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TRAINING PROGRAM

DECEMBER 2013

professionally speaking

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
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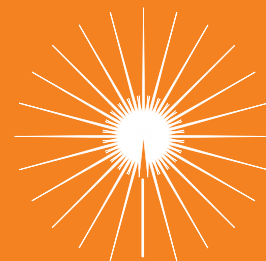
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A graphic designed to look like a contest announcement on lined paper. At the top, a red banner with a gear icon on the left and a star on the right contains the word "CONTEST" in white capital letters. Below the banner, the text "Let the Edventure begin!" is written in a playful font, with "Edventure" in red. To the left, a cartoon woman in a blue jacket and black skirt holds a white flag with the "Edvantage" logo. In the center, the text "Take note and you could WIN!" is written, with "WIN!" in large red letters. Below this, a whiteboard lists "Exciting prizes!" with a red arrow pointing to logos for "Sarracini Travel" (with the tagline "The travel people."), "SoftMoc", "GoodLife FITNESS", and "VIA Rail Canada". To the right, another cartoon woman in a purple blazer and black skirt holds a red folder. At the bottom, a red wavy line separates the main content from the footer, which says "Visit www.edvantage.ca/contest to play!" in a handwritten style.

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The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the College.

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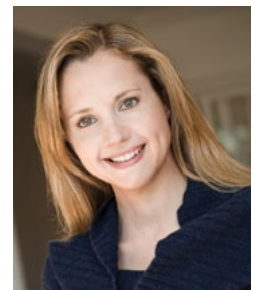
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SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY!

The Welcome Reception on Wednesday, February 19th features our AGM and a special appearance and book signing by Patricia MacLachlan and Steven Kellogg with *Snowflakes Fall*, a memorable children's book that honours the community of Sandy Hook and Newtown, Connecticut, and all children who have suffered loss.



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College of
Teachers

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The College is the self-regulating professional body for Ontario teachers. Membership is open to anyone qualified to teach in the province and required to maintain an Ontario teaching certificate.

The College is responsible to the public and the profession for ensuring that teachers receive the training they need to provide Ontario's students with an excellent education now and in the future. It sets standards of practice and learning for teachers and accredits teacher education programs and providers.

The College regulates teaching qualifications, investigates complaints involving members and takes appropriate disciplinary action.

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Martin Luther King III addresses 20,000 students and teachers on We Day at the Air Canada Centre.



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GOVERNING OURSELVES

More Than Just the Blue Pages

BY LIZ PAPADOPOULOS, OCT

Did you flip to the “blue pages” before reading this column? Be honest. I wouldn’t be surprised if you had.

The “blue pages,” or “Governing Ourselves,” is a notoriously well-known and widely read section of the College’s official publication. The decision summaries are intended to be educative and demonstrate our transparency as a profession. Yet those pages serve a much greater purpose. They remind us that we hold ourselves and our colleagues accountable to the highest professional and ethical standards.

Members of the teaching profession aren’t the only ones interested in the College’s disciplinary matters. In an age of transparency and accountability, more is expected from professionals and public institutions all the time, everywhere.

This summer, the College consulted extensively with Ontario Certified Teachers and members of the public right across Ontario. We asked what factors they felt erode or enhance public confidence. We also talked about steps the College might take to help build confidence in the teaching profession and in self-regulation.

Not surprisingly, we heard that communicating details about disciplinary decisions is critical to building public trust. Yet we also heard that the ensuing negative media coverage leaves a bad taste in our mouths. Most teachers are passionate professionals, dedicated to helping students achieve. So why is it so difficult to tell good news stories about the exceptional learning and teaching opportunities taking place in classrooms across Ontario?

What we heard from the summer focus groups is that parents and teachers alike want the good news to get out. In addition to sharing the work of remarkable teachers with College members in this professional publication, they want to see these best practices shared with parents across the province.

So in 2014, let’s work together to celebrate and share our professional successes, and our ability to build public confidence each day.

I encourage you to become involved in your own professional regulation. Go beyond the “blue pages.” Take an interest in all matters that come forward in the “Governing Ourselves” section of *Professionally Speaking*.

Write to me at ps@oct.ca. Put “Public Confidence” in the subject line. What are you doing now that promotes confidence in your abilities as a professional? What do you think you can do to enhance public confidence in Ontario’s teaching profession?

Together, we can tell our good news stories and demonstrate that Ontario’s students are in great hands. **PS**

SOME GOOD READING — BOTH LONG AND SHORT

From time to time, I pick up a copy of *The Walrus* magazine. I’ve learned that the publication has just turned 10 and to mark this milestone, it has published a special 122-page anniversary issue. The cover story features images from renowned photographer Edward Burtynsky’s latest project, *Water*. Inside, you’ll find new fiction from CBC’s “Canada Reads” winner Lisa Moore, and a profile of the always hilarious Canadian comedian Russell Peters. thewalrus.ca



A Twitpic is worth a thousand words. Or should that be 140 characters? On July 11, 2008, Twitter co-founder Jack Dorsey tweeted his first digital image to the popular social media site. The rest, as they say, is history. As the company prepares to go public, *Business Insider* shows off 13 iconic snapshots that blew up the Twittersphere. Among them, the rescue of US Airways Flight 1549 passengers from the Hudson River and a bird’s-eye view of the Space Shuttle Endeavour’s final launch. read.bi/14IZNdr

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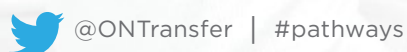
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A close-up of a woman with dark hair and a thoughtful expression, looking upwards. The background is a chalkboard with white chalk arrows and the word 'STUDENTS' written on it.



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Cette information est aussi disponible en français.





THE POWER OF ONE

The Registrar examines a child's wisdom and the notion of heroism in teaching, and what it means to the students in our care.

BY MICHAEL SALVATORI, OCT

“One child, one teacher, one book and one pen can change the world.” As the courageous young woman Malala Yousafzai spoke these words earlier this year in her address to the United Nations, I was both moved by their power and struck by their simplicity.

Education as a liberating force. Teachers as agents of change. Children as our future. These are powerful messages. In our own Ontario context, I firmly believe that teachers committed to

students and their learning, dedicated to inspiring public confidence in the profession and exemplifying the ethics of care, trust, respect and integrity change our world every day.

As teachers, we are builders of a civil society by instilling in students the values that contribute to establishing and maintaining a strong, vibrant society. Trust, compassion, courage, integrity are the building blocks that parents forge at home and that teachers strengthen at school.

Words like “building,” “strengthen” and “vibrant” make me think of superheroes. Although teachers may not wear tights and capes, leap buildings in a single bound or make liars tell the truth with a lasso (do you remember these superheroes?), you are heroes and heroines. You proudly wear emblems of integrity, you walk with compassion and you radiate care.

This past summer I had the opportunity to travel to Haiti with four of our Ontario colleagues to work with a group of Haitian principals whose image of teacher as hero was very evident.

During our five-day summer institute, stories emerged not only of the aftermath of the devastating earthquake in January 2010, but the role schools, principals and teachers play in Haiti in helping students who lack basic life necessities. As we wove leadership competencies and professional ethics into our presentation, the participants related these qualities to their context and to their realities.

It became clear during my time there that professional ethics are universal. They cross borders and cultures. Malala's declaration of the agents of change: one child, one teacher, one book, one pen is equally universal.

Care. Respect. Trust. Integrity. For me, these — the ethical underpinnings of our roles as teaching professionals — are the tools that one teacher, one child apply in their quest to change our world. **PS**

M. Salvatori

NEIGHBOURHOOD HERO

One of my personal heroes is Fred Rogers. As a young child, I remember watching *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* and enjoying the songs and seeing the puppet characters such as King Friday and Prince Tuesday. Now, as an adult, I know that Fred Rogers was much more than a children's television show host. He was an innovator, a valiant supporter of public education and a tireless advocate for children. To witness his passion and power, check out our Facebook page and watch a YouTube video of Fred Rogers's presentation to a Senate committee on public broadcasting and educational television. He speaks so eloquently and passionately of the potential of children and the promise of the future that the Senate chair said he had goosebumps listening. Who are your heroes? What impact did they have on you and how did they contribute to your decision to become an educator? I'd like to know and if you would like to share, please send your response to me care of **PS@oct.ca**. Please write “Heroes” in the subject line.



letters to the editor

Professionally Speaking welcomes letters and articles on topics of interest to teachers. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and to conform to our publication style. To be considered for publication, letters must provide the writer's daytime phone number and registration number. Address letters to: The Editor, Professionally Speaking at ps@oct.ca or 101 Bloor St. W., Toronto, ON M5S 0A1.

My refreshed start

I want to thank *Professionally Speaking* for the consultation with professionals for my “Fresh Start” contest winnings (September 2013). While my hair and makeup were done, I wanted to say thank you for not making this a “makeover.” I looked the way I generally do in real life (minus a little extra makeup). My friends all commented that while the picture looked good, it still did, in fact, look like me. Many even laughed and told me that just like in real life I was wearing a dress!

Most of all, thanks for the consultation with the nutritionist who was super helpful. I never would have gone to see a nutritionist on my own with my busy teaching schedule. As a result of the advice I received, my constant headaches are diminishing every day! I have also been able to decrease my blood pressure medication because I have lost some weight. Part of teaching is learning when to take care of yourself. This is something the Fresh Start contest enabled me to do.

—**Sheri Sparling**, OCT, teaches Grade 5 at Winston Churchill PS in the Lambton Kent DSB.



Does the shoe fit?

I would like to call your attention to the photographs on pages 40, 41 and 45 of the September 2013 issue. These are supposed to represent the professional attire for teachers. How misguided. In the three pictures the women are wearing stiletto-style shoes. Not only is this type of footwear not commonly worn by teachers during their workday, it is also a sexist attire. I don't think that as role models for the women of the future we should be encouraging this unhealthy footwear in the workplace. Also, compare this style with the comfortable attire of the male teacher on page 44. The stylist who suggested these outfits is not responsible. She may not know that teachers hardly ever sit down during their workday. The editor of the official magazine of the Ontario College Teachers should know better.

—**Liliana Wolosin-Ozersky**, OCT, teaches at Ursula Franklin Academy in the Toronto DSB.

ECE story misses the mark

John Hoffman's article “Building Together” (September 2013) does a disservice to Ontario's kindergarten teachers. Hoffman asks if OCTs and ECEs are interchangeable. He argues that this interchangeability should be the norm. If teachers and ECEs are truly interchangeable and if roles are ill-defined, consider their wage differences and you'll reach a disquieting conclusion: OCTs are not necessary in the early years.

It is the differences in preparation, skill sets and experience among certified teachers and early childhood educators that brings strength to the team. Teachers do not “tend” to have higher

educational levels; it is a professional requirement. For ECEs, the experience working with young children through their stages of development, while implementing play-based learning, is a foundational and critical element in the success of the program.

Acknowledging our distinctions results in a team founded in mutual respect. ECEs and OCTs are delivering on the promise of rich, engaging programs where children emerge eager to learn more and contribute co-operatively.

—**Mark McCormick**, OCT, kindergarten teacher at St. Bernard School, Ottawa CSB

A source of pride

All of us at The Bishop Strachan School (BSS) shared a strong sense of pride reading your article by Trish Snyder on our Junior School teacher Harriet Simand (September 2013). Her ability to inspire and engage students in the most creative ways, and her belief that it's never too early for children to become agents of change, endear her to our whole community. The article reminded us just how powerful an inquiry-based, student-centred approach can be.

—**Deryn Lavell**, BSS Head of School, Toronto.

NOT ALWAYS RIGHT

Make your classroom more inclusive with these handy tools for lefties.
BY LEIGH DOYLE

STAY SHARP

Even sharpening a pencil can make a left-hander feel rather gauche. The trick is to find a sharpener that works its magic when you turn it counter-clockwise.

*** Igloo Lefty 1 Hole, \$9, scholastic.ca.

MADE TO MEASURE

Noticed any lefties struggling during math? Making left-handed rulers (read from right to left) available will help. You could also recommend a left-handed geometry set. Instead of fumbling over measurements, they'll be able to focus on their lesson.

*** Lefties Rule, \$3.95, leftiesrule.com.
*** Left-handed geometry set, \$3.99, desmos.ca.

WRITE LEFT

Stuck with left-handed handwriting? Look for pens with balanced grips and offset nozzles that keep fingers from slipping and a clear field of vision. Have a thank-you letter to send? Show off your impressive calligraphy skills with a set designed especially for left-handers. Nothing smears on assignments? Suggest a quick-drying ink to keep work tidy.

*** Visio Pen, \$3.50, scholastic.ca.
*** Penache Basic Calligraphy Left Handed Set, \$17.99, currys.com.
*** Uni-ball Jetstream Rollerball pen, \$19.99 (3-pack), staples.ca.

ULTIMATE HANDBOOK

Keep up-to-date with *The Left-Hander's 2014 Calendar*. It's an agenda that flips the traditional layout. Its weekly planning pages are on the left and bound on the right.

*** *The Left-Hander's 2014 Weekly Planner Calendar: Left-handed legends, love & more*, \$12.40, amazon.ca.

GET A GRIP

Make practicing penmanship easier with a triangular grip! Add a comfortably shaped accessory to a spiral to guide fingers into place and reduce writing fatigue.

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*** Mercurio Pencil Grip, \$2.99 (3-pack), staples.ca.
*** Crayola Junior Triangular Colored Pencils, \$4.99 (10-pack), staples.ca.
*** Staples Left Right Ergonomic Crayons, \$6.99 (10-pack), currys.com.



September 2013 | Professionally Speaking 23

No longer left out

Thank you for the article “Not Always Right” (September 2013). Being left-handed, I read it with interest and recall instances from my school experience where I would have appreciated more accommodation.

As a kindergartener, I was confused by the difficulty I had during cutting activities. I naturally wanted to use my left hand, but the scissors only cut when used with the right. To my chagrin, it took me twice as long as my classmates to complete cutting activities. To this day, I still use my right hand to cut with scissors or pruning shears.

Later in my school life, I would dread the arrival of the 3-Pitch season not because I

wasn't athletic or didn't enjoy sports, but because there were never any right-handed gloves. Using no baseball glove meant the outfield was the only option, but a poor one at that, since bare-handed catches were few and far between.

In classrooms that strive to be more inclusive and supportive of student needs, the provision of resources to support our minority of left-handers cannot be overlooked. Thank you for this timely reminder.

—**Stefanie Lemke**, OCT, teaches Grade 4/5 at Grand Avenue PS in the DSB of Niagara.

From left field

As being one of those left-handed learners, I would *not* thank you for the left-handed items mentioned. I had left-handed scissors in elementary school and I curse them to this day. I am curious about the left-handed ruler since I can't figure out that one at all. I have sat at left-handed desks at university and my ink-stained hands just showed I was working hard and had proof of it. The world is right-handed and that is that.

—**Virginia McMillan**, OCT, is a happy left-hander and an occasional teacher in the Kawartha Pine Ridge DSB.

Accommodating young lefties

I've been teaching for many years and I'm sad to say that it took your article “Not Always Right” (September 2013) to open my eyes to the possibility that I'm not doing enough for these students. After reading the article, I did some research on the Internet and found first-hand accounts of the biases, both mental and physical, that left-handed people encounter. I will be sharing my findings at an upcoming staff meeting and looking into the possibility of getting the tools that our left-handed students need to make their lives easier. It's all very interesting, and the way to make a classroom more inclusive is to accommodate and accept that we all do things differently. This is a good lesson to teach the class as well. I intend to discuss with my students why some of their classmates have learning tools that look a bit different. Thank you for bringing this topic to my attention. I learned that it's not enough to give a student a pair of left-handed scissors. There is so much more to consider.

—**Julie Palmese**, OCT, teaches at Blessed Sacrament Catholic ES in Hamilton.

Counselling as a calling

I read “A World of Guidance” (September 2013) with such mixed, raw emotion. As a teacher/counsellor, now retired, but always wanting to be a guidance counsellor, I worked hard to remain as a school counsellor throughout my career. Although I received outstanding references from every principal I worked with, I was always faced with declining enrolments and offers of full-time teaching with little or no counselling, which I consistently declined. I stated and knew that my skills were as a counsellor, and I strove to be a member of the school system contributing in my area of expertise.

This was not to be my career path. I was bumped from school to school for the majority of my career; me, always seeking to remain in guidance; the system constantly offering me teaching positions. I resigned; was rehired as a counsellor; took a leave of absence. And finally, after 26 years of attempts to make a difference as a counsellor, I retired.

