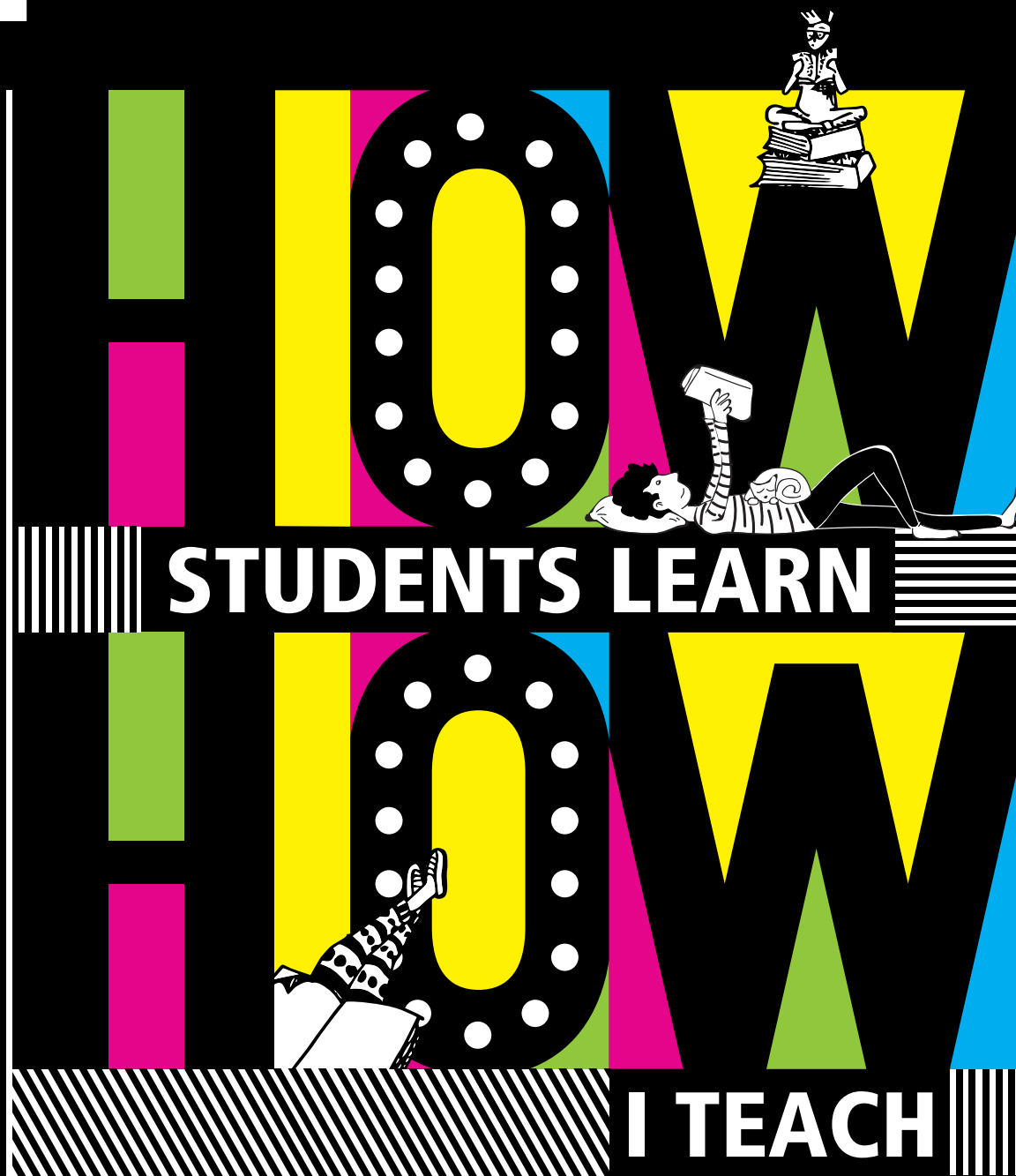


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# Textbooks, teaching and testing

Who is responsible for education?



**I**t is a privilege to be back as editor of *Education Forum*. The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation has a long and proud history of publishing articles on topics relating to public education, both here in Ontario and abroad. I am excited to be part of the publication again!

I was unpacking some boxes of books today and I came across my 1911 first edition of *Ontario High School English Grammar*. Complete with an imprint of Ontario's coat of arms, the green canvas cover boasts that it was "authorized by the Minister of Education" and that it sold for a mere 45 cents. I picked it up at a used bookstore decades ago, back when I regularly taught grammar to secondary students. The book is marked with underlines and margin notes, delicately written in the burgundy ink of a long-gone fountain pen. There is something about these scribbles that always had me imagine that they were made by a teacher and not a student. The delicate cursive notes document someone's journey through a prescribed guide of English grammar.

I am not sure when the Ontario government abandoned the writing of textbooks such as this one. Even as an

elementary student in the 1970s, I can recall my school texts bearing the Pearson and Scholastic logos. A quick dive back into my musty box of books and I find my Grade 2 reader, *Higgleby's House*, was published by Ginn and Company (the same folks who brought you Mr. Mugs, in case you're wondering). So, the Ontario Ministry of Education has been out of the textbook game for quite a while.

Looking back even further, in 1965 the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation began publishing resource books for secondary school teachers. This was in response to members looking for curricular leadership when the Ministry was providing none.

However, our provincial government has suddenly become more interested, as of late, in all things curricular. Math scores from the EQAO standardized tests has suddenly become a great concern. The solution? Apparently giving teachers a math test themselves will provide some type of panacea. I highly recommend Peter Bates' article "Testing the Teachers" in this issue. In it, he clearly separates fact from fiction and outlines not only the flaws of such testing, but also the flawed logic and political maneuvering that brought the government to this solution.

As for curricular leadership, it should come as no surprise that the most significant and most impressive strides are being made by educators themselves. In our 2017 fall issue of *Education Forum*, I interviewed researchED founder Tom Bennett about his revolutionary movement of empowering educators by sharing the elements of learning and cognitive science. His grass-root, in-

ternational conferences bring together educators and educational researchers to share best practices and promote evidence-informed instruction. In this issue, check out Nicole Charron's article, "How students learn: How I teach." Nicole is a secondary teacher in Ottawa who has been applying recent findings from cognitive science to her instruction to help students better remember the concepts they have learned in her class. She embodies the spirit of researchED and takes control of her own pedagogy by finding and applying evidence-informed techniques.

Finally, I cannot write about who is taking responsibility for public education in Ontario without mentioning the topic of funding. Our current provincial government has undertaken a plan to remove 25 per cent of all secondary school teachers in order to cut cost. These cuts will devastate what is now internationally recognized as one of the top public school systems in the world. If one wanted to engage the government on this issue, I recommend reading this issue's piece "Investing in Education: Investing in our Future" by Gary Fenn and Chris Samuel. They explore the Conference Board of Canada's report on public education that has found that for every \$1 invested in our schools, it yields \$1.30. This is a credible and very pragmatic argument to increase funding to public education, not cut it.

*Education Forum* is always looking for writers interested in telling stories about public education. If you are interested in writing for us, please visit our [education-forum.ca](http://education-forum.ca) website.

Randy Banderob, Editor  
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# Manuel scolaire, enseignement et tests

## Qui est responsable de l'éducation?

C'est un privilège de revenir à titre d'éditeur d'*Education Forum*. La Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario a une longue et fière tradition dans le domaine de la publication d'articles sur des sujets connexes à l'éducation publique, ici en Ontario et à l'étranger. Je suis enthousiaste à l'idée de faire partie à nouveau de la publication!

Je débailais quelques cartons de livres aujourd'hui et j'ai trouvé ma première édition de l'*Ontario High School English Grammar*, paru en 1911. Complétée d'une impression des armoires de l'Ontario, la couverture en toile verte se vante d'être « autorisée » par le ministère de l'Éducation et elle se vendait pour seulement 45 cents. Je l'ai récupéré à une librairie d'occasion, il y a quelques décennies, quand j'enseignais régulièrement la grammaire à des élèves du secondaire. Le livre est surligné et annoté dans les marges, écrit délicatement à l'encre bourgogne d'un stylo à cartouche, révolu depuis longtemps. Quelque chose dans ces griffonnages m'a toujours fait penser qu'ils avaient été faits par un enseignant et non pas par un élève. Les notes en caractères cursifs délicats relatent le cheminement d'une personne à travers un guide prescrit de grammaire anglaise.

Je ne sais pas trop quand le gouvernement de l'Ontario a abandonné la rédaction de manuels scolaires comme celui-ci. Même lorsque j'étudiais à l'élémentaire dans les années 1970, je me rappelle que mes livres scolaires portaient les logos Pearson et Scholastic. Je me suis replongé rapidement dans ma boîte poussiéreuse et j'ai trouvé mon livre de lecture de 2<sup>e</sup> année, *Higgleby's House*, publié par *Ginn and Company* (les mêmes personnes qui ont sorti *Mr. Mugs*, au cas où vous vous poseriez la question). Le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario

n'est donc plus dans les manuels scolaires depuis un bon moment.

En remontant encore plus loin, en 1965, la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario a commencé à publier des documents d'appui à l'intention du personnel enseignant des écoles secondaires. C'était à la demande des membres qui cherchaient des orientations pédagogiques alors que le ministère n'en fournissait aucune.

Toutefois, notre gouvernement provincial s'est soudainement intéressé davantage ces derniers temps à tout ce qui est pédagogique. Les résultats en mathématiques aux tests normalisés de l'OQRE sont devenus subitement une grande préoccupation. La solution? Apparemment faire passer un test en mathématiques au personnel enseignant sera une sorte de remède universel. Je recommande fortement l'article de Peter Bates, « Testing the Teachers », dans ce numéro. Dans celui-ci, il dissocie nettement les faits de la fiction et décrit non seulement les lacunes de ces tests, mais aussi le mauvais raisonnement et la manœuvre politique qui ont entraîné le gouvernement vers cette solution.

Quant aux directions pédagogiques, nous ne devrions pas être surpris si les foulées les plus importantes et les plus marquantes proviennent des éducateurs eux-mêmes. Dans notre numéro de l'automne 2017 d'*Education Forum*, j'ai interviewé le fondateur de researchED, Tom Bennett, à propos de son mouvement révolutionnaire d'habilitation des éducateurs en partageant les éléments des sciences de l'apprentissage et cognitives. Ses conférences internationales populaires rassemblent des éducateurs et des chercheurs en éducation dans le but d'échanger des pratiques exemplaires et de promouvoir l'enseignement éclairé

par des données probantes. Dans ce numéro, lisez l'article de Nicole Charron intitulé « How Students Learn: How I Teach. » Nicole enseigne au secondaire à Ottawa et applique des découvertes récentes de la science cognitive à son enseignement dans le but d'aider les élèves à mieux retenir les concepts qu'ils ont appris dans sa classe. Elle concrétise l'esprit de researchED et prend le contrôle de sa propre pédagogie en trouvant et en appliquant des techniques éclairées par des données probantes.

Finalement, je ne peux pas écrire sur ceux à qui incombe la responsabilité de l'éducation publique en Ontario sans mentionner le sujet du financement. Notre gouvernement provincial actuel a entrepris un plan visant à enlever 25 pour cent de tout le personnel enseignant au secondaire afin de réduire les coûts. Ces coupures anéantiront ce qui est maintenant reconnu à l'échelon international comme étant l'un des meilleurs systèmes scolaires au monde. Si quelqu'un cherche à amener le gouvernement sur cet enjeu, je recommande la lecture de l'article « Investir en éducation – Investir dans notre avenir » rédigé par Gary Fenn et Chris Samuel. Ils explorent le rapport du *Conference Board du Canada* sur l'éducation publique qui conclut que pour chaque dollar investi dans nos écoles, cela rapporte 1,30 \$. Il s'agit d'un argument crédible et très réaliste pour augmenter le financement en éducation publique et non pas pour le couper.

*Education Forum* est toujours à la recherche de rédacteurs qui souhaitent raconter des histoires sur l'éducation publique. Si vous souhaitez écrire pour nous, visitez notre site Web [education-forum.ca](http://education-forum.ca).

Randy Banderob, rédacteur en chef  
[randy.banderob@osstf.ca](mailto:randy.banderob@osstf.ca)





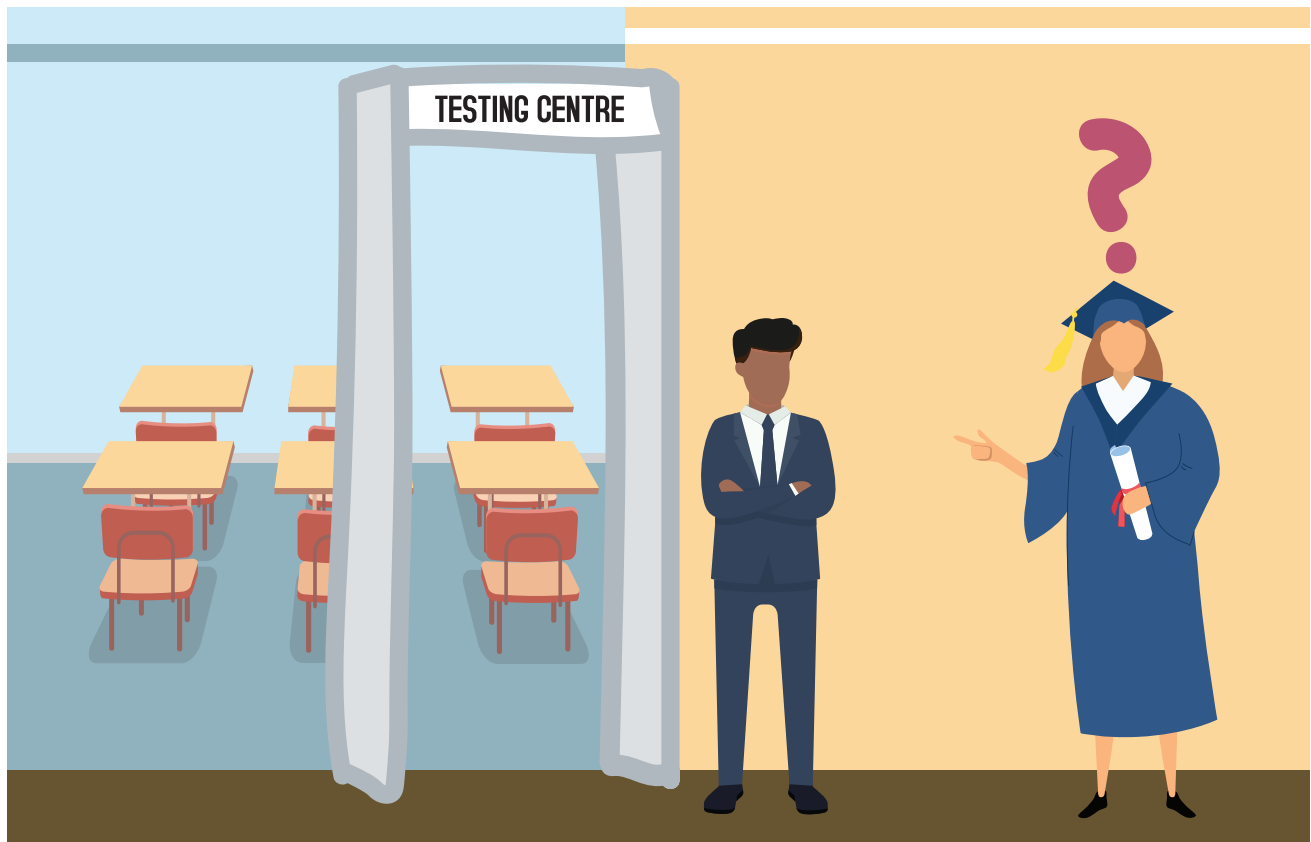
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# Testing the teachers

When the government needs someone to blame



The Ford government is making good on its misguided 2018 announcement to require that all new teachers pass a mandatory math test before they can teach in Ontario. Of course, given the provisions of the *Ontario Mobility Act*, teachers certified in another province will not need to meet any such certification requirement: under the terms of the act, professionals certified elsewhere in Canada are considered to have met the requirements for certification in Ontario.

