

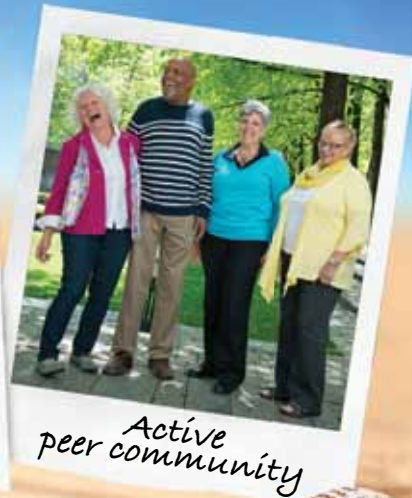
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Sincerely

Paul Elliott, President



The importance of being current

Keeping members engaged

IN the early 1990s, when I was working on my Bachelor of Education at Queen's, my fellow teacher candidates and I were considerably less worried about whether we would be capable of being effective teachers in our subject areas than we were about the myriad of expectations that our professors told us would dominate our teaching. Even then the seeds of many new initiatives, such as differentiated instruction and rubric-building were floating down from the ivory towers of education. We were told in no uncertain terms that not only were these new ideas soon to become the norm in schools, but that school boards and governments would insist on them.

Our entries into our respective work placements seemed to indicate otherwise. While professors had pushed portfolio learning and seeing the student as a whole, once we were in the classroom teaching seemed to consist of simple lessons, assignments and evaluations. Nary a Ministry document was to be found, in my English department anyway.

When I brought up some of the concepts proposed at my teacher faculty, my department head would chuckle and say, "Never chase a bus or a new idea in education. They'll always be another one in 20 minutes." Likewise, another new colleague told me, "Whatever they tell you, once you close that classroom door behind you, the class is yours to do as you see fit."

But as anyone from my graduating class of 1994 will attest, that's simply not the case any more.

For me it was the doomed Common Curriculum, followed by the curriculum restructuring after the removal of Grade 13, followed by teacher appraisals, followed by—well, the list is too long to print here.

And with these greater expectations, not just on teachers but all education

workers, came the reality that everyone working in public education in Ontario today needed to remain current and vigilant. This is why I am especially proud of this, my first issue of *Education Forum*. The wide range of articles will inform, caution and inspire you.

As I mentioned earlier, the Teacher Performance Appraisal (TPA) was a huge change for teachers. In his feature on the topic, Stephen Bloom does an excellent job of providing a basic primer to the rules surrounding TPA as well as some

“Everyone working in public education in Ontario today needs to remain current and vigilant.”

solid advice on how to survive it. Tear this article out and post it in your staff room today!

Similarly, Rob Dubyk's piece on the changes in Canada's copyright law is a must read for any education worker who reproduces or shows works copyrighted by others. That's novels, poems, songs, and videos. You need to know the rules about what you can and cannot use in an educational setting. Rip out this article too and paste it on your school's photocopier!

And while I'm mentioning the need for caution, be sure to read the article on rising tuition fees by Anna Johnston-Gibbins. I remember when the only

thing stopping people from attending post-secondary was grades. This article clearly shows the trend of increasing tuition fees and how it's preventing our most vulnerable students from attaining a post-secondary education.

For another terrifying, though inspiring, read, Paul Bocking's feature on recent protests by teachers in Mexico will get you thinking. You will not believe the efforts to which these teachers went to protect their and their schools' autonomy.

For more inspiration, Rod Albert's piece on the Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan is an amazing story. We have all heard in the media how this pension plan is both the envy and, most recently, the template for pension managers around the world. Read about how an innovative concept for a pension plan with shared responsibility became a model for the rest of the world.

And along the line of keeping up on current issues, Suzette Clark's feature on 21st-century learning is something all education workers will want to read. The Ontario Ministry of Education has begun a consultation process on the idea of what they call 21st-century learning, which focuses on the career goals of students. This is potentially another great shift in this province's public education and one that bears close scrutiny.

Finally, I direct you to a heart-felt story by one of our occasional teachers, Lindsay Chase. As an OT stuck on the supply list, she provides a realistic description of what many of our members now face at the beginning of their careers.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Education Forum* and I welcome your feedback. Letters to the editor are welcomed and encouraged! ☺

Randy Banderob, Editor
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L'importance d'être d'actualité

Maintenir les membres engagés

AU début des années 1990, alors que j'étudiais en vue de mon baccalauréat en éducation à l'Université Queen's, mes collègues candidats à l'enseignement, et moi-même étions considérablement moins inquiets d'être compétents dans nos matières, que des nombreuses attentes qui, selon nos professeurs, seraient au cœur de notre enseignement. Même à l'époque, les nouvelles initiatives comme l'enseignement différentiel et la création de rubriques d'évaluation se faisaient entendre des tours d'ivoire de l'éducation. On nous disait, en termes sans ambiguïté, que non seulement ces nouvelles idées allaient devenir la norme dans les écoles, mais que les conseils scolaires et les gouvernements insisteraient pour que celles-ci soient appliquées.

Nos placements professionnels respectifs ont semblé démontrer le contraire. Alors que nos professeurs avaient mis l'accent sur l'apprentissage et sur l'élève comme un tout, une fois que nous étions en salle de classe, enseigner semblait toutefois consister à de simples leçons, devoirs et évaluations. Pas un seul document du Ministère ne se trouvait dans mon département d'anglais.

Lorsque j'ai mentionné les concepts proposés à ma faculté d'éducation, cela a fait rire mon chef de département qui m'a dit : « Ne te lance jamais à la poursuite d'un autobus ou d'une nouvelle idée en éducation. Il y en aura toujours d'autres plus tard. » De même, un autre de mes nouveaux collègues m'avait dit : « Peu importe ce qu'ils te disent, une fois que tu fermes la porte de ta salle, elle t'appartient et tu peux faire comme bon te semble. »

Mais comme le confirmera quiconque de ma promotion de 1994, ceci n'est tout simplement plus le cas.

Pour moi, ce fut le programme d'études commun voué à l'échec, suivi de la restructuration du programme d'études après le retrait de la 13^e année, suivi des évaluations

du rendement du personnel enseignant, suivi... la liste est trop longue.

Et avec ces attentes de plus en plus ambitieuses imposées non seulement aux enseignants, mais à tous les travailleurs en éducation, a surgi la réalité que toute personne œuvrant au sein de l'éducation publique en Ontario aujourd'hui, doit se tenir à jour et rester vigilant. C'est pourquoi je suis particulièrement fier de ma première édition d'*Education Forum*. Le large éventail d'articles vous informera, vous mettra en garde et vous inspirera.

L'évaluation du rendement du personnel enseignant a été un changement radical pour eux. Dans son article de fond sur le sujet, Stephen Bloom fournit de façon remarquable des notions de base sur les règles relatives à l'évaluation du rendement du personnel enseignant, ainsi que des conseils judicieux sur la manière d'en réchapper. Découpez cet article et affichez-le dans votre salon du personnel!

De façon similaire, le texte de Rob Dubyk sur la *Loi sur le droit d'auteur* au Canada est à lire absolument par tous les travailleurs en éducation qui reproduisent ou présentent des travaux faisant l'objet de droits d'auteur. On parle ici de romans, poèmes, chansons et vidéos. Vous devez connaître les règles sur ce que vous pouvez et ne pouvez pas utiliser dans un cadre éducatif. Détachez aussi cet article et collez-le sur la photocopieuse de votre école!

Et puisque je signale la nécessité de faire preuve de prudence, assurez-vous de lire l'article d'Anna Johnston-Gibbins sur les frais de scolarité. Je me souviens qu'à une époque la seule chose qui arrêtaient quelqu'un d'accéder aux études postsecondaires était ses notes. Cet article démontre clairement une tendance à la hausse des frais de scolarité et comment cela empêche nos élèves les plus vulnérables à accéder à une éducation postsecondaire.

Une autre histoire épouvantable bien

qu'inspirante, donnant matière à réflexion, est l'article de Paul Bocking sur les récentes manifestations des enseignants au Mexique. Vous aurez du mal à croire l'ampleur des efforts que ces enseignants ont dû déployer pour protéger leur autonomie et celle de leurs écoles.

Pour davantage d'inspiration, l'article de Rod Albert sur le Régime de retraite des enseignantes et des enseignants de l'Ontario est une histoire étonnante. Nous avons tous entendu dans les médias que ce régime de retraite fait à la fois des envieux, et plus récemment, est devenu le modèle des administrateurs de régime de pension partout dans le monde. Lisez comment un concept innovant de pension planifiée avec un partage des responsabilités est devenu un exemple pour le reste de la planète.

A fin de se tenir au courant des questions actuelles, l'article de Suzette Clark sur l'apprentissage au 21^e siècle est un texte que tous les travailleurs en éducation voudront lire. Le ministère de l'Éducation de l'Ontario a entamé un processus de consultation sur une idée qu'il appelle l'Apprentissage au XXI^e siècle et qui est axé sur les objectifs de carrière des élèves. C'est un autre tournant potentiellement important dans l'éducation publique de la province et il devrait faire l'objet d'un examen très attentif.

Pour finir, je vous invite à lire le cri du cœur de Lindsay Chase, l'une de nos enseignantes suppléantes. En tant qu'enseignante bloquée sur la liste de suppléance, elle offre une description réaliste de ce qui attend nombre de nos membres en début de carrière.

J'espère que ce numéro d'*Education Forum* vous plaira et j'accueillerai volontiers vos commentaires. Nous encourageons les lettres à la rédaction. ☺

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A fair deal for education

Copyright changes for the classroom



WE live in an age of information with almost limitless access to print, video and audio works available at our fingertips. We take this access for granted. Depending on who you talk to, it is either the photocopier or the Internet that is the greatest asset to educators, especially when it comes to using all that information at our disposal. And all of us have used both in our day-to-day work lives to meet our needs in delivering the Ontario curriculum to our students. It is how we use that information that should put copyright front and centre when we are planning our lessons.

The Internet created as many problems as opportunities with respect to accessing copyrighted materials. Under the old legislation we had far greater restrictions

placed on educators on the use of print and audio-visual materials. Electronic communication of those same materials formed the basis of many copyright lawsuits. The legislation needed updating, and more money was spent on lobbying politicians at all levels of government regarding copyright than any other issue for many years. The need for new definitions on fair use and the distinction between physical and intellectual ownership were constantly debated between the publishers and users of copyrighted materials.

The *Copyright Modernization Act* was given royal assent on June 29, 2012, changing the definition of “fair use” and “fair dealing,” not only for education and private study but for research, criticism, review, parody and satire. The Supreme Court of Canada handed down

five crucial decisions dealing with copyright in July 2012. These decisions have a profound impact on what educators and students can and cannot do when using copyrighted material. Fourteen new rights for students and educators, giving far more latitude in the use of copyrighted works, have been defined. With every new right there is a corresponding responsibility. Educators have been charged with promoting good citizenship, respecting the law and demonstrating intellectual responsibility.

The Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) has published an easy to read and understand booklet called *Copyright Matters!*. Every school in Canada should have received copies of this booklet, along with posters explaining the Fair Dealing Guidelines that were

to be placed in school work rooms, staff rooms and teaching areas. Schools were to have these posters placed near every photocopier in the building and wherever computers were located as a reminder of your rights and responsibilities when using copyrighted material. You can access a copy of these at cmec.ca/Publications/Lists/Publications/Attachments/291/Copyright_Matters.pdf and cmec.ca/docs/copyright/Fair_Dealing_Guidelines_EN.pdf.

Fair dealing permits the use of copyrighted material without permission or payment of royalties. Fair dealing does not allow education workers to copy or post whatever they want. Fair dealing does allow communication in print as well as in electronic form. Fair dealing does not allow for unrestricted use of material from the Internet. Educators are allowed to use a “short excerpt” from a copyright-protected work as a class handout, as a posting in a password-protected e-learning environment or as part of a course pack. Understanding the definition of “short excerpt” is important. From the CMEC Fair Dealing

Guidelines, “short excerpt” means:

- up to 10 per cent of a copyright-protected work (including a literary work, musical score, sound recording and an audiovisual work);
- one chapter from a book;
- a single article from a periodical;
- an entire artistic work (including a painting, print, photograph, diagram, drawing, map, chart and plan) from a copyright-protected work containing other artistic works;
- an entire newspaper article or page;
- an entire single poem or musical score from a copyright-protected work containing other poems or musical scores;
- an entire entry from an encyclopedia, annotated bibliography, dictionary or similar reference work.

You can see from this list the flexibility educators now have in providing materials to support the delivery of the curriculum. This makes it all the more important that educators read the booklet *Copyright Matters!* and refer to the poster on Fair Dealing Guidelines before using copyrighted material.

Why does this matter? The publishing

industry lost big in the cases taken to the Supreme Court. They want to recover the potential fees and royalties they claim to be losing—approximately \$23-million every year. Access Copyright is a non-profit organization that collects the fees and royalties from educational institutions and distributes them to the owners of the copyrighted works. Since the definition of “fair use” and “fair dealing” was expanded by the Supreme Court, this organization has been in search of a new test case in the hopes of recouping the perceived losses. The copyright law will not likely be revised for another decade. The only thing that will change is its interpretation through litigation. A lawsuit could be brought against you, your school and school board for violating copyright. The stakes are too high for the publishing industry to not pursue changes through lawsuits. One such case has already started in October 2013 by Access Copyright against York University. Other cases may be pending.

To make educators aware of the changes to copyright, the Ministry of Education, in Policy/Program Memorandum 157 (www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/157.pdf) that was released on June 21, 2013, directed every school board to develop copyright policies. These policies were to be posted in worksites near every photocopying and printing station and near computers and scanners along with the CMEC posters. Boards should also have designated contact persons in the schools and in the board office to answer any copyright questions. Have you seen these posters and policies? Do you know who the contact person is when you have questions? If you don't, you need to ask your principal.

As educators we have to protect our new rights by ensuring we meet our responsibilities and our students understand them as well. Otherwise, we may lose more than just money—we lose the right to use the wealth of information available to us. ☺

Rob Dubyk is an Executive Assistant at OSSTF/FEESO in the Educational Services Department.



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Stuck on the OT list

One member's story



AT the beginning of March 2006, about two months after graduating from teachers' college, I received an e-mail from the Board informing me that I had been placed on the Occasional Teachers list. I was excited. I could finally start my career, move out of my parents' house and get my life going. I was full of enthusiasm, drive and motivation. I was going to be able to make a difference in a career I was completely in love with. Just after March break I was asked to do my first Long-Term Occasional teachers placement (LTO). How could things get better? I thought, "All I have to do during the LTO is what I've been trained to do and I'll be on my way to a contract."

Over the next two years I had LTOs but they always came up with such short notice that I was lucky if I had a weekend

to plan. But I was grateful for the positions and felt I was starting to develop and demonstrate my skills as a teacher. I learned a great deal from each position, gained new skills, made new connections and loved having my own classes.

