

E D U C A T I O N

# F O R U M



Aboriginal ways of knowing



# Think Life

## Relevant. Reliable. Focused.

Over 70 years ago when a group of teachers started Teachers Life they had one goal in mind – to develop and provide relevant, affordable insurance products to fit the needs of the education community.

Whether you are just starting your career in education or you're about to retire, our range of products and services is geared to support your goals and help you on the way to financial security.

We think of you as a member not a number. If you have a claim or a concern we're there supporting you. Making sure you receive reliable, caring advice about your situation.

Our understanding of the education community is focused into every member benefit and insurance product we develop. That's what makes us a different type of insurance company.

Improving the lives of our members and the communities in which we work and live is our mission. To find out how Teachers Life can help you plan and build for a secure future, please visit our website.

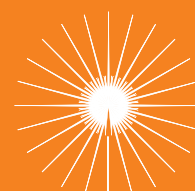
### Insurance Protection at Affordable Prices

*District Plans: Life • Disability*

*Individual Plans: Life • Critical Illness*



[teacherslife.com](http://teacherslife.com)  
[facebook.com/teacherslife](https://facebook.com/teacherslife)



TEACHERS LIFE  
Ready For Life

# Contents

# 28



ILLUSTRATION: JOE MORSE

## Columns

### 9 Full circle

By Alison Wallace

### 11 The gift of learning

By Rebecca Priegert Coulter

### 13 Transitions and transformations

By Kimberly Muchnick

## Features

### 16 Beware of band wagons

Assumptions need to be challenged now and then

By Adam Mercer

### 20 Teaching north of 50

An extraordinary and fulfilling opportunity

By Dawn Burleigh and Sarah Burm

### 24 Boys and girls and achievement

Neither a competition nor a question of ability

By Rod Heikkila

### 28 What would Gandhi do?

Applying Gandhian educational philosophy in Ontario classrooms

By Benjamin Petric

## Departments

### 5 Openers/Mot de l'éditrice

By/par Wendy Anes Hirschegger

### 7 Letters

### 34 Stills

By Timothy King

### 36 Beyond the classroom

By Ronda Allan

### 40 Forum picks

### 45 Last word/Mot de la fin

By/par Ken Coran

**Editor** Wendy Anes Hirschegger **Managing Editor** Ronda Allan **Advertising Co-ordinator** Audrey Bourque **Copy Editor** Jocelyn Laurence **Translation** Diane Saint-Pierre; Publicité Services **Art Direction and Design** Fresh Art & Design Inc. **Cover** Mark Anthony Jacobson **Editorial Submissions** Unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, artwork, and materials sent on speculation should include ample postage on a self-addressed, stamped envelope **Member** Canadian Educational Press Association; Education Forum (ISSN 0840-9269) is indexed in the Canadian Education Index and available online in the Canadian Business & Current Affairs Database from Micromedia Ltd., 20 Victoria Street, Toronto, Ontario M5C 2N8. Tel. 416-362-5211 **Publisher** Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation/Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario, www.osstf.on.ca. Published tri-annually. Advertising rates listed in CARD, on OSSTF/FEESO's website www.osstf.on.ca or available upon request **Business Manager** Pierre Côté **Advertising Office** Education Forum, 60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, Ontario M4A 2P3. Tel. 416-751-8300. Fax: 416-751-3394. GST 107800682. Although advertisements are screened as carefully as possible, acceptance of an advertisement does not imply OSSTF/FEESO endorsement of the product or service. Advertising contracts are subject to cancellation upon receipt of complaints from members **Subscription Rates** One school or calendar year (3 issues): \$15 + HST. Outside Canada: \$20. Single or back issues \$5 + HST. Outside Canada \$6. **Postmaster** Return undelivered copies to 60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, Ontario M4A 2P3. Canadian Publications Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 40012523. **Submissions** Education Forum, 60 Mobile Drive, Toronto, Ontario M4A 2P3. Tel. 416-751-8300, Toll free 1-800-267-7867; allanr@osstf.on.ca



Printed in Canada by union labour.



EDUCATION FORUM 3



NO ONE LIKES  
UNEXPECTED GAPS.  
ESPECIALLY YOU.



### By understanding you better, we can help you best.

Our knowledge of your world means we can provide expert advice on the financial challenges only education members face, such as how to minimize pension income gaps. That's because after over 35 years of working exclusively with

educators and their families, we have an intimate understanding of your unique financial needs and goals. To chat with a specialist about your pension income, or any other financial-related topic, call **1.800.263.9541**, or visit us online.

———— PLANNING • INVESTING • LENDING ————





# Aboriginal ways of knowing

Awareness and empowerment for all Ontario students

Over the last several years, OSSTF/FEESO has made a concerted effort to better meet the needs of its Aboriginal members, and in turn the needs of Aboriginal students. The OSSTF/FEESO First Nations, Inuit, Métis Advisory (FNIM) Work Group is composed of 13 First Nations and Métis members, five of whom had served on the Aboriginal Education Work Group, its original incarnation. As the Provincial Executive considers issues related to First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and communities, the FNIM Work Group provides advice and information to the Provincial Executive.

The website of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada indicates that National Aboriginal Day was first proclaimed by the Governor General in 1996. “In co-operation with Aboriginal organizations, the Government of Canada chose June 21st for National Aboriginal Day because it is also the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. For generations, many Aboriginal peoples have celebrated their culture and heritage on or near this day.” Although this issue of *Education Forum* wasn’t originally planned as a theme issue, happily several of the articles and other inclusions do have an Aboriginal focus and as such this issue quite fortuitously has turned out to be a celebration of Aboriginal culture.

“Full circle: First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing” is both the name of Alison Wallace’s article and the name of the soon-to-be-released fifth installment in OSSTF/FEESO’s Common Threads resource documents produced by and for OSSTF/FEESO members. The lessons in this resource “will assist in achieving the goal of integrating knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, history and culture into a variety of courses.” This resource can be used by edu-

cators in Native Studies and Native Languages classes, as well as in history, civics, social sciences, careers, English and science classrooms. Each lesson uses interactive and differentiated instructional strategies that match overall course expectations and opportunities for assessment as learning, of learning and for learning.

This issue  
quite fortuitously  
has turned  
out to be a  
celebration of  
Aboriginal culture.

The article “The gift of learning” by Rebecca Priegert Coulter describes Aboriginal Education Day at Western University’s Faculty of Education. This annual event provides a “way to encourage students to engage in some important equity and social-justice learning.” Teacher candidates choose from a wide variety of workshops at this “full-day mini-conference that complements other initiatives to provide knowledge and understanding in the area of First Nations, Métis and Inuit education.” Feedback from this event indicates that it is one of the most popular professional growth opportunities offered to the teacher candidates there.

Dawn Burleigh and Sarah Burm have written “Teaching north of 50” about their experience teaching for several years in Attawapiskat, a Cree community in north-

ern Ontario. Each found the experience an extraordinary one that contributed to both their professional and personal growth. At a time where teaching opportunities are few and far between, the writers indicate that the “Aboriginal population is the fastest-rising demographic in Canada” and that as a result, there is “an undeniable need for more qualified teachers who will make a long-term commitment to improving the quality of education for Aboriginal learners in Ontario.”

FNIM Work Group member Deborah Moore has written a review of the new book, *Shannen and the Dream for a School*, which chronicles the true story of the people of Attawapiskat and their decades-long struggle for a new school. Teenager Shannen Koostachin and her fellow classmates took on the federal government and captured the imagination and hearts of the Canadian public, and this book continues their initiative even after Shannen’s untimely death in an automobile accident in May 2010. This story is an inspirational one for young teens and adults alike.

Aside from these pieces, this issue also contains articles on other timely issues. Rod Heikkilä’s article “Boys and girls and achievement” explores various points of view around why and how boys and girls respond in different ways to learning and assessment, and what educators can do to help all students rise to their potential, regardless of gender. Once again, Adam Mercer challenges us with a provocative article “Beware of bandwagons,” which argues that sometimes students need to learn to deal with failure in order to be able to deal with life after they leave school.

All in all, we believe there is much in this issue to challenge and inspire you in your own journey of professional growth, and in so doing, we hope the students you work with will also be enriched. ☺





# Prise de conscience et habilitation

En utilisant les sources des connaissances autochtones

**AU** cours des dernières années, OSSTF/FEESO s'est efforcé de mieux répondre aux besoins de ses membres autochtones, et donc aux besoins des élèves autochtones. Le Groupe de travail consultatif d'OSSTF/FEESO sur l'éducation des Premières Nations, Inuits et Métis (PNIM) réunit 13 membres des Premières Nations et Métis, dont cinq avaient participé au Groupe de travail sur l'éducation des Autochtones, sa forme originale. L'Exécutif provincial se penche sur des questions reliées aux peuples et communautés des Premières Nations, Inuits et Métis et le Groupe de travail PNIM fournit conseils et renseignements à l'Exécutif provincial.

Bien que nous n'ayons pas prévu au départ que ce numéro d'*Education Forum* soit thématique, heureusement, plusieurs des articles et autres éléments sont axés sur les Autochtones, de sorte que tout à fait fortuitement ce numéro constitue une célébration de la culture autochtone.

« *Full Circle: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Ways of Knowing* » est à la fois le titre de l'article d'Alison Wallace et le nom du cinquième épisode des documents de ressource *Common Threads* d'OSSTF/FEESO produits par les membres d'OSSTF/FEESO à l'intention de leurs collègues. Les leçons de cette ressource « aideront à atteindre l'objectif d'intégrer dans divers cours les connaissances et la compréhension des peuples des Premières Nations, Métis et Inuits, leur histoire et leur culture. » Cette ressource sera utile aux enseignants dans les cours d'études sur les Autochtones et de langues autochtones ainsi que dans les classes d'histoire, d'études civiques, de sciences sociales, de carrières, d'anglais et de sciences. Chaque leçon fait appel à des stratégies d'instruction interactives et différenciées correspondant aux attentes et aux occasions d'évaluation dans l'apprentissage.

L'article « *The gift of learning* » de Rebecca Priegert Coulter décrit la Journée de l'éducation autochtone à une Faculté d'éducation de l'Université Western. Cette activité annuelle offre « un moyen d'encourager les étudiants à entreprendre un apprentissage important sur le plan de l'équité et de la justice sociale ». Les

Tout à fait  
fortuitement ce  
numéro constitue  
une célébration  
de la culture  
autochtone.

candidats à l'enseignement choisissent parmi une panoplie d'ateliers lors de cette « mini-conférence d'une journée entière qui complète d'autres initiatives visant à fournir connaissances et compréhension dans le domaine de l'éducation des Premières Nations, Inuits et Métis ». Les commentaires sur l'événement indiquent qu'il compte parmi les occasions de perfectionnement professionnel les plus populaires proposées aux candidats à l'enseignement de cette université.

Dawn Burleigh et Sarah Burm ont écrit « *Teaching north of 50* » sur leurs expériences d'enseignantes pendant plusieurs années à Attawapiskat, une communauté Cri du Nord de l'Ontario. Elles ont toutes les deux vécu une expérience extraordinaire qui a contribué tant à leur perfectionnement professionnel qu'à leur épanouissement personnel. À un moment où les occasions d'enseignement se font rares, elles soutiennent que « la population

autochtone est le groupe démographique affichant la croissance la plus rapide au Canada » et qu'il y a donc « un besoin indéniable d'un plus grand nombre d'enseignants qualifiés prêts à s'engager à long terme à améliorer la qualité de l'éducation des élèves autochtones en Ontario. »

Deborah Moore, membre du Groupe de travail PNIM, a écrit un compte rendu du nouveau livre *Shannen and the Dream for a School* qui raconte l'histoire vraie des gens d'Attawapiskat et leur lutte, poursuivie sur plusieurs décennies, pour obtenir une nouvelle école. La jeune fille Shannen Koostachin et ses camarades de classe ont affronté le gouvernement fédéral et saisi l'imagination et les cœurs du public canadien, et ce livre suit le cours de leur initiative même après le décès inattendu de Shannen dans un accident automobile en mai 2010. Cette histoire inspire les adolescents et les adultes.

En plus de ces articles, ce numéro contient des articles sur d'autres questions d'actualité. L'article de Rod Heikila « *Boys and girls and achievement* » examine divers points de vue sur le pourquoi et le comment des réactions différentes des garçons et des filles envers l'apprentissage et l'évaluation et comment les enseignements peuvent aider tous les élèves à atteindre leur plein potentiel indépendamment de leur sexe. Encore une fois, Adam Mercer nous met au défi par un article provocant, « *Beware of bandwagons* » qui a pour thèse le fait que parfois les élèves doivent apprendre à faire face à l'échec afin de pouvoir affronter la vie quotidienne après l'école.

Dans l'ensemble, nous croyons que le contenu de ce numéro présentera à la fois des défis et de l'inspiration pour votre propre chemin de perfectionnement professionnel, ce qui, nous l'espérons, enrichira également les élèves avec lesquels vous travaillez. ☺

**Re: “Moments of startling clarity”  
(Fall 2011)**

I think Dr. Anderson is very close to understanding what I think has been happening in the last 15 or so years. We are being taught as a society to accept people and their beliefs from around the world. Not a bad idea if we just stop there. But we continue by not wanting to offend anyone with our beliefs and culture.

It is Christmas season as I write this. It is difficult to find Christmas in schools because we might offend another culture. Schools are told to have holiday assemblies or even crazier, not do anything until February so all cultures and religious people can be included. Kids are taught not to offend someone because our beliefs are different.

It is a tiny step from that influence to not want to involve ourselves with how other societies arrange marriages and abuse women. It is great to teach our kids to respect and learn about other cultures, but life should always be a two-way street. Respect must come from all societies for each other if you want effective blending of all cultures. I could carry on but I do not think I am alone with being frustrated about what is really happening in our schools and society.

**John Vander Kooij**  
 ct 16, York Region

**Re: “Character education revisited”  
(Winter 2012)**

I read the article "Character education revisited" with considerable interest. My specialty at Ottawa U was attitude-related learning. I used the term "imparting" attitudes, values, morals etc. rather than "teaching" because traditional teaching relies on a cognitive model and leads one to learn "about" these things rather than acquiring them or learning them.

Initially, to a large degree Chantal



## Moments of startling clarity

Moral education programming in Ontario today  
By Dr. Stephen L. Anderson

By Dr. Stephen L. Anderson

Every teacher has moments of startling clarity, when the world seems to be made of light—epiphany—when some unorthodox “dithers through” to us in an unfamiliar way and changes our perspective. At such moments, such clarity is not a gift, but a flash of dissatisfaction, when an old realization takes on new force a comforting delusion.

I recently had one of these moments when I was visiting my senior Philosophy class. We had just finished a unit on Metaphysics and were about to go into Ethics, the philosophy of how we make moral judgments. The school had also just finished a unit on justice, yet another Miles—mucklunkum, women's rights, anti-violence and gay acceptance. So there was no shortage of evidence pointing to the end of the beginning.

I mused an emotion-gener: something to really spark interest, something to shock the students awake and make them commit to an ethical judgment. I decided to pull a handkerchief from my pocket they could begin to ask questions about the legitimacy of moral judgments of all kinds, and then pursue various theories of justice. No more Miles. No more Virtus Ethics, Nilhilism, Modern Pragmatism and so on.

I decided to open by simply displaying

Asuka, Asuka was the English manager of the Japanese company that teamed up with a Taliban fighter, who abused her and kept her with his animals. When she attempted to flee, her family came to her aid, but she was killed. I was left her for dead in the mountains. After crawling to her grandfather's house, she was saved by a nearby American soldier. I felt quite sure that my students, using their imagination, would be able to come up with a story that would have a clear moral message, but when we held our students' moral dilemmas, we found that we could build toward more difficult cases.

[illegible]

Mancini dealt with this fundamental issue. Unfortunately, she then focused on one example, that of women. I agree with much of what she wrote but there are so many other cultural issues that require society's attention. Our culture has made major strides towards women's rights. I am old enough to remember my grandmother's pride in having achieved the right to vote. Cultural change takes time, time for each generation to grow up accepting the fundamental progress of a culture. Pressure must continue as each generation grows towards an ultimate vision of human rights in balance with societal needs.

The current character education program is not well named. However, using more appropriate terms such as morals and values raises a knee-jerk response from a variety of sectors. I would have preferred the term “citizenship” but even that falls short of the real issue.

Please extend my appreciation to Chantal for keeping this issue in the forefront. It appears to me that it was very much a flash in the pan and will soon fade.

**W. A. (Bill) Belanger, Ph.D.**

**Re: "Five days in Finland"**  
**(Winter 2012)**

What's so special about Finland? Sure, it ranked number one in the 2009 PISA testing (average scores and confidence intervals for provinces and countries: using scientific evidence. Stats Canada, Catalogue No. 81-590, No. 3) but did you know that Ontario came in third out of 64 countries and all Canadian provinces? Brainy Alberta came in second and Canada ranked fifth overall.

I think that our world rankings should be the next major article in *Education Forum*. I hope you are “Finnished” with Finland!

**Don Cooper**  
Gordon Graydon Memorial SS  
Mississauga, ON

The article "Five days in Finland" is excellent. I was disappointed, however, that it did not include a comparison of salaries and benefits to Ontario teachers.

