Next we were off to lunch at Fort Rose Maple Company, where students learned how maple sap is collected from the trees and then piped to the main building to be made into syrup. During the early spring season, Ashley and her younger brother, William, help at the pancake house on Saturdays.

After lunch, the students visited a dairy farm, a cash-crop farm and a grain transportation company. Students saw a newborn calf, examined farm equipment up close, and observed the transportation and storage of grains. Students from North Middlesex were "proud to put the family farm on display," said Dennis who helps his family every day after school in the dairy barn. Many students attending rural schools are stereotyped as cowboys or rednecks. Breaking down that stereotype while sharing real farm experiences helped the Westminster students connect lifestyle with food on the table and gain insight into the Farmers Feed Cities campaign.

At the other end of the spectrum, 80 per cent of Westminster's population are new Canadians and as such, helped the North Middlesex students dispel many ethnic stereotypes. Diversity Advisor Sara Najdi works for the South London Neighbourhood Resource Centre but is currently assigned to Westminster to help students become comfortable at school and also help keep lines of communication open with parents and teachers about diversity within

Westminster. Najdi reflects on the importance of supporting diversity at Westminster: "Many of the students are newcomers to Canada. Most are from Middle Eastern countries who speak Arabic and little English. I feel that my role as a Diversity Advisor, with the advantage of my speaking Arabic, has helped many students succeed. I was able to communicate the advantages of school/community involvement and give them the chance to participate/volunteer with different events during the school year, which ultimately made them feel proud, confident and more involved within the school."

For the second part of the exchange, Westminster hosted North Middlesex students on a city adventure. Immigration policy and history are a curriculum expectation that many North Middlesex students can only read about but not know first hand. Rural students are basically unaware of the limitations and struggles that come from learning a second language and embracing new traditions. On the agenda at Westminster was a visit to a local mosque, London's Emergency Operations and Training Centre and Covent Garden Market. A

wonderful potluck lunch was provided so all of the students were able to taste cuisine from a variety of cultures. A fashion show demonstrating different attire from different countries was another highlight of the urban part of the exchange.

**Creating a
diversity team
...will help
foster empathy
and reduce
intolerance.**

The greatest reward was to see students reconnect after the relationships they had built during Part One of the exchange. The bus conversations were much different between Parts One and Two! Students made more connections the second time around; it was such a pleasurable experience. Another great experience was to

see normally shy students talking about their experience and cultural background with ease. One Westminster teacher commented that seeing students talk with each other, especially students of the opposite sex, was a great confidence boost for many.

Najdi participated in both parts of the exchange and says, "The Urban & Rural Exchange Project was a huge eye-opener for many of our students at Westminster. Students were surprised at how many kids who lived on a farm had daily responsibilities in order to help their family. They were impressed with the amount of work, dedication and pride they had when giving us a tour of their farm. I think organizing trips similar to this one is a great idea. It gives students a view of both worlds. It makes them appreciate what they have, appreciate what others do, teaches them how everyone is different and unique, and most importantly, they build new friendships."

Building community among schools in Thames Valley through diversity is a completely different approach from what has been done in the past to connect schools. More often, schools meet only on a competitive basis through sports. Creating a diversity team to connect schools, to celebrate their diversity, and share their life experiences and lifestyles will help foster empathy and reduce intolerance across the board. Olivia says, "It's cool to learn about diversity—our school is not diverse at all!" Jenna found that "Westminster's cafeteria provides different food such as turkey pepperoni instead of pork. I found it very interesting as our family raises pigs, and these families give up pork to show love to Allah."

Back at the school, students came together to reflect on the importance of our exchange as a whole. The project showcased our lifestyle and we learned about the challenges others face. North Middlesex is very monocultural, so creating this great opportunity to celebrate our strengths and differences has been a beneficial learning experience for all students involved. I was proud to be part of it. ☺

Jennifer Morley, an occasional teacher in District 11, Thames Valley, did a Long Term Occasional assignment at North Middlesex DHS in 2011–2012.

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What's that buzz?

OSSTF/FEESO worker bees produce sweet results



For the past six months there has been a noticeable buzz at 60 Mobile Drive. In fact our OSSTF/FEESO head office has been a hive of activity as a multitude of workers toils for hours every day with a common goal.

You would be forgiven if you assume the above description refers to the various staff and executive members hard at work, countering the difficult challenges visited upon us by Mr. McGuinty and his government.

And to a great extent, that is in fact the case. However, there is also another surprising explanation.

Since May of this year, 60 Mobile Drive has hosted a small apiary of five hives of honey bees actively pollinating the surrounding area while making delicious and healthy honey.

The journey from idea to jar of honey began four years ago with a simple sug-

gestion generated by the newly formed Environment Advisory Work Group. Members of the group were aware of similar initiatives that had been going on in a small number of urban Toronto locations including the Fairmont Royal York Hotel. It was felt by the group that the location of the headquarters of OSSTF/FEESO, right on the edge of the wild Don Valley, would be an ideal spot for a beehive; the grounds of Mobile Drive certainly provide ample room.

Unfortunately, the enthusiasm of the work group was not initially shared by all that needed to be on board for such an initiative to be successful.

Bees have the unfortunate luck of being closely tied to their much more aggressive cousins, wasps and hornets. As a result, most people can recount being stung by a “bee” and thus have ingrained

fears associated with the insect. As well, a small number of people are allergic to bee stings and need to be protected from reckless exposure.

The truth is that the vast majority of stings associated with bees are actually perpetrated by wasps. The honey bee by and large wants nothing to do with people, is very gentle and has the singular focus of serving the queen bee. If the bee or the hive is not threatened, the risk of a sting is remote, and people can sit near a colony for hours without incident.

Happily, eventually an adequate comfort level was achieved and the hives were introduced, and to date at Mobile Drive, there have been zero stings.

So, given that the mini apiary is in fact relatively harmless, then what are the benefits of this endeavour?

Well, the answer is both selfish and altruistic. On the selfish side, each hive can produce 50 to 80 litres of honey a year when conditions are right. Currently our hives are a little below that number but still on track to produce about 45 litres of honey each. What exactly will be done with all of the bounty has not yet been fully decided but initial uses include personal and interesting gifts for presenters and special guests of OSSTF/FEESO.

Our OSSTF/FEESO honey is incredibly healthy and has a distinct flavour that cannot be found in any store. The simple reason for this rests in the fact that a naturally produced bottle of honey is like a snowflake: there are no two alike. The taste of the honey is heavily influenced by what the bee eats, which in turn is influenced by the surrounding environment and the time of year. The first batch of our Mobile Drive honey has a distinctly spearmint flavour.

Yet despite the obvious benefits of a hive for our union, there is another, arguably far more important reason for providing a home for bees.



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Worldwide populations of our winged friends are inexplicably crashing. There are several theories as to why this is happening but no one knows for sure. This should be of concern for all of us, even if you don't like honey.

According to the Ontario Beekeepers Association, every third mouthful of food was produced as a result of bees pollinating crops. Flowering plants rely on bees to produce blossoms and fruit, and some crops such as almonds are only pollinated by bees. Thus a loss of bees would have a devastating effect on overall food production.

Even though they sit quietly in the corner of 60 Mobile, each hive is an incredible structure and each bee is a little miracle with wings. A beehive in summer can have as many as 50,000 to 80,000 bees. A bee must collect nectar from about two million flowers to make 500ml of honey. It requires 556 worker bees to gather 500ml of honey, and in doing so bees fly a total distance the equivalent of more than once around the world. Amazing!

So beekeeping, especially urban beekeeping, is a great way to help our environment while supporting a healthy population of these marvels of nature.

However, the true altruistic part comes from the realization that not only do OSSTF/FEESO and the staff at Mobile Drive benefit from our small colony but so do our neighbours for a radius of about three kilometres who have unknowingly been enjoying a much more bountiful harvest in their backyard gardens or patio flowers.

Hives can usually be harvested twice in a season. The bees keep the first two boxes of honey to keep them fed over the

winter but any boxes above this can safely (and deliciously) be taken for human consumption. The process is fascinating.

The hives are initially smoked by the beekeeper; this tricks the bees into thinking the hive is under threat and results in the bees engorging in honey and becoming much more docile. Boxes are then removed and opened up and the frames (usually about 10 per hive) are removed and the bees gently shaken off and allowed to return to the hive. The frames are then taken inside so as not to attract other bees and the tops of each comb (known as the caps) are then removed with a hot knife. The frames are then placed in an extractor where they are spun until the honey is forced out. The end result is decanted into a pail where it is finally ladled into individual jars. Simple but rewarding.

Fortunately, we found a willing urban beekeeper, Fred Davis, who happens to live in the neighbourhood and was more than happy to help set up and monitor the hives while teaching willing participants the various steps from spring to fall.

Yet despite the efforts of Fred and numerous volunteers who have donated their time to produce this liquid gold, the truth is that most of the work is done by the bees. The colony toils tirelessly from day to day, seven days a week from May to September, with few breaks and absolutely no time off for leisure.

Perhaps our OSSTF/FEESO bees could use some union representation. ☺

Glen Hodgson is the District and Teachers' Bargaining Unit president in District 4, Near North, and a member of the Environment Advisory Work Group.



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social media

les médias sociaux

A revolution in public response • Une révolution dans la réponse du public

By/par Randy Banderob

“Oh my God, they’re throwing guitars out there!” With that exclamation from a woman seated on a grounded United Airlines plane at Chicago’s O’Hare airport on March 31, 2008, Canadian musician Dave Carroll was propelled into a social-media roller-coaster ride that would rock both his world and the world of customer relations.

In his book *United Breaks Guitars: The Power of One Voice in the Age of Social Media*, Carroll documents his experience, from his initial disappointment of discovering his Taylor 710ce acoustic guitar broken in its padded case, through his frustrating interactions with United Airlines, to his successful YouTube campaign. His success went beyond achieving justice for the damage done to his guitar. Carroll tapped into popular public opinion through a series of videos satirizing the company and demonstrated the influence of social media as powerful new voices for consumers.