The Ministry of Education issued a memorandum on August 21, 2019, regarding the introduction of a Mathematics Proficiency Test for new teachers. On August 20, 2019, two regulations were filed: the *Proficiency in Mathematics* regulation requires that new applicants to the Ontario College of Teachers (OCT) must successfully pass a mathematics proficiency test if their application for registration is completed on or after

March 31, 2020, and the *Objects of the Office* regulation mandates the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) to develop the test.

## What we know about Ontario's new teacher proficiency test

Ontario Faculties of Education will administer the test in accordance with instructions provided by EQAO. At least 70 per cent of the test will be math content and the remainder pedagogy. Candidates will require a mark of 70 per cent or higher in each of the math content and pedagogy sections to successfully pass the test.

The math questions will include concepts taught in both the elementary and secondary Grades 3 through 11. The pedagogical questions will focus on teachers' foundational understanding of math assessment, planning, and facilitating student learning specific to mathematics, even if the teacher candidate is

not obtaining math qualifications.

EQAO will mark the multiple choice test and provide the result to the person who took it, and forward the names of successful candidates to the OCT. EQAO will also conduct research and collect information relating to the candidate's confidence and proficiency in mathematics. EQAO is expected to develop online preparation, support materials and practice tests for teacher candidates.

There will be no fee to write the test on the first attempt for those who must pass the test to register with the OCT. A fee will be required for subsequent and/or voluntary attempts. There is no limit on the number of times a person may take the mathematics test.

## What is wrong with the test

The new math proficiency test is concerning for a variety of reasons. This kind of across-the-board testing of all teach-

Artwork: Ronda Allan



ers, when a majority of them will never teach math, will not impact secondary students' math outcomes. Without mutual agreement, secondary school teachers can only be assigned to teach in their areas of qualification. There is the potential to have an excellent art, geography or history teacher not qualified to teach in Ontario because they do not pass a math test, a discipline that they would never teach. The regulation states that this test will include Grades 3–11 curriculum content and pedagogy. It is unreasonable and unnecessary for any teacher candidate to be tested in math content and pedagogy beyond the scope of their division levels.

Questions remain about the implementation and delivery of the test. How will EQAO manage to develop, pilot and implement a multiple-choice test by March 31, 2020 that appropriately screens a teacher candidate's curricular and pedagogical knowledge? What is the fee for those who fail and must re-take the test? And does this open the door to further teacher testing for new and existing teachers?

Also disconcerting is the option for currently certified teachers to take voluntarily this standardized math test administered through EQAO. Some OSSTF/FEESO members may be tempted to take the test voluntarily as an avenue to leadership positions. There would be little to prevent employers to view those with successful completion of the EQAO math proficiency test as preferred or better suited for transfer or promotion to positions of added responsibility. There is also the potential for administrators to coach teachers into taking the math proficiency test 'voluntarily' during an Annual Learning Plan or Teacher Performance Appraisal process. While it is not clear whether the actual score on the test will be communicated to anyone other than the person who takes it, there will be the temptation to request test

scores when making hiring decisions.

There are additional considerations making a mandatory, high-stakes proficiency test for OCT certification requirement impractical and a waste of time and resources that could be better spent elsewhere in the education system. First, Ontario students do not have an achievement in math problem. Secondly, there is little empirical evidence that standardized teacher tests have a positive correlation to teaching effectiveness or student achievement. Finally, any proficiency assessment should be an integral part of their teacher education program with opportunities for support as needed.

### **What achievement in math problem?**

In 2015, 540,000 15-year-old students in 72 countries participated in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) testing. PISA 2018 Math Scores will not be available until December, 2019. The Canadian report indicates that after a decline in math between 2003 and 2012, the performance of Ontario students remained stable over the 2012 to 2015 period. Students in Canada scored well above the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average and were outperformed by students in only one country in reading and six in mathematics among the 72 countries that participated in PISA 2015. Among the provinces, students in Quebec, Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia performed above the OECD average in both reading and mathematics. Canadian students had an average score of 516 in mathematics, well above the OECD average of 493 and 490, respectively. As a province, Ontario ranked 4th behind BC, Alberta and Quebec. The Ford government has yet to explain how testing secondary school teachers who will not be qualified to teach math can have any impact on math scores, locally or globally.

### **Lack of evidence that standardized tests can predict teacher efficacy or student success**

EQAO has been designated as the

developer, marker and reporter of the math proficiency test. Ironically, EQAO released an extensive literature review in August 2019 which shows that the empirical evidence regarding the connection between teacher testing and student outcomes is weak at best. In their review, EQAO concludes that "Current research demonstrates that standardized teacher tests are not linked with a level of performance consistency that justifies their widespread implementation at this time," and that the academic literature around teacher testing suggests that the fundamental goal of these politicized tests are not often met.

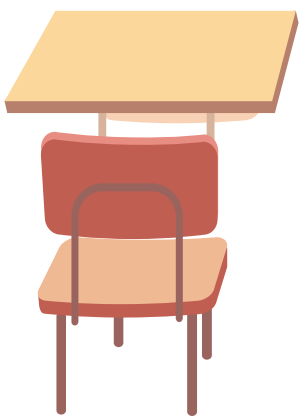
Studies that find that teacher competency test scores are positively related to student outcomes in most cases the correlation to be weak and not universal. EQAO's review also finds that teacher competency test scores are much less likely to predict student outcomes. Teaching experience, college/university education grade, the number of post-secondary math courses and the number of professional math courses taken for teacher certification are all better predictors of positive student outcomes in math.

Standardized proficiency tests contribute to equity issues for educators just as they do for students. A range of research studies found that teacher competency testing has an impact on the diversity of the teaching population as built in biases against marginalized groups have an impact on who passes the test. In the US, one study found that black and Hispanic teacher candidates were much more likely to fail the standardized tests than their white peers, as just one example.

Given the problematic nature of standardized proficiency tests as an entry requirement into the teaching profession, the futility of this approach to measuring teacher efficacy, and that such tests may do more harm than good, OSSTF/FEESO is cautioning members not to take the test on a voluntary basis.

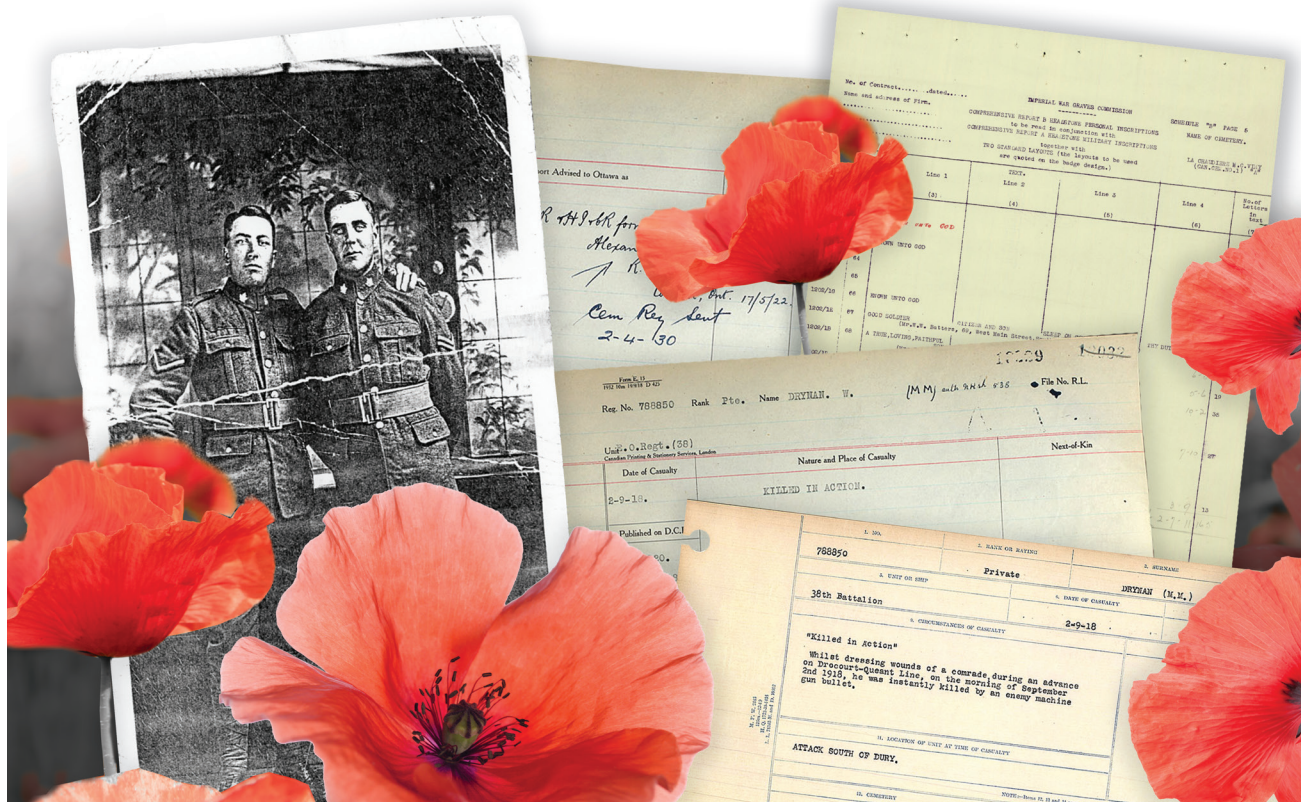
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**Peter Bates** is an Executive Assistant working in the Educational Services Department at OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office.



# Passing the torch

Remembrance Day



In the First World War, 619,636 Canadian women and men served. Of that number, 170,000 were wounded and 66,000 Canadians made the ultimate sacrifice. I want to share the stories of two young men and the sacrifices they made.

Peter “Pete” O’Gorman and Wilbert “Will” Drynan grew up on the Cobden to Eganville road in the Ottawa Valley. Pete and Will were farmers, neighbours, and best friends since childhood. In the spring of 1918, Pete arrived at his unit, the 38th Ottawa Overseas Battalion stationed near Arras, in Northern France. He had arrived to the war green, but he was not alone. He joined Will, who had already served two years in the war, a tough veteran soldier.

Will had enlisted in 1916 and he had been in action since the Battle of Vimy Ridge where he was wounded by a bullet from a sniper rifle. Many months in the trenches had transformed this young

Renfrew County farmer into a first-rate fighting soldier.

When Pete joined the 38th, the battalion was out of the line “on rest.” With Will’s guidance, Pete would learn the ropes as an infantryman-and in 1918 there were arguably no better soldiers on the Western Front than the Canadian Corps.

The German Army, desperately attempted victory, strengthened by a million soldiers released from the Eastern Front. One out of five Canadian casualties in the first world war would be suffered in these 100 days of bloodshed.

On the eighth of August, the Battle of Amiens commenced. The 38th Battalion, part of the 4th Canadian Division advanced into barbed wire, poison gas and machine gun barrages, but they moved 15 kilometres in three days. In the midst of battle, Will Drynan distinguished himself in the advance-not only fighting towards the objective but look-

ing out for his comrades as well. He was observed moving through a hail of bullets applying medical aid to the wounded friend and foe alike, dragging men to the cover of shell craters and ditches. He was recommended for the Military Medal for bravery under fire, his award would be announced in February of 1919.

After Amiens, Will, Pete and the other Canadians returned to the Arras sector to prepare for an assault against the main German defensive positions on the Western Front, the Hindenburg Line. The Germans had retreated into the strongest defensive position in Europe: the Drocourt-Queant Line and the Canadians were ordered to drive them out.

The Drocourt-Queant Line was formidable: six lines of trenches heavily reinforced by deep belts of barbed wire each over a kilometre in depth. Wall after wall of interlocking machine gun posts all supported by hundreds of heavy guns.

Artwork: Audrey Bourque



On the 26th of August, 1918 the Canadian Corps began its attack facing ferocious fire. After four days of heavy fighting, the Corps prepared to attack the final position atop Dury Ridge, a wire protected defense complex distinguished by a battered red brick windmill. It seemed that the 38th had been given an impossible task, and yet, it succeeded. Relentlessly, heroically, steadily leaning into a rainstorm of bullets, the men of the 38th advanced. By 4 p.m. they had secured the ridge, suffering what the battalion war diary recorded as "...heavy casualties due to sustained machine gun fire."

Moving across the hilltop that afternoon was Pete O'Gorman, and it was he who found Will. Will had been applying a field dressing to a wounded German soldier when a burst of gunfire struck his chest and he fell, face first across the German. That is how Pete found his best friend, lying lifeless across the body of an enemy he was trying to save. "Whilst dressing the wounds of a comrade, during the advance on Drocourt-Queant Line, on the morning of September 2, 1918, he was instantly killed by an enemy machine gun bullet."

For Pete, his war had not yet ended. Pete was wounded in the head and face by fragments from a high explosive shell. Pete was blinded in one eye as a result of his wounds.

On a November morning one hundred years ago, the guns finally fell silent. Sixteen kilometres southeast of Arras along the D939 highway on the north side of the road is situated a simple cube shaped memorial to the victory of the Drocourt-Queant Line. It is a largely forgotten battle of the 100 Days. Uphill from the memorial across an open wheat field is Dury Mill War cemetery. In Plot 1, Row C, Grave 18 you will find the resting place of Will Drynan, farmer and soldier.

Pete returned from the wars to his farm on the Cobden road. He lived a long and productive life. He raised children and grandchildren. In 1968, he helped to construct Opeongo High School as Chair of the Vocational Committee. Pete was a farmer and a citizen soldier. He was a survivor of the 100 Days from Amiens to Mons, but he left behind his best friend.

How do I know the story of Will and Pete? On November 9, 2018, I had the honour and privilege to be invited by teacher John Pierce to attend the Remembrance Day Ceremony at Opeongo High School.

John Pierce, a long-time history teacher at Opeongo, set the tone for the assembly recognizing all of the sacrifices that have been made in the many wars and highlighting that this was the 100th anniversary of the end of the First

World War. To help connect the audience to Remembrance Day, Pierce wove a narrative focused on two young Ottawa Valley farm boys, Will Drynan and Pete O'Gorman who fought in some of the most pivotal and costly battles of the "Great War." I am certain Mr. Pierce wanted the story of Will and Pete to resonate with the audience; listening to him speak, it was clear that Pierce himself struggled to recount the tale.

