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IN THE CLASSROOM

DECEMBER 2015

# professionally speaking

THE MAGAZINE OF THE  
ONTARIO COLLEGE OF TEACHERS

## Shifting Gears

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**Danielle Breau, OCT,**  
a flight attendant  
for 17 years before  
becoming a teacher.



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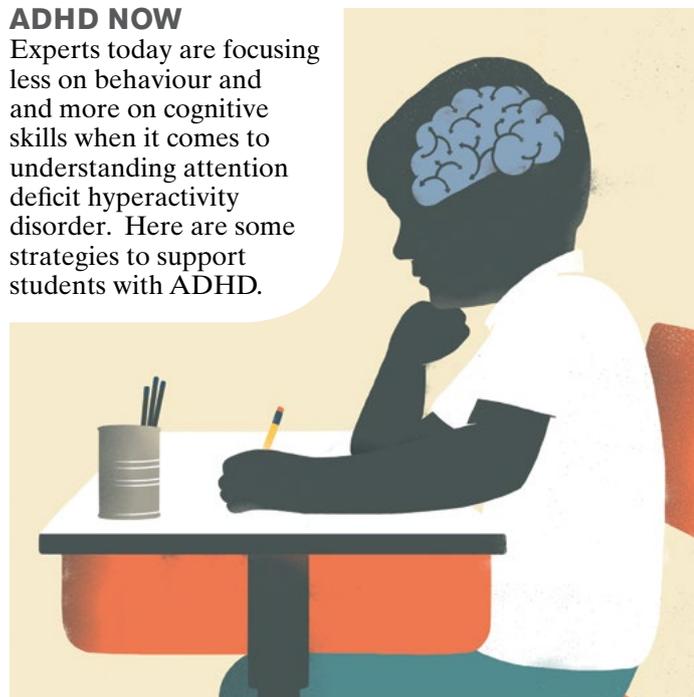
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Geography	CONT 592	• •
Health & Physical Education	CONT 596	• •
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Cooperative Education Part 2	CONT 682	• •
Cooperative Education Specialist	CONT 683	• •
English Part 1	CONT 539	• • •
English Part 2	CONT 540	• • •
English Specialist	CONT 541	• •
Family Studies Part 1	CONT 677	• • •
Family Studies Part 2	CONT 678	• •
Family Studies Specialist	CONT 679	• •
French Part 1	CONT 536	• • •
French 2	CONT 537	• •
French Specialist	CONT 538	• •
Guidance & Career Ed Part 1	CONT 611	• • •
Guidance & Career Ed Part 2	CONT 612	• • •
Guidance & Career Ed Specialist	CONT 613	• • •
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Part 1	CONT 510	• • •
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Part 2	CONT 511	• • •
Health & Physical Ed (P/J) Specialist	CONT 512	• • •
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Part 1	CONT 701	• • •
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Part 2	CONT 702	• •
Integration of Information & Computer Technology in Instruction Specialist	CONT 703	• •
Kindergarten Part 1	CONT 801	• • •
Kindergarten Part 2	CONT 802	• •
Kindergarten Part 3	CONT 803	• •
Librarianship Part 1	CONT 797	• • •
Librarianship Part 2	CONT 798	• •
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Mathematics, Primary & Junior Part 1	CONT 542	• • •
Mathematics, Primary & Junior Part 2	CONT 543	• •
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Reading Part 1	CONT 533	• • •
Reading Part 2	CONT 534	• • •
Reading Specialist	CONT 535	• •
Religious Education Part 1	CONT 624	• • •
Religious Education Part 2	CONT 625	• •
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Special Education Part 1	CONT 504	• • •
Special Education Part 2	CONT 505	• • •
Special Education Specialist	CONT 506	• • •

### ONE SESSION QUALIFICATIONS

Adult Education	CONT 860	• •
Occasional Teaching	CONT 825	•
Special Ed - Behaviour	CONT 810	• • •
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**FUTURE STUDENTS**

College staff greet visitors at the London Baby Expo in October. The College was there to inform parents about how it sets the standard for Ontario teachers.

**VISITING DELEGATIONS**

This fall, the College hosted visiting delegations from Korea, Holland, Denmark and Sweden, who were here to learn about the College's mandate. (Chair Angela De Palma, OCT, left, with visiting teachers from the Netherlands.)



**SPREADING THE WORD**

Book enthusiasts visit the College booth during Toronto's The Word On The Street Festival in September, where they learned about how the College serves and protects the public interest.



**PROFESSIONAL ADVISORY TOUR**

Following the September release of its professional advisory, *Duty to Report*, the College hosted events in Toronto, Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Windsor, St. Catharines and Ottawa. (Chair Angela De Palma, OCT, discusses the reporting of child abuse and neglect at the Toronto launch.)

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Students at the Ontario Universities' Fair visit the College booth to gather information on teacher education programs.



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# THE RIGHT STUFF

Hard and soft skills are integral to professional success. The Chair highlights the importance of such skills in regulated professions.

BY ANGELA DE PALMA, OCT

Throughout my career in education, I've had the good fortune of taking on a variety of roles: French as a Second Language teacher, English as a Second Language teacher, classroom teacher and Special Education teacher. Each position had its different rewards and challenges, yet collectively they have all influenced my personal and professional growth. Perhaps this is because children, while demonstrating unique needs, remain children nonetheless. Even though some of the geographic and demographic environments in which I've taught have been diverse — from middle-class suburbs to inner-city neighbourhoods to expatriate communities — my students have always, to varying degrees and in different ways, demonstrated curiosity, creativity and a sense of adventure.

I hope they would agree that I too, as both teacher and learner (because I learned from my students and colleagues daily), exhibited similar qualities regardless of the instructional role I assumed.

## Technical vs. non-technical skills

The skills I have drawn upon throughout my teaching career have remained largely constant. Admittedly, pedagogy shifts with new research and deeper understanding about how children learn best. Corresponding teaching practices reflect such movements. However, the broad competencies required by the teaching profession — “hard” or “technical” skills paired with “soft” or “non-technical” skills — still hold.

Last spring, a presentation given at a conference I attended highlighted the importance of the combination of

such skills in regulated professions. The session resonated with me because as an Ontario Certified Teacher, I recognize how teaching requires a forever-growing list of specific content knowledge to navigate the profession successfully. Curriculum, health and safety guidelines, 21st-century learning, mental health and well-being are just a few examples. While technical knowledge contributes to the performance of “specialized tasks,” non-technical skills are equally important to a teacher.

In fact, conduct some online sleuthing of what are considered the most sought after workplace skills, and you'll find a list of non-technical proficiencies. Communication, flexibility, coaching, collaboration, prioritizing and situation awareness, for example, are regarded as integral to professional success. Teachers apply these soft skills in classrooms, meeting rooms, gymnasiums and schoolyards. As mentor, facilitator, coach, adviser and partner in a child's learning, they know that non-technical skills matter; they serve to nurture the trusting relationships between teachers and the vast, and often complex, membership of a school community.

While the conference presenter drew upon terminology generally applicable to the spectrum of regulated professions, my mind turned to the professional standards established by the Ontario College of Teachers that speak to the practice of Ontario Certified Teachers. The *Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession* and the *Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession* outline the knowledge, skills and values



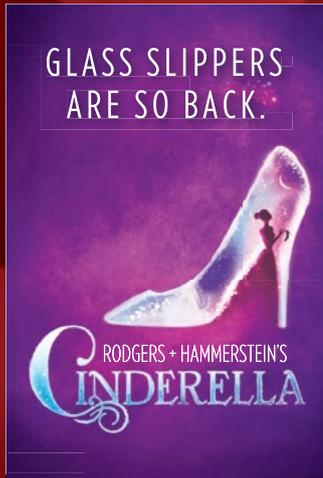
of teaching, and encompass the technical and non-technical skills unique to the work of teachers in this province. Like changes in teaching practices, the standards have also adjusted over time to better align with the profession. However, they remain a collective vision for a role considered instrumental in the lives of children.

Call the standards a framework, a common language for teachers, or aspirational skills and principles: I see them as forming the genetic code of the teaching profession. This perspective might seem a little more monumental than that taken by promoters of technical skills and non-technical skills, but, I would argue, deservedly so. **PS**

Angela De Palma

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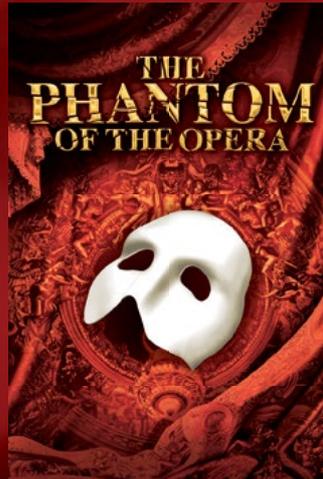
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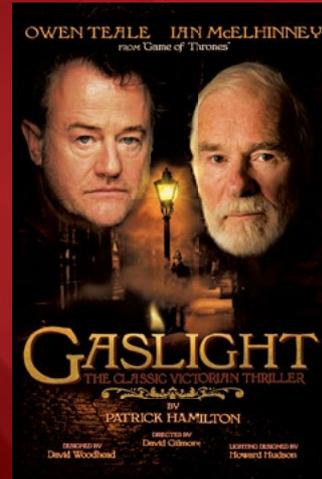
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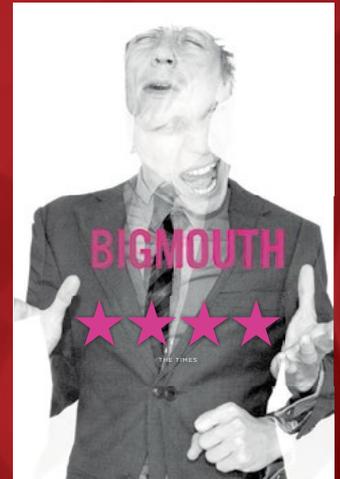


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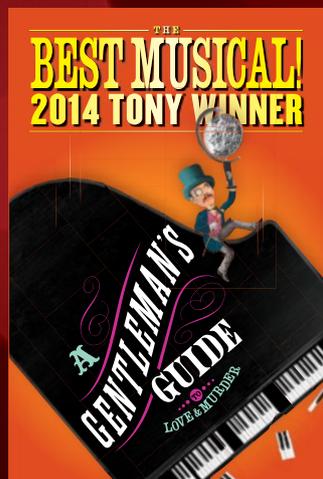
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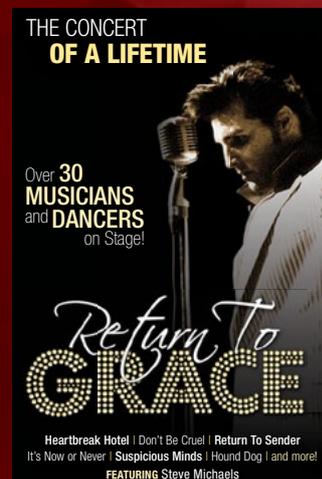
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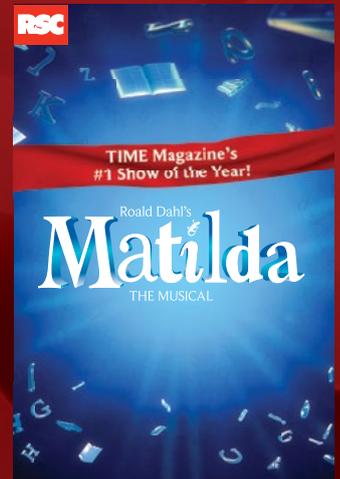
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# EXERCISING JUDGMENT

**Penny loafers or runners? How does your footwear reflect the practicality of your work and, more importantly, your professional judgment? The Registrar steps up to discuss.**

BY MICHAEL SALVATORI, OCT

One of the best lessons I learned as a new principal involved footwear and the importance of professional judgment. For that, I have a former student named Maxwell to thank.

Max, like some young children, had anxiety his first day of school. I knew this because his mother, who entrusted him to my care, was careful to note his first-day nerves. As I gently guided him to his classroom and his mother quietly slipped away, the other shoe — so to speak — dropped. Max bolted, in search of his mother, so I followed suit. However, the polished terrazzo floors and the soles of my shiny new loafers made for a very ineffective pursuit. A solid pair of runners, slightly used, would have been a better choice that first week.

As professionals, we learn from our experiences, our successes, our triumphs and our ... ahem ... missteps.

Honing our professional judgment is an important part of our practice. As reflective practitioners, we assess the effectiveness of our instructional strategies with students and modify as needed. We refine our communication with students, colleagues and parents continually in order to convey our messages with clarity, care and professionalism. And we gauge our approaches to occasional dilemmas against well-established ethical standards for the teaching profession and our standards of practice.

And frequently, we seek assistance, advice and support. The College is here to serve as one source of advice and support for Ontario teachers.

Recently, we issued a professional advisory on the duty to report when teachers suspect that children and youth may be the victims of abuse or neglect. The advisory considers teachers' judgment about the well-being of their students. It also provides clear direction: when in doubt, report.

*Duty to Report* is our fifth professional advisory. All are written with the purpose of informing members' professional judgment and practice. Whether it's advice about charting professional learning or the responsible use of social media, the advisories demonstrate one way that the College supports its members. As the regulator for the teaching profession in Ontario, the College plays a pivotal role in providing support to augment, enhance and inform members' professional judgment. In that regard, we are no different than other professionals in our schools such as early childhood educators, psychologists and social workers.

The excellent reputation members of the College enjoy, steeped in public confidence and trust, can be attributed in large part to the judgment you exercise in your daily practice. Stride by stride, step forward with pride and confidence knowing that the decisions you make support students and their learning.

And make sure you're wearing the right shoes. **PS**

*M. Salvatori*





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# 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](mailto:ps@oct.ca) or 101 Bloor St. W., Toronto, ON M5S 0A1.

## Overseas Experience

Teachers who work overseas often face many obstacles and challenges that teachers at home don't: teaching in a foreign language, teaching children with English as a second language, adjusting to a new environment, and facing new attitudes and cultural norms. Yet, when teachers apply for jobs in Canada, their experience overseas is not taken into account equal to their Canadian counterparts. Teachers who have worked overseas have had to create lesson plans, be accountable to the administration, parents and students, participate in school-wide activities, write report cards, hold teacher-parent conferences, handle behavioural issues, teach for all levels within the classroom, and participate in extracurricular activities.

The reason we go overseas is to gain full-time experience, which is difficult [for new teachers] to obtain in Canada. While overseas, we gain experience, [learn about] various cultures and experience different environments. Canada is a multicultural country — we see that in the classroom — and teachers who taught overseas have first-hand experience in understanding students from different backgrounds.

So why not let our overseas experience be seen on par with our Canada-based colleagues?

—**Susanna Wallis**, OCT, teaches kindergarten at Sinarmas World Academy, an international school in Bumi Serpong Damri City in Indonesia.



## Teaching Social Justice

Thank you for the excellent article, “A Greater Good,” by Helen Dolik. From storytelling to researching key players, I appreciated reading about the different strategies used to teach about social justice.



—**Lise Presseault**, OCT, is a former Ontario College of Teachers senior accreditation program officer.



## Librarians Support Learning

While reading — and enjoying — the September issue of *Professionally Speaking*, I noticed a repeated and glaring omission: several articles highlight the important use of contemporary and diverse texts, technology and learning spaces, yet none of them mentioned the school library, the learning commons, or the teaching practice of partnering

with a teacher-librarian to find, acquire and provide access to all of these necessary learning tools and spaces.

I encourage the staff, contributors and readers of *Professionally Speaking* to think about how teachers from all regions of our province find, purchase and make available to students reading and learning materials, technology and spaces that reflect the important teaching and learning goals covered in the September issue.

I also encourage teachers and school administrators to visit the Ontario Library Association's (OSA) ([oct-ooeo.ca/1WdTRuh](http://oct-ooeo.ca/1WdTRuh)) online resources, where you can find *Together for Learning* written by the Ontario School Library Association, as well as Learning Commons ([oct-ooeo.ca/1KANomv](http://oct-ooeo.ca/1KANomv)), a website companion to the book *The New Learning Commons Where Learners Win!* for more about this contemporary approach to ensuring schools have access to all of these vital resources, including teacher-librarians and library technicians.

—**Peggy Lunn**, OCT, a former secondary classroom teacher and teacher-librarian, is now the librarian at the Teacher Resource Centre at Queen's University in Kingston.

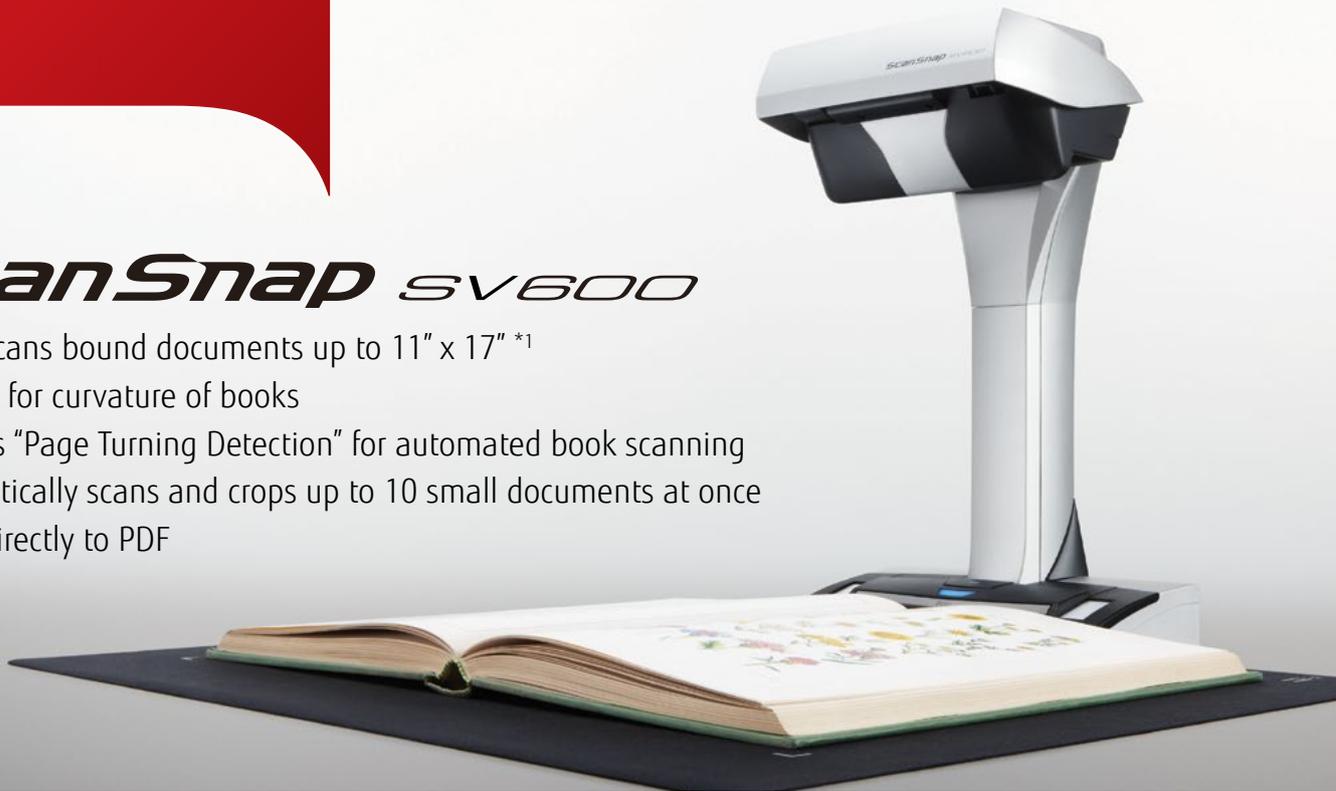
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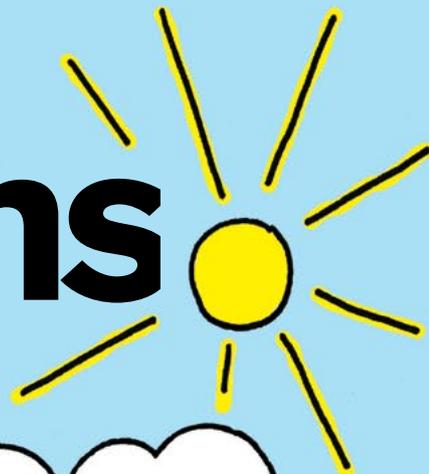
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# connections

... to inform your professional practice



## HAVE A SAFE TRIP!

WHICH SAFETY PRECAUTIONS TOP YOUR COLLEAGUES' FIELD TRIP CHECKLISTS? HERE ARE THE 7 THAT RATED THE HIGHEST IN OUR LATEST OCT POLL.