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« Mon Dieu, ils balancent des guitares à l’extérieur de l’appareil! » Avec cette exclamation d’une femme assise dans un avion plaqué au sol de la compagnie américaine United Airlines à l’aéroport O’Hare de Chicago le 31 mars 2008, Dave Carroll, musicien canadien, a été propulsé dans les montagnes russes des médias sociaux, ce qui allait secouer tant son monde que celui des relations avec les clients.

Dans son livre intitulé *United Breaks Guitars: The Power of One Voice in the Age of Social Media*, Dave Carroll décrit son expérience, de sa déception initiale de découvrir sa guitare acoustique Taylor 710 cassée dans son étui rembourré à ses interactions frustrantes avec United Airlines jusqu’à la réussite de sa campagne sur YouTube. Son succès a dépassé l’atteinte de la justice pour le dommage causé à sa guitare; Dave Carroll a percé l’opinion d’une grande partie de la population grâce à des vidéos satiriques présentant

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ILLUSTRATION: GRAHAM ROUMIEU



While social media have been an important part of our lives for only a scant few years, the perception of their power and influence continues to fluctuate. They are dismissed by some as trivial and irrelevant while others are betting on social media to reinvent the way we interact with one another. One area in which social media's power has been touted is consumer influence. While it is not new for dissatisfied customers to join forces against a company or corporation, Carroll's experiment with United Airlines ushered in a new era of online consumer protest.

If you are unfamiliar with the "United Breaks Guitars" phenomenon, the best way to experience it is to watch the first of the three videos that Carroll made. It can be found easily by searching online or going to www.davecarrollmusic.com. The first thing you will notice is the staggering 12 million-plus views the video has received. It uses humour to show Carroll's frustrating attempts to work with the customer-relations department of United Airlines in order to be reimbursed for the repairs made to his damaged guitar. In this video and the two others, he refers to—and implies that he may have a crush on—a Ms. Irlweg, an actual airline employee who ultimately refused his request for compensation. The video is deliberately hokey, but it is also playful and lighthearted. There is no question as to why millions have found it to be entertaining and informative.

The launch and ensuing popularity of the first video were nothing short of astonishing. From 25,000 views the first day to 500,000 by the end of the first week, "United Breaks Guitars" had astronomical online buzz. This was soon fuelled by the attention of traditional media such as newspapers and television shows that then stimulated even more interest in the video. This, in turn, exponentially increased the YouTube video's popularity, causing such a stir in corporate America that people ran to their computers to see what all the fuss was about. A perfect storm of media attention propelled Carroll's experiment in consumer protest into realm of popular culture.

The power of the video is simple. We

can all relate to the plight of someone who has been mistreated by a large, faceless corporation and simply dismissed. The frustrated consumer in all of us rises to the surface as we view "United Breaks

Social media are transforming how society responds to just about everything, from consumer issues to societal and political ones.



Guitars" and we applaud its message and pointed humour. Adding to our collective frustration and to the popularity of the video was not only United Airlines' steadfast refusal to deal with Carroll's guitar repair bill but also its continued failure to acknowledge there was even a problem. Very quickly, United Airlines became the Goliath to Carroll's David.

Just how effective was the video? Despite an eventual offer from United Airlines to pay for the repair, Carroll decided that in this case, his moral victory far outstripped any compensation. Ultimately, his crusade for consumer justice has become a staple in business schools around the world as "people began to realize that

'efficient' but inhuman customer-service policies had an unseen cost—brand destruction by frustrated, creative and socially connected customers." United Airlines itself now uses the "United Breaks Guitars" videos to train its customer-service representatives on how not to respond to customer complaints, while Carroll has become a much sought-after speaker on the topic.

Carroll's book thoroughly follows his actions in producing his attack on United Airlines, as well as the company's actions (and inaction) and the public's reaction. While the "United Breaks Guitars" phenomenon is often cited as an example of how a single person can leverage social media, in the book we learn that the seemingly simple and slightly hokey video was actually the product of immense planning, skillful execution and many helpful hands. Carroll's description of the production of his videos reveals an incredible donation of time and effort by professionals and friends alike. In fact, within the first week of launching his first video, Carroll was forced to enlist the services of a friend simply to keep up with the media requests for interviews. Despite this revelation, his book provides a fascinating look at how social media have thrown a wrench into the traditional way that businesses deal with consumers.

In fact, social media are transforming how society responds to just about everything, from consumer issues to societal and political ones. As much as businesses and traditional media have had to adapt to a world of social media, so have governments and social justice organizations. Indeed, it is rare for any successful endeavour not to have social-media links with which to share our "likes" with others. Facebook pages, Twitter feeds and YouTube videos, to name just a few, have irrevocably changed the way we interact with and respond to each other. As teachers and educational workers, we too need to learn to use these tools and to teach our students to use them safely and, hopefully, for the public good. ☺

Randy Banderob is an Executive Assistant at the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office whose responsibilities include social media.



la compagnie et il a démontré la puissance des médias sociaux en tant que nouvelle voix des consommateurs.

Bien que les médias sociaux ne jouent un rôle important dans nos vies que depuis quelques années, la perception de sa puissance et de son influence continue de fluctuer. Ils sont rejetés par certains comme étant sans intérêt et non pertinents alors que d'autres misent sur eux pour réinventer la façon dont nous interagissons les uns avec les autres. Le domaine dans lequel la puissance des médias sociaux a été citée est l'influence des consommateurs. Quoiqu'il ne soit pas nouveau pour les clients mécontents d'unir leurs forces contre une compagnie ou une entreprise, l'expérience de Dave Carroll avec United Airlines a marqué le début d'une nouvelle ère de la protestation en ligne des clients.

Si vous ne connaissez pas le phénomène « *United Breaks Guitars* » (United casse les guitares), la meilleure façon d'en faire l'expérience est de visionner la première des trois vidéos produites par Dave Carroll. On les trouve facilement en effectuant une recherche en ligne ou en visitant son site Web à www.davecarrollmusic.com. La première chose qui vous étonnera, c'est que la vidéo a été visionnée plus de 12 millions de fois. Elle a recours à l'humour pour raconter les tentatives frustrantes de Dave pour travailler avec le service des relations avec la clientèle d'United Airlines afin d'être remboursé pour les réparations effectuées à sa guitare endommagée. Dans cette vidéo, et les deux autres suivantes, il fait référence, et laisse imaginer, qu'il a peut-être un coup de cœur pour Madame Irlweg, une employée de la compagnie aérienne, qui a fini par refuser sa demande d'indemnisation. La vidéo est simple et intentionnellement absurde, mais elle est aussi amusante et légère. Il n'y a pas lieu de se demander pourquoi des millions de personnes l'ont trouvé divertissant et éducative.

Le lancement de la première vidéo et la popularité qui s'ensuivit sont pour le moins étonnants. De 25 000 visionnements la première journée à 500 000 à la fin de la première semaine, « *United Breaks Guitars* » a atteint une fureur astronomique en ligne. Cela a été vite alimenté par l'attention des médias traditionnels comme les journaux

et les émissions de télévision qui ont stimulé encore davantage l'intérêt pour la vidéo. Ce qui a eu pour effet d'augmenter de manière exponentielle la popularité de la vidéo sur YouTube, provoquant une telle agitation au sein des sociétés américaines que tous couraient à leurs ordinateurs pour tenter de savoir ce qu'il en était. La « super tempête » d'attention médiatique a propulsé l'expérience de Dave Carroll de la manifestation des consommateurs jusqu'à la culture populaire.

Le pouvoir de la vidéo est simple; nous pouvons tous faire le lien avec la situation d'une personne qui a été maltraitée par une grande entreprise impersonnelle et simplement rejetée du revers de la main. Le client frustré qui sommeille en nous tous s'élève à la surface quand nous visionnons « *United Breaks Guitars* » et nous approuvons son message et son humour lourd de sous-entendus. Le refus inébranlable d'United Airlines d'acquitter la facture de réparation de la guitare de Dave Carroll et aussi son refus persistant d'admettre qu'il y avait un problème s'ajoutent à notre frustration collective et à la popularité de la vidéo. Très rapidement, United Airlines est devenue le Goliath de ce David.

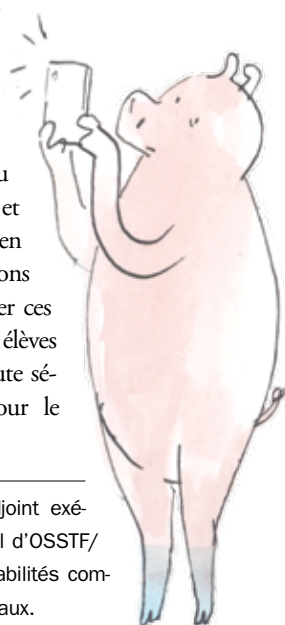
Dans quelle mesure la vidéo était-elle efficace? Malgré l'offre éventuelle d'United Airlines de rembourser la réparation, Dave Carroll a jugé que, dans ce cas-ci, sa victoire morale dépassait largement tout dédommagement. En fin de compte, sa croisade pour la justice à l'égard des consommateurs est devenue une matière première dans les facultés de commerce à travers le monde quand « les gens ont commencé à réaliser que les politiques des services à la clientèle « efficaces », mais inhumaines ont un coût caché – la destruction de la marque par les clients frustrés, créatifs et socialement branchés. » Même United Airlines utilise maintenant les vidéos « *United Breaks Guitars* » pour former les représentants du service à la clientèle sur la façon de ne pas réagir aux plaintes des clients. Dave Carroll est devenu aussi un conférencier fort prisé sur le sujet.

Le livre de Dave Carroll suit avec beaucoup de rigueur ses actions en attaquant United Airlines, de même que les actions de la compagnie (et inaction) en plus de la réaction du public. Bien que le phénomène

« *United Breaks Guitars* » soit souvent cité comme exemple de l'influence d'une seule personne dans les médias sociaux, le livre nous apprend que la vidéo, en apparence simple et légèrement absurde, est le produit d'une planification considérable, d'une exécution habile et de l'aide très utile de plusieurs personnes. La description effectuée par Dave de la production de ses vidéos laisse voir un don invraisemblable de temps et de travail de professionnels et de ses amis. En réalité, dans la première semaine du lancement de sa première vidéo, Dave Carroll a été obligé de recourir aux services d'un ami simplement pour gérer les demandes d'entrevues des médias. Malgré cette révélation, le livre de Dave Carroll jette un regard intéressant sur la façon dont les médias sociaux ont porté un dur coup à la manière traditionnelle dont les entreprises traitent avec les consommateurs.