John Hush  
H.B. Beal SS  
London, ON

# Share in the CELEBRATION!



# Soyez de la FÊTE!

**JUNE 21** is National  
Aboriginal Day, a time for  
all Canadians to recognize  
the diverse cultures and  
outstanding contributions of  
First Nations, Inuit and Métis  
peoples.

**LE 21 JUIN** est la Journée  
nationale des Autochtones,  
une occasion pour tous les  
Canadiens et Canadiennes  
de reconnaître la diversité  
culturelle et la contribution  
remarquable des membres des  
Premières nations, des Inuit et  
des Métis.





# Full circle

## First Nations, Métis and Inuit ways of knowing



**F**ull Circle: *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Ways of Knowing* is the fifth in a series of Common Threads resource documents produced by and for OSSTF/FEESO members. Each project in the series tackles an important social issue that is cross-curricular in nature and compels students to examine their beliefs, choices and actions. In the past, projects have had an international-development theme and tackled issues as diverse as HIV and AIDS, globalization and sweatshops,

food security and the world water crisis. In all cases, these projects address a gap in curricular resource materials and create opportunities to form partnerships with NGOs, international unions and other advocacy groups.

The topic for the fifth Common Threads project was the result of a recommendation from the OSSTF/FEESO Aboriginal Education Work Group. The contributors to this resource are OSSTF/FEESO members who self-identify as

First Nations or Métis, or have extensive experience working with Aboriginal students. They have created a document that is authentic in its approach to sensitive, value-laden topics and honours traditional “ways of knowing” by taking a holistic approach to each topic. Although many of these lessons can be used by educators in Native Studies and Native Languages, they were developed for use in history, civics, social sciences, careers, English and science classrooms. As provincial curriculum documents have been revised, they have included a statement about the importance of using learning resources that are inclusive of and sensitive to diverse cultures, including Aboriginal people. Many curriculum expectations include examples with an Aboriginal perspective, but there are few resources to help implement those expectations. These lessons will assist in achieving the goal of integrating knowledge and understanding of First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, history and culture into a variety of courses.

The diversity among First Nations, Métis and Inuit people means that some teachings and symbols are not universally recognized by all Aboriginal people, and the Common Threads writers acknowledge this fact. Where possible, specific names and titles have been used to describe groups of people; however, the word “Aboriginal” has been used as a collective term to include First Nations, Métis and Inuit people and their descendants as the original inhabitants of North America.

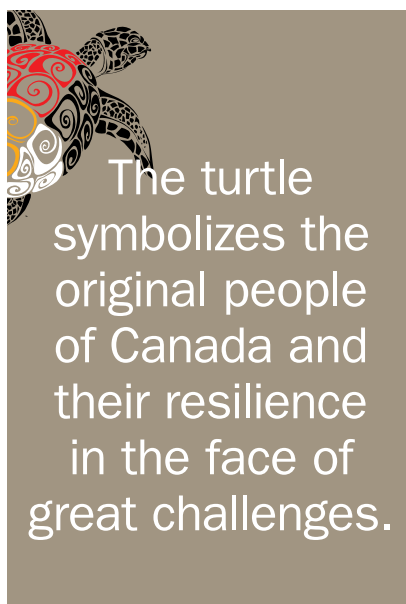
The symbol of the turtle used on the cover of this project is a reference to Turtle Island, a term used by the Haudenosaunee to refer to North America. The turtle is also a common symbol used by environmentalists to indicate their solidarity with the land and its creatures. The turtle is also a symbol of longevity, and the writers use it to symbolize the original people of

Canada and their resilience in the face of great challenges. In many cultures, the turtle is a symbol of knowledge or wisdom and in this document, the turtle symbolizes “ways of knowing.”

An important feature of every Common Threads project is the audiovisual component. In *Full Circle*, the video was created by the same production company that produces the video highlighting the Student Achievement Awards in honour of Marion Drysdale, showcased annually at the Annual Meeting of the Provincial Assembly (AMPA). Using a similar format, the videographers have profiled two First Nations youth: a Métis and an Inuit teenager. The stories of their struggles and triumphs as they come to terms with and celebrate their cultures and heritage illustrate the universal themes of teenage angst in a quest for identity. All students will recognize a part of themselves in these young people as they ask the quintessential questions of identity: Who am I? And why am I here? This is the common thread that runs through each of the lessons.

The title *Full Circle* is meaningful to the writers and many First Nations, Métis and Inuit people. The symbol of the circle or medicine wheel is used throughout the document. While not all Aboriginal people use the medicine wheel, it is useful as an organizational tool and provides a holistic and balanced approach to these sensitive topics. The circle is a common symbol used in many cultures to denote wholeness, inclusion, femaleness (womb) and eternity. For many First Nations and

Inuit people, the circle has a spiritual connotation as the symbol of the moon and the sun. The Métis infinity symbol, the joining of two circles, illustrates the joining of two cultures and the unending existence of a people. The title *Full Circle* also refers to the unending journey on which many Aboriginal people find themselves as they claim and reclaim their culture, their land and their identity.



For some, the circle is seen as whole and never ending. It can be balanced or unbalanced, depending upon what is placed on or in it. In this resource, the writers have attempted to balance the lessons in four quadrants. *Full Circle* is divided into four thematic areas: identity, health, residential schools and land, and

each of these themes has up to 10 lessons within it. Each lesson uses interactive and differentiated instructional strategies that match overall course expectations and opportunities for assessment as learning, of learning and for learning. The Common Threads team has partnered with Pearson/Goodminds, publishers of the latest textbooks for use in Ontario Native Studies courses: *Aboriginal Peoples in Canada* and *Aboriginal Beliefs, Values, and Aspirations*. Several OSSTF/FEESO members were involved with the writing and editing of these texts, and both books provide a set of excellent, up-to-date teaching material for the high school classroom.

The Common Threads V team members are: Sherry Ambridge, District 5A, Northern Shield; Christopher Gardner, District 1, Ontario North East; Alan Howard, District 26, Upper Canada; Cristina Lai, District 12, Toronto; Troy Maracle, District 29, Hastings-Prince Edward; Sheryl Mattson, District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge; Teena Millette, District 17, Simcoe; Laurie Minor, District 35, Universities & Colleges; and Kim Murphy, District 23, Grand Erie. In addition, the following members of the OSSTF/FEESO First Nations, Inuit, Métis Work Group sit as an advisory body to the team: Rocky Landon, District 27, Limestone; Vicki Lucier, District 17, Simcoe; John Macdonald, District 23, Grand Erie; Mary McCue, District 16, York Region; and Marjorie Paleshi, District 24, Waterloo. OSSTF/FEESO provincial staff members are Domenic Bellissimo and Alison Wallace.

*Full Circle: First Nations, Métis and Inuit Ways of Knowing* continues the Common Threads tradition of providing high-quality, educator-ready resources that focus on important social issues and fill curricular resource gaps. The project is currently being field tested with a release date set for August 2012. Electronic copies will be available on the provincial website along with the four previous projects, and a DVD version will be provided to all worksites. ☺

**Alison Wallace** is an Executive Assistant in the Educational Services Department at the OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office.

## LOOKING FOR RELEVANT CONTENT TO ENGAGE STUDENTS?

**ExploreCurioCity.org**

**FREE ready-to-use  
science resources  
for teachers**

# The gift of learning

Aboriginal Education Day at Western's Faculty of Education



**AS** part of on-going efforts to prepare teacher candidates for the complex challenges they will find in their schools, Western's Faculty of Education adopts a variety of approaches to professional learning. Among the most popular is our annual Aboriginal Education Day, a full-day mini-conference that complements other initiatives to provide knowledge and understanding in the area of First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) education.

Aboriginal Education Day was developed as one way to encourage students to engage in some important equity and social-justice learning. Unfortunately, we have found that many students enter their professional programs with very little knowledge of the history of Canada's first peoples or matters such as treaty rights and residential schooling. Indeed, too many teacher candidates are initially convinced they do not need to learn anything

about Indigenous education because they will never be teaching "Indian kids" or working "on reserves." They are surprised to discover that a majority of Aboriginal students attend provincially funded schools and that in many boards, there are Aboriginal students in every school within the jurisdiction.

To encourage the process of developing awareness, building professional knowledge and expertise, and enabling critical engagement with educational questions about social responsibility, reconciliation, fairness and justice, one curriculum inclusion strategy has been Aboriginal Education Day. This approach has proven to be a winner with teacher candidates and presenters alike. The spirit of active learning is alive throughout the day as presenters share their gifts with teacher candidates. And teacher candidates welcome the opportunity to select their own workshops, only complaining, like conference-goers

everywhere, that there were too many choices and they wanted to register for everything or, conversely, that they couldn't register for the workshops they wanted because they were already full.

In planning the day a conscious effort is made to bring together a full panel of presenters who demonstrate by their presence a shared commitment to Aboriginal student success. Included among the 17 workshop presenters this year were:

- Vicki Lucier and Mary McCue from OSSTF/FEESO with their workshop, *First Steps: Creating an Inclusive Environment for First Nations, Inuit and Métis Students*.
- Kim Wheatley, Turtle Clan from Shawanaga First Nation, and Aboriginal Program Co-ordinator of the Turtle Island Conservation Project at the Toronto Zoo, whose workshop was *First Nations Ways of Knowing*.
- Robyn Turgeon, FNMI Education

PERMISSION TO USE PHOTOGRAPH OF TEACHING BUNDLE GRANTED BY KIM WHEATLEY, ABORIGINAL PROGRAMME COORDINATOR, TURTLE ISLAND CONSERVATION, TORONTO ZOO.



Advisor from the Thames Valley District School Board, who spoke on *Our Shared Vision: A Board-wide Approach to the Effective Implementation of Provincial FNMI Educational Policies*.

- Rene Meshake, Ojibway writer and artist: “Jiimaanike: The Canoe Speaks”: Experiencing the language, art and cultural teachings of the Ojibway birch bark canoe.

to visit the Oneida community. Organized by Bonnie Hill, who works with the Indigenous Education Coalition, this field trip allows students to visit a First Nation community, something most of them have never done. An Elder acts as a guide to the community and shares information about its history. Teacher candidates visit Standing Stone School and are able to observe

candidates. Many commented on the use of humour to get points across, and one teacher candidate emphasized that the session “made us reflect on our preconceived notions about Aboriginal students and how that would look to students themselves.” In addition, the workshop “drew comparisons between how the general public feels towards the police [due to speeding tickets, arrogance, etc.] and how students feel towards teachers, and ways to alleviate this.”

Aboriginal Education Day always begins with a plenary session. This year Elders Dan and Mary Lou Smoke accepted our gift of tobacco and offered the opening protocols. One teacher candidate described her experience and expressed her gratitude in this way. “The speakers gave us a water song to learn and provided the smudging ceremony for us to heal and be ready to be responsive to learning. We became part of the tradition and culture, not just outsiders/observers. We were given respect and trust, which was a wonderful experience.”

Dr. Christy Bressette, the first Aboriginal person to earn a PhD from Western’s Faculty of Education and now the Aboriginal Co-ordinator for the Council of Ministers of Education Canada, gave the keynote address. Using four generations of her own family history, she effectively illustrated the history of First Nations education in Canada and discussed the research that points to ways to ensure FNMI students enjoy educational success.

In an e-mail sent the day after her presentation, Dr. Bressette observed, “It was truly a wonderful day yesterday. I had so much positive feedback from the students about their interest and willingness to learn more about how to better work with Aboriginal students and families.” This observation about the open-heartedness and open-mindedness on the part of teacher candidates is particularly gratifying, for it demonstrates the important professional growth Aboriginal Education Day and related learning activities are designed to achieve. ☺

**Rebecca Priegert Coulter** is a professor and the Director of Aboriginal Education in the Faculty of Education at the University of Western Ontario.



Aboriginal Education Day was developed as one way to encourage students to engage in some important equity and social-justice learning.

Several graduate students offered workshops to share their research and knowledge. For example, Andrew Judge spoke about his completed M.Ed research on the Anishinaabe clan system, and Dawn Burleigh and Sarah Burn discussed their experiences teaching at Attawapiskat. Patsy Day, a member of the Oneida First Nation, a teacher and M.Ed student, shared her artistic and craft skills in a hands-on workshop titled Preparing to Study First Nations. Teacher candidate John FitzGibbon, using understanding he gained through an independent study course, offered a session on integrating Indigenous knowledge into Intermediate/Senior science courses and Patti Whiteye, an instructor in the Faculty of Education and a secondary school teacher with the Lambton-Kent Board, demonstrated ways to incorporate Aboriginal materials into the mathematics curriculum.

While the majority of events occur within the faculty, one of the most popular workshops permits a number of students

in classrooms and speak with the children and teachers. A visit to the Longhouse is included, along with a traditional lunch at the Cookhouse. Students are exhilarated when they return from this trip.

Two new workshops added this year were particularly popular. Jessica Ford arranged for the young dancers from Nimitaa (the Ojibway word for “let’s dance together”) and the traditional powwow drummers, Red Tail Hawk, to demonstrate their leadership and proud cultural identity through exhibition dancing and singing. Audience participation through a round dance was encouraged, and a question and answer period was facilitated by the young people from Antler River Elementary School, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation.

A discussion of the similarities between teaching and community policing from Faron Whiteye’s perspective as a First Nations person, a former instructor at the Ontario Police College and a Sergeant Major with the Anishinabek Police Service, also proved highly popular with teacher





# Transitions and transformations

Graduating from teachers college when jobs are scarce



When people ask, “What would you like to be when you grow up?” it seems as if the occupation is a destination point. I knew for a long time that I wanted to be a physical-education teacher to inspire children and youth through fitness and sport. I too was inspired by many people along the way to reach this dream of mine. After years of dedication, support and perseverance, one of the best days of my life finally came—graduation!

I vividly remember this point in time; I knew I was holding a golden ticket. This ticket would enable me to embark on my next journey. This ticket would enable me to take the next steps in my life. This ticket would enable me to be who I want to be, be who I am: a teacher.

Despite my enthusiasm, the lack of demand for educators in Ontario was a reality I was not prepared to accept. Where are the

jobs? What do I do now? I recall feeling lost but I tried to remain positive and optimistic. As the weeks and months went by, another reality hit: I was not going to teach in Ontario this year. None of the boards I had applied to had even invited me for an interview. I hit a roadblock, and yet something inside me said, “This is an opportunity.”

After much thought, support and preparation, I decided that working internationally would enable me to obtain the professional growth and personal experiences I aspired to have in these early stages of my career, and so I set my sights on London, England. Transitioning from student to professional, from teacher candidate to teacher and geographically from Canada to England was life-changing.

Many teachers register with agencies to find a position, apply to schools directly when advertised online ([www.tes.co.uk](http://www.tes.co.uk)) or

check a specific Borough’s website for postings. I chose to register with a U.K. teaching agency prior to departure. I was lucky to find one that offered a guaranteed paid scheme (GPS). Essentially this contract is offered to those who wish to supply teach, since it guarantees you paid work for four out of the five working days. I was eager to supply teach and found it to be very beneficial and enlightening, as opposed to immediately stepping into a role as a full-time contract teacher. It allowed me to see various areas of London and a wide range of inner-city schools and to familiarize myself with the educational system and the diverse routines and school procedures. I gained a lot from this experience, primarily in the domain of classroom and behaviour management. Most importantly, supply teaching helped with the transition from teacher candidate to teacher.

As a secondary trained teacher in Ontario, I was happy to discover that secondary credentials enable you to teach primary school in the U.K. There is a much higher demand for primary educators in London, especially in supply teaching. That meant the majority of my initial working days were spent teaching grades with which I was not familiar. I had to learn fast, but once I became more familiar with the system and had more experience, it became less overwhelming.

After a few weeks of supply work, I was offered a contract to teach physical education in a secondary school. This too was challenging, but for different reasons. The more I observed my colleagues and took note of how the students interacted and responded to certain teaching methods, the easier it became to plan and deliver lessons, to gain trust and respect from the students, to connect but also be firm. With each day, week and month, I was transformed.

One of the many differences between Ontario schools and schools in England involves government inspections administered by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted), after which an evaluation is made public. However, Ofsted inspectors receive only a small glimpse of the school, which may result in a biased and perhaps inaccurate representation of day-to-day activities. After going through two Ofsted inspections at two different schools, I certainly noticed the pressure from the top down as a teacher; even the students were feeling the pressure to perform.

Initially, the hardest thing for me to

acknowledge was feeling as though I was not meeting the expectations I set out for myself as a teacher. This in turn made me feel as though I were failing. It was apparent that who I was when I stepped into

I have now transformed from the person I was prior to teaching abroad and I will continue to transform as I continue to take the next steps forward.



my classrooms was incongruent with who I wanted to be as an educator. What step should I take next?

I needed to be willing to take a leap when at times I wanted to take step back. There were moments when I questioned whether I was strong enough to keep going, if teaching was the right profession

for me (a thought that had never crossed my mind before; to verbalize it seemed taboo, and made me feel very confused and scared). I even questioned if my decision to go abroad was best for my development as an educator.

However, after some heavy introspection I realized many of the insecurities I experienced were a result of my lack of teaching experience, and the emotions a product of how much I wanted to succeed and the effort I wanted to put forth for my students. Yes, teaching is the right profession for me and yes, going abroad was one of the best decisions I have ever made.