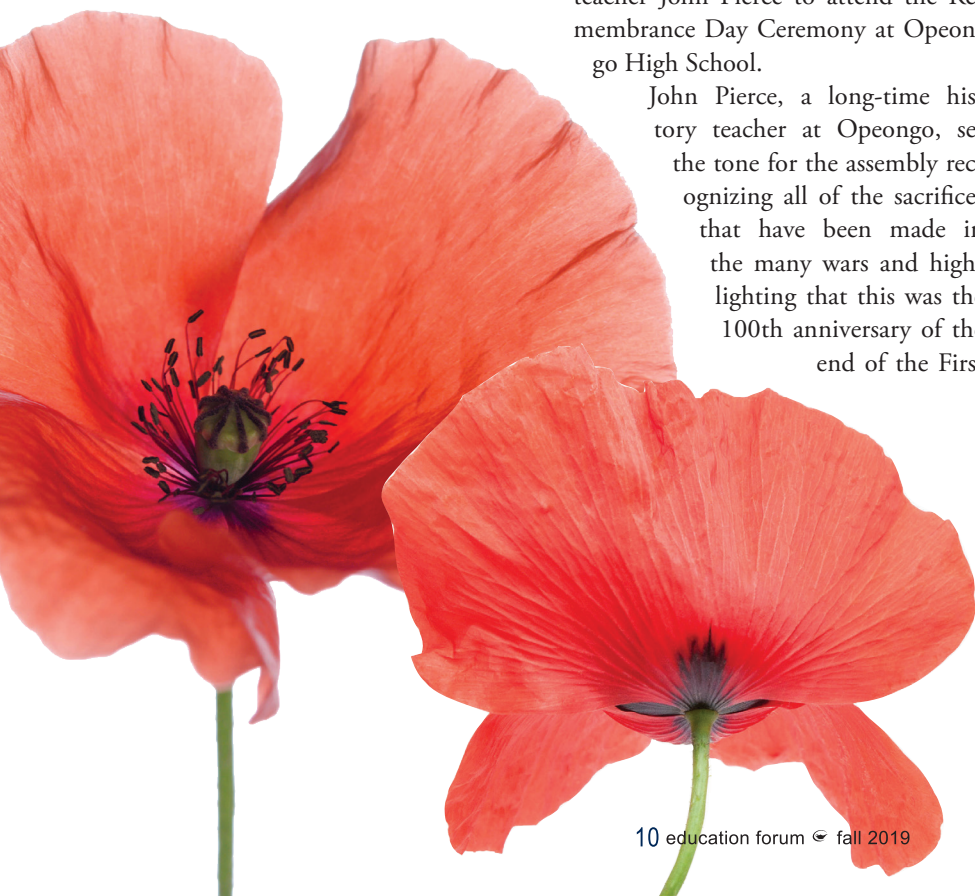
We often hear the reasons that young men and women went to serve in the wars. Noble reasons: For King and Country! To fight tyranny and oppression! For Freedom! For the love of their country! I expect that those are the reasons for many that went, but I often wonder if many served for other reasons: for adventure, a sense of duty, or just to earn a living to help support their family. I do not know why Pete went to war, but I do know that when he returned, he clearly valued public education.

I believe that the sacrifices that Will, Pete and others made helped shape Canada to be the incredible country it is today. Part of what makes this such a great country is our public education system and its educational professionals. It is the embodiment of what makes a great society, and public education helps keep tyranny at bay. Educational professionals, like John Pierce, who are committed to creating authentic learning opportunities, in a safe learning environment, are ensuring our country remains a world leader. We continue to need an education system that is free for all, where all are welcome and can feel safe and supported, an education system that ranks amongst the top countries in the world and prepares students for their futures, an education system that helps us to remember.

John Pierce shared a story at that assembly; I have shared it with you. How will you pass this torch so incredibly purchased by the selfless valour of Will and Pete?

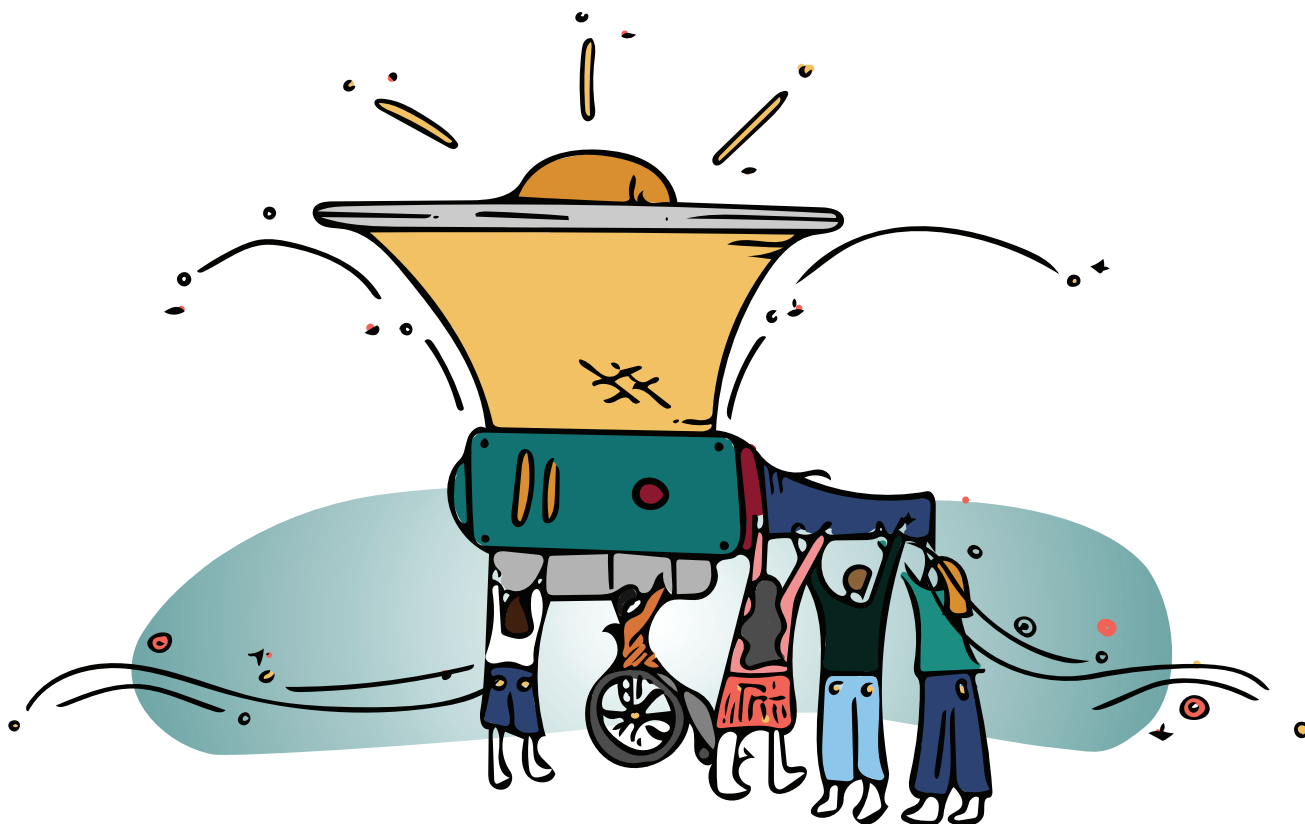
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**Jeff Barber** is the Director of Pension and Economic Affairs at the Ontario Teachers' Federation.



# Ideology to action

A story of community organizing



I've been immersed in the activities of political action for about a decade. I've volunteered on half a dozen provincial and federal election campaigns, looked after communications-related tasks for our local labour council, and represented union members through several different roles. For union activists, who spend most of their active time on political action, monthly involvement is typical, especially if it means getting to do things locally, regionally, and provincially.

While finalizing a Chief Financial Officer audit report for Elections Ontario during August of 2018, a short six weeks after Doug Ford became Ontario Premier, one by one all my activist responsibilities took on a kind of urgency I've never experienced before. Is this how people experienced the initial voltage back in 1995 when Harris got elected, I wondered, a steep uptick in activist communication and social currency? By the

time summer had ended, I was already utilizing all pathways, nodes, and hubs of my social union network, searching for resources, people, and funds to begin pushing against Ford's assault on the hard-fought Employment Standards and Labour Relations regulations we won through Bill 148, not to mention the attacks on Health and Physical Education and the development of Ontario's important Indigenous curriculum, the Indigenous Cultural Fund, and the Federal Carbon pricing program. The urgency brought on by Ford's aggressive agenda, combined with excellent training by the Ontario Federation of Labour and the Fight for \$15 and Fairness, pivoted me toward specific goals about message, structure, and commitment. I made the conscious decision to see myself as an organizer, not just an activist.

I'm a firm believer that growth as a social unionist happens when we venture slightly beyond our union's structure,

experiencing the labour movement and social justice through local action. Labour council or \$15 and Fairness, for example, are perfect places to try skills, techniques, and strategies we learn in union workshops. When we return to specific union work, we do so with greater understanding and context of important concepts like union equity, history, and solidarity.

The thing that makes community-based organizing equally enthralling and difficult is the near absence of an established structure as with the organizational structure of unions. Unions champion structure based on equity, democracy, and service. The goals of political action (i.e. protecting worker rights or the quality of publicly-funded education) become less about adhering to big picture policy, past practice, and elected positions (incredibly important nonetheless) and more about creating a culture of commitment. Through train-

Artwork: Gabriela Rodriguez

ing and practice with \$15 and Fairness organizers, I learned that organizing structure is relational. In other words, the quality of the personal relationships that get developed while implementing the strategy or campaign become the organizing structure. Whether online or in person, each point of contact or opportunity to gather within the campaign is an opportunity to build relational strength, and nurture the people power it takes to change the minds of elected officials.

As a Communications Officer with the North Bay and District Labour Council, it was easy enough work to connect with many public and private sector union representatives. The goal was to convince as many people as possible to contact the MPP to explain the importance of maintaining Bill 148, thereby winning the support of the ultra-business friendly Minister of Finance—a seemingly impossible mission. We used the campaign petition to learn and practice one-to-ones and to gently debunk decent work myths. We did this during main street media-friendly events, during workplace lunch and learns, and during scheduled union gatherings. The entire campaign was very time sensitive and quick paced, with specific goals set for two-week cycles, all designed to dial up the message that two thirds of Ontario voters were fine with Bill 148 and that repealing it would be a major political mistake. We earned several media stories and a lobby meeting with MPP Fedeli. We used pop-up street actions to build solidarity, we signed close to 1,000 petition signatures, and we culminated with a rally in front of the local Chamber of Commerce, the biggest source of

anti-worker messaging. Above all, we gathered as groups and showed to one another that people power is real, that it teaches us about organizing ideas, skills, and humility.

We also created some serious momentum. Part way through the campaign to stop Bill 47, it became evident that the bill would pass third reading in early November. Many mid-sized communities have community solidarity groups: Making Waves in Windsor, London Common Front, and We are Oshawa are a few. Solidarity or social justice groups encourage people to organize along similar interests. Projects get initiated through relationships and tend to be about local issues. The fact that Ford started appealing to social conservatives so quickly by attacking human rights and equity services, institutions, and programs, combined with his willingness to use the not withstanding clause to reduce Toronto council seats (during a municipal election!), was enough to initiate a solidarity group in North Bay. Education sector workers, parents, students, trade-unionists, environmentalists, business owners, elected officials, equity justice organizers, researchers were gathering together to develop strategy and implement tactics in my town—it was amazing.

In the middle of social and worker justice projects and campaigns, it's not always easy to visualize concrete success. Bill 148 was three years in the making, using organizing tactics throughout the province to pressure the Liberal government to modernize the *Employment Standards Act* and the *Labour Relations Act*. The victory was a legislated success.

But what happens when we're up against a majority government that makes decisions based on the hungry desires of capital wealth? What does organizing success look like when we know for certain the Premier wants to monetize and privatize publicly-funded education or imple-

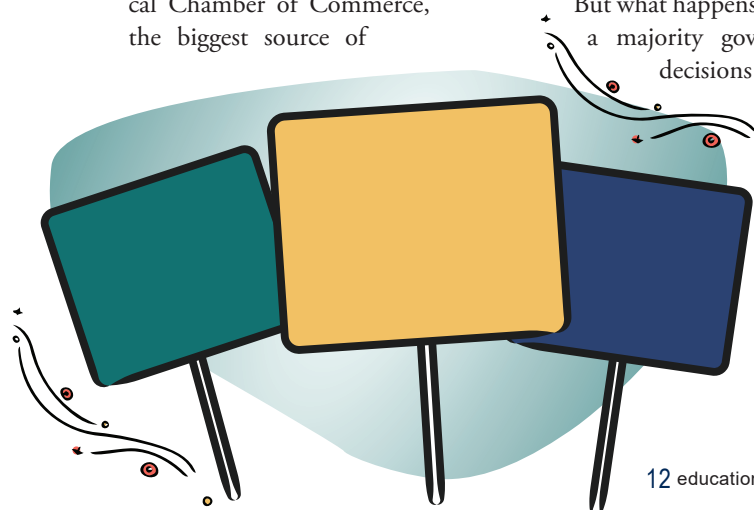
ment grotesque ways to circumvent labour standards and union contracts? Successful campaigns use values to help storytellers build relationships that teach us to develop strategy around a timeline of tactics.

Community organizing means being a student of organizing. As a student of the Labour College of Canada I learn that the incidental and informal experiences that occur while community organizing are important learning instances. These are experiences that allow us to tell our stories and their frequency and curation help us build a culture of commitment. Rallies, for example, are perfect opportunities for organizers to promote new skills like public speaking, speaking to media, and promoting for turnout. Asking the question of who gets to speak is critical because it forces organizers to confront privilege and detrimental status quo structure.

My experiences of community organizing taught me that organizing for social change requires flexibility, compassion, and creativity. Meetings must be productive and have responsible and brave accountability. However, organizing for social change is different than union service work because the structure of organizing is mostly relational. Whereas union service adheres to collective agreements, constitutions, policy, and reporting, organizing colleagues to engage community allies requires a high frequency of collaboration and requires members to harness personal resources like developed skills and leadership networks to bring along new people.

When I ask colleagues during socially appropriate times, one to one, and in small, already establish groups, to take part in a bigger than life struggle they almost always have something important to say. Yes or no, I get to hear their story, and that means everything to organizing.

**Jared Hunt** is a full-time teacher, District 4, Near North President, and a Vice-chair of Educational Services Committee. As a community organizer in North Bay, Jared likes to promote the merits of labour and work power.







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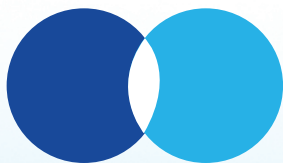
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INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE



INVESTIR EN ÉDUCATION  
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# The Conference Board of Canada report on public education

by Gary Fenn and Chris Samuel

Invest more in education—it is good for the economy. A seemingly simple and logical statement, and arguably difficult to refute. However, in the political landscape of Ontario, we are subjected sound bites from all sides of the political spectrum. Thoughtful, substantiated and factual discourse has eroded as populist rhetoric has grown to become the way to do political business in Ontario, and in many other jurisdictions.

To move the dialogue away from simple unsupported assertions toward a discussion about facts and authentic data, the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF/FEESO) asked the Conference Board of Canada to look at the numbers and answer a simple question—When you invest public money into education, is it good for the economy? High quality, quantitative research would help answer this question, and not a continuance of empty rhetoric.

The result was a research report produced by Conference Board entitled *The Economic Case for Investing in Education*, which was released to the public on June 19, 2019 at an Empire Club of Canada event in Toronto.

The report's methods key findings—that investing in education leads to overall economic growth and reduces public spending in key areas—represent a departure from most research on the relationship between education and the economy. Most research—and certainly the current government—tends to focus on education's role in giving individuals access to higher earnings and better job opportunities. These are important considerations, but they are also private, individualized measures. Focusing on the link between education and employment reduces public education to a mere tool of the economy and makes it seem as though the education system is only important to current students and their families.