I read this article wondering if Mercedes Carli will be able to keep her job as a counsellor. Was I just hired at the wrong time? Will she be more fortunate than I was? I truly wish you well, Mercedes. You are making a phenomenal difference to your students.

—**Beverly Swerling**, OCT, semi-retired secondary guidance counsellor, Toronto DSB.



CONGRATULATIONS!

Judy Onzuka, OCT, who teaches at Yorkview Public School in Toronto,

wins a prize pack for the handy left-handed tips she shared (see Tools of the Trade, September 2013). She keeps plenty of leftie scissors available, provides a wireless mouse and an electric pencil sharpener for in-class use, and hangs a poster of famous lefties in her class.

Krushnal Acharya, OCT, is the lucky winner of a signed copy of Joseph Boyden's latest book, *The Orenda*, (see Final Exam, September 2013) because he liked us on Facebook.



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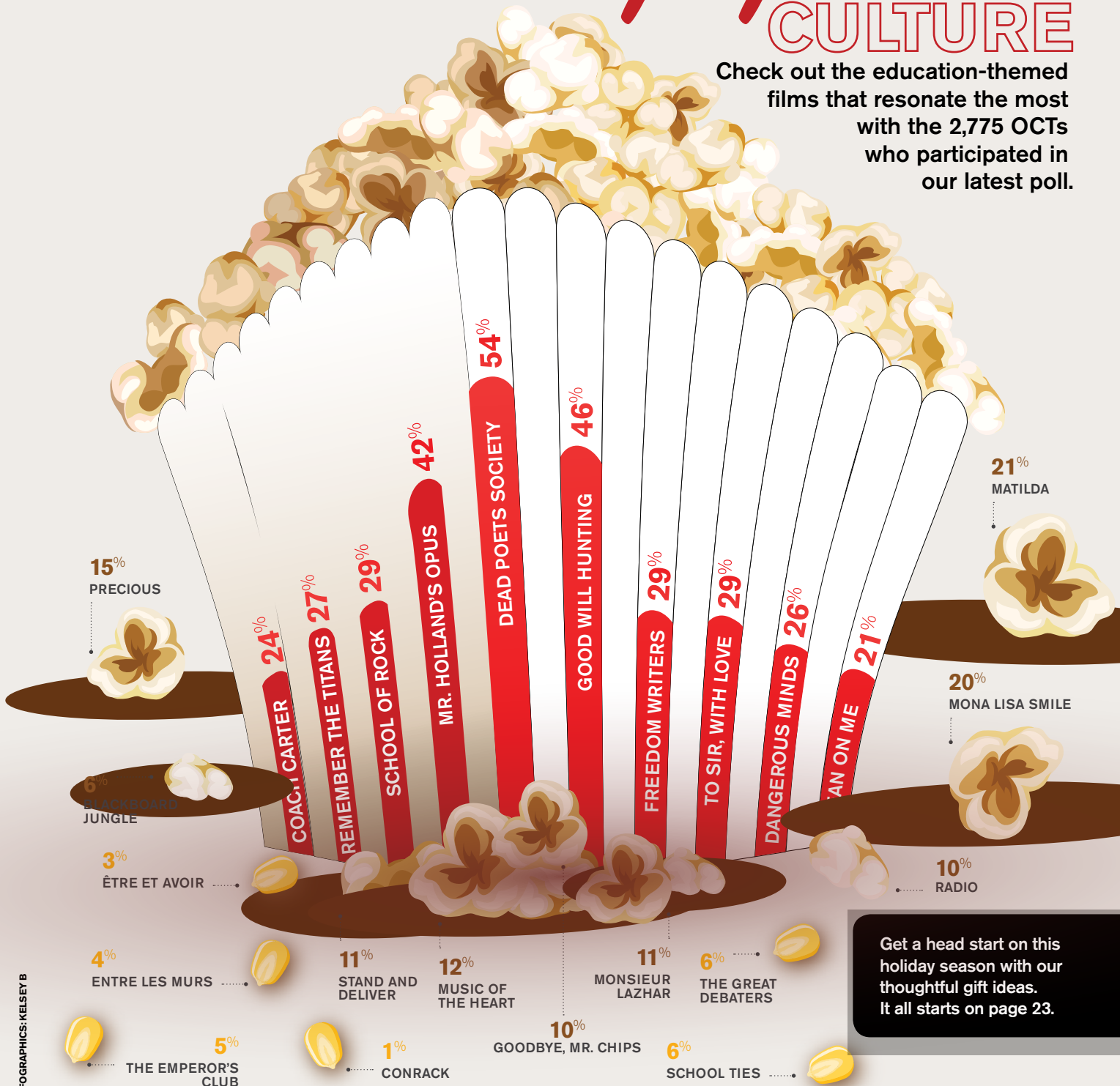
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Pop Quiz

with Stu Auty

BY LAURA BICKLE

The recent spate of teen suicides due to cyberbullying is a trend that hasn't gone unnoticed by Stu Auty. As the founding administrator of Brampton's Vanier School for Young Offenders and former chair of the Ontario Safe School Task Force, he's been an active presence in addressing bullying for more than 20 years. Now the president of the Canadian Safe School Network (CSSN), Auty takes a moment to discuss the problem with technology, the difference a dollar can make and what happens when you reunite perpetrators with their victims.

Q How have the issues changed since you founded the CSSN?

Whether it's the Internet, video games, movies or television — students today are soaked in violence. It's little wonder that many react violently in difficult situations.

Q What is key to dealing with school violence?

It's multi-dimensional, however, three areas stand out. The first is principal leadership. It involves role modelling and engaging staff, as well as explaining rules, policies and regulations to students.

The second is community and parent engagement. If our children are to be truly safe we must support them in their risks and mistakes, so they can discover who they are emotionally and intellectually.

The third is early intervention and prevention programs. Economically speaking, it's understood that \$1 spent on these resources is worth \$8 spent on corrective interventions as children enter into adulthood.

Q Any advice for teachers whose students are being bullied?

Become an engaged participant. Get to know your students, familiarize yourself with the various aspects of bullying and learn about the technologies that drive cyberspace. You'll then be able to provide the necessary direction they require.

Q What role should restorative justice take in schools?

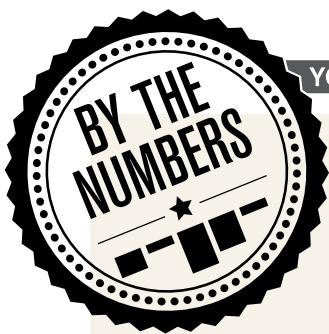
Restorative practice is a progressive disciplinary technique that has met considerable success. It brings both the perpetrator and victim together and is used alongside or independent of the traditional suspension methodology. The exercise provides accountability for the perpetrator and repairs harm done with minimal recidivism.

Q Tell us about your annual Safe Schools Conference in Toronto.

On February 25, experts will discuss topics that include adolescent mental health, bullying, restorative justice, legal issues, emergency and disaster planning, gender- and sexuality-based violence, and how social media can save lives. [For more info, visit bit.ly/1aEaZEW.]

Q Share a CSSN success story you're particularly proud of.

Our direct involvement in the Child Development Institute's SNAP for Schools behaviour modification program rollout was a definite highlight. It was first offered in 2009, in English and French, to over 6,000 students in the Greater Toronto Area. The National Crime Prevention Strategy funded this research project as an essential evidenced-based early intervention program.



YOUR CHEAT SHEET TO FUN FACTS IN EDUCATION

LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Some heavy lifting on physical education in Ontario.
BY STEVE BREARTON

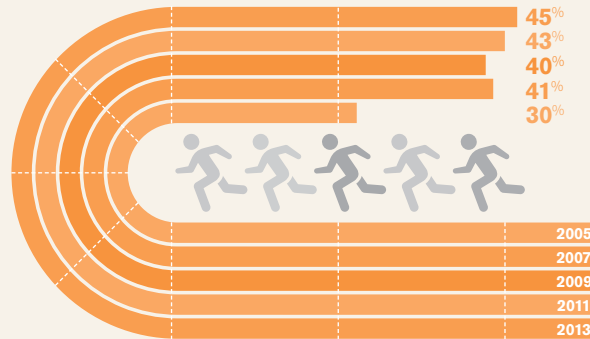
1 20-MINUTE WORKOUT

2005

Year the Ministry of Education introduced 20 minutes of required daily physical activity at the elementary level.
Source: People for Education, 2013

2 ACTIVE SERVICE

Percentage of elementary schools with a full- or part-time phys. ed. teacher:



Source: People for Education, 2013

3 KEEPING SCORE

Changes in physical activity requirements throughout the years:

	ELEMENTARY LEVEL		SECONDARY LEVEL	
YEAR	1887	2013	1887	2013
TIME	150 MINUTES	vs. 100 MINUTES	150 MINUTES	vs. 1 CREDIT
ACTIVITY	weekly in drill, gymnastics + calisthenics	weekly includes galloping to music and skipping	weekly in drill, gymnastics + calisthenics	required in high school for graduation

Source: Ontario Ministry of Education, 2013 and "Children who drill, seldom are ill." Drill, Movement and Sport: The Rise and Fall of a 'Female Tradition' in Ontario Elementary Physical Education — 1850s to 2000, Nancy R. Francis and Anna H. Lathrop

4 IN THE ZONE

The Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology suggests 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous daily activity.

Canadians aged 5 to 11 who meet these requirements:



Canadians aged 12 to 17 who meet these requirements:



Source: 2013 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth

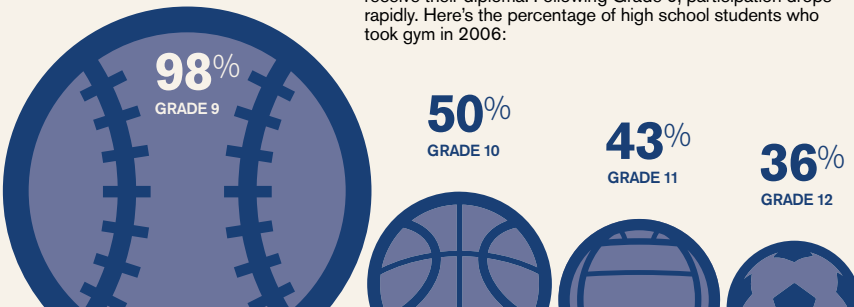
5 TEAM PLAYER

Percentage of secondary students involved in inter-school sports:



Source: Journal of Adolescent Health, 2006

6 COOLING DOWN



Source: Journal of Adolescent Health, 2006

7 ROMPER ROOM

"It is no harm to allow girls to 'romp' and take abundance of outdoor recreation. Every school yard should have a portion fenced off for the girls, where they may play ball, lawn tennis, or other games. More physical vigor, and less music and painting, would not harm many young women."

Source: John Millar, Ontario Deputy Minister of Education, comment in 1896 on the "false views of decorum often debar [girls] from play."



TWEET SHEET

Follow what's trending in the education Twitterverse



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Malala Yousafzai's fund helps raise girls' voices for the right to an education.

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"The best way to fight terrorism is not through guns. It's through pens, books, teachers and schools" -Malala via

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Dear Students: If you see a kid eating alone in the cafe, say hello and join him/her. #thatishnice



TEACHER
TIP

Approach your students' former teachers of guidance in classroom seating assignments

Write your students' first and last names on a colourful index card, making the first name larger. Ask your colleagues to assign the names to the desks that are best suited to each student considering special hearing needs, disruptive behaviour and extra help requirements

Happy with the seating plan? Laminate the cards to the front of the desks with packing tape, to discourage damage. Now when supply teachers and visitors enter the room, they can glance at the cards and properly address the students. You'd be surprised how powerful this simple act can be

—John Devine, OCT
Retired Grade 5/6 teacher

→ Have a great classroom tip to share? Send it to us at ps@oct.ca.

If we choose to publish it, you will receive a \$50 Staples gift card.

Be sure to check out our Teacher Tip research archive at bit.ly/16mofMi.

national treasures

On the hunt for great Canadian literature for your classroom? Set your sights on the 49th Shelf, and get access to the largest database of this country's books. The Association of Canadian Publishers is promoting this platform as a way to get more homegrown literature into our libraries and classrooms so that a new generation of readers can benefit from these gems.

The site boasts more than 65,000 titles from not only award-winning Canucks but also first-time writers, with categories ranging from almanacs and atlases to criminals and outlaws. Search by category, author or publisher, or get specific and use soon-to-be released tools that find titles based on grade/reading level, curriculum area or theme — with trusted peer reviews from teachers and librarians in each listing.

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The next time you need Canadian content for the classroom, visit 49thshelf.com and decide for yourself if it deserves an eh-plus! —Kate Winn, OCT

GREAT CLASSROOM READS

Stay up-to-date on what's new and exciting in publishing with Top Grade: CanLit for the Classroom. The initiative keeps decision makers on top of which Canadian-authored books are suitable for school (library and classrooms) collections and how they link to the curriculum (age group, grade level and subject area).

Twice a year, the program distributes free elementary- and secondary-level sample boxes to board consultants and co-ordinators, filled with recently released review copies, study guides, catalogues and other promotional items (bookmarks, posters, buttons, etc.) from 17 of Canada's top publishers. For access to Top Grade's catalogues, order forms and list of participating publishers visit bit.ly/1MRcUQ.

→ What is your all-time favourite Canadian book for elementary or secondary students?

Send your answer to ps@oct.ca by January 3 and you could win one of two Top Grade sample boxes, packed with either K–8 or 9–12 swag. Look for the winner in our March issue.

APPS ANALYSIS

By Stefan Dubowski



Symmetry School

Help your students shape up their geometry skills with this multilingual app that encourages creative thinking, spatial reasoning and problem solving. Choose from two game modes, with three difficulty levels each. In the Reflective Symmetry mode, users match patterns of increasingly complicated geometric shapes. In the Rotational Symmetry mode, players match patterns given a certain degree of rotation.

Each purchase includes access to a whiteboard version and supplemental print activities for teachers. Although iTunes rates it 4+, the app is meant for children aged 9 to 11 and was written according to international curricula.

DEVICE: Apple

SOURCE: iTunes, \$2.99

RATING: 4+



Ninjawords Dictionary

Speed, simplicity and accuracy. Ninjawords exhibits all three.

It brings definitions up in a jiff and keeps recently searched words onscreen. The app has a spell-checker, so if the user's spelling isn't perfect, it still finds the right word. The pronunciation function allows students to hear what a word sounds like, while the word-of-the-day feature helps them expand their vocabularies. Tech website Daring Fireball says it's a terrific app — what they've been looking for in an iPhone dictionary. It's rated 17+ but some people believe Apple unfairly flagged the app for including definitions to objectionable words. The developer claims it has removed those definitions.

DEVICE: Apple

SOURCE: iTunes, \$1.99

RATING: 17+



My Class Schedule

As children grow up and their schedules get complicated, staying on top of classes, exams and assignments is key. My Class Schedule provides that support. Available in English, French and several other languages, the app displays class and exam times in a colourful, easy-to-navigate timetable (day and week view), tracks and averages grades, and notifies the user about homework. It even allows students to automatically silence their phones during class. The advanced scheduling feature works with a variety of timetables; just customize the frequency. The free version runs ads, which tend to drain batteries. You may want to spend the \$2 to eliminate this problem.

DEVICE: Android

SOURCE: Google Play, free or \$1.96

RATING: Everyone

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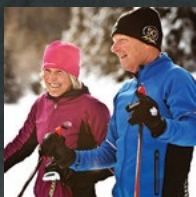
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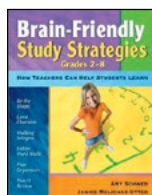
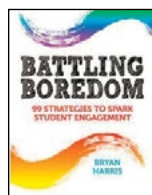
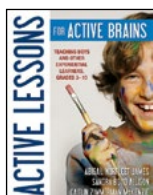


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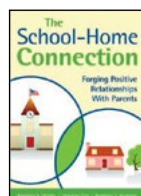
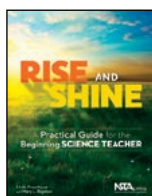
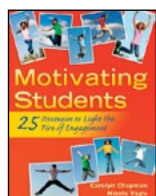
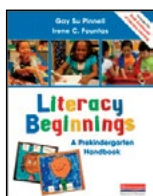
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Better Giving

Caring is one of the standards of professionalism shared by Ontario teachers. This season, lead by example and show you care with gifts that contribute to the greater good.

