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A teacher, Mrs. Nusrat Mirza, submitted this report of a conference she recently attended in Korea. Thinking her message to you regarding the upcoming international meeting of world leaders in Copenhagen was more important than anything I could say, we are printing it here as a guest editorial.

I recently returned from the 2009 TUNZA International Children and Youth Conference on Environment, which took place in Daejeon, Korea from August 17 to 23, 2009. The conference was organized by United Nations Environment Program and the Republic of Korea. Please visit www.unep.org/tunza for more information.

The conference brought together some 550 children (10 – 14 years old) and youth (15 – 24 years old) from over 100 countries who have been involved in various environmental activities in their respective countries. It was an exceptional experience and quite heartening to see what young children and youth — the future torchbearers of this planet — have resolved themselves to accomplish for the betterment of their planet Earth.

The main theme of the conference was Climate Change, and it focused on key issues such as loss of biodiversity, scarcity of water and sustainable lifestyles. Many projects were presented during the plenary sessions, which allowed participants from all over to share their environmental concerns and learn from others.

The highlight of the conference was the Global Town Hall meeting which presented a unique opportunity to all the participants as well as virtual participants from 20 cities of the world (through live webcasting) to finalize a draft statement to be presented to world leaders during the Copenhagen talks in December 2009. The power of that statement comes from the fact that it is the voice and collective plea of the children and youth of this world calling for actual, action-oriented commitment by all world leaders to come to a real agreement. After all, it will be today’s young children who will have to bear the major brunt of global warming, if the world leaders fail to come to an agreement to curb the alarming, rapid rise of greenhouse gas emissions. This statement was finalized after a three-hour long session, in which every child, younger or older, had a say. Please visit http://uniteforclimate.org/ for more information.

It is of the utmost importance that children and youth of today be taught about their planet, about the various issues facing the world, and what each and every citizen can do to make a difference. It could then encourage their families, friends and relatives to become involved in actions to reduce our carbon footprint (www.zerofootprint.net).

As teachers, I feel we should take an unprecedented responsibility to ensure that environmental education becomes an integral part of education and learning in today’s classrooms, at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels.

Mrs. Nusrat Mirza

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October 5th marked World Teachers’ Day, and although the Prime Minister in office normally takes note of this day, the right honourable Stephen Harper went above and beyond this year. Fifteen educators from across Canada convened in Ottawa on World Teachers’ Day—newly conferred laureates of the Prime Minister’s Awards for Teaching Excellence. The country’s highest honour for the teaching profession was accompanied by a $5000 financial award and, this year, compliments of the Prime Minister and his wife, Laureen, a private reception at 24 Sussex Drive.

From Muriel Sawyer, a dynamic and passionate gate-keeper of the Ojibwe language and pioneer in native language education, to Marc Pelech, a tireless educator who, from a rundown post office, founded an award winning student art collective, the 2009 laureates are outstanding educators to say the least.

Signaled by their gold lapel pins, the Prime Minister’s Awards laureates shuffled around Ottawa for five days spending time on Parliament Hill, having cocktails at 24 Sussex, lunch at the Library of Canada and even an impromptu meeting with Justin Trudeau! The week was packed with activities and social events but was not without some serious discussion. Two jam-packed days of policy discussion unfolded at the Minto Suites, the delegation’s home base, from which the PMA will compile their famed ‘Exemplary Practices’ document. This annual publication is meant to disseminate the “brain pickings” of these visionary teachers to colleagues from coast to coast to coast.

“Let’s not create a class of celebrity teachers,” comments Marc Pelech who worries about those teachers who are not visionary teachers to colleagues from coast to coast to coast. Although undoubtedly a great honour for all recipients, the award came at an especially opportune time for Alberta laureate Daniel Buchanan who was trying to decide when to propose to his girlfriend while, at the same time, unpacking his newly purchased home. Although aware of the nomination, Daniel comments on his surprise of actually receiving the award: “with so many amazing teachers in Canada, I had written off the award and treated the nomination as a complement and commendation on its own, which it truly was.”

Certainly 2009 will be one to remember for this trailblazer in classroom technology.

With a surprising number of men on the roster, all the 2009 laureates are exceptional and unique in their teaching practices. Public educators affect our society in an awesome way; the responsibility of being in the classroom day-to-day is one that far too many people simply cannot fully understand or appreciate. There is no neutral ground in teaching—every time a teacher enters a classroom and stands in front of a group of students they are either transforming society or reproducing it. Through their teachings, educators affect our society in an awesome way.

A great thank you is due to Industry Canada and the staff of the Prime Minister’s Awards for Teaching Excellence. Although a mere fifteen educators have been conferred this prestigious title in 2009, as Canadians we have all benefited by investing in recognizing and appreciating one of the most difficult but crucial professions. Those of us who teach recognize the great importance of this rewarding career, but this award, as Casey Brown reminds us, “demonstrates that others think what we are doing is important too.”

Michael Ernest Sweet is the Founder of the Learning for a Cause Group, an appointed member of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and a regular contributor to Canadian Teacher Magazine. He is also a 2009 laureate of the Prime Minister’s Award for Teaching Excellence. For more information about the Prime Minister’s Awards for Teaching Excellence visit www.pma-ppm.gc.ca.

“because it would show people what teachers do and why teaching is such a rewarding profession.”

Prime Minister’s Awards for Teaching Excellence 2009 Recipients

Ron Blair - Newfoundland & Labrador
Michael Ernest Sweet - Quebec
Eileen Erasmus - Northwest Territories
Wayne Philip - Alberta
Muriel Sawyer - Ontario
Daniel Buchanan - Alberta
Ron Vandalais - Ontario
Rob Doughtery - Alberta
Casey Brown - Alberta
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Michael Ernest Sweet - Founder of the Learning for a Cause Group, an appointed member of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and a regular contributor to Canadian Teacher Magazine. He is also a 2009 laureate of the Prime Minister’s Award for Teaching Excellence. For more information about the Prime Minister’s Awards for Teaching Excellence visit www.pma-ppm.gc.ca.
by Jock Mackenzie

Teachers’ Plates Are Full

Our plates are full! Teachers everywhere, at all grade levels, agree that there is too much to do in too little time. Is this a new problem? No. Are overworked, stressed teachers less likely to deliver effective lessons and react positively with students? Yes. Is this concern keeping talented young people from entering the profession, or causing current teachers to leave our schools? To some extent. Is there a solution? Yes.

**Suggested Solutions**

The cynics have flipantly suggested getting a bigger plate. Other staffroom comedians have proposed the idea of having two plates, or a more creative possibility—a double-decker plate. The problem may elicit dark humour, but there are some things that can be done. By looking more closely at the various players in the game, we can choose a number of strategies that should help. Teachers, other school staff, students, parents, school trustees, Department of Education members, and the public can all play a role. Our first, best hope is ourselves. By setting priorities, reflecting on personal idiosyncrasies, sharing, creating routines, taking small steps, planning and organizing, establishing a mindset, taking advantage of structure, and through mental and physical preparation, this problem of “too much to do” can be tackled.

**Saying “No” and Being Supported**

It is easy to say, “I should just learn to say No.” But we are in the helping profession, we are problem solvers and rescuers, we see ourselves as indispensable. We’re not. If we compare our workload to our charitable donations in the real world, we overworked, stressed teachers less likely to deliver effective lessons and react positively with students. Yes. Is this concern keeping talented young people from entering the profession, or causing current teachers to leave our schools? To some extent. Is there a solution? Yes.

Saying “No” can be tackled.

**Junior Assistants & Routines**

As well, far too late in my career, I realized that I was not making sufficient use of the 30 or so teacher assistants that I had in my classroom. Hander outers, picker uppers, fish/plant caregivers, cleaners, decorators, cleaners and tidiers were there at my disposal. I just had to create a routine to put them to use. Having students make their own phone calls home after a successful test constitute a crisis on theirs,” then I would have much of the students make their own phone calls home after a successful test. Students could practise in bite-size chunks: in Math, basic computation; in Science, classification, in Social Studies, worldview, in P.E., ball skills, etc. In my Language Arts classes, it became a routine and a small part of each class to have the students write in their journals. A maximum of five minutes of writing time was allowed each day. To avoid having the task become tedious, I always provided two writing prompts but left Choice #3 as an offering, a personal topic of interest could be made. Further, we hit the Journal Writing hard at the beginning of the year—daily if possible—but then eased off to Tuesdays and Thursdays later in the year. Because I had a plan and a routine, my plate became a little less full; I didn’t have to plan for that part of each class.

**Planning**

When it comes to clearing your plate, being sick or disabled can be quite wonderful. Being a little bit sick is preferred because then you can still do school work even though you can’t be at school. A gift, albeit a left-handed one, from my mother’s side of the family, was the gift of varicose veins. After one of several operations that I have endured, I was laid up for two weeks—virtually no walking, and definitely no teaching. As I lay at home convalescing, I made the best year plan I have ever had. As a bonus, this particular operation occurred when I was nearing retirement. (One of the many things that I have always loved about teaching is that you get a fresh start every year. Every September is a brand new beginning.) I gave up a principalship and returned to the classroom with three years left in my career. I knew that I had only those three years to “get it right” because I had ended every other year with the thought that it may have been good but it wasn’t as good as it could have been. I am not suggesting that you get sick or that you have to wait until near retirement, but, please, take it from me, those last three years were clearly the best of my career. I took the time to plan my work and then work my plan. A big part of my planning and the resulting success came from my revised mindset. I was determined to go out smiling.

**Teach Like It’s Your Last Year**

Another book on tape that I have listened to while walking the dog is called “The Last Lecture” (Pausch & Zador, 2008), the story of a college professor who is dying of pancreatic cancer. He gives his last lecture, literally, but ultimately emphasizes to his audience, that it is a lecture of hope—hope that he can give them some advice that will make a difference in their lives, hope that his life will prove to have been as worthwhile as possible. In the book, Professor Pausch notes that the idea of the “last lecture” is a common one at Carnegie Mellon University; professors are encouraged to give a lecture as if it were the last one they would ever give, and the difference is amazing. If we, as teachers, could teach as if we would soon be denied the privilege of working in a world of energetic, enthusiastic, interesting, challenging young people, it would make a difference in how we see our plates.

**Organization**

But the plate is still too full. As teachers, we have the ability to control a number of variables. Some we don’t. The beating of breasts and grasping of teeth over the ones beyond our reach is a useless, tiring, stress-inducing enterprise. One of the areas that we can control, one that has caused considerable grief in my life, is organization. If I could amalgamate all of the hours that I have wasted looking for something, re-doing something because I couldn’t find the original, doing something myself at the last minute because I was too embarrassed to ask others to help me and admit that “lack of organization on my part should constitute a crime on theirs,” then I would have much of the valuable time that I complain about not having. I would have that extra hour during the day.