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## Rapport du Conference Board du Canada sur l'éducation publique

par Gary Fenn et Chris Samuel

Investir davantage dans l'éducation, c'est bon pour l'économie. Une déclaration vraisemblablement simple et logique et sans doute difficile à réfuter. Pourtant, sur la scène politique de l'Ontario, nous sommes soumis à des phrases-chocs de tous les horizons politiques confondus. Les discours réfléchis, étayés et factuels se sont effrités alors que la rhétorique populiste est devenue la façon de faire des affaires politiques en Ontario, et dans de nombreuses autres provinces.

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While it is doubtlessly important that students find meaningful and fulfilling careers, OSSTF/FEESO commissioned this study to find out whether educational investments impact more than just students and their families. In other words, the key question was: are there public benefits—benefits everyone shares in—that come from education investments? By providing an independent economic analysis, *The Economic Case for Investing in Education* confirms what supporters of public education instinctively know: education is indeed for everyone.

To investigate the public benefits of investing in education, the Conference Board researchers looked at two general economic areas. In the first part of the report, the authors investigate the impact of education spending on the overall economy. In the second, they link research on educational outcomes to spending in other policy areas. It's important to keep the findings of each part separate. The report doesn't say that the 1 per cent increase described in the first part would necessarily lead to the improved outcomes and reduced spending in the second part. They are separate analyses. Nonetheless, they are both compelling and while either part makes a strong case for increasing educational investments, in combination they leave no doubt.

## Let's look at the report in more detail



When economists look at the economic impact of any injection of money into the economy—from corporate investments to Pride Parades to government spending—they look at three kinds of effects: the direct impact of the investment in terms of employees' wages in the sector; the indirect impact that comes from purchasing goods and services the sector needs (for example, desks, school supplies, real estate, and school buildings); and, finally, what economists call 'induced' impacts, which are the new jobs, business opportunities and additional tax revenue that are created when employees in the sector spend their wages. Using sophisticated models, economists then use the direct, indirect and induced impacts to estimate overall economic growth, changes in wages and changes in government revenues that result from introducing new money into the economy, again, either through private investments or through public expenditures.

The education system is a particularly important sector for this type of analysis because K–12 education is already responsible for 291,000 jobs (either directly or indirectly) and accounts for 3.2 per cent of the overall size of the economy. In *The Economic Case for Investing in Education*, the authors looked at what would happen if the government increased its investment in education by 1 per cent. Based on the 2018–2019 expenditure of \$29.1 billion in education, a 1 per cent increase would be \$291 million. The results are remarkable.

First off, the authors found that a 1 per cent investment would create increased economic activity worth \$371 million. The economy would grow by more than the original investment! This growth would include 4,234 jobs and \$275 million in additional wages and salaries. Keep in mind that these new jobs and increased salaries would be across the economy, not just for educational workers. Naturally, when jobs and salaries increase, so do tax revenues. The Conference Board estimates that total tax revenue would increase by \$94 million, including \$36 million in provincial taxes and \$54 million in federal taxes. That means that nearly one third of the initial \$291 million would be returned to various levels of government to support additional investments.

**In short, for every \$1 invested in education, there would be a \$1.30 worth of economic growth.**

In short, for every \$1 invested in education, there would be a \$1.30 worth of economic growth. Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. As the government takes money out of the education system, they are also cramping our province's economic growth. For every dollar the education system loses, the economy contracts by \$1.30.

However, the general economic impact of investing in education is only half of the story.

As noted earlier, higher levels of education attainment are understood to lead things like higher salaries and less precarious employment. We can add to those private benefits things like better health outcomes and lower likelihood of involvement in criminal activity. *The Economic Case for Investing in Education* argues that these private benefits actually translate into social benefits because they reduce government expenditures in key areas.

To make the case, the authors review research that demonstrates the connec-

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The Conference Board of Canada



# The Economic Case for Investing in Education



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Pour écarter le dialogue des affirmations simples dénuées de fondement vers une discussion fondée sur les faits et les données réelles, la Fédération des enseignants-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario (OSSTF/FEESO) a demandé au Conference Board du Canada d'examiner les chiffres et de répondre à une question simple : Quand vous investissez des fonds publics en éducation, est-ce bon pour l'économie? Une étude de haute qualité et quantitative contribuerait à répondre à cette question, mais pas le maintien d'une rhétorique creuse.



Le résultat a été un rapport de recherche produit par le *Conference Board*, intitulé *The Economic Case for Investing in Education*, qui a été rendu public le 19 juin 2019 lors d'une activité de l'*Empire Club of Canada* à Toronto.

La méthodologie et les principales conclusions du rapport, à savoir qu'investir en éducation génère une croissance économique globale et réduit la dépense publique dans des domaines clés, diffèrent de la plupart des recherches sur la relation entre l'éducation et l'économie. La plupart des recherches, et surtout le gouvernement actuel, ont tendance à se concentrer sur le rôle de l'éducation pour donner accès aux individus à des salaires plus élevés et à de meilleures occasions d'emploi. Ces considérations sont importantes, mais elles sont aussi des mesures personnelles individualisées. Attirer l'attention sur la relation entre l'éducation et l'emploi réduit l'éducation publique à un simple instrument de l'économie et cela donne l'impression que le système d'éducation importe uniquement aux élèves actuels et à leurs familles.

Bien qu'il soit certainement important que les élèves trouvent un travail intéressant et épanouissant, OSSTF/FEESO a commandé cette étude afin de découvrir si les investissements en éducation influencent bien plus que les élèves et leurs familles. Autrement dit, la question fondamentale était de savoir s'il existe des avantages publics, des avantages que tous partagent, qui découlent des investissements en éducation. En assurant une analyse économique indépendante, *The Economic Case for Investing in Education* confirme ce que les défenseurs de l'éducation publique savent d'instinct : l'éducation est vraiment pour tous.

Pour examiner les avantages publics d'investir en éducation, les chercheurs du *Conference Board* se sont penchés sur deux secteurs économiques généraux. Dans la première partie du rapport, les auteurs étudient l'effet des dépenses en éducation sur l'économie globale. Dans la deuxième, ils associent les résultats scolaires aux dépenses

dans d'autres domaines politiques. Il importe de dissocier les conclusions de chaque partie. Le rapport ne précise pas que l'augmentation de 1 pour cent décrite dans la première partie mènerait nécessairement à de meilleurs résultats et à la réduction des dépenses de la deuxième partie. Ce sont des analyses distinctes. Néanmoins, elles sont toutes deux convaincantes et même si l'une ou l'autre fait fortement valoir l'augmentation des investissements en éducation, ensemble, elles ne font aucun doute.

### Examinons le rapport en profondeur

Lorsque les économistes regardent les retombées économiques de toute injection de fonds dans l'économie, qu'il s'agisse d'investissements des entreprises aux parades de la Fierté en passant par les dépenses gouvernementales, ils examinent trois types d'effets : l'incidence directe de l'investissement en termes du salaire des employés dans le secteur, l'incidence indirecte qui découle de l'achat de produits et services dont le secteur a besoin (par exemple, pupitres, fournitures scolaires, immobilier et bâtiments scolaires) et enfin, ce que les économistes appellent les incidences « dérivées », qui sont les nouveaux emplois, les occasions d'affaires et les recettes fiscales supplémentaires créés lorsque les employés du secteur dépensent leurs salaires. Au moyen de méthodes perfectionnées, les économistes utilisent ensuite les incidences directes, indirectes et dérivées pour évaluer la croissance économique globale, les changements au niveau des salaires et les changements des revenus gouvernementaux qui découlent de l'introduction de nouveaux fonds dans l'économie, encore par le biais d'investissements privés ou de dépenses publiques.

Le système d'éducation est un secteur particulièrement important pour ce type d'analyse puisque l'enseignement de la M/J-12<sup>e</sup> année est déjà responsable de 291 000 emplois (soit directement ou indirectement) et représente

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tions between investment in education and educational attainment, educational attainment and lower reliance on health care and social assistance programs and, finally, educational attainment and lower likelihood of involvement in the critical justice system. As a general proxy for educational attainment, the authors used Ontario's graduation rate. This is particularly useful in the current Ontario

context because the 15 per cent increase in graduation rates that we have seen since the Mike Harris days are under direct threat. As the government increases secondary class size averages, boards are already starting to cut key support staff. Larger classes and reduced supports are a potentially devastating combination and will make it more difficult for many students to keep on the path to graduation.

Using graduation rates as an indicator of improved education outcomes, the authors then set up three scenarios to allow comparisons. In the first scenario, they assumed no improvement in the current 86.2 per cent graduation rate. In

the second, they assumed an investment in education that would increase Ontario's graduation rate to 90.0 per cent. This would

bring Ontario into line with Nova Scotia, which currently boasts the highest graduation rate among the provinces. Finally, they calculated the opposite, namely the effect of cuts that reduce Ontario's graduation rate to 82.6 per cent.

Based on the connection between graduation rates and financial, health and criminal justice outcomes the authors establish through their literature review, the authors then estimate how the changes in graduation rates in each of their three scenarios would affect spending on health care, social assistance, and the criminal justice system.

Here again, the findings are remarkable. Overall, boosting graduation rates to 90 per cent would result in an annual savings of \$2,767 for each additional high school graduate across the three areas. That works out to \$16.4 million per year and over 20 years would save the government coffers roughly \$3.5 billion.

The report breaks down these costs by policy area. In health care, the province would save \$6.4

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**Pour chaque dollar que le système d'éducation perd, l'économie se replie de 1,30 \$.**

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3,2 pour cent de l'envergure globale de l'économie. Dans le rapport *The Economic Case for Investing In Education*, les auteurs ont examiné ce qui peut arriver si le gouvernement augmentait de 1 pour cent ses investissements dans l'éducation. En se fondant sur les dépenses de 29,1 milliards de dollars en éducation en 2018-2019, une augmentation de 1 pour cent serait de 291 milliards de dollars. Les résultats sont remarquables.

Tout d'abord, les auteurs ont découvert qu'un investissement de 1 pour cent créerait un accroissement de l'activité économique d'une valeur de 371 millions de dollars. L'économie devrait croître plus que l'investissement d'origine! Cette croissance comprendrait 4 234 emplois et 275 millions en traitements et salaires additionnels. N'oublions pas que ces nouveaux emplois et la hausse des salaires seraient dans tous les secteurs de l'économie et non pas seulement pour les travailleuses et travailleurs en éducation. Évidemment, lorsque les emplois et les salaires augmentent, il en va de même pour les recettes fiscales. Le *Conference Board* estime que les recettes fiscales totales augmenteraient de 94 millions de dollars, y compris 36 millions d'impôts provinciaux et 54 millions de dollars en impôt fédéral. Cela signifie que près du tiers du montant initial de 291 millions de dollars serait retourné aux divers paliers du gouvernement pour soutenir des investissements supplémentaires.

Bref, pour chaque dollar investi en éducation, il y aurait une croissance économique d'une valeur de 1,30 \$. Malheureusement, l'inverse est aussi vrai. Au fur et à mesure que le gouvernement retire de l'argent du système d'éducation, il mine aussi la crois-

sance économique de notre province. Pour chaque dollar que le système d'éducation perd, l'économie se replie de 1,30 \$.

Cependant, les retombées économiques générales de l'investissement en éducation ne sont qu'un côté de la médaille.

Comme nous l'avons déjà mentionné, des niveaux supérieurs de scolarité entraînent des résultats comme une rémunération plus élevée et moins d'emplois précaires. Nous pouvons ajouter à ces avantages privés des éléments comme de meilleurs résultats sur le plan de la santé et une plus faible probabilité de participation à des activités criminelles. *The Economic Case for Investing in Education* fait valoir que ces avantages privés se traduisent véritablement en avantages sur le plan social, car ils réduisent les dépenses gouvernementales dans des secteurs clés.

Pour démontrer ceci, les auteurs ont examiné des recherches qui témoignent du lien entre l'investissement en éducation et le niveau de scolarité, le niveau de scolarité et une dépendance moindre aux soins de santé et aux programmes



## L'argument économique pour investir dans l'éducation

Report June 2019

d'aide sociale et, enfin, le niveau de scolarité et la faible probabilité de démêlés avec le système de justice pénale. À titre d'indicateur général du niveau de scolarité, les auteurs ont utilisé le taux de diplomation en Ontario. Ceci est particulièrement utile dans le contexte actuel de l'Ontario, parce que la hausse de 15 pour cent des taux d'obtention de diplôme, que nous avons constatée

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OSSTF/FEESO

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million annually (\$1.4 billion over 20 years), \$5.1 million would be saved annually on social assistance (\$1.1 billion over 20 years) and \$4.9 million would be saved annually in the criminal justice system (\$1.0 billion over 20 years).

By contrast, if government policies lead to the lower graduation rates analyzed in the third scenario, public would likely spend an additional \$3,128 per year on each additional high school non-completer. This works out to approximately \$18 million in extra costs per year and over 20 years would accumulate to an additional \$3.8 billion. Over 20 years, that would be an additional \$1.4 billion each on health care and social assistance as well as an extra \$1.0 billion on criminal justice.

Unfortunately, how much to spend to achieve a 90 per cent graduation rate as well as how to spend it (i.e., on smaller classes, professional development or technology) were beyond the scope of the report. There is considerable debate in the education literature on these issues already, but *The Economic Case for*

*Investing in Education* shows the fiscal benefits that governments will get from making that investment.

The numbers and conclusions speak for themselves. Investing in education is good for the economy, and conversely cutting education spending has an equally negative effect. The Ontario Progressive Conservative government cannot deny the findings of this report. As the government embarks on a journey of cutting education funding, it also risks disrupting Ontario's economy and costing us more.

We can only hope that politicians who hold the levers of power will pay attention to well researched facts to formulate public policy rather take the path that is guided by populist sound bites and unsubstantiated half-truths.

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depuis les années de Mike Harris, est directement menacée. À mesure que le gouvernement augmente les effectifs moyens des classes au secondaire, les conseils scolaires commencent déjà à réduire le personnel de soutien essentiel. Des classes plus grandes et des soutiens réduits sont une combinaison potentiellement dévastatrice et il sera donc plus difficile pour plusieurs élèves de se maintenir dans la voie de l'obtention de diplôme.

À l'aide des taux d'obtention de diplôme comme indicateur de l'amélioration des résultats scolaires, les auteurs ont ensuite imaginé trois scénarios pour permettre de faire des comparaisons. Dans le premier scénario, ils sont partis du principe qu'il n'y avait aucune amélioration au taux actuel d'obtention de diplôme de 86,2 pour cent. Dans le deuxième, ils ont supposé un investissement en éducation qui augmenterait le taux d'obtention de diplôme en Ontario à 90 pour cent. Cela permettrait à l'Ontario d'être sur un pied d'égalité avec la Nouvelle-Écosse qui affiche actuellement le taux le plus élevé d'obtention de diplôme parmi les provinces. Finalement, ils ont calculé l'inverse, à savoir les conséquences des coupures qui réduisent le taux d'obtention de diplôme en Ontario à 82,6 pour cent.

Sur la base du rapport entre les taux d'obtention de diplôme et les résultats financiers sur les soins de santé et la justice pénale, que les auteurs ont établis lors de l'analyse de la documentation, ils ont ensuite évalué de quelle manière les variations des taux d'obtention de diplôme dans chacun de leurs trois scénarios influenceraient les dépenses de soins de santé, d'aide sociale et du système de justice pénale.