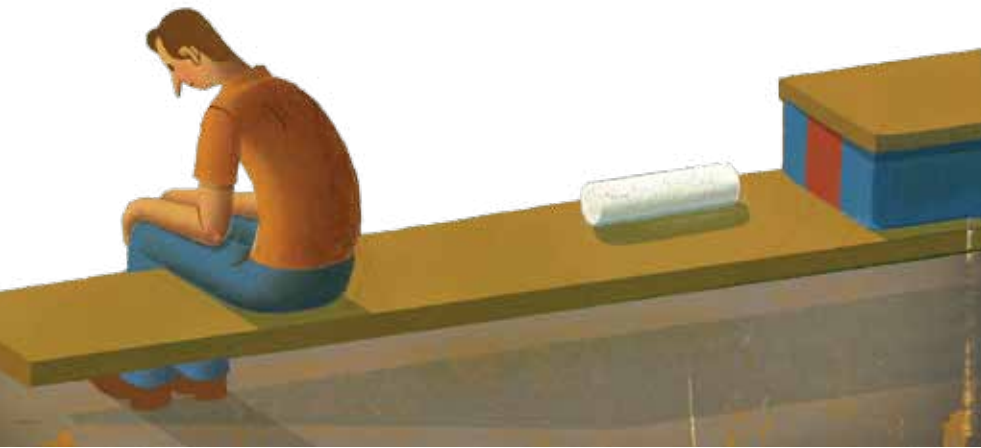
Although I continued to apply for LTO after LTO over the next three years, I didn't have any luck and primarily worked as a daily OT. This was tough. I never knew how much work I would get, which meant making a budget was almost impossible. Sometimes I would go weeks without working and finally get a call for one period at a school 45 minutes from home. This was incredibly difficult to deal with. I felt I had done something wrong and my teaching skills were not good enough.

I took it very personally. My biggest stressors were financial instability and

the difficulty of going into a school and not feeling a part of the staff. Being asked "Who are you?" or getting a look from someone because I sat at "their" table during lunch made me feel I was an outsider. In fact, being a daily OT can be one of the most isolating jobs there are.

Just before Christmas that year, one of my previous employers offered me a full-time temporary position for a few months. I took it for my own mental health and financial well-being. I was able to supply teach enough to stay on the list for the following year. I continued to apply for LTO postings but received no interviews. Finally, at the end of August I applied for a Continuing Education position, had an interview and received the good news that I was chosen for the position. I was so excited to be back on track. After my first year

Being stuck on the OT roster is unpredictable, frustrating and lonely, as well as rewarding and challenging.



I was told the funding for the program was approved again so I would keep my position for another year.

After the second year, the same thing happened. I relaxed a little. I wasn't tied to my phone, waiting for daily OT work, I had a steady income, I was working in a career I loved and I felt I was making progress and proving myself as a teacher. I even decided to make the leap into home ownership.

But at the end of my third year I was told I would no longer have my position

since it was being made into a contract teaching position. I was devastated, and once again felt helpless, since I wasn't even able to apply for the position I had had for three years.

For the last year and a half I've once again primarily been working as a daily OT but I crave my own classroom. Last year was incredibly difficult, given the implementation of Regulation 274. I was interviewed for the LTO list about a week after accepting a two-month

position working in an alternative-education outreach program with students who had been suspended. About a month later I found out I hadn't been successful in my interview.

I felt helpless, frustrated and as if I had been demoted. The only thing that made me feel slightly better was that many of my OT colleagues were in the same place. My situation didn't seem to make sense, just like theirs. Unfortunately, I also had to tell family and friends about not being hired, which made me feel even worse since everyone had the same reaction: "What?!" Then they would stare at me with a blank, sympathetic look and say, "But didn't you teach that Continuing Education program for three years and aren't you teaching that outreach program now?"

So here I am, seven-and-a-half years later. I recently went through the LTO interview process again and found out I was successful. A glimmer of hope. However, I still have no job security, no steady income, no benefits and because I'm so stressed by the constant job uncertainty, I'm considering a career change, where I would inevitably have to start from the beginning. Many of my OT colleagues have told me about having had one day of supply work in the last month, having to work two, or sometimes three, jobs just to make ends meet, having to make that hard choice of giving up a career you love because there is no prospect of getting a contract position in the near future and there isn't enough work to make a living.

Being stuck on the OT roster is unpredictable, frustrating and lonely, as well as rewarding and challenging. The hardest part, I find, is never knowing you will be in a classroom day to day and also knowing the future for hiring for permanent positions is grim.

Nevertheless, one thing is for certain. I will always be a teacher in one way or another in whatever I do. ☺

Lindsay Chase is an occasional teacher in District 22, Niagara. She is also President of the Occasional Teacher Bargaining Unit and a member of the Educational Services Committee.

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Effects of rising tuition fees in Ontario

Is a post-secondary education becoming a privilege?

The rising cost of tuition in Ontario is a story we have heard over and over again. Each year, students and their families shell out greater sums of money, bury themselves in debt and when the student finally attains that shiny post-secondary diploma, they are greeted with promises of underemployment, unemployment and an average student debt of \$28,000.

Over the last 20 years, average tuition fees in Ontario have nearly tripled, from \$2,574 in 1990 to \$7,259 in 2013. In the last five years, average tuition fees have increased over 20 per cent (\$5,985 in 2009). Currently, Ontario students pay the highest average fees of any province in Canada and pay over 20 per cent more for their education than the current Canadian average, \$5,772 in 2013. In other provinces, like Saskatchewan and Nova Scotia, students pay higher than average tuition fees; respectively; while students in Newfoundland and Labrador and Quebec pay much lower than average fees: \$2,644 and \$2,653 respectively. This disparity between provinces is due to a number of circumstances, most significantly provincial funding and the freezing of tuition increases. It is not surprising to learn that Newfoundland and Labrador, the province with the lowest average tuition, froze its fees in 2003.

As Ontario leads the way in making education less affordable for its students, the federal and provincial governments add further barriers by underfunding both colleges and universities. Ontario spends the least amount per student of any province in Canada, transferring just over \$10,000 per full-time student each year.¹ Today, government funding accounts for less than 50 per cent of post-secondary institutions' operating budgets compared to over 70 per cent just 20 years ago. Ontario institutions make up for that 20 per cent decrease in government revenue by raising student tuition fees along with instituting hiring freezes, hiring more part-time and temporary staff, and relying heavily on funding from the private sector.

While the current trend in rising tuition fees and governmental underfunding places significant strain on all but the wealthiest Ontario families, it particularly impacts students from low-income

Effets de l'augmentation des frais de scolarité en Ontario

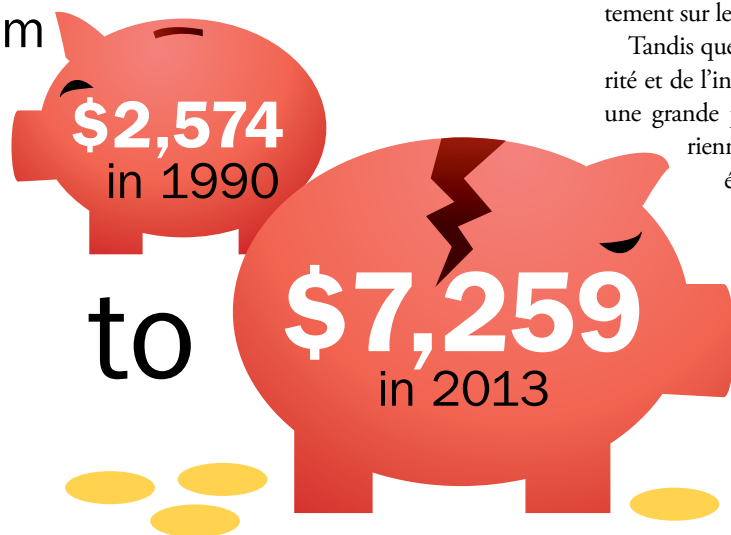
L'éducation postsecondaire devient-elle un privilège?

LA hausse des frais de scolarité en Ontario est une histoire que nous avons entendue maintes et maintes fois. Chaque année, les étudiants et leurs familles dépensent des sommes de plus en plus importantes, sont criblés de dette et lorsque l'étudiant obtient finalement son diplôme postsecondaire tant miroité, des promesses de sous-emploi, de chômage et une dette d'en moyenne 28 000 \$ par étudiant les attendent.

Au cours des 20 dernières années, les frais moyens de scolarité en Ontario ont presque triplé, passant de 2 574 \$ en 1990 à 7 259 \$ en 2013. Pendant les cinq dernières années, les frais moyens de scolarité ont augmenté de plus de 20 pour cent (5 985 \$ en 2009). Actuellement, les étudiants ontariens acquittent les frais de scolarité moyens les plus élevés de toutes les provinces du Canada et paient au-delà de 20 pour cent de plus pour leur éducation que la moyenne canadienne actuelle, 5 772 \$ en 2013. Dans d'autres provinces, comme la Saskatchewan et la Nouvelle-Écosse, les étudiants paient des frais de scolarité supérieurs à la moyenne : 6 394 \$ et 6 185 \$ respectivement; tandis qu'à Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et au Québec les frais moyens sont nettement inférieurs, 2 644 \$ et 2 653 \$ respectivement. Cette disparité entre les provinces est due à toute une série de facteurs, le financement provincial principalement et le gel des augmentations des frais de scolarité. Il n'est guère surprenant d'apprendre que Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador, la province ayant les frais de scolarité moyens les plus bas, les a gelés en 2003.

Alors que l'Ontario montre l'exemple en rendant l'éducation moins abordable pour ses étudiants, les gouvernements fédéral et provincial ajoutent des obstacles supplémentaires en allouant des fonds insuffisants à la fois aux collèges et aux universités. L'Ontario dépense le moins par étudiant comparativement à n'importe quelle province du Canada, affectant chaque année un peu plus que 10 000 \$ par étudiant à temps plein.¹ Aujourd'hui, le financement gouvernemental représente moins de 50 pour cent des budgets de fonctionnement des établissements postsecondaires, comparativement à plus de 70 pour cent il y a à peine 20 ans.

Average tuition fees in Ontario have nearly **tripled**, from



families. Nearly 81 per cent of students from families with incomes over \$100,000 attend post-secondary institutions while only 58 per cent of students whose family income is less than \$25,000 attend. Those youth who do not attend university or college overwhelmingly report financial concerns as their largest barrier.

Ontario youth from low-income families who do pursue post-secondary education are more likely to depend on student loans and employment to finance their education. Unfortunately, this situation is complicated by the current rate of student unemployment, which is nearly twice as high as the unemployment rate in the general population. And as student debt mounts, these youth begin to reassess their career goals. One Canadian study showed that the rise in student debt from \$1,000 to \$10,000 per year resulted in plummeting program-completion rates, from 59 per cent to just 8 per cent.² And for those Ontario youth who do complete their degree program, they will graduate with an average student debt of \$28,000. According to the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP), students will be able to pay off their loan in just under 15 years if they pay the minimum \$241 per month. In the end, these students will pay over \$41,000, nearly \$14,000 of which is interest. Marginalized youth who have statistically lower than average incomes, regardless of their education, end up paying more for their education.

The unfortunate conclusion to this situation is that the current trend of high tuition fees and debt in Ontario only serves to marginalize youth from low-income families and further exacerbates systemic discrimination. ☹

Anna Johnston-Gibbins is a recent OISE graduate, a Visual Arts and Social Science educator, a sociocultural anthropologist and an active social-justice advocate.

¹ Canadian Association of University Teachers, 2011

² For students with only loans and no grants

Les établissements ontariens comblent la baisse de 20 pour cent en revenu du gouvernement en augmentant les frais de scolarité des étudiants ainsi qu'en instituant un gel d'embauche, engageant plus de personnel à temps partiel et temporaire et s'appuyant fortement sur le financement du secteur privé.

Tandis que la tendance actuelle de la hausse des frais de scolarité et de l'insuffisance de financement du gouvernement exerce une grande pression sur tous, à l'exception des familles ontariennes les plus riches, elle a des retombées surtout sur les étudiants issus de familles à faible revenu. Près de 81 pour cent des étudiants provenant de familles dont les revenus dépassent les 100 000 \$ fréquentent des établissements postsecondaires, tandis que seulement 58 pour cent des étudiants dont le revenu familial est inférieur à 25 000 \$ le font. Ces jeunes qui ne fréquentent pas une université ou un collège mentionnent en très grande majorité que leur obstacle le plus grand est leur situation financière.

Les jeunes ontariens issus de familles à faible revenu qui poursuivent des études postsecondaires ont davantage tendance à dépendre de prêts étudiants et d'emploi pour financer leur éducation. Malheureusement, cette situation se complique par le taux de chômage actuel des étudiants, qui est près de deux fois plus élevé que le taux de chômage de la population en général. Et au fur et à mesure que leur dette d'études augmente, ces jeunes commencent à remettre en question leurs objectifs de carrière. Une étude canadienne a montré que l'augmentation de l'endettement étudiant de 1 000 \$ à 10 000 \$ par an engendrait un effondrement des taux d'achèvement du programme, passant de 59 pour cent à seulement 8 pour cent.² Et pour ces jeunes ontariens qui terminent leur programme menant à un diplôme, une fois diplômés, ils auront une dette moyenne d'étudiant de 28 000 \$. Selon le Régime d'aide financière aux étudiantes et étudiants de l'Ontario (RAFEO), les étudiants pourront s'acquitter de leur dette en un peu moins de 15 ans s'ils versent la somme minimale de 241 \$ par mois. Dans les faits, ces étudiants paieront plus de 41 000 \$, dont près de 14 000 \$ d'intérêts. Les jeunes marginalisés, qui ont statistiquement des revenus moins élevés que la moyenne, quelle que soit leur éducation, finissent par payer plus pour leurs études.

La regrettable conclusion à cette situation est que la tendance actuelle de frais de scolarité et d'endettement élevés en Ontario sert uniquement à marginaliser les jeunes issus de familles à faible revenu et à exacerber davantage une discrimination systémique. ☹

Anna Johnston-Gibbins est diplômée depuis peu de l'IEPO, enseignante en arts visuels et sciences sociales, anthropologue socioculturelle et militante active de la justice sociale.

¹ Association canadienne des professeures et professeurs d'université, 2011

² Pour les étudiants bénéficiant de prêts seulement et sans bourses



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MEXICAN TEACHERS

Their historic struggle against the neoliberalization of public education

By Paul Bocking

In November 2013 I was asked by the Provincial Executive to speak on behalf of OSSTF/FEESO at a conference in Mexico City, organized by the Mexican teachers' movement, concerning struggles over public education across North America. With less than 24 hours' notice and a ticket for a 7:30 a.m. flight, I was back in Mexico City, which I had visited many times before as a university student and later as a union activist. I was eager to get in touch with teachers and education activists to begin piecing together what had happened in the largest nationwide uprising of Mexican educators in decades that had unfolded over the past four months since the start of the school year in August.

Soon after arriving I was called to a meeting by Maria Luz Arriaga, professor of public education finance at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), and originally a public school teacher and leader of the teachers' movement in the 1980s. Maria Luz introduced me to other international participants: Jim Iker, president of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation; Rosemary Lee, a teacher from Los Angeles and longtime international solidarity activist; and Nancy Serrano, a passionate bilingual English-Spanish teacher representing the Chicago Teachers Union. Nancy casually mentioned how, ahead of her union's successful nine-day strike in September 2012, worksite representatives enlisted the vast majority of the union's 26,000 members to canvass their neighbourhoods to explain the reasons for the strike, reaching an estimated 60 per cent of all homes in Chicago and helping contribute to majority public support for the job action. The Chicago Teachers Union's emphasis on grassroots organizing appeared to hold much in common with our hosts in the Mexican movement.