En réalité, les médias sociaux transforment la façon dont la société réagit à presque tout – des questions de consommation à celles de la société et politiques. Au même titre que les entreprises et les médias traditionnels ont dû s'adapter au monde des médias sociaux, il en est certainement de même pour les gouvernements et les organismes de justice sociale. En effet, il n'est pas rare qu'un projet réussi ait des liens sur les médias sociaux avec lesquels il « partage » avec les autres ce qui nous « plaît ». Les pages Facebook, les fils Twitter et les vidéos YouTube, pour n'en citer que quelques-uns, ont définitivement changé la manière dont nous interagissons envers l'autre et y répondons. En tant que membres du personnel enseignant et du personnel de soutien en éducation, nous devons aussi apprendre à utiliser ces outils et enseigner à nos élèves à y avoir recours en toute sécurité et, espérons, pour le bien commun. ☺

Randy Banderob est adjoint exécutif au Bureau provincial d'OSSTF/FEESO dont les responsabilités comprennent les médias sociaux.



CONFRONTING STEREOTYPES S'ATTAQUER AUX STÉRÉOTYPES

And breaking free from them

By Timothy Miller

I met Anthony McLean through his anti-bullying work, when he spoke at Fletcher's Meadow Secondary School and I was in the process of creating a performance piece for our Grade 9 population about that very subject.

To be honest, I was a little desperate and was looking for an easy out. I had little knowledge of the subject and needed someone who knew what they were talking about. So I approached Anthony and asked for his help. Turns out he is also a very accomplished actor.

Long story short, he came in to the school on his own time, "experted us up" on bullying, workshopped my students' works-in-progress and then came to watch the performance and support us. A friendship was born.

Fast forward about six months. I got an e-mail from Anthony saying that he and his production partner, Sherien Barsoum, were making a documentary about teens and race and he wanted my school and its students to serve as the backdrop as well as the focus of the film. It was a no-brainer. I trusted and valued Anthony and what he had to offer. It was an interesting subject that I felt needed examining. And I love documentaries. Seemed easy enough.... Little did I know the impact it would have on the producers, our students and myself.

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Et s'en libérer

par Timothy Miller

J'ai rencontré Anthony McLean par le biais du travail qu'il avait entrepris contre l'intimidation, quand il s'est adressé aux élèves de la Fletcher's Meadow Secondary School et que j'étais en train de monter une représentation pour les élèves de 9^e année sur le même sujet.

Pour être honnête, j'éprouvais de grandes difficultés à cet égard et cherchais une solution. Je connaissais mal le sujet et avais besoin d'une personne qui savait de quoi il retournait. Je me suis donc adressé à Anthony pour lui demander de l'aide. J'ai découvert par la suite qu'il était aussi un excellent acteur.

Pour faire une histoire courte, il s'est rendu à l'école pendant son temps libre, nous a mis au fait sur l'intimidation, a animé des ateliers sur les travaux en cours de mes élèves et est venu assister à la représentation pour nous soutenir. Nous sommes devenus amis.

Avance rapide sur environ six mois. Je reçois un courriel d'Anthony indiquant que lui et sa partenaire de production, Sherien Barsoum, élaborent un documentaire sur les adolescents et le racisme et qu'il veut que mon école et mes élèves servent de toile de fond tout autant que de centre d'attention du film. Rien de compliqué. J'ai confiance en Anthony et j'apprécie ce qu'il a à offrir. C'est un sujet intéressant qui, à mon avis, doit

PHOTOS: TAZA MEDIA

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Brampton is one of fastest-growing suburbs of the Greater Toronto Area, let alone the country. It is also one of the more ethnically diverse. In Brampton, minorities are actually the majority. The 2006 census showed that 57 per cent of the population is made up of visible minorities, most of them of South Asian descent, but with an ever-increasing black

own beds and live in a town once known as Flower City. As such, you would think notions of the hood would be the furthest thing from their minds. However, Anthony soon discovered and pointed out that these kids have what he calls a “ghetto mindset”: you have to be or act a certain way to “be black.” Hip-hop, not grunge. Karl Kani, not the Gap. Basketball, not hockey.

Being on the outside, but having an

was their journeys: watching them recognize their hurdles, accept them (some more easily than others) and begin to overcome their obstacles, learn that stereotypes do exist but that one doesn’t have to succumb to them. A teacher’s truly great reward is seeing the light flicker on in a student’s eyes. Lights seemed to be flashing quite often for these six students. They had opportunities



FYI

Anthony McLean is the motivational speaker for iEngage.ca, a bullying prevention program that empowers students and staff to create a safe, positive and inclusive climate in schools. Their interactive, multimedia assemblies combine fun with bullying prevention strategies. iEngage is a member of the Toronto Coalition for Bullying Prevention and Awareness.

Colour Me is available for purchase from www.colourmethemfilm.com in either the 46-minute or 80-minute version. Both come with a viewing guide. The 46-minute DVD is divided into seven, 6.5-minute segments, making it easy for teachers and facilitators to show the film in various sessions. The 80-minute version is the entire film, allowing viewers to get an in-depth look at characters and issues. The guide is designed to help teachers, facilitators and students enrich their experience of the film with questions and activities.

populace. It was that group Anthony wanted to look at, and with Fletcher’s Meadow’s black population hovering somewhere between 60 and 70 per cent, it seemed the logical place to go.

Having a white mom and a Jamaican father, Anthony had had some serious identity issues growing up. He was the only black kid in his class during much of his early school years and found it difficult to fit into the crowd. In later years, black kids would call him names like “Oreo” and tell him outright he was “not black,” so he felt he didn’t fit there either. He struggled with coming to terms with his identity.

For their documentary, he and Sherien wanted to know whether kids in similar circumstances still struggle with their identities. Is it easier? Different? The same? Their documentary, *Colour Me*, explores this theme with surprising and inspirational results.

Most of the students who attend Fletcher’s Meadow live in two-storey homes, eat three square meals a day, sleep in their

inside track on the making of the film, I was very interested in seeing the final product. I taught and/or worked with five of the six Grade 11 student participants in the film, some of them since Grade 9, so I thought I had a fairly good knowledge and understanding of each of them. I was wrong. In some cases, it felt like I was meeting a completely different kid from the one I thought I knew. Parents divorcing. Living with grandparents. Violent family losses. Victims of overt racism. I had no idea.

Perspective can often be very humbling. You realize you have indeed prejudged some of your students. But the insight it grants you can also be freeing. Now some of your students’ more questionable or inappropriate actions are understandable—not necessarily right, but you can approach the issues with more clarity. It also allows you to deal with them with much more empathy. I wish I could view documentaries involving all my students.

In the end, what moved me the most

to meet with people who not only did not fit the stereotypes but busted out of them. Successful business people. Sports commentators. Politicians. Video producers. Not a ghetto mindset in sight. A whole new world opening up. Dreams beginning to brew. Things not so unattainable any more. Mentors. Direction. No more excuses. In the documentary, even Anthony himself provides a few humbling insights and has to engage in some mind-resetting changes.

It was a far from perfect experience for any of the students. Their stories do not end with the film credits, but I can tell you that they have been forever changed. Even before the film made its debut, I saw and sensed that change in those kids as they went through their final year of high school. Will they make it? I don’t know, but this experience will give them the knowledge and courage to try. ☺

Timothy Miller is a drama, history and guitar teacher at Fletcher’s Meadow Secondary School in District 19, Peel.



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être examiné. De plus, j'adore les documentaires. Rien de plus simple... Je suis cependant loin de prévoir les retentissements que cela aura sur les producteurs, nos élèves et moi-même.

Brampton est l'une des banlieues de la région du Grand Toronto – si ce n'est du pays – dont la croissance est la plus rapide. C'est aussi l'une des plus diverses sur le plan ethnique. À Brampton, les minorités sont en fait la majorité. Le recensement de 2006 montre que 57 pour cent de la population est constituée de minorités visibles, dont la plupart provient d'Asie méridionale, bien que la population de race noire y soit de plus en plus présente. C'était ce dernier groupe qu'Anthony voulait étudier et, avec une telle population à l'école Fletcher's Meadow se situant aux alentours de 60 à 70 pour cent, il semblait logique de filmer à cet endroit.

Ayant eu une mère blanche et un père jamaïcain, Anthony avait éprouvé de graves problèmes d'identité dans son enfance. Pendant ses premières années de scolarité, il était souvent le seul enfant noir de sa classe et trouvait difficile de s'intégrer. Pendant ses dernières années de scolarité, les enfants noirs le surnommaient « Oreo », lui lançant qu'il n'était « pas noir ». Il avait donc l'impression de ne pas être de leur bord non plus. Il a dû surmonter de nombreuses difficultés pour accepter son identité.

Pour leur documentaire, Anthony et Sherien souhaitaient savoir si les enfants dans une situation semblable éprouvaient eux aussi des difficultés d'identité? Était-ce plus facile pour eux? Différent? Pareil? Leur documentaire, intitulé *Colour Me*, explore ce thème avec un effet surprenant qui est aussi source d'inspiration.