**Structure**

Organization can come from structure. As one small example, during my last three years of teaching, I was lucky enough to work at Eastview Middle School. The “structure” in the grade 8 pod was to have two teams. Each team consisted of four classes; and here’s the “take something off your plate” part: the four teachers in the team taught one subject to each of the four classes. I taught all of the Language Arts. Rachelle was in charge of Social Studies. Geoff handled the Science, and Steve did the Math. Not only did this save on prep time, it allowed the team to meet and discuss the same students. Tasks could be divided: student concerns could be addressed, gratutudialy school postcards could be sent home to deserving...
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students, integrated activities could be organized, parent-student teacher conferences could be set up, and monthly “Lunch with Your Teachers” could be planned without fear of duplication and overlap.

Sharing

The structure, in the bigger picture, created a helpful framework—and it provided, on a weekly basis, the opportunity for sharing. It is my belief, that we, as teachers, spend far too much time reinventing the wheel. This may seem like an unrelated parallel but bear with me. I like to tell jokes. When I hear a new joke, I share it. I have what I refer to as a “joke trap line.” There are certain people in my circle of family, friends, and acquaintances who like to hear a new joke, who often have a new joke—or both. By the time I have traveled along my trap line and shared my latest tidbit of humour, I have certainly embedded the Joke of the Day into my memory, and quite likely, have picked up a new joke as well. What a difference it would make if we could establish a “sharing trap line.” Through conversations, emails, telephone calls, or whatever other methods seem appropriate, we could let other teachers know what has worked for us and learn what has worked for them. For me, the first and most important hurdle is making this kind of sharing a habit, setting up the structure so that it becomes routine.

As I look back on my years in teaching, I realize that routines did play an important role in making more efficient use of time, and if not taking things off my plate, at least in helping to organize the things that were on the plate. Perhaps best of all was the concept of the “anticipatory set.” Thank you, Madeline Hunter.

Getting ready—mentally

The ‘getting ready’ mentally ideas were usually puzzles or questions. When I was teaching the plot of the short story, my anticipatory sets were incomplete sequences. Starting with some as simple as 2, 4, 8, 16, ___ (and later more challenging sequences) or the first letters of a song (Happy Birthday To You) would get things going. For poetry, I might ask for a list of rhyming words. During a novel study, I may have asked that students discuss how their own lives related to the theme. Getting the students in the zone took some of the stress of discipline from my plate as they all transitioned into Language Arts, the best class of the day.

In the spirit of sharing and of effective ideas, I almost always ask teachers in my sessions to give as well as take. What opportunity could be greater to get knowledgeable educators together and share strategies that work than at a ProD gathering—and how often is this opportunity missed as we listen solely to the “brought him/her in from elsewhere” professional who is the sage on the stage? Even if staff meetings could start with a few minutes of sharing, we would all benefit.

Who benefits and who else can help?

The people who will benefit from teachers having less on their plates are all of the stakeholders, but most importantly, our students. Teachers are closest to the action and have the greatest opportunity to decide, in this wonderful smorgasbord of teaching and learning, what goes on the plate and what stays on the buffet table. Other school staff—department heads, team leaders, school administration—are important. So too are students, parents, school trustees, and the public. Ah, so much to do, so little time. A look at the other players must be saved for another day.

A teacher’s plate will never and should never be empty. It should be less full. What remains on the plate should be palatable, interesting, a mixture of old favourites and tantalizingly new possibilities.

Lessons learned

1. Say “no” to just a few things. Discuss your “priorities” or don’t allow me to accept these things on my plate with someone close to you.
2. Check to see if you are “busy being busy.” Try to be more effective with strategies like checking your email only three times a day.
3. Look for assistants. Students in your room who would love to be helpers.
4. Establish a “daily work routine.” Come a bit early, stay a bit late, find a quiet place. Make your work time “quality” time.
5. Establish routines. Perform tasks until they become ingrained, part of your day that is almost automatic.
6. Take small steps: The repetition of key elements in bite-size chunks makes for a more satisfying and lasting result.
7. Take time to plan. Consider planning for an entire week with all back-up materials (photo copying etc.) done. This necessitates a time investment but as the week progresses, you will likely save at least double the time you invested. If you don’t know where you’re going, how will you know when you’re there?
8. Teach as you will soon be denied the privilege. Use a “this could be my last chance to get it right” approach.
9. Get organized. Find a system that works for you—and then work at the system.
10. Look at the structure in your school. Do your grade partners have prep periods in the same time block? Can you ‘team plan’ and avoid overlap? Do you have a department head?
11. Create a “sharing trap line” that works for you. Find like-minded people who are excited about helping themselves while they help others.
12. Find ways to prepare your students “mentally” and “physically” at the beginning of each class. Getting started quickly, efficiently, and enthusiastically is critical.

References


Jock Mackenzie was a teacher and administrator in Red Deer, Alberta for over 30 years. Jock believes that practical, “use ‘em on Monday” ideas are needed by teachers everywhere. Through his books, his blog, and his speaking, he does what he can to share a lifetime of techniques that worked well for him. He is currently volunteering one day a week at Westpark Middle School to help students with reading and writing. See Pembroke Publishing and jockmackenzie.wordpress.com

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Kids are sexting in class, in the hallways, at lunch and after school. It is the high-tech way to flirt with boyfriends, girlfriends, crushes and online strangers. In concept, sexting is nothing new to previous generations—think of Seven Minutes in Heaven gone digital. It involves the electronic transmission of sexually suggestive messages or images using cell phones or the Internet. With one click, kids’ sexual antics, which were once relegated to the privacy of their bedrooms, can be made available to households and classrooms across the globe.

According to a survey by The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy (www.thenationalcampaign.org) in 2008, 20% of teens have sent or posted nude or semi-nude pictures or videos of themselves, while 48% say they have received such messages. However, pigeonholing it as a teenage fad is misleading. Children as young as 11 are engaging in the practice, making it a safety issue across elementary and high schools.

For school officials, sexting on school grounds has become a legal headache and liability. For teachers, it is a classroom distraction and a significant risk to the emotional and psychological health of a child. And to authorities, the act is neither benign nor innocent, landing kids in court on charges of child pornography in some jurisdictions.

The moral panic over the sexting craze has kids writing off adult concerns as overblown fears. All the safety spels and headlines claiming sexting as ‘the newest epidemic facing parents and children’ and ‘a dangerous sex crime’ register as mere sensationalism to many kids. So how can parents and teachers effectively discourage the practice without coming off as being uncool and overdramatic?

The aim is to get kids informed on how the Internet operates, the implications of sexting and how to manage their online privacy. Real-life cases of sexting misadventures will help drive home the connection to their own actions. The first step to sexting prevention is to go over the five lessons on Internet privacy.

**LESSON 1: THE INTERNET IS PUBLIC.**

This states the evident, but do kids know who can access the sexually charged photos or videos they plan to share or upload? With over 1.5 billion web surfers worldwide, people’s photos and videos have the ability to go global within thirty seconds. Clicking ‘send’ can virally land them on computer or mobile screens of pretty much anyone—parents, teachers, bosses, peers and pedophiles. Case in point: Lily Allen—a singer and the latest victim of celebrity sexting scan-

**LESSON 2: THE INTERNET IS NOT WITHIN YOUR SPHERE OF CONTROL.**

As soon as your content hits the web or goes mobile, it becomes public property. Online, people can store and distribute anything you share. Website services, third-party advertisers, your exes and old friends can reproduce, alter or publish your personal files without your consent or knowledge, for a range of purposes. There’s also the issue of sexual predators exploiting children’s images and adding it to their catalogue of child pornography. In 2006, a 13-year-old girl was coerced and threatened into taking explicit images via webcam by a New York man whom she met in a chat room. He later posted the photos on the social networking site MySpace.

**LESSON 3: THE INTERNET IS VIRAL.**

Things spread exponentially over the Internet. All it takes is text-message forwarding or a popular online social platform like Twitter to make racy photos go viral in a matter of hours. From there, people can pass on the photos to other sites and other contacts. Soon enough, those photos could come up as the number one search result when someone Googles your name. For 18-year-old Jesse Logan of Ohio, all it took was a break-up for her nude photos to reach hundreds of students. It all started when Jesse’s ex-boyfriend sent nude pictures of her to other female schoolmates. After months of shame and harassment from classmates, Jesse decided to take her own life.

Kids need to understand that privacy and trust end with the relationship. There is no insur-

**LESSON 4: WHAT GOES ON THE INTERNET STAYS ON THE INTERNET.**

After uploading your content to the Internet, the first download marks a point of no return. Your original content now nests on the hard drives of other computers, where it can be shared with other users. File sharing and storage are what makes it virtually impossible to completely remove your personal files off the web. And while most social networking sites offer the option to delete posts, there is that period of time when the posts were publicly available and possibly carried away in the charge of online friends and surfers. Consider High School Musical’s Vanessa Hudgens. In 2007, the star emailed a nude photo of herself to actor Drake Bell who later surfaced on numeros blogs across the net. Her lawyer demanded that the blog sites remove the photo as it exposed an underage Vanessa and infringed on several legal rights. Two years later, despite her lawyer’s attempts, the photo is still making rounds on the web.

**LESSON 5: NEGATIVE PUBLICITY ON THE INTERNET CAN COST YOU.**

Anything posted or distributed online, can come back to haunt you in the future, even if it was from over a decade ago. Your online reputation can now cost you a career opportunity or uni-

This nuisance we call “sexting” is a perfect educational opportunity to introduce the topic of online privacy. Sexting prevention, education and intervention should involve an open dialogue with youth. The goal is to eliminate poor judgment and help them make the most informed deci-

Phoebe Uy is a staff writer for KiwiCommons.com, an Internet safety resource dedicated to providing teachers and parents with the most informative late-breaking news, tips, product reviews and downloads. KiwiCommons is proud to be the content partner of educators across the province of Ontario, including the York Catholic District School Board.
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In my early childhood, I had Cree stories told to me. The elders who told them taught about a good way of life and how to live it. It was a great event in the old days when people gathered round just to tell stories. Special foods were set aside for the storytellers who were held in high esteem. But legends and traditional stories, often portrayed in children’s books today, do not tell much about our Aboriginal history.

I grew up in northern Alberta in the village of Slave Lake. While in residential school, I lost my mother. With so much hurt inside, I ran away twice. Finally I quit school at 13 years of age. Looking back on the bad times, I see they inspire my work. At the age of 55, when I began writing about my six years in St. Bernard Mission residential school in Alberta, I concentrated on the good things. Although there were not many good things, they were something to cling to. One day, a story of mine was discussed in a creative writing class. Someone said, “It must have been good in that school.” It was then I knew I wasn’t facing the bad things. Encouraged by friends, I talked with others who shared my experience. Just talking helped me write the truth.