BY TRACEY HO LUNG

1 The Body Shop's Give Joy initiative donates \$300,000 from gift sales to the construction of five new schools in Community Fair Trade areas around the world — Nepal, Southern and Northern India, Honduras and Ghana.

thebodyshop.ca

2 The Canadian Women's Foundation and the Big Sisters of Canada mentoring programs benefit with each purchase of Avon's Start Something bracelet, \$9 (with rhinestones, \$20) — they receive 100 per cent of the net proceeds. A hidden multi-tasker, this rubber bracelet doubles as a 1 GB USB key.

avon.ca

3 Half the net profit from Me to We's array of locally made collectibles (clothing, stationery, accessories, books and travel), in such countries as India, Kenya and Ecuador, goes directly to their charity partner, Free The Children, with the other half reinvested into the social enterprise.

metowe.com

4 For every \$5 spent in-store at an Urban Barn between November 15 to December 8, one brand new fleece blanket is donated to a local shelter. Last year, Urban Barn donated 8,000 blankets across Canada.

urbanbarn.com

5 The Canadian Fairtrade-certified, organic Ethical Bean Coffee producer (\$11.99 for a bag of whole beans) is involved with charities that focus on children, arts and culture, including a \$20,000 per year donation to Child-Aid and Project Somos. The latter is helping to build a village in Guatemala for orphaned and abandoned children.

ethicalbean.com

Plan Canada

(bit.ly/18ZDY1I) Improve the lives of children by supporting Plan Canada, which builds schools, educates teachers, opens health clinics and develops sustainable living for locals. It's also the charitable brains behind the "Because I am a Girl" initiative, which empowers girls throughout the world to overcome discrimination by giving them tools (an education, access to food and a safe living environment) to become strong and independent women.

Operation Smile

(bit.ly/1bbRgcs)

Contributions allow children born with cleft lips or palates to receive reconstructive surgery in a nurturing environment. The organization trains local doctors, provides medical volunteers and supplies. Last year, Operation Smile performed 18,668 surgeries, which makes it the largest volunteer-based charity providing free cleft surgeries in the world.

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Canadian Feed the Children

(bit.ly/17bZkyf)

The Canadian charity provides long-term sustainable food solutions in Bolivia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Haiti, Uganda — and even at home in Canada — through their creation of school gardens and nutritional programs. Their Best Gift Ever section makes donating easy, buy a chicken for \$15 or equip an ECE centre for \$300.

Kiva

(bit.ly/HK1sBI)

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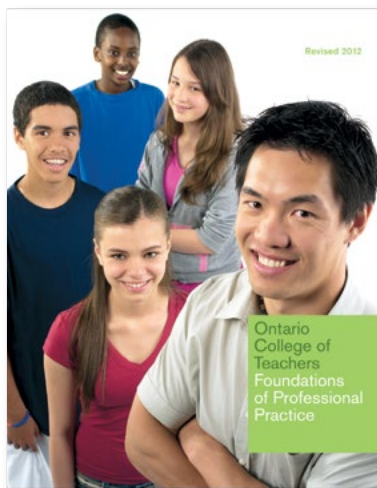


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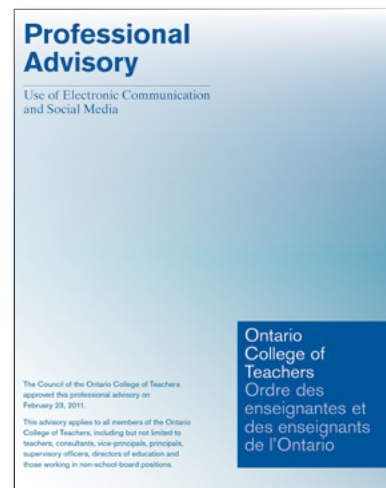
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Global going

Brent Robillard, OCT, is a man on a mission who's taking his students on an international adventure they won't soon forget.

BY TRISH SNYDER

“Today we’re going to see what it’s like to live in a developing country,” Brent Robillard, OCT, announces to his Grade 10 civics (French) class at Brockville’s Thousand Islands SS. He hands out photocopied game cards and runs through the rules: pick a scenario, then gain or lose food. Whoever finishes with the most provisions wins.

Students cluster in groups and take turns reading *The Survivor Game* scenarios they’ve selected, created by the Canadian Hunger Foundation. In one case, a young man must choose between having to support the family farm or abandoning it so he can attend school, land a better job and support the household. Other cards describe a family that loses all their crops due to extreme weather, while another makes the difficult decision to trade life-sustaining nourishment for life-saving medicine.

“Does everyone have the same amount of food?” asks Robillard when the activity is over. Cue an outburst of laughter: one student ended up with two cards while another stockpiled 18. “We can laugh because it’s a game,” the teacher says. “But what do you think happens in the real world when enough people get angry because they’re trying to feed their family and they can’t?” War, says one student quietly. Terrorism, says another. “Who thinks this is fair?” Robillard asks. No one raises a hand.

Some of these adolescents have never ventured west of Kingston, but Robillard is expanding their view of the world using real-life experiences and simulations. This civics class is part of the school’s unique International Studies Programme (ISP), which opens students’ eyes to global issues, inspires them to make a difference in the world and invites them on a humanitarian mission to Central America. It’s a program that didn’t exist before Robillard and his wife, Caroline Bergeron, OCT, developed it from scratch and pitched it to the Upper Canada DSB in 2004. Passionate about human rights, the well-travelled pair envisioned a robust four-year extended French program that would broaden minds and tempt young people to stick with languages. “Some schools specialize in drama or health and wellness,” says Robillard. “We thought this would be a great way to graduate a thinking student.”

PHOTOS: JAIME HOGGE



Brent Robillard, OCT, and his Thousand Islands SS students play a game that simulates what it's like to live in a developing country.

Every time principal Donald Lewis, OCT, overhears a debate in Robillard's room, he's reminded why Robi, as his students call him, won the 2010–11 Premier's Award for Teacher of the Year. "Brent understands that when students realize that what they're learning is actually relevant, they buy in."

The 8-credit ISP embeds specialized education into a high school diploma. Bergeron teaches the program's four

French-language credits; Robillard covers Canadian history, international aid and development, as well as half-courses in careers and civics — all in French — plus Spanish. "Learning another language is the first step toward learning about the world and meeting another culture on common ground," Robillard says. Languages are also useful in the real world — for instance, when the group goes to Nicaragua on a humanitarian mission, their hosts speak only French or Spanish. This helps keep the morning's Spanish class on task; it doesn't hurt that Robi spins verbs and vocabulary into a rousing game of Spanish Jeopardy on the Smart Board.

He pulls global issues to the surface, so recurring themes pulse through every year of high school for students in the ISP. In Grade 10 Canadian history, Robillard breaks down concepts like multiculturalism, discussing everything from racism in Canada's early immigration policies (such as the Chinese head tax) to today's world-class refugee policy. Within the interdisciplinary studies curriculum, the international aid course is embroidered with strands of economics, geography and sociology. Robillard recalls students expressing outrage when they came across the discrepancy between what the UN estimated it would cost to eradicate

poverty (0.7% of GNI) versus the actual amounts countries spend (Canada, 0.32%; United States, 0.19%). "I teach that being an international citizen is about being aware," says Robillard. "My role is to bring global issues into the room, so that my students have a forum for discussion."

From awareness springs action. Instead of writing a test at the end of Grade 10 civics, students must contribute to the community. Some focus on campaigns to relieve poverty, support women's rights or end impaired driving. One boy learned that Haitians were so desperate for food after the 2010 earthquake that they were surviving on salted clay. His clay-cake sale attracted swarms of curious students, raising visceral awareness of hunger and a few dollars for the Red Cross.

Helping hands

More good deeds are organized by the Humanitarian Educational Leadership Programme (HELP), a school club supervised by Robillard and Bergeron. An upcoming coin drive is on the agenda at a lunch meeting where two girls are trying to enlist volunteers to mount posters and collect donations. (They eventually raised over \$500.) Each month there's a new fundraiser that engages the community to support groups like World Vision and

agents of Change ✈️

For a budget-friendly experience that goes beyond sightseeing, consider "voluntourism." Brent Robillard has completed five such missions with Voyages Tour Étudiant (VTE), which offers community-based homestay programs in Nicaragua, Guatemala, Ecuador, Costa Rica, Peru and Mexico. "Many student-oriented travel agencies partner with international organizations to offer humanitarian options, which often leads to higher costs," says Robillard. "VTE works directly with local community groups and Canadian non-profit NGOs to provide affordable, authentic experiences." For more info, visit bit.ly/16y3Kz2.

Free the Children — everything from a 5K fun run to a 24-hour fast.

Seniors head to Nicaragua for the ISP's culminating 15-day humanitarian mission. They live in homes that are half the size of a Canadian classroom, while they job-shadow their host moms and dads. They clear brush and plant trees on farms, and deliver supplies to children who work in the local dump. Families earn \$9 a day, per student, for their hospitality — this is a windfall compared with the \$2 average.

It's not unusual that students break down during that first week. "They're upset by what they see and experience: emaciated dogs, naked youngsters in the street, no cold water, no showers, sleeping on cots," says Robillard. But when it's time to return home, they don't want to leave. "They come back feeling somewhat impotent and confused because they realize they've learned so much — how to laugh when you have nothing, how to have fun without video games — from the people they went to help. There's no better way for students to understand how the world works than by living it."

"Some of his students go on to study international development or human rights based on their experiences," says principal Lewis. "For a teacher to make that kind of an impact, that's huge."

About as huge as coaxing teenagers to write 30,000-word novellas, which is what Robillard manages to do by running his Writer's Craft course as a novel study. An award-winning poet and novelist (*Drift*, his most recent novel was published in 2011), he unravels the writing process into elements like plot, characterization, crisis, conflict and reversals. Before students sketch out a detailed storyline, for example, he gets them to think about the plot in short episodes — they practise by looking at chapter titles on a *Lord of the Rings* DVD.

Thanks to daily exercises scribbled in thick spiral notebooks, students will write more in Writer's Craft than in any of their other courses combined. "I tell them by the end their book should look like they dropped it in the bathtub," says Robillard. Borrowing ideas from author Natalie Goldberg, he'll start with a phrase such as "I remember" and ask them to continue that thought by writing non-stop for five minutes. Then seven. Then nine.

"When they read their work aloud, the reactions are amazing. Tears of laughter, spontaneous applause — we've heard it all," he says.

Students feel safe sharing their work because they practise the delicate art of constructive criticism in small writers' groups. Robillard prepares the class for peer review by explaining the needs of the various personalities involved: some want a no-nonsense message about what needs work in their writing; others need a more delicate approach. Students pick the personality type they most relate to, and the group responds with feedback delivered in an appropriate manner.

Novel ideas

Like their teacher, Robillard's students are becoming accustomed to seeing their work in print. One self-published her first novel and is working on a second. Many win short story contests. Just that morning, a Grade 11 student arrived clutching an acceptance letter from *The Claremont Review*, a serious international literary journal for young adults that accepts less than one per cent of submissions. Robillard is happy to play a part in these accomplishments but he gets just as much satisfaction when former students confess they still write in their notebooks, even if they never publish. "It makes you realize that they value the written word and that creative process."

A few years ago, Robillard's writing class turned some 19th-century newspaper clippings about shipwrecks in the St. Lawrence into *Dive Brockville*, a local dive compilation, including a log, illustrated by fellow teacher David Sheridan's art students. The award-winning book went through three printings and sold enough copies to fund a public art sculpture. "Brent's always enthusiastic, always pumped to find his students real-world experiences," says Sheridan, OCT, and a past winner of a Prime Minister's teaching award. "It's difficult to find teachers who are willing to put in that extra 100 hours of work to enrich their curriculum. When you work with someone like that, you're inspired to achieve higher goals yourself." **PS**

Six must-see sites

Want to introduce students to the world of international studies and global citizenship? Tap into Brent Robillard's favourite websites for excellent (and free) classroom resources:



1. UNITED NATIONS CYBERSCHOOLBUS
bit.ly/GIQKdQ
2. CANADIAN HUNGER FOUNDATION
bit.ly/GHFQpf
3. TEACHER ZONE: FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT CANADA
bit.ly/19uFDC7
4. THE CANADIAN ATLAS ONLINE
bit.ly/19uGhzw
5. FREE THE CHILDREN
bit.ly/1e4bGYJ
6. OXFAM CANADA
bit.ly/GHGD9L



SCHOOL TIES

Suits star Patrick J. Adams honours the high school drama teacher who counselled him toward a successful career in acting.

BY RICHARD OUZOUNIAN

The room erupts into applause as Patrick J. Adams approaches the podium to accept an Honorary Life Membership to the University College Dublin Law Society. The prestigious club had previously bestowed this tribute on the likes of Noam Chomsky and Bill Clinton, and was now honouring the 32-year-old Torontonion, or as the society's auditor introduces him, "The man who made lawyers sexy again."

While it's obvious that the crowd agrees with the description, the truth is Adams isn't a lawyer. Far from it. He just plays one on TV.

The character that Adams portrays on the hit series *Suits* is Mike Ross — a drug-dealing, LSAT-cheating college dropout. After stumbling into a job interview he's not qualified for, Ross's photographic memory helps land him the position of high-powered lawyer Harvey Specter's right-hand man.

The show feeds off of Ross and Specter's relationship; they play to each other's strengths and weaknesses. While Ross is street-smart, Specter is book-savvy, but together they're unbeatable.

"We play a lot of that relationship up for comedic purposes but there's a serious message at the core," says Adams. "Never underestimate the power of a mentor. You have to find someone who can inspire and encourage you."

He's been lucky. Not only is Adams acting out the perfect mentor/pupil dynamic but he also had the chance to experience the real deal early on in life — someone who provided him with the necessary tools to carve out the kind of successful career he has today.

Deborah Barton-Moore was that person. She taught drama at Northern SS for 20 years, was department head for much of that time and worked directly with Adams from Grades 10 to 13.

Adams knew from an early age that he wanted to be an actor and made the life-changing decision to commit as he entered high school. "My family was moving back to the Beaches and everyone assumed that I'd go to school there; but I'd heard about the courses at Northern Secondary so I decided to check them out."

The wannabe thespian was impressed with the school's performance space and the real works of dramatic literature they put on. Adams was sold. "Even though it meant that I would have to commute an hour and a half every day, I knew it was where I had to be."

“Debbie took an interest in her students and treated everyone like they had something to offer.”

Although he didn't get to work with Barton-Moore immediately, his presence did not go unnoticed. The now-retired teacher remembers her first glimpse of Adams's acting skills in the school play *Marat/Sade*, Peter Weiss's complex piece about the French Revolution. “Patrick played Marat and he just had to sit in a bathtub making political speeches, but I recall how riveting he was.”

When he wasn't sitting in suds, Adams could see the influence Barton-Moore had in her classroom. “Debbie took an interest in each of her students and what they could teach her,” he explains. “She had a real enthusiasm and a genuine curiosity, she would treat everyone like they had something to offer.”

When Barton-Moore and Adams finally joined forces, neither was disappointed. “I found that there were very few secondary school teachers who would talk to students like regular human beings,” Adams recalls, “but she was actually one of the first people in my life to say, ‘You can do this. You can really do this.’ Right off the bat, she was supportive and more importantly, she believed in me as an actor.”

As they began working together, Adams noticed something about his teacher's approach. “Debbie would grade people on the product but paid close attention to the process.” Barton-Moore confirms that. “There's a lot of students who can achieve a certain level of success and they stop there. That never interested me. I was more concerned with how hard a student worked on their projects and what they learned from them.”

During Adams's final year of high school, he reached new levels of responsibility when Barton-Moore suggested that they co-direct the senior show, *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

“Looking back, I can't believe Debbie agreed to share that responsibility. She let me do my part. It wasn't one of those instances where the student hangs around being useless,” explains Adams.

“A lot of people think that when a teacher co-directs with a student that it'll be a scary journey. But, with Patrick, it wasn't,” says Barton-Moore. “He had the ability to see the contradictions in the characters and bring them to life onstage.”



Deborah Barton-Moore and Patrick J. Adams co-directing the senior production of *Cyrano de Bergerac* at Northern SS.

Of course, teacher and student had their differences. For instance when Adams decided that his future would be better served by studying in the United States, he approached Barton-Moore. “I asked Debbie if she would help with my monologues for the auditions and, of course, she agreed. But then, I would keep putting it off and finding reasons not to do it. When we finally met, Debbie walked into the auditorium and was brisk,” explains Adams. “She said, ‘I don't think you're taking this seriously. There's a huge opportunity here, you've had weeks to prepare, I've made myself available and you keep turning my help down. You have to get serious about this.’”