La plupart des élèves de l'école Fletcher's Meadow vivent dans des maisons à deux étages, mangent trois bons repas par jour, dorment dans leur propre lit et vivent dans une ville autrefois appelée Flower City. On pourrait donc penser que des notions comme celle des mauvais quartiers ne les effleurent même pas. Et pourtant, il n'a pas fallu longtemps à Anthony pour découvrir et faire remarquer que ces enfants avaient ce qu'il appelle

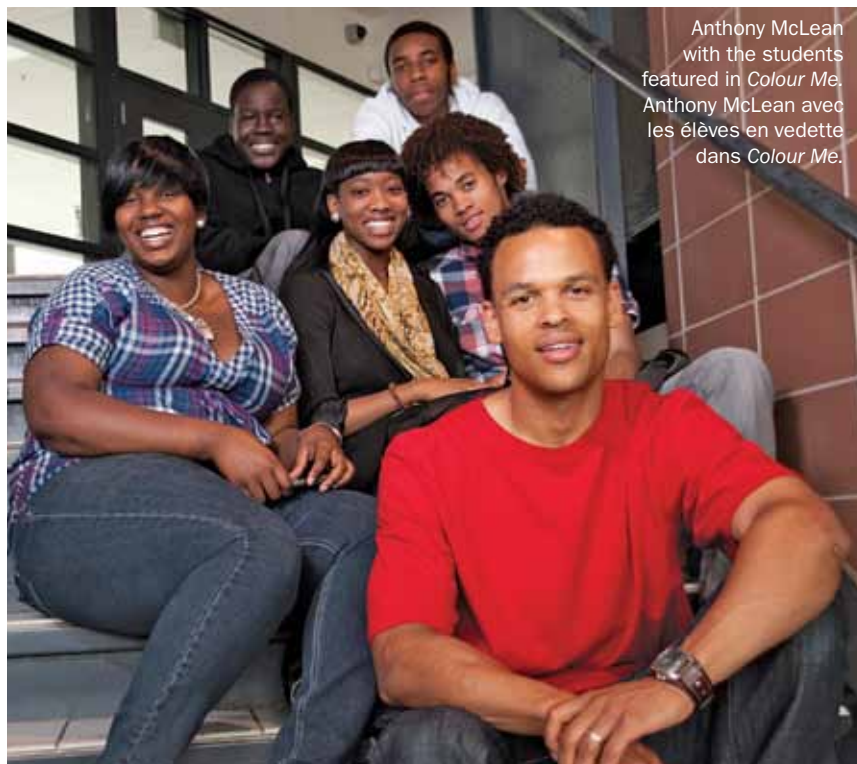
« l'esprit du ghetto » : il faut être ou agir d'une certaine façon pour « être noir ». Hip-hop, et pas grunge. Karl Kani, et pas Gap. Basket-ball, et pas hockey.

Voyant les choses de l'extérieur, mais étant bien placé pour assister à la réalisation du film, j'étais très intéressé par le produit final. J'avais enseigné et (ou) travaillé avec cinq des six élèves de 11^e année participant au film, connaissant certains d'entre eux depuis la 9^e année. Je pensais

donc les avoir bien cernés et bien comprendre chacun d'entre eux, mais j'avais tort. Dans certains cas, c'était comme rencontrer un enfant totalement différent de celui que je connaissais : parents en plein divorce, vivant avec ses grands-parents, pertes violentes de certains membres de la famille, victimes d'un racisme manifeste... J'étais bien loin du compte.

Mettre les choses en perspective

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Anthony McLean
with the students
featured in *Colour Me*.
Anthony McLean avec
les élèves en vedette
dans *Colour Me*.

POUR INFORMATION

Anthony McLean est conférencier spécialiste de la motivation pour iEngage.ca, programme de prévention de l'intimidation qui permet aux élèves et au personnel de créer un climat sécuritaire, positif et inclusif dans les écoles. Leurs ensembles multimédias interactifs combinent plaisir avec les stratégies de prévention de l'intimidation. iEngage est membre de la *Toronto Coalition for Bullying Prevention and Awareness*.

Le documentaire *Colour Me* est offert en vente sur le site Web www.colourmethemfilm.com/ en version de 46 minutes ou en version de 80 minutes, toutes deux accompagnées d'un guide de visionnement. Le DVD de 46 minutes est réparti en sept segments de six minutes et demie pour qu'il soit facile aux enseignants et aux animateurs de montrer le film en plusieurs séances. La version de 80 minutes est le film dans sa version complète, ce qui permet aux spectateurs d'analyser en détail les personnages et les problèmes. Le guide est conçu pour aider les enseignants, les animateurs et les élèves à enrichir leur visionnement du film par des questions et des activités.



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nous incite souvent à beaucoup d'humilité. Nous réalisons que nous avons des préjugés sur certains des élèves. Cependant, les enseignements que nous en tirons peuvent aussi nous libérer dès lors que certains des actes les plus contestables ou les plus inappropriés de nos élèves se comprennent, sans toutefois se justifier. Dès lors, les problèmes se posent avec plus de clarté. Cela nous permet aussi de les traiter avec plus d'empathie. Je voudrais pouvoir visionner des documentaires sur tous mes élèves.

En fin de compte, ce qui m'a le plus touché est leur parcours : les voir reconnaître leurs obstacles (certains plus facilement que d'autres) et commencer à les franchir, apprendre que les stéréotypes existent bel et bien, mais que l'on ne doit pas forcément s'y conformer. La véritable récompense d'un enseignant est de voir que ses élèves ont les yeux qui continuent à briller. Souvent, le regard de ces six élèves s'est obscurci, mais ils ont eu la chance de rencontrer des gens qui non seulement ne se conformaient pas aux stéréotypes, mais les repoussaient : des professionnels couronnés de succès, des commentateurs sportifs, des hommes et femmes politiques, des producteurs vidéo – aucun esprit de ghetto en vue. Un tout nouveau monde s'est alors ouvert à eux et les rêves ont commencé à prendre forme. Les choses leur ont tout à coup semblé à leur portée. Des mentors, une direction, plus d'excuses. Dans le documentaire, Anthony lui-même fait quelques commentaires en toute humilité et doit accepter de modifier son état d'esprit.

L'expérience est loin d'être parachevée pour ces élèves. Leur histoire ne s'arrête pas avec le générique du film, mais je peux vous assurer qu'elle les a changés à jamais. Même avant la diffusion du film, j'ai remarqué et ressenti le changement chez ces élèves qui terminaient leur dernière année d'études secondaires. Réussiront-ils? Je ne saurais le dire, mais cette expérience leur donnera les connaissances et le courage d'essayer. ☺

Timothy Miller est professeur de théâtre, d'histoire et de guitare au Fletcher's Meadow Secondary School, District 19, Peel.



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LES DROITS DES TRAVAILLEURS MENACÉS

Projet de loi 115 et attaque mondiale lancée contre les travailleurs
par Gary Fenn

WORKERS' RIGHTS AT RISK

Bill 115 and the global attack on working people
By Gary Fenn

The much publicized attacks on teachers and educational support workers by the McGuinty government for the last nine months have proved to be an excellent distraction from the many political issues that have dogged the Ontario government since its re-election in October 2011. These attacks have culminated in the creation and passing of a piece of legislation inaccurately entitled the *Putting Students First Act*, or Bill 115.

Bill 115 has very little to do with putting students first and everything to do with making the educational workers of Ontario pay for a recession they did not cause. It is about making educational workers pay for the cuts to corporate taxes that have not stimulated the economy. And now it is about taking away the constitutionally protected right to free collective bargaining.

McGuinty won the support of Progressive Conservative MPPs and their leader, Tim Hudak, to pass this legislation. The Premier has mused about going after other public-sector workers in Ontario, including doctors, nurses and firefighters. One can conclude that if McGuinty and Hudak can do this to educational workers, they can do it to any worker. All workers should be very afraid of this precedent.

Les attaques à l'encontre du personnel enseignant et du personnel de soutien en éducation que le gouvernement McGuinty a menées au cours de ces neuf derniers mois et qui ont fait la une de l'actualité se sont révélées une excellente source de distraction pour nous éloigner des nombreux problèmes politiques qui s'abattent sur le gouvernement ontarien depuis sa réélection en octobre 2011. Ces attaques ont culminé lors de la création et de l'adoption du Projet de loi 115, appelé de manière inappropriée *Loi donnant la priorité aux élèves*.

Le Projet de loi 115 est très loin de donner la priorité aux élèves mais, en revanche, il fait tout pour que les travailleurs en éducation de l'Ontario paient les frais d'une récession qu'ils n'ont pas provoquée. Ce projet vise en effet à leur faire payer les diminutions de l'impôt sur le revenu des sociétés qui n'ont pas stimulé l'économie et, à présent, il vise également à nous priver du droit constitutionnel à des négociations collectives libres.

Pour faire adopter ce projet de loi, McGuinty a gagné l'appui des députés conservateurs et de leur chef, Tim Hudak. Le premier ministre a fait mine de s'en prendre à d'autres travailleurs du secteur public ontarien comme les médecins, les infirmières et les pompiers. On peut en conclure que si McGuinty et Hudak peuvent l'imposer aux travailleurs en éducation, ils peuvent tout aussi bien le faire aux autres catégories de travailleurs. Tous devraient s'alarmer de ce précédent.

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I'M
STICKING WITH
THE
UNION
OSSTF/FEESO
REALLY PUTTING
STUDENTS FIRST
SINCE 1919!

MCGUINITY
HUDAK
GIVE I
WE
FIGHT



WAGES GO DOWN AND THE MIDDLE CLASS DISAPPEARS. THE RICH GET RICHER AND WORKERS GET POORER.

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What is in the legislation that should be troubling to workers in Ontario and the rest of Canada?

It will take away the ability of democratically elected local school boards to negotiate fair collective agreements with their employees. Instead, the provincial government, specifically the Minister of Education, will hold virtually all bargaining power. The Minister will not be subject to any scrutiny by all MPPs in the legislature.

The attack on educational workers in Ontario is not an isolated incident. Prime Minister Stephen Harper and the federal Minister of Labour, Lisa Raitt, have intervened in both public- and private-sector negotiations. First it was with the workers at Canada Post, then Air Canada. In both situations, Minister Raitt forced an end to legal labour actions. The rationale used by the Minister of Labour? "Canadians mandated our government to protect the Canadian economy." In other words, it was about money and not about basic rights.

Globalization of economies has led to a rush for cheap labour in an effort to cut costs and maximize profit. Cheap labour means low incomes, which leads to a lower standard of living for all workers. Corporations have created their own economic downward spiral as they look to offshore cheap labour. Moving jobs out of Canada, for example, creates higher unemployment. In turn, there is less personal income, which leads to less

demand for the products that the same corporations decided to have built offshore. The short-term vision of profits for shareholders is leading to a long-term demise of the middle class and reduced economic growth.

What is the government's role in all of this?

They feel compelled to reduce corporate tax rates under the threat of losing companies to other countries. The tax burden then shifts to working citizens to take up the slack. When that hits its saturation point, the next option is to cut services. This means cutting out the public-sector workers and driving unemployment up further. Wages go down and the middle class disappears. The rich get richer and workers get poorer.