PHOTOS: ISTOCKPHOTO.COM

We were ostensibly present to speak to an audience of Mexican teachers about the struggles of our unions to defend public education and our working conditions—notes on last year’s Bill 115 fight dominated my talking points. I quickly learned that the principal objective of our presence was to boost the morale of our audience, who had been marching and striking, some for over three months, to defeat laws that would not only gut many of the principles at the centre of their professionalism as educators but would also shift a considerable portion of the burden of paying for education from the state’s coffers directly onto the students’ families. As Jacinto Rodriguez, a Grade 2 teacher from rural Veracruz on the Gulf of Mexico, told me, because of these laws, “The parents are going to have to make more sacrifices.”

Consolidating the neoliberalization of education

As educators in Ontario know, since his inauguration in December 2012, the Mexican government of President Enrique Peña Nieto has been pushing anti-labour laws that target education workers under the pretense of education reform. These policies have been underwritten by both the Mexican business community, which sees investment opportunities in the privatization of education through the weakening of organized teachers, and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which ideologically supports this agenda.

The OECD’s report, “Education at a Glance 2013,” shows that the work hours of Mexican secondary school teachers are the third longest in the OECD at 1,050 hours a year (the average is 709), and 90 per cent of this is direct instructional time (compared with 60 per cent for Canadian secondary teachers). Nevertheless it champions the Mexican government’s assertions that rather than improving working conditions for Mexican teachers, such as reintroducing paid prep time, what is really needed is a further disciplining of teachers through more standardized evaluations of both educators and their students.

The present conflict is the latest round in the Mexican government’s efforts to impose these conditions on Mexico’s restive teachers. 2008 saw the rollout of the so-called Alliance for Quality Education (ACE) by the Mexican government, with the support of its political allies in the top leadership of the National Union of Education Workers (SNTE), founded in 1948.

With 1.4 million members, the SNTE is the largest union in Latin America, encompassing all job classes, from preschool teachers, support staff and administrators to secondary education and some at the post-secondary level. Its size, and the role of its members as the personification of the Mexican state in every village and urban neighbourhood, resulted in the government striving to exert considerable control over the union and its members through elaborate networks of political power brokerage at the national, state and local levels.

Resistance to ACE’s substitution of standardized student examination results in favour of collective agreements to determine individual salaries and job security was led by the National Coordinating Committee of Education Workers (CNTE), founded in 1979 to democratize their union. In 2013, President Peña Nieto sought to push back against the movement’s success

in preventing the implementation of these policies by codifying these measures into the Mexican constitution and prohibiting state-level compromises.

In addition, following recommendations from the World Bank and business lobby group Mexicanos Primero (modeled closely after its pro-charter school cousin in the U.S., Students First), Peña Nieto also put on the legislative agenda measures described as increasing “school autonomy,” intended to increase the discretionary power of principals to discipline and fire teachers based on standardized test results, thereby circumventing union “just cause” provisions.

Just two weeks after enacting amendments to place teacher evaluation into the constitution, laying the basis for further legislation to implement these policies, last February Peña Nieto ordered the arrest of Elba Esther Gordillo, the self-anointed president for life of the SNTE. She was charged with the appropriation of millions of dollars in union funds that were used to finance her lavish lifestyle in San Diego, Ca., purchase Hummers for loyal local leaders and finance her personal political party, the New Alliance Party, through which she maintained her status as arguably the most powerful woman in Mexico.

Loathed by the public for her blatant corruption and hated by many of her members for having run the union for decades in her personal interest, her imprisonment was widely welcomed, though education activists also saw its timing as a clever ploy to associate Peña Nieto’s legislation with action in the public interest. If this were the strategy, it appears to have backfired on the Mexican government. The unraveling of Gordillo’s webs of influence within the union helped educators across Mexico to organize on a national scale not seen in decades.

Prior to the latest wave of protests, the roots of the teachers’ movement were in the southern states of Chiapas and Oaxaca where, since the early 1980s, the CNTE had consolidated and gained power to take over the state-level leadership of the union. In these states, as leaders in their communities in the predominantly rural and poor south, teachers have frequently allied with campesino and indigenous movements over struggles for land and public services. Risking their careers and sometimes their lives to support their neighbours has given many teachers deep connections to their communities and usually strong relationships with the parents of their students. This solidarity has in turn helped sustain public support during the weeks—and occasionally months—of the long strikes educators have frequently taken, as was the case across large parts of Mexico in the fall of 2013.

Emergence of the movement

Following a summer of unsuccessful national-level negotiations between the CNTE (the official SNTE leaders having been sidelined) and the federal government, alongside local organizing and strategy conferences, the school year began in August with the eruption of full strikes in Chiapas, Michoacan and Oaxaca, soon joined by teachers in Veracruz, Guerrero and Campeche, with regular protests and one-day work stoppages occurring in 27 of Mexico’s 32 states.



“I quickly learned that the principal objective of our presence was to boost the morale of our audience, who had been marching and striking.”



OSSTF/FEESO member Paul Bocking participates in an international panel on preserving public education.

Secondary teacher Alfonso Escobar explained to me how the movement erupted in his home state of Veracruz. We were touring an outdoor kitchen after the conference, operated by teachers from Veracruz to feed over 1,000 education workers every day, who sleep in the main CNTE protest camp under the shadow of the Monumento a la Revolución in downtown Mexico City. Under a canopy of tarps, a string of hot-wired light bulbs hung over donated cartons of milk, crates of plastic plates and basins at the food-preparation and washing areas. Outside the kitchen, hundreds of tents filled the public square, grouped and labeled by their local district and state, where between 2,000 and 3,000 people slept, most on week-long rotations from their home states. Across the street was a long line of Porta Potties in urgent need of service.

With 195,000 members, the Veracruz local is the second largest in the SNTE union after combining the primary, secondary and support-staff locals in Mexico City. Local worksite and district union representatives first expressed concern about the impending legislation to their state executive in August. Members were troubled by what they saw as the elimination of job security and the principle of seniority and collective bargaining in employment and setting salary scales. Closely aligned with the old guard under Gordillo, their state leaders told them to go home.

Meeting across worksites and districts, and with local demonstrations receiving no response from the authorities, several hundred members decided instead to begin their protests with a familiar tactic in Mexico: occupying road toll booths on a major highway and letting cars through for free. With no reaction from their union executive, organizing continued until committees were formed in all 32 school districts across the

state, subsequently winning local union officer positions overwhelmingly in elections that September. Now the dominant force in their state union local—primary and secondary teachers, as well as members at the University of Veracruz—voted to join other states on strike, send a contingent to participate in the national teachers’ encampment in Mexico City and affiliate with the CNTE.

While opposing the further rollout of the neoliberal standardized-testing regime, teachers from Veracruz and elsewhere have been active in articulating alternative pedagogical projects, frequently emphasizing local indigenous languages and cultures. “The official curriculum doesn’t take into account the diversity and richness of the cultures in our country,” Jacinto Rodríguez says, noting how the national exams do not take local contexts into account and sideline instructional time in indigenous studies.

These demands and initiatives have also helped maintain parental support during the strike. In Chiapas and Veracruz, attempts by state governments, with the support of hostile corporate media, to organize anti-teacher parent groups were decisively defeated. After the passage of school-autonomy legislation, which allowed state authorities to levy school fees, several state governments released documents detailing how parent councils must now decide collectively on how to pay for maintenance, supplies and most non-salary expenses at their children’s schools. Livid parents in these states overwhelmingly backed the teachers.

While chatting with Alfonso I noticed the black threads of fresh stitches protruding from the top of his recently shaved scalp. He had been hit in the head by a police baton earlier in the week during a misunderstanding that arose when a new contingent of teachers arrived at the square to relieve their colleagues,

Mexican secondary school teachers

worked 1,050 hours a year.
The average is 709.

4+ months of constant rallies, marches, blockades, strikes and negotiation sessions.



Hundreds of tents filled the public square, grouped and labeled by their local district and state, where between

2,000 to 3,000 people protested, most on week-long rotations from their home states.

The federal government agreed to hire

6,000 new teachers in Oaxaca to lower class sizes and keep small rural schools open.

erecting tents and tarps in contravention of an earlier agreement. While police supervisors met with CNTE leaders to clarify the mistake, riot police—allegedly egged on by nearby businesses that were upset by the tents—were rapidly deployed, charging into the new encampments, resulting in several teachers being injured, including Alfonso.

Amid the peaceful atmosphere of district meetings, teachers chatting, reading or playing the guitar, a tension remains. It is rumoured that as many as 500 police on patrol, in plain clothes or riot gear, are deployed at all times day and night around the Monumento a la Revolución and between it and the central square across from the National Palace. Such is the perceived threat of the teachers to public order. Later, walking along busy Avenida Francisco Madero, I see squads of a dozen armoured police standing at major intersections, leaning on their Plexiglas shields, principally preoccupied with their smartphones.

Next steps

After over four months of constant rallies, marches, blockades, strikes and negotiation sessions, some observers are cautiously optimistic that the teachers may have broken the back of the reforms. According to one Oaxaca journalist, this could result in the teachers' protests being a "dead letter"—in other words, ignoring a law that exists but that everyone knows is ineffectual in practice.

While national negotiations still drag on, teachers in Oaxaca and Michoacan returned to their classrooms in October,

followed by Chiapas in November, and the expectation is that Veracruz will follow suit. The belief is that governors in these states are implicitly agreeing not to apply the most contentious aspects of the national legislation, though the federal government maintains that no local deviations are occurring. However Oaxacan teachers claim to have won substantial state-level autonomy in developing local curriculum, sidelining the impact of national standardized evaluations. Addressing local demands, the federal government agreed to hire 6,000 new teachers in Oaxaca to lower class sizes and keep small rural schools open. Teachers in all states with settlements have also received back pay for their time on strike. To lend support to states still on strike, the CNTE in Oaxaca and Chiapas continue to rotate 10 per cent of their 71,000 and 85,000 members who are not classroom teachers but administrators and support staff, respectively, through the Mexico City encampment.

The battle over public education is far from over in Mexico, but some victories have been won. Along with tentative settlements in the states where the movement is strongest, and the emergence of new activism in many others, teachers in the CNTE are organizing a groundswell of support to take over their union on a national scale and use its institutional power to defend their interests and those of their communities. ☞

Paul Bocking is an occasional teacher in District 12, Toronto, and a member of the Communications/Political Action Committee.



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21ST CENTURY SCHOOLS & LEARNING

Responding to *The Next Phase in Ontario's Education Strategy*
En réaction à *La prochaine étape de la stratégie d'éducation de l'Ontario*

By/par Suzette Clark

ILLUSTRATION: MIKE BYERS 2014, LEVY CREATIVE MANAGEMENT, NYC

In September, the Ministry of Education began a consultation process unlike any other seen previously. During a meeting with Ministry officials in April 2013, those present were asked to consider the future of education, implications for the educational system and implications at various grade levels.

Discussions highlighted the issue that student success depends on the development of good character but not for the sole purpose of creating a workforce that will support the Ontario economy. It is essential that student training allows every student to be educated within a system that allows them to move towards their career goals. The restriction of 34 credits was identified as one

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En septembre, le ministère de l'Éducation a entamé un processus de consultation ne ressemblant à aucun autre vu précédemment. Durant une réunion avec des représentants du Ministère en avril 2013, on a demandé aux personnes présentes de réfléchir à l'avenir de l'éducation, aux implications du système d'éducation et aux conséquences à divers niveaux scolaires.

Des discussions ont soulevé la question que la réussite des élèves dépend de la formation d'un bon caractère, mais pas pour l'unique objectif de créer une main-d'œuvre qui soutiendra l'économie ontarienne. Il est essentiel que la formation des élèves donne la possibilité à chacun d'être éduqué au sein d'un système qui lui permet de s'orienter vers ses

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21^E SIÈCLE ÉCOLES & APPRENTISSAGE



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of these barriers. The compressed curriculum, with all its limitations, was identified as another. Every student in Ontario deserves access to an up-to-date curriculum that is broad and contemporary to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The Ministry then launched a unique consultation. The invitation to participate stated:

We have spent a decade working with our education partners and today, Ontario's publicly funded education system is recognized as one of the best in the world. We are proud of our accomplishments as our success has been based on the talent, dedication and hard work of those in our education community.

Now it's time to build on that success and redefine our vision, aspirations and goals, not just for the system but, more importantly, for our students. We're looking for a made-in-Ontario approach that benefits from considering a wide range of opinions about the best way forward.

OSSTF/FEESO welcomed the fact that the Ministry was seeking feedback

to improve Ontario's education system with a goal of providing the best possible outcome for all students. Overall, we expressed support for a plan to build upon a successful education system that will prepare our students for a rapidly changing, technology-driven, globalized world. However, OSSTF/FEESO expressed its concerns about the plan to launch a new education system early in 2014. Change of this magnitude and importance requires careful and thoughtful planning.

Since the consultation process began, significant input was provided not only in response to the seven questions that shaped the consultation but, above all, about the underlying premise of the consultation itself. Two faulty assumptions were the basis of many remarks made during the consultation process. One, that the next phase of education is primarily dependent on the enhanced use of technology and two, that teachers and educational workers are fearful or reluctant to move ahead. The comments of some were that unions were opposed to changes that would move education forward.

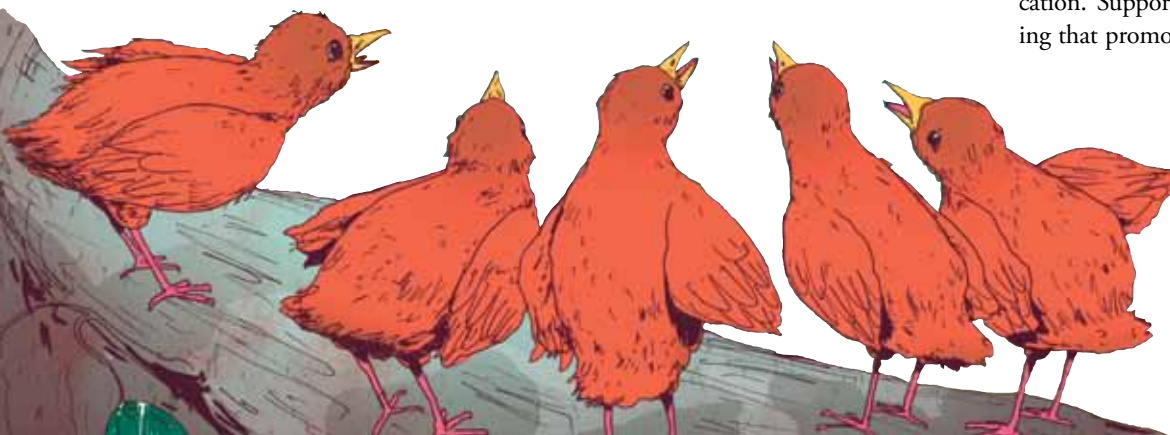
There is no question that technology is important to education and OSSTF/FEESO has clearly demonstrated its support of 21st-century learning. The Federation promoted technology in education when hosting its 2010 conference, offering 48 workshops to almost 400 participants. One of our most successful professional development experiences ever, *Tools & Toys, Technology in Education*, provided opportunities for understanding and embracing the many valuable resources to enhance students' learning.