The young actor was taken aback.

“That was my first real experience with self-sabotage — setting yourself up to fail at something because of a fear to succeed. What made Debbie so special is that she was the first person to call me out on it.”

Adams followed her advice, got into the University of Southern California, received a BFA in acting, graduated with distinction, and his career was well on its way. He took the opportunity to express

his thanks when he invited his mentor to the set of *Suits* last year. “I had never been on a TV shoot in my life,” says Barton-Moore, “it was a magical world to me.”

Looking back, the former teacher refuses to say that she knew Adams had star quality. “I've learned not to think too much about that kind of stuff,” she says. “So many of my students have the potential, but you never know who is going to go the distance.”

But Barton-Moore will admit that Adams had one special skill set that put him out in front of the competition: “Patrick was able to articulate his feelings

so beautifully. He had an introspective streak of self-examination, and of the art form, that gave him an advantage.”

Adams still grows emotional when he thinks of his time with Barton-Moore. “Young people are at such a delicate stage in high school. They're making decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. You need to find somebody you can be yourself with. What Debbie did for me was so far beyond just teaching me theatre.”

The two have kept in touch over the years, but not as much as Adams would like. “Our closeness survives time and space,” says the actor, “and every time I'm around Debbie, I feel like I still have so much to learn from her.” **PS**

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BRAINSTORM

Fresh thinking on supporting students with mental health issues in the classroom.

BY JENNIFER LEWINGTON

Overwhelmed, frustrated and desperate — the raw emotions spilled out when Sarnia teachers were asked to rate how they cope with mental health issues in the classroom. The high volume and intensity of responses in the voluntary, open-ended comment section of one survey stunned researchers.

“They were all saying ‘I care about my students; I am desperate, I am burning out, I am at the end of my rope,’” says Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit epidemiologist Michaela Smith, whose agency conducted the survey with the Lambton Kent DSB and co-terminus St. Clair Catholic DSB a year ago.

Surveyed teachers felt somewhat able to handle attention deficit problems, but ill-equipped for student depression and suicide. “We can’t teach those who cannot learn because we are not addressing the underlying [mental health] issues,” says Smith, summing up teacher concerns.

The Sarnia teachers’ unease, echoed elsewhere, come as Ontario rolls out a sweeping, decade-long overhaul of mental health services. Phase one of the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, announced in 2011, earmarks \$257 million over three years (and \$93 million a year thereafter) for an array of school-based initiatives.

The strategy provides coaching and other support to school boards to raise mental health literacy and awareness, reduce stigma and, as never before, work with the health care agencies to smooth pathways to care.

The new spotlight on schools is overdue, say advocates. One in five children and youth experience some kind of issue (anxiety, stress, attention deficit hyperactivity, mood disorders, schizophrenia, depression and suicide among them), and not all receive treatment. For schools, the challenge is to create an environment conducive to academic achievement and social-emotional well-being for all students.

To that end, the “caring classroom” — a place of empathy, engagement and learning — is emerging as a significant component of school-based mental health.

ILLUSTRATION: MICHELLE THOMPSON/ANNA GOODSON

***A student's stress* MAY BE PERCEIVED AS DEFIANCE. TOO FREQUENTLY, STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES ARE DISMISSED AS "GOING THROUGH A PHASE."**

"It is right at the centre," says Kathy Short, director of School Mental Health ASSIST, an implementation support team set up by the Ontario Ministry of Education to provide support to mental health leaders and assist in implementing the strategy within the province's 72 school boards. "It is so important that classrooms are welcoming environments where teachers know their students and students feel comfortable taking risks as they are learning pro-social as well as academic skills." Teachers, she adds, are "the eyes, ears and heart in this work."

The strategy has the potential to reshape practices within and beyond the classroom. "It's not just about what do teachers need to know," says Ian Manion, executive director of the Ontario Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Mental Health. "It's also what the community service providers need to know and the linkage between the two."

Caring classrooms exist in the province's 5,000 schools, say observers, just not everywhere or with adequate support. "We have pockets of excellence across the province, but it is a bit of a staggered front," says Judith Nyman, OCT, co-chair and co-ordinator of the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health, a multi-sector advocacy group. "Good teachers have always done this in a very intuitive way but now we are being very explicit about the conditions that need to be in place in the classroom to build resiliency in children and youth — and that takes time."

Support for students

Students know a caring classroom when they see it. At St. Patrick's Catholic SS in Sarnia, Grade 11 and 12 students serve as peer mentors in a Grade 9 mental health awareness program. Senior students rhyme off the key ingredients: communication, respect, trust, understanding and a feeling

of safety. "If we have a problem, teachers are never too busy to talk to us," says peer mentor Trevor Ducharme. "They might not know the answer, but they help you get to where you need to be."

But his experience is not universal. In *Building a Better School Environment for Youth with Mental Health and Addiction Issues*, a report released this fall, the Youth Action Committee of Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) surveyed nearly 300 students aged 11 to 25. Only 35.1 per cent felt school staff understood mental health issues. The report recommends a larger role for students in reducing stigma and promoting better communication between students and teachers.

"A student's stress may be perceived as defiance or a teacher may be viewed as showing judgement versus genuine concern," say the report authors. "Too frequently, students with serious mental health issues are dismissed as 'going through a phase.'"

Students with mental health problems say they often get the brush-off. "People think we are crazy attention seekers," says one teenager, too young to be identified, who participated in CMHO's annual youth leadership camp in Orillia last July. "We are just normal people who are dealing with a struggle."

The camp provides training for the organization's anti-stigma campaign, "The New Mentality," with teen volunteers swapping stories on local efforts to drive mental illness from the shadows. Often candid, the volunteers refuse to be defined by their illness.

That can mean addressing stigma head-on. One young woman describes being ostracized by other students who feared they could "catch" her disease. Another teen, who asked not to be identified, shares her drawing of a school counsellor's office showing limited office hours. "My mental illness doesn't run on a schedule," reads the

cutline. "So why do you?"

Recognition of students as school allies is gaining currency. This year, student leaders in the Hamilton-Wentworth DSB held peer-to-peer workshops on mental health, with support from mental health professionals.

"A lot of people think that if you have a mental illness that you can just 'get over it,'" says Alexandra Ewing who, with fellow trustee Sydney Stenekes and student senators representing every high school in the school board, organized the event. "A lot of people learned through the workshops that you can't just 'snap out of it.'" As important for students, says Stenekes, is the knowledge they can change preconceptions. "Starting the conversation is the first step to eliminating the stigma," she says.

The workshop fits with a broader strategy by Hamilton-Wentworth to engage students on mental health. "We are really being explicit in Hamilton-Wentworth to ask students what they need, how we might do things differently, what should we continue," says director of education John Malloy, OCT.

Customized approaches

A focus on students shines through on a sunny September morning at P.E. McGibbon PS, an inner-city elementary school in Sarnia, where Grade 5/6 teacher Heather Parnham, OCT, and her students kibitz in the schoolyard. Moments later, outside her second-floor classroom, she greets each student by name.

Like the Canada-wide statistics, one in five of her 25 students has a diagnosed disorder. Long before her students open a textbook, Parnham invests time to teach respectful listening, empathy and conflict resolution. For attendance, students check off their names on a Smart Board and select an icon — happy, sad or in-between — to communicate their mood. A few minutes later, the students sit in a circle on the floor to share a "tribble," if they wish, such as the death of a pet.

"My biggest thing in September and October is building community, building inclusion and making them feel safe," says Parnham, a teacher for 12 years. The social-emotional "front-loading," she argues, lays the foundation for student success.

“Heather runs a program that is the full embodiment of what we hope to see in a safe classroom and a safe school,” says McGibbon principal Helen Lane, OCT, whose school is one of six Lambton Kent schools with a program to promote positive character traits.

In Stoney Creek, the caring classroom has a different hue at Saltfleet District HS, where Grade 12 teacher Dubravka Prica, OCT, seeks to create a safe haven for students wherever she finds them.

During the first week of school, a former student drops by for encouragement before heading to his class. To welcome the incoming class of hospitality and tourism students, Prica hands out a homemade “student survival kit” of dollar-store trinkets, bite-size candy and uplifting message.

She leaves her door open at lunch — sometimes hearing from an anxious student — and serves as an adviser for a weekly “positive space” meeting for LGBT students. This fall, she worked behind the scenes to make sure the “rainbow” prom, to be hosted by Saltfleet next spring, is held at a banquet hall like any traditional prom, not the gym. “It’s about making people feel at home,” says Prica.

Creating comfort

Students notice. Saltfleet graduate Kaitlyn Addley, 19, came out as a lesbian at age 12 and struggled to adjust to high school. Prica struck up a regular hallway conversation with the then-Grade 9 student, sparking a supportive relationship that lasted through high school.

“She said ‘if you ever have any issues, if you have anything you need to talk about, come to me,’” says Addley, citing several interventions by Prica to keep her on track. The experience changed Addley’s perception of teachers. “It told me that there are teachers out there who care about you and respect you for who[m] you are and do care about everyone fitting in equally,” she says. “She stood for something.”

Elsewhere, boards are working with each other and community agencies to help teachers spot student distress and know where to seek help.

In Sarnia, mental health was a priority before the provincial strategy. Lambton Kent lost eight students to suicide over

two years in 2010–11. “Seven of the eight students were not on a caseload and were a surprise to our staff who deal with mental health issues,” says director James Costello, OCT, whose board had no suicides in the last two years.

Mental health was also a priority for St. Clair Catholic DSB director Paulus Wubben, OCT, who retired last August. Prior to that, the two directors used their history of co-operation to establish a regular meeting of education, health and community agencies. “I liken it to connecting the dots,” says Costello. “There were some organizations that we had never heard of that provide mental health supports for our kids.”

Building awareness

But it was the arrival of Lori Brush in October 2012 as a school mental health leader — a province-funded position for each Ontario school board under the strategy — that Costello says was “a critical piece in improving the conditions.”

With coaching from ASSIST, she gathered information from Lambton Kent teachers who identified anxiety, oppositional behaviour, social relationships and bullying as top concerns. Digging deeper, she conducted school-level focus groups to identify needs, such as training on how to manage stress. Brush describes her work as “trying to put together a puzzle”

that integrates mental health awareness into the daily life of a classroom.

At Northern CI & VS, though not raised by Brush in focus groups with students, the memory of two suicides in close succession in 2010 lingered with them. In sessions, students expressed concerns about teachers and urged that they have more fun in and outside of class. Last June, principal Gary Girardi, OCT, responded with a staff day of outdoor leadership activities organized by the YMCA. The mix of school newcomers and veterans created positive chemistry, says teacher Dave Parkes, OCT. “It was great to shuffle the whole deck.”

The ASSIST network also gathers evidence on effective practices for potential province-wide application. “If ASSIST works, it promises to bring a comprehensive lens to school mental health,” says Stanley Kutcher, Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health, a respected Canadian mental health researcher at Dalhousie University. “That is its strength.”

A constant challenge is to reassure teachers they are not expected to be medical specialists. University of Western Ontario psychologist and professor of education Alan Leschied, an expert in children’s mental health, sees a parallel with the recalibrated response to school violence. “It was seen as an add-on for teachers until we realized that if kids don’t feel safe they will not be able to focus on their learning and

Learning to manage

This fall the faculty of education at the University of Western Ontario offered an elective on mental health literacy for prospective teachers, the only one in the province. Students jumped at the chance, with 38 enrolled for each of the fall and spring semester courses — the spring course has a waiting list.

The faculty’s associate dean of research, Susan Rodger, fellow psychologist and faculty member Alan Leschied and faculty member Kathy Hibbert, who specializes in literacy, developed the elective. “We asked teacher candidates what they knew and what they thought they needed to know about mental health,” says Rodger. “The answer was they were decidedly feeling unprepared to even work with children in a classroom with any kind of mental health challenge or problem.”

The elective is offered online, accessible to teacher education students living in remote regions. An inclusive, productive learning environment is healthy for students — and teachers, says Leschied.

Other teacher education initiatives are in the works. In September 2015, a two-year teacher education program is expected to add mental health content. All AQ courses include content associated with student well-being and mental health. *The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* also includes the concept for caring for student well-being.



Aboriginal culture OFFERS A LOT OF REALLY POSITIVE, HEALTHY MODELLING FOR HOW TO BE ENGAGED IN SCHOOL AND LEARN, AND BE RESPECTFUL OF THE ENVIRONMENT.

achievement,” he says. “Now we are at the same with mental health.”

With no evaluation yet of the provincial strategy, some encouraging trends are emerging. For example, Lambton Kent had a 40 per cent drop in student suspensions over five years. Similar results hold for Keewatin-Patricia DSB, whose 4,800 students include 40 per cent self-identified First Nations, Métis and Inuit. Some credit for an almost 50 per cent drop in suspensions over five years goes to the board’s embrace of a Native-inspired “restorative practice framework” to nurture relationships among students and with their teachers. When conflicts occur, students talk about possible remedies.

“Aboriginal culture offers a lot of really positive, healthy modelling for how to be engaged in school and learn, and be respectful of the environment,” says Lisa Doerksen, OCT, school mental health leader for Keewatin-Patricia. In recognition of Aboriginal culture, the board

engages elders to work with students, teachers and parents, and some schools hold staff meetings in a circle.

Like its co-terminus board, Kenora Catholic DSB has introduced restorative practices, with special training for five staff this year. “There is a great push and a lot of interest,” says mental health leader Ashley Hendy. “We have reorganized our professional learning communities this year and one of them is focused on restorative practices.”

The boards piloted a school-community intervention program that assigns mental health workers to help needy families strengthen their ties to school. The result, says Doerksen, “is an increased understanding on the part of teachers about what was contributing to a student’s difficulty in her classroom.”

Still, wait times remain a challenge. In 2012, the average wait time was 72 days for clients who started receiving a mental health service that year, with even

longer delays for access to residential or day school programs, according to data gathered by Children’s Mental Health Ontario for the provincial government.

Geography, language and access to resources can test patience. The Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud, with 14,500 students in a 40,000-square-kilometre region, is typical of francophone boards delivering programs to schools scattered across the system.

At some of Centre-Sud’s 54 schools, pilot projects to promote teacher mental health literacy and coping skills for students are showing positive signs, with anecdotal reports of reduced school suspensions, says school mental health leader Dr. Marie-Josée Gendron.

Francophone boards face a shortage of relevant materials *en français*. “Often at the table of mental health leads, they are talking about wonderful programs they are putting in place,” says Gendron. “Finding the equivalent in French that is just as good is much harder.”

Changing the culture, climate and practice of school-based mental health will take time, but promises big dividends, predicts Nyman. “If we do this work and we do it well,” she says, “it will probably have the greatest impact on student success, achievement and well-being over time.” **PS**

When stigma strikes close to home

An award-winning teacher and youth sports coach, Tracy Sharpe, OCT, knows how anxiety, depression, mood disorders and behaviour issues affect her students at a rural school in Bluewater DSB. But it was not until her eldest child, Hayden, 18, was diagnosed with depression that she felt the sting of stigma.

Earlier this year, after a four-year battle to get help for their son, Sharpe and her husband, Scott, decided to share their experience. They had to cope with mistaken assumptions their son was on drugs or, as Sharpe puts it, “we were bad parents and must have done something wrong.”

A teacher for the past 10 years, Sharpe won a Premier’s Award for Teaching Excellence in 2007–08 and has been recognized for her work with behaviour students. This fall, she was appointed vice-principal of a K–12 school, with half-time responsibility for behaviour issues. Several months ago, an acquaintance rebuked Sharpe, saying “you won a Premier’s Award and deal with behaviour kids all the time and you can’t handle your own kid? That must make you feel like a failure.” Bruised, Sharpe walked away. “I knew it was not something Hayden had asked for, it was not something he did or we did.”

Going public gave her fresh insights into other families struggling with wait times for treatment. Hayden’s academic decline in high school was

dismissed initially as a behaviour problem because he fell asleep in class and skipped school. “Depression presents as behaviour,” she says. “People have in their mind that depression is about crying and being sad and it is not. It can be rage, acting like the class clown and truancy.”

Sharpe says it took four years to get an official diagnosis of depression. This year, about to graduate from high school, Hayden is the first adolescent in Grey-Bruce to receive counselling by teleconference. She says the experience has reinforced her practice of honest, regular conversations with students and parents. “Let’s not say the kid can’t cope,” she says. “Let’s say what it is: anxiety disorder.”