As Long as the Rivers Flow (Groundwood, 2002) introduced residential school through the story of my last traditional summer spent with my family. My newest book, Goodbye Buffalo Bay (Theytus, 2008) is the sequel. A chapter book, it tells the true story of my last year in residential school and how I moved on, searching for a place in my family, culture and community.

As an author, I had to find a way to write truthfully about my experience. In Goodbye Buffalo Bay, I portray the fear and loneliness that we felt. I also recall what we, as boys, talked about in school to keep us going. In the book, it comes out as funny and lively but when I was writing, the anger surfaced.

The subject of residential school brings out many emotions. As one grade four student told us, “As Long as the Rivers Flow is my favourite book. It made my teacher cry.” As the history of residential school is studied, it is natural for adults to feel dismay, horror, anger, sadness and empathy. Children, on the other hand, grasp the injustice of the system, and often simply say, “That wasn’t fair.”

On June 11, 2008, Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologized to First Nations, Metis and Inuit people on behalf of Canada for a century of residential schools. For school survivors and their families, it was an emotional day. Finally their personal histories and those of thousands of Aboriginal children could be told without fear of denial or reprisal. The prime minister’s apology has made it possible to share this long-hidden aspect of Aboriginal history. I no longer worry that people who read my books or hear me speak about residential school will ask me, “Is it true? Was it that bad in the school?” The truth is out, and I am hopeful about the future. The children are being remembered and honoured at last.
Award-winning Cree author Larry Loyie has written two books about residential schools. Here are some suggestions for learning more and for introducing this topic to your students.

WHERE TO BEGIN

- Read Prime Minister Stephen Harper’s apology for residential schools (http://www.cbc.ca/canada/story/2008/06/11/pm-statement.html). It is an honest assessment of the consequences of the Canadian government’s decision to introduce the residential school system. (Note: the term “residential school” was introduced in 1929. Prior to this, various names were used such as Indian boarding school and industrial school.)


- Many school boards offer background material prepared by Aboriginal educators. Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, for example, has published Nurturing the First Nations, Mists and Insult Spirit in Our Schools, a staff resource that includes residential school information.

- Where are the Children? is an interactive Internet site exploring “What were the residential schools actually like?” Created by the Legacy of Hope Foundation, Aboriginal Healing Foundation and Library and Archives Canada, the site (www.wherearethechildren.ca/en/ahf.html) includes invaluable research, individual experiences and many family and school photographs. It addresses issues such as the disappearance and/or death of a high percentage of students.

IN THE CLASSROOM

- Read the prime minister’s apology with the students. Visit the Where are the Children? interactive website.

- Share first-hand experiences in books such as As Long as the Rivers Flow and its sequel Goodbye Buffalo Bay. These books include epilogues on residential school. Study material is available at www.firstnationswriter.com.

- Create a timeline of residential school history. An accurate timeline is included in the study material for Goodbye Buffalo Bay.

- Discuss why residential schools were established, the short-term and long-term impacts of the schools on children and their families, and how to support Aboriginal peoples in the healing process.

- Tap children’s imaginations. As in the Guelph, ON, example, encourage students to write first-person short stories on the subject.

- Ask students to prepare a presentation on residential schools for the United Nations. This exemplar task is part of the Toronto District School Board’s Grade 6 Social Studies curriculum exemplar (“Preparing a Presentation on the Impact of Residential Schools on Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples for a United Nations Forum on Contemporary Aboriginal Issues”).

- Literature circles using authentic Aboriginal voices are part of the Durham District School Board’s Aboriginal education program. Teacher Arlene Cole uses circles to encourage students to “identify and justify [explain] the Aboriginal’s point of view and Canadian Government’s point of view” regarding residential schools in texts such as As Long as the Rivers Flow.

- Invite authors and/or residential school survivors to speak to the students.

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

Growing Up Resilient
Ways to Build Resilience in Children and Youth
Tatyana Barankin and Nazilla Khanlou • 104 pages • $12.95

Acting Out
Understanding and Reducing Aggressive Behaviour in Children and Youth
Editor: David A. Wolfe • 111 pages • $12.95

These CAMH books draw from the latest research and present it in an engaging format, complete with tips for educators and other adults. Both books have been awarded Curriculum Services Canada’s Seal of Quality as a reference for educators.

Resilience is an important aspect of mental well-being. In Growing Up Resilient, the authors consider the development of resilience at three levels: individual, family and environmental. This book is a must-read for teachers, school administrators and parents who want to increase resilience in the children and youth in their lives.

Aggression among young people is an important social issue. Acting Out highlights the differences between normal aggression and aggression that is of greater concern, gives practical advice on how to address aggression and indicates strategies to avoid. This book is a valuable tool for anyone who interacts with young people.
from the classroom

MATH AGAIN?

by Ray Appel

We keep hearing that math is all around us, yet many of our kids struggle with it. Even if they do well on tests, it seems that they don’t really understand it. How can we change that?

Many years ago, I remember giving my kids in grade five some long division questions. The work was pretty typical of the math textbooks from the early eighties. One day Kyle, (who always got straight A’s) was frustrated with me because, as far as I was concerned, part of being an effective math learner meant also understanding what we were learning. He repeatedly got all his solutions perfect, without any errors, yet didn’t really understand what an answer of “346 6” meant. His lack of understanding, while getting all the right fill-in-the-blank answers, taught me a lesson.

The following year, I had a student teacher. I suggested (in late September) that we start with division. My student teacher gulped. Now? Even I was pretty nervous. Why was I scared? Well, to begin with, in the older textbooks, division is always placed in the last part of the text. Why? Because the only method usually taught is standard “long division.” Kids have to know how to multiply, divide, subtract, add, follow through with four or five basic steps, and repeat the process until they arrive at a solution. It’s not easy. (But give them a cookie and ask them to divide it evenly and you have a different story!)

Before starting the division unit in late September, I gave the class two numbers (3 and 157) and asked them to show different strategies for solving how to divide 157 into 3 equal parts. I was amazed at how many strategies the class found! Forty-five minutes into the lesson, a student said, “Hey, we haven’t talked about long division yet!” How true. The kids were finding other ways to solve the problem. Instead of 3 groups of 52, they would do 5 groups of 31.

The key when asking students to come up with their own strategies, is that whatever strategies they use, the better ones are accurate, flexible and efficient. Using tally marks to group might be accurate and flexible, but it might not be efficient for all students.

After students brainstorm strategies, introduce the criteria for powerful strategies (i.e., accurate, flexible and efficient). Then, focus on the generated strategies that meet ALL of the criteria, and go from there. For a free criteria template to try out with your class, go to my website under “Free Stuff” (www.zapple.ca). I have a few different versions you can try out in any subject area.

If a student can divide using a strategy similar to the pizza method, but struggles with long division, does that mean they know how to divide? Of course it does. What is the bottom line? In the end, we really want to build kids’ number sense, while they learn and use effective strategies. My approach has been to start with the real world, and allow kids to invent strategies, but at the same time make sure the invented strategies are accurate, efficient and flexible. If we start with an old textbook from the early eighties, and do that “math,” we run into the problem that that is what kids think math really is. It isn’t always.

Keith Devlin in his book, The Math Instinct, argues (with research) that babies as young as a few days old can distinguish between one-ness, two-ness and three-ness! What does that mean for us? It means that “math” is much more than the textbook or worksheet. It’s how we talk in the classroom, at home and how we engage mathematically in our world. But, it’s not always that easy.

I remember being really frustrated one day, when I heard, “I give up!” for the umpteenth time during math class. It was my first year of teaching. It was my first year, and I was wondering why math was the one place where patience and perseverance didn’t seem to matter, or even exist. One thing that got me moving was something another teacher said to me. She asked me what it is like for me when I am learning something new. Is it easy? What happens with the inevitable struggle that comes with deep learning? At the time, I was trying to get into shape. I was just starting to run. I was trying to watch what I was eating. Was it easy? No! Did I want to give up? Yes…

That conversation got me thinking about some truths I’ve learned over my life when it comes to learning something new. Think about a new relationship you’ve had, exercising, losing weight, taking big risks, going back to school, saving for a vacation in Europe… We all struggle, and we learn some important truths while we struggle:

1. Meaningful things take time.
2. It helps when others allow me to take some risks.
3. It’s good when I listen, and when others listen to me as I learn.
4. I need to try things in more than one way, even if it seems wrong at first.
5. I need to make mistakes. If I feel free to make them, then I’ll really learn.

One of the ways that we’ve heard at probably every math workshop we’ve ever gone to is to make math “fun” and “engaging.” In some ways, this helps with perseverance and patience, as our students get into the learning without always realizing they’re learning. With that in mind, I created a really cool resource and field-tested bits and pieces in my class, and in its finished form, it’s been used in classrooms across Canada. For a free sample that you can use in your class tomorrow, go to my website under “Free Stuff” (www.zapple.ca), and look for the ‘Placemaths’ sample.

I designed the Placemaths to be fun and meaningful, while students engage in the math concepts. Some of the things I’ve questioned over the years are:

- Do students have to do the whole page?
- Should we formally assess everything they do?
- Can students simply be engaged for engagement’s sake?

Of course, I found that the answer to 1 and 2 above is “No!” while the answer for 3 is a resounding “Yes!” Using the Placemaths taught me that students can select parts or all of the page. I’m not formally assessing the “page.” However, to boost confidence and learning, I used it as a place to begin math conversation, as a preview of what was to come, and even as a refresher. Because the students didn’t feel as though my evaluating eyes were upon their every stroke, number and line, they were more relaxed and more open to try. Research shows this as well. In one study cited by Daniel Goleman, math scores were more relaxed and more open to try. Research shows this as well. In one study cited by Daniel Goleman, math scores increased by at least 10% when students were more relaxed.

We want our kids to develop best practice and healthy, persevering attitudes, including those in math. If I can look at how I struggle and learn in my own life, I can be more empathic to students as they struggle with their learning. That got me thinking… (this was the tough part) how was I approaching math? What were my attitudes? Where was I getting frustrated?

Each student would begin by drawing the number of circles indicated by the divisor (in this case, 3). Then, they would begin estimating the quotient (how many units in each circle). Students who are good at estimating might not have to write down 10 in each group followed by 20, followed by another 5 in each group, and so on. They might be able to estimate 50 in each group with some left over. Since estimation is a major foundational part of the math curriculum, and since knowing how to estimate is vital in everyday life, we were actually helping each other in ways beyond just the correct answer.

The key when asking students to come up to their own strategies, is that whatever strategies they use, the better ones are accurate, flexible and efficient. Using tally marks to group might be accurate and flexible, but it might not be efficient for all students.
This made a difference. Firstly, I noticed a pattern in the way I was speaking with the students. Essentially, I used a pattern that Gordon Wells calls, "Initiation-Response-Evaluation." I initiate a question, I get a response, then I evaluate. Notice that with this pattern I’m speaking two out of the three times per unit of conversation in the math class, and doing most of the work. This struck me as interesting. If I was doing most of the talking and evaluating, then what was left for the students to do?