One of the most challenging aspects of teaching abroad was doing it alone—not having my family and friends with me. But I was fortunate to meet some fellow Canadian/international teachers and friends. We shared our ideas and struggles and supported each other. Being able to communicate and empathize with friends who are experiencing very similar emotions made me feel less isolated, as well as lucky to be surrounded by such amazing people.

I understand now how much strength it took to live in a foreign country while repeatedly stepping outside my comfort zone to situate myself in many interesting and terrifying situations. Eventually these experiences unveiled themselves as lessons and were key ingredients in shaping the person I am today.

I have not reached my destination point. I am a teacher, but there are many more steps and leaps to take. My golden ticket represents more than just my degrees. It represents resilience. Despite the many obstacles, there are many potential opportunities. It's what one chooses to do with those opportunities that will make the difference and act as a catalyst on one's journey to happiness and success.

My choice to travel and teach abroad has influenced who I am, personally and professionally. I have now transformed from the person I was prior to teaching abroad and I will continue to transform as I continue to take the next steps forward. ☺

**Kimberly Muchnick** graduated from the pre-service program at York University in 2011, and is now actively seeking a teaching position in Ontario.



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

With 3 Ontario certified secondary school campuses in China (Shanghai, Quanzhou and Jinhua)—The Canadian Trillium College is searching for qualified principals and teachers of: English, E.S.L., Mathematics, Physics, and Business & Social Science for **Feb. & Sept. 2012**. Familiarity with ESL programs/services an asset.

Terms: Competitive compensation (CND\$) and free: return air, private furnished accommodation, local travel and more.

This is an ideal opportunity for retired teachers or beginning teachers or teachers on "teacher funded leaves" to experience the culture and mysteries of China.

**Apply Now! Forward resume and cover letter to: Supervising Principal  
Tel: 416-763-4121. Fax: 416-763-5225. Email: dmfolz@hotmail.com**



You're dedicated to taking care  
of your students. We're dedicated  
to taking care of you.

The simple fact of life is that accidents and injuries can happen  
anywhere and to anyone. Even to education workers like you.

At Wynperle Law, we have been helping educators like you with  
their injury and disability cases for many years. We know the law  
and always fight hard to make certain it works to your benefit.  
From compensation to any therapeutic help needed to get you  
back to the top of the class.

Call us today or visit our web site to find out more.

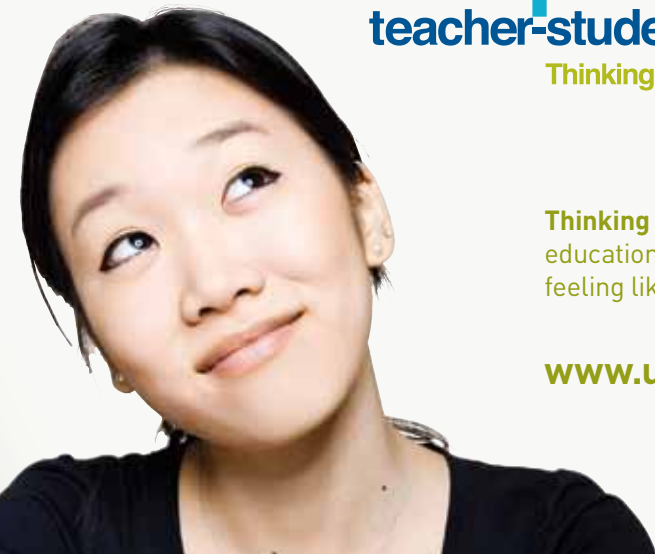


Wynperle Law  
Personal Injury Advocates  
Toll Free: 1.866.696.0300  
E: [info@wynperlelaw.ca](mailto:info@wynperlelaw.ca)  
[www.wynperlelaw.ca](http://www.wynperlelaw.ca)

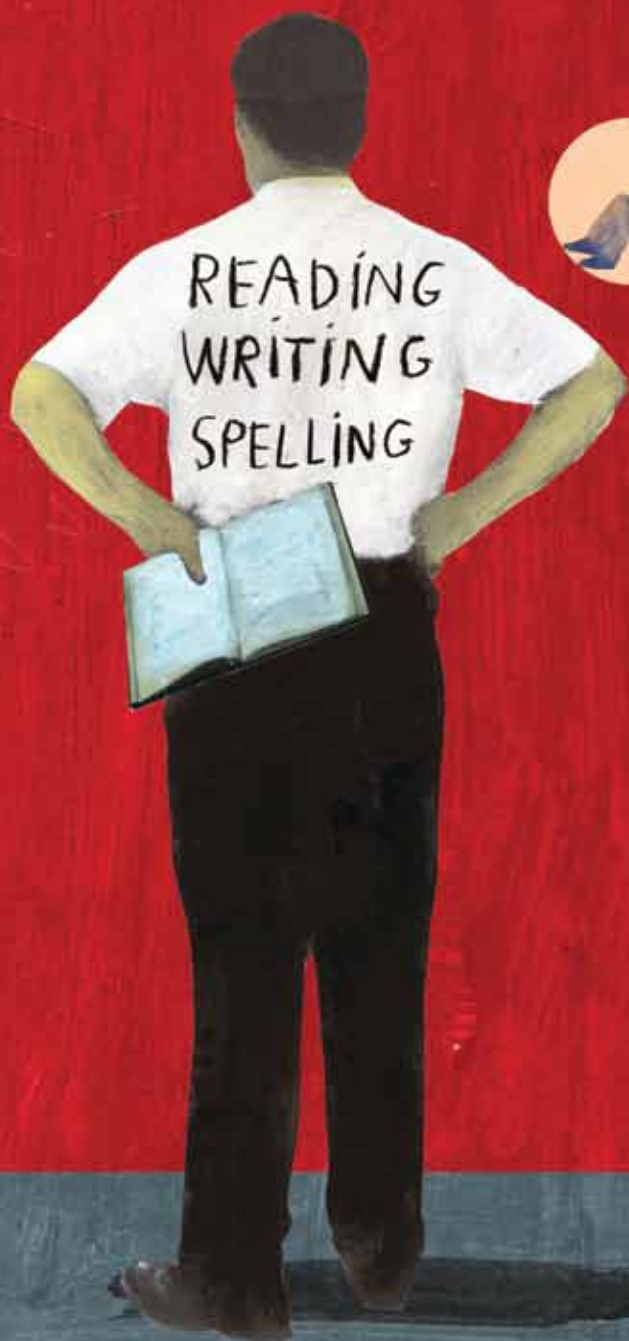


**Thinking about a University?** At UWindsor, get the excellent  
education and exceptional student experience you want without  
feeling like a number. You won't get lost in the crowd here.

[www.uwindsor.ca](http://www.uwindsor.ca)









# BEWARE OF BAND WAGONS

Assumptions need to be challenged now and then

By Adam Mercer

Given that every educator in an Ontario classroom is a university graduate, one has to wonder why we do not apply our own critical thinking to all the new ideas we hear every day. We are constantly exposed to new ideas about how we should teach, what we should teach and our relationship to our students. These ideas are based on assumptions that perhaps we should not be making.

I was recently reading *The Case for Books* by Robert Darnton and came across an episode in the history of libraries that highlighted how potentially dangerous wrong assumptions can be. Darnton recounts that not long ago, the librarians of major universities and other collections were exposed to the idea that the paper upon which their collections were printed was so acidic, the paper itself would soon crumble, which would cost the world not only the actual printed texts but the thoughts and ideas

of previous generations. Something had to be done to save those precious volumes. It wasn't long before the books were being cut along the spines in order to increase the speed and efficiency with which these "soon to be ruined" books could be microfilmed.

The bill for all of this was staggering. At one point 975,000 books were microfilmed at a cost of \$39-million. This estimate is for the process, not the value of the books being destroyed. As it turns out there was only one problem: the science behind the assertion that books were going to fall apart was wrong. In actual fact books are more resilient in many ways than the microfilm they were copied to. Then there was a push get the books off microfilm and onto a digital record, until it was been discovered that digital copies of books are more susceptible to damage than either the microfilm or the original copies. All of

ILLUSTRATION: LINO



this cost and destruction of books started with several seriously flawed assumptions, which must force us in education to ask, “What happens if some of our assumptions are wrong, too?”

In education we seem to have developed many assumptions about learning and what it should mean to our students, their parents and to us. Unfortunately some of these assumptions might also be flawed. And since we are in the process of raising and training the next generation, the consequences might be much more severe than the cost of a few million dollars’ worth of books. If we get it wrong, we might do greater harm to the students’ ability to learn, and even more significantly, we might actually stray so far off course as to make some of the problems we have already identified worse rather than better.

The first assumption that must be challenged is that students must feel good about themselves before we can get them to perform even simple tasks. In order to keep students of various grade levels from feeling bad about themselves, we have eliminated the prospect of failure from the elementary panel and have instituted various programs at the secondary level that spend as much time making kids feel welcome and happy as they do teaching kids. The reasoning goes that if kids feel good about who they are, they will then feel more comfortable coming to class and thus will be more successful academically, less likely to engage in behaviours we know can damage their chances of success and thereby make them better. But what if the first assumption—that they need to feel good for all this good stuff to happen—is flawed?

There have been numerous studies that discuss the issue of connecting self-esteem to many different outcomes. Jean M. Twenge points out in *Generation Me* that self-esteem does not prevent bad things like drug abuse, teen pregnancy, juvenile delinquency or alcoholism. The same author also points to the California Task Force to Promote Self-Esteem and Personal

Responsibility, which spent US\$250,000 trying to improve self-esteem in California schools and then realized that academic achievement and good behaviour were not outcomes of positive self-esteem. So if feeling good about yourself has no impact on academic achievement, why is it that we are once again hip-deep in social promotion to protect students from negative feelings of failing?



The twisted logic seems to say that in order for students to perform at all, they need to first feel good about themselves, and this means anything that might interfere with their feeling good about themselves needs to go. But what about all the things they cannot do, academically speaking, when they enter our classes? Sadly, there seems to be a movement towards the idea that if they can’t do it, don’t make them.

Consider the struggles kids have getting through Shakespeare. I have to admit that reading the words of the Bard was no great joy to me in high school. However, the themes he dealt with are universal, lasting and can resonate with almost anyone. Yet there have been plenty of arguments put forward that since today’s students struggle with Shakespeare, maybe it’s time to retire him. I’ve seen it in the media from time to time, and have even heard colleagues make the

same point in my workplace. In other words, because the kids don’t get it, we shouldn’t teach it or even try.

Many of our students also struggle with their own writing. I have read more than my fair share of essays from all grade levels that fail to meet any of the expectations clearly laid out beforehand. They are required to write paragraphs, use actual sentences, cite evidence from a minimum number of relevant sources and argue a point with which others might disagree. Many of us in the education system have noticed these skills declining, as has the mainstream media. In fact, it has become enough of a problem that many of our post-secondary institutions offer English programs designed to fix that basic deficiency, or some kind of extra editing help for essays, or both.

Interestingly, even something most of us take for granted, such as spelling, is one of those areas that, it is argued, might harm students’ fragile egos if we correct them. As far back as teachers’ college I have heard how important it is that we allow students to express their ideas and not hamper that expression by correcting spelling and grammar errors. It still comes up at the occasional PD session, and the logic is startlingly familiar: if we correct spelling, students might feel their ideas are being undervalued and, as a result, they might not want to participate in class or express themselves in writing. Having auto-correct active on all of our word-processing software is not helping, but that’s another story.

Another example of our profession potentially making wrong assumptions is this little jewel I heard in a number of presentations recently: “In order for students to be successful, we must meet them where they learn.” This particular statement has many interpretations, but essentially the message is that if we want kids to learn from us, we have to drop to their level and deal with them in ways they can relate to—and presumably also drop whatever they are not interested in or motivated to learn.

If students seem unable to understand

Shakespeare, or write an essay, or spell properly, it should not mean, however, that we should stop teaching them these things, nor that we should downgrade our expectations. Should we not be trying to push them to climb higher, rather than encourage them to stay in the familiar? After all, is education not supposed to be about learning something that was previously unknown? I would argue that we might actually be exiling students, forcing them to stay exactly where they are, if we don't challenge them to do more academically. We have to give them material that is new or different, dare to show them where they are making mistakes and let them fail occasionally in order for them to learn.

Does failure make them feel good? No, and it didn't make me feel great either as a kid, but stumbling into new concepts, ideas and questions is part of the challenge. Those struggles will lead them to greater understanding of themselves, their world and how they impact on it. We should also consider that letting them taste a little bit of defeat now and then might give them enough of an aversion to it that they will want to work harder to avoid it.

Many different sources, including *Generation Me*, point out that rates of clinical depression among young people are going up, some say even to about 25 per cent. Could it be that once these young people are no longer in the protected world where everyone is making every effort to protect their egos and

make them feel good, they can't handle the drastic change of environment? By protecting them, is it not possible that we might be ensuring they never build up any resilience and, as a result, make every minor failure a major disaster in their minds? Many of these young people have no tools in their character to deal constructively with conflict, frustration or failure.

Another assumption we seem to be making, not just in education but in society at large, is that technology is good. As an extension of the philosophy that we need to meet students where they learn, some say we need to use technology for everything. This assumption actually has two components that are thoroughly explained in *Hamlet's Blackberry* by William Powers. Essentially, time spent in front of a screen is good and everything else is bad. Collective group-think, particularly on a topic that is vacuous in relation to real research, carries with it a lot of costs. Early indicators seem to show that we might be shortening attention spans, reducing the importance of actual knowledge, de-emphasizing the importance of expertise and making depth of analysis difficult for our students to achieve.

Perhaps the most alarming side effect of this assumption, as far as education goes, is that we may be losing sight of something that was fundamental when I was in teachers' college: Bloom's taxonomy. Not to be too glib, but if we spend

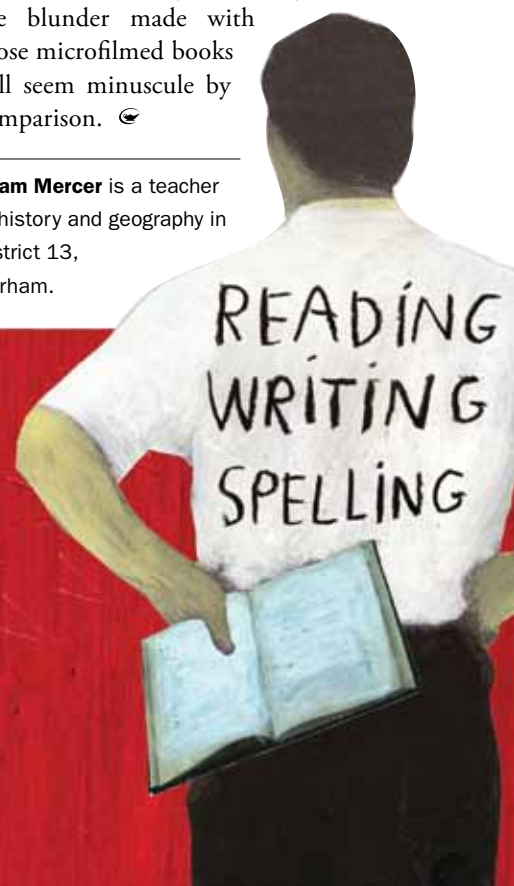
huge amounts of time trying to figure out how to turn almost everything we do into more time in front of a screen for our students, how are we really addressing multiple intelligences? Computers by their nature are incapable of dealing with all of the various aspects of Bloom.

People have been teaching other people since long before Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, and frankly, the methodologies that work have not changed all that much. We seem to get locked into the idea that because something is new it is good. In fact that assumption might actually be the most potentially dangerous trap we could fall into, since "old" ways of learning are the ways we learned and we know they work.