The right-wing flavour of the month has been "Right to Work" legislation that has manifested itself in the United States in 23 states so far. This statute essentially allows people who enter a unionized work environment the choice to either join or not join the union. The goal for corporations is to break up union membership and drive wages and benefits downwards, which has been successfully accomplished. Average wages are 10 per cent lower in Right to Work states than in those that don't have that legislation, and this does not measure the loss of other benefits.

The pressure from corporations for governments to cut their taxes and get rid of laws that protect workers has nearly hit its peak in Canada. Governments have bought into the notion that we must sacrifice workers in order to comply with the demands of corporations, which is translated into an argument about saving the fragile economy.

And workers have bought that argument too. So much so that they have generally agreed with the need for some restraint. McGuinty asked the educational workers of Ontario for a "pause" in terms of wages for two years. Many educational workers agreed, as did others in the public sector. However, when it came to hard discussions about moving forward, McGuinty's finger slipped over to the "rewind" button, eating up the tape of workers' rights and the middle class of Ontario in the process.

McGuinty and Hudak teamed up to take away constitutionally protected rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms from educational workers in Ontario. OSSTF/FEESO has already committed to challenging this legislation in the courts. The Canadian Civil Liberties Association has announced it would seek intervenor status in any court action and would support those who would bring such a challenge forward. The people of Ontario are now drawing the line where people's rights and the economy meet, and it has been clearly crossed by the Liberals and Conservatives.

All workers in Ontario should be very afraid of the power that will be handed to the Premier and Minister of Education thanks to the support of the Liberal and Progressive Conservative members of the Ontario legislature. The devaluing of labour and the middle class is underway. The next logical question that one has to ask is: WHO WILL BE NEXT? ☹

Gary Fenn is an Executive Assistant in the Communications/Political Action Department at the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office.

PHOTO: RONDA ALLAN



Quelles dispositions de la loi doivent inquiéter les travailleurs de l'Ontario et du restant du Canada?

La loi empêche les conseils scolaires locaux élus démocratiquement de négocier des conventions collectives équitables avec leurs employés. Au lieu de cela, le gouvernement provincial, et plus particulièrement la ministre de l'Éducation, détiendra tous les pouvoirs de négociation. Les décisions de la Ministre ne seront pas soumises à la sanction des députés de l'Assemblée.

L'attaque menée contre les travailleurs en éducation de l'Ontario n'est pas un incident isolé. Le premier ministre Stephen Harper et la ministre fédérale du Travail, Lisa Raitt, sont eux aussi intervenus dans les négociations des secteurs public et privé. Ce fut tout d'abord le cas auprès des travailleurs de Postes Canada, puis d'Air Canada. À chaque fois, la ministre Raitt a imposé la fin des conflits de travail légaux. Les raisons invoquées par la ministre du Travail étaient que « les Canadiens ont donné à notre gouvernement le mandat de protéger l'économie au pays ». En d'autres termes, c'est l'argent qui a compté et non les droits élémentaires.

vingt-trois états. Ces textes législatifs permettent essentiellement aux personnes qui entrent dans un milieu syndiqué de choisir de se syndiquer ou non. Le but des grandes entreprises est de diviser les membres des syndicats pour faire baisser les salaires et les avantages sociaux, ce qu'elles sont parvenues à faire. Le taux des salaires moyens est 10 pour cent plus faible dans les états qui ont adopté une loi sur le droit au travail que dans ceux qui ne l'ont pas fait, et ce taux ne tient pas compte de la perte d'autres avantages.

Les pressions qu'exercent les grandes entreprises sur les gouvernements pour réduire leurs impôts et éliminer les lois de protection des travailleurs ont presque atteint leur summum au Canada. Les gouvernements ont accepté l'idée selon laquelle nous devons sacrifier des travailleurs pour se conformer aux exigences des grandes entreprises, ce qui s'est traduit par un plaidoyer sur le sauvetage d'une économie fragile.

Les travailleurs eux aussi ont repris ce plaidoyer à leur compte, tant et si bien qu'ils acceptent généralement la nécessité de mesures de restriction. McGuinty a demandé aux travailleurs en éducation de l'Ontario de faire une « pause » dans leurs hausses salariales pendant deux années. Nombre d'entre

LES SALAIRES DIMINUENT ET LES CLASSES MOYENNES DISPARAISSENT. LES RICHES S'ENRICHISSENT ENCORE, TANDIS QUE LES TRAVAILLEURS S'APPAUVRISSENT.

La mondialisation des économies conduit à une course à la main-d'œuvre bon marché dans le but de réduire les coûts et d'optimiser les profits. Une main-d'œuvre bon marché est synonyme de faibles revenus, ce qui conduit à abaisser le niveau de vie de tous les travailleurs. Les grandes entreprises ont créé leur propre spirale économique descendante en cherchant à attirer de la main-d'œuvre étrangère bon marché. Externaliser les emplois hors du pays, par exemple, fait grimper le taux de chômage. À son tour, le revenu personnel diminue, ce qui réduit la demande des produits que ces mêmes grandes entreprises ont décidé de faire fabriquer à l'étranger. La vision à court terme des profits des actionnaires aboutit à l'effondrement des classes moyennes et à une croissance économique en berne.

Quel est le rôle du gouvernement dans tout cela?

Il se sent obligé de réduire l'impôt sur le revenu des sociétés, sous la menace de perdre des compagnies au profit d'autres pays. Le fardeau fiscal pèse donc ensuite sur les citoyens qui travaillent. Quand ce système atteint son point de saturation, l'option qui suit consiste à réduire les services, ce qui veut dire supprimer des emplois dans le secteur public et renforcer d'autant plus le chômage. Les salaires diminuent et les classes moyennes disparaissent. Les riches s'enrichissent encore, tandis que les travailleurs s'appauvrissent.

Ce mois-ci, la mode droitiste est aux textes de loi sur « le droit au travail » qui, jusqu'à présent, ont vu le jour aux États-Unis dans

eux ont accepté, tout comme d'autres dans le secteur public. Néanmoins, quand il a fallu discuter âprement de la suite à donner, le doigt de McGuinty s'est posé sur le bouton « reboiner », entravant du même coup les droits des travailleurs et des classes moyennes de l'Ontario.

McGuinty et Hudak se sont alliés pour priver les travailleurs en éducation de l'Ontario des droits constitutionnels qui leur ont été conférés par la Charte des droits et libertés. OSSTF/FEESO s'est déjà engagé à s'opposer à ce texte de loi contesté devant les tribunaux. L'Association canadienne des libertés civiles a d'ores et déjà annoncé qu'elle se poserait en qualité d'intervenant lors de toute poursuite en justice et soutiendrait ceux qui mèneraient une telle action. Les Ontariens tracent à présent la limite où s'affrontent les droits des personnes et l'économie, limite qui a déjà été transgressée par les Libéraux et les Conservateurs de la province.

Tous les travailleurs de l'Ontario doivent s'alarmer du pouvoir qui sera déferé au premier ministre et à la ministre de l'Éducation grâce à l'appui des députés du Parti libéral et du Parti progressiste-conservateur de l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario. La dévalorisation de la main-d'œuvre et des classes moyennes est en marche. La question logique à se poser ensuite est QUI SERA LE SUIVANT? ☹

Gary Fenn est adjoint exécutif au Secteur des communications/action politique, au Bureau provincial d'OSSTF/FEESO.





drowning in data?

How our professional learning
community learned to survive

By Anne Arthur

Authentic thinking, thinking that is concerned about reality, does not take place in ivory tower isolation, but only in communication. Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world and with each other. — Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, 1970

It is no secret that classroom teachers today work in an educational environment driven by a strong accountability mandate. This concern over accountability has resulted in a somewhat desperate clamour for research data to inform our teaching practices. There is an awareness that fundamental decisions affecting how we do things in the classroom need to be based on what educational researchers have deemed to be best practices—not only on the anecdotal experiences of individual teachers.

Statistics Canada began to make school outcome data available to students and teachers in the early 1990s. Subsequently, there has been a groundswell of information-gathering through educational research. As a result, Ontario teachers and school administrators alike have been flooded with measurement data: statistics concerning class-size averages; early-school-leaver rates; gender differences in academic performance; EQAO scores; and incidences of bullying and school violence. Such

ILLUSTRATION: TRACY WALKER



an unprecedented quest for numbers and percentages has left our school boards virtually drowning in two decades' worth of facts and figures. As teachers, we may well wonder if, under the pressure of our government's unremitting push for accountability, we have lost sight of the faces and experiences of those individual students behind the numbers.

Professional learning communities are promoted by the Ministry of Education as a means to gather data on student performance at the classroom level. Accordingly, a primary learning modality for professional learning community members has been to engage in action research. Findings based on data gathered in the classroom are meant to form the basis for classroom-specific changes. This methodology is touted as a crucial vehicle that will make change happen in schools at a grassroots level and lead to enhanced academic performance.

In 2008, with the support of our school administrator, a small group of teachers in our Section 23 program formed the first professional learning community in our school. (Section 23 school programs serve the educational needs of students who are in Care, Treatment, Custody or Correctional facilities.) Like Freire, we understood knowledge as something that emerges through authentic dialogue—"through the restless, hopeful inquiry that human beings pursue in the world and with each other." A professional learning community seemed to offer its own unique brand of knowledge-building, as well as allow for sorely needed opportunities to collaborate and support one another as teachers. However, due to the Ministry of Education's insistence on accountability, we soon began to feel pressure to undertake an action research project. Given this mandate, we wanted an approach that would meet our original goals and yet avoid the trap of mechanistic data-generation. With persistence, we were indeed able to set a course of action that accomplished both objectives.

Along the way, we have learned valuable lessons that have made a significant difference in our classrooms and in our school. We wish to share those lessons with educators who, like us, are weary of the incessant push for data and numbers, and would prefer instead to invest time learning from each other in an informal and yet professional setting.

Addressing the issue of teacher isolation

Ironically, although teachers typically spend the great majority of their working hours interacting with students and colleagues, teacher isolation is nonetheless a huge issue among educators. Nowhere is this isolation more pronounced than among teachers who work off site. As teachers in a Section 23 school, we spend the bulk of our time in segregated classrooms located in agency settings that are kilometres apart geographically. Although our school administrators hold regular monthly staff meetings, promote participation in common social events and encourage daily communication via e-mail, we do have limited opportunity to really get to know each other. Oftentimes we don't find out about an illness or a death in a colleague's family until it is officially announced via an e-mail message from an administrator.