Encore une fois, les constatations sont remarquables. Dans l'ensemble, accroître les taux d'obtention de diplôme à 90 pour cent entraînerait des économies annuelles de 2 767 \$ pour chaque diplômé additionnel du secondaire dans les trois domaines. Cela équivaut à 16,4 millions de dollars par année et, sur une période de 20 ans,

les coffres du gouvernement auraient économisé à peu près 3,5 milliards de dollars. Le rapport ventile ces coûts par domaine politique. En santé, la province économiserait 6,4 millions de dollars par année (1,4 milliard \$ étalés sur 20 ans). En ce qui concerne l'aide sociale, l'économie annuelle serait de 5,1 millions de dollars (1,1 milliard \$ sur 20 ans) et 4,9 millions de dollars seraient économisés dans le système de justice pénale (1 milliard \$ sur 20 ans).

En revanche, si les politiques gouvernementales causent le taux d'obtention de diplôme le plus faible analysé dans le troisième scénario, le public aurait vraisemblablement dépensé 3,128 \$ additionnels par année pour chaque personne additionnelle qui n'a pas terminé ses études secondaires. Cela équivaut à environ 18 millions de dollars de coûts supplémentaires par année et on accumulerait 3,8 milliards de dollars additionnels étalés sur 20 ans. Sur la même période de 20 ans, cela correspondrait à 1,4 milliard de dollars additionnels chacun pour les soins de santé et l'aide sociale ainsi qu'un milliard de dollars supplémentaires pour la justice pénale.

Malheureusement, combien il faut dépenser pour atteindre un taux d'obtention de diplôme de 90 pour cent ainsi que la façon de le dépenser (c.-à-d., sur des classes de plus petite taille, le perfectionnement professionnel ou la technologie) dépassait la portée du présent rapport. La littérature sur ces questions suscite déjà un débat considérable, mais *The Economic Case for Investing in Education* montre les avantages fiscaux que tireront les gouvernements de cet investissement.

Les chiffres et les constatations se passent d'explications. Investir en éducation est bon pour l'économie et, à l'inverse, couper les dépenses dans le secteur de l'éducation a des répercussions négatives de même importance. Le gouvernement progressiste-conservateur de l'Ontario ne peut nier les conclusions du présent rapport. Au moment où le gouvernement entreprend le périple de couper le financement en éducation, il risque aussi de

perturber l'économie de l'Ontario et de nous coûter de plus en plus cher.

Nous ne pouvons qu'espérer que les politiciens, qui détiennent les leviers du pouvoir, porteront une attention particulière aux faits bien documentés pour formuler les orientations politiques plutôt que d'emprunter le chemin qui est dicté par les discours parsemés de formules aguichantes

et les demi-vérités non fondées des populistes.

**Gary Fenn** est directeur du Secteur des communications/action politique et **Chris Samuel** est analyste des politiques publiques, tous deux au Bureau provincial de la Fédération des enseignantes-enseignants des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario.

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## GENDER AND SEXUAL DIVERSITY IN YOUTH

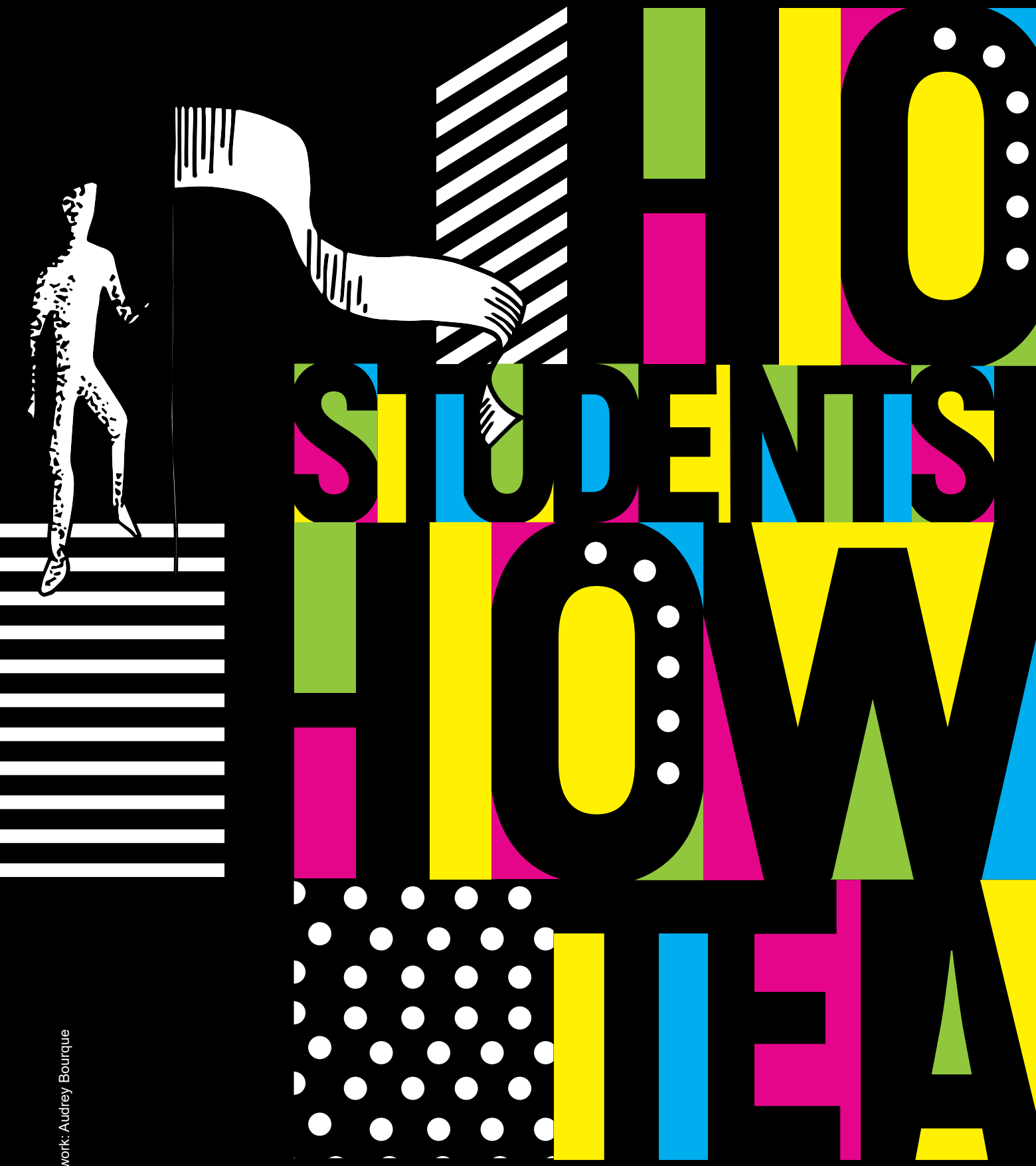
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Artwork: Audrey Bourque

# WE LEARN

## Applying learning strategies in my classroom

by Nicole Charron



A few years ago, I was teaching at a small school where I often taught the same students throughout their time in high school. In many cases, I taught the same students science, chemistry, and/or biology every year for four years straight. What teaching the same students over and over again showed me, was how little course material my students actually remembered. I knew exactly what I taught them the year before, and yet time and again, the learning didn't seem to stick beyond the test or exam. What was going on? The scientist in me wanted to know why.

Around the same time, I discovered #Edutwitter. This is where I first started to hear about cognitive science. Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary field of researchers from psychology, neuroscience, linguistics, philosophy, computer science, and anthropology that seek to understand how the mind works and how we learn. I quickly became fascinated with the field and the implications it had on my practice.

At first, I started to read books on memory and the science of learning written by cognitive scientists such as Daniel Willingham's *Why Don't Students Like School?* and *Make It Stick: The Science of Successful Learning* by Peter C. Brown, Henry L. Roediger III, and Mark A. McDonald. I also started to read articles and research summaries from *American Educator* and the *Education Endowment Foundation*, among others. Websites and blogs by the *Learning Scientists*, *RetrievalPractice.org*, and *The Effortful Educator* also helped to influence my practice. All of these resources included references to empirical research and I soon started to seek out this research as well.

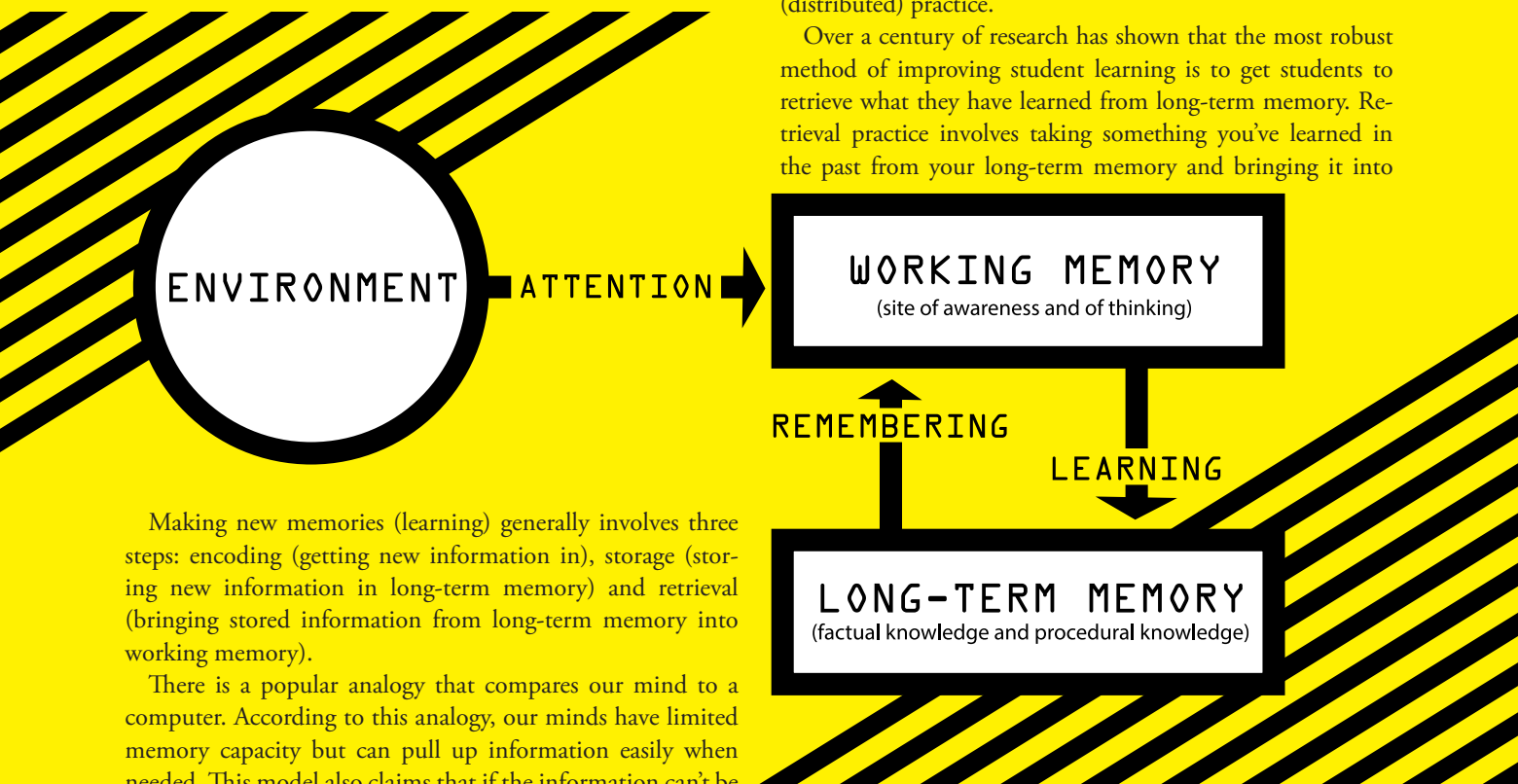
Finding the research is the first challenge. As a member of the Ontario College of Teachers, I have access to the Margaret Wilson Library and its research databases, but it doesn't provide access to many of the journals where research in cognitive science is published. I've had to use other methods to find what I am interested in. A simple Google search will often lead to a PDF file of an article. Some articles are open access and can be downloaded for free and others are open access for the first 50 days of publication. For articles that are behind pay-walls, many researchers will share their research when contacted through social media or email and explain why you are interested in it and what you plan to use it for.

Reading and understanding the research is more challenging, as like many educators, I don't have any formal training in this area. *Impact* has a free poster that summarizes key terms used in educational research. Daniel Willingham's book, *When Can You Trust the Experts?* is written specifically for educators who want to understand educational research. For myself, I was looking for findings that were well supported by empirical research, that were valid in both in the lab and in the classroom, and that explained what I was observing. I was also looking to find strategies that I could use to help support the long-term learning of my students.

What I have learned is that over the past 20 years, findings from cognitive science have shown what a huge impact memory has on learning, and what I assumed about memory and learning, was completely wrong.



No one really knows exactly how the mind works, but there is a simple model of the mind based upon the work of psychologist Alan Baddeley that is quite useful. Working memory is the part of the mind that holds the information that you are thinking about at this moment. Long-term memory is where factual knowledge (what a running shoe looks like) and procedural knowledge (how to tie your shoelaces) are stored. “Everything we see, hear, and think about is dependent on and influenced by our long-term memory.”



Making new memories (learning) generally involves three steps: encoding (getting new information in), storage (storing new information in long-term memory) and retrieval (bringing stored information from long-term memory into working memory).

There is a popular analogy that compares our mind to a computer. According to this analogy, our minds have limited memory capacity but can pull up information easily when needed. This model also claims that if the information can't be recalled, the memory has decayed over time or has been lost. However, what research in cognitive science has shown is that our mind doesn't work this way at all. We have, for all intents and purposes, an unlimited capacity for storing information, but have great difficulty in retrieving information when not used often. A memory hasn't necessarily decayed or been lost, we've just forgotten how to find it.

**How does this explain what I was observing with my students?**

The junior science curriculum consists of four main content strands: biology, chemistry, physics, and earth & space science. In the past, I taught each unit, gave a few quizzes, a unit test, and then moved on to the next unit. Generally, the only time students would see course material from a previous unit was on a cumulative final exam. I was spending a lot of time getting course material into my students' heads, hoping that it would stick, but I was spending very little time getting students to retrieve what they had learned. My practice also encouraged students to cram—they may stay up the night before or spend

a couple of days before a test or exam reviewing their notes and/or textbook. They would remember enough course material to pass the test or exam, but then they quickly forget it.