• **COUNT** heads accurately & often.

• **DISCUSS** appropriate behaviour & safety procedures with students beforehand.

• **OBTAIN** signed release forms & contact info for each student.

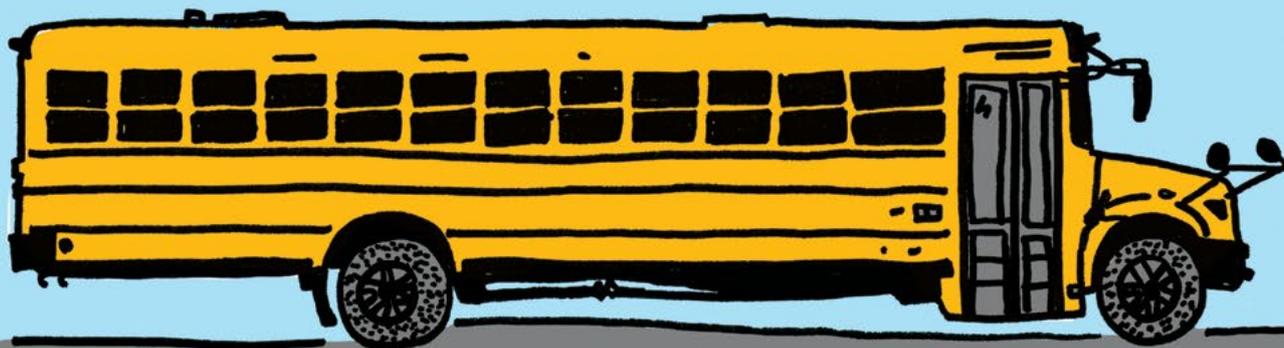
• **KNOW** your students' medical needs & any accommodations required.

• **ASSESS** whether an activity is appropriate for the group.

• **ADVISE** parents of what children should bring, wear, etc.

• **MONITOR**, modify or stop an activity you think is unsafe.

ILLUSTRATION: LEANDRA CIANCI



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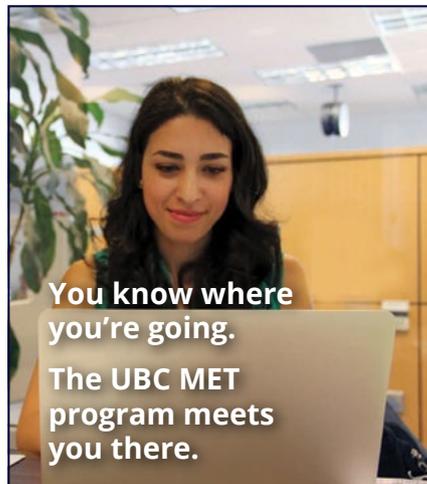
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## CONNECTIONS IN YOUR PROFESSION



# Pop Quiz

with Helen Kennedy

BY LAURA BICKLE

Two-thirds of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Queer (LGBTQ) students feel unsafe at school. That's why Egale Canada Human Rights Trust — a national charity that promotes LGBTQ human rights through research, education and community engagement — has established the Safe Schools Campaign ([MyGSA.ca](http://MyGSA.ca)). The program includes teacher training, advocacy at the board and provincial levels, as well as resources for schools, teachers and students.

"Teachers often feel they don't know enough about LGBTQ issues before starting the conversation," says Helen Kennedy, Egale's executive director. Kennedy shares why this particular exchange is essential and how OCTs can prepare for it.

### Q What challenges do LGBTQ students face at school?

Egale's national survey (*Every Class in Every School*) on homophobia, biphobia and transphobia in Canadian high schools, attests to the need for more services dedicated to helping our youth. Over two-thirds of all students hear homophobic expressions such as "that's so gay" every day. Half of LGB students and 74 per cent of the trans-identified have been verbally harassed about their sexual orientation, and 21 per cent of LGBTQ students have been physically harassed or assaulted. Forty-five per cent of those with LGBTQ parents have been sexually harassed at school.

Both homelessness and familial/social rejection take a toll on LGBTQ youth and can result in an elevated risk of suicide. Despite these statistics, there is a spirit of resilience, pride and potential among LGBTQ youth that is just waiting to be unlocked.

### Q How does the Safer Schools program make schools safer?

When you attempt to create a deep awareness and cultural change, it's essential to have a personal connection with the change agents within that institution. That's why we do face-to-face training (supported by a pre-training e-module and a post-training followup program), it's the best means by which to effect lasting change.

### Q What tools will OCTs take away from your training?

Each session deals with real scenarios: How to handle harassment? How to recognize homophobic, transphobic, biphobic bullying? How to deal with a parent who doesn't want their child to engage in this learning?

### Q What issues can arise when creating a safer environment?

Teachers want to do this work and are eager to participate in the training. However, what is really needed is pre-service education, so that our teachers college graduates have the language, knowledge and understanding prior to entering the classroom.

### Q What does a safer, more inclusive school look like?

It has a Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA) and inclusive policies. The administration, teachers and students are engaged in recognizing days of significance. Conversations in class are open and non-judgmental. Our study shows that schools with GSAs are safer than those without. Starting at the elementary level will have a positive outcome for students as they progress through the system.

### Q Any advice for making schools more inclusive?

Being authentic and open to having the conversation is a great way to start.

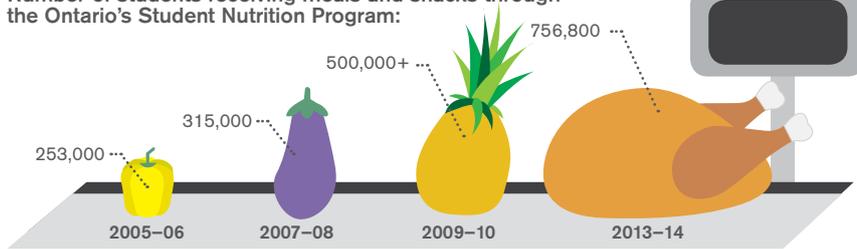


# APPETITE FOR LEARNING

An invitation to lunch in Ontario schools.  
BY STEVE BREARTON

## NUTRITION CALCULATOR

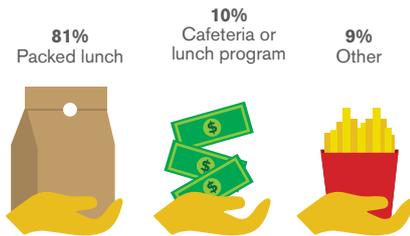
Number of students receiving meals and snacks through the Ontario's Student Nutrition Program:



Source: Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services, 2005-15

## FOOD SOURCE

Top three sources of students' school lunches in Canada:



Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 2013

## PACKING LIST

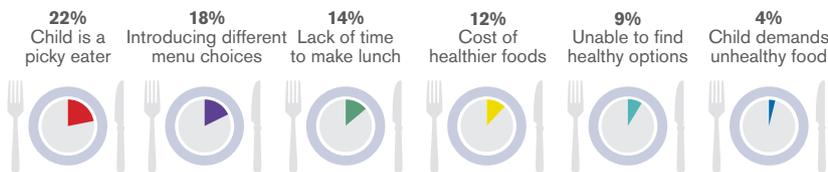
The six most common items found in packed school lunches:



Source: "What's in Children's Backpacks? Foods Brought from Home." Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, 2014

## FOOD FIGHT

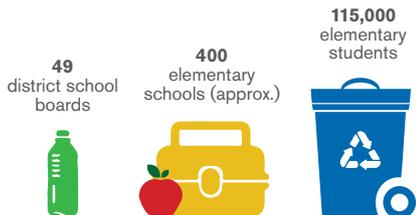
Challenges parents face when providing healthy lunches and snacks for their children:



Source: Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada, 2013

## WASTE NOT

Participants in Ontario's 2014 Waste-Free Lunch Challenge:



Source: Recycling Council of Ontario, 2014

Lunch waste generated by the average elementary student:



Source: Recycling Council of Ontario, 2014

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—Jan Hendry, OCT  
Retired elementary teacher  
Rainbow District School Board

→ Have a classroom idea to share? Send it to us at [ps@oct.ca](mailto:ps@oct.ca) and your advice could be published in an upcoming issue! Check out our Professional Practice research archive at [oct-oeo.ca/1QAwOIQ](http://oct-oeo.ca/1QAwOIQ).

# Idea Box

Tired of endless web searches for Ontario curriculum-related resources? Time to think inside the box. Cube for Teachers ([cubeforteachers.com](http://cubeforteachers.com)) provides free apps and other digital tools recommended by Ontario teachers.

The database has more than 33,000 links to lessons and other educational resources — for instance, posters, songs, videos and games — all searchable by grade, subject, strand and expectation. The site features teacher-approved technology, such as drawing tools, as well as non-curricular topics like classroom management, bullying and organizing special events.

Also included in the mix are some 500 French-language materials. Cube updates content regularly, thanks to its active teacher-users. (Only individuals who have Ontario faculty or board of education email addresses are allowed access.) Co-founder Susan Kwiecien, OCT, says her team is constantly adding new features, too. A private-group function was recently

introduced where teachers can exchange their top tech resources on a specific topic. For instance, English department heads who are looking for tools to recommend to their staff use Cube, as can ECEs who want to discuss the latest research in their field. Consider Cube your favourites list on steroids — a one-stop Internet shop for sourcing electronic materials designed with you in mind. As Kwiecien says, “It’s a place that provides teachers with a voice and a choice, the autonomy to share web resources relevant to their needs.”  
—Stefan Dubowski

# APPS ANALYSIS

By Stefan Dubowski



## Devine Qui Vient Jouer? Saison 2

The perfect French class supplement — six entertaining games based on *Devine Qui Vient Jouer?* TFO's (the educational Ontario French-language TV channel) show starring Élyse and her dog, Virgule. This colourful app invites three- to six-year-olds to identify shapes, arrange items from largest to smallest and try other pattern-finding activities. Students can play *Amuse-toi avec Virgule* to develop hand-eye co-ordination and *Danse avec Virgule* to get moving. This app isn't strictly for franco-phone fans of the program; those new to the language will appreciate Élyse's bubbly and easy-to-follow instructions. Either way, players may need help with the first few sessions.

**DEVICE:** APPLE; ANDROID

**SOURCE:** ITUNES; GOOGLE PLAY (FREE)

**RATING:** 4+; EVERYONE

**EDULULU RATING:** 4.5/5 BONES



## TVOKids Hop Frog Hop

This simple game has a not-so-simple goal — to help six- to eight-year-olds develop their working memory, so they can keep information front-of-mind. It's essential for fostering foundational tasks such as writing, mathematical problem-solving and reading comprehension. Boost working memory by challenging the brain to recall and repeat recently acquired information. Think of this app as a mobile, amphibian-themed version of Simon Says. The player watches the frog jump across an array of nine lily pads and then tries to repeat the pattern. Levels 1 to 3 may seem easy, but the difficulty increases with each subsequent level, helping students fortify their memory banks.

**DEVICE:** APPLE; ANDROID

**SOURCE:** ITUNES; GOOGLE PLAY (FREE)

**RATING:** 4+; EVERYONE

**EDULULU RATING:** 4/5 BONES



## Chicken Coop Fraction Games

Help students 12+ develop their problem-solving skills — with some feathered fun. This game offers five wacky activities that match math with comedic cluckers. Assist a kung fu-fighting chicken reduce fractions through common numerators and denominators in *Simply-Frying Fractions*. Smash rotten eggs by identifying non-equivalent fractions in *Bad Egg*. Figure out the decimal equivalents of fractions as hens launch eggs from their nests in *Estimating Fractions* — the only game included in the free version. Purchase additional games on: iTunes, (\$2.29 each; \$6.99 for all) or Google Play, (\$2.67 each; \$7.13 for all).

**DEVICE:** APPLE; ANDROID

**SOURCE:** ITUNES; GOOGLE PLAY (FREE)

**RATING:** 4+; EVERYONE

**EDULULU RATING:** 4.5/5 BONES

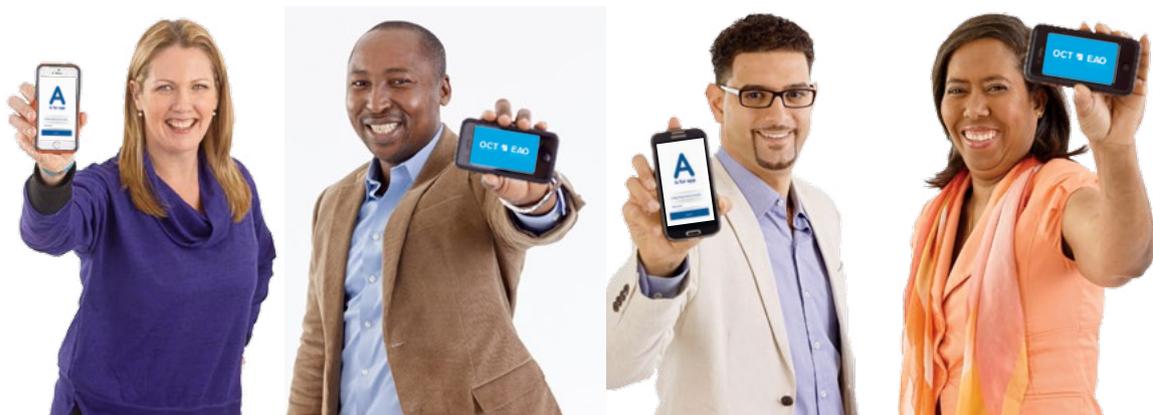
\* EduLulu is part of Groupe Média TFO, a world leader in education. The online guide's evaluations are the work of teams of independent experts (including OCTs), who review up to 100 English, French and bilingual educational apps (iOS and Android) each month for ages 2 to 17. To access the complete list and search by filter, visit [edululu.org/en](http://edululu.org/en). Interested in becoming an EduLulu evaluator? Go to [oct-ooeo.ca/1NzwdJd](http://oct-ooeo.ca/1NzwdJd) to learn how to get involved.

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# PROJECT PODCAST



Ready to raise the volume on classroom creativity and teamwork? Incorporate podcasts to pump up the fun and boost active-listening, writing and collaborative skills. Have a look at these 10 ideas to engage and excite your students.

BY MELISSA CAMPEAU



→ **Jump-start your journalists**

Reporters rove and record interviews, then edit their pieces into a news show. Sport fans, for instance, cover the basketball team while politicians track down the student council scoop.



→ **Pitch perfect**

Are your students crafting a speech? Learning a second language? Record a practice session so they can assess their delivery. Then help them course correct by tracking their progress.



→ **Create. Perform. Enjoy!**

Have students write original radio plays (or find some online), experiment with sound effects and act out the speaking parts. When they're done, host a classroom audio-play festival!



→ **On-the-road reports**

Here's a trick for keeping field trip excitement alive. Have students record their observations while on location at the museum or zoo. In class, pair the audio with video to document the adventure.



→ **Travel, virtually**

Geography lessons take flight when your students partner with peers on the other side of the world. Swap podcasts with another class and share insights into holidays, customs, music — anything goes!



→ **Raise the roots**

Assign a little family-tree detective work. Students interview and record relatives to find out who first came to Canada or what school was like when their grandparents were their age.



→ **Get ad savvy**

Students sharpen media literacy skills by dreaming up a fictional product, then scripting and voicing its radio campaign. The rest of the class listens to the ad before discussing and dissecting the message.



→ **Past comes to life**

History is thrilling when students can take well-known figures and act out their famous moments. Capture Sir John A. Macdonald's first day as prime minister or Roberta Bondar's 1992 NASA mission.



→ **Make 'em laugh!**

Let your natural-born entertainers shine. Students create a weekly five-minute podcast to broadcast to the entire school — including interviews, musical performances, comedy sketches — the sky's the limit!



→ **Learning by ear**

Just wrapped up a unit? Keep review lively by asking children to recall and record lesson highlights. Post the podcast on the class blog so students (and parents) can have access at home.

ILLUSTRATION: ANDREW GIBBS/EYE CANDY



## READY TO RECORD?

Try software such as Podbean ([podbean.com](http://podbean.com), from \$3 per month) or Audacity ([audacityteam.org](http://audacityteam.org), free) to get your project up and running in no time. When podcasts are ready, play them for your class, post them to a blog or consider going global with a directory service such as the one-stop shop [podfeed.net](http://podfeed.net).



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# Nature

**Petra Eperjesi, OCT, has designed a kindergarten program that gets students outside and plants a self-directed learning seed that firmly takes root.**

**BY TRISH SNYDER**

“How can we build a shelter that we can all fit under?” It was a fall morning in 2013 when Petra Eperjesi, OCT, first floated the idea past her three-, four-, and five-year-old students at Tawingo College in Huntsville, Ont. While their peers were adjusting to life in a kindergarten classroom, these youngsters were acclimatizing to life outside four walls. They were enrolled in Outdoor Kindergarten — an innovative program Eperjesi introduced at the independent school just a year earlier. Her unique approach was based on finding ways to teach the ABCs, 1,2,3s and life skills while the class explored 109 hectares of woodland. Make a shelter? The children understood “shelter” was a fancy word for fort, which Eperjesi knew they loved building. Every child was bursting with ideas.

Eperjesi channelled their enthusiasm through an ambitious series of construction experiments. “Ex-per-i-ment,” the teacher repeated in child-size syllables, inviting them to clap along. “That’s a way to test an idea.” (Soon, they were dropping “experiment” and “hypothesis” into everyday conversation.) “What materials can we use to test our fort?” Rain seeped through a version they made using sticks and earth, though it didn’t stop the children from attempting different mud-application techniques, from random dumping to careful patting. One child suggested animal hides, except they didn’t have any. Finally, they tried sticks and tarps, which didn’t dissolve or collapse. Bingo!

The class worked diligently to construct what now became the ultimate teepee. It took six students to lift each pole and 30 minutes to walk to the forested site they chose to build on. Three days later, they’d completed a shelter that was roomy enough to house 18 children and teachers for story time and tea parties. “Petra is brilliant — she never underestimates children,” says Tawingo principal Tia Pearse, OCT. “She knows kids are happiest when they’re outside, so why not teach them when they’re happy?”

Eperjesi fills every school day with fun, real-world lessons by turning the forest into a living, breathing classroom. Her students practise math while collecting pine cones and carrying firewood. They create signs to mark trails through the forest — taking away lessons in geography, literacy and art. They develop sophisticated social skills from navigating a game of let’s-pretend-this-log-is-a-pirate-ship, which doesn’t come with rules on how to

PHOTOS: MATTHEW LITERPIO



**Play-based educator Petra Eperjesi, OCT, teaches real-world lessons to students at the Ottawa Forest and Nature School.**

compromise when everyone wants to play captain. Tawingo outdoor education teacher MoNa McBrien was blown away by the difference between Eperjesi's forest and indoor students from previous years. "When they fall, they pick themselves up," says McBrien. "If it's cold, they don't complain. They are some of the toughest, strongest, most confident kindergarteners I've ever taught." Eperjesi's unconventional program, which is now Tawingo's trademark, earned her the 2013 Amethyst Award from the Council of Outdoor Educators of Ontario and the 2014 Edward Burtynsky Award for Teaching Excellence in Environmental Education.