Therefore, when we approached our principal about forming a professional learning community, we saw this as a needed

opportunity to interact professionally. More than that, we saw it as a chance to really get to know each other on a personal level. Certainly, over the course of four years working closely together, we can point to a number of professional accomplishments. These include a worthwhile research project around character development, presentation of numerous workshops, provision of professional development at staff meetings and creation of classroom resources for our colleagues. However, more importantly, we have become good friends and have been able to support each other emotionally whenever times have been rough. Numbers, data and research have had their place, but have never pre-empted a team member who needed a listening ear or a word of encouragement. Neither have they precluded celebration among friends of an important life event or a significant personal accomplishment. We are at least as pleased with the interpersonal bonds we have formed as we are with the research we have generated. We believe our time together has made us better educators—more compassionate and more caring.

Working together as a community of professionals

In our quest to become a learning community, we found that we had to rid ourselves of a number of our own preconceptions. Having engaged in committee work over the many years of our combined careers, we tended initially to see our roles as those of committee workers and not as members of a community. Committees are very different from learning communities, in that the committee is inherently task-oriented. The primary purpose is to complete assigned tasks. Committees meet for brief periods of time, assign roles and responsibilities, and then reconvene when individual assignments have been completed. Committee members might form relationships with other members, but tend to see these relationships as temporary and based on the needs of the committee. The essential purpose of a professional learning community, on the other hand, is to build up the community. The tasks and responsibilities take a back seat to the business of relationship-building. Whereas committees are typically appointed by an administrator who has a task to be completed, true professional learning communities are self-selected and much more self-directed.

Throughout the first year, we had to remind ourselves and each other over and over again that we weren't a committee rushing to get something done. We were a community trying to understand ourselves as educators and develop our roles as colleagues and supportive friends. We made it a point to slow down and take breaks from time to time. To catch up with each other's news, we scheduled informal sharing as part of each of our meetings. Times of sharing such as these provided unique opportunities to reach out to each other, and taught us the importance of creating a safe shared emotional space. Within this safe space, we were afforded the rare opportunity of time set aside during school hours to creatively engage in problem-solving.

Unlocking the leadership potential in each other

In our commitment to create a professional learning community, we have learned to help each other meet career goals as



educators. Roland Barthes suggested that “fellow teachers hold the power to unlock the leadership potential in each other.” In setting aside time on a monthly basis to be together and get to know each other, we began to see the strengths that individuals brought to the table. We were also able to support each other in a climate of caring that allowed group members to try things they perhaps might never have attempted on their own.

It is not surprising, then, that our group members have been able to meet some important career goals. One member completed her Ph.D. in education. Another enrolled in a Ph.D. program and is currently working on his dissertation. A third, a new teacher, has moved on to start a professional learning community

of a professional learning community helped us to become knowledgeable about character development programming; create character development resources that worked well in each of our segregated classroom settings; and develop expertise in how to embed character development in the core curriculum areas. Our students too were afforded the opportunity to learn about themselves and each other while meeting curriculum expectations. This character development initiative met the criteria for effective programming, which “must address not only students’ academic needs, but social development needs as well” (Ferguson, Tilleczek, Boydell & Rummens, 2005). Our resources were designed to address these needs in our most vulnerable students.



True professional
learning communities
are self-selected and
much more self-directed.

at the elementary school level. Group members unaccustomed to making presentations to their peers became actively involved in workshops that we presented as a professional learning community. One rather shy group member impressed us with her leadership skills when she stepped in as chairperson for the group, and went on to facilitate a number of our meetings. For each successful step taken, our community of teaching professionals served each other as mentors, cheerleaders, colleagues and friends. Over the course of four years together, the members of our professional learning community have been able to encourage and unlock the leadership potential in each other and, in so doing, have all witnessed capacity-building at its most effective.

Learning to put our students’ needs first

Although our professional learning community members have clearly benefitted personally and professionally from participation in our learning community, the Section 23 school of which we were part also benefitted from the fruits of our time together. Our school-wide Character Development Strategy provided our colleagues with some very engaging materials for classroom practice. The resources we created were designed to meet curriculum expectations without adding another program to our teachers’ busy lives. A PDF summary of our research project can be downloaded at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/literacynumeracy/pdfs/DurhamCreatingCaringClassroomCommunities_Tr.pdf.

Overall, the focus on character development in the context

In retrospect, as a professional learning community, we are proud to have resisted the temptation to engage in research driven primarily by external demands for accountability. Rather, we became a cohesive group of educators, proactively listening to and learning from each other. In the process, we were able to avoid the pitfall of creating data for data’s sake—simply adding numbers and statistics to what we had come to recognize as the sea of data engulfing our profession. Instead, we trusted our professional relationships and came to understand that, to be effective educators, we needed to make time for professional dialogue. In our four years together, we were able to combat the problem of teacher isolation, do some worthwhile capacity-building in terms of leadership potential and create some valuable resources that could meet our students’ social and academic needs at the same time. Freire’s proclamations concerning authentic thinking and the cultivation of knowledge came to be realized. True understanding of how to best serve the students in our classrooms was seen to emerge through our invention and reinvention, and through the restless, impatient, continuing and hopeful inquiry we pursued as professionals in a learning community. ☺

Anne Arthur has a Ph.D. in education and works full time at Grove School in District 13, Durham. This article was written with input from several PLC members, including Vas Aivaliotis, Anne Baker, Ann Barker, Craig Knight, Joanna Longworth and Jeff Stewart.





Global explorations through a camera lens

Seiji Ishiguro, currently a teacher at Bill Crothers Secondary School in Unionville, is a travel enthusiast who is crazy about sports and artistic forms of expression. Many of his best travel photos were taken during his time in Japan where he taught for two years. During that time he experienced many sublime moments, which included climbing Mt. Fuji, scuba diving with sea turtles, dancing in festivals and visiting so many world heritage sites that he lost count. Regardless of how old he gets, Seiji hopes to continue exploring the world around him, camera in hand. 📷

Seiji Ishiguro is an English and health and physical education teacher in District 16, York Region

Left page, top: Aboriginal men, said to be over 100 years old, in the Banaue rice terraces in the Philippines. Bottom: A sand-throwing festival to cast out the evil spirits before harvest in Nara, Japan. Right page, top: The top 10 sumo wrestlers in the world at a grand sumo tournament in Osaka, Japan. Bottom: A Japanese garden at a ryokan, a traditional lodging, in Mount Koya, Japan.







Workers Arts & Heritage Centre

A celebration of labour history

For some, Labour Day marks the start of the school year or the fact that summer's almost over. However, for many of us, Labour Day is a time to reflect on the contributions of workers not only in this country but worldwide.

If there were ever a time to look back at the struggles and hardships workers have overcome to get to where they are today, it is now. Workers are facing provincial governments from the west coast to the east that are attacking public-sector workers and disrespecting the collective bargaining process under which contracts are negotiated. It is important for our

society, especially our young people, to understand the history of labour and its vital importance in Ontario and Canada. They should recognize how important the right to free collective bargaining really is. What better way to strengthen peoples' understanding of workers' history than a visit to the Workers Arts & Heritage Centre (WAHC)?

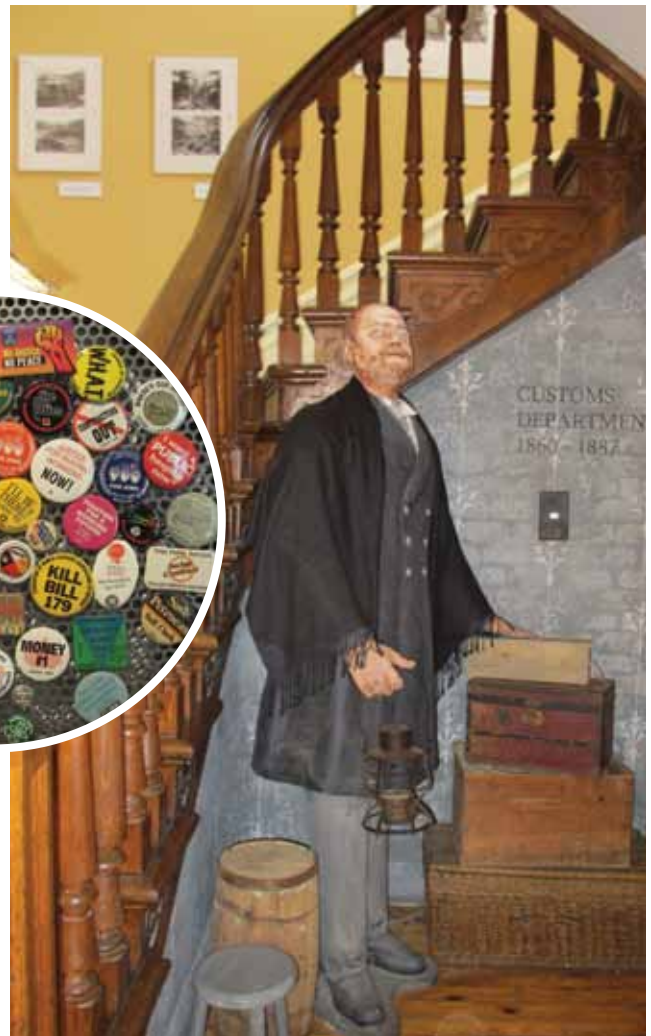
It was in the late 1980s that a group of labour historians, artists, and union and community activists came together and decided there needed to be a place that would showcase the history of workers and where a visitor could feel a sense

of being a part of the significant contributions and achievements. After many long hours of discussion and planning, a building was purchased in 1995 and an enormous restoration project was undertaken that cost over \$1.5-million. The building, originally Hamilton's Custom House from 1860-1887, is grandiose in size, with beautiful architecture and historical roots that lend themselves to the visitors' experience when connecting with stories and facts about working people. The WAHC doors opened in 1996 and 16 years later, it continues to occupy this fantastic historic building.