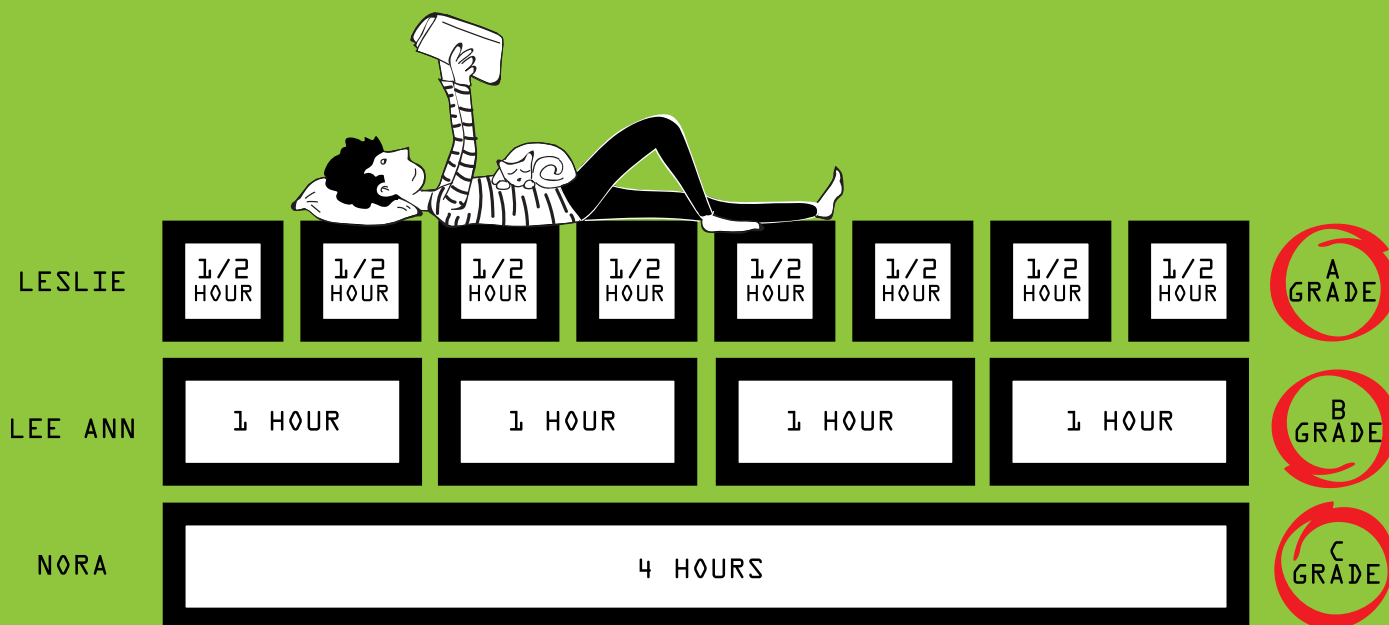
I realized that I was encouraging short-term learning strategies that focussed on performance, not long-term learning. If I really wanted my students to learn for the long-term, I needed to change my practice. What I discovered is that there are simple, yet effective learning strategies that educators (and students) can use to promote long-term learning. The two most effective learning strategies are retrieval practice and spaced (distributed) practice.

Over a century of research has shown that the most robust method of improving student learning is to get students to retrieve what they have learned from long-term memory. Retrieval practice involves taking something you've learned in the past from your long-term memory and bringing it into

your working memory to think about right now (e.g. what did you have for breakfast three days ago?). The *past* part is really important—you need to forget that information at least a little in order for retrieval to be effective. When you retrieve information from long-term memory you are strengthening that information and making it more retrievable in the future.

The spacing effect was first demonstrated by Hermann Ebbinghaus in the 19th century and has since been replicated hundreds of times. Spaced practice is the opposite of cramming (massed practice). When students spread out their studying over time rather than in one long session, even if they use the same amount of time to study, more information is retained over the long-term.

Both of these strategies involve what cognitive scientist Robert Bjork calls a *desirable difficulty*. They make learning more challenging. We tend to assume that when learning feels easy, we are more likely to remember it, but the opposite is actually true. When learning is slower and requires more effort, the better it is for long-term learning.



### How do I use these learning strategies in my classroom?

I figured the simplest way to incorporate these strategies was to give students a quiz that asks them questions not just on the current unit or topic, but on content from earlier in the semester. This didn't work out too well—many of the students were getting way too anxious about the quizzes. I also found that I was putting more effort in than the students were.

The next semester I made some changes. I really wanted my students to understand why these learning strategies were better for them in the long run. I needed something that would make an impact on them. So, I gave them a quiz on the first day of class based on what they learned the previous year. As Dylan Wiliam says, “the best person to mark a test is the person who just took it.” We took up the quiz and the students made their own corrections in green pen (I wanted a colour most students don't use to highlight what they couldn't retrieve). Many, including my top-performing students from the previous year, did very poorly on the quiz. That really got their attention. I spent the rest of the class explaining how our memory works and how the learning strategies were better for long-term learning. I continued with the weekly quizzes, but had the students correct their own using green pen. I also made the quizzes no-stakes—they didn't count toward their final mark. I had the students keep the quizzes in a folder and I would quickly review them each week. It was great way for me (and my students) to get feedback on how they were doing and to illustrate how much they had learned over the course of the semester.

I soon started to spend more time each semester going over the various learning strategies with my students and sharing more of what I have learned about how the mind works and how we learn. I moved from weekly retrieval practice to daily retrieval practice at the start of every class, using a variety of retrieval strategies. Brain dumps (e.g. writing down every-

thing you can on cellular respiration in 10 min); three things (e.g. something you learned last week, last month, last year); graphic organizers (e.g. giving them diagrams of the stages of the cell cycle and having them describe what occurs at each stage); and games such as retrieval-tic-tac-toe. I still use short answer quizzes and *Plickers* (an online quizzing app) to mix things up. I've also changed the way I set my tests and assignments and have incorporated other learning strategies such as interleaving and dual-coding.

### Has using these learning strategies helped my students?

YES! I can see a clear difference from before and after I implemented these strategies in terms of class results and retention of course material over time. More importantly, the students see a difference as well. When I started out on this journey, I knew I wanted student feedback and input. Every semester I have my students fill out anonymous surveys using Google Forms. While I haven't convinced every single student of the benefits of using these learning strategies, the vast majority of the comments have been positive.

**Nicole Charron** is a teacher in District 25, Ottawa-Carleton.





# Change

## IS ON THE HORIZON

### How to Ready Your Resilient Self

by Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe

I read yesterday about an adult with developmental disabilities who was found walking alone and lost. When police asked who they could call—the man could say only one name—his junior high school teacher. When the police contacted her, she said she had not seen that student in over a decade. Nevertheless, the teacher immediately drove to the police station to help her former student. And now, that student is in her care. The student’s father recently passed away and he has no other family. That teacher is now in the process of becoming the student’s guardian. Amid this crisis and the trauma of losing a parent, the only name the student could recall was that of his teacher.

Education is a unique profession that creates the conditions for such deep and meaningful connections. And, it is not just teachers who can have such a profound impact; it is everyone who makes up the greater school community. NFL Star Brandin Cooks from the LA Rams knows this. The footballer gifted his school’s custodian two tickets to the Super Bowl this past year as a gesture of gratitude for all the custodian had done for him. Cooks said the custodian was part of the reason for his success. Everyone in the school community matters and has the opportunity to make a positive impact.

Artwork: Gabriela Rodriguez

As members of the educational community, you know the impact your profession has on society. The influence of education goes beyond the bricks and mortar of the schools. It is the people and practices within the buildings that foster those relationships that have legacy. Unfortunately, in the current political climate, educational workers are in a challenging situation where they have to defend and protect the educational landscape that is required to facilitate positive learning experiences. Change is on the horizon. Yet what that change will actually materialize to be is an unknown. This article will look at how we can prepare and meet changing times. This is an invitation to ready your resilient self.

Education is such a deeply personal profession. It calls on us to bring our whole selves to work every day. And, when we do that we are greeted with opportunities for growth, connection, purpose and care. Alongside those opportunities, though, lie more malevolent factors like stress, anxiety, exhaustion, and the never-ending drumbeat of change. In our province right now, educators are fighting a hard battle. Lately, I hear people asking for educational workers to keep showing up and give 110 per cent, as if that extra 10 per cent will get them through the challenging times. I take issue with this notion of giving more than 100 per cent. How can you give more than all of yourself? We need to think about this idea of just giving more of ourselves differently. And to do so, let's look at our relationship with ourselves and others.

This past year, I had the wonderful opportunity to share my approach to resiliency at OSSTF/FEESO regional conferences all over the province. It was an honour meeting so many dedicated and committed educational workers. Many of these people were also tired, and more than that, they were sick and tired

of feeling sick and tired. Looking after and caring for other people, particularly in stressful circumstances, can leave us depleted and perhaps eventually disheartened. It is hard to take care of others and ourselves. Most of us know that self-care is important. It is practically common sense—you can't be of service to others if you are not well yourself. But, I see a disconnect between the *appreciation* of self-care and actually *doing* self-care. In this case, common sense does not equal common practice.

Taking care of one's self is one of the key components to being resilient. Taking care of yourself is required for you to be able to navigate change, manage stress, and persist towards your goals despite all the noise, setbacks, and challenge. And here the intention for being resilient is being able to practice self-care so we can continue to do our jobs well. To do so, we need time for renewal and rest. I explain resiliency as one's ability to bounce back from adversity. What happens, though, when you are in a constant adversarial state? Some rally through times of stress with little damage, but for most of us, going above and beyond everyday—trying to give 110 per cent—exact a heavy toll. Without time and commitment for rest and renewal, resiliency is so much harder. It also threatens our connections with our loved ones and makes self-care just another thing we are not doing well enough.

Our primal drive is for human connection. We strive for personal relationships and a sense of belonging and purpose. The core of a resilient self is a deep sense of trust, security and belonging. Knowing you matter to someone is vital. Where do you find your community? Where do you feel like you truly belong? Where is home? Where can you be what and who you are? Ironically, though, in times of uncertainty and when we feel as though we have little control over our current






situation, we tend to let our stress bleed into our personal relationships. Despite our best intentions, our loved ones can end up as collateral damage of our stress. We all need a home team and that home team needs to be protected from our stress. I believe the only way a bad day at work can hurt my family is if I bring it home with me. I invite you to think about how your self-care practices can expand to include how you nurture your relationships. How do you leave the stress of the day behind and really show up for those

you love and who love you? I invite you to consider creating your personal daily transition plan or ritual that allows you to let go of work and embrace “after work.” I have the joy of being welcomed home by my two Labrador Retrievers, Luna and Apollo. These two pups beat the children to the front door every time I come home. The dogs welcome me home with such enthusiasm and delight every time; they are as consistent as the sun’s rising in the east. One practice I have recently adopted is to really say hello to those pups to tap





When we are depleted and overwhelmed, we have little cognitive and physical energy to devote to others as well as ourselves.

into their exuberance and truly be welcomed. My pups have become my transition prompt. Those wagging tails and their pitter-patter dance is my mental cue that I am coming into a new part of my day. And, I really welcome that part of my day!

Along the same idea, I reflect on the lessons from the late Toni Morrison. Morrison writes about the importance of transition and impact—“When a child walks in the room, do your eyes light up? That’s what they’re looking for.” When you come home and see your loved ones for the first time all day—can your eyes light up? Can you meet them with that unconditional love and belonging? Let’s make what matters most, matter most.

When we are depleted and overwhelmed, we have little cognitive and physical energy to devote to others as well as ourselves. Research demonstrates that personal care is the first item to get taken off our ‘to-do lists.’ I have learned that when I think I don’t have time for a work-out is precisely the time I need it most. Exhaustion, staying up all night, or working overtime is mistakenly rewarded in our society as performance and achievement, despite overwhelming research indicating these practices lead to burnout and illness. Words like motivation and will power abound, but I believe it is more about personal discipline—choosing to do what you need to be well and making it a priority versus waiting for time to open up. I can assure you there will never be a perfect window for you to devote to self-care. You need to make that window in your schedule and then honour it as you would any other appointment you make. How can I set healthy boundaries? What does prioritizing my health look like? What are the signs that I am slipping away from my optimal self? I believe that stress erodes body kindness. When we are under stress our nutrition and physical practices are diminished. I invite you to think about how you can truly nurture your physical body. Research explains how being in motion, stretching, sleeping, nutrition, and spending time in nature all support stress reduction. Your physical well-being matters. And, how



you talk to yourself about your physical wellness matters. Show yourself compassion. Life is hard. Making time for everything including self-care is hard. Small and simple steps in the right direction count; some is better than none. Be compassionate with yourself. Carving out moments to take care of yourself can foster your sense of worth. You matter. You deserve to feel well.

Another component of learning how to be resilient in ever-changing landscapes is to reframe how we conceive of change. Change has a bad reputation. I choose to believe that people want to grow and evolve but fear of the unknown creates resistance to change. Sportswriter Allister McCaw says that what you want is on the other side of what you don't want to go through. Can we adopt a different perspective and see that how we navigate change is actually up to us? What don't you want to go through? Can you think about change differently? Can we use this season of change as an opportunity to see how resilient we actu-

ally are? How can we ready our most resilient self?

I believe that we can best navigate challenge when we know we truly have a home team, when we practice self-compassion, and take an empathic lens in seeing others. I also think we need to set a goal on how we want to meet change and challenge. I invite you to set a goal for yourself this new academic year regarding how you want to meet change. Choose to strive for building your sense of belonging, prioritizing your self-care, and being brave in the face of change. Be filled with a renewed sense of empathy for others. Can we adopt the perspective that we are all doing the best we can in difficult situations? So often we are tempted to get frustrated with the discomfort of change and try to avoid the challenges. Brené Brown writes, 'we need to choose courage over comfort.' The next time you are tempted to go around an issue, try navigating through the challenge instead. Set an intention to meet the challenge in a manner that

serves you. Remember, it is when we are outside of our comfort zone that we learn what we are truly capable of achieving. Striving to achieve personal goals and setting the intention to meet change in a proactive manner can be scary. Some people even abandon their goals because of the risk of failure or because it goes against the collective tone of others resisting change. True resiliency is being brave and scared at same time but choosing to persist. Reflect on why getting through change matters to you. Remind yourself of the impact your work has on others. This can help keep your focus and strengthen your commitment to not letting change deplete you and your loved ones. Put your energy into what matters. Change can be tough, but so are you.

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**Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe** is an educator, speaker, author, consultant and education instructor, with over 13 years of teaching and research experience at Trent University.





# Members, money, and a mission

The story of OSSTF/FEESO-owned Educators Financial Group

“How can we know who we are and where we are going if we don’t know anything about where we have come from and what we have been through, the courage shown and the costs paid, to get where we are today?”

– David McCullough, author

In August of 1974, a motion was passed at the OSSTF/FEESO annual assembly with one very specific mission—to look out for the financial interests of members.

It is a mission that started out as a simple retirement savings plan, specifically designed for members and their immediate families. Little did anyone know that this mission would eventually grow into a professionally-run organization with the capacity to provide a full scope of financial products and planning services to over 18,000 Ontario educational workers across all affiliates.

But then again, Frank Mandeville—the original Chairman of the plan who

had the vision and the drive to make it all happen—had an inkling that they “were on to something good for the Federation.”

He was right.

By January of 1975 (when the plan was officially launched), OSSTF/FEESO was receiving a minimum of 100 calls a day from members interested in taking part in what was originally known as the Ontario Teachers Group Retirement Savings Plan.

Two of these members were Daryl and Gord Cook, a married couple who were both teaching for the Peel District School Board in 1975.

Still a client to this day, Daryl remembers first hearing about the plan through OSSTF/FEESO *Update* newsletter. “Neither Gord nor I understood very much about investments, so we felt investing with a company established by OSSTF/FEESO would be a safe option.”

It seemed their colleagues within the education community were in agreement.

At the end of 1975, the Ontario Teachers Retirement Savings Plan had already grown to over \$1.5 million in assets.

With membership in the plan steadily increasing across all affiliates, it was decided to use money from the RRSP portion of the plan to fund a limited number of mortgages for first-time home buyers.

This became known as the Ontario Teachers Group Home Ownership Plan.