We have to challenge those who claim to have new knowledge about how to educate. Failing to do so leaves us with an entire generation of kids who have no idea how to deal with failure, criticism (constructive or otherwise), or how to push themselves through challenges and obstacles when they leave the safety and protection of the education system. If we get it wrong, the blunder made with those microfilmed books will seem minuscule by comparison. ☺

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

**Should we not be trying to push them to climb higher than where they are rather than encouraging them to stay in the familiar?**



# TEACHING NORTH OF 50

An extraordinary and fulfilling opportunity

By Dawn Burleigh and Sarah Burm

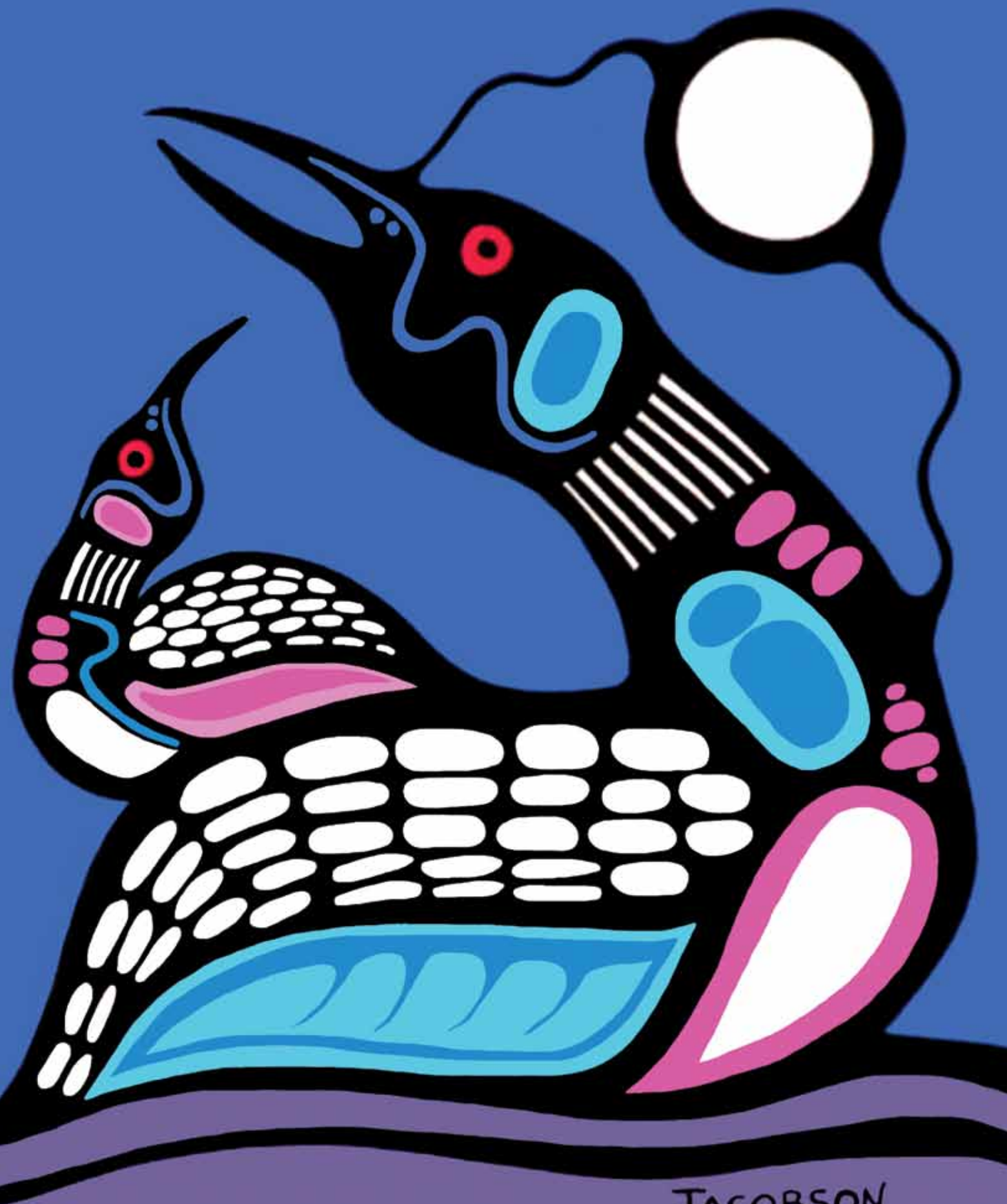
Somewhere between the urban mecca of the GTA and the rural isolation of Canada's Nunavut territory lies the Nishnawbe Aski Nation, a place ripe with opportunity and possibility for those willing to teach and learn beyond conventional borders. The Nishnawbe Aski Nation spans the northern two-thirds of the province of Ontario and is home to 49 First Nation communities, most with schools requiring educators to live and teach as involved members of the community. For both new and experienced teachers, opportunities exist for professional and personal growth. Such growth is not limited to the borders of classroom walls but works to narrow the spaces between the personal and professional self, calling on activist positions and critical approaches to teaching and learning.

The Aboriginal population is the fastest-rising demographic in Canada. This means more and more Aboriginal students will enter the public, separate and private school boards throughout Canada. In Ontario, this translates to an increased student population in both rural and urban areas, calling for an increased focus on the integration of Aboriginal knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum, school community and approaches to teaching. According to Statistics Canada there are more than 50,000 Aboriginal youth of school age residing in Ontario, many in northern communities of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation. While population demographics allude to a higher demand for qualified teachers of Aboriginal


PAINTING: MARK ANTHONY JACOBSON







JACOBSON



*My inability to respond, to defend  
my position, to advocate for my  
students and my work leaves me  
with a resolve to do more, to be  
prepared and to have pride in my  
work as a teacher in the north.*  
—Dawn August 2009

students, research shows that graduation rates and levels of achievement of Ontario's Aboriginal students are at an all-time low. The demographics and research paint a picture of undeniable need, a need for more qualified teachers who will make a long-term commitment to improving the quality of education for Aboriginal learners in Ontario.

Having lived and taught in a remote First Nation community for two and three years, respectively, the two of us have embarked on a research endeavour to speak to some of the experiences, challenges and opportunities of teaching and living with First Nations. The experience of being a teacher in Ontario's north draws questions from those within and beyond the educational community, regarding the motivation to assume and maintain a teaching position in a northern location. Among the most popular is the question, "What is it like to teach in a remote First Nation community?" While each of us would describe our teaching experiences in northern Ontario as unique, the commonality we share is the impact our experiences have had on how we negotiate our roles as educators, researchers and individuals.

Teaching in northern Ontario offers both opportunities and challenges. The professional dialogue around the future of the teaching profession is often clouded by cries of a teacher surplus, teachers deemed redundant and teachers delegated to occasional status. Despite this claim, it must be noted that the bounds of Ontario extend to its northern shores and teaching positions do exist for those willing to seek out opportunities and challenges. They just happen to be north of the 50th parallel.

#### SARAH'S JOURNAL, AUGUST 2008

*As I sit in the airport waiting, it seems like only yesterday I was tirelessly applying to yet another job posting. After sharing my frustrations about employment in the teaching profession to family and friends, it was suggested I look for teaching opportunities in the north. Why not? I thought. I decided to broaden my job search and explore teaching opportunities that pushed me out of my comfort zone. After clicking "submit" to a job posted for a Grade 3 teach-*

*ing position in Attawapiskat, a community unknown to me, it wasn't long until I had secured an interview and received a phone call from the elementary school principal offering me a full-time teaching position. Now as I wait for the chartered flight to depart, reality starts setting in. Three months ago I could barely pronounce the name of the First Nation community I would be teaching and living in, let alone locate it on a map. I am filled with both excitement and nervousness as I enter a new chapter in my personal and professional life. This is it, I think, no turning back now*

#### DAWN'S JOURNAL, AUGUST 2008

*As I wait for Sarah to arrive with the other teachers on the chartered flight, I think back to our phone conversation in the summer. She, like I had been a year ago, had many questions and I struggled with how best to answer them. In many ways, I thought, you have to figure things out as you go, but most teachers want to be prepared and as a result asked many questions about the logistics of home and school. Essentially, Sarah was asking me what teaching in a remote northern community was really like. As the plane comes in for landing, I think to myself, now she's going to find out.*

#### DAWN'S JOURNAL, AUGUST 2009

*"When you get a real job and you're a real teacher, it's better, right?" I sit red-cheeked at a dinner table, stumbling for a response, ultimately speechless. The moment is frozen in time.... I sit still and silenced, not wanting to elicit another round of questioning. So you're the teacher from up north? How's that going? It really is tough to get a job in the city now, isn't it? These are the questions I field at weddings, BBQs, days at the beach and over coffee with friends. All the while thinking about how my position is not perceived as authentic, as credible, as real. I leave dinner that evening feeling deflated and misrepresented. My inability to respond, to defend my position, to advocate for my students and my work leaves me with a resolve to do more, to be prepared and to have pride in my work as a teacher in the north.*

Northern teachers are subject to the same conditions for certification and practice as all other teachers in Ontario. Northern



teaching positions require Ontario-certified teachers capable of implementing the Ontario curriculum with the added opportunity to facilitate culturally responsive programming and provide a supportive environment for students to become critically engaged citizens. Today, in many community schools, the Ontario curriculum guides teaching approaches and implementation. Additionally, the associated policies and programs from the Ministry of Education—for assessment and reporting, literacy and numeracy, equity and social justice and other subject-specific recommendations—have been adopted. Regardless of geographical location, certified teachers are required to adhere to the ethics and standards of practice mandated through the Ontario College of Teachers while also incorporating needs-based initiatives from the local education authority. In addition to governing structures, policies, curriculum and local mandates, the northern teacher has an added responsibility to know and understand not only the historical significance of education for Aboriginal communities but also to know and understand contemporary social, political and economic realities. These teachers are also learners, engaged in a process of coming to know and understand a new way of teaching, of learning and of living, often far from ideal circumstances in comparison to schools in the south.

The educational experiences of Shannen Koostachin, a strong-willed youth advocate from the Attawapiskat First Nation, highlighted the disparities that exist between schools like the one in her community and publicly funded schools in the south. Shannen was part of a generation that was educated in a portable system after a toxic diesel leak rendered her school unsafe in 2000. Shannen and her classmates grew up in a time where promises were made repeatedly by government officials to improve the conditions of their learning environment. Unfortunately, those promises were always broken and the reason was always the same: not enough funding. With a desire to change the educational outcomes for the youth in her community, Shannen and her classmates worked tirelessly, advocating for all First Nations children and ultimately taking their fight to Parliament Hill in June 2008.

#### SARAH'S REFLECTION, DECEMBER 2009

*I have learned that December is a busy teaching time. Parent-teacher conferences, preparation for the upcoming Christmas concert and the anticipation of Christmas holidays filled the air as my students and I made the trek outside from our classroom portable to the school gymnasium for an impromptu school assembly. One by one, the elementary and secondary school students, teachers, administrators, as well as community members and elders, were ushered into the gymnasium, filling the bleachers until there was only standing room remaining. Having little knowledge about what was to be announced, I waited eagerly for the assembly to begin, as did my students. It was an occasion for celebration, proclaimed the first speaker. Indian and Northern Affairs Canada had just announced that negotiations would begin immediately for a new elementary school to be built. Students cheered and handshakes were shared among members of the community in response to the*

*wonderful news. Upon returning to our classroom, students were filled with excitement and joy at the prospect of finally being able to attend what they described as a "real" school. "Will we be able to eat our lunch in a school cafeteria?" "Do you think we will each have our own locker?" I did my best to answer their questions, but a part of me hesitated. From my understanding of the school history, promises such as the one announced today had been made before, only to be later broken. I asked myself, how was this time different? I worried my students would grow disheartened if, in a couple of years, no progress had been made in building a new school. Later that day I spoke with Dawn about the school assembly and told her about my students' reactions and my inability to share fully in their excitement. She said her students had responded quite differently, many of them walking out of the assembly, skeptical of the agenda and the intentions of those who held the fate of a new school in their hands. No longer did these words have value. Inaction had spoken louder to them than any message of hope.*

This new message of hope was embodied by Shannen Koostachin, but shortly after she was nominated for the International Children's Peace Prize, she died tragically in an automobile accident in May 2010. With the support of family, friends and community members, Shannen's Dream, a campaign named in her memory, continues the work she had begun in advocating for the educational rights of First Nations youth. With issues of equity and social justice becoming integral to teaching pedagogy, the time is apt to extend the issues in Aboriginal education to allies in the south. Students across the country have demonstrated their support through a national letter-writing campaign. In addition to student-led movements, national and provincial educational associations such as the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation have pledged their support.

Whether it is in Toronto's concrete jungle or somewhere in the vast northern landscape, federation members across Ontario sit at their desks each morning, preparing for the arrival of their students. Regardless of geographical location, we have a professional commitment to ensuring our students' safety and rights, but beyond the scope of our classrooms we can provide opportunities for awareness, knowledge-building, empowerment and action through advocacy participation. Shannen's Dream offers an opportunity for northern and southern teachers alike to bridge the gaps in Ontario's educational inequalities. The injustices of these issues are not relegated to the desks of northern teachers and students but to the desks of all educational stakeholders.

In working to narrow the spaces between us, we, as northern teachers and now as researchers, hope our shared stories have answered the question: what is it like to teach in the north? It is an extraordinary opportunity, and most definitely a real job. ☺

**Sarah Burn** and **Dawn Burleigh** are pursuing graduate studies at Western University, and presented a workshop on this topic at Western's Aboriginal Education Day in February.







# BOYS AN

## Neither a competition nor a question of ability

By Rod Heikkila

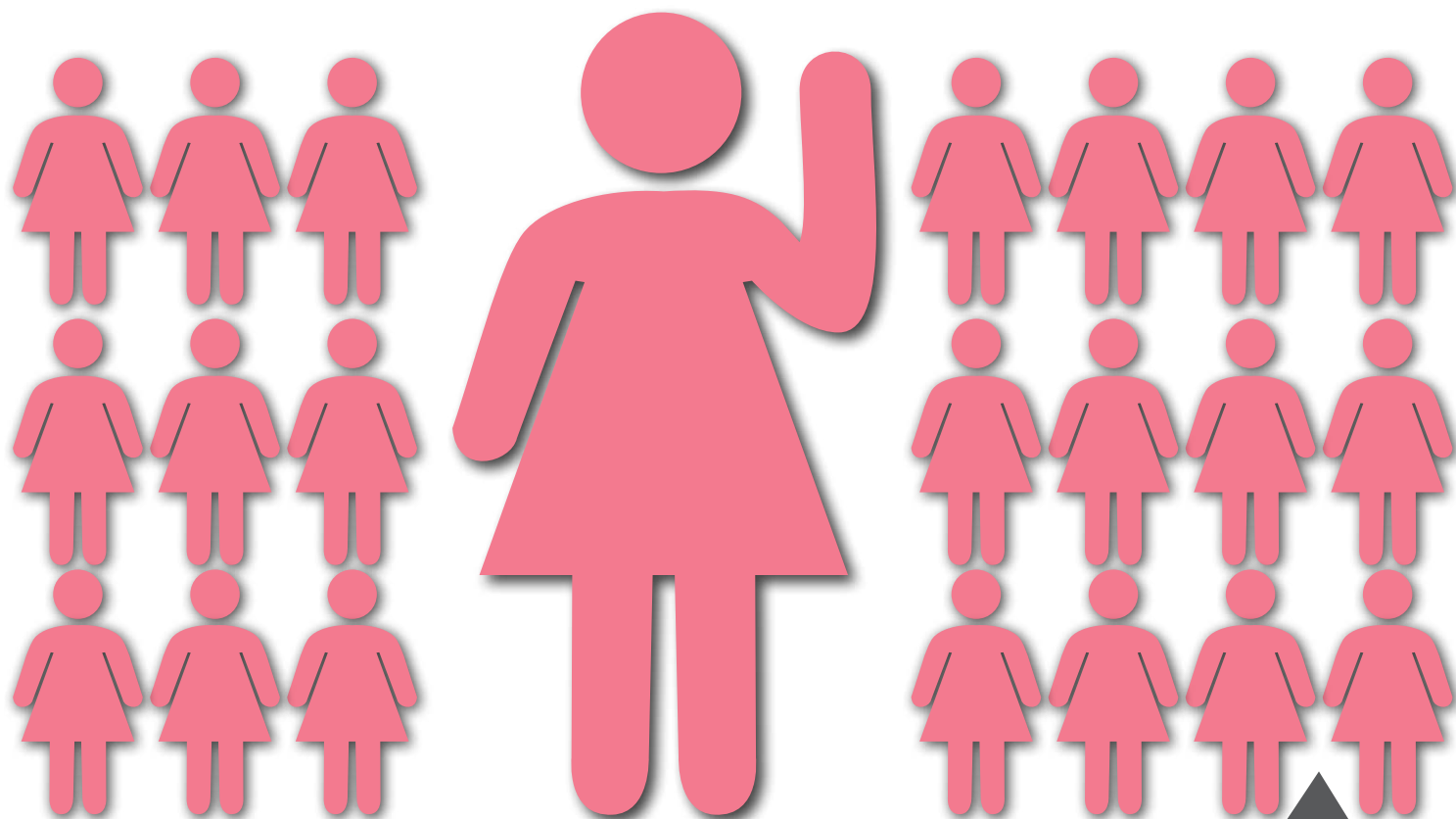
New class lists: 22 girls and four boys in one class; 22 boys and four girls in the other—which class would you rather teach? In which would you rather be a student? Few issues raise as many fascinating questions as the idea of male achievement in school. When asked, most people have an opinion, including the boys themselves and their female classmates. Most agree that, at the moment, most boys are outperformed by most girls, from elementary through secondary education, and that at the post-secondary level, women are outperforming men in an increasing number of academic disciplines.

There are, of course, exceptions, but the trend is remarkable. Kathleen Palmer Cleveland, American author of *Teaching Boys Who Struggle in School: Strategies that Turn Underachievers into Successful Learners*, looks in detail at what she calls “the complexity of the issue of the problem of boys’ academic underachievement” by referring to studies conducted in Australia, England and the United States. What strikes her are the similarities between jurisdictions, but she notes that the U.S. is doing by far the least about it when it comes to financial commitment by governments. Canadian

Michael Reist’s *Raising Boys in a New Kind of World* focuses on ideas that suggest Canadian boys are similar to their American, British and Australian brothers when it comes to academic achievement. *The New York Times* bestseller *Real Boys: Rescuing our Sons from the Myths of Boyhood* by Dr. William Pollack is aimed at parents who are understandably concerned about the situation in which many boys find themselves nowadays, and offers some reassuring advice while taking aim at some of the stereotypes about masculinity. It too is worthwhile reading for any educational worker.