Working for a board that promotes character education, Sharpe integrated respectful, responsible, trusting and caring behaviour into her Grade 3 curriculum. When an issue arose — on the playground or in the classroom — she would gather students in a circle and talk it out. “I have never lost curriculum by incorporating and focusing on character education,” she says. “My kids learn better because they are happy, healthy and feel included.”

In time, she hopes the stigma of mental health will ease. “Twenty years ago, cancer was a scary word for people,” she observes. “People pulled away and now we embrace them and help them. Hopefully that is what it will be like with mental health too.”



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TWO- YEAR TEACHING PROGRAM

BY HELEN DOLIK

In a milestone for the teaching profession, plans are underway that will significantly change how teachers are educated in the province — and the Ontario College of Teachers is spearheading the way.

Starting in 2015, the teacher education program will double from two to four semesters and provide future teachers with more classroom experience by increasing the practice-teaching time from a minimum of 40 to 80 days. The program will include a sharper focus on equity and diversity; meeting the needs of students with special needs; child, youth and parental mental health issues in relation to teaching; and the use of technology as a teaching tool.

The first cohort will be cut in half from 9,000 to 4,500 students.

Why the change? To equip new teachers for the challenges of the contemporary classroom and to combat the shrinking job market — and a surplus of teachers that has grown steadily since 2005. Plus, the annual College *Transition to Teaching* survey shows new teachers rank more practical experience in the classroom as the highest priority for change in the way teachers are educated.

“The initial teacher education program is an induction into a 30-year career,” says Michael Salvatori, OCT, the College’s Chief Executive Officer and Registrar. “Teacher candidates are just beginning. We don’t expect them to be fully formed when they start. They are certainly competent and qualified and they will deepen their skills as they move on in their careers.

“You see the seeds in teacher candidates early on, and maybe that’s a good way to look at this. There’s more time for that plant to grow and flourish in the care of professionals at a faculty, whereas more of that happened in schools with nurturing from mentors, from principals when we have a shorter program.”

The College, as the regulatory body for the teaching profession, is responsible for setting qualifications and program requirements for Ontario teachers. It has been working tirelessly with the Ministry of Education and faculties of education to develop a program that will prepare future teachers to help students thrive in the 21st century.

FAST FACTS

- start date —
September 2015
- program expands
from two to four
academic semesters
- increases practice-teaching
time from a minimum of
40 to 80 days
- sharper focus on diversity,
meeting the needs of students
with special needs, children’s
mental health and the
integration of technology
- annual admissions to
teacher education programs
to be reduced by half, from
approximately 9,000 to 4,500
students for the new program

Other professional preparation programs like medicine, dentistry and nursing, Salvatori points out, also have longer professional programs. “I think that members of the public, and parents in particular, will be proud of the fact that teachers who have dedicated five or six years to postsecondary education are now dedicating themselves to children,” he says. “That’s a good sign. When we talk about what’s happening during these four semesters and the experience gained, it’s significant.”

What’s in the new program?

- Teacher candidates will be expected to understand the design, format and rationale for the current Ontario curriculum content, documents and policies. Some examples include financial literacy, environmental education, media literacy and First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditions, cultures and perspectives.
- Instructional strategies will focus on areas such as the integration of technology as a teaching tool, special education, classroom management, child and adolescent development, and teaching English- and French-second-language learners.
- The program will also include an understanding of child, youth and parental mental health issues and teaching in the Ontario context (for example, diversity, equity, sexual orientation, safe and accepting schools).

“The College has always had a desire to make the program a little longer,” says Michelle Longlade, OCT, the College’s Director of Standards of Practice and Accreditation. “It’s a response to a need that we have heard from teachers. The College continually looks at improvement for the profession. We’re responding to changes in the environment and in the profession.”

The four-semester program, also commonly referred to as a two-year program, was first envisioned in the Royal Commission on Learning, and was one of the recommendations in its 1995 report *For the Love of Learning*. A longer initial teacher education was also among the recommendations of the College’s *Preparing Teachers for Tomorrow* report, released in 2006. The College had consulted extensively with the education sector for the report.

The College’s annual *Transition to Teaching* study, which surveys new teachers and tracks their experiences, indicated that more practice-teaching time is a high priority. The 2012 survey of first-year teachers continued to provide evidence of the oversupply of teachers, with the unemployment rate rising sharply for the fourth year in a

ON YOUR MIND?

Q Was there something wrong with the old program?

A. Government policy, advice from education stakeholders, practice in other Canadian jurisdictions and worldwide trends all influence this change. The annual College *Transition to Teaching* survey shows new teachers are interested in more time for practical teaching experience in their education.

Q Will current members need to upgrade or recertify?

A. If you’re a member in good standing with the College, there would be no requirement to upgrade to the new program. The College has been working hard to examine other scenarios presented by the new program and its effect on former members, and we will be developing regulations to clarify this over the winter. These will be outlined in future issues of *Professionally Speaking*.

Q Will these changes affect current Additional Qualifications?

A. Additional Qualification courses are enormously popular with our members, and participation reflects their commitment to ongoing learning. In 2012, our members completed 37,626 AQs in Ontario. There are no changes to the current AQ system.

Q Will current members be at a disadvantage in the job market?

A. A College member is a College member — the Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) designation represents having met the certification requirements at a certain time, and there will always be changes to entrance-to-practice requirements.

I’ve wanted to be a teacher since I was in Grade 2. It’s a passion of mine. I think the expanded program is a great idea because it gives students more experience. I’m excited to see the new courses introduced.

— Kali, Sinclair SS, Whitby

row. More than one-third of 2011 graduates from Ontario faculties and US border colleges who sought teaching jobs were unemployed. “They were actively looking for teaching jobs but could not even find daily supply teaching during the year,” reported the survey.

“The calibre of teachers who graduate from the programs that we currently accredit are already top-notch,” says Liz Papadopoulos, OCT, Chair of the College Council. “If you look at test results and data gathered internationally and how Ontario students are measuring up in the world, it’s obvious our students are being taught by quality individuals.

“An extended program can enhance teacher education. I wouldn’t want the new program to create a rift in the profession.

Teaching isn’t a profession of competition. It’s a profession built on collaboration and interdependency. The seasoned professional will benefit from being a colleague of a four-semester graduate in the same way that new members of the profession learn from someone who has been in the profession for 30 years.”

The College was the lead partner in Ministry of Education discussions regarding the framework

for the program, including duration, content and practice-teaching time. Faculties are looking closely to the College for direction, whether for the development of the programs or approval of new elements. Their programs must meet the new requirements to be accredited by the College.

And just like it does for Additional Qualification courses, the College is developing an accreditation resource guide to help faculties meet the new requirements for the expanded program. It will work with

*I'll be graduating and I'll be pretty young
— this gives me another year to mature.
It's an extra year to grow up and get better
at what you're doing.*

— Jeremy, École secondaire catholique Saint-Charles-Garnier, Whitby

faculties and schools of education to ensure the programs comply with the new elements.

Across Ontario, faculties of education are busy preparing for the new program. The Ontario Association of Deans of Education (OADE) has created a document that outlines the core elements and the related learning outcomes.

“The OADE *Learning Outcomes for Teacher Education* document and the program framework are closely aligned,” says Fiona Blaikie, dean of the faculty of education at Brock University and OADE chair. “We’re looking forward to enhancing the program for our teacher candidates and the teaching profession. Teachers graduating now are well trained. The extended program will provide teacher candidates the opportunity to engage more deeply and broadly in theory and practice.”

Deani Van Pelt, OCT, the director of teacher education at Redeemer University College, says their program has always incorporated a longer model of teacher education. In fact, the bachelor of education program at the Christian liberal arts and science university is currently three semesters. “We’ve always held a position that the formation of a professional teacher does take longer than eight months and the program has been designed that way,” she says.

The faculty has mapped out the new four-semester program, considering it from educational and student perspectives while maintaining the distinctive strengths of the university and the legacy of the current program.

“I think the expanded program will enhance the qualifications of teachers entering the profession,” says Van Pelt. “They will have had more time to develop and reflect upon their professional identity and to build skills, practices and dispositions based on a more robust foundational knowledge of the profession. We are privileged to have an Ontario College of Teachers. I have a sense that the leadership the College is showing in the province in this particular initiative will have national and even international impact.”

What impact will the changes have on candidates currently enrolled in concurrent programs or multi-session programs at faculties of education?

The College is working on transition provisions for these teacher candidates. It is developing regulations, which when filed, will specify that a person who begins (but has not completed) an Ontario program of professional education on or before August 31, 2015, would be eligible for College registration.

In response to the oversupply of teachers — both the unemployed and under-employed — the first cohort for the new program will be cut in half. Faculties will be admitting approximately 4,500 students in September 2015 as opposed to the current 9,000 spaces allotted to teacher candidates. The first teacher candidates will graduate from the new program in 2017.

“The effect of the program is that there will be no new graduates of consecutive programs in 2016 — there may be some from the concurrent programs,” Longlade says.

The College takes great pride and effort in its accreditation responsibility. It has accredited more than 50 full- and part-time teacher education programs in 18 university faculties of education in Ontario.

College Council member Bill Kirkwood, Chair of the College’s Accreditation Committee, says the committee and the College will have to re-evaluate and revise the accreditation process and adjustments will be required in how accreditation is carried out in the future. He also noted the new program’s increased focus on special education and First Nations, Métis and Inuit traditions, cultures and perspectives. “It provides a broad base of learning for teacher candidates.” **PS**



The College is developing an accreditation resource guide to help faculties (such as those within Charles Sturt University, Lakehead University and the University of Ottawa pictured above) meet the new requirements for the expanded program.

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A WIDER VIEW

Kindergarten teachers use blogs, Skype and Twitter to connect students across the province and beyond.

BY STEFAN DUBOWSKI



Angela Harrison, OCT, uses a whiteboard to take up work with her kindergarten class.

CHALLENGE

Help students learn about their communities and connect with people in other schools and cities.

SOLUTION

Use blogs, Skype and Twitter to link classrooms around the province and beyond, enabling children to compare their own environments with other places.

LESSONS LEARNED

Teachers in the York Region DSB developed a web-based program to teach youngsters about their own communities and places beyond. Dubbed “We Can See,” the project helped students in the 2012–13 school year understand what makes different cities and classrooms unique, and also taught children to be responsible citizens online.

“We want our kids to be 21st-century thinkers and explorers,” says Jocelyn Schmidt, OCT, a kindergarten teacher at

Lorna Jackson PS in Woodbridge. “We have the technology for that.”

Various technologies were used when taking part in the program. Some teachers shot pictures of their schoolyards and local landscape with iPads and digital cameras. Some had students make and narrate videos. The teachers then uploaded the material to a central blog (wecanseeprojectsharingspace.blogspot.ca) and invited other classes to respond.

Angela Harrison, OCT, a kindergarten teacher at Lake Simcoe PS in Keswick, used Twitter to invite teachers and students to participate in 20-minute Skype calls with her class. Prior to each session, students researched aspects of the other class — its location or the photos and movies the class had made available online — and developed a few questions to ask during the call. Students established a protocol of politeness: standing up to pose a question, waiting for the person to finish answering before speaking,

YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

You'll need:

- a web-connected device such as a PC or an iPad; a blog on a blogging platform such as **blogspot.ca**; accounts on social media platforms Twitter and Skype

Steps:

- 1) Reach out: find teachers and classes to connect with on Twitter or Facebook
- 2) Get ready: develop specific questions with students to ask another class
- 3) Interact: schedule 10- to 30-minute Skype sessions or use a blog to correspond with participants
- 4) Post your observations: use the blog to tell the world a bit about your class and the connections you've made

thanking participants for joining.

We Can See created some truly long-distance connections. Schmidt's students had a Skype session with a kindergarten class in Monterrey, Mexico. The children learned that the school in Monterrey has a security guard and the children wear uniforms.

OBSERVATIONS

Students learned to hone in on their surroundings, comparing them with the places they visited virtually. Joanne Babalis, OCT, who teaches kindergarten at Bond Lake PS in Richmond Hill, says that during outdoor walks, students started to pick up on details. “We saw snowflakes and began to develop theories about how they were created.”

The teachers learned a few lessons, too. “It really inspired them to try new technologies,” Harrison says.

For 2013–14, some participants are using the We Can See framework for a new project: Looking Closely Collaboration. This program has children examining their surroundings, along with seeds, flowers and other objects in detail. Learn more at kidblog.org/LookingClosely.

HELPFUL HINT Don't worry about making a mistake. In fact, embrace the chaos. Yes, sometimes Skype calls don't connect. Internet links may drop. “Kids need to see us taking those risks and dealing with it when they don't work,” says Angela Harrison.

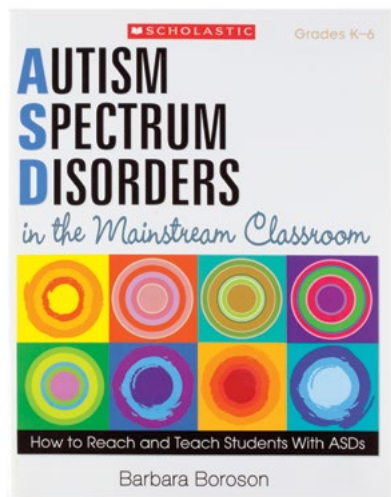
reviews

Your guide to recently released books, CDs and other teaching resources.

For additional reviews of French-language resources, visit pourparlerprofession.oeeo.ca → **lu, vu, entendu**. With the exception of some classroom sets, items reviewed are available on loan from the Margaret Wilson Library at the College. Call **416-961-8800** (toll-free in Ontario **1-888-534-2222**), ext **679** or email library@oct.ca to reserve your copy.

Autism Spectrum Disorders in the Mainstream Classroom

BY BARBARA BOROSON



Teachers looking for effective ways to teach students with autism spectrum disorders (ASDs) might do well to read this short, engaging book first.

Assuming no prior knowledge of this increasingly common developmental disorder, Boroson begins by thoroughly explaining what ASDs are and explores the various ways they could manifest in students. The particular challenges faced by students with ASDs such as anxiety, transition fears, sensory issues and social and communication difficulties are all explored. For each challenge, she suggests concrete strategies to make them less stressful for both student and teacher. Boroson purposely places the chapter about behaviour toward the end of the book because as she correctly notes, if the triggers for students with ASDs are properly understood, and the previously described action plans have been implemented, most behavioural problems will be averted.

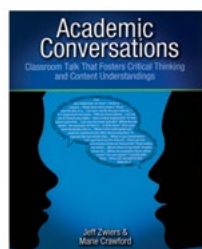
A companion website provides supplementary resources relating to each chapter, including reproducible charts, a bibliography and a parent questionnaire. Despite using the American special education system as her template, the differences between the Canadian and the American methodologies are minimal. *ASDs in the Mainstream Classroom* primarily targets elementary school teachers, but Boroson's clear classroom-based examples and explanations are applicable at any level, and strategies can be adapted for older students as necessary.

Elizabeth M. Starr, OCT, is a professor in the faculty of education at the University of Windsor who specializes in the education of children with autism disorders.

Autism Spectrum Disorders in the Mainstream Classroom: How to Reach and Teach Students with ASDs, Scholastic Teaching Resources, New York, 2011, softcover, ISBN 978-0545-16876-2, 224 pages, \$27.99, available through Scholastic Canada Ltd., scholastic.ca

Academic Conversations

BY JEFF ZWIERS AND MARIE CRAWFORD



Talking with people opens doors to seeing different perspectives, building fresh ideas, exploring boundaries and solving problems. And yet, as teachers, we are often flummoxed by how to teach, assess and evaluate this critical oral skill. Geared toward students in all grades, this resource shows teachers how to integrate spoken language into all subject areas while their students participate in one of the things they love to do best — talk with each other.

Although *Academic Conversations* covers many types of small and large group discussions, it primarily focuses on paired conversation. But this is talk with real purpose, like teaching students how to elaborate and clarify, how to support their ideas with examples, how to build on and/or challenge a partner's ideas, how to paraphrase and how to synthesize. The lesson suggestions require little

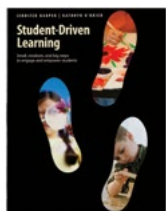
planning and few materials and will help students think about their spoken language in new ways. Some of the graphic organizers show students how to talk through a subject, listen to different perspectives and to justify their own thinking before writing their ideas down on paper. In addition, the book provides sample rubrics and advice on formative and summative assessments. This resource is the single tool you need to help your students create the essential link between thinking, speaking and writing.

Kerry Zinkiewicz, OCT, is an instructional leadership consultant in K–8 literacy in Peterborough.