I decided to do a few things. Firstly, I listened more to the students. What were their ways to solve problems? How many different ways could they solve 48 + 52 without using pencil and paper? How could they estimate? What strategies could they use? Were they using strategies that were efficient, accurate and flexible?

Secondly, I decided to allow mistakes to be made. I had been saying this in my class for years ("It’s okay to make mistakes") but did I really believe that? If so, how far did I believe that? In allowing kids to make mistakes (and openly share those) they felt more comfortable to persevere.

But, here’s the secret! Use peer sharing throughout the math class so students feel more comfortable taking risks and sharing with their peers first. Then, slowly build yourself into the picture. Often, kids will listen to their peers more than they’ll listen to you. Use that to aid the learning process. You can start by asking them to show one example of where they learned something really well, and one example where they didn’t.

Thirdly, I realized that learning takes time. Imagine if you were learning a new math resource, textbook series, or a new provincial math curriculum. Is it easy? Are you struggling? Are you ready to throw down your pencil on your desk? Of course, but like anything meaningful, it takes time.

When I say that things take time, I don’t mean that we should spend all of September and well into October teaching place value until every student gets it. That can be a waste of time, particularly if it’s not in context. What I mean is that we should layer and repeat throughout the year. As well, we need to continue to build number sense while we help kids to estimate.

What have I learned? I’m a learner too. Just as I struggle with keeping fit, or going back to take courses, or learning a new math resource, textbook series, or a new provincial math curriculum, so too do my students struggle as they learn.

It’s part of life.

Five Tips & Tricks

1. Ask the students how the topic fits in with everyday life.
2. Give the students the problem and the solution. Then, students use strategies to show how to get there.
3. Ask students to write word problems instead of just answering them. This will show you to what extent they understand.
4. Ask yourself "What is the bottom line?" If it’s to build numerate students with a deep sense of number, then do they always have to show it in only one way?
5. Continue to listen to your students. It’s always fascinating how they arrive at solutions, use mental math or invent strategies.
**STRENGTH-BASED CLASSROOM STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS**

by Edward Rawana, Kim Latimer, Jessica Whitley and Michelle Probizanski

Every teacher attempts to create an environment that is optimal for learning, yet finding useful strategies for positive classroom management is a constant challenge. This challenge becomes magnified for teachers working with students who are struggling academically, behaviourally or culturally. The integration of these students with those achieving at average levels, through a focus on common strengths, can serve to bridge the divide and create an inclusive climate.

Our team of researchers and practitioners at the Centre of Excellence for Children & Adolescents with Special Needs at Lakehead University suggest that teachers examine their students’ strengths and incorporate them into day-to-day activities. We all know that every student has at least one strength to offer the class. Once those strengths are identified and encouraged, it creates a kind of positive ripple effect within a classroom—a type of “pay-it-forward” scenario where all students “pay their strength-forward” without much effort. Researchers believe this will happen naturally once students understand that they are valued because they have something of importance to contribute. The idea is to encourage students to use their strengths as a tool to deal with issues they may be encountering at school rather than to focus on shortcomings.

Principals and teachers in northwestern Ontario are teaming up with academic researchers to offer practical classroom strategies that help educators apply student strengths to both classroom management and to everyday lessons using activity-based ideas. These easy-to-use concepts are intended to spark ongoing ideas and dialogue among teachers about other ways that strengths could be incorporated into the classroom.

**Understanding Student Strengths**

Recognizing student strengths allows the teacher to gain a well-balanced understanding of a child’s behaviour and learning style in order to set reasonable expectations. By building a student strength profile for each student, the teacher will have a tangible resource for communicating with that student, parents and other school staff. Identifying strengths can be done in a number of ways depending on the teacher’s end goals. In our work at Lakehead University, we have developed a Strengths Assessment Inventory (SAI) tool that can be easily completed online or on paper by students, like any self-assessment. The SAI helps students identify their positive qualities, competencies and characteristics that are valued by society. These positive attributes can also be used to track student’s understanding of “self.”

**Strategies To Include Students Who May Be Struggling In The Classroom**

Even though some students struggle, they all have inherent information and use it for practical planning purposes—from identifying strengths to use to identify concerns and attempt to remedy them. Teachers can then encourage students to use their strengths to deal with their struggles. We have defined strength as “a set of personal competencies and characteristics of the child or adolescent that were developed and embedded in culture and valued both by the individual and society.”

Strengths can develop from everyday life experiences of students. For example, if a struggling student is identified as having a particular strength in the classroom, the teacher could encourage the student to use those strengths every day in the classroom and “show respect for the other team” when dealing with other kids who are bothering them. Identifying positive character traits in students gives the teacher the ability to encourage the student to use his/her natural propensities to help them make healthy decisions throughout the school year.

**Use Strengths To Shape, Organize, Manage and Plan Your Classroom**

Knowing student strengths also gives teachers a more balanced understanding of each student. Teachers can compile the information and use it for practical planning purposes—from deciding how to arrange students into compatible groups; to structuring lesson plans that will motivate all students regardless of their particular difficulties. Strengths can be used to “hook” the class by appealing to their interests and capturing their attention, thus motivating them to learn. Tailoring the classroom environment and planning with strengths in mind will help students not only reach their potential, but also help students gain a more balanced sense of self and others.

**Applying Student Strengths To Group Activities In The Classroom**

Strengths can be used to help teachers set up and manage group work or implement group-based programs such as Tribes® or literature circle groups. Practical strategies can be put in place to assist students and encourage them to improve. For instance, a teacher might consider teaming up the self-identified “non-listeners” with those who are proficient listeners and can help keep the others on track. In one class in which strength is used as a strategy to engage the learners, it has worked very well to begin math lessons by summarizing the strengths of each of the students. The teacher then proceeds to buddy up students according to areas of need and areas of strength in the math classroom.

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opportunities for students to write about their progress as time goes on (perhaps on a weekly or monthly basis).

Depending on the student’s age, journal and portfolio activities using strengths can be adapted to incorporate balanced literacy strategies. For example, read an excerpt of text related to strength, then have students write their reaction to it. Or the teacher could offer a writing theme related to strengths. For example, a writing theme might be “What makes you special in relation to your strengths?” or “Where could you use your strengths in or outside of the classroom?”

Having students keep journals based on self-expression is an excellent way to monitor progress, assisting educators with the difficult task of communicating and reporting on student behaviour with parents, school administrators, educational assistants or early intervention specialists. Implementing strengths-based rules and routines is another option for a strength-based classroom. Maintaining a reasonable level of harmony in the classroom is in everyone’s best interest considering the average class spends over 900 hours together over the course of a school year. Focusing on student strengths is a positive way to respond to misbehaviour and it is important to state what IS working rather than what isn’t. For example, in one class, a student who had spent time in a behavioural class setting was experiencing some challenges adjusting to a regular classroom setting. Posting her strengths on the classroom wall, and verbally referring to them often when there are instances of misbehaviour, has given her a new opportunity to shine. She began re-inventing her image, and striving to live up to the positive statements that she heard about herself.

Another activity geared toward building an environment of mutual respect and security is a strength sharing circle. Sharing circles are commonplace classroom activities; they are sometimes called “circle news” or “sharing time” activities. The purpose of sharing activities is to open up the floor to communication and oral expression and enhance students’ interpersonal skills. A strengths sharing circle goes beyond those basic expectations by asking students to become aware of other students’ strengths. A strengths sharing circle allows students to hear others’ perspectives on their strengths, opening the door to self-awareness and understanding which might otherwise go unrecognized. It is an excellent way for students to visualize themselves through the lens of others. A September classroom shuffle moved some Grade 5s into an existing Grade 4 classroom. Some anxiety existed for students about moving to a new room. Some anxiety existed for students about moving to a new class and away from their Grade 5 friends. Were they moving to the “dumb class”? To address these feelings, the class sat in a sharing circle and examined the strengths wall. The students pointed out the great things that they were learning about their new classmates and themselves. “I didn’t know that Carey is a great hockey player,” Desi said. “Does he help others all the time and is really generous? She plays with the Js every recess.” By the end of the sharing time, the students felt really good about themselves and their classmates. They couldn’t believe all of the wonderful things that they were realizing about their friends, and their faces glowed when a classmate commented on their strengths. They continue to point things out to each other on the wall. “Isaiah is funny…we should tell him this joke!”

Strength-based Rules and Routines

Creating a positive classroom environment is highly dependent on the teacher who can model appropriate strength-based verbal cues and routines in the classroom. Precise cues help students get back on track quickly and efficiently. Be specific when praising a student. “You listened closely today, I am proud of you.” Use “I” statements when pointing out a student’s specific strengths. For example, “I know that one of your strengths is being organized, so why does your binder look disorganized today?” That is not like you.” When a student has done well on a particular assignment, it is important to recognize this in front of other students and/or staff members, “You did very well on this assessment, I am very impressed. You are very good at adding two digit numbers. I will be phoning your parents to let them know how strong you are in this area.” Although verbal cues are effective, enforcing strength-based rules goes beyond teacher responses to behavior. A strengths-based approach to setting rules could be modeled using a mutual strengths contract. The mutual contract is a designed list of rules that is agreed upon in cooperation with the class. Have students sign the strengths contract, whereby agreeing to follow the rules that they have helped in developing and agreed upon. Ensure that the rules are directly related to their strengths. For instance, one rule might read: “One of our strengths as a class is our ability to communicate appropriately—if we become too noisy we agree that our teacher will signal us to communicate quietly.” Positive verbal and physical cues will help prompt the class and get them back on track and achieve balance between discipline and positive reinforcement.

What You Stand To Gain

Ideally your students will learn to recognize each student’s strengths and work together as a holistic community. By encouraging students to use their strengths to deal with difficulties, they will have the confidence to tackle challenges using strength-based solutions. Teachers must guide students in this process and take the opportunity to incorporate student strengths into the day-to-day curriculum. Helping students recognize their strengths will, in turn, allow teachers to set realistic expectations. These strengths concepts must be consistently developed, reinforced and re-evaluated in an effort to encourage dialogue among teachers and between teachers and parents. By meeting the needs of mainstream students and at the same time engaging those who struggle, students will be able to take responsibility for their learning and develop their own interests and talents from a strengths perspective. Using this kind of approach when interacting with students will help to create a cultural shift in the school that sets the stage for growth and development.

Notes

1 Please note, elementary school children in grades 4 – 8 are highlighted based on prior pilot programs, research and experiences with the SAI tool which were conducted in schools during the 2007-08 school year. Researchers involved in the study explain that students younger than grade 3 can use the tool, however they need much more assistance to complete it.


5 Tribes Learning Communities www.tribes.com

Thousands of schools throughout the United States, Canada, Australia and other countries incorporated the Tribes program into the classroom. After years of “Tri-ing” programs to reduce student violence, conflict, drug and alcohol use, absenteeism, poor achievement, etc., educators and parents now agree, creating a positive school or classroom environment is the most effective way to improve behaviour and learning.