In addition to the investment accounts they opened, Daryl and Gord also heard about the ability to put money into the Ontario Teachers Group Home Ownership Plan, tax-free.

“Gord and I both contributed to the home ownership fund in those early days,” Daryl recalls. “Thanks to that fund, we ended up saving approximately \$10,000 in the first few years.”

Because of Daryl and Gord (and other members) contributing to that plan, in 1976, Ian Cameron, a Scarborough-based teacher at the time, became the

# WHAT'S in a name?

**Known today as 'Educators Financial Group', this OSSTF/FEESO-owned financial services organization has had many monikers over the years:**

Ontario Teachers Group Retirement Savings Plan and Ontario Teachers Group Home Ownership Plan  
(1975 to 1984)

Ontario Teachers Group Investment Fund  
(1984 to 1987)

Ontario Teachers Group Inc.  
(1987 to 2003)

OTG Financial Inc.  
(2003 to 2008)

Educators Financial Group  
(since 2008)



very first person to benefit from a mortgage under the Ontario Teachers Group Home Ownership Plan.

It's one of the earliest examples of how this member-based financial services program, created by OSSTF/FEESO, differed from typical financial institutions.

The differentiation was particularly important to educational workers of the 1970s, as this was a time when financial institutions had the perception that all education members were occasional workers (due to their September to June schedules). Therefore, they were considered too 'high-risk' to be given mortgages. So when OSSTF/FEESO chose to include mortgages as part of its mission to look out for the financial interests of members—this was a monumental turning point. That's because for many educational workers, the Ontario Teachers Group Home Ownership Plan made their dreams of owning a home, a reality.

As the decade of disco drew to a close, the Ontario Teachers Group Retirement Savings Plan and Home Ownership Plan had collectively grown to just under \$24 million in assets.

With assets continuing to grow exponentially, and more and more members wanting to take advantage of this educator-specific benefit, the increased demands of the plan started becoming too great for the eight-person committee originally tasked with managing it.

To accommodate these quickly evolving demands, an advisory committee was created to render advice on all aspects of funds managed under the plan.

By the time 1984 rolled around, the Ontario Teachers Group Retirement Savings Plan was reorganized and renamed the Ontario Teachers Group Investment Fund.

In just 10 short years, the company had grown from a simple motion that was passed during an annual assembly,

to a fully-fledged financial services organization—one that was geared exclusively to the Ontario education community. With a newly relocated office in the basement of OSSTF/FEESO headquarters on Mobile Drive in Toronto, a handful of specialized staff were employed to better handle the growing day-to-day needs and demands of the organization.

The 1980s then gave way to the 1990s and the name had changed yet again—to Ontario Teachers Group.

With assets up significantly from the start of the previous decade (\$140 million by the end of 1990), staff presentations with the schools and school boards were making noticeable strides at building awareness of the unique services being offered.

One of these services included group payroll plans through the school boards.

It was through the group payroll plan that Julie and Marc Goulet, a teacher couple from northern Ontario, first





# Our collective STORY

Educators Financial Group has grown from a simple idea to a fully-realized, **member-centric** financial services organization with a diverse team of 65 full-time staff members that, to date, collectively:

Speak a total of  
**19** languages

Represent **21** countries/  
backgrounds

Manage **\$1 billion** in assets

Help **18,000+** members  
on a path to achieving  
their financial goals



heard of OSSTF/FEESO's member-centric financial services.

"When I first started teaching in the 1990s, my school board offered a \$3,500 RRSP upon the fifth anniversary of working with them," explains Julie. "It was a really nice incentive to stay with that particular school board—who then highly recommended investing the RRSP with Ontario Teachers Group."

Julie naturally shared the information regarding the RRSP incentive with her husband, Marc.

The more they learned about Ontario Teachers Group, the more they realized there was a genuine understanding for the financial needs of education members.

So Julie and Marc continued to invest in RRSPs through the organization.

With the dawning of a new millennium and a few more name and office changes, OSSTF/FEESO selected

'Educators Financial Group' as being a more all-encompassing title to represent educational workers.

Throughout all of the changes and evolutions over the years, clients such as the Cooks and the Goulets have stayed with the organization because its commitment to members has always remained strong.

For now-retired educator Daryl Cook, that commitment provided a measure of comfort to help her through a difficult time.

"The investment advice I received from Educators Financial Group over the years ended up helping me through a period when Gord was facing many health challenges. Thanks to early planning, I was able to afford the incremental costs of care and treatment."

For Julie and Marc Goulet, it's the kind of commitment that realized their dream of taking advantage of a deferred



salary plan to travel the world.

“We definitely needed guidance on how to financially plan for a trip of this magnitude. Plus we also had very specific questions about income tax and RRSPs. Our Educators advisor answered our numerous questions, which helped us feel so much better prepared,” says Julie.

Now that they’re both retired, neither time nor money has slowed them down from living their dream. Marc goes on to illuminate how Educators Financial Group assisted them in that area. “Over the years, we participated in several Educators retirement workshops. Our goal was to better understand how to plan, save, and invest to put us in the best financial position possible upon retirement, especially since we love to travel. Through these workshops and our Educators advisor, we’ve been able to invest wisely so that we can continue to travel and explore the world in retirement.”

For relatively new clients Peter and Madison MacLeod, it’s a goal-achieving commitment that helped them become homeowners for the first time.

“The decision to purchase a home was a big deal for Madison and I. Yet thanks to Educators, there were never any moments of panic. They’ve always been very direct and clear about everything and we quickly learned that were getting so much more than just a great mortgage rate.” Peter goes on to explain, “I had al-

ways wanted to own a piece of property and it was such a tremendous feeling to achieve that goal.”

Gord, Julie, Marc, Peter, Madison. These are just a handful of names in a history of providing financial solutions to education members and their families—a history that, to date, spans 44 years.

There are still so many more members to help...and stories left to tell.

Under the name Educators Financial Group and a promise to provide peace of mind through financial solutions that are tailored to the unique needs of education members, OSSTF/FEESO’s original mission to look out for the financial interests of its members remains just as strong today, as it was back then.

As we celebrate OSSTF/FEESO’s 100-year milestone, Educators Financial Group salutes all members past and present—as well as the ones who are yet to come.

Our mission continues. Get in touch, plan your goals, share your stories: [educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/OSSTF100](http://educatorsfinancialgroup.ca/OSSTF100)

Facebook: Educators Financial Group

Twitter: @EducatorsFG

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**Educators Financial Group** is a financial specialist dedicated to the education community and offering financial planning, investing and lending products.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the following for contributing to the creation of this story:

Daryl (and in memory of Gord) Cook

Julie and Marc Goulet

Peter MacLeod

Educators Financial Group Staff (past and present)

Educators Board of Directors (past and present)

OSSTF/FEESO *Update* archives

# Scenic Caves Nature Adventure

Learning through nature



Millions of people worldwide are participating in the current climate strikes to make people aware of the crisis of climate change and to push governments to also recognize the crisis and take action. Young people especially, feel their futures are the most threatened and the world they know will no longer be liveable or sustainable throughout their lifetimes.

For all people, young and old, who may not realize the beauty and gifts at risk, a trip to the Scenic Caves Nature Adventures is just the thing. Visitors can come here to learn hands-on in this natural environment.

Located at the top of the Niagara Escarpment, Scenic Caves Nature Adventures offers tours of and education programs on centuries-old caves and caverns carved by glacial ice. As well, there are plenty of other activities to explore such as Southern Ontario's longest suspension footbridge, the longest twin zip line and a network of pristinely groomed cross country ski trails.

During the spring and summer months, visitors can explore a labyrinth of caves and caverns 70 feet below the surface and learn about their historical significance and how they provided a natural shelter for the Hurons. Visitors can also descend into the aptly

named "Refrigerator Cave" or shimmy through "Fat Man's Misery" at just 36 centimetres wide. Throughout the whole year, visitors can enjoy the scenic views of Georgian Bay. Which soon becomes obvious why it was a perfect place for settlers to set up waterway trade routes from its harbour. As you ski or snowshoe throughout the forest trails, one can also observe the foliage and wildlife of this region.

The school group field trips offer a variety of activities that are age and grade appropriate and include educational materials free of charge. The Eco Adventure Tour guides students through an exciting adventure with activities that gives students a chance to view the panoramic geography of Georgian Bay and countryside from the highest point of the Niagara Escarpment; treetop walks; zip lining and a forty-eight metre drop. Participants will learn about the plant and animal ecosystems in this UNESCO designated biosphere reserve. This tour covers subject areas in history, geography, science & technology, phys ed

and others.

During the winter months groups can take part in the Scenic Caves Nordic Adventures. On this tour, one will have an charged outdoor experience that involves gliding along 27 kilometres of cross country ski trails and eight kilometres of snowshoe trails.

For all visitors during the warm season, other activities that have yet to be mentioned are gemstone mining; mini golf; nature trails & lookouts; Rocky the Train; the Children's Adventure Playground; tractor wagon rides and a pond & picnic area. Activities during the winter season also include winter trail season passes; guided night snowshoe hikes; Nordic rentals and lessons and the Children's Adventure Playground.

To book your school group field trip contact Chris Westbrooke at 705-446-0256 or [cwestbrooke@sceniccaves.com](mailto:cwestbrooke@sceniccaves.com). Detailed information about all the activities at the Scenic Caves Natures Adventures can be found by visiting [sceniccaves.com](http://sceniccaves.com).





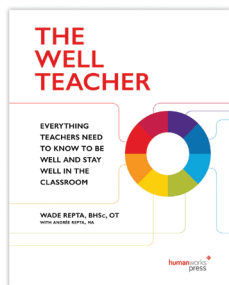


Photos: Courtesy of Scenic Caves Nature Adventures



# Top picks

## Reviews



**The Well Teacher: Everything Teachers Need to Know to be Well and Stay Well in the Classroom**  
**By Wade and Andrée Repta**  
**humanworks press**  
**272 pages, Paperback \$39.95**  
**Reviewed by Nanci Henderson**

In 2018, Humanworks published an excellent resource entitled *The Well Teacher* by Wade and Andrée Repta. Humanworks, located in Burnaby, British Columbia, consults with unions, insurers, corporations, individuals, compensation boards, and associations to “assist individuals and businesses to improve personal and/or corporate efficacy.” They provide personalized and comprehensive wellness initiatives, which address imbalance and identify opportunities for developing enhanced health and vitality.

*The Well Teacher* draws on resources from education unions across Canada, the United States, and the United Kingdom, Senate Standing Committee and the Conference Board of Canada Reports, as well as medical and education journals.

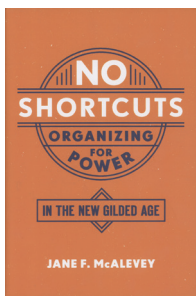
This resource references other education worker job classes, but focuses mainly on teachers. However, the teacher focus does draw in various perspectives including elementary, secondary, special education, and specific subject areas and should not be discounted. This would be an excellent resource to give branch representatives, local office leaders, and any new teacher wanting to understand the dynamics affecting their wellness over the lifespan of their career.

*The Well Teacher* is clearly laid out,

moderately repetitive, contains YouTube links, printable sheets, and additional resources for users looking for more resources. The book is filled with colour-coded chapters, easy to follow graphic features, and a host of tools including: planning tools (the Wellness Map, Wellness Checklist, Wellness Pie), How-tos, Key Takeaways, Thought Trackers, Vocal Exercises, and a Safety Plan for teachers with disabilities. There is a significant emphasis on developing goals that connect to the aforementioned tools and the book takes readers through the process of thinking about, setting, and making actionable their personal wellness goals. Ultimately, this book has an element of accountability that transforms common sense into personal practice for any worker struggling. It would be easy to dismiss *The Well Teacher* as yet another self-help missive, however, the research and Canadian context, as well as the statistics will read like an educator’s diary. It gives voice to dynamics that we are almost desensitized to since it is our work reality. For anyone heading back to school who is not quite recharged from the 2018–19 year, *The Well Teacher* may give you a framework to get yourself on track.

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**Nanci Henderson** is a teacher in District 24, Waterloo.



**No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age**  
**By Jane F. McAlevey**  
**Oxford University Press**  
**256 pages, Paperback \$22.55**  
**Reviewed by Simon Banderob**

Jane McAlevey does not believe in shortcuts, nor does she believe in accidents. In *No Shortcuts: Organizing for Power in the New Gilded Age*, author Jane McAlevey’s analyzes the dire state of the United

States’ societal alienation and inequality. These are not the passive outcome of historical trends but the results of decades-long right-wing planning to limit the power of working people. Only the equally deliberate strategizing and organizing of working people can reverse that.

McAlevey has little patience for the “advocacy” or “mobilization” models of change which focus on highly paid communications and legal specialists which have superficial or no involvement of workers in their own movement. Advocates like Nader’s Raiders may improve regulations. Mobilizers like Occupy Wall Street may create powerful spectacle, but only organizations can take power. Using case studies of organizing and striking nurses (SEIU), teachers (CTU), meatpackers (UFCW) and immigrant labourers (MRNY) McAlevey shows the ability of an organized majority to win better pay, safer and more dignified workplaces and healthier communities.

In McAlevey’s definition, organizing mean constantly testing the commitment workers have to their own struggle, methodically increasing the scope of the stakes and the tactics used to win. That means hundreds upon thousands of shop-floor and break-room conversations between organizers and workers and between workers themselves, building support for escalating actions—what McAlevey calls structure tests. These lead to the ultimate structure test, the strike, which labour leaders should not reserve as a last resort, but constantly train their members for its inevitable use.

McAlevey also calls for power analyses as part of any organization—not just elite institutions but also of workers themselves. Who are natural leaders within the workplace? Who do workers look up to? What organizations might workers also have links to, as parents, parishioners, neighbours or otherwise? How can the biggest possible base of power be built within the confines of a particular fight? McAlevey calls for organizers to build supermajorities within workplaces and communities to overwhelm wealthy and powerful opponents.

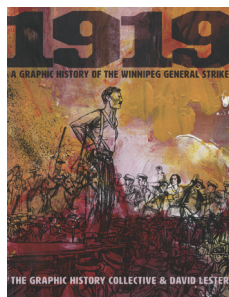
For McAlevey, there is nothing accidental about the inequality and alien-



ation of our politics and economy and nor is there anything accidental about the labour movement's historic weakness. But McAlevey is hopeful: through methodical strategizing and organization of majorities, workers can bring democracy to its final frontier: the workplace.

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**Simon Banderob** is an Occasional Teacher in District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge.



**1919: A Graphic History of the Winnipeg Strike**  
**By The Graphic History Collective and David Lester**  
**Between the Lines; 1 edition (Jan. 22, 2019)**  
**128 pages, Paperback \$19.00**  
**Reviewed by Jason Bremner**

Every so often, you come across a book that surprises you for any number of reasons. *1919: A Graphic History of the Winnipeg General Strike* made this list for me. The idea of making history more accessible to people by creating graphic novel style representations is becoming more popular but some people find them lighter in terms of content. If you are looking for a traditional historical account of the Winnipeg general strike, this is not the book for you. However, what the format gives up, creates a different sort of window to view the events leading up to and following June 21, 1919.

The introduction by James Naylor is eloquent, informative and sets the stage for the drama that unfolds in this comic. Once the panels begin, the narration of events is spot on in tone and becomes the backbone of the rest of the work. *1919* relates the events leading up to Bloody Saturday with a broader brush than some other books and lets the reader feel more in touch with the story of the people in-

involved and their struggle.