# D GIRLS & ACHIEVEMENT

## IDENTIFYING THE “PROBLEM”

Pollack points out that poor performance by boys compared to girls “exists across Western Europe and Australia as well. In England and Wales, girls uniformly score higher than boys in standardized tests conducted at ages five, seven, nine and 11... [and that] 48 per cent of [16 year-old] girls—versus 39 per cent of boys—receive the highest grades in five or more subjects.

“When poverty is factored in, the discrepancy doubles in favour of girls. In the European Union, more girls complete secondary education and in most West European countries, they stay on longer

in all forms of post-secondary schooling. In New South Wales, Australia, a study found that the majority of ‘special’ and ‘support’ class occupants were boys... [and] boys performed less well than girls in literacy tests, had lower scores on entrance exams for higher education and left school earlier than girls.”

At first glance, the facts are striking. Similar statistics abound throughout the literature on the subject, but two ideas here deserve consideration: boys are compared to girls as a measure of success, and standardized tests are often used to gauge success.

## STANDARDIZED TESTING

More about the former in a moment, but about the latter, Reist makes a good point. He shows that recent research regarding brain development in boys and girls predicts that boys will necessarily do more poorly on the type of testing done by the oddly named Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) in Grades 3 and 6, for example. The EQAO’s own 2009 website claims gender results differ perhaps because of “difference in maturity levels, difference in reading preferences, leisure reading (of which girls do more) and certain instructional practices.” The





Better still, he suggests that government “take the money spent on blanket testing ...and put the money towards helping [at-risk-students].”

EQAO has no suggestions about what to do, but they keep testing anyway, at considerable expense to the public. Student achievement on standardized tests for boys and girls, incidentally, is affected little by the deliberate placement of a male teacher in the classroom, a strategy also attempted in Australia. In fact, female elementary teachers have a slightly higher success rate in that regard, according to a study at Western Washington University, in a country where educational funding and even mass firings are often tied to test scores. Reist suggests that one strategy “would be to test boys a year later.” Better still, he suggests that government “take the money spent on blanket testing, which reveals the same 15-20 per cent of students who are ‘at risk’ every year, and put the money towards helping them. Ideally, we should get rid of blanket standardized testing or at least anticipate the resulting lower scores for boys and not ‘pathologize’ a perfectly natural state of affairs.”

#### WHO ARE THESE GIRLS ANYWAY?

It has not been the fashion to admit it for several decades, but boys and girls are different, significantly different. Many experienced teachers still in the classroom will remember when times were different, when it was generally understood that girls were not succeeding in school as they should. Studies abounded about favouritism towards males and stereotyping

masculine and feminine academic areas, from technological education and physical education to English, mathematics and modern languages. Educators put a lot of time into strategizing how to make the classroom more female friendly. Since the late '70s, girls and women have been actively recruited and encouraged to study in fields that had largely been denied them. Where I teach, there isn't a female washroom in the technological education wing, and the school was built in 1967. While there are still many areas of inequity that need to be addressed in Canada and elsewhere, and while some areas remain dominated by one gender or the other, when it comes to academia, there is ample evidence that females have risen to the challenge with great success, and they are not finished yet. Perhaps the “problem” of male underachievement is a misnomer for the wonderful success story of female achievement.

As early as the '80s, controversial feminist pundit and professor Camille Paglia was already sensing the shifting sands. She declared in her 1992 book *Sex, Art, and American Culture* that “[e]quality of opportunity, a crucial political ideal that all must support, should not be confused with sexual similitude, which remains a wishful fiction.” She agreed with some earlier tests that suggested “female intelligence occupies the broad median of the spectrum and that women do not reach the heights and depths of men, who may be genius or moron.” She asserted that “though men may be deep, mentally they are slow. Compared to women, they are

poor at the rapid absorption of verbal data. Narration of complex social incidents is hopelessly impeded by male auditors, who require backtracking, repetition and endless clarification.”

A lot of research has been done since then. It turns out that there is essentially no correlation between gender and IQ, but male and female brains develop and function so differently that educators must take into account the essential differences in what might be loosely called temperament as it pertains to success in school. Hormonal differences are another fascinating and mysterious area worthy of more study. For now, let us acknowledge that boys are different from girls, and that girls as a group are doing better at school.

#### WHO ARE THESE BOYS ANYWAY?

It's hard to say, exactly, who the under-achieving boys are. It's possible, for example, that as many boys as ever, or perhaps more, are achieving academic excellence but now there are simply far more females succeeding than before. Students, mostly boys, who long to leave school at a younger age to achieve in other ways—as they could in their parents' generation—are now forced to stay in the classroom. In Ontario, those boys are essentially locked in until they are 18 years old. The resulting and predictable behavioural issues raised by such a pedagogical and sociological reality cannot be ignored. They are about much more than teachers' failure to engage through place mats, learning cycles, graphic novels or the ubiquitous differen-



Male and female brains develop and function so differently that educators must take into account the essential differences in what might be loosely called temperament as it pertains to success in school.



tiated instruction. Ontario government promises of alternative programming for the inevitable increase in the number of underachievers have been all but forgotten as economies wobble around the world.

One school underachiever is, of course, unique from the next, because we are dealing with real people who are more than statistics. It is clear, however, that economies like Ontario's truly are changing, and the middle-class income opportunities once available to so-called underachievers are decreasing. Many know this from a young age. Nonetheless, one study shows that females generally have a heightened sense of their likelihood to fail in life, while boys have a heightened sense of their likelihood to succeed. Paradoxically, Steve Jobs is admired partially because the successful creative genius was once a directionless young man who didn't fit into elementary school, dropped out of university after six months, led a freewheeling lifestyle that included psychedelic drugs, then, after landing a job as a video-game designer, eventually founded Apple. Facebook inventor Mark Zuckerberg quit school too, and he's a billionaire with a Hollywood film about him. For many boys, academic achievement is simply not considered cool, and the nearly inescapable mass media reinforce largely unrealistic images of masculinity that mock the nerdy smart guy or brand him as effeminate while promising material success for the lovable, misunderstood loser or the witty fool. Intellectuals are often mistrusted as public figures, while wealthy athletes and rappers are revered.

Others say that the traditionally masculine ideal of success, of the noble man of action, has transmuted into the basement-dwelling action hero of often violent video adventures, that underachieving young men now expect less of themselves, which in turn is reinforced by education's ever-decreasing expectations of them. Maybe. All this is occurring while the demands of the workplace require increasingly sophisticated workers, and credentialism is waxing, not waning. Many college technological programs in Ontario, for example, which lead to good employment, now require a university-stream math credit or the MCT4C math credit; a high school diploma with a MAP4C math credit will not be enough for admission, and first-year dropout rates for those programs are soaring. University of Western Ontario professor James Côté's perspective on the effects of credentialism on post-secondary education was outlined in Jon Cowans' article "Kids in the Hallowed Halls," published in the Fall 2007 issue of *Education Forum*. He asserted that too many young people are being pushed into, rather than drawn to, higher learning, and examined what distinguishes education from graduation.

#### WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP UNDERACHIEVERS?

We all need to be aware of the true nature of the problem before we can begin to address it. A reader might disagree with some of the premises, but books and articles like those mentioned above are excellent resources for trying to appreciate the

complexities of the issue. They also offer practical strategies for educational workers to consider as they think about and rethink their own individual professional practices, confident that what works for one teacher might work for another, that boys and girls are different as groups, to be sure, but each student is as unique as each teacher. Today's situation and these ideas defy standardized approaches and blanket solutions. It would be pedagogically and fiscally sound thinking by the Ontario government to retrain its EQAO employees as educational workers and send them into classrooms to do the heavy lifting with the rest of us. Then pull down the EQAO building.

Finally, let us remember that females' success is not detrimental to males' success. Education is not a competition; it is a human right. As we struggle with the reality of addressing the needs of an important segment of our male populations in North America, the U.K., Western Europe and Australia, there are still dozens of countries, some of them wealthy, where women are treated as the property of men, where it is illegal for a woman to drive, where a woman who leaves her home unaccompanied by a male will be flogged, where women are forbidden to show their faces in public or girls to receive any education at all. Everyone, including our underachievers, will benefit when that changes. ☺

---

**Rod Heikkila**, a teacher in District 11, Thames Valley, is a long-time OSSTF/FEESO activist.











# WHAT WOULD GANDHI DO?

Applying Gandhian educational  
philosophy in Ontario classrooms

By Benjamin Petric

While researching Gandhi and his educational philosophy, I began to consider whether his ideas could be interpreted and applied here in Ontario, and if so, how. Ours is a large and uniquely diverse province. A multitude of complex challenges, a variety of actors, and divergent and sometimes competing perspectives interact in the province's many school systems. Heated debates on topics such as bullying and school safety, the relationship between funding, region and class, the role of faith and sexuality in the school, and First Nations, LGBTQ and visible minority rights illustrate only some of the many challenges we face together as a province. These challenges play out not only in society at large but on a daily basis in the province's classrooms and schoolyards, sports teams and after-school clubs. As we strive to negotiate the complexities of our changing province, together we need to continue building our society from some common ground. Can incorporating a moral/spiritual foundation as articulated by Gandhi into our school systems result in a more inclusive education system and society, and more deeply engaged students and citizenry?

ILLUSTRATION: JOE MORSE



Paul Axelrod notes in his book, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada 1800-1914*, that the education system has both generated and reflected social change throughout Canada's growth as a nation. Gandhi, too, saw education as a force for nation-building. Through education, he sought to eliminate discrimination and injustice in an effort to create a unified society out of a sometimes incongruent multitude. We can adapt and incorporate parts of Gandhi's educational philosophy as we seek to eliminate discrimination and injustice, and create a more unified and engaged society here in Ontario. The province's school systems are the ideal venue to equip youth with a moral/spiritual foundation in pursuit of this goal.

Gerald Gutek identifies three pillars of Gandhian educational philosophy in his work *Mohandus Gandhi: Father of Indian Independence*. The first is "*satyagraha*," meaning "soul force" or "truth force." Teaching the concept of *satyagraha* and non-violence emphasizes the "interior moral force" that requires us to resist injustice. *Satyagraha* encourages us to confront wrongdoing but trains us to focus emotions such as anger on constructive conflict resolution in order to avoid physical, sexual and verbal forms of violence. According to the principle of *satyagraha*, violence of all forms begets violence, in the process "dehumanizing both the victim and the perpetrator." In his book *Gandhi's Way: A Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, Mark Juergensmeyer writes

that practising *satyagraha* "redirect[s] the focus of a fight from persons to principle." It emphasizes the search for higher truth through the process of a respectful and, importantly, self-respecting engagement with conflicting views. Perhaps the concept of *satyagraha* can give youth and adults alike the philosophical and also the practical tools to confront injustice and the "ethically vacuous relativism" that Dr. Stephen L. Anderson wrote about in his article, "Moments of startling clarity" (*Education Forum*, Fall 2011, Vol. 37, Issue 3). Gandhi believed that education is what is required to elicit "soul force," and the youth of our province should be afforded the opportunity to discover their interior moral force, for their sakes and for the sake of our society.

The second pillar of the moral/spiritual foundation is the importance of educating the "whole" individual—mind, body and soul. Gandhi states that "Man is neither mere intellect, nor the gross animal body, nor the heart or soul alone. A proper and harmonious combination of all three is required for the making of the whole man." It is the whole person who is most productive and engaged in society, and most fulfilled. At present our education system's main focus is on educating the mind and, to a lesser extent, the body and the soul. Education of the body consists of creating a social culture that values and engages in physical activity and work. Arguably, our education system generates and reflects social mores that value and emphasize the maths and sciences and university-level courses, as opposed to truly valuing the multiple intelligences that manifest in humanity.

The Gandhian concept of education for the soul creates a deeply inclusive spiritual foundation that can serve as a point of departure in developing self-knowledge. According to Gandhi, the "...cohesive force between animate beings is love.... Where there is love there is life...." Gandhi also says that "[a]ll religions are founded on the same moral laws. My ethical religion is made up of laws which bind all men all over the world." This spiritual foundation can offer students and our society an inclusive and common ground for introspection and self-discovery. Both religious and secular interpretations of Gandhian spirituality allow us to understand that Gandhi's "ethical religion" is fundamentally about love for oneself and for humanity. Surely there is always room in our schools and in our society for more caring and love.

Ultimately, the concept of wholeness in body, mind and spirit results in a more well-rounded, confident and thoughtful individual. Gandhian wholeness has the potential to increase student engagement and, intrinsically, motivation by virtue of its emphasis on our human responsibility to perfect our own nature and to contribute to the perfection of others, thereby helping to make our learning and our lives more meaningful and productive. This in turn would enhance individual self-actualization, and result in an improved quality of learning and teaching in our education systems.

In the pursuit of perfection as individuals, we must see ourselves as part of our broader community, the third and final pillar of the moral/spiritual foundation. The pursuit of perfection in a Gandhian sense can only be achieved, as Gutek says, "in the cooperative mutuality of human community." Gandhian morality



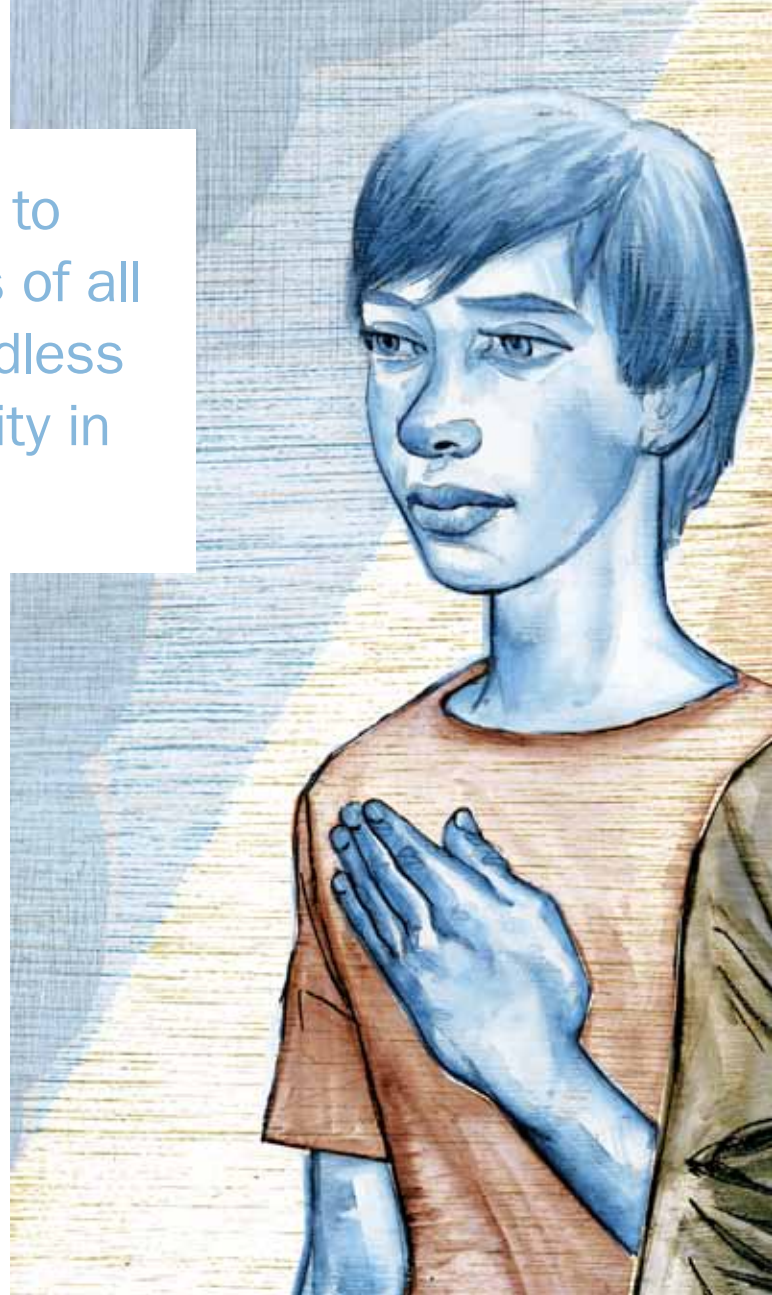


“Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels, regardless of the level of heterogeneity in their classrooms.”

consists of living in service to others, and his conception of service is deeply tied to his ideas on spirituality. His emphasis on the concept of community speaks to the importance of social cohesion and unity, and of the need to actively identify and emphasize the commonalities between us. Gandhi deeply valued the idea of community and service to others, and his ideas could serve to further unify our schools and communities to create a more meaningful existence together. Implementing Gandhi's moral/spiritual foundation can help teachers and other education professionals to create a meaningful and supportive classroom learning experience that fosters students' intrinsic motivation and encourages learning and living with intent.