Dr. Edward Rawana is a practising child psychologist and Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Lakehead University. He is also Director of the Lakehead Site of the Centre of Excellence for Children & Adolescents with Special Needs (CECASN). He is leading the research on strength in children, which is being studied in relation to education, social services and mental health services for children. Kim Latimer is formerly the national Communications Coordinator for CECASN. He has degrees in both Education and Journalism and is currently employed with CBC Radio in Thunder Bay. Dr. Jessica Whitney is Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Education at the University of Ottawa. She has worked extensively with students with various exceptionalities and conducts research in the area of psychosocial outcomes for students at-risk. Michelle Podbielniak is a principal with the Lakehead District School Board in Thunder Bay, Ontario. She works tirelessly to promote a strength-based approach when meeting the needs of the students in her school.

For a comprehensive list visit: www.braingymcanada.com
hmlearningskills@mts.net
the planning department

CRAFTY IDEAS

FOR THEME BASED UNITS

by Brenda Boreham

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT THEMES?

The main purpose of a theme is to promote student learning. Successful themes always connect the different subject areas into relevant and purposeful units of study. Regardless of the topic, the number of subjects that are integrated, or the amount of time spent on the theme, the learning that takes place is heightened when the students are fully engaged in the process.

The following are two craft ideas that are easily transported from theme to theme. They are fun to make and help the students to reflect their learning.

BANNERS

These banners can be made to any length and hung from the ceiling. Any thin, flat object (paper, fabric, leaves, etc.) can be embedded between two layers of wax paper. As a hot iron is involved in the process, this is a good project to have a student teacher, parent helper or assistant to help you with.

Materials (for a snowflake banner)
- one iron and an extension cord
- 2 boxes of wax paper
- scissors
- stapler
- hole puncher
- string
- white paper
- 12 x 18 sheets of colored construction paper
- several large sheets of plain newsprint

Process
1. Have each student cut out a number of snowflakes in a variety of sizes and shapes.
2. Store each student’s snowflakes (a paper clip or folded piece of paper will keep them together nicely) until s/he is ready to assemble a banner.
3. Place a wad of newsprint on a table. This will protect the table from the heat of the iron, and will absorb some of the wax.
4. Tear off a piece of wax paper and place it on the newsprint.
5. Have a student spread his snowflakes out on the paper.
6. Tear off a second piece of wax paper and place it on top of the snowflakes. Check to see that the two sheets of wax paper are aligned and that the snowflakes are not sticking out at the edges.
7. Place one sheet of newsprint on top to absorb the wax.
8. Gently iron across the banner on medium heat.
9. Remove the iron and the top piece of newsprint. Check to see that the wax paper sheets have sealed together. If they did not seal it is because the iron was too hot (burned off the wax) or you held the iron in one place for too long.
10. Fold two pieces of construction paper in half. Staple each one over an end of the banner. This conceals the ends of the wax paper and adds weight so that it will hang well.
11. Punch a hole at the top and hang the banner.

Other ideas
- Use colored tissue paper for the snowflakes.
- Press and dry autumn leaves for a leafy banner.
- Cut out a red maple leaf, use red construction paper for the ends and make the Canadian flag.
- Cut out any paper shapes that connect with your theme: pumpkins, hearts, flowers, planets, stars and moons, fish, birds, animals, etc.

3-D MODELS

One of the best hooks for capturing student interest within a theme is to learn about an animal. The following instructions can be adapted to fit the shape of many creatures your class might want to learn about.

Round Masks

Materials (for a cougar)
- construction paper (gray, brown, yellow, black)
- scissors
- glue sticks

Process
1. Look at some pictures of cougars. Pay particular attention to the positioning of the eyes, ears and nose.
2. Have each student trace a large circle about 25 cm in diameter onto gray or brown construction paper and then cut the circle out.
3. Fold the circle into quarters and then open it flat and cut along one fold line from the edge to the center.
4. Overlap the two quarters adjacent to the cut line and glue to form a shallow cone.
5. Make ears using rounded triangles about 7 – 9 cm tall.
6. Make the nose by cutting a rectangle about 15 cm long and 7 cm wide. Round the corners at one end of the rectangle. Fold the snout in half and glue on the face. Glue a black triangle to the end of the snout.
7. Add eyes and whiskers with markers or glue and construction paper.

Other ideas
- This model can easily be adapted to any animal with a roundish face (e.g.: sea otter, beaver, squirrel, groundhog, bear, wolf)
- Wings and bodies can be attached as well.

Square Masks

Follow the directions for the round masks but substitute a square piece of paper for the circle. Make the folds on the diagonal. You will end up with an elongated shape that lends itself well to making cartoon deer, buffalo, etc.

Also available: the Currents Resource Guide for teachers. Download Teachers’ Guides for free from our website or order the Resource Guide online.
All over Europe and North America, schools are taking the initiative to stop buses and cars from idling, to walk and cycle to school, to eat local organic food and grow their own food, to increase recycling, to stop using toxic cleaners and pesticides, and to bring global warming into the curriculum. Schools are also working to rebuild the broken connection with nature, with students spending time in nearby forests, wetlands, rivers and farms.

In a video contest in 2008, McTavish Elementary School, near Victoria, BC, was voted the greenest school in North America for reducing its waste by 80% by composting, paper recycling and soft-plastics recycling. In February 2009, hundreds of schools across the US took part in the National Teach-In on Global Warming Solutions, participating in the national webcast and following up with local discussions about how they could contribute. At Akron Westfield Community School, Iowa, students helped to install their school’s 600-kW wind turbine. Many schools have installed solar systems, integrating the data into their science and business studies. In Britain, all seven classes at the St. Francis of Assisi Academy in Liverpool have a garden, where teenagers grow food and plants, integrating it into their math and geography classes.

GLOBAL WARMING – RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS
adapted from The Climate Challenge: 101 Solutions to Global Warming by Guy Dauncey (New Society Publishers, 2009)

GETTING STARTED
Week 1
Organize a lunchtime meeting for anyone in the school (staff and students) interested in planning a green project for your school. Go around the circle and gather everyone’s ideas as to what you could do as a school. Ask group members to research one idea each before your next meeting.

Week 2
Share your research. Focus on those ideas that are achievable within three months, and choose the one that is most doable and has the most support. Write down your long-term goals, give your group a name, and create a page on your favourite networking site.

Week 3
Present your idea to the school community and ask for support. You will need everyone’s support, including the support staff, teachers, principal, school board and parents.

Week 4
Get to work on the project you have chosen.

HELPFUL RESOURCES
School Carbon Calculators
- earthteam.net/GWCampaign/calculate.html
- epa.gov/climatechange/vysol/school.html
- dott07.com/FictionMont__1024.htm

Green Schools
- Build Green Schools: buildgreenschools.org
- EnergySmart Schools: www1.eere.energy.gov/buildings/energysmartschools
- Green Schools Alliance: greenschoolalliance.org
- Green Schools Checklist: epa.state.il.us/p2/green-schools/green-schools-checklist.pdf
- Green Schools Program: ase.org/action/program/greenschl
- International Walk to School: iwalktosschool.org
- Kids for Saving Earth: kidsforsavingearth.org
- Solar Schools: solarschools.com
- Students Leading the Way—Energy Saving Success: tinyurl.com/2bbmxl
- The Edible Schoolyard: ediblebhschoolyard.org
- The Green Squad: nrdc.org/greensquad
- Wind Energy for Schools: windpoweringamerica.gov/schools_projects.asp

Green Curriculum
- Climate Challenge: Teachers Guide: www.earthfuture.com/theclimatechallenge/
- Climate Curriculum: worldwildlife.org/climate/curriculum/items9444.html
- Climate Change Education Portal: climatechangeeducation.org
- Energy Kid’s Page: eia.doe.gov/kids
- EPA Teaching Center: epa.gov/teachers
- Focus the Nation: focusthenation.org
- Green Learning: greenlearning.ca
- Green Teacher Magazine: greenteacher.com
- How We Know What We Know About Our Changing Climate: Scientists and Kids Explore Global Warming, by Lynne Cherry and Gary Braasch, Dawn Publications, 2008
- Lesson Plans from California Green Schools: ase.org/content/article/detail/2053
- Roofus’ Solar & Efficient Home: www1.eere.energy.gov/kids/roofus
- Sustainable School (UK): suschool.org.uk
- Teaching About Climate Change: mgreenteacher.com/tacc.html
- The Climate Challenge Game, by Guy Dauncey: tinyurl.com/2h42nj
- Wind with Miller: windpower.org/en/kids
- The Down-to-Earth Guide to Global Warming by Laurie David and Cambria Gordon: scholastic.com/downearth

Guy Dauncey is a speaker, author and organizer who works to develop a positive vision of a sustainable future, and to translate that vision into action. He is author of the award-winning book Stormy Weather: 101 Solutions to Global Climate Change, Cancer: 101 Solutions to a Preventable Epidemic, and 9 other titles. His home page is www.earthfuture.com.

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- Lessons & Videos
curriculum-linked (K-12)

- Special Events
including giftsfromthatmatter.ca

www.chf-partners.ca

Founded in 1961, CHF is a non-profit organization dedicated to enabling poor rural communities in developing countries to attain sustainable livelihoods.

Contact our Global Education Coordinator at 1 (866) 242-4243 ext. 229 or GlobalEd@chf-partners.ca
Ryan treats this sensitive topic with care and understanding. She creates a believable pathway for D’Arcy from anger and despair toward hope and reconciliation. Readers will readily identify with D’Arcy’s emotional turmoil and fears about what other kids will say about her father and the stigma that comes with his death. With his mother away on a tour and his father’s death, D’Arcy is feeling lost and confused. She is not sure where she fits in and feels lonely and isolated. She begins to withdraw from her friends and family, and this isolation only makes her feel more vulnerable. D’Arcy is also dealing with her own grief and the guilt of feeling angry at her father for leaving her. She is wrestling with her own feelings of not being good enough and wondering if she is worthy of love and affection.

In Leftovers, Waldorf manages to construct a compelling account of an adolescent struggling to find her place in the world. She becomes friends with her, and he is there when she dies. This is a sad story, but Waldorf’s death is described with great sensitivity and there is hope for the reconciliation of a family torn apart by cancer. No clear-cut solution to the dilemma is offered by the author, however, since withdrawing from society is not a practical or healthy choice. Lee feels she is “home free,” but Cassandra’s demons pursue her. It is not until separation looms that the two girls discover the meaning of friendship, and Lee discovers the difference between being owned and belonging to someone. The story’s location in a socially conservative 1960s environment is not necessary to support the themes of loyalty and belonging, and might be more distracting then helpful for many young readers. The novel is, however, an excellent exploration of the meaning of friendship.