With newer schools being built with embedded technology, increased access meant greater use. Gradually, the availability of iPads and SMART Boards allowed more teachers and educational workers to support student learning with this new approach. However, the reality is that equitable access to such devices is still lacking in many schools. More importantly, proper training on the use of technology when delivering the curriculum has not been provided. A board policy to support Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) is meaningless if the teacher delivering the curriculum has not been provided with the basics of how a smartphone can be utilized for class instruction.

Understanding and utilizing technology are important to innovation in education. However, innovation is not dependent solely upon technology. According to Webster's dictionary, innovation is "something new, a new idea, method or device." History will long remember Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein and Bill Gates but each important innovation was based on a creative idea found in the inventor's mind, not in the equipment they worked with. Access to technology does not equate to students moving "from great to excellent"—a phrase used by Michael Fullan—to shape the next phase in education. Support for inquiry-based learning that promotes critical thinking is not

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“OSSTF/FEESO welcomed the fact that the Ministry was seeking feedback to improve Ontario's education system.”



objectifs de carrière. La restriction des 34 crédits a été déterminée comme l'un de ces obstacles. Le programme d'études condensé, compte tenu de toutes ses limitations, a été identifié comme en étant un autre. En Ontario, chaque élève mérite d'avoir accès à un programme d'études à jour, qui est étendu et contemporain, pour relever les défis du 21^e siècle.

Le Ministère a par la suite lancé une consultation unique. L'invitation pour participer disait :

Depuis dix ans, nous travaillons en collaboration avec nos partenaires en éducation. Grâce à cette œuvre commune, le système d'éducation financé par les fonds publics de l'Ontario est aujourd'hui reconnu comme étant l'un des meilleurs au monde. Nous sommes fiers de nos réalisations, rendues possibles par le talent, les efforts et le dévouement de tous les membres de notre milieu de l'éducation.

Le moment est maintenant venu de continuer sur notre lancée et de redéfinir notre vision, nos aspirations et nos objectifs, non seulement pour le système lui-même, mais surtout, pour nos élèves. Nous sommes à la recherche d'une approche bien ontarienne qui bénéficie d'une large gamme d'opinions sur la meilleure façon d'aller de l'avant.

OSSTF/FEESO a accueilli favorablement le fait que le Ministère cherchait à obtenir des commentaires en vue d'améliorer le système d'éducation de l'Ontario avec pour objectif de fournir les meilleurs résultats possible pour tous les élèves. Dans l'ensemble, nous avons exprimé notre soutien pour un plan en vue d'appuyer la réussite d'un système d'éducation qui préparera nos élèves pour un monde globalisé, en évolution rapide et axée sur la technologie. Toutefois, OSSTF/FEESO a exprimé ses préoccupations à propos du projet de lancement de la nouvelle vision du système d'éducation au début de 2014. Un changement de cette ampleur et de cette importance requiert une planification minutieuse et réfléchie.

Depuis le début du processus de consultation, des renseignements importants ont été fournis non seulement en réponse aux sept questions qui ont façonné la consultation, mais, avant tout, sur le principe fondamental de la consultation elle-même. Deux suppositions erronées ont été le

“ OSSTF/FEESO a accueilli favorablement le fait que le Ministère cherchait à obtenir des commentaires en vue d'améliorer le système d'éducation de l'Ontario. ”

point de départ de nombreuses remarques faites durant le processus de consultation, à savoir que la prochaine étape de l'éducation dépend principalement de l'utilisation accrue de la technologie et, enfin, que le personnel enseignant et les travailleurs en éducation ont peur ou sont réticents à aller de l'avant. Les commentaires de certains étaient que les syndicats s'opposent aux changements qui permettraient à l'éducation de progresser.

Il ne fait aucun doute que la technologie est importante pour l'éducation et OSSTF/FEESO a clairement démontré son soutien à l'apprentissage du 21^e siècle. La Fédération a mis en valeur la technologie en éducation à l'occasion de sa conférence de 2010, offrant 48 ateliers à près de 400 participants. L'un de nos plus grands succès de perfectionnement professionnel à ce jour, *Outils & Jeux, Technologie en éducation*, a ouvert de nouvelles possibilités pour comprendre et saisir les nombreuses ressources de qualité en vue d'accroître l'apprentissage des élèves.

Avec la construction de nouvelles écoles dans lesquelles la technologie est incorporée, un accès plus grand s'est traduit par une utilisation plus importante.

Progressivement, la disponibilité des iPad et des tableaux interactifs a permis à davantage d'enseignants et de travailleurs en éducation d'appuyer l'apprentissage des élèves grâce à cette nouvelle approche. Cependant, la réalité est qu'un accès équitable à de tels appareils est toujours absent dans de nombreuses écoles. Ce qui est plus important encore est qu'une formation adéquate sur l'utilisation de la technologie au moment de la prestation du curriculum n'a pas encore été offerte. Une politique du conseil scolaire visant à appuyer l'initiative *Apportez vos appareils personnels* (BYOD) est dénuée de sens, si l'enseignant ou l'enseignante fournissant le programme d'études n'a pas reçu les rudiments sur l'utilisation d'un téléphone intelligent pour l'enseignement en classe.

Comprendre et utiliser la technologie sont importants sur le plan de l'innovation en éducation. Cependant, l'innovation ne dépend pas uniquement de la technologie. Selon le dictionnaire Webster, l'innovation est « quelque chose de nouveau, une nouvelle idée, méthode ou un appareil » [traduction]. L'histoire se souviendra longtemps de Thomas

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Service Providers Workshop, offered in October and February, provides information about: documentation required to register with disability services, accommodations and support available and how to best prepare students for the transition <http://lds.info.yorku.ca/project-advance/workshop-for-service-providers/>

For more information, please visit:

<http://lds.info.yorku.ca/> or email projecta@yorku.ca



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22/

based only on the information acquired through the Internet.

OSSTF/FEESO believes strongly in public education as the key to Ontario's future. Our schools must continue to equip our students with the knowledge, skills and sense of community that will make our province prosperous and dynamic. Our dedicated staff must be provided with the resources to accomplish those important objectives. Our students must be supported by a caring society in order to nurture their the abilities and achieve the confidence necessary to meet the new challenges of the 21st century.

Specifically, OSSTF/FEESO believes that too many First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners, children and youth in care, learners with mental health issues and those who require the support of special education are still struggling within the current system of education. The need to present those learners with the greatest opportunity for success and achievement necessitates commitment to increased awareness, improved understanding, and enhanced supports and services that will see all learners become healthy, well-rounded and resilient young adults.

OSSTF/FEESO believes that better support of all learners will be realized when success is not measured solely by standardized testing and graduation rates. Successful learners will have the skills to communicate so they may interact with the world around them. They will also be skilled at critical thinking so they understand when an attempt to manipulate their thinking is occurring.

Successful learners will have the ability to collaborate with others so they may become positive agents of change in society. Finally, creativity is essential as a contribution to society, making it a better world while also adding to feelings of self-worth and fulfillment. When teachers and educational workers working in modernized classrooms are provided with 21st-century resources and the training to use those resources, 21st-century learning will be guaranteed. ☺

Suzette Clark is the Director of Educational Services at OSSTF/FEESO Provincial Office.



Edison, d'Albert Einstein et de Bill Gates, mais chaque innovation importante était basée sur une idée créative qui a pris naissance dans l'esprit de l'inventeur et non pas dans l'équipement avec lequel ils ont travaillé. Un accès à la technologie n'équivaut pas à ce que les élèves passent de « mieux en mieux », une expression utilisée par Michael Fullan pour façonner la prochaine étape en éducation. L'appui d'un apprentissage fondé sur le questionnement, qui favorise la pensée critique, ne repose pas uniquement sur l'information acquise par le biais d'Internet.

OSSTF/FEESO croit fermement en l'éducation publique comme étant la clé de l'avenir de l'Ontario. Nos écoles doivent continuer à donner à nos élèves les connaissances, les compétences et le sens d'appartenance à une communauté qui conduiront notre province à être prospère et dynamique. Les ressources qui serviront à atteindre ces importants objectifs doivent être mises à la disposition de notre personnel dévoué. Nos élèves doivent être appuyés par une société bienveillante pour qu'elle puisse renforcer leurs aptitudes et qu'ils parviennent au niveau de confiance nécessaire en vue de relever les nouveaux défis du 21^e siècle.

Plus précisément, OSSTF/FEESO croit que beaucoup trop d'apprenants des Premières Nations, des Métis et des Inuits, d'enfants et de jeunes pris en charge, d'apprenants ayant des problèmes de santé mentale et ceux qui requièrent du soutien par le biais de l'éducation de l'enfance en difficulté, luttent encore au sein du système d'éducation actuel. La nécessité de présenter à ces apprenants la solution la meilleure qui soit propice à leur réussite et à leur réalisation exige un engagement envers une sensibilisation accrue, une meilleure compréhension et des soutiens et des services améliorés qui verront tous les apprenants devenir de jeunes adultes en meilleure santé, en harmonie avec eux-mêmes et flexibles.

OSSTF/FEESO est d'avis qu'un appui renforcé offert à *tous les apprenants* sera atteint à partir du moment où la réussite ne se mesure pas uniquement par le biais de tests standardisés et de taux d'obtention

OSSTF/FEESO croit que beaucoup trop d'apprenants... luttent encore au sein du système d'éducation actuel.

de diplôme. Les apprenants qui réussissent *détiendront* les compétences pour communiquer afin de pouvoir interagir avec le monde qui les entoure. Ils seront également capables de penser de façon éclairée de manière à ce qu'ils soient conscients lorsque quelqu'un tente de manipuler leur pensée.

Des apprenants performants auront la capacité de collaborer avec les autres de manière à devenir des acteurs positifs du changement de la société. Pour terminer, la créativité est essentielle comme contribution envers la société, la transformant en un monde meilleur tout en ajoutant un sentiment de confiance en soi et d'épanouissement. À partir du moment où on donne aux enseignants et aux travailleurs en éducation œuvrant dans des classes modernes des ressources adaptées au 21^e siècle et de la formation en vue de les utiliser, on aura la garantie d'un apprentissage digne du 21^e siècle. ☺

Suzette Clark est directrice du Secteur des services éducatifs, au Bureau provincial d'OSSTF/FEESO.



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Growth or Groan?

A primer on how to prepare for your Teacher Performance Appraisal

By Stephen Bloom

The Teacher Performance Appraisal process (TPA) has been in effect for just over a decade. For most teachers, teacher performance appraisal is viewed with some skepticism since the professional-growth elements of the process seem overshadowed by a sense of foreboding as teachers enter into this cyclical, murky rite of passage. Much of the mystery surrounding the TPA process stems from the varied approaches from school to school and district to district. Among other things, these variations can be attributed to a combination of different administrators' perspectives and to local past practices or collective-agreement language.

The typical five-year cycle begins with the more formal portion of the TPA, complete with classroom observation, that results in either a "Satisfactory" or "Unsatisfactory" rating. Unless a teacher receives an "Unsatisfactory" rating, only one evaluation is required in the evaluation year. Boards and principals are not permitted to change the five-year cycle. As with every rule there are exceptions. For example, a teacher can receive a TPA out of cycle if the principal has concerns about the teacher's performance. If this is the case, the teacher should contact the local Federation office to ensure that support is present when the administration explains its rationale for the out-of-cycle evaluation.

A less formal component of the TPA process is the development of the Annual Learning Plan (ALP). This plan is a description of the teacher's goals for

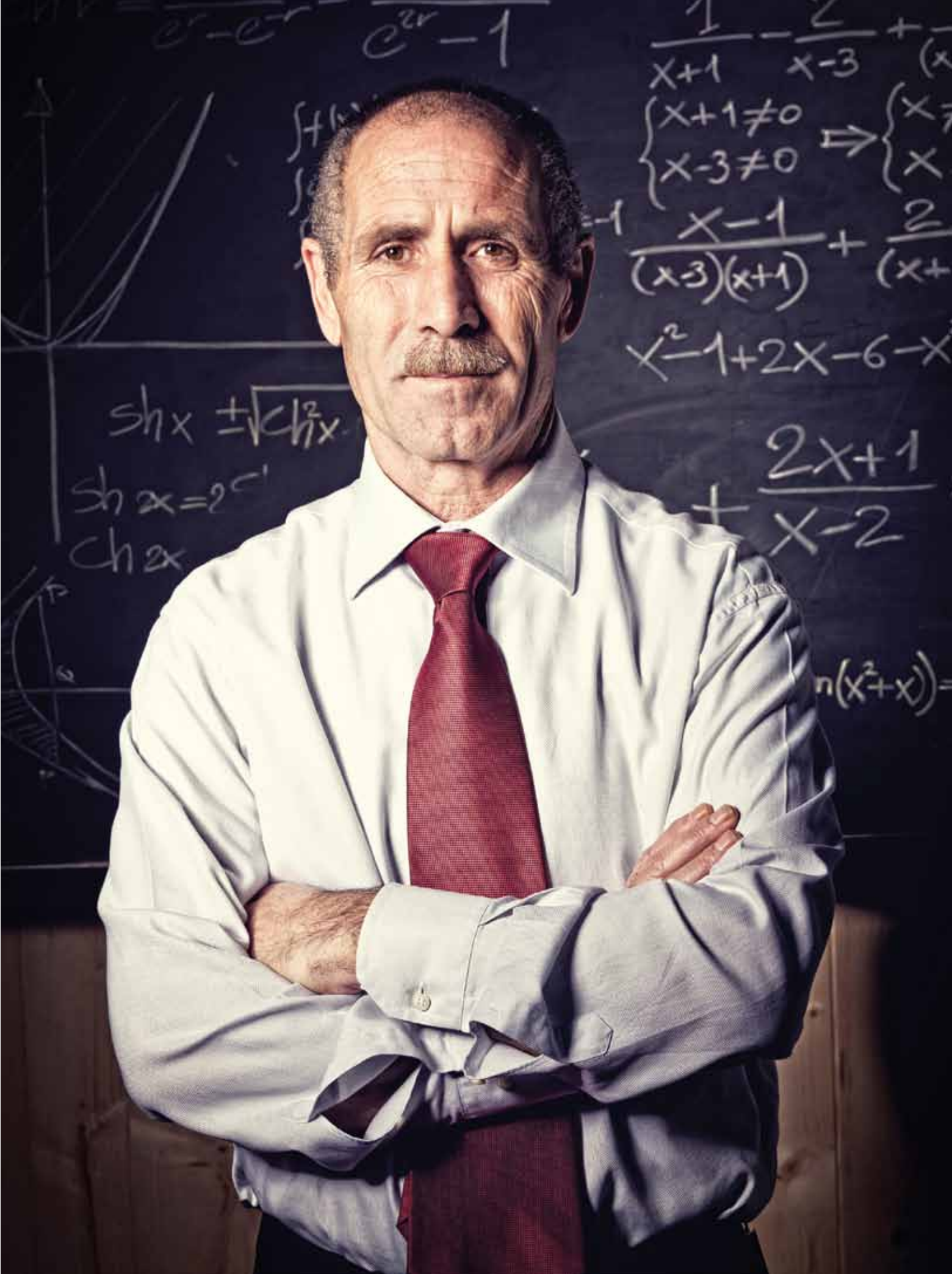
professional growth in the upcoming year. The teacher-directed ALP must be submitted to the principal every year, and in the evaluation year, the ALP will be reviewed with the administrator as part of the appraisal process.