### **Playing in Nature**

Nature-based learning is having a moment. Unlike outdoor education, which is learning *about nature*, Forest School (also known as Nature School or Outdoor Kindergarten) is about children directing their learning by playing *in nature*. The method sprouted in Scandinavia in the 1950s and spread through Europe (the U.K. has an estimated 10,000 outdoor schools) before taking root more recently in North America. At the Ottawa Forest and Nature School, where Eperjesi now teaches, parents have the option of sending their two- to 10-year-olds for part-time, half- or full-day programs. Forest learning became more accessible this fall when the school partnered with the

Ottawa-Carleton District School Board to provide six-week forest programs to visiting public school students. And they'll be under a microscope: a researcher from the University of Ottawa will be studying the impact on children's achievement and well-being outcomes.

It's tougher than ever to argue with the benefits of outdoor play-based learning. After reviewing the literature, the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute and ParticipACTION (backed by 12 other organizations and 1,600 stakeholders worldwide) released an evidence-based position statement this year in ParticipACTION's *The Biggest Risk is Keeping Kids Indoors* report card that states, "access to active play in nature and outdoors — with its risks — is essential for healthy child development." It urges schools, daycares and parents to take children outside to explore and, yes, even climb trees. Besides being fun, these activities help children learn their own limits while building confidence, autonomy and resilience.

With garter snakes slithering around one day and a deer appearing the next, there's no typical day at the school. Instead of ringing a bell, Eperjesi calls students to the cabin, and to her, by howling like a wolf — their cue to howl back and come running. Heated by a wood stove, the cabin is their indoor home base: where they take

bathroom breaks, do literacy activities and start their day with a meeting about safety considerations, such as how to identify poison ivy in the spring and stay hydrated in the summer. What happens next is a shock to visiting teachers — instead of whipping out lesson plans, Eperjesi listens as each child turns to the next and asks, "What would you like to do today?" From looking for bugs to turning over rocks, they narrow down the choices and vote. "It's much easier to start from play than learning goals," she explains. "This way I'm working with the current of their interest instead of fighting battles to get them interested in my agenda."

What if they disagree? Eperjesi will then say, "If we don't get our choice, are we going to say, 'Awwww' and let our shoulders slump?" "Nooooo," they answer. "They go along because they all have a say — she doesn't decide on their behalf," says Pearse. Eperjesi also uses this trick to ease transitions. When they're wrapping up an indoor activity and preparing to go on a hike, she'll ask, "Now, are we going to race to the door and push people out of the way?" "Nooooo." "Are we going to run ahead of the teacher who's leading?" "Nooooo." Instead of issuing orders, she influences their behaviour by getting their buy-in on better choices. "She does this with everything until their choices are automatically positive," said Pearse.

## Curriculum Connections

Once outdoors, Eperjesi knows play is serious business. The Waldorf approach to early childhood education, which nurtures imagination, inspired her to infuse the program with a sense of wonder. “I once created a treasure hunt with little fairy notes along the path to our tree house so the children would feel the forest was safe and welcoming,” she says. “They were totally swept up and excited. And I was excited because they were keen to read.” On occasion, she’ll guide the children’s free time using the seven play motifs — including adventure, fantasy, animal allies, maps and paths — identified by educator David Sobel in his book *Childhood and Nature*. As they roam for pirate ships (fallen trees) or treasure (sticks criss-crossing into an X) Eperjesi observes what they uncover and question, all the while figuring out how to enhance those experiences by linking them back to the Ontario curriculum.

Flipping the starting point of a lesson is called “backward planning” or an “emergent curriculum.” When children were fascinated by winter’s first snowfall, Eperjesi led an inquiry into snow. She used the KWL (Know-Want-Learn) technique to ask what they already knew, would now want to know and what they learned. They wondered where snow comes from and what it was made of. To help them, the kindergarten teacher hit the library and read non-fiction books aloud to explain how it forms into crystal structures. Students ran around with magnifying glasses and dark fabric catching the flakes, shouting, “I see a plane crystal or a column crystal!” When they discovered the various classifications and shapes, Eperjesi seized the chance to make a literacy connection: she began introducing different adjectives to describe the snow crystals. “They think they’re just playing,” she says. “I’m always taking notes and mentally making authentic curriculum connections and asking myself, ‘What’s the potential here?’ Sometimes I struggle with being a play-based educator because it can look from the outside like I’m not doing anything. I always have the voice of a critic in my mind. ‘Why does it matter? What are they learning?’”

Managing risks is a huge part of this innovators’ routine. Eperjesi prepares risk-assessment documents (including seasonal and site) with colleagues, to mitigate

any potential issues — everything from large animals waking from hibernation to dealing with mosquitos. When temperatures plummet, teachers limit time outdoors and communicate with parents to make sure children arrive properly dressed.

## Solving Real Problems

It would be tempting to steer children away from risky situations that arise in a classroom with no walls. Eperjesi looks for ways to say “yes” if they present a chance for students to grow by directing their own learning and solving real problems. “Can anyone tell me why I’m feeling worried about letting you play here?” she once asked, after the children raced toward a tree that had fallen and uprooted another during the night. Students saw a pirate ship: she saw accidents waiting to happen. One by one, the children listed the dangers and figured out solutions. “They meet challenges with resilience and persistence,” says Eperjesi. “They think creatively and try different solutions. It’s a self-esteem thing.”

It’s no wonder children love a school where every day feels like a field trip. One mother registered her child in Eperjesi’s school halfway through junior kindergarten because he was defiant and unhappy at his neighbourhood school. After attending one day a week, for a few months, he was a different student: thinking before acting, with no behaviour issues. His school’s psychologist told the family she’d never seen such progress without medication. Another boy named Jasper was having so much trouble complying with requests at his home school that he begged not to go. His parents enrolled him in Eperjesi’s class one day a week, where he thrived on fresh air and freedom. “Petra has a fantastic positive energy about her,” says Jodi Browne, his mom. “Her ability to read the group and roll with it is amazing. She had so much patience with Jasper and he really responded to that.”

Tawingo principal Tia Pearse wishes her own three sons had had Eperjesi for Outdoor Kindergarten, but they were in older grades by the time she arrived. “Her students become self-aware, proactive learners. They inquire, they probe. If I can turn out a school of critical thinkers like that, I’m happy. Petra is special and our school is better because of her.” **PS**

# Three WAYS TO BRANCH OUT

**No forest? No problem! Award-winning kindergarten teacher Petra Eperjesi knows she’s lucky to have the woods as her classroom. Here are three ways that you, too, can bring home that forest feeling wherever you’re located.**

## CREATE RHYTHM

It’s not uncommon for Eperjesi to notice her younger students struggling with rigid, highly structured days that demand conformity. She finds it helpful to balance daily periods of “inhalation,” such as circle time — which require a greater amount of self-control and self-awareness — with plenty of time for the children to “exhale” during self-directed free play, for instance.

## HAVE A “YES” ATTITUDE

Encourage curiosity and creativity in the classroom by looking for ways to say “yes” to as many of your students’ requests as possible. This gives young people the hands-on experiences they need to build their own understanding. Eperjesi believes that these questions are the basis for children steering their own learning — an essential skill for students to acquire at an early age.

## CARVE OUT TIME

Find a block of time in your schedule that’s open-ended. Give your students 45 to 60 minutes, ideally outdoors, to pursue their own questions and interests. A warning: for the first 15 minutes it will look like chaos! Just listen and observe without interrupting and without an agenda, then find a way to uncover a strand of the curriculum by focusing on one of their questions.

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*The OCT featured in this department has been recognized with a provincial teaching award and exemplifies the high standards of practice to which the College holds the teaching profession.*

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# SETTING THE SCENE

*Actor Eric McCormack recalls the role his high school drama teacher played in giving him the grit to step into the spotlight and become a star.*

BY RICHARD OUZOUNIAN

What every teacher dreams of is being in the right place at the right time for the right student. That's what happened with Mort Paul and Eric McCormack.

McCormack, the Scarborough-born actor, is a household name in entertainment, thanks to the starring role he occupied on the wildly successful TV series *Will and Grace* for eight seasons.

But this wasn't always the case. Flash back to 1977 and you'd see a reserved teenage McCormack walking the halls of a new school with as much on his mind as was likely in his backpack. The big question weighing on him? Should he pursue his dream of becoming a performer, or go into the teaching profession, as his parents had gently suggested?

Luckily, he didn't have to navigate this path on his own. "Though I knew I wanted to be an actor, Mort gave me wings early on," he says.

At the time, Paul was a 30-year-old Toronto native who had once faced the same kind of career decision in his teens as the young McCormack.

"I wanted to be a performer but I also thought I might want to go into medicine," the former teacher recalls from his home in Nanaimo, B.C., where he and his wife have retired. "So I enrolled in a science program at the University of Toronto, got my teaching degree and became a teacher. I thought I'd become an actor after a few years."

He never made the change. Paul was hired as a drama and science teacher at Sir John A. Macdonald Collegiate Institute in Scarborough;

although he admits it was an odd combination, he appreciated the freedom it afforded him. It also gave him the chance to work with a number of talented artists at an early stage in their development — producers like David Furnish and Damon D'Oliveira.

But it's safe to say that of all the skilled students Paul helped guide over the years, none would make quite the same mark on the world of show business as McCormack. And, the fascinating thing is that they might never have met if it hadn't been for the instinct of another teacher.

"I was taking Grade 10 drama," remembers the Hollywood star, "but in the first week, my teacher, Lois Kivesto, came up to me and said 'I don't think you should be in this class. You should be in Mr. Paul's Grade 11 class.'"

The scene that would soon unfold once the two met was charged with comic energy that would define their relationship. "This guy came up to me and said 'Call me Mort,'" recalls McCormack. "He looked like Groucho Marx — you know, with the glasses and the big moustache. It seemed that if you moved his glasses, the nose would come off too."

Paul asked his students to prepare a monologue for an upcoming class, but McCormack was so green that he didn't realize that his teacher was expecting a two- to three-minute speech at most.

"I took a Stephen Leacock story that I thought was funny and memorized the whole thing — it was 22 minutes long," says McCormack.

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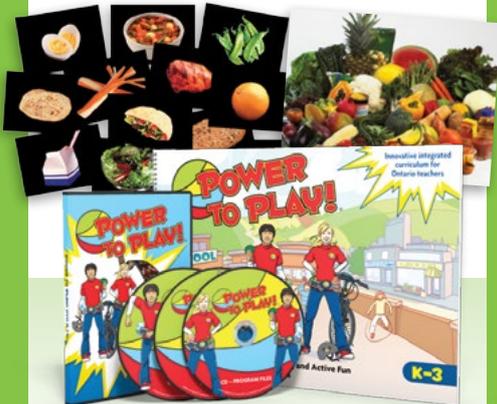


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# “ [Mort] taught me that the most different thing I can give the world is me, and that’s something every young actor should learn. ”

Almost four decades later, the memory of the scene still makes Paul chuckle. “This brash young kid comes into my classroom and does *My Financial Career*. All of it. After 10 minutes, I tried to stop Eric but he said, ‘I’m only halfway through.’ He was amazing.

“What Eric did in many ways was set the tone for the rest of the students. Everyone upped their game immediately and, in short order, they became the class of my dreams.”

A genuine warmth fills the actor’s voice. “There was no right way to do things with Mort. There was no wrong way either. He was open to everyone’s talents.”

And when it came to McCormack, Paul had already identified a few of the talents that made this student unique. “He had such terrific presence and focus. He worked so hard that you just sat back and let him do it.”

Then it was time for the parent-teacher meeting. McCormack’s mother and father went to see Paul because they weren’t sure about which direction they should point their son.

“I didn’t discover this until years later,” says McCormack, “but they went to see Mort that night with a real agenda. They had always been supportive of me, totally, but they were also getting nervous. They knew how tough show business could be and they didn’t want me getting hurt or throwing my life away.”

Paul continues the story: When Eric’s mother wondered about her son’s acting career choice, “I put my hand on her shoulder and replied, ‘I think he wants to be a performer. Don’t stop him.’”

By the time the next school year rolled around, Paul had something special in mind for McCormack and his classmates. “Rather than doing the usual big cast musical,” says McCormack,

“Mort decided to do *Godspell* with a cast of 10, with everybody else making the sets and running the box office.”

Although the drama teacher selected the show with this specific group in mind, he wasn’t sure who was best suited for each role, so he held individual auditions.

“I didn’t know a lot about musical theatre,” laughs McCormack, “so I came in with the Deep Purple song, ‘Child in Time.’ It was a really long song. I remember



**Eric McCormack shares a laugh with former Sir John A. Macdonald drama teacher Mort Paul at the actor’s home in Vancouver, B.C.**

standing on-stage, with Mort sitting there — the only person in the 1,000-seat theatre. “I gave it all I had and at the end of the audition he said, ‘Good!’ And, that was it. I didn’t know what this meant until the next day — when I found out that I was Jesus!”

It’s no surprise that a career-changing moment like that would still reverberate with McCormack after all these years, but it remained equally important to Paul. “I remember that whole period like it was yesterday. The class’s devotion to the project was incredible. The student council gave us a limited amount of money to do these shows and the rights for *Godspell* cost a lot.

“So the class decided to do an all-night dance-a-thon to raise money. They asked me to supervise and they went at it from 10 at night until 6 the next morning.”

One of the things Paul had taught his students was that it’s not just what you do, it’s how you sell it, and this class had learned that lesson well. McCormack laughs gleefully as he recalls what they did.

“You know how before the opening of a school show, the cast performs a couple of songs at assembly to raise interest and the audience usually yawns their way through it? Well, with *Godspell*, it was different. We started out with ‘Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord’ and then we went right into ‘Save the People,’ and man, we nailed it!

“I remember how we hit that last big note, the music stopped and the school went bananas — the way they never did before. It was Mort at his very best.” The show ended up being such a hit that they even took it down to Toronto’s Harbourfront for a weekend.

*Godspell* wasn’t the last time Paul saw McCormack perform on stage. He happily showed up to see his former student star in *The Music Man* on Broadway and, more recently, in *Glengarry Glen Ross* at the Arts Club in Vancouver.

“I’m proud of all my students,” says Paul. “What I essentially wanted to do was encourage that wonderful potential that everybody has, that so often gets quashed.”

McCormack took away an additional message from his years with Paul. “What I learned from Mort was that my instincts were good and that I should trust them. He taught me that the most different thing I can give the world is me, and that’s something every young actor should learn.” **PS**

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*In this department, notable Canadians honour the teachers who have made a difference in their lives and have successfully embraced the College’s Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession, which are Care, Respect, Trust and Integrity.*

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PROFESSIONAL

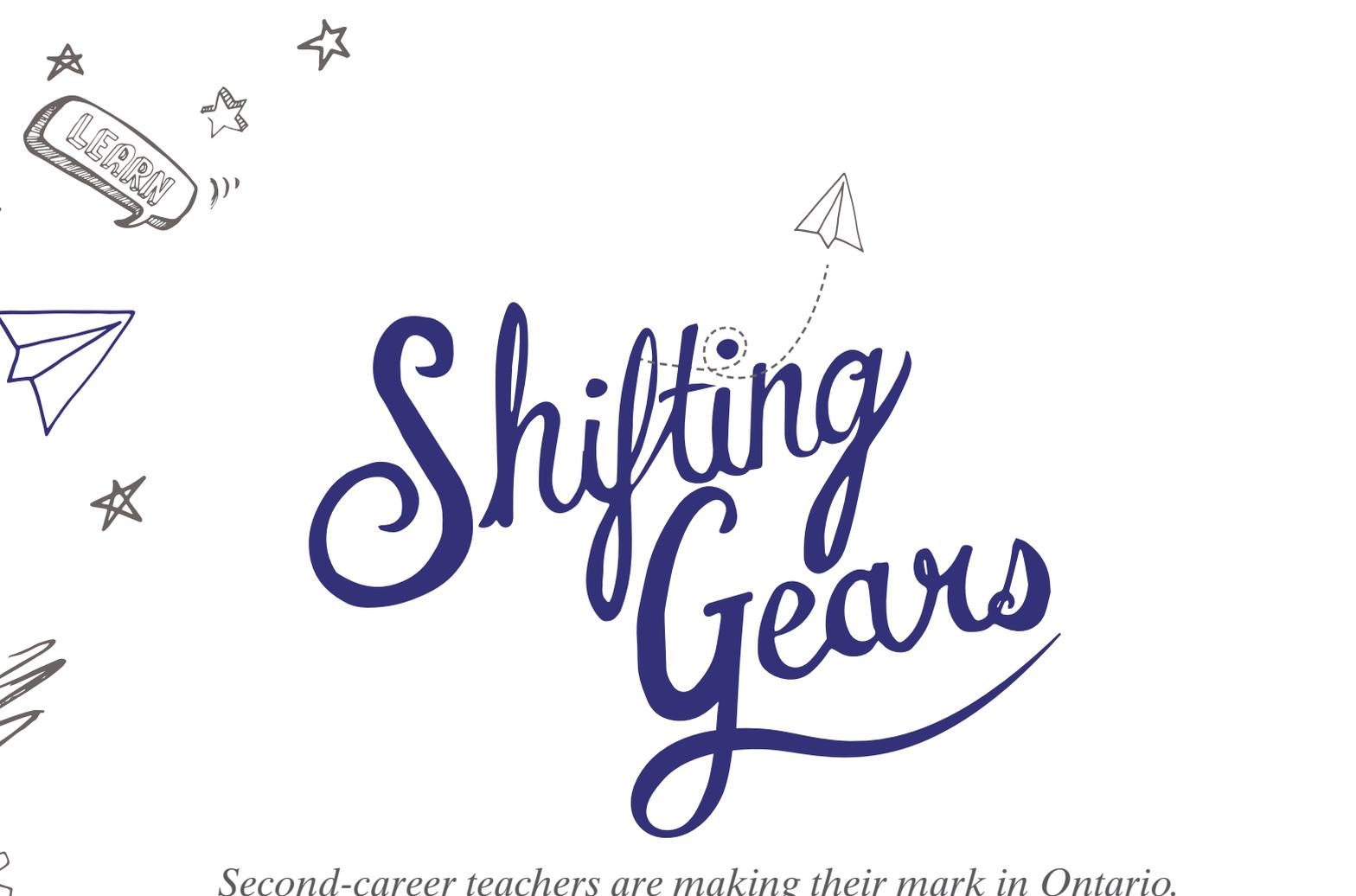
JOHN

HELLO CLASS

TRUST

1+1=2

—John Barclay, OCT, enrolled in teacher education at age 39 after several careers including director of a theatre company.



# Shifting Gears

*Second-career teachers are making their mark in Ontario.*

BY JOHN HOFFMAN

**L**ast year when I was teaching Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* to a high school English class, I was having amazing conversations with students about Internet censorship. I couldn't have conceived of those kinds of conversations when I first read the classic more than 25 years ago, but they are relevant to the themes of the book. I love discussing these concepts with the students, and taking them through new experiences."

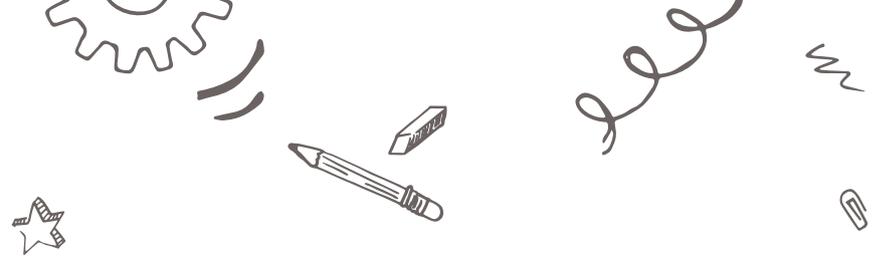
John Barclay, OCT, is enthusing about his new profession — one that he didn't find until he was 40. Barclay's early career trajectory was speckled to say the least. By the time he enrolled in teacher education at age 39, he had worked at eight different jobs since graduating from university. Those jobs were so diverse that each one was almost like a separate little career: director at a theatre company; office manager for an arts collective; head of HR for a computer design company; owner of a make-your-own wine business; manager of a Cinnabon franchise; video store owner; mailroom co-ordinator for Gillette; and data entry for an insurance company.