Academic Conversations: Classroom Talk That Fosters Critical Thinking and Content Understandings, Stenhouse Publishers, Portland, ME, 2011, softcover, ISBN 978-1-57110-884-5, 234 pages, US\$23.50, stenhouse.com

Student-Driven Learning

BY JENNIFER HARPER AND KATHRYN O'BRIEN



We live in a technologically driven information age that proliferates with all kinds of intelligence. The technology has so radically shifted the landscape that we no

longer know what skills our students will need to adapt to an uncertain world and for jobs that don't even exist yet. That means that it is incumbent on us to prepare our students to be lifelong learners who can think critically, evaluate all information that comes their way and innovate based on their findings. This book offers some great insights and clear steps for teachers to transform their practice from teacher-driven to student-driven learning, which will foster personal responsibility and provide students with real opportunities to learn in their own highly individual ways.

The book calls on teachers to reflect on their current practices and to look at the different paths to establish a student-driven learning community in their classrooms. By providing practical ideas from which to pick and choose, this resource invites teachers to find those best suited to the needs of their students. Many of the strategies are basic, like getting to know your students, creating a culture of student autonomy, fostering creative mindsets and nurturing critical thinking. From there, the authors expand on the ideas.

This is a great resource for both beginning and experienced teachers. Newcomers will find the practical examples easy to adopt as they begin their teaching journey. Similarly, experienced teachers will find that the suggested ideas are not overwhelming and can be readily integrated into their existing practices.

Yovita Gwekwerere is an assistant professor of science education at Laurentian University.

Student-Driven Learning: Small, medium and big steps to engage and empower students, Pembroke Publishers, Markham, 2012, softcover, ISBN 978-1-55138-278-4, 128 pages, \$24.95, pembrokepublishers.com

Ban the Book Report

BY GRAHAM FOSTER



want powerful alternatives to traditional book reports, look to this resource. It offers a true alignment of responses to reading for pleasure. Written by an educator with many years of experience, this must-have resource has 20 classroom-tested assignments that focus on a personal response to independent reading. Challenging and intellectually rigorous, each assignment has a student-friendly rubric, completion form and two exemplars that invite students to develop their ability to maximize meaning from texts.

Each chapter has several report statements with many insights into how best to implement the assignments. This is a phenomenal feature of the resource. And although the chapters' recommendations may differ slightly, they all conclude with similar advice: develop reading responses that are real and that will deepen a love of reading for the rest of your students' lives.

Mary Veronica Moloney, OCT, is a teacher at D'Arcy McGee Catholic School in Toronto.

Ban the Book Report: Promoting Frequent and Enthusiastic Reading, Pembroke Publishers, Markham, 2012, softcover, ISBN 978-1-55138-264-7, 128 pages, \$24.95, pembrokepublishers.com

Your initial response to the title of this book might sound something like, "I always assign book reports, why would I want to ban them?" Take a moment to inspect the cover of this text: a boy, reading. Look again. A boy reading, resting on the grass with his pet, in a big field or park, reading a short novel, smiling. He is enjoying it! But is he getting anything out of the book? We'll know after he hands in the book report, right?

Most of us agree that the boy's level of enjoyment should be fostered and encouraged, and that required responses (a rigid template of assigned topics) to independent reading may have exactly the opposite effect. If you

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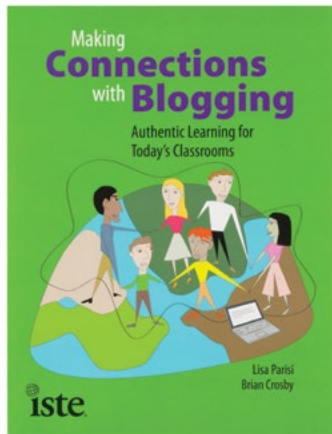
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Making Connections with Blogging: Authentic Learning in Today's Classrooms

BY LISA PARISI AND BRIAN CROSBY



We have all come across students who are reluctant to put pen to paper. While many may be effective oral communicators, transferring information into the written word can be a challenge. *Making Connections With Blogging* adds a 21st-century spin on writing by integrating blogging into the curriculum. The book sequentially guides teachers through the process of blogging, starting with Internet safety and etiquette

with lesson suggestions in several subject areas and assessment advice. For example, one illustration shows how children can create screencasts within their blogs, demonstrating problem-solving methods — a great way for shy and IEP students to present their skills and knowledge.

The book includes blackline masters and examples of the consent forms required before initiating a blogging project in your classroom. In addition to the detailed steps and procedures needed to start classroom blogging, Parisi and Crosby provide a variety of websites that support further inquiry. While this book refers to American education guidelines and standards, it is infinitely transferable to the Canadian classroom experience. This is a great resource for the blogging novice, or for an experienced teacher looking for fresh ideas to add to technology programs.

and moving on to responding to blog posts in a respectful way. Detailed examples and visuals highlight how blogging can be successfully integrated into the daily classroom schedule, along

Cheryl Woolnough, OCT, is a Special Education teacher with the Peel DSB.

Making Connections with Blogging: Authentic Learning in Today's Classrooms, International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), Washington, DC, 2012, softcover, ISBN 978-1-56484-312-8, 100 pages, \$23.50, distributed by Scholarly Book Services, sbookscan.com

Potatoes on Rooftops

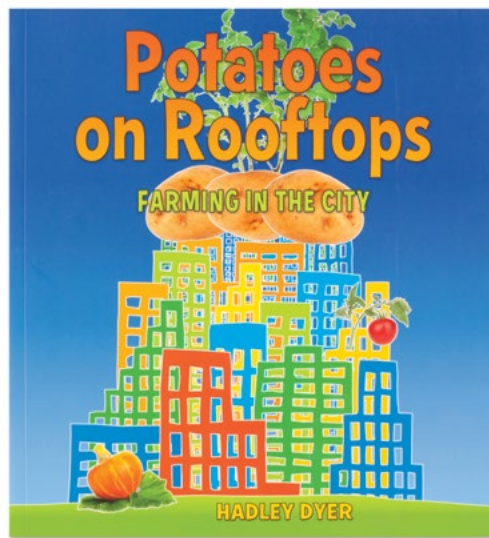
BY HADLEY DYER

Have you ever stopped to think about where your food comes from, or how many miles the fruit and vegetables in your grocery store might have travelled? The Industrial Revolution and urbanization brought about vast changes in the way food is produced and distributed to meet the needs of city dwellers. Growing city populations have led to an increased demand for fresh produce, which in turn led to the proliferation of large mechanized factory farms and extensive food distribution systems across the world. Although this system seems to be working to meet the demands of growing cities, it is unleashing toxic emissions of greenhouse gases that have huge negative impacts on the environment. In *Potatoes on Rooftops*, Hadley Dyer addresses the challenges posed by how our food is being produced and distributed and why it is critical for city dwellers to reduce their carbon footprint by growing some of their own food.

From rooftop gardens, vertical gardens, towering farms and underground gardens, the author suggests numerous ways to use small open spaces in the city to produce food. Ideas for composting, water harvesting, raising chickens and fish in city backyards are proposed. The book is a particularly useful reference for integrating the environment and sustainability ideas into the curriculum at different grade levels. It also suggests brainstorming questions for guiding teachers and students as they plan the logistics of establishing a school garden.

This is a valuable resource full of creative ideas for getting immersed in urban agriculture, and a compelling rationale for doing so.

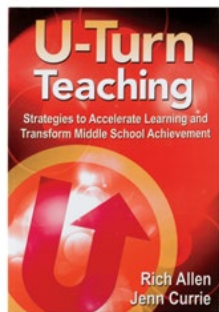
Yovita Gwekwerere is an assistant professor of science education at Laurentian University.



Potatoes on Rooftops: Farming in the City, Annick Press, Toronto, 2012, softcover, ISBN 978-1-55451-424-3, 84 pages, \$14.95, distributed by Firefly Books, annickpress.com

U-Turn Teaching

BY RICH ALLEN AND JENN CURRIE



It is an understatement to say that teaching students in middle school is distinctly unlike teaching in the primary years that precede it. Young children

usually start school with great curiosity and enthusiasm. As they move further away from play-based and hands-on learning, that positive attitude often erodes. Sitting at desks, working independently and listening to a teacher deliver a lesson, coupled with all the personal developmental changes of puberty, can often lead to apathy and indifference. This book is designed for teachers to recreate some of the energy from those early grades by focusing on classroom community, building trust and the very particular educational

needs of middle school students. The authors fundamentally recognize that middle school children are ruled by the social environment more than any other single factor in their young lives.

Strategies in *U-Turn Teaching* are designed to turn around middle school students' attitudes at this critical juncture in their education at the same time as turning around many of the traditional practices used by educators to teach this age group. Some ideas are not new, such as using Exit Cards and Mindmaps. But others are highly innovative like pegging students' body parts to embed and trigger memory to recall information they have already learned.

The book is easy to read and provides action plans and clear examples, useful to both beginning and experienced teachers.

Maureen Doeler, OCT, is a Grade 5 teacher at Holy Cross Catholic School in Alcona, Ont.

U-Turn Teaching: Strategies to Accelerate Learning and Transform Middle School Achievement, Corwin Press, an imprint of Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA, 2012, softcover, ISBN 978-1-4129-9646-4, 182 pages, US\$34.95, corwin.com

The Night Before Christmas

BY CLEMENT C. MOORE, ILLUSTRATED BY BARBARA REID



Barbara Reid revitalizes *The Night Before Christmas* with dynamic Plasticine illustrations that bring a uniquely Canadian twist to the traditional poem. The story was originally written in 1822 for the author's family and published anonymously in the Troy, NY *Sentinel* the following year. It wasn't until 1844 that Moore acknowledged its authorship.

Reid has chosen to use mice instead of the original human characters to spin the tale of St. Nicholas's arrival with his

reindeer-drawn sleigh full of toys. Readers will enjoy searching for the hidden visual treasures on each page and exploring the effects of illustrating with the medium of Plasticine. Teachers may want to use the book as a launch pad for teaching students how to create storyboards or for investigating art media, including Plasticine. Reid has created a number of online videos and projects demonstrating the essential techniques for working with the medium as well as how to plan, design and create backgrounds.

Sarah Lynn Frost Hunter, OCT, teaches Grade 3 at Kindree PS in the Peel DSB.

The Night Before Christmas, Scholastic Canada Ltd., Markham, 2013, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-4431-2471-3, 32 pages, \$19.99, scholastic.ca



What's Next for this Beginning Writer?

BY JANINE REID AND BETTY SCHULTZE WITH ULLA PETERSEN

This resource is a primer on the developmental stages of young writers and how to move them toward becoming confident and competent. Based on years of research, the authors propose two extra questions to expand on the original 10 questions presented in their first edition: What is the role of oral language in writing workshops? How do I continue to grow as a writing teacher? In discussing each of these questions, the authors never lose sight of their main question: What's next for this beginning writer?

The authors address the 12 questions in a concise and accessible format. They offer practical suggestions for structuring writing workshops, applying key principles to the primary classroom on how to balance direct instruction with independent learning. Based on the belief that children will thrive as writers if they experience success, the authors discuss how teachers can talk to students so they feel encouraged and ready to set goals for future writing assignments. *What's Next for this Beginning Writer?* will deepen your understanding of the writing process and strengthen your ability to help your students succeed in their written work. An excellent mentor book for teaching writing to early primary children, it will no doubt become your go-to book for your practice.

Caroline Cremer, OCT, teaches in the Primary division at Leslieville Junior PS in Toronto.

What's Next for this Beginning Writer? (Revision), Pembroke Publishers, Markham, 2012, softcover, ISBN 978-1-55138-274-6, 160 pages, \$24.95, pembrokepublishers.com

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Applications open on 1 December 2013 for the following positions available starting August 2014.

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Dave McMaster, Head of School, will be recruiting new staff for 2014/2015 at the following fairs:

Search Associates Bangkok Fair, Bangkok, January 8-11, 2014

Search Associates London Fair, London, January 16-20, 2014

Teachers' Overseas Recruiting Fair, Kingston, Ontario January 22-25, 2014

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bill 103



PROTECTING STUDENTS ACT EXPLAINED

BY HELEN DOLIK

The introduction of the *Protecting Students Act* in September 2013 marks a defining moment in the history of the Ontario College of Teachers and ushers in an era of improved transparency and efficiency for students, teachers and parents.

The proposed legislation contains the most significant amendments to the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* since the College was formed in 1997. The changes reinforce the College's continuing efforts to streamline its investigation and discipline processes.

The College will be allowed to fast-track complaints against teachers directly to the Discipline Committee and automatically revoke the teaching licence of a member found guilty of

sexual abuse. It will open reinstatement hearings to the public and implement new timelines to help dispose of complaints. For example, the College will be allowed to proceed with a hearing should a member take more than 60 days to reply to a Notice of Hearing.

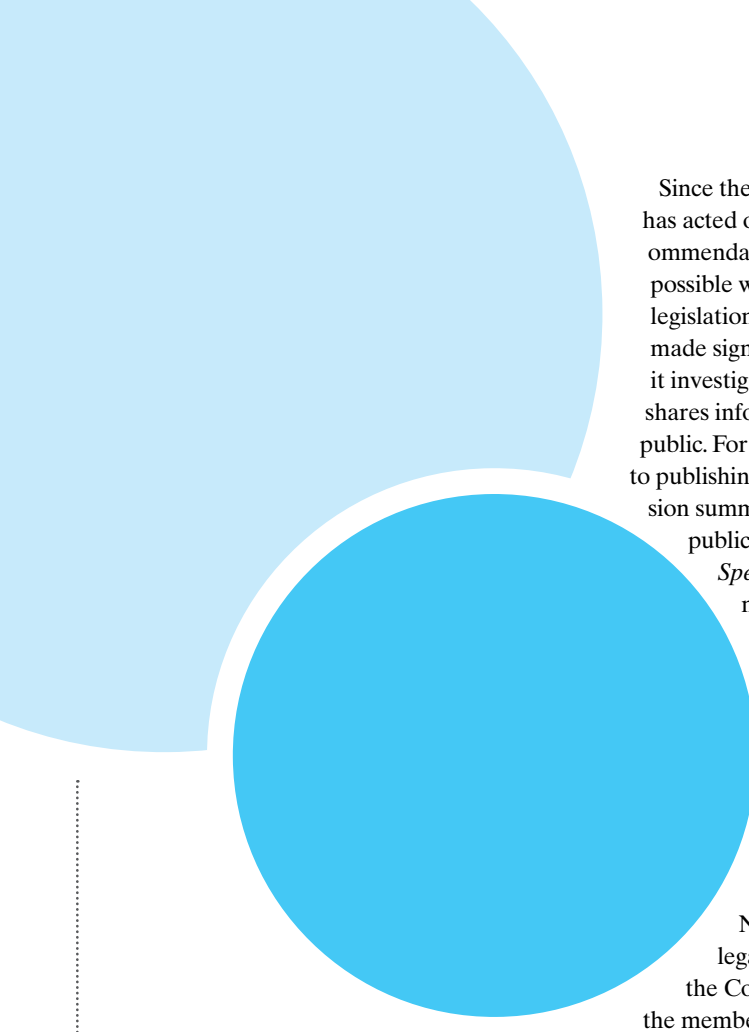
These are just some of the major changes contained in the *Protecting Students Act* that is en route to becoming law in Ontario.

"For students, it better protects their interest and safety," says Francine Dutrisac, OCT, the College's Director of Investigations and Hearings. "For teachers, the improved efficiencies ensure that matters are dealt with in a more timely matter. And for the public, it provides

more transparency and therefore more evidence demonstrating that the College does indeed protect the public interest.

"This promotes the confidence that society demands of its education professionals. These are major changes and they provide an opportunity to make the legislation work better for the public interest."

The changes are consistent with advice provided to the province by College Council in response to an independent review by former Ontario Chief Justice Patrick LeSage. The report — released in 2012 by the College — made 49 recommendations, many calling for the teacher regulatory body, the government and district school boards to improve reporting and information sharing.



THE PROPOSED LEGISLATION WILL BETTER SERVE THE PUBLIC INTEREST AND LEAD TO GREATER PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE TEACHING PROFESSION.

Since the report, the College has acted on many of the recommendations, to the extent possible without changes in legislation or regulation. It has made significant strides in how it investigates complaints and shares information with the public. For example, in addition to publishing discipline decision summaries in its official publication, *Professionally Speaking*, the College made 600 full decisions available online in January 2012. All discipline decisions are now posted on the College website.