In In Ecstasy, McCaffrey takes the reader on a journey of self-discovery and personal growth. Mia is a 16-year-old girl who is a member of the Blackfoot Siksika Nation in Alberta. When she learned of the Stephen Lewis Foundation’s Grandmothers to Grandmothers campaign, which connects grandmothers in Canada with grandmothers in Africa who are raising children orphaned by AIDS, she was determined to help. With the support of her family and community, she learned to use a sewing machine and began sewing purses using donated materials. The highlight of her efforts to raise money was a visit by two African grandmothers who were in Canada to promote the campaign. This is a story of remarkable courage and initiative in a young person who wanted to help others less fortunate. Photos of the visit by the African grandmothers are included.

In Poster Boy, Crane explores the idea of being an “in” or “out” kid and the pressures that come with it. Gray enjoys a privileged life within a happy family, possessing many of the “toys” that today’s teens aspire to having. She tries to believe her father’s drowning was a suicide. She struggles both to accept and live with his sad choice and to figure out what it means for her and her mother. In the process, she has to renegotiate relationships with her friends, her teachers, her half-sister, and her mother. Darlene Ryan treats this sensitive topic with care and understanding. She creates a believable pathway for D’Arcy from anger and despair toward hope and reconciliation. Readers will readily identify with D’Arcy’s emotional turmoil and fears about what other kids will say about her father and why he ended his own life. The imaginative experience of the novel will help them appreciate the meaning of suicide and the ways one can cope with it.

In Groundwood Books, 2009
$18.95 (hc)/$12.95 (pb), 198 pp, ages 14+
www.groundwoodbooks.com

In Home Free, Jennings explores the idea of being an “in” or “out” kid and the pressures that come with it. Lee is an 11-year-old orphan who believes she would be more glamorous if she were an orphan. She is a real-life orphan who moves into Lee’s neighbourhood. It would be very glamorous to be an orphan, or so thinks 11-year-old Lee Mets. Orphan status, she believes, would have the additional advantage of a certain kind of freedom: no one “owns” an orphan in the way Lee feels “owned” by her parents. Enter Cassandra Jovanovich, a real-life orphan who moves into Lee’s neighbourhood, and Lee’s perceptions start to shift. First, despite her red hair, Cassandra is not at all like the iconic orphan Anne of Green Gables. Second, she definitely does not want to talk about her dead parents. As friendship develops, Lee reveals her “sanctuary”—a hidden place to which she retreats when times are tough. Lee feels she is “home free,” but Cassandra’s demons pursue her. It is not until separation looms that the two girls discover the meaning of friendship, and Lee discovers the difference between being owned and belonging to someone. The story’s location in a socially conservative 1960s environment is not necessary to support the themes of loyalty and belonging, and might be more distracting then helpful for many young readers. The novel is, however, an excellent exploration of the meaning of friendship.

In Second Story Press, 2009
$8.95, 152 pp, ages 10+
www.secondstorypress.ca

In Annick Press, 2009
ISBN 978-1-897187-61-6
$12.95, 254 pp, ages 14+
www.annickpress.com

In Second Story Press, 2009
ISBN 978-1-897187-61-6
$12.95, 216 pp, hardcover, ages 14+
www.orcabook.com

In Groundwood Books, 2009
ISBN 978-0-88899-841-3 (pb)
$18.95 (hc)/$12.95 (pb), 152 pp, hardcover, ages 14 – 18
www.groundwoodbooks.com

The idea of being an “in” or “out” kid and the pressures that come with it.

In Second Story Press, 2009
$8.95, 152 pp, ages 10+
www.secondstorypress.ca

The idea of being an “in” or “out” kid and the pressures that come with it.
The Green Teen: The Eco-friendly Teen's Guide to Saving the Planet
by Jenn Savedge
New Society Publishers, 2009
ISBN 978-0-86571-649-0
$14.95, 192 pp, ages 13 – 19
www.newsociety.com

Alarming news and predictions about issues facing the planet are everywhere. It’s enough to make even the most optimistic person feel hopeless. How can we counteract the bad news and help young people avoid falling into despair and despair? It’s easy to say that we have to change, but what does that mean? What can we do to make a difference? The Green Teen answers these questions in language and a format that teens can relate to. With basic information and suggestions for concrete actions, this guide will help individual teens make personal changes, then combine forces with others to green their schools and communities. Options explored include how to shop, how to eat, how to deal with waste and how to conserve energy. Frequent “Why Bother?” notes give real reasons for making the effort to change behaviour. The Green Teen is a great book to put into the hands of young people who are motivated but unsure of what to do, and those who might be helped out of despair by taking some positive action.

Mark, An Island Champ
The War Amps, 2009
$11.00, 27 min 30 sec DVD, ages 10+
www.waramps.ca

This inspiring documentary chronicles the story of Mark, who lost his arm in a farming accident on Prince Edward Island at the age of seven. Now attending university, Mark looks back and explains what happened on the fateful day, and how his life was changed by the accident. Soon after he became an amputee, Mark attended a War Amps Child Amputee Seminar which gave him hope for the future and inspired him to pursue his dreams. Despite the loss of his arm, Mark continued to excel at soccer, cycling and skiing, and he began competing in biathlon events. He also volunteered as a Safety Ambassador, working with children to raise awareness of safety issues. He now maintains that the loss of his arm has made him a stronger person and more determined to reach his life goals. This is a heart warming portrait of a remarkable young man who has thrived with the support of a loving, close-knit family and community.

Life in the Boreal Forest
by Brenda Z. Guiberson
illustrated by Gennady Spirin
Groundwood Books/House of Anansi Press, 2009
ISBN 978-0-88899-956-6
$18.95 (hc), 32 pp, colour illustrations, ages 7+
www.groundwoodbooks.com

Each two-page spread in this strikingly beautiful picture book contains information, through text and illustration, about the wild things that live in the northern boreal forest. This huge forest, stretching across Alaska, Canada, Scandinavia and Russia, covering one-third of the earth’s total forest area, has great importance to the health of the entire planet. Beyond providing nesting habitat for migratory birds and a year-round home for creatures such as beavers, hares, moose, bears, wolves and lynx, it cleans the earth’s air, filters the water, and, especially critical now, it is one of the world’s best places to store carbon, helping to protect against global warming. Despite its vastness, the boreal forest and all the creatures that live full or part time here are threatened by human development—logging, mining and peat harvesting. The boreal forest is disappearing fast. This book aims to teach appreciation for the beauty and benefits of the boreal forest, in hopes that more people will participate in its protection and preservation. Although the text is written for young people, the gorgeous illustrations make this book appealing to all ages.

I is for Inuksuk: An Arctic Celebration
by Mary Wallace
Maple Tree Press, 2009
ISBN 978-1-897349-57-1
$19.95, 32 pp, colour illustrations, ages 5+
www.maplecreepress.com

Award-winning author/illustator of many books for children, Mary Wallace has a particular interest in the north. Using the word “inuksuk” as inspiration, she has created another artistic celebration of the arctic and the traditional life of the people who live there. In this latest book, each letter of the word stands for another Inuktitut word: “I is for Inuksuk, the stone messenger that stands at the top of the world; N is for Nanuq, the powerful polar bear and supplies graphic symbols that can be reproduced and used in the classroom to represent the plot of a story and to provide structure for children as they create their own stories. The lesson plan suggested by Charles is simple and adaptable to any type of tale, although in her experience, most effective with younger children who are still open to the concept of magic in fairy tales. This resource will be of great interest to any teacher who is fascinated by folk tales and story telling, and is a straightforward guide for those who choose to use the lesson plan with their own students. Detailed instructions are provided, along with samples of children’s stories and illustrations generated by the author’s work with students.

Fairy Tales in the Classroom
by Martenova Charles
Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 2009
$34.95, 262 pp, colour illustrations, teacher’s resource
www.fitzhenry.ca

Fairy Tales in the Classroom outlines a methodology for introducing primary grade students to folk and fairy tales, leading them through a process to create their own tales. Working from a life-long interest in folk tales, Martenova Charles developed this lesson sequence after extensive research into the universality of folk tales, their significance in human culture, and particularly, how young children relate to and benefit from the stories. Charles then adapted the work of Vladimir Propp, a Russian linguist who identified a series of “functions” that underly all tales and that move the plot along, to develop her methodology. Charles renames Propp’s functions as “actions” and supplies graphic symbols that can be reproduced and used in the classroom to represent the

Close Encounters of the Third-Grade Kind
Thoughts on Teacherhood
by Phillip Done
Center Street, 2009
$27.99 (hc), 336 pp, adult
www.centerstreet.com

In Close Encounters of the Third-Grade Kind, award-winning teacher Phillip Done has produced an almanac of hilarious and touching anecdotes for each month of the school year. Based on his twenty years in the classroom (in California), and inspired by his obvious love of teaching and children, Mr. Done captures the essence of “teacherhood” as he relates his experiences at the elementary school level. Teachers of all ages of children will recognize the little joys and frustrations of teaching in this entertaining collection of stories, and likely be reminded of why they chose this rewarding career.

The War Amps
$11.00, 27 min 30 sec DVD, ages 10+
www.waramps.ca

This inspiring documentary chronicles the story of Mark, who lost his arm in a farming accident on Prince Edward Island at the age of seven. Now attending university, Mark looks back and explains what happened on the fateful day, and how his life was changed by the accident. Soon after he became an amputee, Mark attended a War Amps Child Amputee Seminar which gave him hope for the future and inspired him to pursue his dreams. Despite the loss of his arm, Mark continued to excel at soccer, cycling and skiing, and he began competing in biathlon events. He also volunteered as a Safety Ambassador, working with children to raise awareness of safety issues. He now maintains that the loss of his arm has made him a stronger person and more determined to reach his life goals. This is a heart warming portrait of a remarkable young man who has thrived with the support of a loving, close-knit family and community.

Canadian Teacher Magazine November 2009
Long favoured by travelers from the west coast, the Hawaiian Islands are a convenient and familiar holiday destination. This group of islands offers a warm, sub-tropical climate and the security of an American location. Vacationers can choose from among the distinctly different environments that the islands present, among them the peacefulness of the “Garden Isle” of Kauai with its lush vegetation and spectacular Waimea Canyon, the sophisticated snowbird haven of Maui or the famous beaches and action of busy Waikiki on Oahu. Having enjoyed all of these, my favourite is still the “Big Island” of Hawaii. From snow-capped volcanoes to tumbleweed cattle ranches and luxurious waterfront resorts, the contrasts that this island possesses will surprise you at every turn in the road.

The iconic symbols of Hawaii are all here—palm trees, hula dancing, macadamia nuts and surfing—but there is so much more, ranging from the tranquil to the exotic. Here you will find an active Hawaiian culture and villages with clapboard shops dating back to the time of the earliest western settlement of the island. There are State parks that preserve the steamy forests and vibrantly coloured flowers, as well as historic sites such as the beach where Captain Cook met his end and the remarkable spectacle of Kilauea, the world’s most accessible active volcano.