It's not hard to imagine Barclay's sense of relief when, at the age of 43, he landed a full-time teaching contract with the Toronto District School Board and could finally envision a consistent career path. After quitting a particularly discouraging job in his late 30s, Barclay found himself at a crossroads. "I talked to a lot of people about what to do with my life," he says.

"I realized that of all the things I really liked to do, the common denominator was teaching."

Barclay, who teaches at Parkdale Collegiate Institute in Toronto, has no doubt that he made the right choice. But like many other new teachers, his first few years in the profession included some uncertainty. "After graduating, I was able to get on a supply list fairly quickly, but for the first year-and-a-half I didn't get a single call," he says. He had to scramble for other kinds of work including a stint answering phones for the Parkinson Society Canada. Barclay was wondering if he'd ever get a teaching job when, out of the blue, he landed a long-term occasional (LTO), which kick-started his career. He would go on to do three more LTOs on the way to his full-time contract.

That's a fairly typical early career path in Ontario's job market, where the supply of new teachers greatly exceeds the number of retirees to the point where 50 per cent of new teachers are still underemployed or unemployed three or four years into the profession. Other data from the Ontario College of Teachers shows that, in recent years, about one-third of all newly certified Ontario teachers say that teaching is a second or subsequent career, while 12 per cent to 15 per cent of newly qualified graduates from Ontario teacher education programs were age 35 or older.



**PERSPECTIVE**



**PATIENCE**

**CARE**

123

**INTEGRITY**



**DANIELLE** →

*“Life experience is very helpful — you can’t buy it. I’ve raised kids, and I’ve gone through good times and bad times. I think I have more patience and perspective because of that.” — Danielle Breau, OCT, a flight attendant for 17 years before become a teacher at 37.*

*Respect*



Obviously it's one thing to go through a period of unstable, uncertain employment in your 20s. It's quite another to experience it at age 40-something, when you're supposed to be on the threshold of your prime earning years.

Take Samantha Simpson, OCT, for instance. At age 45 she worked less than 90 days as an occasional teacher during the 2014–15 school year. That's not a lot of income for someone who spent 11 years in a successful and reasonably well-paid career in retail publishing. "Finding yourself back at the bottom after being successful in another career is pretty hard for an older person," she says.

Simpson had originally planned on a teaching career. However, her university academic counsellor advised her not to go into teaching because of the tough and competitive job market. That advice prompted her to forgo the idea and take a college course in magazine publishing instead. Simpson landed a job in publishing shortly after graduating and a year-and-a-half later was editing the Sears Catalogue, working her way up the company ladder. But six years ago, Simpson lost her passion for the work.

"It was a good job, but my heart wasn't in it. I didn't really care if Sears ever sold another fridge," she says. "And the opportunities for advancement were all in marketing, which didn't really suit me."

So in 2009 Simpson switched tracks to pursue the career she'd always wanted, enrolling at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. After graduation Simpson had trouble finding a job in the tight southern Ontario market. She did, however, find a job in Garden Hill, a First Nations community in northeastern Manitoba. "It was a great, life-changing experience, and it showed me that teaching really was where I wanted to be," says Simpson.

After three years in the North, she decided to return home, hoping that her teaching experience would help her land a job in Ontario. No such luck. Along with the supply teaching she did in the 2014/15 school year, Simpson also found work scoring the Ontario Secondary School Literacy Test and teaching summer school, but it wasn't enough. So she decided to head north again, this time to teach Grade 8 in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut.

SAMANTHA



*"[Teaching in a First Nations community] was a great, life-changing experience. It showed me that teaching really was where I wanted to be."*

—**Samantha Simpson, OCT**, moved from publishing to teaching; landed her first teaching job in the First Nations community of Garden Hill, Man.



SYLVIE



*"My mother had been a teacher, so I was familiar with the profession. And I had always worked in jobs that included a caregiving role. I enjoyed that role, so teaching seemed like a good fit."* —**Sylvie Forest Palkovits, OCT**,

spent 13 years working as an esthetician, receptionist and dental assistant before pursuing a career in teaching.



## Second Calling

You might wonder why someone would trade a successful career for this kind of uncertainty. Simpson's simple answer, "I always wanted to teach," reflects one of the themes found in research about second-career teachers. A 1990 study out of the Bank Street College of Education in New York City identified different categories of second-career teachers. One category was "home comers," people who saw themselves as finally getting to pursue the career they had originally wanted.

Another category of second-career teachers identified in this study was those whose decision to pursue teaching was influenced by a pivotal event. John Barclay, OCT, Sylvie Forest Palkovits, OCT, and Danielle Breau, OCT, fit into that category.

Breau perhaps straddles both camps. She had originally planned to be a teacher, but after one year of university she took a job as a flight attendant. "I thought I'd get in a few years

of travel before completing my formal education," says Breau, who is teaching Grade 3/4 French Immersion in Lakefield, Ont., this year. That few years turned into 17.

The issue that began to nudge Breau back toward teaching was the increasingly ramped up security procedures in the airline industry. "That took a lot of fun out of the job and I was ready for a change," she says. Breau's growing disenchantment with the airline industry, plus a severance package that helped pay for her university education, provided the impetus she needed to take the risk of career change at the age of 37.

After a checkered first few years, which started with several LTOs with the Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington Catholic District School Board, Breau is thrilled to have landed a permanent position at Ridpath Public School in Lakefield.

For Sylvie Forest Palkovits — who spent 13 years working as an esthetician, receptionist and dental assistant — the decision to pursue a university education and, ultimately, teaching, was influenced by two separate pivotal events. One was her husband's layoff from his job with a mining company. That layoff proved to be temporary, but it prompted Palkovits, who had never been to university, to pursue a degree in liberal sciences.

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She had also considered a career in medicine, but after looking at all the factors, including post-secondary options in Sudbury, she chose teaching.

“My mother had been a teacher,” says Palkovits, who is currently a curriculum consultant in Special Education with Conseil scolaire public du Grand Nord de l’Ontario. “So I was familiar with the profession. And I had always worked in jobs that included a caregiving role. I enjoyed that role. So teaching seemed like a good fit.”

### The value of life experience

Palkovits feels that her past experience stood her in good stead as she transitioned to teaching. After an initial stint as a resource teacher, which she got shortly after graduating, Palkovits was hired as a teacher in a Section 23 class at École publique Jean-Éthier-Blais in Sudbury, where she worked with students with behavioural, emotional and mental health issues.

That’s a pretty challenging assignment for a second-year teacher. Palkovits says her experience working for a dentist who specialized in treating children with special needs was a big help. “I had worked with children with Downs syndrome, autism and other challenges, and I was the mother of two teenagers,” she explains. “That gave me a lot of confidence in dealing with the children in my class.”

The value of life experience is something that virtually all second-career teachers agree on. Breau says, “Life experience is very helpful — you can’t buy it. I’ve raised kids, and I’ve gone through good times and bad times. I think I have more patience and perspective because of that.”

When it comes to being an older newbie teacher, Barclay feels that his multi-faceted job experience, including some periods of struggle, gives him a valuable perspective when talking to students about possible career paths and post-secondary education. “I know what it’s like to look for a job and

## Advice for second-career teachers on ...



### GETTING ESTABLISHED IN THE PROFESSION

*“Perseverance and positive outlook are key. Make yourself present and accept short-term contracts to gain experience.”* —Sylvie Forest Palkovits, OCT

*“Be flexible! Get to know the principals and staff in different schools. Become involved any way you can and get out there in the community and get yourself known.”* —Danielle Breau, OCT

### LEARNING THE CRAFT OF TEACHING

*“Learn with your students. Involve them in the process and they will grow with you. Students learn from teachers they like and believe in. Respect students and they will respect you.”* —Sylvie Forest Palkovits, OCT

*“It’s much easier to let go of frustrations and learn from difficult days when you know your students. Find the positives and build those relationships. Share aspects of your previous professional life as they connect to various lessons. For example, I draw on my knowledge of publishing to help explain the writing process in my English classes.”* —Samantha Simpson, OCT



### ADJUSTING TO YOUR NEW PROFESSION

*“Slow down and understand that you have to take care of yourself [by working] smarter, not harder. I spent an incredible amount of time planning and often didn’t go to bed until after midnight. I wish I’d kept it a little simpler. That is something I’m still working on today.”* —Danielle Breau, OCT

*“If I had to do it all over again, the one thing I would do differently would be to ask for support from colleagues. I thought that if I said I was feeling lost, there might be negative repercussions. The opposite was true, of course, and I got a great deal of support.”* —John Barclay, OCT

not be able to find anything,” he says. “I’ve run a business where I knew that if I didn’t do my job I wouldn’t make any money. That gives me lots of experience to draw on in teachable moments.”

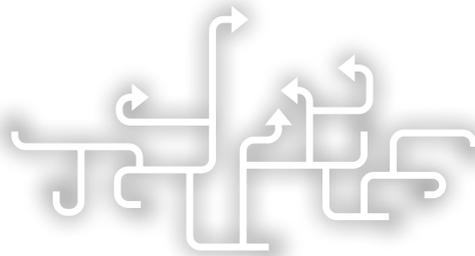
But it’s not really a question of comparing the relative merits of older and younger teachers. “I think schools need a mix of younger and older teachers,” says Breau. “One of the best teachers I’ve ever seen went into teaching straight from university. I have learned a lot from teachers who are younger than me.”

Mid-life career switches, in various professions, are nothing new and may well increase given the mobility of today’s workforce. “Boundaryless careers, where individuals move between organizations or switch occupations are more common than in the 1970s and ’80s,” says Eddy Ng, professor of organizational behaviour and F. C. Manning Chair in Economics and Business at Dalhousie University. “We’ve seen an increase in career mobility among Gen Xers and Millennials even in the last 10 years.”

Barclay and Breau are glad they rode out the challenges of establishing their career switches. “I think the most important thing was to just take whatever I was offered, whether it was an LTO, teaching day on/day off, or teaching a new subject,” he says. Each step, however small, helped bring Barclay to where he is today.

Breau knows some colleagues who gave up after several years of underemployment in teaching. “I thought about it myself at one point,” she says. “But instead I decided to take more Additional Qualification courses, get qualified in more divisions and keep checking the job listings. I’m really glad I stuck with it a little longer because I got that contract I wanted. I couldn’t be happier.” **PS**





# ADHD NOW

*Experts today are focusing less on behaviour and more on cognitive skills. Here are some strategies to support students with ADHD.*

BY JOHN HOFFMAN

“I knew I was smart, but I always felt dumb. Every once in a while I’d complete an assignment and I’d get an A on it. My teachers would write a note saying something like, ‘Looking forward to seeing more work like this!’ And I’d think, ‘I can do it.’ But then the next time I just wouldn’t do the work.”

James DeCarlo, age 21, is recalling what it was like to be a student with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), the disorder that affects one to two children in most school classes. DeCarlo, who grew up in Peterborough but now lives and works in Toronto, received a medical diagnosis of ADHD when he was eight. He struggled with school, dropping out at age 17, eight credits short of graduation.

While there is an increasing recognition that people with ADHD often have certain strengths such as energy, enthusiasm, creative outside-of-the-box thinking or the ability to hyperfocus on tasks and subjects that interest them, the disorder is still defined by areas of weakness. DeCarlo’s recollection of his struggle to buckle down and work aptly illustrates the key issues in ADHD today. In the past the focus was primarily on behaviour — hyperactivity, impulsiveness and

distractibility. But ADHD experts are now zeroing in on cognitive problems. In fact, ADHD is no longer even classified as a disruptive behaviour disorder.

That doesn’t mean behaviour is irrelevant in ADHD; it’s still part of the picture. “But we need to focus more on the cognitive side of ADHD,” says Dr. Rosemary Tannock, a senior scientist at the Hospital for Sick Children and professor emerita of Special Education and psychiatry at the University of Toronto, who sat on the working group that recommended reconceptualizing ADHD as a neurodevelopmental disorder. “Supporting the cognitive functioning of children with ADHD is not only important for learning,” says Tannock, who specializes in learning problems, including ADHD. “There is also emerging evidence that improving children’s cognitive skills can lead to better behaviour. But the reverse is not true. Addressing behaviour problems does not improve cognitive skills.”

Tannock says two key aspects of cognitive functioning are especially relevant for understanding and educating children with ADHD: executive functions and a phenomenon called cognitive load (more about that later).



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## SUPPORTING THINKING SKILLS IS HELPFUL FOR ALL STUDENTS, BUT PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH ADHD.

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### EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

Many teachers will be familiar with executive functions (EF): the thinking skills that enable us to make and execute plans, pay attention, regulate our emotions, and monitor our thoughts and actions. One aspect of EF that is particularly relevant to ADHD is working memory, the temporary mental bulletin board that helps us use and connect multiple bits of information at the same time. “Many, though not all, children with ADHD have problems with working memory,” says Tannock. On top of that, they tend to process information more slowly than their peers. “Slow processing speed makes working memory problems even worse,” says Tannock. “Working memory affects children’s ability to control attention, ignore distractions and complete what they set out to do.”

In her research-into-practice monograph *The Educational Implications of*

*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (published by the Ontario Ministry of Education’s Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat), Tannock argues that the keys to improving the school performance of students with ADHD boil down to two main goals: (1) Supporting and improving executive functions through modified instruction, and (2) Teaching practices that reduce and/or mitigate problems caused by poor working memory.

Retired Toronto principal Cheryl Paige, OCT, was ahead of the curve on improving executive functions at Joyce Public School. In fact, she made it a cornerstone of her strategy to improve student achievement when she first came to the high-needs school in 2001.

Paige, who had spent considerable time educating herself about ADHD, says supporting EF was helpful for all students, but it was particularly helpful for children with ADHD. “Many children with ADHD

are at grade level on some academic skills, but they are behind in EF,” she says. “So I thought that if we could support and enhance executive functioning, we could improve the performance of students who were struggling.”

Apparently it worked. On Paige’s watch student achievement at Joyce Public School rose tremendously. For example, the percentage of Grade 3 students achieving level three or four on EQAO math tests went from 42 per cent in 2002 to 74 per cent in 2005 and 89 per cent in 2012. Paige and her staff won many teaching awards during that time.

Supporting EF has two goals: compensating for EF weakness in order to help students learn and get their work done, and putting structures and systems in place that help children gradually build EF skills as their brains mature. While the implementation of some of these strategies may depend on classroom space and board policy, here are some of the ways to support EF that Tannock, Paige and other teachers recommend.

### ↓ Minimize Distractions

While this may seem obvious, Allison Caldwell, OCT, a psycho-educational consultant with the Grand Erie District School Board, and previously with the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, is surprised when she sometimes sees students with ADHD sitting near the back of the class in the midst of a group of students who are likely to distract them.

“I’d put the student close to the teacher so the teacher can provide seamless support, including more frequent feedback, more easily,” she says.

Another, less obvious, distractor for some students is too many pictures, posters and artwork on classroom walls. Tannock recommends restricting visual supports to one wall of the classroom. “It is also helpful to organize the room into different areas: quiet areas, areas for small group discussion, and an area where students can stand or move around,” she adds.

Background noise was a major distractor for DeCarlo. “Very small sounds like the noise of a paper rustling could easily and violently break my focus

from a task,” he says. When asked if he’d ever had a teacher who knew how to help him function in school, DeCarlo quickly names Rachel Bemrose, OCT, the teacher who let him listen to music on headphones while he was working. “Putting on my headphones allowed me to create my own environment, free from unwanted sensory input. That allowed me to focus.” Noise-cancelling headphones can have a similar effect.



**↑ Increase Physical Activity**  
Bemrose, who teaches Grade 7/8 at Adam Scott C.V.I. and Intermediate School in Peterborough, is a big believer in the value of physical activity for helping students with ADHD. “When we started doing Daily Physical Activity (DPA), I noticed that students were more engaged, including those who had trouble with focus and sitting still.”

Paige agrees. “We arranged for students with attention problems to have at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day first thing in the morning, and we noticed that it enhanced their focus.”

Last summer David Koscielniak, OCT, a Special Education teacher, purchased four exercise balls for his class of 16 students at Collège catholique Samuel-Genest in Ottawa. “All students in my class have learning disabilities and many of them have ADHD as well,” says Koscielniak. “I had read about yoga balls and I thought they might help some of the more hyperactive students.” Although only a couple of weeks into his experiment when interviewed, Koscielniak is intrigued by what he’s seen so far. “The kids seem happier. Bouncing and moving around on the ball seems to be a stress relief for them. It’s as if they were putting most of their energy into trying to sit still and concentrate. Now they have more energy for focusing on academics.”

Koscielniak has one student this year who he describes as the most fidgety kid he’s ever met in 21 years of teaching. “He literally bounced on that ball all day,” says Koscielniak. “I was watching him and thinking, ‘Does he really have to bounce that high? Or is he trying to test me?’ But after I noticed that when

he was on the ball, he was participating: answering questions, asking questions, helping other students.”

Bemrose once had a similar student. “I got him into breakdancing. His hyperactivity was an asset in dancing,” she says. Breakdancing not only helped this boy work off pent-up energy and regain focus, his desire to do well in dance also motivated him to achieve in other areas. “He was eventually selected to go to leadership camp,” Bemrose says.

Tannock notes that dance, and other physical activities that require students to learn or perform a set of movements in a certain order (tai chi, karate or even “Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes”), are of particular value because they help children learn to sequence ideas. “Knowing how to sequence ideas is a very important — but sometimes overlooked — part of executive function,” she says.

**↓ Reduce Stress/Anxiety**  
Children with ADHD are often very anxious,” says Paige. “You can see the stress in their body language, even in the way they hold a pencil.”

Coping with stress sucks up children’s physical, emotional and cognitive energy. So reducing stress helps them save some

## OTHER STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS

- Giving **frequent breaks**. David Koscielniak, OCT, a Special Education teacher at Collège catholique Samuel-Genest in Ottawa, likes to give mental breaks where he tells a little joke, a story from his life, shows a video clip on the Smart Board or a picture from the web that relates to the subject at hand. “That gives the students a break, as well as draws their attention back to me,” he says.
- Offering **flexible or extended deadlines** to accommodate time-management problems.
- Implementing **routines** that make the day more predictable.
- Permitting a **parent or peer to scribe** for a child who has difficulty with note-taking.
- Using **teaching strategies that help children articulate their thinking process**. “Our teachers were constantly asking students, “Why did you do it that way?” or “How did you get that answer?” explains retired principal Cheryl Paige, OCT. This kind of interaction gradually builds students’ metacognitive skills and moves them along the road to more self-regulated learning.



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## CHILDREN WITH ADHD ARE CHALLENGED WHEN IT COMES TO ESTIMATING HOW LONG IT WILL TAKE TO COMPLETE A TASK.

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of that energy for learning. The challenge for teachers is tuning into the specific sources of stress for individual children. One source of stress for many students with ADHD comes from getting more than their share of negative feedback.

“Children with ADHD are often very sensitive. They’ve often had a lot of

negative feedback.” So public reprimands upset them to the point where it takes a long time for them to calm down, and as a result, they have an even harder time focusing. “We found that taking a child aside for a quiet, private talk was often more effective,” says Paige. “Tapping lightly on a student’s shoulder

(or desk), as a reminder to get back on task, is another way to avoid public reprimands,” she adds.

### ↑ Use Timers

Children with ADHD are challenged when it comes to estimating how long it will take to complete a task or how long they should be spending on a certain chunk of an assignment. Timers can help them. “We say to the child, ‘Here’s the task. You have 20 minutes to do it and here’s the timer,’” Paige explains.