Within the first 20 school days of a teacher's appraisal year the principal is expected to notify the teacher that an appraisal is to be scheduled during the year. Occasionally, administrators forget to notify members of their pending TPA during the first 20 days. Although this is clearly a violation of the legislation governing the process, only in very extreme situations can it be used as a reason for a TPA to be deferred. In the absence of collective-agreement or board-policy language on the topic, the timing of the TPA and determination of the classes to be observed are at the principal's discretion. Despite this, if teachers have preferences for certain semesters or classes they should indicate those preferences to the administrator. Although teacher performance appraisal is the responsibility of the school principal, it may be delegated to a vice-principal. Teachers cannot choose a particular administrator for evaluation purposes.

Once you know when you are going to be evaluated and by whom, there are several steps you can take to better prepare yourself. A quick assessment of your attributes as a teacher, your classes and your evaluator may be helpful. Ask yourself these questions: What are your best qualities as a teacher and what subject/course

PHOTOS: VEER.COM





$$e^x - e^{-x} \quad e^{2x} - 1$$

$$\frac{1}{x+1} - \frac{2}{x-3} + \frac{1}{x}$$

$$\begin{cases} x+1 \neq 0 \\ x-3 \neq 0 \end{cases} \Rightarrow \begin{cases} x \neq -1 \\ x \neq 3 \end{cases}$$

$$-1 \frac{x-1}{(x-3)(x+1)} + \frac{2}{x+1}$$

$$x^2 - 1 + 2x - 6 - x$$

$$\operatorname{sh} x \pm \sqrt{\operatorname{ch}^2 x}$$

$$\operatorname{sh} x = 2^x$$

$$\operatorname{ch} x$$

$$\frac{2x+1}{x-2}$$

$$n(x^2+x)$$

best allows you to demonstrate these qualities? Which of your classes would you deem to be your “best”? Is there one group that is more fully engaged, where every question leads to numerous hands being raised or where small group discussions are actually on topic? Consider the person doing your evaluation. Is his/her subject expertise the same as yours? While the “He’s not a math guy” defence would never be grounds to challenge an unsatisfactory TPA, it may guide some of your discussion at the pre-/post-observation meetings.

Of greater importance, take time to ascertain what the evaluator is likely to look for when doing a TPA. Speak to your colleagues about their TPA experiences with the administrator in question. Find out what the administrator expects you to bring to the pre-observation meeting. Confirm in advance the administrator’s preferences for lesson plans, record keeping, etc.; knowing evaluator’s preference in advance may be advantageous. First, it helps you to make an informed decision about whether or not to alter your current methods to align more fully with that of your evaluator. Second, if you’ve received prior approval for assorted elements of your preparation, it is more difficult for the administrator to find fault with it during the TPA process. Use a brief e-mail to confirm these discussions.

Prior to the classroom visit, the evaluator and the teacher have a pre-observation meeting. Teachers are expected to bring certain items to this meeting. In general, the lesson plan for the class to be observed, the course outline and your ALP should suffice. However, you should be aware of local practices and contact your union office if you think your administrator’s demands are unreasonable. As well as finalizing the timing of the classroom observation, part of the meeting will be devoted to discussing the class and students with the administrator. You should be able to readily identify the gender split and those students who have IEPs. This will demonstrate that you know your students and are working to address their unique needs.

The actual lesson will be discussed so the evaluator knows what to expect when he/she arrives in your classroom. It’s very

important to demonstrate how this lesson fits into the curriculum as part of a natural progression in the course and to identify the learning expectations for the students. Avoid stand-alone, show-stopper lessons that may have students applauding but leave you grasping for answers when asked the inevitable question regarding its connection to the course.

One of the most important components of the meeting is to discuss which competencies will be the focus of the evaluation. While there are 16 competencies that a principal must consider during a TPA, the reality is that only some of these are going to be the focus of the visit and some of them will carry more weight than others. For example, while it is certainly important for teachers to “work with professionals, parents and members of the community to enhance pupil learning, pupil achievement and school programs,” the absence of this competency is unlikely to have a profound impact on the teacher’s rating. On the other hand, a failure to “treat all pupils equitably and with respect” may lead to an “Unsatisfactory” appraisal. It’s very important that teachers leave the pre-observation meeting with a clear understanding of which competencies the administrator plans to assess during the observation.

According to the Ministry of Education’s *Teacher Performance Appraisal—Technical Requirements Manual*, 2010, at least one classroom observation is to occur. For those teachers whose classroom is non-traditional, another instructional setting is acceptable as long as it allows the administrator to see the interaction between the teacher and students. For teacher-librarians this could involve teaching a visiting class. For a guidance counsellor it may be working with a small group. Teacher-consultants who rarely have direct interaction with students are still expected to be appraised using the same competencies as their colleagues, but a board may establish procedures that allow the consultant to demonstrate competency in a different manner.

Once the classroom observation has been completed, the principal is required to provide the teacher with a summative report within 20 school days. Prior to this, the principal must first hold a

post-observation meeting to discuss how the teacher demonstrated the competencies discussed in the pre-observation meeting and any other information related to the evaluation. Remember, you know your class and your program better than anyone else. This is your last chance to highlight all of the great things that happen in your classroom before the evaluator prepares the summative report. Some administrators may say they didn’t see evidence of a specific competency that was discussed in the pre-observation meeting. Help them see how you demonstrated it.

If the rating is “Satisfactory,” as the vast majority are, the next step in the appraisal process is receiving the summative report. Principals have the discretion to include comments related to competencies that were not discussed during the pre-observation meeting. If this is the case, the issues should have been discussed during the post-observation meeting. The 20-day timeline for receipt of the summative report is meant to allow teachers to receive their evaluations and, in theory, begin using them to further enhance their professional growth and practice.

The irony is lost on no one that far too often the administrators who preach the need for students to receive prompt feedback are the very same administrators who fail to meet the generous timelines for providing summative reports to teachers. Upon receipt of the summative report, the teacher’s signature is required. A signature acknowledges receipt of the document only and not agreement with its content. Should teachers wish to add comments before signing it, they are free to do so. In very rare circumstances an administrator may add additional comments after the teacher has signed the summative report. If this occurs, the teacher will once again have an opportunity to add further comments before signing it for a second time. Once the final version has been signed, copies will be made for the teacher’s file and the teacher should retain a copy.

Occasionally a teacher will receive an “Unsatisfactory” rating. It is strongly recommended that the teacher call the Bargaining Unit to ensure there is a Federation representative present for all of the upcoming



meetings with the evaluator. Receiving an “Unsatisfactory” can evoke a full range of emotional responses, from anger to embarrassment. It also raises the stakes as it can have a direct impact on the teacher’s employment, and it is for these reasons that it is important to have an advocate to assist.

Within 15 school days of the teacher receiving the summative report with the

outside the teacher’s qualifications when one within their qualifications was available; not enough time to show improvement because the second classroom observation was scheduled too soon after the first one; and lack of direction or assistance in carrying out the Improvement Plan. Federation representatives can assist the member by monitoring

best interests are not served by allowing the teacher to continue teaching. Usually these revolve around concerns for student safety. A third “Unsatisfactory” rating will result in termination.

The Teacher Performance Appraisal process has become part of the life of a teacher. Whether you are going through it for the first time or have been through



Take time to ascertain what the evaluator is likely to look for when doing a TPA.

“Unsatisfactory” rating the administrator must also create an Improvement Plan that will become the blueprint for success. This plan includes identification of the competencies requiring improvement, steps and actions that will lead to this improvement and the supports that the administration will provide in order for the teacher to be successful. While teachers can provide input into the steps and actions to be taken, the onus is on the administrator to create the Improvement Plan. In other words, an administrator should not be asking a struggling teacher to devise the plan for improvement. It is the teacher’s responsibility to follow the plan.

During this process members should keep careful records of issues related to the appraisal and improvement process. For example, requests not met, such as the administrator selecting a class

the process to ensure the administration is providing the supports detailed in the Improvement Plan and to encourage the teacher to take advantage of these supports. A second appraisal takes place within 60 school days of the first summative report. It is preferable to have the appraisal done closer to the end of this time limit to allow the teacher maximum time to improve.

In the rare instance that a teacher receives a second “Unsatisfactory” rating, he/she will engage in a similar improvement process. The teacher is placed on review status. Another improvement plan is created and a third appraisal must be done within 120 school days of the teacher being put on review. In even rarer circumstances, a board may terminate a teacher after the second evaluation but this is only when the board deems the students’

it several times it’s important to remember, you’re not alone. While the support of your colleagues and your Federation may not extend to helping you write your lesson plans in the wee hours of the morning, both are there to help make the process more manageable, less stressful and ultimately successful. ☺

Stephen Bloom is an Executive Assistant at OSSTF/FEESO in the Member Protection Department.

RESOURCES

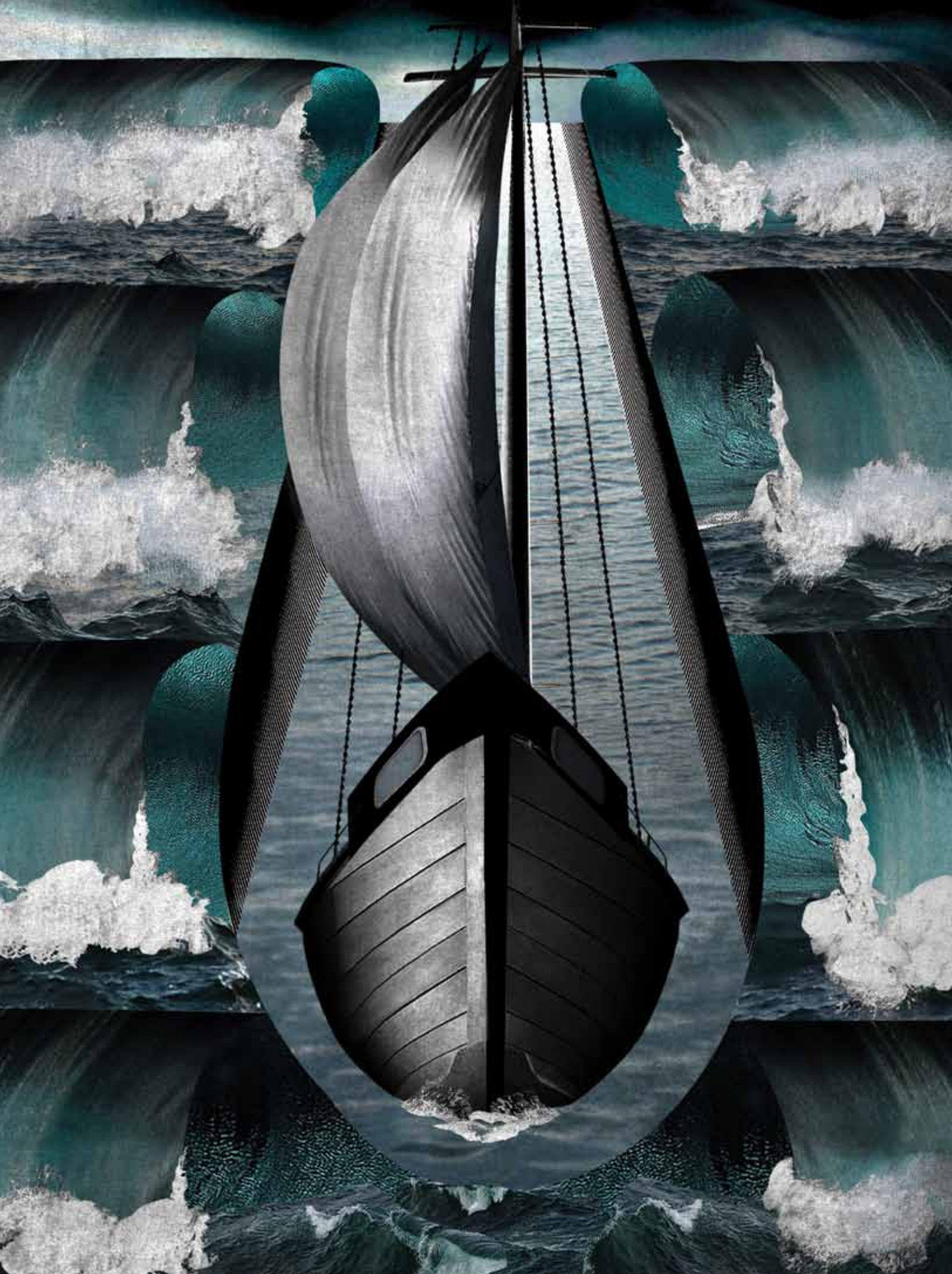
Procedural information for this article was taken from the following Ministry of Education documents:

Teacher Performance Appraisal—Technical Requirements Manual, 2010

Teacher Performance Appraisal—Frequently Asked Questions, 2012

Both are available at www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/teacher/appraise.html.





A Canadian success story

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan

By Rod Albert

The Ontario Teachers' Pension Plan (OTPP) is recognized by many experts as the best pension plan in the world. From 2003-2012, OTPP had the highest investment return among 328 pension funds in the world.

The June 2013 edition of *aiCIO*, a magazine published for institutional chief investment officers, reported that “measured by either investment returns or value added, OTPP simply has been the best pension-plan investor in the world over the past 10 years.”

Well-regarded Canadian writer John Lorinc confirmed that fact. Writing in the September 2013 issue of *The Walrus* magazine he said, “Ontario’s teachers have the world’s best-performing retirement fund.” He quotes *The Economist*: “...four of the world’s Top 40 pension funds are now Canadian, and all have been structured according to the groundbreaking governance principles that underlie OTPP’s success.”

With nearly \$130-billion in assets, the OTPP is clearly a Canadian success story. That success has very much depended on the foresight and responsible leadership shown by Ontario teachers and their government partner over the last 25 years. The following are some of the key decisions made over the last quarter-century.

Achieving a pension partnership

The road to the best-in-the-world pension plan has not been without its share of challenges and setbacks. Even with the best of intentions, initial attempts to establish a jointly sponsored pension plan for teachers failed. In 1988, the ultimate authority and responsibility for providing pensions to teachers rested solely with the Ontario government, as it had since 1917. For most of the time between 1917 and 1990, the Teachers' Superannuation Fund (TSF) design and benefits were stable; changes were introduced infrequently. As an interesting historical financial marker, there was a cash deficit in the TSF in only three of its 73 years.

Even in 1988, the TSF was Ontario's largest public-sector pension fund. In fact, the TSF had an actuarial surplus of \$1.885-billion before being merged in 1990 with the Teachers' Superannuation Adjustment Fund (TSAF), a separate fund established by the provincial government in 1975 to provide inflation protection for members.

In February 1988, two major reports commissioned by the Ontario government were made public. The first, “In Whose Interest” by Malcolm Rowan, focused on permitting public-sector pension plans to invest in capital markets without government intervention.

In the 1980s, there were no independent investment possibilities for the TSF. The *Teachers' Superannuation Act* required assets not needed for current expenditures to be invested solely in Ontario debentures. The debentures could not be traded and were, therefore, referred to as non-market government debt. Furthermore, the Treasurer of Ontario, subject to the approval of cabinet, determined the interest rate and the term of the debentures (20 to 25 years). The Treasurer of Ontario was also the Treasurer of the Teachers' Superannuation Funds. Not surprisingly, the TSF held 28.6 per cent of the provincial debt. (That was a lot of roads and bridges!)