Timelines have been set for issuing and publishing Notices of Hearing, a legal document issued by the College and served on the member. It provides notice of the charges that will be heard by a College committee. They are available on the College's website after the member is served.

More space has been added to hold concurrent hearings at the College and additional human resources will be allocated to assist with investigation and hearing matters. In October, the College launched a new online complaint form to improve accessibility at the intake stage.

While the College has acted immediately in some areas, more than 60 per cent of the recommendations require legislative changes to the *Ontario College of Teachers Act*.

On Sept. 18, Minister of Education Liz Sandals introduced the *Protecting Students Act*, or Bill 103, to address the remaining recommendations, saying it was an important step to ensure families continue to have confidence that their children are safe and protected in Ontario schools.

The *Protecting Students Act* will:

→ Allow complaints to be “fast-tracked” directly to the Discipline Committee when there is a criminal conviction and

guilty plea by a member

- Automatically revoke a member's teaching licence if found guilty of sexual abuse or acts relating to child pornography
- Open reinstatement hearings to the public
- Make it mandatory to publish the names of College members found guilty of professional misconduct
- Formalize the complaint resolution process and procedures in legislation
- Allow record sharing between the College and other public agencies, such as social services, the police or other regulators
- Authorize the Registrar to appoint an investigator in cases where the member's conduct is likely to harm or injure a student
- Ensure that a disciplinary panel reviewing a complaint or hearing a matter related to the conduct of a principal or vice-principal includes a principal or vice-principal
- Clearly define when school boards must inform the College if they have restricted a teacher's duties.

“We know that the vast majority of Ontario teachers do an excellent job supporting our students,” Sandals told the legislature. “Every day, they put their hearts and souls into their classrooms, and they share our commitment to giving their students the opportunity to learn and develop in a safe and respectful school community.”

“However, in the rare circumstances where teacher discipline is required, families, parents, students and teachers deserve a fair and transparent process that maintains the public interest and protects our children. Together with the Ontario College of Teachers, we have a shared interest in maintaining public confidence in the investigation and disciplinary process, and have worked hard to reinforce public trust.”

During Bill 103's second reading on October 1, Sandals acknowledged the leadership at the College, not only for asking LeSage to conduct the review but for moving quickly to address his recommendations.

Members of all provincial political parties have spoken in favour of the *Protecting Students Act*. The bill must pass through

stages prescribed by the legislature, including readings, committee review and royal assent, to become law in Ontario.

“As context, this is the last part of the implementation of the recommendations from our independent review,” explains Michael Salvatori, OCT, the College’s Chief Executive Officer and Registrar. “We’re pleased with the introduction of the Act. But in the meantime, we’ve made a number of practice changes.”

The College has a duty to serve the public through its work in three primary areas: teacher licensing, program accreditation and member discipline. The College’s mandate states that it is required to receive and investigate complaints against members of the College and to deal with discipline and fitness to practice issues.

“The safety of students is at the heart of the public interest,” says Salvatori. “That’s one of the key elements when the public thinks about what inspires confidence — what allows them to trust — is that they know students are being kept safe.

“If the public looks at the changes, they’ll see more transparency and more information. They’ll see efficiencies such as shorter timelines and the College acting more swiftly in circumstances where a member hasn’t upheld the standards and a student has been at risk.”

The vast majority of College members are upholding the standards and have never had an investigation into their conduct. “Although each case is serious and one student being put at risk is too many, when you look at the number of disciplinary decisions and the number of members, you can see there’s good reason to trust in our teachers,” he says.

By proportion, teachers facing Discipline committees are relatively rare. The College has more than 237,000 members. In 2012, the Discipline Committee heard 41 cases.

The College’s Discipline Committee already revokes certificates of members found guilty of sexual abuse. The proposed legislation will formalize this current practice and make this penalty mandatory.

For members found guilty of sexual misconduct, the *Protecting Students Act* will also increase the waiting period to reapply for reinstatement from one to five years.

bill 103

“IT’S GOOD FOR THE PUBLIC, IT’S GOOD FOR PARENTS AND IT’S GOOD FOR STUDENTS.”

This does not guarantee that a member’s teaching licence will be reinstated.

Liz Papadopoulos, OCT, Chair of College Council, says the proposed legislation will better serve the public interest and lead to greater public confidence in the teaching profession.

“It’s good for the public, it’s good for parents and it’s good for students. There’s no doubt about it. And what’s good for them is also good for the teaching profession because it shines a positive light on the profession as well,” she says.

“The profession has an opportunity to show that it can put the public’s needs first.

“It demonstrates to the public that the profession recognized that changes had to be made. It shows a commitment to

protecting the public interest.”

Papadopoulos says teachers deal with public and parental expectations, societal demands and school board needs, and this Act will put into law best practices and what’s in the best interest of students.

“It’s a good start and proof that when stakeholders work together and are moving in the same direction, you can achieve many positive outcomes,” she says.

Since beginning its review, Salvatori says the College has reached out to other regulators in Ontario interested in learning about the College’s process and, subsequently, the *Protecting Students Act*. They are talking to the College about the changes and looking at their own procedures and processes to serve the public interest. **PS**

YOUR COLLEGE THROUGH THE YEARS A HISTORY OF PROTECTING STUDENTS

January 1995

July 1996

May 1997

September 1997

October 1997

December 1997

April 1998

February 2000

March 2001

September 2001

June 2002

September 2002

June 2006

August 2011

January 2012

June 2012

September 2013

October 2013

- Royal Commission calls for professional self-regulation.
- The *Ontario College of Teachers Act* (OCTA) becomes law.
- The Ontario College of Teachers opens its doors.
- Province introduces the *Education Quality Improvement Act* to approve non-certified instructors.
- Council calls for changes; province removes clauses supporting non-certified instructors.
- Professional Misconduct Regulation comes into effect.
- Amended *Education Quality Improvement Act* becomes law.
- College holds its first disciplinary hearing.
- Justice Sydney Robins publishes the *Protecting Our Students* report.
- College requests legislation to better define sexual misconduct.
- Province introduces the *Student Protection Act* (Bill 101) that defines sexual abuse.
- The *Student Protection Act* becomes law.
- College publishes first professional advisory on sexual abuse.
- Amendments to the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* (Bill 78) become law.
- Province creates the Public Interest Committee, which recommends changes to disciplinary process.
- College appoints Justice Patrick LeSage to lead independent review.
- College posts 600 full disciplinary decisions online.
- LeSage report is released with 49 recommendations; Council reviews and approves the report.
- Province introduces the *Protecting Students Act* (Bill 103).
- The *Protecting Students Act* is introduced for second reading.

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Closes March 6, 2014

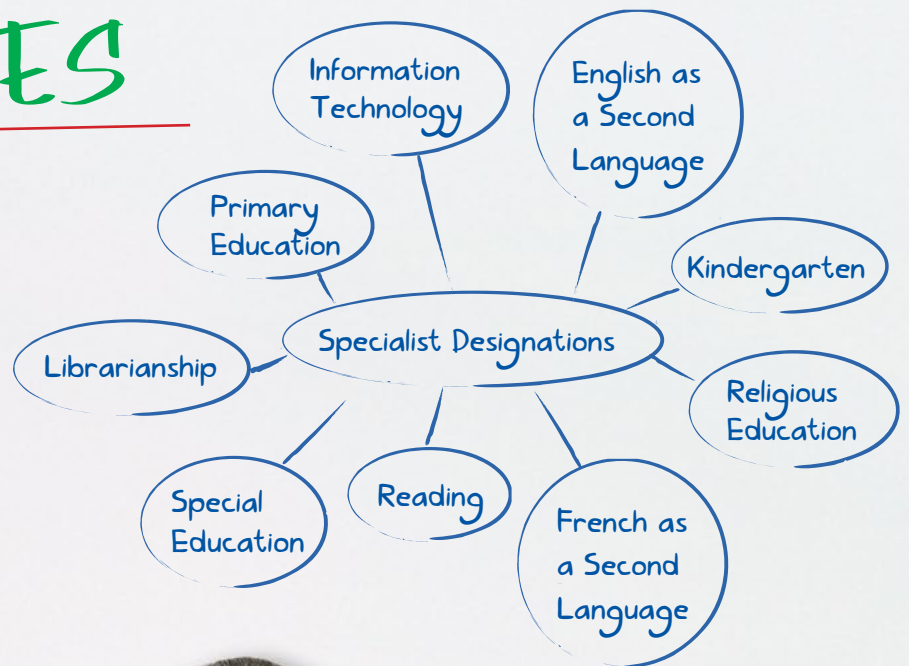
SUMMER 2014

Opens April 8, 2014
Closes June 6, 2014

FALL 2014

Opens June 17, 2014
Closes September 9, 2014

Closing dates will be extended
if spaces are still available.



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governing ourselves

Governing Ourselves informs members of legal and regulatory matters affecting the profession. This section provides updates on licensing and qualification requirements, notification of Council resolutions and reports from various Council committees, including reports on accreditation and discipline matters.

COLLEGE'S PUBLIC AWARENESS INITIATIVE

ENHANCING PUBLIC AWARENESS

BY HELEN DOLIK

You'll soon be seeing and hearing the phrase "Setting the Standard for Great Teaching" in connection with the Ontario College of Teachers.

The College is launching a public awareness initiative in 2014 designed to make the public aware that the College exists and to explain what it does. The initiative will include a range of cost-effective tactics using a variety of media and a broadening of College activities that reach out into the community.

The College licenses, governs and regulates 237,000 members of the teaching profession in Ontario. It sets standards of practice and ethical standards, accredits teacher education programs and conducts disciplinary hearings.

"We're here to inspire confidence among members of the public in our profession, and we have a duty to communicate with the public on behalf of members of profession," says Michael Salvatori, OCT, the College's Chief Executive Officer and Registrar. "This new initiative is a catalyst, or a little energy infusion, into that role."

"We're telling the public about greatness in teaching and how we're there to make sure the greatness is maintained. We do that by making sure that teachers are qualified and competent, that the teacher education program is deep and rich, and that teachers uphold the standards of the profession."

The "Setting the Standard for Great Teaching" tagline will grace the College website, display advertising and the public e-newsletter. The College plans to rebrand its Facebook page, print products, a special

brochure, corporate display panels and promotional merchandise with the new tagline and key visuals.

The College will reach out to the public through magazines, online and radio. It will also take part in conferences, trade shows and exhibitions targeted toward parents, and will create a College Speakers Bureau to encourage community speaking engagements.

Another focus will be on high-profile speaking opportunities at education, regulatory and community-based events. The College is looking at offering presentations on its role to Parent Involvement committees at the board level, to school trustees, and other community organizations like local chambers of commerce, Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs.

"A recent survey of the general public showed that only a small minority of the public are aware of the College and its existence," says Richard Lewko, Director of Corporate and Council Services.

The College's mandate actually requires the organization "to communicate with the public on behalf of the members of the College."

The public awareness initiative is also in keeping with the advice of former Ontario Chief Justice Patrick LeSage, who was commissioned by the College in August 2011 to carry out an independent, wide-ranging review of its disciplinary policies and practices.

The May 2012 LeSage report included 49 recommendations — the most important being "The College should develop a communication strategy to increase public awareness of the College and its mandate."

This would include explaining the distinction between its role and responsibility and that of School Boards."

The College Council has made communication with the public a priority. At its June 2012 meeting, Council approved a recommendation to implement a communications strategy to increase public awareness of the College and its mandate. Helping parents understand how the College's role and responsibilities are different from those of their local school board will be an important feature of this strategy. At their special meeting on April 29, 2013, Council adopted a set of principles to guide the campaign.

The initiative's ongoing communications with the public will reflect the ethical standards to which all Ontario Certified Teachers aspire — care, trust, respect and dignity. They will be appropriately sensitive to Ontario's diverse population and provide geographic coverage of the province. Communications will be in English and French. The strategy will be regularly assessed to measure its impact and success.

Lewko says the College conducted focus groups in six Ontario communities, meeting with teachers and the public — parents with students in the system — and received helpful feedback.

"You're a submarine organization," was one Thunder Bay parent's observation. "I've never seen you." Another commented: "I can't recall ever hearing about you guys." One London parent spoke for many when he said: "It [the College] is the best-kept secret."

Perhaps not for long. **PS**

A MATTER OF INVESTIGATION

The College's Investigation Committee considers all complaints made to the College about its members and reviews all information resulting from investigations. The committee can dismiss a complaint or refer the matter, in whole or in part, to the Discipline or Fitness to Practise committees for a hearing.

The Investigation Committee may also caution or admonish the member in writing or in person, or provide written reminders or advice or ratify a Memorandum of Agreement reached through the complaint resolution process.

By law, cases under investigation are confidential. For the education of members, the following account, based on facts from real cases, raises important questions about teacher conduct such as what's appropriate and what isn't. Details have been altered to respect confidentiality.

The English class was over and the student wanted to catch his bus to go home for lunch. The dismissal bell rang and he headed for the classroom door. The teacher told him to return to his seat.

He kept walking. Contact between teacher and student occurred at the doorway. How much or how little depends on whom you spoke to.

The student said the teacher grabbed his wrist, which prevented him from opening the door. As a result, the student's parent complained to the College that the teacher assaulted his son as he tried to leave the classroom. Meanwhile, the student was suspended for not following the direction of the teacher.

The teacher denied the allegation of an assault, saying she reached for the door handle at almost the same time as the student and may have inadvertently touched his hand.

Once the College received the letter of complaint from the parent, it notified the member and invited her to respond. An investigation ensued. Information was gathered from the parent, the teacher and the school board. Typically, that includes employee history, any record of previous misconduct, board/school investigation notes, employer policies and any police or Children's Aid Society information. The College's Investigation Committee carefully

reviewed all relevant information.

Again, the teacher denied grabbing the student's wrist. She admitted she and the student reached for the door handle at the same time and there may have been incidental touching. She said she stepped aside and let him pass through, and that she reported the incident to the vice-principal immediately.

She was not involved in the decision to suspend the student and was not advised of it. Legal counsel for the member requested that the complaint be dismissed.

The parent agreed with the suspension because his son disobeyed the teacher, but was concerned that the physical contact was not mentioned in the suspension letter. He heard about it from his son.

The student said the teacher forcibly grabbed his wrist and prevented him from opening the door. "Let go," he told her.

The parent contacted the school board and asked the board to investigate but said he did not receive a reply. Police were not contacted.

If you were a member of the panel, what would you have decided?

1. Identify the professional resources and actions in this situation.
2. Discuss the insights and perspectives that can be gained from this case to inform professional practices of the educator. **PS**

contact when she and the student reached for the door handle at the same time. The panel said that even if it accepted the member's version, there were concerns that she attempted to prevent the student from leaving the classroom. The committee reminded the member to avoid physical contact with students and to use other mechanisms at her disposal to deal with the situation.

As a result, the three-person investigation Committee panel issued a reminder to the member. A reminder is not a disciplinary action and is intended to help members avoid any future difficulties. The panel noted that there was conflicting information from the member, student and other witnesses. However, the panel said that the member indicated there may have been some incidental

THE OUTCOME

COUNCIL MEETINGS

COUNCIL SUMMARY — OCTOBER 4, 2013

At its October 4 meeting, College Council:

- approved a Council Member Harassment and Discrimination Policy
- referred recommendations to facilitate external speakers at Council and committee meetings to the Executive Committee for study and report
- approved asking the Minister of Education to amend the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* to enable greater flexibility in the appointment of College panels, including the use

of Council members who are not currently members of a committee and a roster of former Council members who may have experience on a relevant committee

- recommended that the Minister of Education amend the Accreditation Regulation regarding the extended teacher education program
- modified bylaws so that members be required to provide the College with their business address(es) and telephone

number(s) where the member is employed as a teacher and/or in which the member is in a position of trust or authority over children or students or in education

- revised bylaws to clarify the per diem given to Accreditation panel members during site visits
- supported changes to bylaws affecting the election of chairs to standing committees, special and ad hoc committees, and committee vacancies. **PS**

HEARINGS

Three-member panels of the Discipline Committee conduct public hearings into cases of alleged incompetence or professional misconduct. The panels are a mix of elected and appointed Council members. Members found guilty of incompetence or professional misconduct may have their certificate revoked, suspended or limited. In professional misconduct matters only, the committee may also reprimand, admonish or counsel the member, impose a fine, order the member to pay costs or publish the order in *Professionally Speaking*.