Supporting and building executive functions is a long-term, ongoing project for many children, but especially those with ADHD. Tannock cautions that the strategies mentioned above may or may not be effective with individual students. “It’s important for teachers to observe whether the strategy works and to ask the student whether it was helpful,” she says. (For more strategies see sidebar “Other Strategies to Support Executive Functions.”)

### COGNITIVE LOAD

As noted earlier, working memory is an executive function — and it’s a particularly important one in school. Recent research has shown that weaknesses in working memory and other aspects of EF are more strongly related to the symptom of inattention than the other classic ADHD symptoms of hyperactivity and impulsivity. What’s more, working memory problems are strongly associated with difficulties in reading and math, and lower academic achievement in general.

This is where cognitive load comes into it. Cognitive load refers to the level

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## CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES

### TEACHADHD.CA

Designed by the Hospital for Sick Children, this website is supported by a team of health professionals and educators. It offers teachers a wealth of relevant, research-backed educational material stemming from current ADHD research to improve the learning outcomes of all students. It also includes a section on behaviour support strategies.

### SAVING YOUR CHILD SAVING YOURSELF

Subtitled *Navigating Roadblocks in Managing ADHD, Asperger’s and Learning Disabilities*, the book is a compilation of research and practice spanning more than 40 years. Check out *Professionally Speaking’s* review in the September 2014 issue at [oct-oeo.ca/1KSk3uw](http://oct-oeo.ca/1KSk3uw).

### ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

Regardless of subject matter, Additional Qualification courses encourage teachers to critically explore the content in light of supporting every student they work with, including those with ADHD. The Ontario College of Teachers accredits over 370 AQs. To find an AQ visit [oct-oeo.ca/1iOweMR](http://oct-oeo.ca/1iOweMR).

### ENHANCED TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

As well as AQ courses, the Enhanced Teacher Education Program, which was launched on September 1, 2015, includes a greater focus on helping students with special learning needs, including autism, ADHD and learning disabilities. When students feel well, they learn well.

of demand that mental activities such as learning or following instructions place on a person's working memory.

"Cognitive load includes things like the number of elements or ideas a child needs to attend to and how many connections between concepts they have to keep in mind, in order to understand or complete an assignment," says Tannock. For example, long and complex instructions create a higher cognitive load than short, simple ones.

Children with ADHD experience cognitive load more easily and often than their peers. This impairs their ability to pay attention, take in information and use other cognitive skills. DeCarlo has never heard the term "cognitive load," but describes it quite aptly. "Trying to do well was exhausting," he says. "Sometimes I could make myself do my best for half the day and then my brain would sort of fall asleep and I'd stop trying."

Tannock explains this phenomenon. "The brain consumes 20 per cent of our energy even though it constitutes less than two per cent of our body weight," she says. "That's why people with ADHD often say cognitive tasks are very tiring." Therefore, reducing cognitive load is key to addressing the working memory problems of students with ADHD.

Strategies that reduce cognitive load will differ depending on the age and stage of the child and their individual strengths and weaknesses, says Caldwell. But at the centre is finding ways to reduce the number of ideas and connections between ideas that a student has to juggle in his or her mental workspace at the same time.

### ↑ Implement Scaffolding

Scaffolding, or moving a student gradually from dependence on instructional support toward working more independently, is a core strategy in teaching. It is also one of the most important strategies for reducing cognitive load in students with ADHD, says Karen Timm, OCT, vice-principal of Sir John A. Macdonald Public School in Pickering. "Scaffolding is a long-term project with students with ADHD," adds Timm.

The extra scaffolding that kids with ADHD need includes more frequent

monitoring and feedback. "Students with ADHD need extra feedback about the progress and engagement with the task, the errors they have made and the things they are doing right," says Caldwell.

Timm says there is a danger in providing too much scaffolding for older students. "I've had teachers say, 'But he's 13 and he's going to be expected to work independently in high school.' But if the work and learning process is not supported every step of the way, the work often doesn't get done." When the work doesn't get done not only do students not learn the content, they don't get the experience of using the learning skills they need to succeed.

### ↑ Try Chunking

"Breaking down and prioritizing tasks is a huge problem for students with ADHD," says Paige. "They also tend to have problems with sequential organization, 'What's the first, second, third and fourth thing I need to do? What is the big idea and which ideas are subordinate?' These abilities are delayed in children with ADHD, so they need us to help them identify the steps, and they need extra support and lots of practise so they can internalize the skills."

Caldwell agrees. "With students with ADHD you can't just say, 'Here's your assignment. Away you go,'" she says. "It's important to break the assignment down into tasks or steps, give the students timelines (how long they should spend on each chunk) and to give them specific, frequent feedback when they have finished each chunk."

### ↑ Modify Instructions

The key here is to reduce the volume of verbal information, says Caldwell. "This means things like simplified, shorter, very explicit instructions, stopping to check for a student's understanding and repeating the information if necessary using the same words," she says. Tannock adds that it also helps to provide direct instruction on the order of operations, such as, "First do A, then do B, then C." "But make sure you have the student's attention to begin with," she says. "And be prepared to repeat each instruction, pausing after each step."

### ↑ Use Visual Aids

Use anchor charts, graphic organizers and other visuals to reduce verbal memory load. This helps the student see necessary information, rather than having to keep it in mind. One of Paige's primary teachers created a wheel that sat on her desk with icons depicting all of the things a child had to do or remember before going home: Do you have your coat? Hat? Lunch box? Boots? Et cetera. "The children would touch every icon on the wheel before saying goodbye to the teacher."

What these strategies have in common is that they reduce the load on working memory. That makes it easier for the child to pay attention, tune out distractions and, ultimately, learn.

One of the smartest things Paige did in her school improvement journey may well have been to put improving achievement on the agenda at staff meetings. That included discussions about executive functions. "We would spend a few minutes at each meeting discussing how to enhance student achievement," she says.

Paige also sent teachers to ADHD conferences to learn more about how ADHD manifests itself. This enabled teachers to learn about EF together while sharing strategies and problem-solving. "It's important to get all staff involved and to share ideas and strategies," she says. "When you get teachers thinking and working together, you can achieve amazing results!" **PS**

### OTHER STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT COGNITIVE LOAD

- Using **mnemonics**, which help students remember lists or steps in a process. For example, POWS (Pick an idea, Organize your notes, Write and Say more) will help students remember the sequence steps in the process of writing.
- Pre-teaching **new vocabulary** to reduce the load on working memory during a lesson that requires understanding of the new terms.
- Drawing increased attention to **key information** by underlining or highlighting words in text, providing notes listing key concepts, or flagging big ideas with verbal cues such as tone of voice and animated delivery.

# reviews

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

For additional reviews of French-language resources, visit [pourparlerprofession.oeeo.ca](http://pourparlerprofession.oeeo.ca). With the exception of some classroom sets, items reviewed are available on loan from the Margaret Wilson Library at the College. Contact Olivia Hamilton at **416-961-8800** (toll-free in Ontario **1-888-534-2222**), ext **679** or email [library@oct.ca](mailto:library@oct.ca).

## Stop the Stress in Schools

BY JOEY MANDEL

Mental resilience and practical strategies for coping with stress are key skills Ontario's revised Health and Physical Education Curriculum focuses on in order for students to be successful. To reach that goal, teachers have been charged with creating learning environments that not only cultivate students' cognitive development, but each child's emotional and psychological development as well.

In *Stop the Stress in Schools*, Mandel argues that teachers can do much to support students who may not have been formally identified with mental health challenges but who still struggle with "social skills, anxiety, chronic sadness, obsessiveness, explosive anger, disorganization and/or inattentiveness." The first step in creating a healthy and caring classroom is to take stock of one's own strategies for coping with conflict and stress. In the bustle and demands of a typical classroom, it's all too easy to react in negative ways that are not conducive to building the kinds of relationships essential to students' emotional well-being.

Mandel identifies three social-emotional character traits —

awareness, acceptance and the ability to manage stress — as essential to realizing positive mental health outcomes for children in our schools. In the context of developing each trait — like positive self-talk, feedback and calming strategies — the author provides a host of teacher prompts, teacher and student tracking charts, and checklists that teachers and students will find easy to use.

Given what we know about the link between high expectations and a positive classroom environment, teachers would be wise to adopt practices to support their students' mental health needs, and must themselves be supported in taking on this new challenge.

**Michael Bellrose**, OCT, is the principal at Algonquin Road Public School in Sudbury.

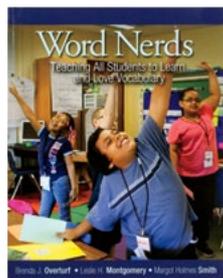


***Stop the Stress in Schools: Mental health strategies teachers can use to build a kinder gentler classroom***, Pembroke Publishers, Toronto, 2014, softcover, ISBN 978-1-55138-298-2, 128 pages, \$24.95, [pembrokepublishers.com](http://pembrokepublishers.com)

## Word Nerds

BY BRENDA J. OVERTURF, LESLIE H.

MONTGOMERY AND MARGOT HOLMES SMITH



Believe it or not, learning vocabulary can be a really fun and engaging way to create a classroom filled with word-loving students. *Word Nerds* reminds us

of the importance of regular, structured vocabulary instruction that expands the boundaries of what our students know about language, opening up new ways for

them to express themselves verbally and in written form.

Growing up, many children attend music or art classes, play sports or are involved in hobbies. All of these activities involve practise and developing technique and skills. In teaching vocabulary, we must provide students with the same opportunities. With ready-to-go lessons, this book offers specific instructions on games and activities, as well as a range of ideas for adapting to your classroom at the elementary or secondary levels. Moreover, it suggests many ways to integrate the ideas across the curriculum and to use them for assessment purposes.

*Word Nerds* is based on solid research that is introduced so concretely that it seamlessly eases its application into the classroom, guiding teachers to develop activities that best suit their own students. I would recommend this book as a great way to open up discussions flush with vocabulary and ideas. Most importantly, the activities build amazing interest and enthusiasm in the classroom while offering students some key building blocks for a word-rich future.

**Janet Cotreau**, OCT, is an occasional elementary school teacher with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

***Word Nerds: Teaching All Students to Learn and Love Vocabulary***, Stenhouse Publishers, Portland, Maine, 2013, softcover, ISBN 978-1-57110-954-5, 176 pages, \$28.95, [stenhouse.com](http://stenhouse.com)

## How to Read Literature Like a Professor

BY THOMAS C. FOSTER

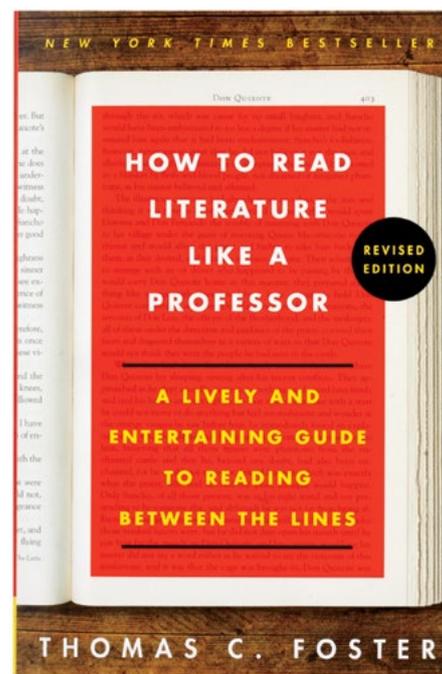
A decade ago, Thomas Foster, a veteran professor at University of Michigan-Flint, published a bestseller that helped students between high school and university understand what the writer calls, “the grammar of literature, a set of conventions and patterns, codes and rules that we learn to employ in dealing with a piece of writing.” The current edition, more of a reissue than the revision promised, continues to educate us about “memory, symbol, pattern.”

Throughout the different chapters, Foster shows us how the Bible, Shakespeare, folklore and the classical tradition have shaped English literature. Even as we lose sight of these sources, he reminds us, their essence persists. As writers build on the work of their

predecessors, they continue to manipulate the plots, write according to the conventions, and exploit the symbols that form the vocabulary deeply rooted in the original sources and common to all writing. As for symbols, Foster explains the principles of alchemy that transmute the base metal of the literal into the gold of the figurative; how the stuff of life — geography, weather, the seasons, illness, death, sex and violence — becomes the stock of literature.

In any book intended for a general audience, one can quibble about content. But given the quality of this book, it’s simply better to praise the cartographer who teaches us how to read a compass so that we can chart for ourselves the *terra incognita*.

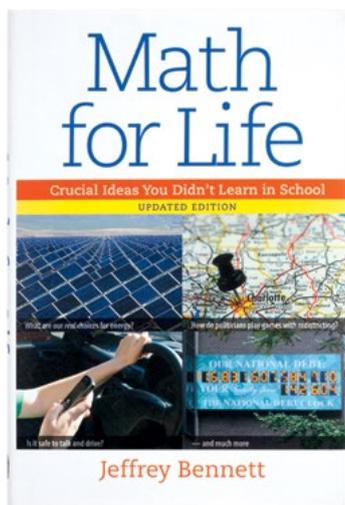
**Fred DuVal**, OCT, is a program officer with the Accreditation Unit of the Ontario College of Teachers.



**How to Read Literature Like a Professor: A Lively and Entertaining Guide to Reading Between the Lines**, HarperCollins Publishers, New York, 2014, softcover, ISBN 978-0-06-230167-3, 368 pages, \$19.99, [harpercollins.ca](http://harpercollins.ca)

## Math for Life

BY JEFFREY BENNETT



needed to break the topic down by applying the key ideas of quantitative reasoning. Bennett then shows how numbers and other mathematically based ideas can help us reason our way through problems that confront us in everyday life.

All levels of education are considered in *Math for Life*. Not surprisingly, the author identifies excellent teaching as the

Jeffrey Bennett is trying to understand why so many people describe themselves as “bad at math.” More importantly, he asks what can he do about it to change that mindset. Each chapter of this thought-provoking book starts with real-world, multiple-choice questions about a wide range of current, “non-mathematical” topics like national debt, cellphone use or fossil fuels. The rest of the chapter is devoted to examining the tools

single most decisive factor in student achievement. He calls upon teacher training to regard math like it does reading: a crucial tool for life. Bennett recognizes different rates of learning, but rejects different learning styles and preferences. He favours a “drill and kill” approach to mastering the numeracy basics, and suggests moving quickly from the concrete to the abstract when teaching math. One solution Bennett proposes is quite simple, yet powerfully effective. In his ideal classroom, he says, no one would be able to get away with saying — with either pride or acceptance — that they are “bad at math.”

On a personal level, this practical book challenges the reader to build on his or her existing knowledge and apply mathematical reasoning and effort to solve real-world problems. On a societal level it challenges us to build a society that is more adept at math. On an educational policy level, it encourages revisiting and revising mathematics curricula to meet the needs of 21st-century learners.

**Anne Marie Landon**, OCT, is a primary grade teacher at George Vanier Catholic School with the Renfrew County Catholic District School Board.

**Math for Life: Crucial Ideas You Didn't Learn in School**, Big Kid Science, 2013, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-937548-36-0, 216 pages, \$25, distributed by Independent Publishers Group, [math-for-life.com](http://math-for-life.com)

## The Dogs

BY ALLAN STRATTON

In his latest novel, this award-winning author and playwright has crafted an eerie psychological thriller. *The Dogs* is dark and atmospheric, and the lines between reality and the supernatural are blurred to create a ghost story in which violence and madness prevail.

Cameron and his mother have been running from an abusive past for years, moving from place to place in the hopes of hiding from Cameron's violent father. Cameron doesn't know the exact details of what sent them into hiding. And although his mother promises to share them when he is older, Cameron feels his mother is overprotective to the point of being paranoid. She limits his use of social media, keeps a getaway bag packed and always has an escape plan in place. These themes of uncertainty and paranoia thread their way through the book as Cameron struggles to decipher what is real and what is not.

The novel begins with Cameron and his mother making yet another getaway because she fears Cameron's father has found them. Their escape route takes them to a rundown farm where the boy discovers the previous owner of the farmhouse was killed by his own dog pack. Shortly after moving in, Cameron

starts hearing voices and encounters Jacky, the ghost of the boy who once lived on the farm. Is Jacky real, or is he a manifestation of Cameron's inner conflict? Cameron's mother worries about his behaviour, and after a violent outburst both Cameron and his mother wonder whether he is "turning into his father."

Ultimately, *The Dogs* is a coming-of-age story, one in which a boy struggles to understand his past and his relationship with his abusive father. Will solving the mystery at the farm bring him closer to understanding what really happened in his own family years earlier, and will it bring him the closure he needs to move forward? This page-turner — appropriate for readers in Grade 9 and up — will engage reluctant and seasoned readers alike, and will likely be at the top of many libraries' "books for boys" lists this year.

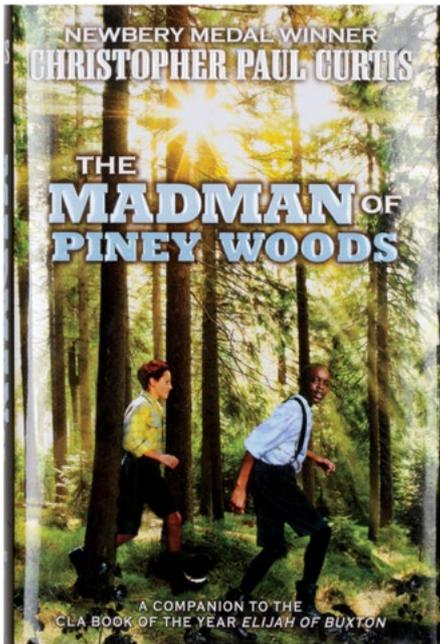


**Bev Bellrose** is a library technician at Sudbury Secondary School.

*The Dogs*, Scholastic Canada, Toronto, 2015, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-4431-2830-8, 288 pages, \$19.99, [scholastic.ca](http://scholastic.ca)

## The Madman of Piney Woods

BY CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS



This bestselling, award-winning author has written yet another wonderful historical novel that reads like *Tom Sawyer* and — like that classic predecessor — is brimming with adventure, humour and heartbreak. In fact, Curtis is often hailed as a modern-day Mark Twain. Written for children in Grades 4 to 6, the book is filled with intrigue and thoughtful reflections on how one's past can scar and affect one's future.

The second of the *Buxton* trilogy, *The Madman of Piney Woods* takes place 40 years after the first book, *Elijah of Buxton*. Although this book is described as a companion to *Elijah*, it stands on its own. This story focuses on Benji Alston, a young African-Canadian boy and Alvin "Red" Stockard. The two boys couldn't be more different. Benji wants to be a famous journalist; Red, a scientist. Benji is from a loving home in Buxton, a former runaway slave settlement; Red lives with his mostly absent father and angry, oftentimes abusive Irish grandmother in

nearby Chatham. Their unlikely friendship is one born of a shared experience; they've each met and talked with the legendary madman of Piney Woods.

Through their adventures, Benji and Red learn that adults can sometimes be frail and damaged, and that two young boys can be braver and stronger than they'd ever imagined. The novel deftly intertwines the stories of former slaves, the American Civil War, the Irish immigrant experience, racism and life in Southern Ontario in 1901. The author's website ([nobodybutcurtis.com](http://nobodybutcurtis.com)) has teaching resources for several of his other historical fiction works (which are just as highly recommended as this one), although currently there is not one for *Madman*. He is now working on the third book in the series.

**Terri Lawrence-Taylor, OCT**, is an anatomy and physiology instructor with the nursing program at St. Clair College in Windsor.