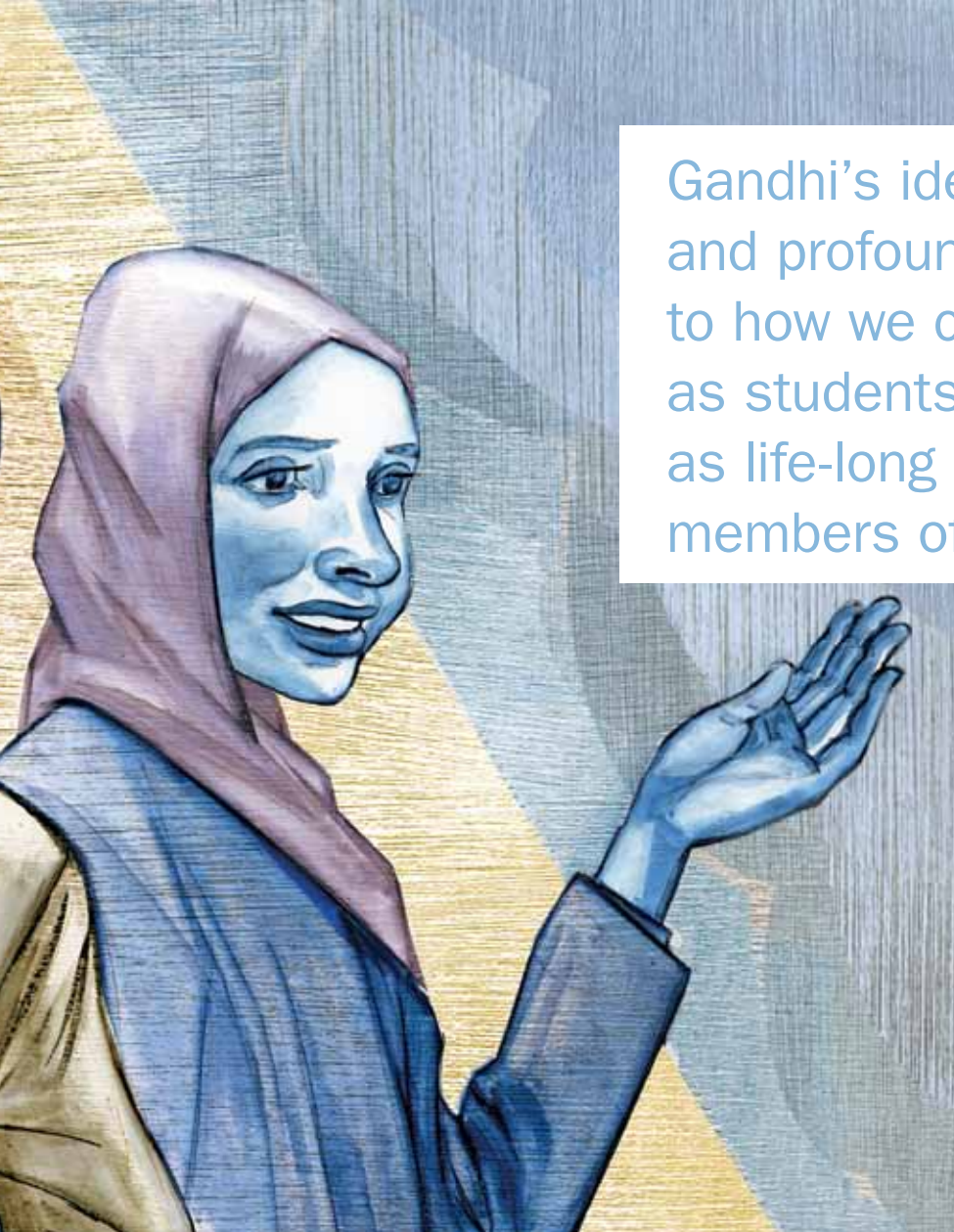
So how can we incorporate his ideas into our school systems? Teachers can play a significant role in a student's success. In their book, *Classroom Instruction that Works: Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement*, Robert Marzano, Debra Pickering and Jane Pollock write that “...research...has shown that an individual teacher can have a powerful effect on [his or] her students...” In their work *Teacher and Classroom Context Effects on Student Achievement: Implications for Teacher Evaluation*, Paul Wright, Sandra Horn and William Sanders go further, saying that “...the most important factor affecting student learning is the teacher.... Effective teachers appear to be effective with students of all achievement levels, regardless of the level of heterogeneity in their classrooms...” Accordingly, teachers and, by extension, any person who models *satyagraha*, wholeness, and service to community in their own lives can provide students with a real-life example to follow. This can be a powerful encouragement for students to do the same.

In addition to living and modelling Gandhi's ideas, teachers can incorporate them into their classroom practices. In his book *The First Days of School: How to be an Effective Teacher*, Harry Wong notes that in Japan, the first day of school is celebrated and honoured by ceremonies that welcome students and their families. At present, we throw students together in September and start classes. If we expect co-operative learning from our students, this is akin to fielding a sports team for the biggest game of their lives without a game plan, without warming up and without knowing each other. Wong's insights regarding the first day of school in Japan can be adapted to incorporate Gandhian philosophy. The first few days of school



could be dedicated to introducing students to *satyagraha*, the concept of wholeness, and the significance of community in a Gandhian sense. Teachers could lead students in self-reflection exercises, identifying both individual and community (i.e. the classroom, school and wider community) goals for the year. By using, for example, ice-breakers, case studies, readings, movies and character studies of a wide diversity of positive and successful individuals, teachers and students can explore the three pillars articulated by Gandhi. This could help to lay a strong moral/spiritual foundation for students and the class as a whole, and clearly define the shared high expectations of all individuals for the coming school year.

Time is a limited resource in the classroom. Nonetheless, even if dedicating a set amount of time to the study of Gandhian ideals is not possible, teachers in almost all, if not all, subjects can find opportunities to consider and incorporate his ideas throughout the year. For instance, subject matter in drama, science and history classes, among others, offers opportunities to think critically about identity, morality and conflict. We can



Gandhi's ideas are relevant and profoundly important to how we can live our lives as students and educators, as life-long learners and as members of society.

and experience of a high school sports team has been deepened and expanded to incorporate the principals of wholeness and community.

The three pillars could be further incorporated into school culture through school assemblies and into professional best-practices through Professional Development (PD) days. The resulting improvement in inter-professional and professional student relations would invariably help administrators, teachers and students to perform and engage with their duties, and their lives, in a more profound and meaningful manner.

Gandhi's ideas are relevant and profoundly important to how we can live our lives as students and educators, as life-long learners and as members of society. As we continue to build our chang-

consider the application of Gandhian philosophy in a given situation, be it bullying, nuclear energy or World War I. Wholeness can be encouraged and valued through differentiated instruction and assessment as they value and engage multiple intelligences. A Gandhian concept of community can be fostered in order to create a shared sense of responsibility for the learning environment, ensuring a clean and pleasant classroom and school.

Teachers' important work in extra-curricular activities such as clubs and sports teams can be excellent opportunities to actively foster *satyagraha* and non-violent conflict resolution, the development of the spirit and body, and the creation of more meaningful communities, both within the school and between the school and various actors. Dave Sutherland at Marc Garneau C.I., for instance, continues to build an impressive rugby program founded upon the values of discipline and family, which can be interpreted in a Gandhian sense. The expectation that teammates support one another off the pitch, emotionally, organizationally and scholastically, has been purposefully built into the team. Players are coached to value and respect the school environment and resources. As a result, the purpose

ing and dynamic province, the three pillars articulated here as a moral/spiritual foundation can contribute significantly to education in Ontario. We can work to incorporate Gandhi's ideas, and to identify parallels between Gandhian philosophy and the diverse knowledge structures present in Ontario, ranging from LGBTQ and newcomer perspectives, to First Nations knowledge and spirituality, to present teaching philosophies, among many others. An important sphere where this rich exchange takes place is our education system; the school systems of our province are significant social spaces that help to create and reflect our society's mores. In teaching *satyagraha*, educating the whole individual and working to create stronger, more inclusive communities, our youth, citizens, schools and society will become more dynamic and engaged, more effective and more compassionate. ☺

---

**Benjamin Petric** has just completed his teacher education at York University in Intermediate/Senior Politics and Environmental Studies; he also took part in a Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) Youth Internship in 2006/07 in Quebec and Cuba.





**BrightLink®**

# Interactivity 3.0

Switch Sources and Keep Writing



Also Featuring...

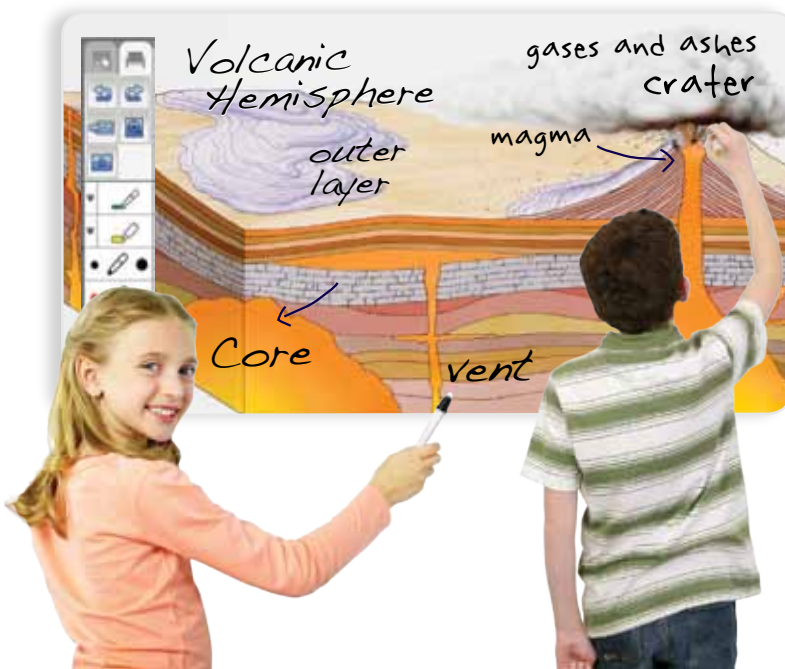
HDMI

Instant Annotate

Dual Pen

Ultra-Short-Throw  
(Up to 100" diagonal from 10" away)

16 W Speaker



Only with Epson's new BrightLink® 475Wi, 480i, or 485Wi interactive projectors can you connect your iPad, document camera, VCR, DVD player, or nothing at all (not even a computer) and keep writing.

With instant annotation tools, you get something no other interactive whiteboard or interactive projector provides—the freedom to switch between tools and keep the interaction and engagement going.

## Write On!

[epson.ca/WriteOn-EdF](http://epson.ca/WriteOn-EdF)



### 3 NEW Ultra-Short-Throw Interactive Projectors

BrightLink® 475Wi

BrightLink® 480i

BrightLink® 485Wi

Resolution

WXGA

XGA

WXGA

Lumens\*

2,600

3,000

3,100

\*White and colour light output will vary depending on mode selected. White light output measured using the ISO 21118 standard.

EPSON and PowerLite are registered trademarks, and EPSON Exceed Your Vision is a registered logomark of Seiko Epson Corporation. Brighter Futures and BrightLink are registered trademarks of Epson America, Inc. All other product and brand names are trademarks and/or registered trademarks of their respective companies. Epson disclaims any and all rights in these marks. Copyright 2012 Epson America, Inc. Product specifications are subject to change without notice.

**EPSON®**  
EXCEED YOUR VISION







## Moments in time

**AN** avid photographer for many years, I find still images to be a contemplative and thoughtful medium. Photography offers me the thrill of the hunt, technical complexity and creative expression: the complexity and thrill that go into freezing a moment in time, plus the room to experiment widely in order to paint the light for impact rather than accuracy. If you want to see more of my latest experiments, visit [www.atking.ca](http://www.atking.ca). 📷

**Timothy King** works at Centre Wellington DHS in Fergus as a media arts, English and computers teacher. @tk1ng on twitter

Clockwise from below: Catching the weak March sun in the snow dew of first blooms (Erin, Ontario) • Lightning storm at sunset using a long shutter to catch multiple streaks (Elora, Ontario) • Tower Bridge from the Thames taxi during an August downpour (London, U.K.)





# Google Art Project

A worldwide art jaunt at your fingertips

**T**he thought of a field trip brings back memories of excitement and adventure. We would climb into the big orange bus and the teachers would ask us to settle down so they could do a head count. Then the doors would close and we were off. The trip often didn't take long—an hour at the most—but it was a change from our daily classroom environment. Many times we would be going somewhere to be introduced to a cultural experience.

But if a field trip isn't possible for an educator, due to time or budget constraints, there is now an exciting new option. You and your students can be transported around the world with the click of a mouse, thanks to the Google Art Project, an interactive website that offers everyone a chance to see works of art in over 150 museums and 40 countries for the price of an Internet connection.

The Google Art Project delivers a unique experience. It lets the virtual visitor explore, learn about and appreciate artworks and artists from all over the world. The site is clear and well organized, making it easy for a user



*The Harvesters* (1565), Pieter Bruegel the Elder, oil on wood





PHOTO: COURTESY THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART





to search over 32,000 examples of art, sculpture, historic and religious artifacts, photographs, manuscripts, architecture and drawings. It provides filter options so you can browse the collections by artists, works or types of art. You can also narrow down your choices by selecting a continent, a country or a city.

An area called My Galleries encourages users to choose a personal group of artworks, whether for a class project or their own interest. After creating a Google account on the site, they can save their collection, including zoom views, plus add comments and share their collection and projects with friends, family and fellow students through social portals such as Google +1, Google+ Hangout, Facebook, Twitter and e-mail.

The Google Art Project actively encourages educators to use the site in their classrooms. Its Education section provides simple tools for students to learn about the work featured on the Art Project. The Education area is divided into four parts: an introduction; Look like an Expert, where you can use quizzes (or construct your own) to test what you or your students have learned; DIY, which enables visitors to search the collections and create their own gallery based on specific criteria such as era, style or subject matter; and What's Next, which lists additional art-history resources.

Among the countries partnering with the Google Art Project, the only Canadian participant at present is the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO). The AGO's images allow the visitor to have an up-close experience of the artwork, whether it's B.C. painter Emily Carr's vibrant colours and generous brushstrokes in her dramatic depiction of West Coast forests, Native churches and totem poles; the haunting *Helga Matura* (1966), a murdered prostitute painted by German artist Gerhard Richter in the year she died; the exquisitely detailed environment of a 19th-century Parisian shop girl in her place of work by James Tissot; or the astonishingly flawless bronze



PHOTO: COURTESY THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO

sculpture of a crucified Christ by one of the leading sculptors of the 17th century, Italian-born Gian Lorenzo Bernini.

There is an abundance of museums that can be accessed for a variety of course curriculum. The Rock Art Research Institute in Johannesburg, South Africa, for example, features art dating from 4,000 BP (Before the Present) to 100 BP. A wide variety of artworks at The National Heritage Board in Singapore opens windows into that city-state's complex history and culture. Cooper-

Hewitt, National Design Museum, in New York City houses examples of both art and design. The Imperial War Museums in London, England, have an important collection of paintings that reflect the realities of both World Wars. The Israel Museum in Jerusalem shelters ancient texts, artifacts and paintings. And students can explore The Metropolitan Museum of Art, which has been acquiring paintings and sculptures since 1870 with a mission, originally set out by a group of Americans in Paris,



France, “to bring art and art education to the American people.”

The Google Art Project is actively looking to expand its roster of partner museums and is also exploring the possibility of an experimental section that would showcase how artists are using new and emerging technologies in their art practice.

If students can't travel the world to see works of art in person, the Google Art Project is an excellent alternative. Visit [www.googleartproject.com](http://www.googleartproject.com). 🌐

Left page: *Indian Church*, 1929, Emily Carr, oil on canvas.

Right page: *La demoiselle de magasin*, 1883-1885, James Tissot, oil on canvas.

*The Crucified Christ (Corpus)*, Gian Lorenzo Bernini, c. 1655, bronze.

*Helga Matura*, 1966, Gerhard Richter, oil on canvas.

Fragment of a Queen's Face, New Kingdom, Amarna Period, Dynasty 18, reign of Akhenaten, c. 1353–1336 BC, yellow jasper.





# Keeping you in the loop

Reviews, conferences, PD opportunities and other items of interest

## BOOK REVIEWS

### Shannen and the Dream for a School

By Janet Wilson

Second Story Press, 2011

208 pages, \$14.95

Reviewed by Deborah Moore

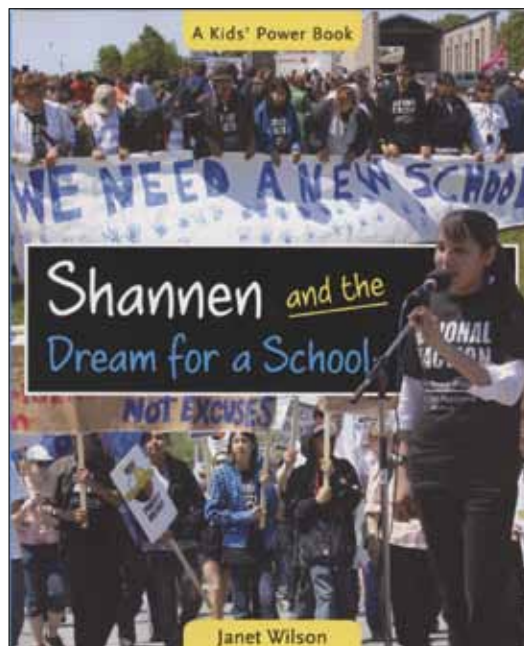
“When you know other children have big, comfy schools with hallways that are warm, you feel like you don’t count for anything.” — Shannen Koostachin, 13, Attawapiskat First Nation

The old building was finally gone. Years after it had been boarded up by community members frustrated by the federal government’s refusal to acknowledge the seriousness of a devastating diesel-fuel contamination, the once shining heart of the Attawapiskat First Nation, J.R. Nakogee Elementary School, disappeared into memory.