The second 1988 report, prepared by Laurence Coward, reviewed the financing of indexation under the separate TSAF. Both reports recommended merging the underfunded indexation fund (TSAF) with the fully funded basic fund (TSF).

The Ontario government appointed Dr. David Slater, past chair of the Economic Council of Canada, to conduct further consultations with respect to the two reports. In his July 1988 report, Dr. Slater proposed a package of bold recommendations that today form the cornerstone of the OTPP governance structure. He called for a full partnership and joint trusteeship with equal numbers of representatives from government and teachers. He also recommended that all pension matters be negotiable. At the time, there were no formal pension negotiations between teachers and the government; there were only discussions through the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) Biennial Review Committee.

Slater's recommendations would lay the groundwork for what we know today as the partnership, making the government and teachers joint sponsors and trustees of the new plan. Government guarantees would be terminated but so would the government's unilateral control of the pension plan.

Dr. Slater provided a starting point for negotiations of a new pension deal for the Ontario government and OTF. It would be up to the parties to develop the structures of a real pension partnership.

The Liberals fail to establish a pension partnership

In a letter to OTF in September 1988, Ontario Treasurer Robert Nixon acknowledged that the way the government "dealt with pension matters in the past has been somewhat paternalistic.... We would be willing to take this opportunity to contemplate real reform...." based on Dr. Slater's principle "that teachers and the government should be full and equal partners in the amount they contribute to the plan, in the way they share its risks and rewards, and in the role they play in the management of the pension funds in the future."

Until 1990, the province of Ontario was the sole sponsor and employer for teachers' pensions. The province guaranteed the pension promise; if there was a shortfall, the deficiency would be made up from Ontario's Consolidated Revenue Fund. Ownership of any surplus was unclear and contentious.

As a result of talks initiated by the Peterson Liberal government in September 1988, OTF and the affiliates agreed to reform pension management for teachers. Some issues were agreed to quickly: operating the new plan on a fully funded basis, diversifying the plan's assets and joint sponsorship within

an equal partnership. Ontario's teachers were embracing a bold, new initiative in which they would accept the risks and rewards of joint sponsorship. Even then, Ontario's teachers were at the forefront of recognizing and addressing the challenges and risks facing their pension futures.

Unfortunately, the agreement fell apart when the Peterson government would not accept a third-party resolution mechanism when the co-sponsors disagreed on benefits/monetary matters. Leaders of the affiliates and OTF had long recognized the difficulty in establishing an "equal" partnership with the Crown. Teachers believed that the only way to guarantee the integrity of the partnership was with some form of third-party arbitration. Ontario's teachers would not accept a new pension-management system that provided one partner with more power than the other.



77% of that growth is based on investment returns of about \$99.7-billion.

On December 20, 1989 the Peterson government ended talks on equal partnership and legislated a government-controlled pension plan. The imposed teachers' pension plan gave the government the right to set contribution rates, change benefits and provisions, and to use plan surpluses as it wished. The government permitted itself the use of future surpluses to reduce its indebtedness to the plan. It's interesting to note that when Conrad Black tried to unilaterally skim surpluses from the Dominion Stores' pension plan at about this time, the Ontario government took action to protect the interests of employees but deliberately chose not to protect the interests of teachers under the imposed legislation. The government considered the TSF an easy solution to its need for access to low-interest funds.

The imposed legislation established a Pension Plan Board comprised of eight representatives, five appointed by the government and three appointed by OTF. Changes to benefits were to be made by cabinet through an Order in Council. No consultation with Ontario Teachers was required; OTF would be



notified 45 days prior to the change(s). The only good news was that the investment of available plan assets was to be diversified.

The NDP government succeeds

It would take another two years, the humiliating defeat of the Peterson government, which had dismissed teachers' pension concerns as "silly," and the election of Ontario's first NDP government, on September 6, 1990, to establish a true arm's length equal pension partnership.

Bob Rae's approach to an equal pension partnership was based on the principles of fairness and shared responsibility. As the new Premier of Ontario, Rae reopened pension discussions with Ontario's teachers and agreed to a negotiation process that included compulsory binding arbitration. The new deal was signed on August 20, 1991—less than a year after the NDP came to power.



Only 12% of the total fund is due to government contributions.

By remaining strong, united and determined the leaders of OTF and the affiliates were able to secure a true equal partnership with Sovereign Ontario. After four years of effort, the teachers of Ontario finally had an equal pension partnership that would take effect January 1, 1992.

\$100-billion in investment returns

Since its inception in 1990, the OTPP has steadily increased in value from about \$19-billion in non-transferable, non-negotiable provincial debentures to today's \$129.5-billion. Seventy-seven per cent of that growth is based on investment returns—about \$99.7 billion. Only 12 per cent of the total fund is due to government contributions. The taxpayers of Ontario pay a reasonable amount to sustain the Teachers' Pension Plan. Teachers do their part, matching the government's contributions, deferring a significant part of their current income to provide a future guaranteed (Defined Benefit) stream of income determined by the number of years they contribute and their annual salaries during their "best five."

More significant than contributions, however, the strong funding position of the plan is due to the leadership shown by the partners in establishing a pension plan able to invest in diversified asset classes free from manipulation by either partner. The plan also developed numerous and novel investment strategies to increase returns.

By diversifying our investments in equities, commodities and real estate, none of which was permitted under the old government-controlled Superannuation Plan, the OTPP began to generate surpluses that made benefit improvements possible. In 1996, the early retirement penalty was reduced from a prohibitive 5 per cent to 2.5 per cent. The "85 factor" was introduced in 1998 and made permanent in 2001.

Imagine the state we would be in today if our pension funds were still in the sole control of the Ontario government. If we were still dependent only on government bonds, it's doubtful that any pension improvements would have been realized over the years.

Skillful investing has been a hallmark at OTPP. The fund's growth has been remarkable by anyone's standards. OTPP is a model for pension plans worldwide. Investment performance for 2012 was 13 per cent; the investment returns over the past 10 years is 9.6 per cent; and the returns since inception are 10.1 per cent.

Between 1990 and 2012, contributions by the government and Ontario's teachers totalled \$37.7-billion, while the payout in pensions was \$62.6-billion. Yet, despite the \$24.9-billion difference between contributions and pensions paid in that period, the plan's total worth grew by a staggering \$110.5-billion.

That growth in funds is even more remarkable when you consider the following demographic facts about the plan's changing membership since 1992.

The number of active contributors has risen from 158,000 to 179,000, a 13.3 per cent increase; the number of retirees has tripled from 41,000 to 124,000.

Today's retiree is expected to receive a pension from OTPP for 31 years, up from 25 years in 1992.

Life expectancy for female contributors is up from age 85 to 90.5; male life expectancy is up from 81 to 88 since 1992.

Despite more members receiving a pension, despite the dramatic increase in our life expectancy and despite the increase in the total number of years one can expect to receive a pension, each funding valuation demonstrates the plan's continued ability to pay every member's pension 70 years into the future because the financial team at OTPP continues to earn the investment returns necessary to meet the challenge of these changes.

Nor have the partners been passive in the face of these demographic shifts. They have demonstrated leadership in adjusting plan provisions, especially inflation protection, to provide temporary flexibility during recent years of historically low interest rates and to address longer life expectancies.

The future security of the OTPP is not in doubt. The additional investment returns realized because of the governance partnership has only added to that pension security. ☺

Rod Albert was President of OSSTF/FEESO (1985-88), President of OTF (1988-89) and General Secretary of OSSTF/FEESO 2004-2007. He currently sits on the OTPP Board of Directors.



The Mustang Drive-In

Revisiting an icon of the past

Cydnee Hosker has been teaching visual art for 29 years and currently teaches at Thomas A. Stewart Secondary School in Peterborough. Chiefly a painter, Cydnee found herself teaching photography about seven years ago. What at first was a daunting task soon became a delightful exploration of a new medium.

Following her own advice to celebrate the everyday, she ventured to the deserted Mustang Drive-In. She was struck by the silence of the place—it seemed as though everyone had decided one day to simply walk out, leaving behind an intact capsule of a lost time.

The resulting photographs emphasize the weathered beauty of the deteriorated surfaces, left to the indifference of time, the elements and busy vandals. Her first visit to the Mustang, years ago, was to see *Doctor Zhivago*. What likely will be her last was to record the remnants of a vital hub of the community. ☺

Page 34: *The Men's Room*.

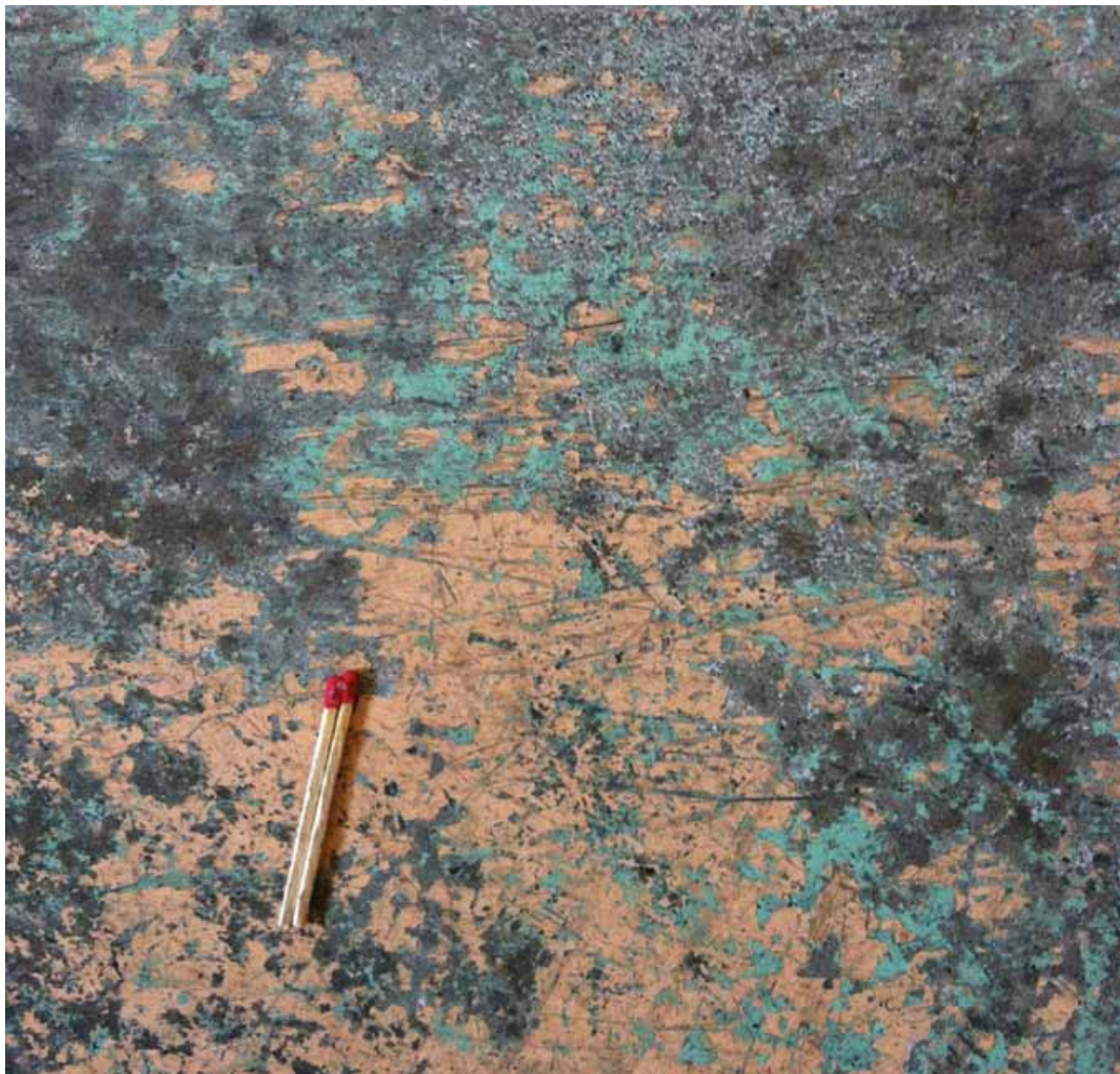
Page 35 top: *Redbird*.

Page 35 small photos,
left to right: *Savages*.

Turn to the Right. Rule of Thirds.

All photos Fall 2014.







The Human Edge

How far can you be pushed?

What do frog breathing, glowing zebrafish and sports have in common? They all play a large part in the discovery of the human body and its wonders, possibilities and limits. All this and more can be experienced with a visit to The Human Edge, presented by AstraZeneca at the Ontario Science Centre.

It has been seven years since the Ontario Science Centre opened a permanent exhibition hall. The launch of The Human Edge reveals 80 exhibits that explore the science of the body. It provides visitors with a variety of scenarios that include tests, activities and visual displays that help to demonstrate the ways in which the body develops and how it reacts to individual limits.

The exhibition was designed and created by Ontario Science Centre scientists, designers, writers and craftspeople. This included extensive collaboration with leading experts from a wide range of fields, including neuroscience, physiology, bio-mechanics and sports medicine. The exhibition was built using the best environmentally friendly and sustainable materials and processes. Visitors can participate in fascinating tests and observations about the human body that are displayed in five grouped areas.

In the Beginning explores a newborn baby's developmental stages as well as the changes a woman's body goes through during pregnancy. Gene development is explored, including how it can be affected by both internal and external factors. And inherited family traits are demonstrated through the aid of fluorescent zebrafish, which are used in genetic research.

Mind and Body Limits delves into the fundamentals of the human body. This area focuses on longevity and aging and offers stories of people who have pushed the human body further than ever thought possible. An aging machine provides a glimpse into a visitor's future by offering a sneak peak at watching yourself age 60 years.

Pushing Past the Limits includes the Wall of Pain, Banting & Best's Laboratory and Brain Imaging, which all help to show how the body responds when pushed to extremes. As well, the body's reaction to broken bones, concussions, organ defects and nutritional imbalances are examined.

Outer Limits focuses on athletes and adventure-seekers who push their bodies to the limit in extreme environments, from

ocean bottoms to mountain tops. The Single Breath experience includes a grand structure resembling a diving bell. Inside, the glowing blue light gives the feeling of being on a underwater adventure. Visitors learn about champion freedivers who use the process of frog breathing to help them descend to depths greater than 85 metres using only a single breath of air. Meanwhile Canadian Mandy-Rae Cruikshank Krack narrates a voice-over about her freedive to a record-breaking 88 metres in two minutes 48 seconds.

Decision Maze provides fun exercises as you move through the steps of climbing a mountain. You will be asked questions about what you should do next, now that you have reached a higher elevation. Do you choose the right equipment to keep you going? The choice(s) you make could lead to doom and gloom or could set you on your way to a higher plateau. It is amazing how the lack of oxygen, high elevation, glare off the snow and proximity to the sun can affect all your decisions. The Climbing Wall in this area also delivers interesting lessons about the limits of your body and the steps that need to be taken to ensure your safety.