There are so many choices for how visitors can spend their time on Hawaii. It would be easy to stay at a hotel in the main city of Kailua, a twenty minute drive south of the airport on the west coast, and enjoy the comforts and diversity of the services offered there. Or you could stay at one of the self contained resort hotels that dot the Kona coast less than an hour to the north, with their adjoining beaches and golf courses. From either location, it is easy to access many of the local sites like the City of Refuge or St. Benedict’s Painted Church or to go game fishing or whale watching. But to truly appreciate Hawaii you need to venture out and explore.

One thing that sets Hawaii apart from its neighbours is its size. It is by far the largest of all the islands in the chain and not one you could easily navigate by car in one day. And you wouldn’t want to for fear of missing the many interesting sites. Getting around the island is easy, though, with excellent highways and paved secondary roads. Rental cars are plentiful and inexpensive, and
bus tours are also available. The main highway hugs the coast for most of the route, the interior being dominated by the twin peaks of the Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea volcanoes, both over 3962 metres in elevation, with their rugged lava slopes. It is these massive features that have influenced the formation of the different climates on the island.

Starting from the Kailua-Kona airport on the western side of the island, travel north along the scorching Kona coast. The highway has been built atop the ancient black lava flows that long ago emanated from the two volcanoes and into the sea. This is part of the grueling route for the cycling component of the original Iron Man competition held here every October. On the seaward side of the highway, modern technology has made possible the verdant oases that surround the luxury hotels and resorts there. Premier among them is the Hilton Waikoloa Resort with its waterfalls, dolphin pool, and canal system with dock-side restaurants and ferry boats that link the distant parts of the site. There are also popular public beaches along this hot stretch of coast that runs into the region of South Kohala up as far as Kawaihae.

At this point you head higher into ranch country and the landscape changes quickly to a mix of forest and fields as you enter the more moderate climate of North Kohala. From the spectacular Pololu Valley lookout (and for the fit and energetic, a steep walk down to the valley and a step back in time) up and over the Kohala Mountain Road, the trees, wildflowers and pastures give way to cactus, rocky terrain and tumbleweeds. This is quintessential Hawaiian high country and offers southern vistas over the volcanoes, sloping lava flows and coastline.

The Waipi’o Valley, the home of King Kamehameha, the island King who united the Hawaiian people under his rule back in 1810, is the start of the Hamakua Coast, the windward and wettest part of the island. The northeast trade winds deliver the rain that produces the stunning green mountainsides along the drive from Honoka’a to Hilo and supports the coffee and agriculture industries. There are lots of places off the main road to get close to the lush undergrowth and gorgeous blossoms along this scenic drive. Follow picturesque pathways through the forest at Akaka Falls State Park or the well marked scenic route to see the Tropical Botanical Garden.

Travelling west out of Hilo you pass through miles of rainforest before emerging into the volcanic zone and the newest real estate on the island. The Hawaii Volcanoes National Park is the most unique part of Hawaii. Here, red hot lava passes miles through lava tubes, sometimes emerging to ravage the landscape before spilling out into the ocean in the longest sustained eruption in recorded history—since 1983. Be sure to drive along Crater Rim Road to see the smoking, lunar-like landscape of the gaping Kilauea caldera and visit the excellent visitors’ centre (but I would not recommend staying at the military barracks style Volcano House Hotel). View the glowing red lava at the closely managed location along the coast at night for the most impressive sight, or take a charter flight over the area for an aerial view.

The drive back to the Kona coast leaves behind the dramatic desert of the Kilauea lava flows and takes you through the green and lightly treed terrain of the most southerly part of the United States, a notable feature adopted by so many local establishments that you would have to take your GPS to be sure you got the authentic most-southerly-cup of delicious Kona coffee. Leaving the peacefulness of the countryside behind, the highway takes you back north to the city of Kailua.
TUSCANY PAINTING TOUR

by Valerie Kent

The transfer company representative was right there, on time, waiting for our group to come in from Toronto, holding up the sign, “Valerie Kent.” Ten of us streamed towards the sign, luggage already in hand. We had been looking forward to this painting workshop all winter. A couple of the artists had been to Italy previously, but the rest of us were newbies.

We were all so excited that I thought we would levitate, but actually all we did was board the pleasant little van which headed right up the mountain to the lookout, and took in our first, but by no means last, astounding vista. Beneath our feet stretched the city of Florence and the Arno River. It took our breath away. You just could not stop looking. Everywhere you looked it was unbelievably beautiful.

Our hotel, the Monna Lisa, was tucked away in the historic centre of the city, with its narrow streets and cars practically touching the walls of the ancient buildings as they zipped by. The hotel, which had been a grand residence of the Medici family, was approximately 800 years old. It had a romantic entrance, a garden and a courtyard patio for breakfast when the weather was good. Some of the group painted out in the courtyard in the afternoon. It was a great location in that it was close to many restaurants, attractions and piazzas.

The day before we left to go back to Florence, we had the opportunity to have our own exhibition on the balcony of the hotel. We had a vernissage, the reception for which we got wines, cheese and prosciutto — it could not have been better. We took many photographs of our artwork, which was hung out on the dividers on the balcony, and we feasted on wonderful snacks.

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One day we went out to a totally organic farm — Poggio Alloro — for lunch and to try the wines from their winery. We feasted on their fresh vegetables and the owner tempted us with figs right off the trees. They produce extra virgin olive oil, beef, cheese, homemade pasta and fruits including figs and pomegranates on the farm. This was a great place to sketch. I was highly impressed by how the family ran it, how clean it was, and the never-ending views were spectacular. It was a wonderful way to spend a relaxing day.

Afternoons on the terrace were a civilized way to spend the afternoon with pre-dinner drinks and appetizers and the vistas from the terrace while we caught up with each other’s daily painting and touring adventures.

Once we arrived at the hotel in Siena, we walked to the original David. In the evening, several of the group members painted a large flower planter on a column in the hotel garden to get warmed up. Some of the group painted out in the evening with pre-dinner drinks and appetizers and the vistas from the terrace while we caught up with each other’s daily painting and touring adventures.

One day we went out to a totally organic farm — Poggio Alloro — for lunch and to try the wines from their winery. We feasted on their fresh vegetables and the owner tempted us with figs right off the trees. They produce extra virgin olive oil, beef, cheese, homemade pasta and fruits including figs and pomegranates on the farm. This was a great place to sketch. I was highly impressed by how the family ran it, how clean it was, and the never-ending views were spectacular. It was a wonderful way to spend a relaxing day.

Almost every evening there was a free concert in the centre of the town practically outside our hotel doors. We would go and eat somewhere lovely and then attend the concerts, stopping for gelatos before heading to bed (the gelatos are always a favourite whenever I go to Italy). We put in fabulous full days and went to bed content, having put in another exciting day with the lovely memory of music ringing in our ears.

The first day only Nora painted our little street in Siena with the laundry hanging out the windows, but the following day while scouting, I found the Philosophy Department at the local university and its library had an extraordinary garden which overlooked the town and the distant hills. The philosopher’s garden was a beautiful, green and floral oasis, and we sat in it for quite a while painting happily.

Two days later we transferred to San Gimignano, which is a walled town. It used to have 75 towers, but now has 13. What an extraordinary town with a cistern in the centre of the piazza and fabulous narrow streets and very old buildings. Again, our hotel was an ancient stone building, right in the middle of the town. Several of us shared a large balcony overlooking the fields, hills and valleys spreading out in a panoramic fan around the town.

Afternoons on the terrace were a civilized way to spend the afternoon with pre-dinner drinks and appetizers and the vistas from the terrace while we caught up with each other’s daily painting and touring adventures.

We painted the narrow cobbled streets, the arches and the amazing old buildings. We also painted the towers of the town from our balcony. When it was too hot to paint, we shopped at the many small shops and tried out new restaurants and wines. Many of us went down to the Piazza La Cisterna to sketch or paint the ancient well. We also enjoyed people watching because there were people there from all over the world.

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Almost every evening there was a free concert in the centre of the town practically outside our hotel doors. We would go and eat somewhere lovely and then attend the concerts, stopping for gelatos before heading to bed (the gelatos are always a favourite whenever I go to Italy). We put in fabulous full days and went to bed content, having put in another exciting day with the lovely memory of music ringing in our ears.

The day before we left to go back to Florence, we had the opportunity to have our own exhibition on the balcony of the hotel. We had a vernissage, the reception for which we got wines, cheese and prosciutto — it could not have been better. We took many photographs of our artwork, which was hung out on the dividers on the balcony, and we feasted on wonderful snacks.

In Florence on the last day, we did some last minute shopping and then met up at the Uffizi Gallery. It was just too vast to see everything, but we had made a plan to see specific pieces we were interested in, such as the Botticelli and Michelangelo paintings. Sometimes we cannot even imagine how big some of these works are because we have only seen them in books and in prints. We put coins into the fountain at the wish that we would all return some day.

Valerie Kent is an artist and teacher who paints en plein air and in her studio. She presents workshops to art societies and at colleges throughout Ontario, as well as offering courses in various media. She facilitates art river cruises in France and overland trips to Italy in the summers. www.valeriekent.com 905-508-5531 artistvalerie@yahoo.ca

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**Début en septembre 2010**

**Date limite :**

15 mars 2010
This is the second in a series of columns featuring retired educators who have chosen to pursue very different paths in their retirements. In the last issue of the magazine, the respondents shared information about their career backgrounds and current ventures. In this issue they provide pertinent information about why they chose this particular pursuit once retired and whether this pursuit was a new idea or one they had been planning for a long time. And finally, they will tell you what preparations, if any, they made while still involved in their primary careers.

Roger, Judy, Gordon, Jean, Brent, Geraldine, Barbara, Tony, Bal and Carol had very different reasons for choosing their new pursuits and each prepared for their retirement in a way that suited their needs. This diversity of choice and planning will provide you with food for thought.

Why did you choose the particular pursuit or pursuits you use?

1. I didn’t choose my current pursuit as a Bed and Breakfast owner/operator; it was my wife’s idea! I decided that I needed to find a pursuit that truly fulfilled a different piece of me than teaching had, and that is why I went into the field of interior design.

2. I thought that by working in Africa the opportunities to go on safari, to take beach holidays and to visit exotic places of local or international interest were more possible, and could be taken in greater luxury if desired, with my pension arriving each month.

3. For personal reasons, and as a career educational counsellor and administrator, I had become involved in the Mental Health Association of Canada over 40 years ago, so I decided to devote more time to it and related groups during my retirement.