The children of Attawapiskat had long ago forgotten what it was like to be in a real school with hallways, a library or a gymnasium. Reality for them was freezing-cold portables with cracked walls, drafty windows and minimal resources. Years after the government’s promise of a new school had failed to materialize, Shannen Koostachin and her Grade 8 classmates shortened their graduation trip in order to take their fight for a new school to the National Aboriginal Day of Protest in Ottawa. This decision would inadvertently thrust Shannen into the forefront of a national issue and seriously chal-

lenge her core resolve of fairness for all people and the value of a promise.

*Shannen and the Dream for a School* is a story of hope in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds and unspeakable tragedy. Author Janet Wilson has skillfully woven the appalling details of the federal responses to the Attawapiskat disaster with the remarkable life and dreams of a young Attawapiskat girl. Along the way readers are introduced to the many people who would each, in their own way, serve as catalysts in shaping the young activist. Readers are also generously offered a glimpse into Cree culture, traditions and spiritual beliefs.



Shannen initiated a massive letter-writing campaign in Canada, urging the federal government to build a new school in Attawapiskat. What made Shannen unique was her ability to inspire others to dream. In May 2010, five months after finally receiving the federal government’s promise to build a new school in Attawapiskat, Shannen’s life on this earth was accidentally cut short.

Her dream continues but has yet to be fully realized.

On January 9, 2012, Shannen was

recognized by CBC’s George Stroumbouloupoulos as one of only a few teenage girls in history who have made a difference, alongside Joan of Arc, Anne Frank and Mary Shelly.

On February 6, 2012, Chelsea Edwards, a Shannen’s Dream spokesperson from Attawapiskat, and five First Nation youth ambassadors spoke to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child about the inequalities facing Aboriginal youth in Canada.

On February 27, 2012, a Private Member’s Motion calling for the federal government to adopt Shannen’s Dream to improve education on First Nations Reserves was passed unanimously in the House of Commons.

However, Attawapiskat children are still attending school in portables and ground has yet to be turned for the new school promised by the government.

This book will inspire youth, adults and elders to believe in hope and to never give up, and perhaps to help carry Shannen’s Dream to fulfillment.

**Deborah Moore** is a member of OSSTF/FEESO’s First Nations, Inuit and Métis Advisory Work Group and a Psychological Services Consultant in District 24, Waterloo.

### Shannen and the Dream for a School

De Janet Wilson

Second Story Press, 2011

208 pages, 14,95 \$

Analyse de Deborah Moore

« Quand on sait que d’autres enfants ont de grandes écoles confortables, avec des couloirs chauffés, on se sent laissé pour compte. » Shannen Koostachin, 13 ans, Première Nation Attawapiskat

L’ancien bâtiment avait finalement été rasé. Des années après que certains membres de la communauté l’aient condamné, frustrés du refus du gouvernement fédéral de

reconnaître la gravité d'une contamination dévastatrice au diesel, l'ancien cœur vibrant de la Première Nation Attawapiskat, l'école élémentaire J.R. Nakogee, n'était plus qu'un souvenir.

Les enfants d'Attawapiskat avaient oublié depuis longtemps ce que c'était que d'avoir une véritable école avec des couloirs, une bibliothèque ou un gymnase. Pour eux, la réalité était celle de salles de classe mobiles aux murs lézardés, aux fenêtres qui laissaient passer le vent et aux ressources minimales. Des années après l'échec de la matérialisation de la promesse du gouvernement de faire bâtir une nouvelle école, Shannen Koostachin et ses camarades de 8<sup>e</sup> année écourtèrent leur voyage de fin d'année pour participer à la journée nationale de protestation des Autochtones à Ottawa et faire connaître leur combat pour obtenir une nouvelle école. Contre toute attente, cette décision allait propulser Shannen sur le devant de la scène, elle qui représentait un problème d'envergure nationale et allait mettre dangereusement à l'épreuve sa volonté d'égalité pour tous et la valeur d'une promesse.

L'ouvrage intitulé *Shannen and the Dream for a School* relate l'espoir face à des situations qui semblent insurmontables et à une tragédie indescriptible. Son auteur, Janet Wilson, a su avec brio entrelacer les détails effroyables des réponses que le gouvernement fédéral a apportées au désastre d'Attawapiskat avec la vie et les aspirations remarquables de la jeune fille d'Attawapiskat. Au fil de notre lecture, l'auteur nous présente les nombreuses personnes qui, chacune à leur façon, servent de catalyseur et vont façonner les idées de la jeune activiste. Les lecteurs peuvent tout à loisir saisir la culture, les traditions et les croyances des Cris.

Shannen a été l'instigatrice d'une vaste campagne canadienne de lettres de soutien incitant le gouvernement

fédéral à construire une nouvelle école à Attawapiskat. Ce qui rend Shannen unique est sa capacité à donner à d'autres personnes l'envie de rêver. En mai 2010, cinq mois après avoir finalement reçu la promesse du gouvernement fédéral de faire bâtir une nouvelle école à Attawapiskat, la vie de Shannen s'est brusquement arrêtée dans un accident.

Son rêve se poursuit, mais n'a pas encore trouvé son aboutissement.

Le 9 janvier 2012, Shannen a été reconnue par George Stroumbouloupoulos, de la SRC, comme l'une des quelques adolescentes ayant marqué l'histoire, au même titre que Jeanne d'Arc, Anne

et à améliorer l'éducation dans les réserves des Premières Nations, a été adoptée à l'unanimité à la Chambre des communes.

Pourtant, les enfants d'Attawapiskat vont toujours à l'école dans des salles de classe mobiles et les travaux de la nouvelle école promise par le gouvernement ne sont pas encore commencés.

Cet ouvrage incitera les jeunes, tout comme les adultes et les plus âgés, à espérer et à ne jamais renoncer pour qu'un jour peut-être, le rêve de Shannen devienne réalité.

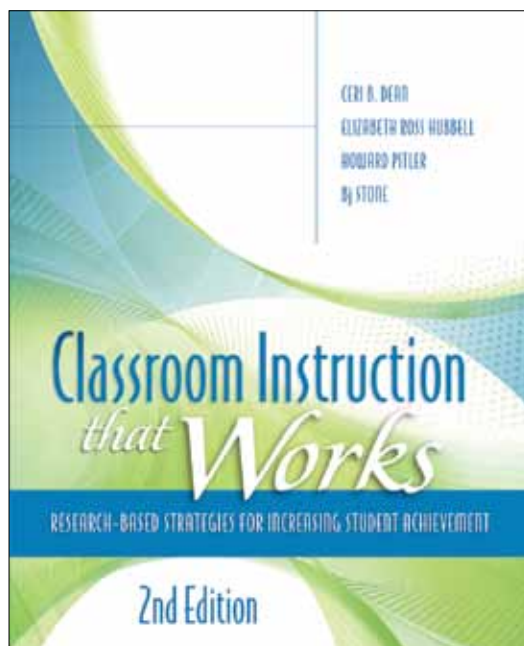
**Deborah Moore** est membre du Groupe de travail sur l'éducation des Premières Nations, Inuits et Métis d'OSSTF/FEESO et consultante en services psychologiques au District 24, Waterloo.

### **Classroom Instruction that Works:**

Research-based Strategies for Increasing Student Achievement, 2nd edition

By Ceri B. Dean, Elizabeth Ross Hubbell, Howard Pitler, Bj Stone  
Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2011  
188 pages, \$28.93

Reviewed by Susan Robinson



Published 10 years after the first edition, *Classroom Instruction that Works* reinforces the message of the original authors. Although the authors have changed, the results of extensive research support the same goal: to improve student learning through specific classroom practices and instructional strategies.

The research was based on the responses of practising teachers to a number of specific questions. These included what works in education and what evidence demonstrates this. Also asked was how the results of educational research can be applied to classroom instruction and support the learning goals of individual students.

*Classroom Instruction that Works* presents and promotes nine categories of

Frank et Mary Shelly.

Le 6 février 2012, Chelsea Edwards, l'une des porte-parole du rêve de Shannen à Attawapiskat, ainsi que cinq jeunes ambassadeurs des Premières Nations, ont prononcé une allocution devant les membres du Comité sur les droits de l'enfant de l'Organisation des Nations Unies au sujet des inégalités qui touchent les jeunes autochtones du Canada.

Le 27 février 2012, une motion d'initiative parlementaire, appelant le gouvernement fédéral à réaliser le rêve de Shannen



strategies that the authors believe, when practised as “habits of mind,” can lead to academic success. The book is arranged in the following parts:

#### Part I Creating an Environment for Learning

1. Setting Objectives and Providing Feedback
2. Reinforcing Effort and Providing Recognition
3. Co-operative Learning

#### Part II Helping Students Develop Understanding

4. Cues, Questions and Advanced Organizers
5. Non-linguistic Representation
6. Summarizing and Note-Taking
7. Assigning Homework and Providing Practice

#### Part III Helping Students Extend and Apply Knowledge

8. Identifying Similarities and Differences
9. Generating and Testing Hypothesis

#### Part IV Putting the Instructional Strategies to Use

Instructional Planning Using the Nine Categories of Strategies

Each category is thoroughly explained with suggestions for implementation and application. The authors recommend that teachers embed the strategies while planning for instruction and stress that all strategies complement the others.

They also recognize the challenges of teaching in the 21st century. Acknowledging that classrooms are increasingly diverse, both culturally and linguistically,

it is noted that the constant influence of external distractions such as social media, television and the Internet is also a reality. Teachers are encouraged to develop or modify skills to meet the needs of students learning through technology.

Although extremely text-heavy with few graphics, this publication is thorough in its coverage of each of the categories of strategies. Users are directed to an Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) website for additional material such as graphic organizers and online content not included in the book.

Classroom teachers, new to the profession or seasoned veterans, who want to improve student learning through effective practice and fair and mindful instruction should add this book to their professional reading list.

**Susan Robinson** is an Occasional Teacher in District 6A, Thunder Bay and represents OSSTF/FEESO on the Teacher Education Liaison Committee at Lakehead University.

#### WEBSITE REVIEW

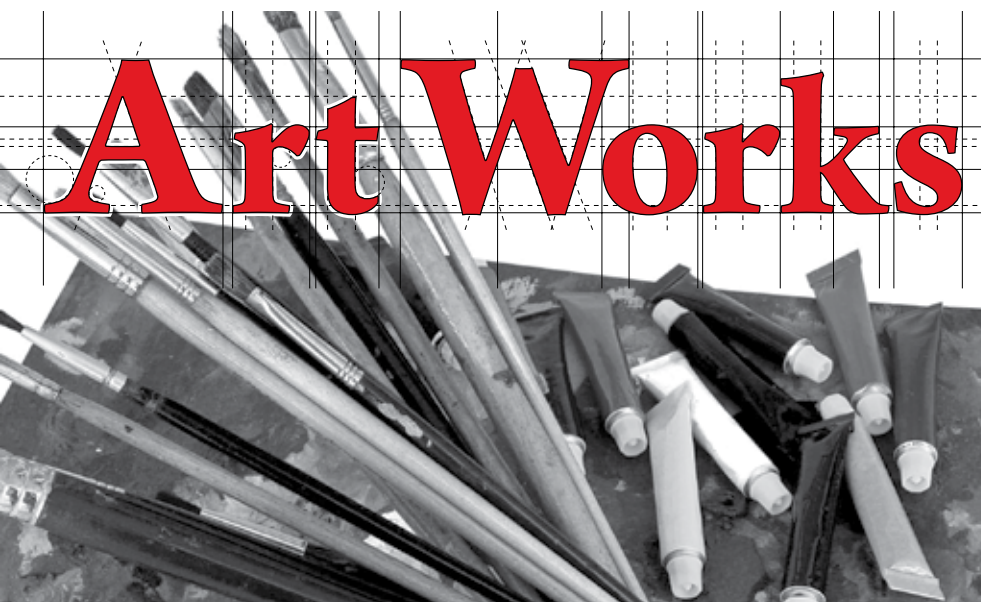
##### myBlueprint

[myblueprint.ca](http://myblueprint.ca)

Reviewed by Marilyn MacLennan

The web-based resource myBlueprint is designed for use in intermediate and senior grades. It provides a vehicle for students to set goals, record extra-curricular activities and volunteer hours, create an individual pathway plan (IPP) and research post-secondary and occupation information. Students involved in Specialist High Skills Majors programs are also able to document their progress. This website also has an option for students to complete interest/skills inventories called “Discovery” for Grades 7 to 10, and “Explorations” for Grades 10 to 12. An online course-selection function is also available. Additional enhancements are being developed.

The website also has excellent resources for teachers to use, including user guides,



## A CONTEST for High School Visual Arts Classes!

**Let the budding artists shine!** Emond Montgomery Publications is giving students the chance to redesign the cover of our *Art Works* text from scratch. The winning submission will be the cover of the *Art Works* ebook. The contest deadline is March 31, 2012.

**Go to [artworks.emp.ca](http://artworks.emp.ca) for contest details.**



PowerPoint presentations and lesson plans, some of which are linked to the Ontario Career Studies curriculum. In addition, webinars and video demonstrations assist teachers in learning how to best use this program in their schools.

Students are able to create individual pathways plans by choosing courses for high school in the “High School Planner.” They can create more than one plan by selecting courses they might take through to graduation that can lead to either apprenticeship, college, university or the workplace. The program helps them discover the post-secondary and occupational opportunities available to them for each plan.

As a user of myBlueprint for the last four years, I have found it a useful tool. I have employed it in the fall with Grades 9 to 11 and again in February, when students choose their options for the following year. With this program, students are engaged in the process of setting goals, recording their activities and planning their future. Guidance counsellors can monitor their students’ progress towards achieving their goals.

This year I chose the “Course Selection Module,” which allows students to reflect on their previous planning when choosing their courses for the following year. This function allows me to see issues with their course selections before they are transferred to our Student Information System, issues that could include lack of prerequisites, not enough courses chosen, too many courses chosen etc. Having access to the individual student profiles is helpful when working with students.

It is a user-friendly program that has received the seal of approval from both my students and parents. While I do not believe that any program has everything, myBlueprint is a very useful tool for student planning when used in conjunction with other resources.

---

**Marilyn MacLennan** is the department head of Student Services at Lester B. Pearson High School in District 20, Halton.

## CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### November 15–16, 2012 Overcoming Obstacles in Education 2012 Educational Services Conference

Hilton Suites Toronto/  
Markham Conference Centre

This conference will offer best strategies to identify and address the many obstacles faced by those working in education in elementary, secondary and university settings. Workshops relating to the theme of the conference include: Aboriginal/First Nations/Indigenous Issues, Adult Education, Attendance, Bullying & Harassment, Community Involvement, Funding, Mental Illness & Addiction, Parent Involvement, Progressive Discipline, Special Education and Student Success. For more information, visit [www.ossf.on.ca/ESconference2012](http://www.ossf.on.ca/ESconference2012).

### July 3–27, 2012 Native Language Teacher Certification (NLTC)

Lakehead University, Thunder Bay, ON

The Certification Program is designed for individuals who want to teach a Native Language as a second language in a primary or secondary school. It focuses on developing skills required for second-language teaching. The curriculum is designed for students who enter the program with an Algonquian Language background. For more information, contact Bruce K. Beardy, Co-ordinator, NLIP at 1-807-343-8003 or [bbeardy@lakeheadu.ca](mailto:bbeardy@lakeheadu.ca).

### July 9–11, 2012 Barbara Coloroso’s 2012 Summer Institute—Teaching with Wit and Wisdom Ryerson University, Toronto, ON

For K-12 classroom teachers, special education teachers and administrators. Topics include:

- Day 1: Teaching with wit and wisdom.
- Day 2: The bully, the bullied and the bystander.

•Day 3: Just because it’s not wrong doesn’t make it right: helping kids to think and act ethically.

Visit [kidsareworthit.com](http://kidsareworthit.com) for additional information and to register.

### October 11–12, 2012 2012 Ophea Conference Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, ON

Are you passionate about the health and well-being of children and youth, and committed to promoting healthy, active living in your school or community? Join us for the 2012 Ophea Conference, an invaluable professional learning experience that will give you the opportunity to connect with colleagues from across the province who share the same passion and commitment. The early-bird deadline is June 28, so don’t miss out! Register now! For more details and to register, please visit [conference.ophea.net](http://conference.ophea.net).

### October 11–12, 2012 Merry Wars: Stratford Festival Annual Teachers’ Conference Stratford, ON

The Teachers-Festival Liaison Council’s 31st annual Teachers’ Conference at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival includes workshops and seminars for English and drama teachers (both secondary and elementary), performances of *The Pirates of Penzance* and *Much Ado About Nothing*, and social events. For more details, visit [www.tflc.ca](http://www.tflc.ca).

### October 19, 2012 Shaw Festival Fall Teachers’ Day Niagara on the Lake, ON

Paint a show-stopping set on a shoestring budget in a workshop with Gwyneth Stark, Shaw Festival Head of Scenic Art. Registration fee includes lunch, refreshments and parking. An evening performance of *Come Back Little Sheba* is optional and an additional cost will apply. Registration: \$92.50 (tax extra). For more information, visit [www.shawfest.com/education/for-teachers/teachers-days](http://www.shawfest.com/education/for-teachers/teachers-days).