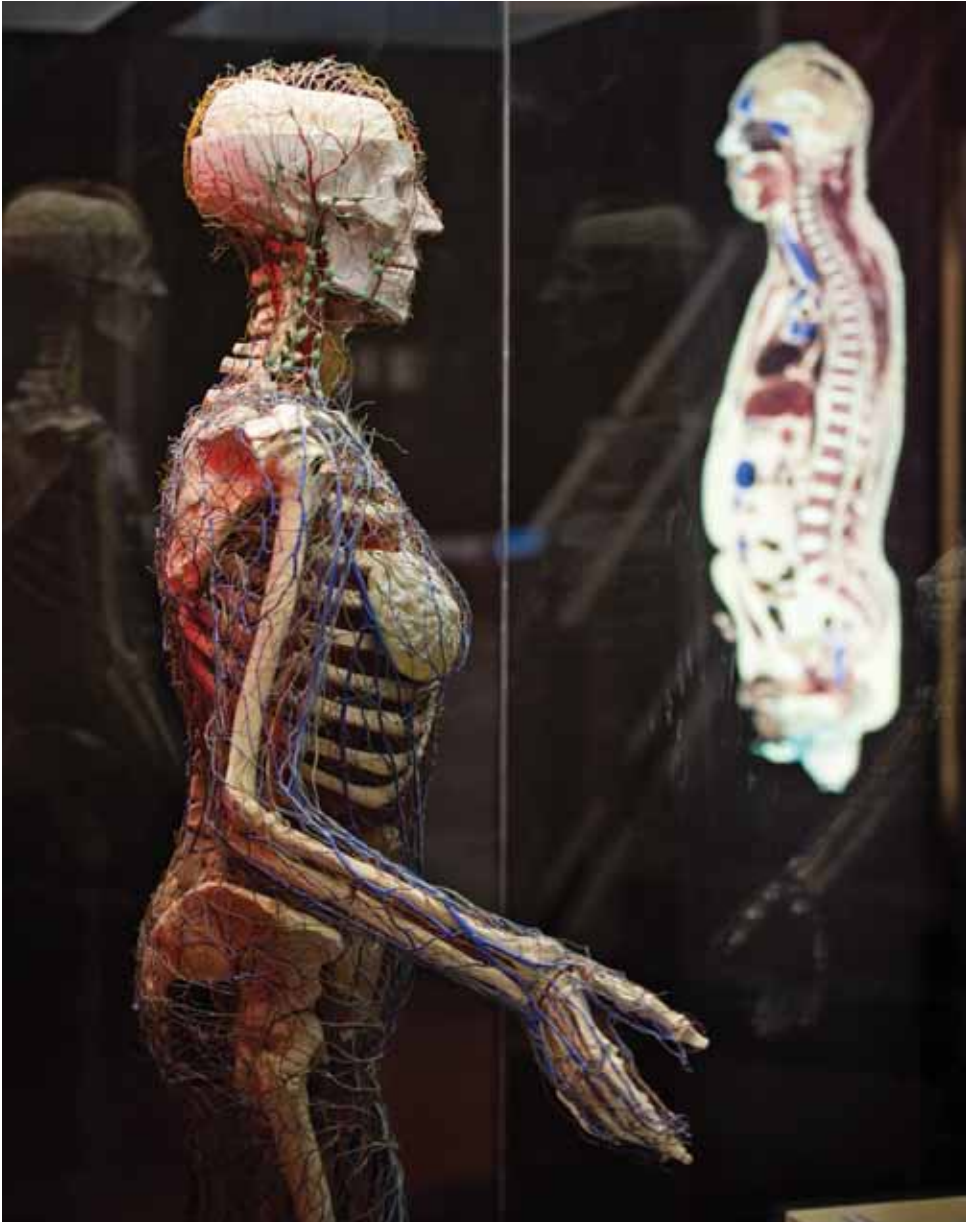
Personal Limits explores common fitness activities: running, rowing and dance.

Other related programs offered at the Ontario Science Centre that have curriculum connections related to Grades 9-12 Health and Physical Education and both Biology and Science for Grades 11-12 range from 45 minutes to a full day. Teachers can book these programs for their students. They include Human Anatomy and Physiology, which offers students a chance to learn about the anatomy and physiology of the human body (Grades 9-12); Way to Glow!, where students enter a real biotechnology lab and use state-of-the-art tools and protocols to transform E. coli bacteria with genes from a bioluminescent jellyfish (Grades 11-12); and DNA Fingerprinting, which allows students to obtain their unique DNA fingerprint in this hands-on workshop by using current biotechnology techniques and equipment (Grade 12).

For booking information and to access the online application form, go to www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/School/Book/Booking. You can visit the AstraZeneca Human Edge exhibition hall with general admission to the Ontario Science Centre Monday to Friday 10 a.m. – 4 p.m. and weekends/holidays from 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. ☺

The launch of
The Human Edge
reveals
80 exhibits
that explore
the science of
the body.





New life (above): In the Beginning charts the path from a single cell to a new person, plus how environmental factors can influence genes. Beautifully lit tanks of zebrafish are used as model organisms in genetic research.

Making the invisible visible (left): The Visible Man is a large, light-box structure that shows different views of organs, muscles and bones.

Breathe in (bottom left): This exhibit, designed to resemble a diving bell, highlights how free-divers can hold a single breath for such a long time.

The body revealed (below): The internal lights that glow in "Lehra," created from a mould of a 28-year-old woman for a health museum in Cologne, Germany, show the network of veins and nerves.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE/BRIAN WILLER



Keeping you in the loop

Reviews, conferences, PD opportunities and other items of interest

BOOK REVIEW

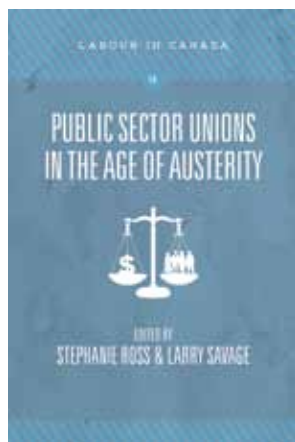
Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity

Edited by Stephanie Ross and Larry Savage
Fernwood Publishing, 2013
160 pages, \$27.95
Reviewed by Ryan Kelly

The fourth installment in the Labour in Canada series, *Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity*, assembles a selection of well-crafted essays designed to enlighten the reader about a great assault on unionized workers in Canada. In a time of increasing income inequality, this book is a relevant, detailed exposé of how corporate and government co-operation systematically manufactures this crisis. As such, this book looks to answer a number of important questions, including “Has the union movement’s work been largely reactionary to this assault?” Contributors argue against this, suggesting unions have employed new tactics and strategies to respond to contrary interests. Why, then, has debate in the public arena not included this discussion? Challenges to control the message are hindered by a public opinion where “reverse class resentment” encourages a race to the bottom, and supports a system where unions are vilified and workers are being made to pay for an economic crisis not of their making. The book’s contributors, however, are up to the challenge and respond to this cultural shift with a critical lens of admirable precision.

The first task of this compilation is to decode what exactly defines a public sector. Remarkably, this has a vast and varying

interpretation. The contributors take an inclusive approach, which certainly complicates their analysis but allows them to better characterize public-sector unions’ unique political features. It also allows the writers to explore public-sector labour relations and how neoliberal austerity perverts sound labour practices. Further to this, the contributors analyze the lessons that have been learned through public-sector union struggles. How does our leadership respond within a discourse that centres on a taxpayer rather than a stockholder? This creates a precarious balance that must simultaneously



navigate the merits of public betterment—an idea with far-reaching and sometimes intangible implications—and the idea of how this is a large contributing factor for the creation and growth of economic capital. What is produced is a quality document that leaves no argument unexplored.

Whether for scholarly pursuits, as an engaging and informative read or as a gag present from one libertarian to another, this book is certain to please. The pendulum of opinion regarding public-sector unions has swung to an extreme in our society. While we search for balance in this climate of austerity, *Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity* prepares a reader to be informed when challenging the ideology that seeks to destroy Canada’s middle class.

Ryan Kelly is a teacher in District 13, Durham, and a member of the Communications/Political Action Committee.

Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity

Édité par Stephanie Ross et Larry Savage
Fernwood Publishing, 2013
160 pages, 27,95 \$
Critique de Ryan Kelly

Quatrième fascicule de la série *Labour in Canada*, *Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity* (Les syndicats du secteur public à l'ère de l'austérité) rassemble une sélection d'articles bien conçus destinés à éclairer le lecteur sur la grande atteinte portée contre les travailleurs syndiqués au Canada. À une époque de disparité croissante des revenus, ce livre constitue un exposé d'actualité pertinent qui détaille la manière dont les entreprises et les gouvernements coopèrent de façon systématique pour fabriquer cette crise. En soi, ce livre cherche à répondre à plusieurs questions importantes, dont la suivante : « Le travail du mouvement syndical a-t-il été en grande partie une réaction à cette atteinte? » Les collaborateurs de cet ouvrage s'opposent à ce point de vue, évoquant le fait que les syndicats ont adopté de nouvelles tactiques et stratégies en vue de réagir aux intérêts contraires. Alors, pourquoi ce débat ne s'est-il pas retrouvé sur la place publique? Le contrôle du message se heurte à des défis qui entravent l'opinion publique selon laquelle « le ressentiment opposé à l'égard des classes » encourage une course vers le fond et soutient un système dans lequel les syndicats sont dénigrés et où l'on fait payer les travailleurs pour une crise économique dont ils ne sont pas responsables. Ces collaborateurs relèvent, cependant, le défi et réagissent à ce revirement culturel en posant un regard critique d'une précision admirable.

La première tâche de cette compilation est de décoder ce qui définit exactement un « secteur public ». Cela donne lieu à une interprétation vaste et diverse, ce qui est remarquable. Les collaborateurs adoptent une approche globale qui complique assurément leur analyse, mais qui leur permet de mieux caractériser les fonctions politiques uniques des syndicats du secteur public.

Cela permet également aux auteurs d'explorer les relations de travail dans le secteur public et de quelle façon l'austérité néolibérale corrompt de bonnes pratiques de travail. En outre, les collaborateurs analysent les leçons qui ont été tirées des luttes syndicales du secteur public. Quelle est la réaction de nos dirigeants dans un discours axé sur le contribuable plutôt que sur l'actionnaire? Cela crée un équilibre précaire qui doit guider simultanément les avantages du progrès public —une idée ayant des répercussions d'une portée considérable et parfois indéfinissables — et l'idée qu'il s'agit d'un facteur contributif important à la création et à la croissance du capital économique. Il en résulte un ouvrage de qualité dans lequel aucun argument n'a été laissé de côté.

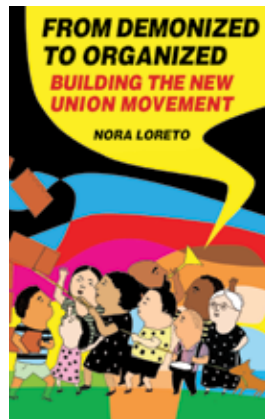
Que ce soit à des fins pédagogiques, en tant que lecture informative et intéressante ou comme cadeau-plaisanterie, d'un libéraire à un autre, ce livre fera plaisir à coup sûr. Dans notre société, on fait face à un volte-face de l'opinion publique par rapport aux syndicats du secteur public. Alors que nous sommes à la recherche d'un équilibre dans ce climat d'austérité, *Public Sector Unions in the Age of Austerity* prépare le lecteur à remettre en question l'idéologie qui s'efforce à anéantir la classe moyenne au Canada.

Ryan Kelly est enseignant au District 13, Durham. Il est également membre du Comité des communications/action politique.

**From Demonized to Organized:
Building the New Union Movement**

By Nora Loreto
Canadian Centre for Policy
Alternatives, 2013
184 pages, \$20.00
Reviewed by Colin Matthew

On November 11, 2013 U.K. Prime Minister David Cameron posited that austerity would be a permanent fixture of the British economy. While the Harper-Hudak-Ford axis has espoused similar policies in Canada, there are many, including the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives



(CCPA), who reject this attack on the middle class. In *From Demonized to Organized* Nora Loreto argues that “the labour movement is the only force that is large enough, regionally diverse and well enough resourced to lead the fight against [austerity].”

Loreto references a bevy of respected media sources from across the political spectrum and frequently cites current examples from 2012 and 2013. She provides

an in-depth examination of the labour movement and recounts many of organized labour's accomplishments from the last 50 years. While this uplifting history is enough to commend the book, particularly to those for whom this is unfamiliar territory, some readers may be left wondering by what means and from whence the new labour movement will emerge.

Loreto recognizes that “unions have to put resources, both financial and human, into organizing young people.” She acknowledges the limitations of existing structures, such as social media, in engaging younger members but fails to propose a clear way forward.

Readers are reminded on innumerable occasions that “democracy is at the core of the very existence of unions” but Loreto goes on to acknowledge that young people, “saddled with an electoral system that promotes disengagement...have simply tuned out.” It is unclear whether unions can be the catalyst in reviving interest in democratic

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processes within and without the Canadian labour movement and thus the relevance of these democratic structures.

In the final pages, the author reminds us that, given the enormity of the task ahead, “unions have to reconnect with their base” and “the union’s role both within and outside a workplace is the business of the leadership and the rank-and-file.”

Colin Matthew is teacher at IE Weldon Secondary School in District 15, Trillium Lakelands.

Learning Targets: Helping Students Aim for Understanding in Today’s Lesson

By **Connie M. Moss** and **Susan M. Brookhart**
 Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2012
 220 pages, \$26.95
 Reviewed by **Shaun Naroski**

The authors of *Learning Targets* begin by stating the most effective teaching and the

most effective student learning happen when teachers design the right learning target for that day’s lesson.

The index of the book includes chapters on how to design, share and use learning targets. A number of the concepts in this book mirror current practice, and the book would be primarily useful for classroom educators and, to some degree, administrators. Changing the word “targets” to “goals” would be much more familiar to Ontario educators.

There is also a chapter dedicated to applying learning targets to differentiated instruction, another familiar educational concept. The most detailed chapter is one that uses learning targets to foster higher-order thinking, though Brookhart admits these have been historically difficult to teach and assess. This chapter might be appropriate for a senior-level high school class and eventually used with junior classes.

The final chapters include how to use learning targets to guide summative



assessment and grading student work for mark accumulation for report card purposes. As a bit of a bonus, the book includes download instructions and a password for action tools, which are a series of reproducible guides to assist educators and students through the process of using learning targets and self-assessment. Readers will also find a helpful glossary of terms located at the back that may assist in their understanding of this text.

Shaun Naroski is a teacher in District 6A, Thunder Bay and is a member of the Educational Services Committee.

How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading

by **Susan M. Brookhart**
 Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development, 2013
 159 pages, \$27.95
 Reviewed by **Steve Russell**

More about rubrics, anyone? Rubrics can be powerful tools in a teacher’s toolbox. For many, making and using rubrics is part of our practice, yet we have spent little time learning about them. It’s something like building the airplane while it’s in flight. In her book *How to Create and Use Rubrics for Formative Assessment and Grading*, Susan M. Brookhart provides invaluable reminders and guidelines for the development and use of effective rubrics. This is a kind of one-stop rubric-repair shop.

The book defines and explains rubrics,

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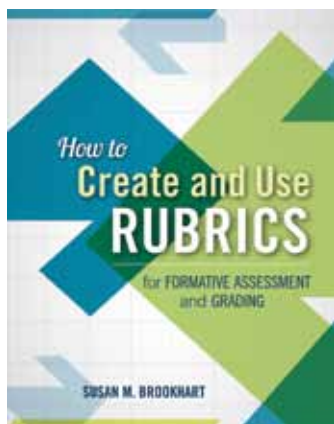


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and helps teachers better understand their components and applications. Brookhart begins by defining a rubric as “a coherent set of criteria for student work that describes levels of performance quality.” She also discusses the purposes of rating scales and checklists, so teachers gain a very clear understanding of their tools and the best applications for them. She differentiates rubrics as either analytic or holistic. Her lists of advantages and disadvantages for the use of rubrics apply across all subject areas.