*The Madman of Piney Woods*, Scholastic Canada, Toronto, 2014, hardcover, ISBN 978-1-4431-3912-0, 373 pages, \$18.99, [scholastic.ca](http://scholastic.ca)



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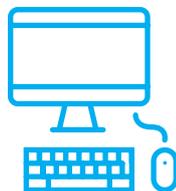
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# KEEN ON COLLABORATING

Grade 7 students jump at the chance to share work and collect peer input in an online environment.

BY STEFAN DUBOWSKI



Yvonne Sun-Hsu's students use Google's Apps for Education to complete their assignments.

**THE CHALLENGE:** Encourage students to collaborate and save time marking and reporting.

**THE SOLUTION:** Use Google's Classroom and Apps for Education to distribute assignments and track grades. Have students use the online software to share comments on their peers' work.

**LESSONS LEARNED:** Yvonne Sun-Hsu, OCT, a teacher at Silver Stream Public School in Richmond Hill, Ont., was surprised by how thoroughly students have embraced the education-focused collaboration system that she employs.

Sun-Hsu uses Google's Classroom, a feature of Apps for Education that facilitates student collaboration and helps her assess learners' performance. The Apps for Education suite includes Google Drive, Google Docs and other Google web-based applications. Unlike

versions of Google Apps available to non-teachers, Apps for Education provides increased data storage, additional technical support and other enhancements. Classroom is an app that teachers can use to distribute assignments and track completions.

At the start of each year, Sun-Hsu sets up Classroom for her classes. The tool generates class codes linked to students' individual Google accounts. When she uses Classroom to develop an assignment, the app copies the document and pushes it to each student's account.

Students complete their assignments in Apps in Education. They upload the work to Classroom and invite their classmates to comment. Once they process the peer input, students edit their work and, through Classroom, submit the material to Sun-Hsu.

At marking time, Sun-Hsu provides feedback with Classroom's grading and

## YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

### WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- Google Apps for Education ([oct-oeeo.ca/1GDolic](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1GDolic))
- Google Classroom ([classroom.google.com](http://classroom.google.com))

### STEPS TO TAKE:

- 1) Use Classroom to distribute assignments.
- 2) Have students complete assignments in Apps for Education tools, such as Google Docs. Have students submit assignments for peer review and teacher assessment through Classroom.
- 3) Use Classroom's comments module for marking. Use Apps for Education to collect and organize information for report cards.

comments modules. She returns the assignments to the students through the Google environment as well.

**OBSERVATIONS:** Sun-Hsu thought students might be nervous about sharing their work with classmates. She was wrong. In fact, she says students collect peer input even when collaboration isn't a requirement for the assignment. "They're keen on asking for feedback to truly improve on their work," she says.

The technology also means she can mark assignments and develop reports more efficiently. For instance, she uses Google Forms to create a document to track student performance. At report card time, she can quickly transport details from that document to a spreadsheet, sort the information into columns and instantly see all her notes on each student.

Sun-Hsu expected Apps for Education would help her save time and encourage kids to collaborate; however, what she's most impressed with is the impact these programs have had on her students. **PS**

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*The College's professional advisory Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media ([oct-oeeo.ca/1iqmDeO](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1iqmDeO)) guides members' professional judgment in the use of technology.*

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**HELPFUL HINT** Always check with your board's safe-use or acceptable-use policy, Yvonne Sun-Hsu, OCT, advises. If you're encouraging students to save work online, you may need to verify that the information will be kept confidential and stored appropriately.

# 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.*

## MEMBER SERVICES

### FAQ

Answers to the most frequently asked questions from College members.

#### ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

**Q) How can I find out what AQ courses are available in Ontario?**

**A)** Information on all Additional Qualification (AQ) courses offerings can be found using the Find an AQ search tool at [oct-oeeo.ca/liOweMR](http://oct-oeeo.ca/liOweMR).

**Q) How can I get a copy of my certificate that shows I have completed an AQ?**

**A)** You can download a copy of your certificate with your updated AQs through the members section ([oct-oeeo.ca/IMsHOGJ](http://oct-oeeo.ca/IMsHOGJ)) of the College website. If you don't see an earned qualification on your certificate within eight to 12 weeks of completing the course, please contact the provider to confirm they have reported the information to the College.

**Q) How do I find out who is offering a certain AQ?**

**A)** Information on all AQ course offerings can be found using the **Find an AQ** search tool.

**Q) What is the difference between the Schedules of AQs?**

**A)** The Teachers' Qualifications Regulation organizes a number of AQs by schedules according to their purposes. You can learn more about these schedules and the different purposes in the College's *Professional Advisory — Additional Qualifications* ([oct-oeeo.ca/1Vd39WT](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1Vd39WT)).

**Q) How is successful teaching experience calculated for admission to certain AQs?**

**A)** Teaching experience for AQs is verified by supervisory officers, and the calculation of experience is described on the Statement of Successful Teaching Experience form ([oct-oeeo.ca/liyPVax](http://oct-oeeo.ca/liyPVax)).

**Q) I completed studies that I think are equivalent to an AQ. How do I get these recognized on my record?**

**A)** You can submit an Application for Equivalent Standing ([oct-oeeo.ca/1Py-bZgj](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1Py-bZgj)), along with a fee. To be considered, your courses need to be completed at an approved teacher education institution (that is, completed at a faculty of education of an approved post-secondary institution), be in addition to your initial teacher education program required for certification, consist of at least 125 hours, and contain a concentrated study of teaching methodology appropriate for Ontario curriculum in elementary and/or secondary schools.

#### MEMBER INFORMATION

**Q) How can I get a copy of my tax receipt?**

**A)** You are no longer required to include a copy of your tax receipt with your return. You can simply enter the amount of your annual fee payment on line 212 under Professional Fees.

You can print tax receipts for membership fees you've paid to the College through your private Members section account at [oct.ca](http://oct.ca) if necessary.

Client Services can also provide you with copies of tax receipts. Call 416-961-8800 or 1-888-534-2222 (toll-free in Ontario). The College will mail or fax the first copy of your current tax receipt to you free of charge, but you will be charged \$9 for any further requests or receipts for previous years.

**Q) How do I access the Members section of the College's website?**

**A)** Go directly to the Members' area ([oct-oeeo.ca/1MsHOGJ](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1MsHOGJ)) to open an account. Simply answer a few questions and you will be given a password to access your account. If you have used the site before but have forgotten your password, you can have your password emailed to you ([oct-oeeo.ca/1OVxh9N](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1OVxh9N)).

Members can use the following links to get access to the proper browser encryption:

- [microsoft.com/windows/ie/](http://microsoft.com/windows/ie/)
- [browser.netscape.com/ns8/](http://browser.netscape.com/ns8/)
- [mozilla.com/firefox/](http://mozilla.com/firefox/)

If you're having trouble, call Client Services directly and we can help you through the process.

**Q) How do I update personal information that appears on the public register?**

**A)** Please use the Request to Update Registry form to update registry information ([oct-oeeo.ca/1Wlk8sI](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1Wlk8sI)).

#### MEMBERSHIP FEES

**Q) How do I renew my College membership if I've been suspended for not paying my fees?**

**A)** You can reinstate your membership online anytime by paying the annual membership fee ([oct-oeeo.ca/1Js8jaM](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1Js8jaM)) and the reinstatement fee (currently \$130). You can email, mail or fax your signed Membership Reinstatement form ([oct-oeeo.ca/1Owl6zJ](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1Owl6zJ)) to renew your Certificate of Qualification and Registration. Please allow up to four weeks from the time we receive the document to return your membership status to good standing. You can check your status on the public register of our website.

## MEMBER SERVICES

Email, mail or fax your completed form to:  
Ontario College of Teachers  
101 Bloor St. West  
Toronto, ON M5S 0A1  
Fax: 416-961-8822  
Email: [info@oct.ca](mailto:info@oct.ca)

**Q) When are College membership fees due and how do I pay?**

**A)** Annual membership fees ([oct-oeeo.ca/1NWQmsJ](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1NWQmsJ)) are due January 1 each year and payment must be received before April 15 to maintain your good standing status. Teachers in good standing whose fee is not deducted automatically from payroll and who have not remitted their fees will receive a reminder invoice either by email or by mail in mid-February. It's not necessary to wait for an invoice before paying.

You can pay your fee through web/telephone banking by adding Ontario College of Teachers as a payee to your bill payment listing with your financial institution or by Visa, Mastercard or American Express, either on our website or by phone. You can also mail a cheque or money order payable to the College. (Please do not postdate the cheque. Write your registration number on the back and ensure we have your current contact information.) Your fee payment must be received by April 15 or your membership status will be changed to Suspended Non-payment of Fees.

**Q) If I do not pay my fee now, will I receive another notice before April 15?**

**A)** No. This is the only invoice you will receive. The onus is on individual members to ensure their membership fee is paid by April 15.

**Q) What period does [the] \$150 fee cover?**

**A)** Your annual membership fee covers the current calendar year from January 1 to December 31, 2015, and is not pro-rated.

**Q) What should I do if I am retiring or leaving the profession?**

**A)** You should fill out the electronic Notice of Retirement form found in the Members' area ([oct-oeeo.ca/1MsHOGJ](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1MsHOGJ))

of our website. If you do not pay your fee and we have a Notice of Retirement form, your status on the public register will be changed to Retired.

If you do not pay your fee and you do not submit an electronic Notice of Retirement form, your status on the public register will be changed to Suspended Non-payment of Fees.

If you are going to continue to teach, you will need to pay your annual membership fee and your status on the public register will remain in good standing. You cannot continue to teach occasionally with a status of Retired.

**Q) What will happen if my membership fee is not paid by April 15?**

**A)** To teach in a publicly funded school in Ontario, you must be a member in good standing with the College. If payment is not received by April 15, your membership in the College will be suspended for non-payment of fees.

This means you lose the right to teach in a publicly funded school in Ontario and lose the Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) status.

To reinstate your membership, you will have to complete the Membership Reinstatement form and pay a \$130 reinstatement fee, in addition to the annual fee of \$150.

You can also email, mail or fax your signed Membership Reinstatement form ([oct-oeeo.ca/10wl6zJ](http://oct-oeeo.ca/10wl6zJ)) to renew your Certificate of Qualification and Registration. Please allow up to four weeks from the time we receive the document to return your membership status to good standing. You can check your status on the public register of our website. To pay your annual membership fee, please visit [oct.ca](http://oct.ca) or [oct-oeeo.ca/1Js8jaM](http://oct-oeeo.ca/1Js8jaM).

**TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS**

**Q) Can I ask to remove an Additional Qualification from my record on the College's public register?**

**A)** The College cannot delete an Additional Qualification that you have earned, just as a university would not revoke a degree because the individual no longer feels current in the subject knowledge that was demonstrated to earn the degree initially. **PS**

## DON'T FORGET TO PAY YOUR 2016 MEMBER FEE

The annual member fee is due.

If your fee is not deducted through payroll, please make sure to pay \$150 directly to the College.

Protect your good standing status and preserve your ability to teach in an Ontario publicly funded school.

### IT'S EASY. SUBMIT YOUR FEE:

- by debit or credit card online at [oct.ca](http://oct.ca)
- via your bank or financial institution.

Use the seven-digit invoice number we assigned to you the last time you paid your annual member fee as your online account number. Please call us if you've forgotten or don't have it.

- via the College's mobile app
- by phone at 416-961-8800 (toll-free in Ontario at 1-888-534-2222). Follow the prompts.

### THE DEADLINE FOR RECEIPT OF PAYMENT IS APRIL 15, 2016.



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**Brigitte (Bidal) Piquette,  
OCT #203194**

The College Council welcomes new elected Council member Brigitte (Bidal) Piquette, who fills the Northeast Region

Full-Time position. Piquette teaches online courses for the Consortium d'apprentissage virtuel de langue française de l'Ontario, which serves Ontario's French-language school boards' e-Learning program.

Piquette started her career teaching a summer course in typing and word processing in 1995. From 1996 to 1997, she taught management, marketing, accounting, and public relations at Collège Boréal in Sudbury and Sturgeon Falls. Since then, Piquette has gone on to teach secondary school English, nutrition and health and co-operative education with the Conseil scolaire catholique Franco-Nord, as well as business and commerce, social sciences and accounting in schools in North Bay and Sturgeon Falls. From 2005 to 2006, she was with her board's Program and Pedagogical Services, facilitating the Ministry's Student Success program initiatives. Between 2008 and 2010, she worked at the Alternative Education Centre at École secondaire catholique Franco-Cité, where she was responsible for helping adults obtain their high school diplomas and assisting high school students who faced challenges in regular classroom settings.

Piquette worked as an international teacher in Dubai and Cyprus from 2010 to 2012, taught online courses through the French-Language Virtual Learning Consortium of Ontario, and wrote online courses for the Franco-Ontarian pedagogical resources centre. Prior to teaching, she served as a special events co-ordinator for the West Nipissing Economic Development Corporation, co-ordinated a promotional tour for French-language radio and television programming for West Nipissing for the CBC-SRC, and was a professional model.

Piquette has a bachelor of business management from Ryerson University, a Nutritional Therapy Practitioner Diploma from the Quebec College of Alternative Medicine, and a B.Ed. from Laurentian University.



**Jane Ishibashi**

The College Council welcomes new Council member Jane Ishibashi, who was appointed in August 2015 for a three-year term.

Ishibashi is an associate with Oakville Psychologists, providing psychological assessments for children and adolescents. She began her career working in psychological assessment and program development for the Richelieu Valley Board of Education in McMasterville, Que., from 1973 until 1980.

Ishibashi was seconded by the Ministry of Education from 1990 to 1992 to the Robarts School in London as a learning disabilities consultant for Northwestern Ontario. She has also worked with young offenders at Oakville's Syl Apps School and with exceptional children at the Halton Board of Education's General Brock High School IEP Centre.

From 1997 to 2013, Ishibashi conducted psychological assessments of kindergarten to Grade 12 students with the Halton Catholic District School Board. Prior to that, she provided similar services for 10 years with the Haldimand Board of Education (now Grand Erie District School Board).

Ishibashi has a BA from McGill University.



**Ravi Vethamany,  
OCT #285995**

The College Council welcomes new elected Council member Ravi Vethamany, who fills the Northeast Region Part-Time/Full-Time position. Vethamany teaches at the secondary level with the Rainbow District School Board. Since joining the profession in 1998, he has also taught elementary and secondary school students at boards in Toronto, Ottawa and York Region.

Vethamany has been a program leader, professional development leader and curriculum writer, an Ontario Teacher Testing Program administrator, and a researcher with Queen's University. He is also a member of the Law Society of



**Marie-Thérèse  
Hokayem**

The College Council welcomes new Council member Marie-Thérèse Hokayem, who was

appointed in September 2015 for a three-year term. Hokayem is a retired evaluation manager who worked in the Office of the Inspector General for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development (DFATD) from 2003 to 2014. As a team leader in complex evaluation projects, Hokayem assessed the relevance, cost effectiveness and results of DFATD program transfer of payments and partnership arrangements with other international governments and organizations.

Between 1998 and 2003, Hokayem served as a review/evaluation manager with Correctional Service Canada (CSC), where she measured the impact and effectiveness of policies, programs and initiatives. She also served CSC as an operational planning analyst, project officer and auditor.

Hokayem has a master's degree in criminology and a baccalaureate in sociology from the University of Ottawa. She is also fluent in French and Arabic.

Upper Canada and served as a legal aid lawyer between 1990 and 1996. He worked as a teacher assistant for the University of Ottawa Faculty of Education from 2003 to 2004, and was a member of the Ontario Health Professions Appeal and Review Board from 2008 to 2010. Vethamany was awarded the 2015 CIVIX Student Vote award for enabling young Canadians to experience the voting process first-hand and practise the habits of informed and engaged citizenship.

Vethamany is a cognitive coach, Tribes trainer, True Colors trainer, licensed soccer coach and a fitness instructor. He holds a B.Sc., Honours, and an LLB from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia, a B.Ed. from the University of Toronto, and a M.Ed. from the University of Ottawa. **PS**



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# OVERSIGHTS

The College's Investigation Committee considers all complaints made to the College about its members and reviews all information resulting from investigations.

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.

In the following cases, the matters were investigated by the Investigation Committee but not referred to a disciplinary hearing as a hearing was not deemed to be the appropriate outcome.

To express its concerns, the Investigation Committee can issue an admonishment, a caution, advice or a reminder to teachers who are the subject of complaints, or can choose to take no action at all.

### Case 1

In 2011, the College received a letter from a school board indicating that a student had seen a teacher's photograph on her Facebook page. The teacher could be seen lying on a bed with her partner. The individuals donned minimal to no clothing from the waist up. A second student had also seen additional photographs of the teacher in sexually suggestive poses on the Facebook page of a professional photographer.

The teacher explained she had hired a photographer to do a photo shoot

to celebrate Valentine's Day with her partner. The teacher gave the photographer a Facebook password to a personal account and asked him to post a non-suggestive photo from the shoot onto her Facebook page, which he did. The photographer mistakenly posted the entire photo album on his own Facebook page, which included suggestive photos.

The teacher acknowledged that it was not prudent to give the Facebook password to the photographer.

### Case 2

A father filed a complaint about a teacher who had posted photographs of his daughter on a publicly accessible website, contrary to his written directions. The father stated that his child was at risk of kidnapping and, for safety concerns, he had not given permission to the school to photograph his child.

The teacher acknowledged that the posting of the photo on his class website,

which could be accessed by the public, was a significant lapse of judgment.

### Case 3

In 2014, the parents of a student complained to the College about a teacher who had accidentally sent them an email containing personal opinions about the parents' parenting skills. The email was intended for the school principal, who later apologized to the parents and offered to have the teacher apologize to them in person or in writing.

The teacher acknowledged that he should have been more careful to ensure that his email was sent only to its intended recipients.

### Case 4

In 2014, the College received a letter from a school board about a teacher who had posted personal, inappropriate sexual messages on her Twitter account. The posts were discovered by students and were reported to a parent.

The teacher was embarrassed and remorseful about the circumstances leading to the complaint as she assumed that this was a private account.

**If you were a member of the Investigation Committee, what would you have issued to these teachers to express your concern:**

- an admonishment (more severe)
- caution
- advice
- a reminder (less severe)

parents in an appropriate manner. The committee noted the teacher's acknowledgment of placing inappropriate comments on her Twitter account and her feelings of embarrassment and remorse. They reminded her to uphold the distinction between the professional and the private life of a teacher. They referred her to the College's *Professional Advisory — Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media*. **Case 4: Caution.**

publicly accessible website. The committee shared the concerns of the complainant and directed the teacher to ensure the safety of students at all times, and to use technology in an appropriate manner. **Case 3: Reminder.** The committee noted that the teacher acknowledged that he should have been more careful to ensure that his email was sent only to the intended recipients. The committee reminded the teacher to communicate with

The allegations regarding posting, or allowing posting, of inappropriate photographs on Facebook caused concerns for the committee. They encouraged the teacher to become familiar with the College's *Professional Advisory — Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media*. **Case 2: Admonishment.** The committee noted that the teacher admitted and regretted posting the photographs on the

## 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*.

In the September 2015 issue of *Professionally Speaking*, a case summary incorrectly stated that Michael Wade Canning had been reprimanded by the Disciplinary Committee in connection with a criminal conviction. Canning was not criminally convicted of any offence. He was found guilty under Section 11(2) of the *Highway Traffic Act* for failing to apply to the Ministry of Transportation for a permit within six days. The College apologizes for the error.

**Member:** André Bédard, OCT

**Registration No:** 283851

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions

A Discipline Committee panel ordered that André Bédard, a teacher from the Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est, be reprimanded for abusing students verbally and physically.

Bédard, who was certified to teach in April 1994, did not attend the public hearing on March 5, 2015, but was represented by legal counsel.

The panel heard that numerous inappropriate incidents happened during the 2008–09 and 2009–10 school years including:

- hitting a male student lightly on the head with a metal water bottle and making comments on his appearance
- dropping a ball on a female student's stomach while she was doing sit-ups.