The WAHC's mandate is to preserve, honour and promote the culture and history of all working people. My recent tour demonstrated how both its permanent and travelling exhibits support that aim. The exhibits focus on many different aspects of the labour movement such as its struggles, its connection to social justice issues, union achievements and challenges, and community action.

The exhibits at the WAHC include the Custom House History & The Hall of Hamilton Labour, which displays artifacts and personal information about the Custom House and its original caretakers, as well as large collages surrounded by facts on the challenges and achievements of labour in Hamilton. You will also see a number of pictures and objects donated from organizations across Canada that





PHOTOS: RONDA ALLAN

Left page: A replica of workers' lockers and safety equipment from the exhibit *Punching the Clock: Working in Canadian Factories* from the 1840s to the 1980s.

Right page, clockwise from top: Part of the current exhibit of work by the art and urban-research collective *Broken City Lab*. • Statue of Alexander Wingfield, the original caretaker and messenger of the

Custom House who lived on the premises with his family. • A fur vault in the basement of the Custom House, used for storing dry goods and hanging fur pelts from the steel bars running across the ceiling.

• Office objects are displayed as part of the exhibit *Nine to Five: A History of Office Work*. • A grouping of labour and community-action buttons is part of a much larger display.





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Beyond the classroom

have faced labour challenges.

The realistic display in Nine to Five: A History of Office Work consists of an office setting with a typewriter and an example of the first adding machine. There is even the added touch of woman's spring coat hung on a hook.

Other intriguing interactive displays at the WAHC that help make workers' history come alive are Punching the Clock: Working in Canadian Factories from the 1840s to the 1980s; Gateway to the Workers' City & Made in Hamilton Industrial Trail; and The Voice of Medical Laboratory Science in Canada.

An exhibit currently running until December 21, 2012 is part of the WAHC's exploration of growing up in working-class cities. We Are Alive & Well: Four Years in Windsor & Beyond is a survey of work done by Windsor-based art and urban-research collective Broken City Lab, a group of artists who have been critically acclaimed for their community-engaged interventions across Canada. Broken City Lab has invigorated communities and raised fundamental questions regarding people's relationships to public and private space within the urban environment, as well as the institutions that define it; our agency as city dwellers within the contemporary urban milieu; and the role of the arts and artists in shaping how we experience or engage with these environments.

The WAHC is definitely worth a trip to Hamilton. For students of all ages, the displays and historical information, along with the permanent exhibitions, demonstrate the power that people have, as workers and empathetic human beings, to contribute to our country and participate in many accomplishments in our society.

The museum is situated in the heart of a working-class community on 51 Stuart Street, Hamilton. It is open to the public Tuesday-Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. To book an educational tour, which includes activities for the students, or for more information about the WAHC, please call 905-522-3003 or e-mail wahc@wahc-museum.ca.





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BOOK REVIEW

Bad Animals: A Father's Accidental Education in Autism

By Joel Yanofsky

Viking Canada, 2011

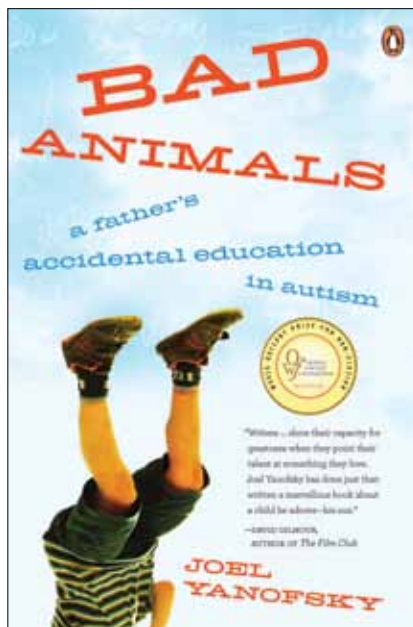
272 pages, \$34.00

Reviewed by Wayne McFarlane

Joel Yanofsky's memoir *Bad Animals: A Father's Accidental Education in Autism* recounts the most important and most frustrating part of his life: his son, Jonah, who has autism. He explains why the dreams he had for himself and his son enjoying baseball together at Montreal's Olympic Stadium will never be a simple reality. He explains how he, and others around him, work hard for his son, desperately wanting to see progress.

Yanofsky also describes how frustrating it can be to encounter people's attitudes towards those who have autism, as well as their families. Sadly, one frustration is the school system. He finds that teachers do not communicate well. He fights a lot of red tape to get an assistant in the school (whom his family will pay for) yet no one can explain why the school does not want the assistant. Yanofsky believes the school sees him as an overprotective and hypersensitive parent. As a teacher myself, I have never regarded parents who are protective and sensitive towards their children as problems. I have always believed it is the parents' job to be the best advocate possible for their children, and all the more so if the child has a communication impairment or learning disability.

The Yanofsky family story is one that will resonate with teachers and educational workers in Ontario. Yanofsky is not a rich, retired NFL quarterback married to an actress, as is the case in Rodney Peete's book *Not My Boy!* Nor is he a model/actor like Jenny McCarthy in her book *Mother Warriors*. Both Peete and McCarthy live in multi-million-dollar houses in California and are able to spend small fortunes on special trainers for their autistic children. Yanofsky is a middle-class book reviewer for *The Montreal Gazette*, struggling to do the best



he can for his autistic son. As such, his circumstances are much easier to relate to than Peete's and McCarthy's.

Bad Animals: A Father's Accidental Education in Autism is a book all teachers and educational workers who might have a student who has Autism Spectrum Disorder should read. It will give teachers and educational workers a better understanding of autism and an insight into the families who deal with it every day.

Wayne McFarlane is a teacher at Cobourg District Collegiate Institute East in District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge.

WEBSITE REVIEWS

ArtsSmarts Open

www.artssmartsopen.ca

Reviewed by Shaun Naroski

ArtsSmarts (www.artssmarts.ca) was launched in September 1996 thanks to a seed grant provided by the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation "to enhance learning by involving young people in hands-on artistic and creative activities."

ArtsSmarts Open, launched in both French and English on May 2 by ArtsSmarts, functions as a social network for arts educators. ArtsSmarts Open provides a variety of ways to communicate by creating a space where educators can post and track their projects, be inspired by creations in other classrooms, discuss their initiatives and engage in live chats with ArtsSmarts representatives.

The site also includes a training component that enables all stakeholders to implement an ArtsSmarts initiative in their community with a step-by-step guide. The end goal of ArtsSmarts is to expose as many Canadian students as possible to this arts-infused approach to learning.

ArtsSmarts has posted impressive data on its innovative school partnerships over the years. For example, more than 22,672 students in 286 schools experienced ArtsSmarts last year. Through 16 partnerships, 370 artists and 1,164 teachers were brought together to collaborate on the development of 282 ArtsSmarts projects in Canadian schools.

The ArtsSmarts web page has six tabs at the top that include About Us, In Schools, Projects, Learning Community, Research and Reports, and Donate. Under the Projects tab, some of the ArtsSmarts projects can be viewed by clicking on In Your Community. This gives educators an idea of what may be possible in their school. Also included is information on an annual Knowledge Exchange conference that invites leaders and innovators in the field of education to explore 21st-century learning skills.

ArtsSmarts can be found on Facebook, followed on Twitter, watched on YouTube, viewed on Flickr and searched on LinkedIn, Google and Yelp. Here is a link to one of the videos available on YouTube: www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOZo6UWyKjA&feature=plcp. The site also includes monthly eNews, while archived issues are just few clicks away.

ArtsSmarts has the ability to generate and sustain school partnerships because of generous donations, and mobile giving is a new and innovative way to do that.

Shaun Naroski is a music teacher and Chair of Arts at Superior CVI in District 6A, Thunder Bay.

Spies in the Shadows

www.spiesintheshadows.com

Reviewed by Clint Lovell

History isn't just about what happened. Sometimes history is about what *didn't* happen. The *Spies in the Shadows* website teaches students that history is not simply random events or great leaders reacting to crises. Sometimes history is calculated and played or not played out deliberately.

Spiesintheshadows.com is the interactive educational website to accompany the upcoming television series now in production. The website enhances the themes and expectations of Canadian history courses as well as senior American and world history courses. Interactive online activities and information will enliven your 1812, World War II or Cold War units. Decisions based on historical facts, not simulated killing or graphic violence, determine success.

The intelligence war is subtle. For example, Grade 10 students learning about the Battle of the Atlantic will calculate fuel supplies and weather conditions to plot submarine attacks in the Gulf of St. Lawrence. The Cold War section is particularly helpful for harried Grade 10 teachers hitting the accelerator after the WWII unit! Timelines, maps, dossiers and discussion topics provide organizers for students who may have limited time to process more curriculum expectations.

Elementary teachers and students will find the War of 1812 section particularly engaging. Intelligence-gathering was vital to the heavily outnumbered British and Canadian forces. Here, students apply intelligence reported from sources such as First Nations people, Laura Secord and the young scout Billy Green to determine battle strategy. Groups of students then devise strategies for five battles.

The Cryptography section provides great hands-on activities. Using simple yet responsive graphics with sound, students decipher and write messages with invisible inks, Morse code and the book code.

A Teacher's Lounge section provides ready-to-go lessons to prepare students for the interactive games as well as other classroom activities and research. Lessons on subjects such as Women in Intelligence are provided. Blackline masters and a thorough glossary are available. Intelligence Files provide alphabetically arranged dossiers on key

figures in Canadian espionage. Extensive links to research sources, ranging from intelligence agency sites to archival and academic sites and museums, are provided.

Teachers and students alike will find this website an engaging learning tool in revealing the hidden facts, considerations and calculations behind history. While they will find the site engaging and entertaining, they must also exercise analytical skills to succeed.

Clint Lovell teaches history at Eastview Secondary School in District 17, Simcoe.