### October 19–21, 2012

Think Global: Drama and Dance  
Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston, ON

Workshops will cover a broad range of topics relating to global drama and dance, such as Shakespeare for social justice, African, South Asian and Tibetan dance, digital theatre, playwriting, antiracism in the drama classroom and much, much more! Special events include a Global Game-Sharing Social, the International “Red Carpet” Film Lounge, free restorative yoga sessions and more! Register before July 1, 2012, for an early-bird discount. For more information, visit [code.on.ca](http://code.on.ca).

### November 1–3, 2012

Vibrations 2012

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Toronto, ON  
Join the Ontario Music Educators’ Association for its annual conference, Vibrations

2012: Making Waves in Music Education. This year’s conference merges music-education tradition with the 21st century. Visit [omea.on.ca/events.php](http://omea.on.ca/events.php) for more information.

### November 15–17, 2012

STAO/APSO 2012:

Recapture the Wonder

DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, Toronto, ON

The world is full of wonderful science! As educators, we provide students with experiences that help them understand their world. We need to recapture students’ imaginations and ignite their curiosity! STAO 2012 provides three days of engaging professional development to help you engage students in every strand, in every grade. Join us in November and recapture the wonder. Visit [stao.ca/conf2/conference.php](http://stao.ca/conf2/conference.php) for program and registration details.

### OTHER PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

#### OTF Connects

[www.otffeo.on.ca/english/pro\\_connect.php](http://www.otffeo.on.ca/english/pro_connect.php)

The Ontario Teachers’ Federation cares about supporting teacher learning and is committed to providing a mechanism for real, ongoing support that respects the limited time teachers have and the need for professional development that is immediately useful in their classrooms.

*OTF Connects* is an online support built by teachers for teachers that provides teachers with opportunities to learn and interact through easy-to-use technology, including online webinars and social media.

*OTF Connects* will:

- provide ongoing support throughout the year.
- connect Ontario teachers with PD that works for them.
- provide a venue for teachers to share with and support each other.
- encourage teachers to build their professional learning network.
- inform teachers about upcoming events.

This online interactive webinar tool provides teachers with a great resource to broaden and deepen their learning in the areas of critical thinking, teaching and learning in the 21st century, financial literacy and more. *OTF Connects* allows teachers to learn, create and collaborate in ways that fit their needs and their schedule.

Visit the website for webinar descriptions, the calendar for webinar dates and registration information.

#### Canadian Aboriginal—First Nation, Inuit and Métis—Resources

Resources for literacy workers, teachers and anyone interested in Aboriginal literacy can be found at [www.firstnationliteracy.com](http://www.firstnationliteracy.com). Download free teachers’ guides, lesson plans, student activities and literacy documents. Browse through the site for information on our authors, books or First Nation cultural information. ☺

**LASIK MD**  
VISION

Exclusive Savings for  
the Ontario College of Teachers

SAVE  
**\$200**

ON LASER VISION CORRECTION!†

Starting at **\$490/eye\***

Lowest Price Guarantee • Financing Available



**FREE Consultation: 1-855-391-2020**

[www.lasikmd.com/oct](http://www.lasikmd.com/oct)

All-Laser LASIK Available

LONDON • WATERLOO • HAMILTON • MISSISSAUGA • TORONTO  
VAUGHAN • NORTH YORK • YORKVILLE • WHITBY • KINGSTON • OTTAWA

†\$100/eye on Custom LASIK, upon presentation of a current membership card. This offer cannot be combined with any other discount or special financing offer and is subject to change without prior notice. \*Prices subject to change without prior notice and can vary based on prescription strength. Applicable to surgery on both eyes only. Other conditions may apply.



Last word

by Ken Coran, President

Mot de la fin

par Ken Coran, Président

## For the record

Negotiate, don't legislate

**BY** the nature of our members' work, OSSTF/FEESO is committed to enhancing and protecting public education. As a strong, independent and socially active union we promote and advance the cause of public education and the rights of students, educators and education workers. Among the many issues we continue to support are: strong public services; the preservation of academic freedom; the prevention of privatization and commercialization of educational institutions; and the fight for equitable opportunity for all students to succeed in a strong, well-funded public education system.

Schools and educational institutions are just buildings; it is the people inside them who ensure our students are able to succeed. Schools, colleges and universities are staffed by educational teams that include many types of education workers and staff such as highly trained and effective teachers, instructors and early-childhood educators; office/clerical staff who greet parents in the office and deal with mounds of paperwork; therapists who provide specialized treatment; plant support staff who ensure safe and secure buildings; education assistants who provide students with additional academic and personal support; and admission and financial aid officers who assist students in preparing for post-secondary education. This list, while not exhaustive, demonstrates the myriad supports that students receive from the full-service education team.

Knowing the success of our students will shape the future of Ontario, OSSTF/FEESO members work every day to equip students with the knowledge, attitude, skills and sense of community they need to be successful and that we also need for a vibrant and strong Ontario. Our goal is to send students out into the world with confidence, ready and able to make a real contribution.

OSSTF/FEESO has worked collaboratively and respectfully with the provincial government to realize this goal and to ensure education remains Ontario's best investment. Ultimately, the working conditions of education workers are intrinsically entwined with the learning conditions of students. As an education union, we advocate for progressive changes that improve the state of our public education system for both students and our members. As a result, when OSSTF/FEESO enters into

## Tenez-vous-le pour dit

Négociez, ne légiférez pas

**DE** par la nature de l'emploi de nos membres, OSSTF/FEESO se voue à protéger et à faire avancer l'éducation publique. En tant que syndicat fort, indépendant et actif dans les collectivités, nous favorisons et défendons la cause de l'éducation publique et les droits des élèves, des éducateurs et des travailleurs en éducation. Parmi les nombreux points que nous soutenons toujours, notons : des services publics efficaces, la préservation de la liberté académique, la prévention de la privatisation et de la commercialisation des établissements d'enseignement et la lutte pour l'équité des chances de tous les élèves de réussir dans un système fort d'éducation publique adéquatement financé.

Les écoles et établissements d'enseignement ne sont que des bâtiments, mais les gens à l'intérieur, eux, s'assurent que nos élèves sont aptes à réussir. Les écoles, collèges et universités emploient une équipe en éducation – une équipe qui réunit maints types de travailleurs et de personnel voués à l'éducation : des enseignants professionnels efficaces, des instructeurs et des éducateurs de la petite enfance, du personnel de bureau et des commis qui accueillent les parents et traitent une foule de documents administratifs, des thérapeutes qui dispensent des traitements spécialisés, du personnel de conciergerie chargé de garder nos bâtiments sains et sécuritaires, des éducatrices et aides à l'enseignement qui appuient aussi les élèves sur les plans personnel et scolaire et des agents d'admission et de l'aide financière qui assistent les élèves se préparant pour leurs études postsecondaires. Sans être exhaustive, cette liste montre la myriade de soutien que reçoivent les élèves d'une équipe offrant des services complets en éducation.

Conscients que le succès de nos élèves façonnera l'Ontario de demain, les membres d'OSSTF/FEESO veillent tous les jours à munir les élèves du savoir, de l'attitude, des aptitudes et du sentiment d'appartenance à la communauté dont ils ont besoin pour réussir et dont nous avons besoin pour une Ontario forte et dynamique. Notre but : envoyer les élèves dans le monde avec confiance, des élèves disposés à se rendre vraiment utiles et aptes à le faire.

OSSTF/FEESO a collaboré dans le plus grand respect avec le gouvernement provincial pour atteindre ce but et garantir que l'éducation demeure le meilleur placement de l'Ontario. En fin de compte, les conditions de travail des travailleurs en éducation sont en soi entrelacées aux conditions d'apprentissage des élèves.





bargaining, our goal is twofold: to achieve the best collective agreements for our members that, consequently, ensures improved learning conditions for all students. When you speak to former students and ask them to recount their best memories, they do not focus on textbooks, assignments or tests, they focus on the people who supported them, protected them, respected them and listened to them. Those people include teachers and support staff whom they saw every day.

## The government now has to decide: work with us or undo eight years of progress in education.

For the last eight years, OSSTF/FEESO has worked with the government to ensure the working conditions of people who support students have improved, resulting in better learning conditions and increased achievement for students. That progress is now at risk because the government has changed its attitude towards education workers.

OSSTF/FEESO members understand the economic climate and the challenges the government says it is facing. However, the proposal the government tabled in the first Provincial Discussion Table meeting and included in the Ontario Budget represents an unprecedented attack on members' rights and the process of free collective bargaining. It is clearly unacceptable to OSSTF/FEESO.

The government has said in its public messaging that it is only asking for a wage freeze from the education workers. This is not the case. OSSTF/FEESO presented an unprecedented offer to the government that would reduce spending and achieve the government's stated goal of a two-year wage freeze for teachers and occasional teachers, essentially a pay cut due to inflation. The government also indicated in the Ontario Budget and the Grants for Student Needs documents that it would entertain cost-saving proposals. We presented cost-saving measures and the government refused to consider them.

At our For the Record Lobby Day held on May 2 at Queen's Park, 93 members met with 70 MPPs from all three parties. Our message was clear and was indeed put on the record. "We ask that the government put away its parameters and engage in true problem-solving discussions that can lead to a NEGOTIATED settlement that will result in long-term stability for the public education system in Ontario."

The government now has to decide: work with us or undo eight years of progress in education. ☞

À titre de syndicat en éducation, nous prôtons des changements progressifs visant à améliorer l'état de notre système d'éducation publique pour nos élèves et nos membres. Donc, quand OSSTF/FEESO entamera les négociations, notre but sera double : conclure les meilleures ententes collectives pour nos membres et garantir ainsi des conditions d'apprentissage améliorées pour tous les élèves. Quand vous demandez à d'anciens élèves quels sont leurs plus beaux souvenirs, ils ne mentionnent aucun manuel, devoir ou examen, ils citent les gens qui les ont aidés, protégés, respectés et écoutés. Ces gens incluent les enseignants et le personnel de soutien qu'ils ont côtoyés tous les jours.

Depuis huit ans, OSSTF/FEESO oeuvre avec le gouvernement à améliorer les conditions de travail de ces gens qui soutiennent les élèves, menant ainsi à de meilleures conditions d'apprentissage et plus de réussites pour les élèves. Ce progrès est maintenant menacé, car le gouvernement a changé d'attitude envers les travailleurs en éducation.

Les membres d'OSSTF/FEESO comprennent la conjoncture économique et les défis que le gouvernement affronte, selon ses dires; cependant, la proposition déposée par le gouvernement à la

## Travailler avec nous ou anéantir huit ans de progrès en éducation.

première réunion de la Table de discussion provinciale et incluse dans le budget de l'Ontario représente une attaque sans précédent sur les droits des membres et le processus de la libre négociation collective. C'est clairement inacceptable pour OSSTF/FEESO.

Dans ses messages au grand public, le gouvernement a dit qu'il ne demandait qu'un gel des salaires aux travailleurs en éducation; ce n'est pas le cas. OSSTF/FEESO a présenté au gouvernement une offre sans précédent qui réduirait les dépenses et atteindrait le but établi du gouvernement de geler les salaires sur deux ans pour les enseignants et le personnel enseignant suppléant, diminuer en fait le salaire en raison de l'inflation. Le gouvernement a également indiqué dans le budget de l'Ontario et les documents des Subventions pour les besoins des élèves qu'il examinerait les propositions d'économies; nous lui avons présenté des mesures à cet effet et il a refusé de les considérer.

Lors de notre Journée de lobbying « Tenez-vous-le pour dit », tenue le 2 mai à Queen's Park, 93 membres ont rencontré 70 députés provinciaux des trois partis. Notre message était clair et il a été enregistré. « Nous voulons que le gouvernement mette ses paramètres de côté et engage des discussions franches de résolution de problèmes susceptibles de mener à un règlement NÉGOCIÉ qui engendrera la stabilité à long terme du système d'éducation publique en Ontario. »

Le gouvernement doit maintenant décider : travailler avec nous ou anéantir huit ans de progrès en éducation. ☞

# CLASSROOM RESOURCES AVAILABLE FROM OSSTF/FEESO

Teaching materials • Lesson plans • Assessment Rubrics • Integrated DVD and CD

## COMMON THREADS

The Common Threads resources consist of high quality, classroom-ready resources for Ontario secondary school teachers. The lessons are designed using specific Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum expectations.

**EDUCATOR FRIENDLY.** Includes everything you need: comprehensive resources, handouts and assessment rubrics are provided. It is multimedia in nature and engaging for students and instructors alike.

Designed for a variety of subjects, including: civics, science, geography, health, politics and family studies.

### AVAILABLE NOW

*Globalization, sweatshops, and the clothes we wear*  
*From Canada to South Africa combating HIV/AIDS together*

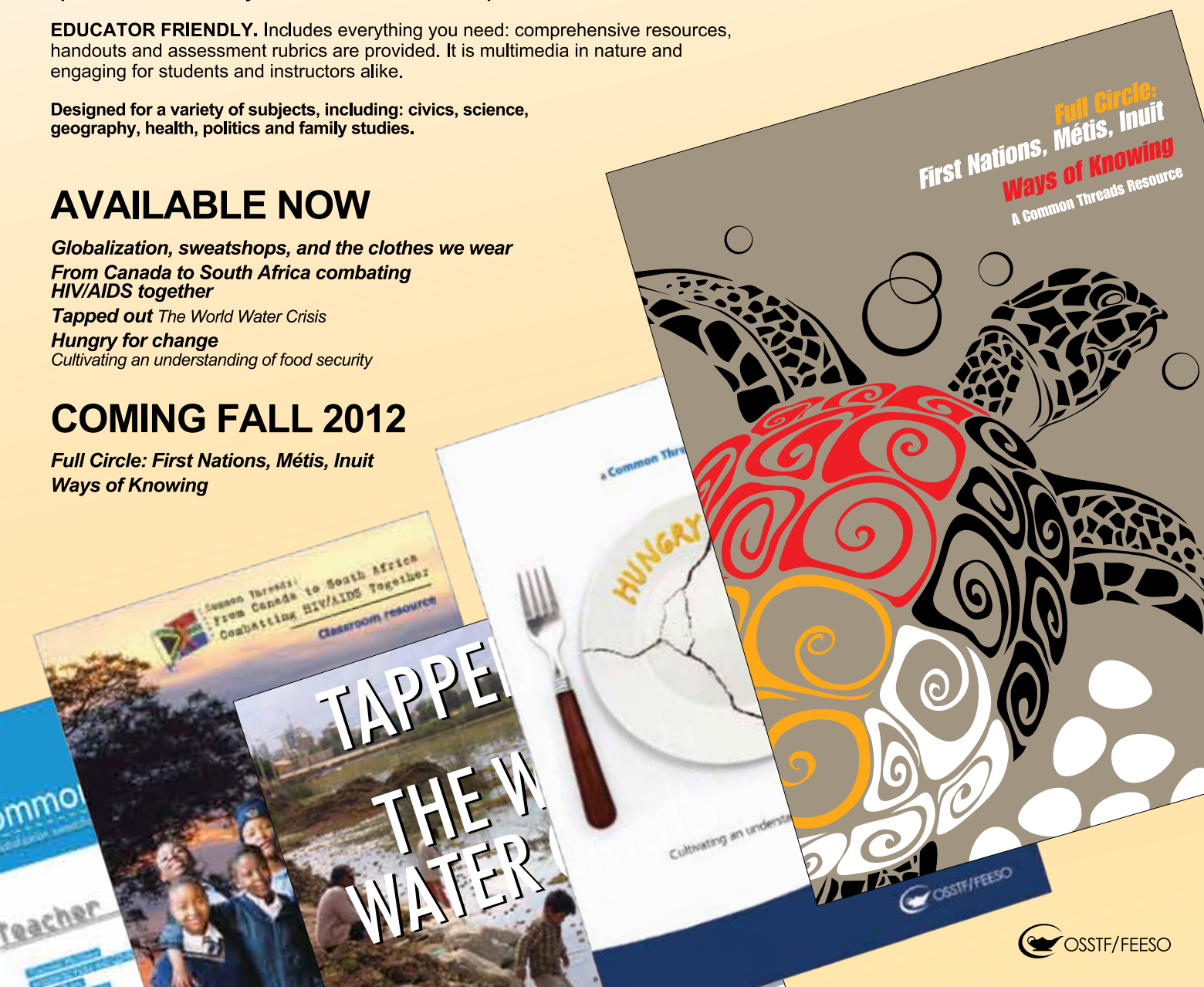
*Tapped out The World Water Crisis*

*Hungry for change*

*Cultivating an understanding of food security*

### COMING FALL 2012

*Full Circle: First Nations, Métis, Inuit*  
*Ways of Knowing*





# Gimme Summer Cash!



OTIP wants you to make the most of your summer with

**\$1,500**  
cash!

Whether you want to travel abroad or enjoy the a/c from the comfort of your living room, the Gimme Summer Cash contest puts money in your hands to spend however you like!



Enter at [otip.com/summer](http://otip.com/summer)

Visit [www.otip.com/summer](http://www.otip.com/summer) for contest rules and regulations. Contest open to active or retired Ontario education employees who reside in the province of Ontario. Contest closes July 31, 2012. Call 1-800-267-6847 to complete a quote and enter by phone.



OTIP RAEO®