The member was subsequently transferred to another school following complaints from the students' parents.

The panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered him to appear before the panel on July 7, 2015, to receive a reprimand, and required that he successfully complete, at his own expense, a pre-approved course

on anger management and maintaining appropriate boundaries within four months of the order.

In its decision, the panel said, "The member failed to maintain the standards of the teaching profession by abusing students verbally and physically, which would reasonably be regarded by members, as disgraceful, dishonourable or unprofessional."

**Member:** Guy Boissonneault, OCT

**Registration No:** 439867

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions

A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board teacher Guy Boissonneault for physically abusing a student.

Boissonneault, who was certified to teach in October 2000, attended the public hearing on June 15, 2015, with his legal counsel.

The panel heard that, in 2013, he grabbed a student and pushed him against the handrail of a portable for a maximum of 15 seconds to put an end to inappropriate behaviour by the student, who continued to hit him in the behind, despite the member's repeated directives. The student had been leaning against the handrail just prior to the incident.

Boissonneault also failed to fulfil his duty as supervisor during two field trips.

The panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered him to appear before the panel immediately following the hearing to receive a reprimand. It also directed the member to successfully complete, at his own expense, a pre-approved course on boundary issues and on student supervision.

In its decision, the panel said, "Members of the College are required to comply with professional standards and to demonstrate conduct becoming of a member of the profession."

**Member:** Not identified

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions

A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded an Ottawa-Carleton District School Board teacher for making inappropriate comments on the physical appearance of two of his students.

The member, who was certified to teach in February 1995, attended the public hearing on June 8, 2015, with his legal counsel.

He made the comments during the 2011–12 school year. His board issued a letter of discipline and suspended him for one day without pay. He was also required to complete a course on boundaries, which he completed successfully.

The panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered him to appear before it immediately following the hearing to receive a reprimand. It also directed him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a pre-approved course on professional boundaries.

In its decision, the panel said, "Although the member may have intended for his comments to be light-hearted jokes, members of the teaching profession should not make negative and inappropriate comments about the physical appearance of their students."

**Member:** Andréane Hélène Cadieux

**Registration No:** 528229

**Decision:** Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Andréane Hélène Cadieux, a former

teacher at the Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est, for engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a student.

Licensed to teach in June 2008, Cadieux did not attend the hearing on October 21, 2013, nor was she represented by legal counsel.

Cadieux entered into a sexual relationship with a student through webcam communication. She crossed the professional boundaries between students and teachers by having inappropriate conversations with students on Facebook and MSN (Hotmail), and exchanging emails and messages of a sexual nature.

The Discipline Committee panel found Cadieux guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke her Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its written decision, the panel said, “This misconduct is extremely serious and undermines the public’s confidence in the teaching profession.”

**Member:** Marc Claege

**Registration No:** 444748

**Decision:** Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the teaching certificate of Limestone District School Board teacher Marc Claege related to a criminal conviction for sexually assaulting a student.

Claege, who was certified to teach in September 2001, did not attend the public hearing on February 12, 2015, nor was he represented by legal counsel.

Claege became the student’s mentor and confidant. Between October 2010 and April 2013, he regularly and systematically sexually abused the student. While the student was uncomfortable with Claege’s behaviour, he was afraid that if he did not allow Claege to touch him, he would lose him as his confidant.

Claege was found guilty of sexual assault and sentenced to eight months in jail and placed on 18 months’ probation.

The panel found Claege guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its written decision, the panel said, “The seriousness of this misconduct

is compounded by the fact that the member was acting as a mentor and confidant to the student and used this relationship against the student for his own sexual gratification. The member had no regard for the well-being of the student ... and his family.”

**Member:** Salvatore (Sam) Congi

**Registration No:** 179960

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Salvatore Congi, a former teacher at the Conseil scolaire catholique du Nouvel-Ontario, for inappropriate conduct.

Congi, who was certified to teach in September 1992, attended the hearings on September 18, 23 and 24, 2013, and on July 21, 2014. He was represented by legal counsel.

The panel heard that, in November 2008, Congi was alone with a female student in his parked car on an isolated road.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for one month, and that he appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Congi was directed to complete a course of instruction in maintaining appropriate boundaries at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said that “his conduct was inappropriate and constitutes flagrant disregard of the professional relationship which must exist between a teacher and a student.”

**Member:** Andrea Roseanne Davidson

**Registration No:** 296740

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the teaching certificate of Andrea Roseanne Davidson, a former teacher at York Region District School Board for her ongoing pattern of lying and for verbally, physically and emotionally abusing a young student.

Davidson, who was certified to teach in August 1998, did not attend the public hearing on February 10, 2015, but was represented by legal counsel.

In November 2007, Davidson, who was employed at the time by the Durham District School Board, pled guilty to five criminal charges for stealing a colleague’s credit card. She received a conditional discharge.

Her employment was terminated by that board. The termination was grieved and, in 2007, the parties settled the grievance on the basis that the member resign from the board. She was found guilty of professional misconduct by a Discipline Committee panel of the College in November 2008.

In 2009 and 2010, Davidson applied for various teaching positions with the York Region District School Board and falsified information in her application and during an interview about her employment termination and her criminal charges. In 2009, she was hired as an occasional teacher by the board and was hired again in 2012 to complete two long-term teaching positions.

In December 2012, Davidson intentionally tripped a young student who was hurt during the incident by hitting his face on the ground. She reacted by saying to the student, “That’s what you get for running.” The board terminated her employment.

The panel found Davidson guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to suspend her Certificate of Qualification and Registration for two years starting on February 10, 2015.

Furthermore, Davidson was ordered to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand, and required to successfully complete, at her own expense, a pre-approved course of instruction covering professional ethics.

Davidson’s legal counsel suggested that the only “glimmer of hope” that the member may return to teaching would be to not have her name published in this summary. The panel did not agree.

In its written decision, the panel found “it was more important that the public be informed of the member’s repeated conduct, abuse of a student and the penalty ordered.”

**Member:** Leonard Samuel Foucault

**Registration No:** 367327

## HEARINGS

**Decision: Revocation**

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the teaching certificate of Leonard Samuel Foucault, a former teacher at the Sudbury Catholic District School Board, for abusing students.

Foucault, who was certified to teach in June 1979, did not attend the public hearing on May 21, 2015, nor was his legal counsel present.

The panel heard that Foucault verbally, physically, and psychologically or emotionally abused several extremely vulnerable students on numerous occasions. For example:

- he grabbed a student by the back of the head and yelled “focus.” He also grabbed him by the face and screamed instructions to him
- on two occasions, he pulled a student by the ponytail
- he insisted on waiting for the nurse to arrive at the school before allowing medical attention to an ill student with a temperature of 99.8 degrees F
- he also bullied and humiliated his colleagues and created a poisonous work environment in which at least one of his educational assistants feared him and was anxious about working with him.

The panel found Foucault guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its decision, the panel said, “The member’s egregious conduct negatively impacted students and staff, and occurred repeatedly over the course of several months, in the face of repeated complaints from staff. The teaching profession expects more of its members.”

**Member:** Vasilios Georgiopoulos, OCT  
**Registration No:** 515861

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel directed Vasilios Georgiopoulos, an occasional teacher of the Simcoe County District School Board, to receive a reprimand for inappropriate conduct.

The member, who was certified to teach in March 2007, attended the January 29, 2015, hearing and was represented by

legal counsel.

During the 2010–11 school year, the member repeatedly conducted himself in a disgraceful, dishonourable and unprofessional way in a number of incidents including:

- making physical contact with a student who inadvertently dropped hotdogs in his classroom
- sending disruptive students into the hallway without instructing them to go to the office and without notifying the office of their pending arrival
- breaking a student’s umbrella while attempting to close it, and verbally abusing the same student by calling him a “vandal.”

The panel heard evidence that the member was advised by the board to complete a classroom management course, yet his behaviour continued at another school approximately three months later. The member ultimately completed the course in February 2011.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct. Georgiopoulos was directed to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand immediately following the hearing. As well, he was ordered to complete a pre-approved course, at his own expense, on anger management.

In its decision, the panel said that “he did not exercise the appropriate and professional boundaries that are mandatory when communicating with students.”

**Member:** Sean Lee Gibson  
**Registration No:** 455555

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Sean Lee Gibson, a former teacher at the Windsor-Essex Catholic District School Board, for abusive and unprofessional conduct.

Gibson, who was certified to teach in June 2002, did not attend the March 6, 2015, hearing, nor was he represented by legal counsel.

During the 2011–12 and 2012–13 academic years, Gibson’s conduct was not what was expected from a member of the teaching profession. For example:

- he was found guilty of possession of cocaine which he used at school
- he verbally abused a student when he referred to the work of the student as “garbage” in front of a class
- he emotionally abused at least two students by making them sit in the corner of his classroom facing the wall for long, continuous periods of time
- parents complained that some students felt very anxious about the possibility of being placed in the member’s class
- he behaved unprofessionally in several meetings with parents, colleagues and school administrators.

His employment with the board was terminated in November 2012.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct, and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for 12 months and that he appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

In addition, the panel imposed a number of terms, conditions or limitations on Gibson’s teaching certificate. For example, he is required to be screened and monitored with regard to his substance abuse prior to beginning or returning to any teaching position.

The panel also ordered that he successfully complete significant coursework prior to returning to the teaching profession.

In its written decision, the panel stated that, in addition to having other concerns, it was, “particularly troubled by the fact that the member used cocaine at the school while there were children under his care. This conduct is completely unacceptable and must be met with severe consequences.”

**Member:** John Alexander Spahich  
Gordon, OCT  
**Registration No:** 477629

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded John Alexander Spahich Gordon, a former teacher at the York Region District School Board, for inappropriate behaviour.

Gordon, who was certified to teach in June 2004, attended the public hearing on June 19, 2015, with his legal counsel.

During the 2008–09 school year, Gordon

made inappropriate, offensive and demeaning comments to students.

For example:

- he told students that, while teaching at another school that had many Jewish students, he arranged the desks in his classroom in the shape of a swastika
- he said to his class, after a female student who was eating a lollipop left the classroom, “That’s the only thing her boyfriend will ever like about her, that she can suck on things for a long time.”
- he made insulting comments regarding the physical stature of one student and the speech impediment of another student.

His employment with the board was terminated in 2009.

The panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered him to appear before the panel immediately following the hearing to receive a reprimand. He was also directed to successfully complete, at his own expense, pre-approved courses on boundary violations and sensitivity training.

In its decision, the panel said, “The courses of instruction regarding boundary violations and sensitivity training will assist in the rehabilitation of the member.”

**Member:** Lenford Dale Grant

**Registration No:** 176554

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Ottawa Catholic School Board’s teacher Lenford Dale Grant for repeatedly engaging in inappropriate conduct.

Grant, who was certified to teach in June 1982, was represented by a lawyer and attended the hearing that was held on January 14, 2015.

In May 2006, Grant, who maintained occasional teaching positions at a school, started to approach students and attempted to recruit them as models, beauty pageant contestants and for television commercials.

The board removed him from its occasional teacher list, directed him to view a video and read certain documents provided by the board, and placed him on

probation for his conduct. He continued to engage in similar behaviour at another school during the two following years.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for one month, starting on January 14, 2015, and that he appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Grant was directed to complete a course of instruction in professional boundaries and boundary violation issues at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said, “[His] lack of judgment was made apparent by his continued and ongoing misconduct and disregard for the previous warnings he received from the board.”

**Member:** Clinton Jeffery Hockin, OCT

**Registration No:** 420510

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions

A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Clinton Jeffery Hockin, a teacher of the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, for engaging in a pattern of misconduct.

Hockin, who was certified to teach in July 1998, attended the February 20, 2015, hearing and was represented by legal counsel.

The misconduct — which happened during the 2012–13 school year — included disregard toward female students by making demeaning and offensive comments, sharing with students inappropriate personal information, binding a student with masking tape, playing songs with inappropriate lyrics, calling students names and making reference to sexual orientation, and making inappropriate comments to colleagues that could be heard by students.

Following the board’s investigation, Hockin was suspended for three days without pay at the start of the 2013–14 school year and transferred to another school in the board.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that he appear before the panel to receive a reprimand immediately after the hearing.

In addition, Hockin was directed to

complete a course of instruction, at his own expense, in adolescent development and professional boundaries with students.

In its written decision, the panel said that “classroom discussions should not have a negative impact on students, especially young students who are easily influenced. The incidents above clearly demonstrate the member’s lack of good judgment. Even if the member, in some instances, recognized the inappropriateness of his behaviour and attempted to fix the situation, the committee is concerned that he repeatedly made poor decisions.”

**Member:** Charles Thomas Jennings

**Registration No:** 216260

**Decision:** Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the certificate of Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board teacher Charles Thomas Jennings related to a criminal conviction for sexually assaulting a female student.

Licensed to teach in June 1993, Jennings did not attend the February 17, 2015, hearing nor was he represented by legal counsel.

Jennings met the student on a class trip in March 2012 and they began texting one another and spending time together. During the 2011–12 and 2012–13 academic year, Jennings had an inappropriate personal relationship with her and engaged in sexual contact and inappropriate electronic communication.

He was convicted of sexual assault and given a 90-day conditional sentence and 15 months’ probation.

The Discipline Committee panel found Jennings guilty of professional misconduct, and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

The panel found that “[His] behaviour has brought the profession into disrepute and was in conflict with the duty of a teacher to protect students.”

**Member:** Rose Marie Kellington

**Registration No:** 200153

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Avon Maitland District

## HEARINGS

School Board's teacher Rose Marie Kellington for purchasing alcohol for an underage student, and for verbally and physically abusing a student.

Kellington, who was certified to teach in June 1991, was represented by a lawyer and attended the hearing that was held on February 6, 2015.

In April 2011, Kellington — while driving her daughter and other students to a party — vocalized her dislike for a student as she believed that student was bullying her daughter. Another student disputed Kellington's claim, which led her to accuse the student of being a bully as well, angrily opened the passenger door and physically removed her from her car and drove away.

Later in the evening, the member's serious and impulsive behaviour continued upon arrival at the party. When she saw the student she believed was bullying her daughter, she began moving toward her with a pointed finger and started yelling, swearing and grabbing the student by the collar and vigorously shook her while screaming obscenities. Kellington pushed the student causing her to hit her head against a glass door. She repeated this action a second time.

Kellington's board suspended her without pay for 30 days. She was subsequently transferred to another school within the board and took two courses on boundary issues, teamwork and conflict management.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct.

The panel also ordered that her teaching certificate be suspended for 30 days — which happened from May 19, 2011 to June 30, 2011 — and that she appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Kellington was directed to complete a course or courses of instruction in appropriate boundaries and boundary violation issues and anger management at her own expense. She was directed to do so within eight months of the date of this hearing.

In its written decision, the panel said,

“The Committee finds this conduct to be unacceptable. Student-teacher boundaries are essential for all teachers. The member failed to fulfil her role as a teacher which is required at all times and not just inside the classroom.”

**Member:** Joseph Robert Marc Lavigne, OCT  
**Registration No:** 200746

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel directed Joseph Robert Marc Lavigne, a principal employed by the Conseil scolaire public du Nord-Est de l'Ontario, to receive a reprimand for contravening the guideline relating to the safety of the board's facilities and the use of the board's computer network.

The member, who was certified to teach in June 1992, attended the April 29, 2015, hearing and was represented by legal counsel.

Lavigne installed the Skype software program on his computer at school without the board's written permission. In 2012, he also sent personal, intimate emails and communications using the board's email account.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and directed him to appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand. As well, the member was ordered to complete a pre-approved course, at his own expense, on ethics and responsibilities of administrators.

In its decision, the panel said, “By sending personal, intimate emails and communications using the board's email account, the member failed to comply with this guideline [the board's guideline] ... By engaging in a personal, intimate conversation with a person outside the school using Skype, his actions were rash and, as such, could damage public trust in the teaching profession.”

**Member:** Luc Bernard Lemieux  
**Registration No:** 428030

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Luc Bernard Lemieux, a teacher of the Conseil scolaire Viamonde,

for sexual abuse.

Lemieux, who was certified to teach in May 1999, was represented by legal counsel and attended the hearings held on April 24, 29, 30 and May 21, 2014, and January 19, 20 and March 31, 2015.

Starting in 2004 and over the next six school years, Lemieux made numerous remarks of a sexual nature toward several students including:

- “As long as they're big enough for a handful and small enough for a mouthful” (while discussing a student's breasts).
- “I know I'm not supposed to tell you that, but you look really gorgeous tonight.”
- “Don't you love me?”
- “Do you have feelings for me?”
- “I love you.”
- “I would like to think a boy like me would have a chance with a girl like you.”

In addition, his relationships with five students were overly familiar and exceeded the boundaries between teacher and student. He demonstrated favouritism by giving them gifts, such as silver necklaces, a stuffed bear holding a heart reading “Just say yes,” a bouquet of white roses and money. He was also lending students his debit card and cellphone, sending them numerous personal texts and emails, and inviting them to lunch during school hours.

Lemieux also suggested to female students belonging to a team to wear only a sports bra during one practice and encouraged a student, in front of the class, to take off a sweater she was wearing under a see-through jacket.

In the 2011–12 school year, he was reassigned to another school with the board, and there have been no other complaints or allegations of inappropriate conduct since then.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for 18 months as of July 1, 2015, and that he appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Lemieux was directed to complete a course of instruction in

maintaining appropriate boundaries and supervising students at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said, “It is essential that teachers be familiar with the boundaries that must be maintained in their relationships with students. By engaging in inappropriate relationships with students, including inappropriate communications of a sexual nature, the member failed to observe these boundaries.”

**Member:** Elias Pantelis Leousis  
**Registration No:** 445629

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of College member Elias Pantelis Leousis for being untruthful about his criminal record, for showing disregard for a student’s well-being and for failing to follow directions given to him by his principal.

Leousis, who was certified to teach in June 2001, attended the April 1, 2015, hearing and was represented by legal counsel.

The Discipline Committee panel heard that, in 2001, the member submitted an application form to the College and made false statements regarding his criminal history. In 1995, he was adjudicated guilty of child abuse and battery in a Florida court.

The panel was troubled by Leousis’s ongoing dishonesty when he continued to be untruthful about his criminal record while applying for a teaching position with the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board. He was hired by the board in 2011.

The panel also heard that he made an inappropriate comment to a student and, despite being told by his principal to refrain from discussing the incident with the student, Leousis apologized to him causing the student to feel uncomfortable.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for six months starting on March 1, 2015, and that he appear before the panel, immediately after the hearing, to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Leousis was directed to complete a course of instruction in

professional ethics at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel members found “the member’s ongoing pattern of dishonesty to be disgraceful and unprofessional ... The committee further finds that the member’s thoughtless words caused discomfort to a student and his parents.”

**Member:** John William Lowrie  
**Registration No:** 235824

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the teaching certificate of York Region District School Board teacher John William Lowrie for failing to comply with school procedures, making inappropriate comments to students and commenting inappropriately about the principal.

Lowrie, who was certified to teach in June 1988, did not attend the April 15, 16, 2015, hearing nor was he represented by legal counsel.

During the 2011–12 school year, Lowrie failed to comply with the appropriate school procedures regarding school or trips and told students about a school trip before receiving approval by the board.

He made several inappropriate comments including telling a student and/or students to “shut up” in class, and calling students “losers.” The member also made threatening comments about the principal in the presence of staff and students.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for six months starting on the date of the order, and that he appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Lowrie was directed to complete a course of instruction in anger management with an emphasis on professional boundaries and sensitivity toward students — at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said that “The member demonstrated a pattern of rude, disrespectful, and inappropriate behaviour.”

**Member:** Hayden Ashford McLean  
**Registration No:** 214559

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended Toronto District School Board auto mechanics teacher Hayden Ashford McLean and ordered his certificate be suspended in connection with a vehicle that was donated to the school’s auto mechanics shop.