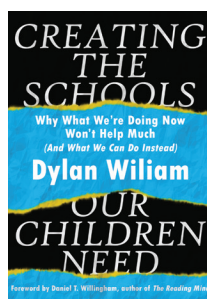
The art from pages forty-eight to eighty-two, is spellbinding. The unfinished quality of the scenes gives life to the pages and pulls the reader through them. The story doesn't lose sight of its characters and follows them after the events of Bloody Saturday and then does what all good portrayals of history do; it looks forward. The final panels are dedicated to the future struggles and goals of Canadian labour as it grew out of Winnipeg and has continued growing to present.

The book finishes with thoughts from the artist, a photo essay on the event and a comprehensive bibliography of its research sources. A careful look will find some of the inspiration for various panels within those photos.

The only criticism I would comment on with *1919* is that in a few panels there are bits of art that appear to have been added with graphic software, places where the shape or line are perfect. The art style keeps a sketchy feel to it and those few instances can be jarring to the eye and draw it away from the rest of the life on the page. Otherwise, this is beautiful work, accessible to many with an inspiring eye to Canada's labour past, present and future.

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**Jason Bremner** is a teacher in District 29, Hastings-Prince Edward.



**Creating the Schools Our Children Need**  
**By Dr. Dylan Wiliam**  
**Learning Sciences Intl Llc**  
**(March 29, 2018)**  
**234 pages, Paperback \$29.24**  
**Reviewed by Christopher Gill**

"Everything works somewhere and nothing works everywhere" according to Dr. Dylan Wiliam, who is a formative assess-

ment authority, in his 2018 book: *Creating the Schools Our Children Need*. In the first half of the book, Dr. Wiliam challenges the effectiveness of popular educational reforms (getting smarter teachers, firing bad teachers, paying teachers more, reducing class size, expanding school choice, and copying other countries). In the final section of the book, Dr. Wiliam provides research-informed recommendations to cost-effectively improve student educational achievement.

Dr. Wiliam argues that teachers should provide students with a "Knowledge-Rich Curriculum." Dr. Wiliam explains that because of short-term memory limitations our brains need information in our long-term memory to think deeply and understand the relationship and connection between different aspects of knowledge. Because students' short-term memory can be easily overwhelmed trying to transfer information into long-term memory (*cognitive load theory*), teachers should take students through each step of a problem and provide background knowledge versus having students try to solve problems completely on their own.

Dr. Wiliam states that the greatest practical impact to improve student achievement is to invest in teacher professional development with attention on formative assessment. Teachers must provide feedback to students on the things a student cannot yet do (*deliberate practice*). Good instruction starts from where students are at, which requires effective assessment strategies during instruction, so that teachers and students can make appropriate adjustments.

Dr. Wiliam concludes that the first step to school improvement is to focus on developing a school climate where all teachers "need to get better, not because they are not good enough, but because they can be even better." Not only must teachers and school leaders "press for student achievement," but we must also promote a school culture of mutual trust and focus on improving teacher professional development.

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**Christopher Gill** is a teacher in District 19, Peel.

## Forging ahead

OSSTF/FEESO supports its members so they can support students



**A**t risk of giving him more attention than he deserves, I begin by quoting our friend Brian Lilley of the *Toronto Sun* in a column from April of this year:

*It may not be the talking points that teachers' unions want to put out, but teachers' salaries have increased while student enrolment and student performance have both fallen. It's time to fix the system. Where were the unions in protesting the failing math curriculum that saw students fall further behind over the last 10 years? They were silent. The unions only came to life once their revenue was threatened, once it became a possibility that they would have fewer dues-paying members.*

The problem, of course, is that Lilley is not uniquely ignorant about the true nature of education unions in general and OSSTF/FEESO in particular (including the various kinds of educators we represent); his ignorance is shared with some portion of Ontarians.

The reality is that our union cares deeply about the quality of education in this province because our members care. Our members—support staff and teachers—work every day to provide the best possible opportunities for the students

they serve, and they insist that the union bargain for conditions that will allow them to do their best.

Look at Nicole Charron's article, "How students learn: How I teach," in this issue to get a sense of how educators approach their work. Nicole is an OSSTF/FEESO member who is driven to improve. She clearly wants what is best for her students. Although she doesn't speak in the article to what motivates her, it seems overwhelmingly evident that she wants nothing more than to give her students the best education she can. And Nicole and her fellow members can and do look to their union for support.

OSSTF/FEESO has long supported members in their efforts to pursue professional development (PD). Member-designed and member-delivered professional development has been a Federation specialty for years. And members regularly tell us that it is the best PD they ever get. Where possible, we have negotiated control of PD days to ensure our members get access to high quality PD. We have negotiated language in the teacher central agreement to ensure that educator professional judgment is respected in matters of assessment, evaluation, and reporting. We have repeatedly, over the years, negotiated improvements in supports for students through increases in the critical support staff who give so many students an equitable chance at success.

In some theoretical way, it would be entirely legitimate to go to the bargaining table with demands for improved compensation and benefits, and let school boards and government insist on higher staffing levels, smaller class sizes, and other supports for students that raise education quality. Realistically,

though, that has never been who we are as a union because our members' interests have never been that narrow. Nor has their pursuit of continuous improvement been confined to the bargaining table. And, just as Nicole describes herself doing, we are engaging the evidence.

Because of the infinite complexity arising from human interaction, education will always be part art, part intuition, about the best approach in any given circumstance. But there is a growing body of evidence that provides what I would describe not as certainties but best odds for success in any given circumstance. At the intersection of art and science is where educator professionalism lies.

Even while under attack by a short-sighted and destructive government, we support members as professionals. To raise just a few examples: We will once again lend a hand in presenting, in May next year, a researchED conference, bringing together practicing educators and researchers in relevant fields. We are currently working with John Mighton and JUMP Math on a pilot project to see if there is something of interest in that approach for our members. We are in the process of creating a work shop to introduce interested members to the field of cognitive science and its intersection with education and pedagogy.

In other words, we may not protest (as Lilley suggests) when we identify an area for improvement in the education system, we just forge ahead, offering our members the supports they want so that they can do what is best for the students they serve every single day. That will always make me proud of my union and its members.

Harvey Bischof,  
OSSTF/FEESO President



# Aller de l'avant

OSSTF/FEESO appuie ses membres pour qu'ils puissent aider les élèves

Malgré le risque de lui accorder plus d'attention qu'il n'en mérite, je commence en citant notre ami Brian Lilley du *Toronto Sun* dans une chronique publiée en avril l'an dernier :

*Il se peut qu'ils ne soient pas parmi les sujets de discussion que les syndicats d'enseignants veulent publier, mais les salaires du personnel enseignant ont augmenté alors que les inscriptions et le rendement des élèves ont tous les deux baissé. Il est temps de rectifier la situation. Où étaient les protestations des syndicats lors de l'échec du programme-cadre en mathématiques qui a laissé les élèves prendre davantage de retard au cours des dix dernières années? Ils étaient silencieux. Les syndicats ont pris vie seulement lorsque leurs revenus se trouvaient menacés, lorsqu'il y avait une possibilité qu'ils aient moins de membres cotisants.*  
[traduction libre]

Le problème, évidemment, est que Brian Lilley n'est pas uniquement ignorant de la véritable nature des syndicats en éducation en général et d'OSSTF/FEESO en particulier (y compris les divers types d'éducateurs que nous représentons); son ignorance est partagée par une proportion d'Ontariennes et d'Ontariens.

En réalité, notre syndicat se préoccupe au plus haut point de la qualité de l'éducation dans la province, parce que nos membres y tiennent. Nos membres : le personnel de soutien et le personnel enseignant travaillent chaque jour pour offrir à leurs élèves les meilleures occasions possible et ils insistent pour que le syndicat négocie des conditions qui leur permettront de donner le meilleur d'eux-mêmes.

Lisez dans ce numéro l'article de Nicole Charron intitulé « Applying Learning Strategies in the Classroom » pour comprendre de quelle manière les

éducateurs s'acquittent de leurs tâches. Nicole est une membre d'OSSTF/FEESO qui cherche constamment à s'améliorer. À l'évidence, elle veut ce qu'il y a de mieux pour ses élèves. Même si elle ne parle pas dans son article de ce qui la motive, il semble plus qu'évident qu'elle ne veut rien de plus que de donner à ses élèves la meilleure éducation possible. Et Nicole et ses collègues se tournent vers leur syndicat pour obtenir de l'appui.

OSSTF/FEESO soutient depuis longtemps les membres dans leurs efforts en vue de poursuivre du perfectionnement professionnel (PP). Les activités de perfectionnement professionnel conçues et offertes par les membres sont une spécialité de la Fédération depuis des années. Et les membres nous disent régulièrement que c'est le meilleur PP qu'ils ont jamais reçu. Dans la mesure du possible, nous avons négocié le contrôle des journées de PP afin de nous assurer que nos membres ont accès à du PP de haute qualité. Nous avons négocié du libellé dans la convention centrale du personnel enseignant pour garantir que le jugement professionnel des éducateurs soit respecté en matière d'évaluation et de communication du rendement. Au fil des ans, nous avons, à maintes reprises, négocié des améliorations au soutien des élèves par des augmentations du personnel de soutien essentiel qui offrent à tellement d'élèves des chances égales de réussir.

De façon théorique, il serait tout à fait justifié de présenter à la table de négociation des demandes d'améliorations à la rémunération et aux avantages sociaux et de laisser les conseils scolaires et le gouvernement insister sur des niveaux de dotation plus élevés, des effectifs de classe plus petits et d'autres soutiens pour les élèves qui rehaussent la qualité de l'éducation. Mais en réalité, cela n'a jamais été notre identité en tant que syndicat parce que les intérêts de

nos membres n'ont jamais été si étroits. Pas plus que leur quête d'améliorations constantes n'est limitée à la table de négociation. Et tout comme décrit Nicole, nous nous livrons à l'évidence.

En raison de la complexité sans limites découlant des rapports humains, l'éducation sera toujours en partie un art, en partie de l'instinct, quant à la meilleure stratégie dans une situation donnée. Mais il existe un ensemble croissant de preuves qui corroborent ce que je décrirais non pas comme une certitude, mais comme les meilleures chances de réussite dans une situation donnée. À la croisée de l'art et de la science, c'est là que réside le professionnalisme des éducateurs.

Même sous les attaques d'un gouvernement peu clairvoyant et destructeur, nous soutenons les membres en tant que professionnels. Pour ne citer que quelques exemples, nous prêterons de nouveau main-forte en présentant, en mai l'an prochain, une conférence researchED qui réunira des éducateurs actifs et des chercheurs dans des champs d'expertise pertinents. Nous collaborons à l'heure actuelle avec John Mighton et *JUMP Math* à un projet-pilote pour voir s'il y a un intérêt de la part des membres pour cette approche. Nous sommes en voie de créer un atelier visant à initier les membres qui le souhaitent au domaine de la science cognitive et son croisement avec l'éducation et la pédagogie.

Autrement dit, nous ne contestons peut-être pas (comme le suggère Brian Lilley) lorsque nous déterminons des aspects à améliorer dans le système d'éducation, nous ne faisons que progresser, offrant à nos membres le soutien qu'ils souhaitent pour qu'ils soient en mesure de réaliser ce qu'il y a de mieux pour les élèves qu'ils desservent chaque jour. Cela me rendra toujours fier de mon syndicat et de ses membres.

Harvey Bischof,  
président d'OSSTF/FEESO



# Events

Conferences,  
PD opportunities and  
other items of interest

**November 29–30, 2019**

**Ontario Council for Exceptional Children (OCEC) Conference 2019  
Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton  
Centre Hotel  
Toronto, ON**

The Council for Exceptional Children provides a variety of services for individuals with special needs and those who work with them. The Council advocates for appropriate government policies, and establish standards for professionals and paraprofessionals. The details of this year's conference have yet to be announced. To check for details when they become available, visit: [www.cecontario.ca](http://www.cecontario.ca).

**November 30–December 2, 2019**

**“Transformations”:**

**2019 Higher Education Summit  
Sheraton Centre Toronto Hotel  
Toronto, ON**

Hosted by Colleges Ontario, the Higher Education Summit explores the major issues of the day and the challenges facing educators, governments, business leaders and others. Highlights include featured remarks from world-renowned leaders and educators, and networking opportunities at the most senior level. Learn, grow and transform with this year's incredible line-up of speakers, including Harvard professor, two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist and experimental psychologist Steven Pinker, who explores whether: “This bleak assessment of the state of the world is wrong.” For more information please visit: [www.highereducationsummit.ca](http://www.highereducationsummit.ca).

**December 5–6, 2019**

**TESL Ontario Annual Conference  
Toronto Marriott Downtown Eaton  
Centre  
Toronto, ON**

The annual meeting of the Teachers of English as a Second Language Association of Ontario. This year's conference theme is “Cultivating Innovation and Inclusion.” Learn from knowledgeable teachers, researchers, technology experts and ESL professionals in many different language training sectors. The TESL Ontario conference will arm participants with the knowledge and skills to become successful ESL professionals. Features will include: more than 100 educational sessions, keynote presentations, a panel discussion and numerous networking opportunities. For more information, please visit: [www.teslontario.org/conference](http://www.teslontario.org/conference).

**January 29– February 1, 2020**

**Ontario Library Association Super  
Conference  
Metro Toronto Convention Centre  
Toronto, ON**

The OLA Super Conference held annually in Toronto, is Canada's largest conference and trade show for the library sector. More than 4,500 people attend from across Canada including public, academic, health and school library staff, public library board members, publishers, authors, and library industry representatives. This year's speakers include: Farrah Khan (nationally recognized advocate and educator on sexual violence and gender issues), Mona Chalabi (British data journalist and author), and Choir! Choir! Choir! For more information, please visit: [www.olasuperconference.ca](http://www.olasuperconference.ca).

**April 24–26, 2020**

**Ontario Coaches Conference  
Sheraton Hamilton Hotel  
Hamilton, ON**

This conference bills itself as Ontario's premier sport leadership event. It's a three-day conference aimed at coaches, teachers, administrators and everyone with a passion for sport. For more information, please visit: [www.coachesontario.ca/conference](http://www.coachesontario.ca/conference).

**April 30–May 2, 2020**

**Bilingualism and Beyond: Advancing  
the Thinking on Pedagogies,  
Policies and Practices  
University of Ottawa  
Ottawa, ON**


This conference is organized by the Canadian Centre for Studies and Research on Bilingualism and Language Planning. The theme of this year's conference is Translanguaging, a construct referring to the complex use of more than one language as a (combined) resource, has captured the imagination of researchers, educators, and policy makers around the world. This conference will examine bilingualism in both Canadian and global contexts. For more information, please visit: [www.ccerbal.uottawa.ca/en/activities/conferences](http://www.ccerbal.uottawa.ca/en/activities/conferences).

**May 7–9, 2020**

**Ontario Council for Technology  
Education Conference  
Hilton Meadowvale Hotel  
Mississauga, ON**

The Ontario Council for Technology Education is a group that advocates for technology teachers in Ontario, in both Secondary and Elementary panels. They hold a conference in May of each year that is attended by more than 500 teachers of technology. For more information, please visit: [www.octe.ca/en](http://www.octe.ca/en).



A close-up photograph of two women with dark hair, smiling warmly and hugging each other. The woman in the foreground has her eyes closed and a joyful expression, while the woman behind her is also smiling. They are wearing a striped shirt. The background is bright and out of focus.

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