Discipline Committee panels have ordered that summaries of these recent disciplinary cases be published in *Professionally Speaking*. Copies of the full decisions are available at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Also available online are decisions and memorandums of agreement ratified by Investigation Committee panels that explicitly stipulate that documents will be made available through the College's library or Quicklaw, a legal subscription service, or other means.

Member: Yasin Mohamud Ajab

Registration No: 478982

Decision: Reprimand, conditions

A Discipline Committee panel found Peel DSB teacher Yasin Mohamud Ajab guilty of professional misconduct for abusing his students, failing to observe certain bylaws and contravening the boundaries between students and teachers.

Ajab was certified to teach in August 2004. He was present at the hearing on May 16, 2013, and was represented by counsel.

During the 2006–08 school years, Ajab had a poor understanding of certain mathematical concepts and failed to effectively teach the subject. He failed to assist students who requested assistance and advised students not to participate in remedial mathematics classes offered by other teachers.

The discipline panel also heard evidence that Ajab used inappropriate language in the classroom, yelled at students and said to one that the student was stupid and an idiot. Ajab also demonstrated intimidating behaviour by slamming books down on his desk, kicking desks and slamming a door on a student's hand.

Based on the evidence, the agreed statement of facts, a guilty plea and counsel submissions, the panel found Ajab guilty of professional misconduct and ordered him to appear before a panel to receive a reprimand.

Furthermore, he was ordered to enrol at his own expense in a course on maintaining boundaries within 12 months of the order.

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Christopher Andrew Forrest

Registration No: 433214

Decision: Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the certificate of former DSB of Niagara teacher Christopher Andrew Forrest for sexual exploitation of a student.

Forrest, who was certified in March 2000, was not present or represented at the hearing on July 25, 2013.

For six months during the 2010–11 academic year, Forrest engaged in an inappropriate personal and sexual relationship with a 16-year-old female student. The relationship began through chatting on Facebook, progressed to intimate conversations, followed by kissing and touching, and culminated in intercourse on three occasions. All incidents occurred in Forrest's classroom before the school day started.

On August 7, 2012, Forrest pleaded guilty to sexual exploitation by engaging in a sexual relationship with a student while he was in a position of trust and authority. He was sentenced to 12 months in jail, followed by two years of probation.

Having considered the evidence, onus and standard of proof, and the submissions of College counsel, the Discipline Committee panel found Forrest guilty of professional misconduct. The panel ordered the Registrar to revoke Forrest's Certification of Qualification and Registration.

"The member engaged in reprehensible conduct unbecoming a member of the teaching profession," the panel said in its written decision. "This conduct is unacceptable and betrays the

teacher's obligation to protect his students. The member abused the public trust in an egregious manner and has therefore lost the right to teach. Revocation is the penalty that is required in this case."

Revocation serves as both a specific and general deterrent as removing the member from the classroom protects students and restores public confidence in the profession. Publication with name advises the profession that misconduct, which breaches the teacher-student boundary and violates the trust and authority vested in teachers, will result in significant consequences.

"The committee (panel) is satisfied that the finding and penalty protect the public interest and uphold the standards of the teaching profession."

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Reid David MacIntosh Innes, OCT
Registration No: 479818

Decision: Reprimand, conditions

A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded former Greater Essex County DSB teacher Reid David MacIntosh Innes for stealing \$33 from a locked drawer in the school office.

Innes, who was certified to teach in May 2004, did not attend the hearing on June 17, 2013, but was represented by a lawyer.

Video surveillance captured Innes using a key to remove a total of \$33 from a locked drawer in the school's office over five days. Innes resigned from the board in June 2011 on the same day he was suspended without pay and told there would be a recommendation to end his employment. That November, Innes sent the board a letter and a cheque for \$100 as restitution.

He said he regretted his conduct, that it was out-of-character, a mistake and that he was experiencing financial difficulties at the time. Police were never involved in the investigation and no charges were laid.

Having examined the evidence and based on a memorandum of agreement (MOA), a guilty plea, a joint submission on resolution, and the submissions of counsel, the Discipline Committee panel ratified the MOA and found Innes guilty of professional misconduct.

He was ordered to face the panel following the hearing to receive a reprimand. He was also ordered to take an ethical behaviour course at his own expense within 120 days of the MOA being ratified, and to provide written proof from the course provider that he has successfully completed the course within 30 days of finishing.

“In the committee’s view, the member breached the standards of the profession and engaged in conduct unbecoming a member of the teaching profession. The committee agreed that a reprimand and the imposition of terms, conditions and limitations on the member’s certificate is an appropriate resolution for conduct of this nature,” the panel said in its written decision.

“The committee accepts that the member indicated that this was an isolated occurrence; he was experiencing financial difficulties at the time and had never previously engaged in the same or similar conduct nor has since.”

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: William Hodgson Marshall

Registration No: 383504

Decision: Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of William Hodgson Marshall after hearing allegations of professional misconduct related to criminal convictions for one count of sexual assault and 16 counts of indecent assault of minors from 1952 to 1986.

Certified to teach in July 1948, Marshall was employed as a teacher and principal at an independent

Toronto Catholic school, the Windsor Essex Catholic DSB and the Sudbury Catholic DSB at different times when the offences occurred, over many years.

He did not attend the hearing on June 4, 2013, but was represented by legal counsel.

In June 2011, Marshall pleaded guilty to criminal charges and was sentenced to two years, imprisonment, to be served concurrently, and three years’ probation for each count.

Court documents, including victim impact statements, revealed that Marshall engaged in a long series of incidents of sexual touching of his students from 1952 to 1986 while he was a priest and employed as a teacher and principal. These assaults occurred in many locations, including in the rectory, in schools, school showers, in dormitories, in Marshall’s office, in the students’ homes when adults were present in other parts of the house, and at recreational locations such as his cottage. In some cases, the students, who were between the ages of 7 and 16, were subjected to these assaults regularly over long periods. Marshall often used physical force, confinement and the administration of alcohol to effect his predations. He warned the students that if they told anyone he would fail them or have them removed from the school.

Having considered the evidence, the onus and standard of proof, and submissions made by legal counsel, the panel found Marshall guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his certificate be revoked.

The committee found that Marshall had brought shame and disrepute to the profession through his abuse of power and sexual exploitation of students, and that such behaviour can only be characterized as reprehensible, debauched and entirely shameful.

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Stephen Alexander Martin

Registration No: 419301

Decision: Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Stephen Alexander Martin after hearing allegations of professional misconduct related to criminal convictions for luring a child via computer for sexual exploitation and making child pornography between June 2009 and April 2011.

A former elementary teacher with the Durham DSB, Martin was certified to teach in 1998. He did not attend the hearing on June 4, 2013, and was not represented by legal counsel.

In December 2011, Martin was found guilty of 10 criminal charges of luring a child via computer for sexual exploitation and one criminal charge of making child pornography. He was sentenced to two years less a day in jail and three years’ probation.

College counsel submitted that Martin had amassed a total of 3,374 pictures and 582 movies that constituted child pornography.

Martin actively preyed on his students by posing as a 13-year-old female student. He would encourage them to befriend him on Facebook and MSN and then ask them to expose their genitals on a webcam.

Having considered the evidence, the onus and standard of proof, and the submissions of College counsel, the panel found Martin guilty of professional misconduct and ordered his certificate to be revoked.

“Targeting and luring children and perpetuating a market for child pornography that thrives on the exploitation and abuse of children is a crime that is most heinous,” the panel said.

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Gilles Michaud

Registration No: 170253

Decision: Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel

HEARINGS

reprimanded Rainbow DSB elementary teacher Gilles Michaud for physically and verbally abusing five of his students between 2003 and 2009.

The member, who was certified to teach in 1984, attended the hearing on August 20, 2013, and pleaded guilty to professional misconduct and acknowledged he behaved inappropriately.

The panel heard evidence that in February 2003, the member kicked a female student in the leg. In November 2007, he pushed another student on the stairs, injuring his side. The Children's Aid Society investigated the incidents and confirmed they had taken place. The member received a letter of warning from the school administration and was suspended for 15 days. Michaud was also required to take an anger management course, which he did.

In spite of the warning, the member continued to behave inappropriately. The panel heard that between January and September 2009, Michaud called two students "idiots" and threw a pair of shoes at a male student during a gym class. One shoe bounced off the floor, hitting the student in the face. The Children's Aid Society was called and the school board terminated Michaud's employment.

Having examined the evidence and based on a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), a guilty plea, a joint submission on resolution, and submissions from legal counsel, the panel found Michaud guilty of professional misconduct and ratified the MOA.

The Discipline Committee panel issued a reprimand and imposed conditions, terms and limitations on his certificate. Before seeking employment requiring a Certificate of Qualification and Registration from the College, the member must complete a pre-approved course in classroom management at his own expense and submit written proof to the College that the course was completed successfully. In addition, the decision with the member's name will be published in the College's official publication, *Professionally Speaking*.

Pour parler profession.

"Publication, with the member's name, acts as a specific deterrent to the member and as a general deterrent to the profession from engaging in similar misconduct," said the panel.

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Not identified

Decision: Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded an Avon Maitland DSB teacher for failing to maintain the standards of the profession and using inappropriate discipline strategies with a student.

The member, who was certified in June 1982, was present at the hearing on May 24, 2013, with his lawyer.

In September 2009, the member confronted a student, grabbed his backpack and exchanged words with him after the student refused to go to the vice-principal's office as instructed. As the student proceeded to walk down the hallway, the member continued to block his way and, at one point, shoved him into a wall or locker in the hallway.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct based on the evidence, the onus and standard of proof, and the submissions of legal counsel.

He was ordered to face the panel following the hearing to receive a reprimand. The Discipline Committee panel ordered the Registrar to impose terms and conditions on the member's Certificate of Qualification and Registration. Prior to returning to a teaching position, the member must complete a pre-approved course, at his own expense, regarding positive discipline strategies and classroom management, and report to the Registrar within 30 days of successfully completing it. The notation of the reprimand will remain on the member's certificate for three years.

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: John Daniel Montpellier, OCT
Registration No: 598763

Decision: Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded John Daniel Montpellier for physically abusing a student while employed as a probationary teacher at the Sudbury Catholic DSB and ordered him to take a classroom management course before working as a teacher again.

Montpellier, who was certified to teach in September 2010, attended the hearing on June 13, 2013, with his lawyer.

In December 2011, Montpellier dragged a student across the classroom floor and then shook him by one or both ankles when he grabbed onto a door frame. He admitted grabbing the student by the ankles, but denied shaking him. In November 2011, Montpellier stood in front of another student with a stick in his hand and then placed the stick behind his back in such a way as to indicate he was going to hit the student.

The school district dismissed Montpellier for cause in February 2012.

The Sudbury Children's Aid Society investigated and notified police. The police charged Montpellier with three counts of assault, but the charges were withdrawn in April 2012 when the matter was resolved with a peace bond.

Montpellier was not working in the teaching profession at the time of this decision.

Having examined the evidence, and based on a memorandum of agreement (MOA), a guilty plea, a joint submission on resolution, and the submissions of counsel, the Discipline Committee panel ratified the MOA and found Montpellier guilty of professional misconduct.

He was ordered to face the panel following the hearing to receive a reprimand. He was also ordered to take a classroom management course at his own expense and provide written proof of its successful completion before seeking work as a certified teacher.

“The reprimand will remind the member of his responsibilities to ensure the welfare of his students and reinforce the standard of the profession prohibiting teachers from using physical force with students,” the panel said in its written decision. “The course in classroom management will rehabilitate the member and provide strategies for successfully dealing with students.”

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Jask Ramburn
Registration No: 104709
Decision: Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel ordered that the certificate of Toronto private school teacher Jask Ramburn be revoked in connection with a criminal conviction for assault of an 8-year-old girl.

Ramburn, who was certified in July 1972, was not present or represented at

the hearing on April 23, 2013.

Late in 2009, Ramburn initiated physical contact with an 8-year-old girl outside the school setting. This resulted in criminal charges and a court finding in June 2011 of guilt in assaulting a person under 14. Physical contacts included hugging the child tightly, cradling her, swinging her around in his arms and placing his hands on her shoulders. The panel heard that the physical contact “made the student uncomfortable and was not consensual.”

Ramburn asked her to keep the physical contact between them a secret as the parents repeatedly told him not to initiate any physical contact with their child.

Ramburn was given a conditional sentence of three months and was placed on probation for 21 months. Further, he was prohibited from having any contact with anyone under the age of 12 unless accompanied by an adult.

Having considered the evidence,

onus and standard of proof, and the submissions of College counsel, the Discipline Committee panel found Ramburn guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that Ramburn’s Certificate of Qualification and Registration be revoked.

In their written decision, the panel recognized that the member was convicted of assault saying, “This is a serious breach of trust involving a vulnerable child. Revocation protects the public interest as it protects student safety.”

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions.

Member: Andrew James Ritchie
Registration No: 481605

Decision: Reprimand, conditions
 A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Peel DSB teacher Andrew James Ritchie for harassing a colleague and failing to maintain the standards of the profession.

Ritchie, who was certified in July 2004, attended the hearing on June 17, 2013, with his lawyer.

Ritchie was involved in a consensual sexual relationship with a female colleague for about three years until May 2010. When the relationship ended, he tried to communicate with her through text messages, emails, notes, other colleagues and following her to her car at the school. On multiple occasions, he became verbally and emotionally abusive to her, sending offensive text messages in which he used explicit and vulgar language, and which his colleague considered threatening.

The Discipline Committee panel found Ritchie guilty of professional misconduct based on a memorandum of agreement (MOA), a guilty plea and submissions of legal counsel.

He was ordered to face the panel following the hearing to receive a reprimand. The Discipline Committee panel also ordered Ritchie to take, at his own expense, a pre-approved course or counselling in harassment and professional boundaries within 90 days of the ratification of the MOA, and report to the Registrar within 30 days of successfully completing it.

The committee found that the member failed to maintain the standards of the profession and engaged in conduct unbecoming a member of the profession by acting in a verbally and emotionally abusive manner toward a colleague.

Information about the disciplinary action appears online at oct.ca/members/complaints-and-discipline/decisions. **PS**

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NAME: *Antoni Cimolino*

- Born May 11, 1961; raised in Sudbury, Ont.
- Attended St. Albert School, Corpus Christi School, St. Francis Junior High School and St. Charles College
- Has a BFA from the University of Windsor
- Joined the Stratford Festival company in 1988; starred as Romeo opposite Megan Follows in the 1992 production of *Romeo and Juliet*; made his solo directorial debut in 1997 with *Filumena*, starring his mentor and then-artistic director Richard Monette
- Named artistic director of the Festival in 2012, having previously been general director and executive director; he is now in his 26th season at the Festival
- Partnered the Festival with CUSO International to establish a theatre school in El Salvador that he has visited several times; holds an annual fundraising event and sends volunteers to the school
- Directed *Mary Stuart* and *The Merchant of Venice* this season
- Married to the actress Brigit Wilson; they have two children
- Follow him on Twitter @acimolino_sf

GOOD COMPANY

Stratford's artistic director, Antoni Cimolino, recalls the high school field trip that got him hooked on theatre.

BY LAURA BICKLE

Describe your school-aged self.

Annoyingly energized. Engaged.

What was your favourite subject?

English. I loved the different worlds you could enter into.

The most challenging subject?

Math. It wasn't until late in high school that I realized that my marks would improve if I actually did my homework.

Memorable literary pieces studied?

My Last Duchess, by Robert Browning, *King Lear*, by William Shakespeare, and *The Deptford Trilogy*, by Robertson Davies.

The last book you read?

Shylock, by John Gross.

Book you're currently reading?

Shakespeare and the Jews, by James Shapiro.

Lesson learned in kindergarten?

I had a rough start. I didn't speak English and couldn't sit still but by the end of it, I won the most improved award — so it taught me not to give up.

Your favourite school lunch?

The chocolate-covered biscuit my mother would always slip into my lunch bag.

Favourite extracurricular activity?

I was involved in theatre, debating and public speaking. Theatre was my favourite.

If you were a teacher, what subject would you teach?

English.

Strongest Stratford Festival memory as a student?

I saw *Love's Labour's Lost* in Grade 12 or 13. I had been before but this is the play that really got me hooked. I was amazed that a 400-year-old play could speak so strongly to me at that age and had characters who could've been my friends at school. That happy memory has stayed with me to this day.

How do teachers inform your decisions at the Festival?

The Stratford Festival and educational institutions share a mission to create a more civil society, so I look for scripts that have something important to say in the world we live in today. Inevitably those are often the plays teachers use in their classrooms.

Suggestions for teachers visiting the Festival or teaching Shakespeare?

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