McLean, who was certified to teach in April 1995, attended the public hearing on January 15, 2015, with his legal counsel.

The panel heard that during the 2009–10 school year, McLean transferred the ownership of a vehicle donated to the school’s auto mechanics shop, for teaching purposes, into his own name. In order to transfer the ownership of the vehicle into his own name, he copied the donor’s signature from the licence plate renewal form onto the owner portion of the ownership document. McLean acknowledged that he did not have permission from the donor, the school or the board to transfer ownership of the vehicle into his name.

Following the board’s investigation, McLean was suspended by the board for 15 days and was required to review the board’s process for vehicle donations.

The panel found McLean guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to suspend his Certificate of Qualification and Registration for 15 days. Furthermore, McLean was ordered to appear before the panel immediately following the hearing to receive a reprimand, and required to successfully complete, at his own expense, a pre-approved course of instruction covering ethical expectations of teachers.

In its decision, the panel found “the member’s actions to be a serious breach of trust.”

**Member:** Norman Neil G. McLeod  
**Registration No:** 328065

**Decision:** Revocation  
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the certificate of former teacher Norman Neil G. McLeod related to a criminal conviction for sexually abusing children.

Licensed to teach in July 1962, McLeod did not attend the December 18, 2014, hearing nor was he represented by legal counsel.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as a trusted

## HEARINGS

member of the community, parents allowed McLeod to take their children to his cottage. While at the cottage, he would invite the children to enjoy recreational activities in exchange for performing and participating in a variety of sexual acts. In 1979, six complained to the local police and McLeod was arrested and charged with indecently assaulting six children. He pled guilty and was sentenced to six concurrent custodial terms of three months, followed by three years of probation. His employment with the board was subsequently terminated.

In 2011, a new victim came forward and the police conducted a second investigation, which resulted in six other victims coming forward. McLeod was found guilty of 14 counts of sexual abuse. He was sentenced to three years' incarceration.

College Counsel submitted that McLeod's conduct was one of the most egregious cases of abuse brought before the College.

The panel found McLeod guilty of professional misconduct, and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its written decision, the panel reported that "College Counsel submitted that the member 'cannot hide by resigning before these proceedings' and 'the College will not shield members of the profession.' Counsel for the College emphasized the importance of transparency as it was through publicity of this case that six additional victims came forward."

**Member:** Olga Aleksandrovna Piatnitsa  
**Registration No:** 504647

**Decision:** Revocation  
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Olga Aleksandrovna Piatnitsa, a former teacher at the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, for physically assaulting a child.

Licensed to teach in January 2007, she did not attend the May 25, 2015, hearing nor was she represented by legal counsel.

During 2009–10, over a six-month period, Piatnitsa assaulted a child on

multiple occasions. The abuse resulted in multiple bruises on the child's body that were inflicted by slapping, punching, pinching and using a belt.

In March 2012, she was convicted of assault and sentenced to four months in jail and two years' probation.

The Discipline Committee panel found her guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke her Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its decision, the panel said, "The member, as a result of her conduct, has forfeited the privilege of holding a teaching certificate and being a member of the teaching profession."

**Member:** Harry Pott, OCT  
**Registration No:** 141513

**Decision:** Reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Harry Pott, a former teacher at the Upper Canada District School Board, for inappropriate social media communications.

Pott, who was certified to teach in July 1984, attended the hearing on October 14, 2014. He was represented by legal counsel.

In August 2011, Pott engaged in a conversation with a student on Facebook. They chatted about drinking at Pott's house and having students of the school over to Pott's home to drink. The member gave the student his home address and telephone number.

His principal sent Pott a disciplinary letter in 2012. In January 2014, he retired from his employment as a teacher.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that he appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Pott was directed to complete a course of instruction in appropriate boundaries, at his own expense, prior to commencing any position requiring a Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

**Member:** Carmel Rouhani  
**Registration No:** 620009

**Decision:** Revocation

A Discipline Committee panel revoked the teaching certificate of Near North District School Board former teacher Carmel Rouhani for engaging in an inappropriate relationship with a female student.

Rouhani, who was certified to teach in June 2011, did not attend the public hearing on March 23, 2015, nor was she represented by legal counsel.

The panel heard that during the 2011–12 school year, Rouhani and her student began to communicate very frequently. During the summer of 2012, they had developed a personal relationship, which continued during the 2012–13 school year. They communicated electronically on a very frequent basis and met outside the school.

One day, Rouhani — with the student's mother's consent — had the student for an overnight stay. Subsequently, the student's mother became concerned about the relationship with Rouhani and the student's father asked Rouhani to "wean herself off" his daughter as he believed his daughter was too attached to the member. Despite the parents' warning and Rouhani's assurance to cease the relationship, she continued the relationship with the student.

On May 2013, the student's mother alerted the Ontario Provincial Police and an investigation began.

The investigation revealed that Rouhani and the student had exchanged about 35,000 text messages between June 2012 and March 2013. The police found that the messages transitioned from being a friendly conversation that one would expect between two teenage girls who cared for one another and who were devastated by the thought of not being able to speak, to messages of a nature that the police felt were an indication that the relationship was more than just friendship. The nature of the text messages became increasingly sexual and included comments such as, "The whole point of me getting into bed with u was to keep u warm."

The panel found Rouhani guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke her Certificate of

### Qualification and Registration.

The panel found that Rouhani “was given numerous opportunities to end the inappropriate relationship with the student but failed to do so. The Committee finds that this, coupled with the member’s repeated pattern of lying and numerous text messages with sexual content, demonstrated that she did not take her teaching duties seriously.”

**Member:** Paul Christopher Sabol

**Registration No:** 400955

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Toronto District School Board teacher Paul Christopher Sabol for showing inappropriate material to his students in the context of an art lesson.

Sabol, who was certified to teach in June 1991, attended the April 9, 2015, hearing and was represented by legal counsel.

On more than one occasion in 2007 and 2008, Sabol showed inappropriate material to his students. During one incident, he warned his students about the mature theme of numerous postcards he had on display in the classroom, in relation to an activity, and advised them that they did not have to participate if viewing the postcards made them uncomfortable.

The Discipline Committee was concerned with Sabol’s inappropriate choice of teaching material and his failure to recognize that his teaching material should not include sensual, provocative or explicit nude images.

Although Sabol believed that the inappropriate content served a pedagogical purpose, the committee finds that he exercised poor judgment and did not consider the sensitivity of young school children.

In 2009, his board suspended him for 25 days without pay and directed him to complete professional counselling and coursework. He was also placed in an interim assignment at a new location for the remainder of the school year.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended

for 25 days. This suspension is to be recorded on the public register. He was also directed to appear before the panel immediately after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Sabol was directed to complete a course of instruction on adolescent development and professional boundaries with students at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said that “the reprimand of the member by his peers in respect of his inappropriate conduct serves to emphasize the necessity to maintain the appropriate professional standards set by the College.”

**Member:** Johanne Ste-Croix

**Registration No:** 453908

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended Johanne Ste-Croix, a former teacher at the Conseil des écoles publiques de l’Est de l’Ontario, for engaging in an inappropriate personal relationship with a student.

Ste-Croix, who was certified to teach in June 2002, attended the hearing held on May 5, 2015, and was represented by legal counsel.

During the 2010–11 academic year, Ste-Croix regularly communicated with a student via email, text message and telephone. On numerous occasions, she met with him outside the school. The meetings consisted of having him sleep at her home and visiting him at his home.

On one occasion, the student told his grandmother that Ste-Croix thought she was his girlfriend, but he did not want her as his girlfriend. The grandmother ultimately relayed this information and her own observations to the student’s parents. The parents reported the matter to the police.

Ste-Croix was suspended by her board for three months.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that her teaching certificate be suspended for three months. She was also directed to appear before the panel immediately after the hearing

to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Ste-Croix was directed to complete a course of instruction with an emphasis on boundary violations, at her own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said, “The member crossed the professional teaching boundaries governed by the College, and this committee finds the member’s behaviour to be disgraceful and dishonourable.”

**Member:** Laura Rae Thompson

**Registration No:** 621867

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of College member Laura Rae Thompson for failing to maintain appropriate boundaries with a male student.

Thompson, who was certified to teach in July 2011, did not attend the February 19, 2015, hearing nor was she represented by legal counsel.

On December 26, 2012, Thompson sent an email message to a student stating, among other things, that she wanted to be with him and that she loved him. She told him that he was “the most incredible person” and that she loved him “more than she has ever loved anything, and always will ... forever.”

The member admitted that she sent a nude picture of herself to a former student of the school upon his request.

Thompson was suspended with pay in February 2013 and her employment was terminated early March 2013.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that her teaching certificate be suspended for one month starting on February 19, 2015, and that she appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Thompson was directed to complete a course of instruction in appropriate boundaries and boundary violation at her own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said that it “does not accept the member’s explanation that she was intoxicated and under emotional distress at the time of writing and sending the mail ... The member’s

## HEARINGS

conduct clearly displays her failure to understand appropriate student-teacher boundaries, which in these circumstances, should have been apparent.”

**Member:** Francis Patrick Ubertelli

**Registration No:** 523850

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of College member Francis Patrick Ubertelli for making inappropriate comments that were offensive, discriminatory and inconsistent with the standards of the profession. He made those comments during his employment with the Conseil scolaire Viamonde from November 2007 to December 2011.

Ubertelli, who was certified to teach in November 2007, did not attend the February 9, 2015, hearing, but was represented by legal counsel.

He posted on a blog this following comment concerning the abortion policies of the president of the United States:

“Shame on this imposter, with his skin as black as tar, shame on this covert murderer ...”

He wrote or posted inappropriate comments on his website, and/or supported the content of sites for which he provided the links, including:

“Considering pederasty, lesbianism, bisexuality, transsexuality (mutilation and an attack on the body’s finitude), sodomy, zoophilism and coprophagia within a new anti-moral social order is seeking to ascribe them legitimacy for the sake of building a ‘culture.’”

He also made inappropriate comments to a female student including:

- homosexuals are bad for society because they are unable to have children
- the student ought to be open to the idea that homosexuality is bad for society because of this fact.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for one month starting on February 16, 2015. He was also ordered to appear before the panel on March 5, 2015, to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Ubertelli was directed

to complete a course of instruction on maintaining appropriate boundaries at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said, “The course on maintaining appropriate boundaries which the member must take addresses his conduct and should assist the member in deepening his understanding of the seriousness of his actions and the fact that they violate school-based societal values and standards.”

**Member:** Bert Udemá

**Registration No:** 169297

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions A Discipline Committee panel suspended the teaching certificate of Bert Udemá, a former teacher at the Waterloo Region District School Board, for multiple acts of shoplifting, which resulted in escalated criminal penalties.

Udemá, who was certified to teach in June 1991, did not attend the May 27, 2015, hearing nor was he represented by legal counsel.

Between 2010 and 2013, he was convicted of theft under \$5,000 five times.

Udemá resigned from the board in June 2013.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for six months and that he appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

In addition, he was directed to complete a pre-approved course of instruction in professional ethics at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said, “Although the nature of the member’s offences were relatively minor, and the value of the goods that he shoplifted were of nominal value, the member engaged in criminal activity at least five times over the course of three years. Moreover, despite the escalating criminal penalties imposed on the member, he continued to steal and did not learn from his previous mistakes.”

**Member:** Ronald William Woltman

**Registration No:** 180391

**Decision:** Suspension, reprimand, conditions A Discipline Committee panel suspended

Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board teacher Ronald William Woltman for making unprofessional comments on a student’s report card and making threatening statements to his principal.

Woltman, who was certified to teach in June 1984, attended the hearings held on October 16 and 21, 2014, November 7, 2014, and April 29, 2015. He was represented by legal counsel.

Woltman’s involvement in a number of incidents happening in 2010 gave rise to a finding of professional misconduct. In particular:

- he wrote on a student’s report card, “Love the jeans with spike heels”
- he made threatening statements to his principal in response to a request to attend a meeting in relation to the report card comment by writing a note to the principal that said, “Now it’s your job to make this go away. Any disciplinary action will be grieved”
- his conduct and communications toward a colleague were disrespectful and unprofessional.

His board subsequently gave him a two-day and a five-day suspension.

The Discipline Committee panel found the member guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for 15 consecutive days — starting within one week of the order. He was also directed to appear before the panel after the hearing to receive a reprimand.

In addition, Woltman was directed to complete a course of instruction with an emphasis on boundaries and positive communication skills, at his own expense.

In its written decision, the panel said, “The member humiliated a student by writing an inappropriate comment on the student’s report card, he wrote a threatening note to his principal, and his repeated inappropriate and unprofessional conduct directed toward his colleague was shameful.” **PS**

Copies of the full decisions are available at [oct-occe.ca/INWS629](http://oct-occe.ca/INWS629).



NAME: *Nino Ricci*

- Born in 1959, in Leamington, Ont.; lives in Toronto
- Attended St. Louis Separate School (Grades 1–2 and 6–8), Queen of Peace Separate School (Grades 3–5) and Leamington District SS
- Graduated with a BA, Specialized Honours English, from York University (1981); received his MA in English from Concordia University (1987); studied Italian Studies at the University of Florence (1988–89)
- Taught English literature and language at a Nigerian high school (1981–83)
- Wrote six novels, including the recently released *Sleep*, and a biography on Pierre Elliott Trudeau
- Won the Alistair MacLeod Award for Literary Achievement (2006); nominated for two Giller Prizes; won two Governor General's Awards for *Lives of the Saints* (1990) and *The Origin of Species* (2008). The former was made into a movie starring Sophia Loren
- Held the Mariano A. Elia Chair at York University, the Chair in Religion and the Arts at Assumption University in Windsor, the G. M. Hopkins Chair in Literary Studies at John Carroll University in Cleveland, Ohio, and the Killam Visting Professorship in Canadian Studies at Bridgewater State University in Bridgewater, Mass.
- Former president of PEN Canada, the writers' human rights organization
- Became a member of the Order of Canada (2011)

## THE WORDSMITH

Acclaimed author Nino Ricci shares his affinity for history, anti-heroes and an advanced sense of irony.

BY LAURA BICKLE

### Describe yourself back in school.

Dazed and confused.

### Reading ...

saved my life in elementary school.

### Writing ...

saved my life in high school.

### What was your favourite subject?

Phonics. It led naturally into English, which I liked not only because we got to read things but because I developed a nerdy attachment to grammar. I have to thank my Grade 6 teacher, Miss Johnson; she taught us how to properly parse a sentence, a skill that turned them into these intricate architectural marvels, and that has stood me in good stead to this day.

### Your most challenging subject?

Recess, by far. It was the only one in which no instruction was provided! The sole school-related activity that surpassed it for sheer horror was riding the bus — where I suffered chastisements that I took as legitimate punishment for having failed recess.

### Which subject do you wish you had paid more attention to and why?

History. I only began to realize in adulthood how basic an understanding of history is to gaining personal perspective and making any sort of sense of the world.

### Favourite historical figures?

I've always been drawn to figures like Buddha, Socrates and Jesus, who were essentially teachers.

### Who are your heroes from fiction?

In fiction I am drawn more to anti-heroes, because they tend to be more interesting. Satan in *Paradise Lost*. Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*. The Underground Man in *Notes from the Underground*.

### What do you wish you had been taught in school but weren't?

How to be a human being. How to succeed at recess. That every humiliation I endured would one day give me killer material for my writing. That in the fullness of time, the meek would inherit.

### If you could pick any year to attend school in, when would you choose?

I'd go back to 1965, my first year of school — with its smell of chalk dust, its felt cut-outs and waxed checkerboard floors — when my innocence was still intact and so too, it seemed, was the world's.

### If not writing, what career would you have pursued?

The one career I *have* pursued in addition to writing is that of teaching.

### Most appreciated quality in a teacher?

Compassion. Barring that, an advanced sense of irony. I was lucky enough to have had a number of teachers with both.

### Best advice that a teacher gave you that you still follow?

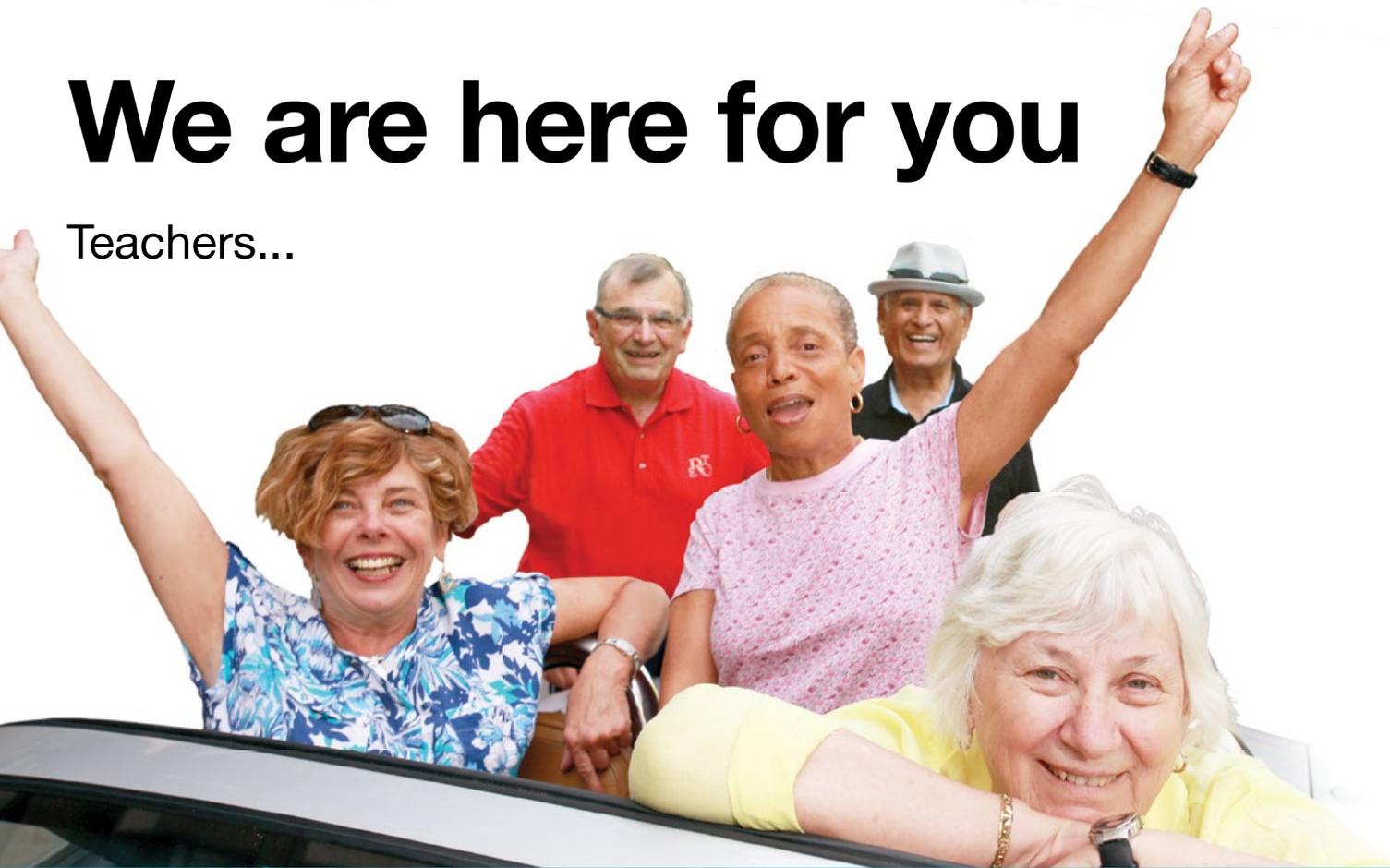
"I" before "e" except after "c."

### Best life lesson learned at school?

No matter how worthless you may want to feel, there is almost always some teacher out there who will insist on dragging you out of the gutter. **PS**

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