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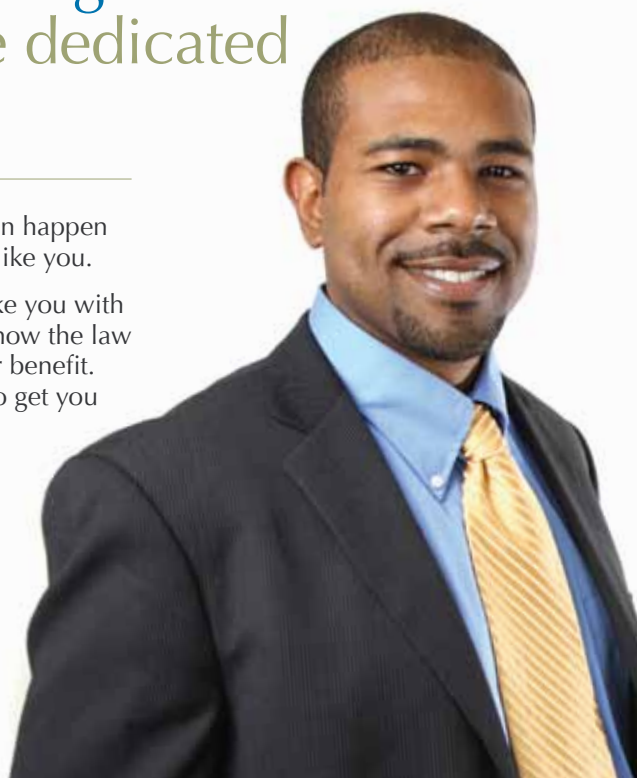
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Last word

by Ken Coran, President

Mot de la fin

par Ken Coran, président

Free collective bargaining works!

Goodwill can't be legislated

La libre négociation collective, ça fonctionne!

La bonne volonté ne peut être légiférée

Bill 115, an act to implement restraint measures in the education sector, was passed on September 11 with the combined support of the Liberal and Conservative parties in the Ontario Legislature.

Before this Bill passed, my fellow presidents at CUPE and ETFO joined me in calling upon the government to back away from its newly adopted attitude of take-it-or-leave-it negotiations and allow for the legal collective bargaining process to continue between the unions and local school boards without government restrictions or interference. We stated repeatedly that this unnecessary and draconian legislation was creating the crisis, not the educational workers in Ontario. Unfortunately, the government did not put students first.

At the same time that Bill 115 was passed, media scrutiny of collective bargaining issues began to extend to the negotiations between the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and the three Detroit automakers.

As CAW's bargaining continued and collective agreements were reached and then ratified, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan and other government leaders essentially told teachers and support staff to suck it up, stop whining and learn from the hardships experienced in recent years by Ontario autoworkers.

The contrast between the two should remind everyone, but especially policy-makers, of an important lesson. When parties are allowed to freely reach a labour agreement, the resulting deal works better for them and for the whole economy. But when they aren't allowed to freely negotiate, the consequences can be costly, unintended and far-reaching.

The CAW's challenge was to bargain a contract that recognized and rewarded autoworkers for their contribution to the industry's turnaround—but to do so in a way that enhanced the case for critical future investments in Canadian plants.

Anti-union critics might have argued that Canada's economy was too fragile to risk a possible work stoppage in this vital industry, and that government should intervene to force a settlement. Wisely, the government stayed out of the picture, and a mutually acceptable deal was reached without disruption.

Compare this to the negotiations involving our teachers and support staff. OSSTF/FEESO recognized that bargaining

LE Projet de loi 115, Loi mettant en œuvre des mesures de restriction dans le secteur de l'éducation, a été adopté le 11 septembre à l'Assemblée législative de l'Ontario, avec le soutien combiné des partis Libéral et Conservateur.

Avant le passage de ce projet de loi, mes confrères présidents du SCFP et d'ETFO se sont joints à moi pour demander au gouvernement de s'écarter de l'attitude qu'il avait récemment adoptée de négociation « à prendre ou à laisser » et de permettre au processus de négociation collective reconnu par la loi de se poursuivre entre les syndicats et les conseils scolaires locaux, sans restrictions ou ingérence de la part du gouvernement. Nous avons mentionné à maintes reprises que cette législation inutile et draconienne créait une crise et que ce n'était pas les travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation de l'Ontario. Le gouvernement n'a malheureusement pas accordé la priorité aux élèves.

En même temps que l'adoption du Projet de loi 115, la mire des médias sur les enjeux de la négociation collective commençait à s'étendre aux négociations entre le Syndicat des travailleurs et travailleuses canadiens de l'automobile (TCA/CAW) et les trois fabricants automobiles basés à Detroit.

Alors que les négociations se poursuivaient avec les TCA et que des conventions collectives étaient conclues et ensuite ratifiées, Dwight Duncan, ministre des Finances et d'autres dirigeants gouvernementaux ont dit essentiellement au personnel enseignant et de soutien en éducation de souffrir en silence, de cesser de se plaindre et de tirer des leçons de ce qu'ont vécu au cours des dernières années les travailleuses et travailleurs ontariens de l'automobile.

Le contraste entre les deux devrait rappeler à chacun, mais surtout aux décideurs, une leçon importante. Lorsque les parties négocient librement une convention collective, l'entente conclue est meilleure pour eux et pour toute l'économie. Mais quand la libre négociation n'est pas permise, cela peut s'avérer coûteux, non voulu et lourd de conséquences.

Le défi des TCA était de négocier une convention qui reconnaisse et récompense les travailleuses et travailleurs automobiles pour leur participation au redressement de l'industrie, mais d'y arriver d'une manière qui améliore les investissements cruciaux futurs dans les usines canadiennes.

Les détracteurs syndicaux auraient pu argumenter que



would have to reflect Ontario's continuing economic challenges. OSSTF/FEESO indicated in April and May that we would accept a two-year freeze for teachers and support staff in line with the government's stated parameters and we offered to find efficiencies through other cost-cutting measures. Each of the proposals would have resulted in real financial savings and none of them would have had a negative impact on front-line services delivered to students. The government rejected the proposal immediately.

It then quickly sabotaged chances of a voluntary deal by demanding very specific concessions in the contracts—while at the same time indicating it would interfere in any work stoppage long before that prospect was even a possibility. That's not just a violation of the Charter rights of all Ontario teachers and educational support staff, it's also a recipe for dysfunctional, inefficient labour relations and for continuing turmoil in our education system.

The McGuinty government is sabotaging the whole process of collective bargaining and undermining the important improvements in education that have been a hallmark of its time in office.

Here's the core difference between the two sets of negotiations. In the auto talks, government allowed the parties to find their own way to a compromise. Because the deal was negotiated, not dictated, it was tailored to reflect the industry's particular circumstances: delivering gains to the workers, but savings and efficiencies to the companies at the same time. Both sides took responsibility for making difficult choices and trade-offs. Because it was attained voluntarily, the new contract enjoys a buy-in from both sides that will be essential for continuing to advance productivity in Ontario's world-beating auto plants.

In our education system, however, the government charged in, trying to predetermine and micro-manage the final outcome. Driven by optics more than economics, the McGuinty government is sabotaging the whole process of collective bargaining and undermining the important improvements in education that have been a hallmark of its time in office.

The lesson from the auto industry for our education system is free collective bargaining works. Times may be tough, but experienced, sensible negotiators can craft solutions that reflect the times and that work for all sides. To do so, however, they must be given the tools, and the freedom, to do their job. ☞

l'économie du Canada était trop fragile pour prendre le risque d'un arrêt de travail dans cette industrie essentielle et que le gouvernement devrait intervenir pour imposer une entente. Le gouvernement est judicieusement resté à l'écart et une entente satisfaisante pour les deux parties a été conclue sans perturbation.

Comparez cela aux négociations avec notre personnel enseignant et de soutien en éducation. OSSTF/FEESO reconnaît que la négociation devrait tenir compte de la persistance des difficultés économiques de l'Ontario. OSSTF/FEESO a indiqué en avril et en mai que nous accepterions un gel de salaire pendant deux ans pour le personnel enseignant et de soutien en éducation, correspondant aux paramètres établis par le gouvernement et nous avons offert de réaliser des économies grâce à d'autres mesures de réduction des coûts. Chacune des propositions aurait entraîné des économies financières réelles et aucune d'entre elles n'aurait eu de répercussions négatives sur la prestation des services de première ligne aux élèves. Le gouvernement a rejeté immédiatement la proposition.

Il a ensuite saboté rapidement les chances d'une entente volontaire en exigeant des concessions très spécifiques aux conventions collectives tout en indiquant qu'il interviendrait dans tout arrêt de travail longtemps avant qu'une telle perspective se dessine. Il ne s'agit pas simplement d'une violation de la Charte des droits de tout le personnel enseignant et de tout le personnel de soutien en éducation de l'Ontario, c'est la recette idéale pour des relations de travail perturbées, inefficaces et des bouleversements persistants dans notre système d'éducation.

Voici la principale différence entre les deux séries de négociations : dans les pourparlers du secteur automobile, le gouvernement a permis aux parties de trouver à leur façon des concessions. Puisque la convention a été négociée et non pas dictée, elle a été adaptée pour tenir compte des circonstances particulières de l'industrie : obtenir des gains pour les travailleurs tout en assurant économies et efficacité aux compagnies. Les deux parties ont pris la responsabilité de faire des choix difficiles et des compromis. Comme la nouvelle entente a été conclue sur une base volontaire, elle jouit de l'engagement des deux parties qui sera essentiel à la croissance de la productivité des usines de fabrication d'automobiles ontariennes de renommée internationale.

Mais dans notre système scolaire, le gouvernement est intervenu, essayant de déterminer à l'avance et de s'ingérer dans l'issue finale. Poussé par les perceptions plus que par l'économie, le gouvernement McGuinty anéantit l'ensemble du processus de négociation collective et mine l'importance des améliorations dans le domaine de l'éducation qui ont fait la marque de son mandat.

La leçon à tirer de l'industrie automobile pour notre système scolaire est que la libre négociation collective fonctionne. Les temps sont peut-être durs, mais des négociateurs chevronnés et sensés peuvent mettre au point des solutions qui tiennent compte de la réalité et qui fonctionnent pour tous. Pour y parvenir, il leur faut cependant les outils et la liberté pour travailler. ☞

Ken Coran and **CAW President Ken Lewenza** co-wrote an opinion column which appeared online at the *Toronto Star*. This column contains pieces of that article.

Ken Coran et **Ken Lewenza, président des TCA**, ont cosigné une chronique qui est publiée en ligne dans le *Toronto Star*. Elle reprend des éléments du présent article.



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