She guides teachers to verify that the criteria used in their own excellent rubrics are “appropriate, definable, observable, distinct from one another, complete and able to support descriptions along a continuum of quality.” She outlines approaches to developing rubrics and provides examples of poor and excellent rubrics.

Ontario teachers will find that Susan Brookhart’s ideas align well with what’s happening here and now. She has written or co-authored several books about formative assessment, giving effective feedback and assessing higher-order thinking. This book about rubrics is built on that solid foundation. In fact, there are sections in the book that support the sharing of learning targets (goals), differentiating instruction and using formative assessment. If you’re trying to repair your rubric airplane in flight, this may be the ideal resource for you.

Steve Russell is a teacher in District 14, Kawartha Pine Ridge and is a member of the Educational Services Committee.

CONFERENCES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

April 3, 2014

Summit on Children and Youth Mental Health

Allstream Centre—CNE Grounds, Toronto, ON

This event is hosted by the Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health—a multi-sectoral group committed to urgent and positive change for children and youth mental-health services in Ontario. The summit on Children and Youth Mental Health is a unique event that unites the voices of educators, professional student services personnel, mental health and health professionals, children service agencies, children service advocates, families and students. This summit is designed to inspire and to demonstrate how the power of our collective voices, commitment and efforts can bring a sense of urgency and action to the vital issue of mental health. The focus of the 2014 summit is Whole Community Approaches and how, working together, we can make a difference in the lives of children, youth and their families. International and national speakers offer evidence-informed practices, programs and resources that have been shown to work and can make a real difference in the lives of children, youth and their families. For more information visit www.opsba.org.

April 4, 2013

Ontario Speech Language Pathologist Association

School Services Symposium

BMO Institute of Learning, Toronto, ON

Keynote speaker Christiane Kyte will launch a document called *Oral Language At Your Fingertips*. We are inviting the Minister of Education and ministry representatives from the Ministry of Education—Special Needs Branch. There will be workshops in early kindergarten/early intervention. Program and registration form to follow. For more information, visit www.osla.on.ca.

April 5, 2014

AGO Workshop for Teachers

It’s About Time! Designing Authentic, Theme-based Curriculum

Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto, ON

Using the AGO’s thematic interpretation of its collection as inspiration, learn to design theme-based units or courses of study for visual arts and media arts using authentic performance tasks, artful approaches to instruction and current understandings about student attention, motivation and engagement. The concept of “time” will be developed as an example, contemporary art will be the focus and student-responsive tasks will be highlighted. For more information visit www.ago.net/teacher-programs-saturday-workshops.

April 9–10, 2014

National Healthy Schools

Conference 2014

Coming Together: Supporting the Whole Child

Hilton Hotel, London, ON

The Ontario Healthy Schools Coalition is a dynamic and innovative coalition supporting healthy schools for the optimal health and learning of Ontario’s children and youth. It is an Ontario-wide, broad-based coalition, with members from public health units, school boards, hospitals, mental-health agencies, universities, health-related organizations, education-related organizations, and parent and student organizations. The focus for the conference is to provide professional learning and sharing strategies related to the healthy-schools framework with an emphasis on quality instruction and programs, community partnerships, healthy physical environments and supportive social environments. For more information visit ontariohealthyschools.com.

April 27–29, 2014

Ontario Cooperative Education

Association 2014 Spring Conference

Explore, Navigate, Experience

Delta Meadowdale Conference and Hotel, Mississauga, ON



The OCEA 2014 Spring Conference will include over 80 workshops related to all forms of experiential learning including co-op, apprenticeship, SHSM and dual credits. The format will provide opportunities to network with educators from across Ontario. Exhibitors will provide a variety of teacher resources. For more information visit: www.ocea.on.ca.

May 9–10, 2014

OSEE Eco-Links 2014

Green Inside, Green Outside

University of Toronto, Toronto, ON

The Ontario Society for Environmental Education presents its annual conference. Keynote speakers will include Franke James, author of *Banned on the Hill* and *Bothered by My Green Conscience*, as well as Colin Harris, an environmental educator and founder of the non-profit organization Take Me Outside. To propose a workshop or to register, visit home.osee.ca.

May 13–15, 2014

The Learning Partnership

Early Years Family and Community

Engagement Symposium

The Fort Garry Hotel, Winnipeg, MB

Experts from the University of British Columbia, the University of Saskatchewan, the Canadian Council of Ministers of Education, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, PEI, the Institute of Child Studies, OISE/UT and Healthy Child Manitoba will share their research and the actions taken to support the importance of parent and community engagement. For more information visit eyeonkids.ca.

May 19–22, 2014

2014 Global Summit on the Physical Activity of Children

The Power to Move Kids

Westin Harbour Castle, Toronto, ON

The global summit has been designed to provide you with the best available evidence

to guide work by attending one of the four tracks: home, school, community and policy. Throughout the summit delegates will have the opportunity to meet and network with passionate physical-activity experts and innovators and learn from both their successes and their missteps to engage all children and youth in physical activity.

May 29–30, 2014

Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies

2014 CAWLS Inaugural Conference

Brock University, St. Catharines, ON

The conference organizing committee is currently confirming workshops and presenters for its first labour studies conference. Possible topics include youth, students and labour unions, threats to organized labour, alliances between the labour movement and other social movements, and labour and political strategy. In keeping with the congress theme, Borders without Boundaries, the participation of researchers in academic, union and community settings is encouraged.

July 4–20, 2014

Toronto Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia

9th Annual Peace and Reconciliation Tour China, South Korea and Japan

The Toronto Association for Learning and Preserving the History of World War II in Asia (ALPHA) is pleased to announce the launch of the 9th annual 2014 Peace and Reconciliation Study Tour. Each year, Toronto ALPHA takes educators and scholars to Asia to learn more about this forgotten history through victim and veteran testimonials, historical site visits and academic discussions with lawyers and professors. Topics of study include the Nanking massacre, military sexual slavery (the “comfort women” system), prisoners of war, chemical and biological weapon use and experimentation. Application deadline is March 14, 2014. Educator grants are also available. For more information visit www.torontoalpha.org.

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Who will be there?

Students / Parents / Educators /
Mental Health and Health Professionals /
Professional Student Services Agencies/
Children's Services Advocates

Who is hosting this event?

Hosted by the Coalition for Children
and Youth Mental Health – a multi-
sectoral group committed to urgent
and positive change for children and
youth mental health services in Ontario

Where is the 2014 Summit?

The AllStream Centre, Toronto

FOR EXHIBIT SPACE

Please contact: Judith Nyman
jnyman@opsba.org

SUMMIT THEME

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MAIN SUMMIT

APRIL 3 EVENING & APRIL 4

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- Features evidence-based practices in action
- Highlights the partnerships among the many sectors engaged in children and youth mental health
- Provides input on progress in the roll-out of Ontario's Mental Health Strategy
- Network with colleagues across sectors

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opportunity to
share energy,
ideas and
inspiration*



Coalition for Children
AND Youth Mental Health



Last word

by Paul Elliott, President

Mot de la fin

par Paul Elliott, président

Mandela's legacy

Canada's need for reconciliation

ON July 18, 1918, a mild July day with temperatures hovering around 20 °C, Rolihlahla Mandela was born in a village on the plains in eastern South Africa. No one could have known or guessed the impact this child would have not only on South Africa but across the globe. Sometime during his time in primary school he was given a name, in accordance with the custom of giving all school children "Christian" names, and the world looked upon Nelson Mandela.

For almost 25 years, through his expulsion from university to his sentence of life imprisonment in 1964, Mandela's life was focused on the goal of moving South Africa towards his "...ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunities." A far cry from the apartheid he was born into and experienced through childhood and adulthood, but nevertheless his goal endured through hardships that most of us can barely imagine. The isolation, torture and mind-numbing work of rock-breaking at the infamous Robben Island Prison only served to strengthen his drive towards the goals he established for himself and South Africa.

On February 11, 1990 Mandela was finally released from prison and four years later became South Africa's first democratically elected President on May 10, 1994. In the four years that preceded his presidency, Mandela worked with President F.W. de Klerk to abolish apartheid and establish the first multiracial elections in 1994.

It was shortly after Mandela's presidency that he realized South Africa was still a divided country, trying to heal from years of abuse and bigotry brought about by the institutionalized racism perpetuated by the policies of apartheid. To heal his country Mandela established the Truth and Reconciliation Commission to "bear witness to, record...crimes related to human-rights violations, as well as reparation and rehabilitation." Over the next five years the Commission investigated human-rights abuses that occurred between 1960 and 1994, worked to restore victims' dignity and considered applications for amnesty from those who committed crimes directly related to sustaining apartheid. The Commission itself was seen as a crucial component of the transition to a free

L'héritage de Nelson Mandela

La nécessité d'une réconciliation pour le Canada

LE 18 juillet 1918, douce journée de juillet avec des températures avoisinant les 20 °C, Rolihlahla Mandela est né dans un village des plaines de l'Est de l'Afrique du Sud. Personne n'aurait pu savoir ou prédire l'influence qu'aurait cet enfant, non seulement en Afrique du Sud, mais aussi ailleurs dans le monde. Durant ses études primaires, on lui a donné un nom, selon la coutume qui veut que l'on confère à tous les enfants d'âge scolaire un nom « chrétien » et le monde a contemplé Nelson Mandela.

Pendant presque 25 ans, de son expulsion de l'université jusqu'à sa condamnation d'emprisonnement à perpétuité en 1964, la vie de Nelson Mandela a été animée par le but de développer l'Afrique du Sud vers son « ... idéal d'une démocratie et d'une société libre dans laquelle tout le monde vivrait en harmonie avec des chances égales. » Nous sommes loin de l'apartheid dans lequel il est né et a vécu durant son enfance et sa vie d'adulte, mais son but a néanmoins traversé des épreuves que la plupart de nous peuvent tout juste imaginer. L'isolement, la torture et le travail forcé abrutissant à la prison notoire de Robben Island n'ont servi qu'à renforcer sa détermination à atteindre les buts qu'il s'est fixés pour lui-même et pour l'Afrique du Sud.

Le 11 février 1990, Nelson Mandela est finalement sorti de prison et quatre ans plus tard, le 10 mai 1994, il est devenu le premier Président d'Afrique du Sud élu démocratiquement. Dans les quatre années qui ont précédé sa présidence, Nelson Mandela a travaillé avec le Président F. W. de Klerk à l'abolition de l'apartheid et à l'organisation des premières élections multiraciales en 1994.

C'est peu après sa présidence que Nelson Mandela a réalisé que l'Afrique du Sud demeurerait toujours un pays divisé tentant de surmonter des années d'abus et d'intolérance causés par un racisme institutionnalisé perpétué par les politiques de l'apartheid. Pour guérir son pays, Nelson Mandela a créé la Commission vérité et réconciliation pour « témoigner de, consigner... les crimes relatifs à la violation des droits de la personne en plus de réparer et de réhabiliter. » Durant les cinq années qui ont suivi, la Commission a enquêté sur les violations des droits de la personne commises entre 1960 et 1994, travaillé à rétablir les



democratic South Africa and consequently the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation was established in 2000 to continue the work of the initial Commission.

Eight years later Canada established its own Commission to deal with the horrific colonial legacy of the Indian residential

We all need to come
to grips with the past
and our need to
build relationships upon
respect and integrity.

schools. Beginning with the first three residential schools in Alberta in 1893, a system of residential schools was established across Canada that was intended to “civilize” the Aboriginal people of this country. A system built upon ignorance and racism was established and funded by the federal government. It served only to tear families apart and deny children access to their cultural and spiritual traditions. All of this was coupled with countless cases of abuse and neglect by those responsible for their care and supervision. The destruction brought upon the Aboriginal people of Canada, in the name of values that place one race above another, has far too many parallels to the apartheid of South Africa.

It was not until 2008, with the establishment of the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, that healing has begun. Over the last six years the Commission has travelled across Canada to uncover the truth of the schools and bear witness to the stories of neglect and abuse that have become a part of our history. In Ontario alone, 17 residential schools have been identified across the province and each one has its own story to tell, not just a story of lost childhood but a story of the resilience of Aboriginal cultures.

On March 27–30, 2014 the Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission will host the final national event in Edmonton, serving as reminder to all of us that the residential school program is a chapter of our collective history.

We all need to come to grips with the past and our need to build relationships on respect and integrity. As it was in South Africa, as it is in Canada, with the shining example of the life of one man—Nelson Mandela, who passed the baton to us on December 5, 2013. ☺

victimes dans leur dignité et examiné des demandes d’amnistie de ceux qui ont perpétré des crimes liés directement à soutenir l’apartheid. La Commission elle-même était perçue comme une composante indispensable au passage de l’Afrique du Sud à un pays libre et démocratique et, par conséquent, l’Institut pour la justice et la réconciliation a été créé en 2000 et poursuit le travail initial de la commission.

Huit ans plus tard, le Canada a établi sa propre commission pour régler l’horrible héritage colonial des pensionnats autochtones. En commençant par les trois premiers pensionnats en Alberta en 1893, un réseau de pensionnats a été créé au Canada dans le but de « civiliser » les Autochtones du pays. Un système fondé sur l’ignorance et le racisme a été établi et financé par le gouvernement fédéral. Il a servi simplement à déchirer les familles et à empêcher les enfants d’avoir accès à leurs traditions culturelles et spirituelles. Tout cela s’accompagnait d’innombrables cas d’abus et de négligence effectués par ceux qui étaient chargés de leurs soins et de leur encadrement. La destruction imposée aux peuples autochtones du Canada, au nom des valeurs de supériorité raciale, offre de très nombreuses similitudes avec l’apartheid en Afrique du Sud.

Nous devons tous comprendre
le passé et la nécessité de
tisser des liens basés sur
le respect et l’intégrité.

Ce n’est qu’en 2008, avec la création de la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation des pensionnats indiens et la Convention de règlement relative aux pensionnats indiens que la guérison a commencé. Au cours des six dernières années, la Commission s’est déplacée d’un bout à l’autre du Canada pour faire la lumière sur les pensionnats et témoigner des récits de négligence et d’abus qui sont maintenant entrés dans notre histoire. Rien qu’en Ontario, 17 pensionnats ont été recensés sur l’ensemble du territoire et chacun d’entre eux raconte sa propre histoire; ce n’est pas seulement une histoire d’enfance perdue, mais celle de la vitalité des cultures autochtones.

Du 27 au 30 mars 2014, la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation des pensionnats indiens organisera son dernier événement national à Edmonton pour rappeler à tous que le programme des pensionnats est un chapitre de notre histoire collective.

Nous devons tous comprendre le passé et la nécessité de tisser des liens basés sur le respect et l’intégrité, à l’instar de l’Afrique du Sud et comme c’est le cas au Canada, avec le vibrant exemple de la vie d’un homme – Nelson Mandela – qui nous a transmis le flambeau le 5 décembre 2013. ☺



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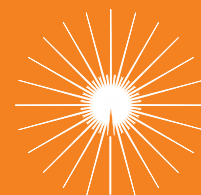
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