4. I chose my pursuits for a variety of reasons—first, the field supervision work has allowed me to keep a finger in the education field and so given me an opportunity to use my experiences and expertise. My second choice of working in the area of electronic sales was chosen because it allowed me to stay current and involved in technology, which is something I’d become passionate about during my career, as well as allowing me to learn about the business environment. Finally, woodturning was a hobby I’d never had much chance to pursue, so after my skills improved it became another satisfying outlet.

5. I have a particular reason for choosing my post retirement pursuits. I just wanted a continuation of what I’d always done to relax by enjoying a variety of leisure activities, volunteering and crafts, such as making stuffed bears from old coats.

6. For many years I was fascinated by advertisements and programs featuring Tai Chi but had never been able to take advantage of any courses as they never seemed to fit into my work and home schedules. When I started taking Taos' Tai Chi, I had no plans to teach, but the more familiar I became with the moves and the techniques, the more I wanted to share them with others.

7. Having chosen to become involved in several different post retirement pursuits, the reasons for choosing each one is also different. All, however, were chosen because of a personal interest or long time involvement.

8. I had always been interested in nutrition, so setting and speaking about the topic seemed to be a natural thing to do. I chose to set up a gardening business because I have had a lifelong interest in horticulture and I felt an increasing need to be outdoors after spending my career within four walls.

Was this a new idea or had you been thinking about it for a long time?

1. Setting up the B & B was a completely new idea.

2. I began to consider a career change during the last five or six years of my teaching career, because of my perception that I had to make an emotional commitment to be ‘everything to everybody’ in my teaching profession and this was taking its toll on my energy and resilience.

3. I always had a fascination with change and the way people and societies adapt to new circumstances but like many young people of my generation, I got caught up in the responsibility of career and family, so that the idea of working in the developing world was only a vague and remote dream. A few years before retirement the possibility became a reality, but I put off the decision until retirement rather than interrupt my primary career in its twilight.

4. No, it wasn’t a new idea, simply a continuation of a 40 year long interest in mental health issues at both the provincial and national levels.

5. Field supervision of education students seemed a great extension of my previous work without the stress that went along with working in the school system. The electronic sales job was done on an impulse and the wood-turning gives me an opportunity to pursue something creative that I never had enough time for while working.

6. I had decided quite some time before retirement that what I wanted was to spend more time doing the same leisure activities I'd enjoyed as a way of relaxing prior to my retirement.

7. It was a new idea, because it was only after taking the Beginner Course for four months and then starting the Continuing classes and realizing the benefits that I decided to pursue teaching Tai Chi.

8. I was already involved in selling software while still working and had been a sailing instructor in the past. Only my involvement with insurance was new although I’d been interested in investment management for some time.

9. Deciding what to do after retirement had been part of my retirement planning.

10. I had been thinking about what I would enjoy doing when I retired for some time.

What preparations did you make for your new pursuit while still at work?

1. I didn’t make any specific preparation because our decision to open a B & B was done on the spur of the moment.

2. I made no particular preparations for a career change while I was actively teaching. I simply completed the course work in interior design, taking it as a 20% per week work diversion from my teaching. I also attended a seminar on setting up a small business, although I did not find that experience particularly helpful.

3. Most of the important preparations for working in Africa happened while working and were accidental and unintended. As an example, the accumulation of knowledge and experience were valuable assets. Knowledge gained on the job through experience, reading and in service was important, but nothing compared to the events that occurred on an irregular basis, which I had to deal with as a teacher and administrator.

4. Because of my long time involvement in the area of Mental Health I didn’t need to make any specific preparations to work more fully in the field.

5. I had kept in touch with university personnel while working and I started doing the field experience work for them as soon as I retired. The rest just seemed to happen.

6. I didn’t make any preparations because I was just continuing with my leisure activities and crafts.

7. I made no preparations whatsoever while still working; I had no time, what with career, home and family to look after; it all happened after retirement.

8. My preparations were mixed. I had made some half-hearted attempts at strategic investing while still working, but they were relatively unsuccessful, so an entrepreneur friend spent some time educating me on the finer points of investment management. I had let my Canadian Yachting Association certification lapse so I had to get re-certified. The business opportunity came about after I persuaded the School District to purchase educational software, and to allow me to set up an alternative learning centre. When the School District policies would not let me take in adult learners who were coming into my centre in the mall, I purchased the software licence through my company, and established a center for adult learners only.

9. While still working I began to write newspaper articles and talk to seniors groups about nutrition.

10. To prepare for my new career, I signed up for a Master Gardening course to begin immediately after retiring so that I would have credibility as a gardening professional.

As you’ve read, the reasons why and how these retirees came to choose their new pursuits vary greatly, as did their preparations. Following new interests or pursuing long held dreams, each one was able to move forward after settling into retirement with positive results. In the next article, you will learn about their hopes and dreams as well as the concerns they had about the paths they had chosen to follow.
Junior Atlas of Canada and the World

This best selling atlas, especially created for younger students, was updated in 2008 and available in a slightly smaller format in your choice of either perfect (glued) or coil binding. The Junior Atlas of Canada and the World is colourful, clear and easy to use, providing children with simplified political and physical maps of the world, the continents, Canada and the provinces. Unlike most school atlases, the clutter has been kept to a minimum—only the most basic of facts and visual information is given so as not to distract young eyes and minds.

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I must admit, the first page I turn to when I get my latest issue of Canadian Teacher Magazine, is the retirement article by Enise Olding and Carol Baird-Krul. Why wouldn’t I? Their book, *Transition to Retirement: The Unhurried Course*, is inspiring and informative for retirees like myself. Quite frankly, it was the research by Olding and Baird-Krul that gave me the inspiration to refuse to fade away in my retirement from a 31-year teaching career.

One of the biggest fears I had when I retired was a loss of identity. Unfortunately, in many western countries, identity is intimately linked to occupation. Even though we all know that we are not who we are because of what we do or what we produce, nevertheless, we have a preoccupation with linking identity with vocation. And too many times, when individuals retire from their careers, they also retire from an identity that supported them throughout their careers. The end of a professional career has a tendency to dim the view that a person has of himself, as well as how they are seen by the active world.

For teachers, the sudden release and the decline of full-time teaching—the relentless preparation, marking, reporting, and dealing with all the stakeholders—can take some time getting used to. This sudden shift away from the high pressure, demanding days of teaching to the mundane of retirement life can make you feel as though you’re living an unfulfilled life with no reason to get out of bed in the mornings.

But I found out very quickly that retirement from teaching is not retirement from life. For me, it was a time to find new goals and rekindle old ones. I’ve been “retired” now for almost three years and I can honestly say, it was the closing of one door and the opening of many others.

Thus far, I have used my time to write a book (in manuscript form and unpublished, I might add) about the First Nations people of my province, the Beothuks. After that I had the opportunity to teach in the high Arctic in Kullik Elementary in Cambridge Bay, Nunavut. For my choice of volunteer work, I joined the Gideon International in Canada. I’ve also worked as a security guard with Garda of Canada in Fort McMurray and drove heavy hauler trucks on the Suncor oil patch. My last job in Fort McMurray was teaching orientation and safety courses with Suncor Energy. Meanwhile, I’ve been back in the classroom as a substitute teacher on many occasions with my school district in Newfoundland and Labrador, while I shuttle back and forth between my province and Alberta. The benefits have ranged from being very busy and productive to meeting some wonderful people, while at the same time earning some extra cash (actually earning a whole lot of cash).

Of course, one does not have to do the variety of things mentioned here to find purpose in retirement (doing one thing you thoroughly enjoy will suffice for some). The important thing is that you do something that you enjoy and makes you happy.

It is said that teachers today retire at about 57 years of age (in my province we can go after 30 years of service regardless of age). So, in essence, we can expect to spend 25 years or more in retirement (assuming we can maintain our health and vitality) right into extreme old age with our faculties still intact. Therefore, it is paramount that you do that one thing (or many things) that brings contentment and purpose in retirement. Keep in mind though, the importance of having goals (short and long term) to help you adjust to life after teaching.

In my situation, retirement was a matter of finding my identity in three broad ways. Here’s my advice to you. Firstly, do something productive. For me, it was a whole bunch of stuff. For others it could be only one activity that feels meaningful. Secondly, consider retirement from teaching as the closing of one chapter in your life and a commencement of a whole new chapter where the sky is the limit. I quickly discovered that it’s a whole new and exciting life out there, a life beyond the classroom that I did not envision when I was teaching. Remember, it’s a new beginning—a time to travel, to learn new skills and embark upon new horizons. Thirdly, take control of your life. It’s a time to spread your wings and to venture out into a world waiting for what you have to offer. You’d be surprised at the vast amount of talent you didn’t know you had. I could go on to tell you more about the wonderful world of “retirement” but I have to go. I’m scheduled to substitute today for an old colleague of mine. It’s a grade 5 class. Yes, my favourite grade. ☺️

by Hector M. Earle

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**International Teaching Opportunities**

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**The Gift of Hope Program**

This holiday season all it takes is $60 to give a school in the developing world access to a “Library in a Box.” These innovative boxes are entrusted to schools so even the most remote communities can be given the gift of reading. No more can rural living and washed-out roads keep children from reading, imagining, dreaming, and one day achieving. This gift idea would offer the perfect opportunity for Canadian teachers to reach children in the developing world.

The Gift of Hope program enables people to support specific projects in developing countries and is a simple way to help create a brighter future for children and families worldwide. Givers can purchase more than 35 different gifts that help families in developing countries earn an income, provide opportunity for an education, improve the health of individual families or improve the water and environment for an entire community.

All gifts are available at the online store at www.plancanada.ca. If the gift is for someone else, givers can choose between a mailed card or an eCard to let them know. For Gifts of Hope, or any donation above $25, the amount will be included on their annual income tax receipt mailed in February.

**Make it Count**

Talking with youth about budgeting, debit card use and common sense spending has been made easier with the Canada-wide release of *Make it Count: An Instructor’s Resource for Youth Money Management*—the interactive money mentoring program and information resource from the Canadian Securities Administrators. The guide provides lesson plans and student handouts with activities and tips to help incorporate youth money management into your course of instruction. A few of the topics that are covered in the guide include cellphones, supermarket shopping, budgeting a vacation and transportation planning. The program also includes an online, interactive money management tool (My Make it Count) that allows mentors and youth to set up a daily budget, start and track savings goals and chat with other money mentors in an online forum. Users can see where their money is going, track their financial progress and provide their own insights and activity ideas to the online community.

All resources are free and available in both English and French. Teachers can download a PDF from MakeitCountOnline.ca.

**Debout!**

Building on the success of the first edition with teachers who work in French in Canada, the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) has launched the second edition of *Debout!* (translation: Be proud, stand tall), a national cultural activities handbook which celebrates the Francophone culture in minority settings. “DEBOUT! 2e édition sparks ideas, provides a wealth of resources in support of proposed activities, and features a calendar of events that take place in French. This resource is intended for educators in French-language schools as well as teachers of French as a second language who wish to instill cultural values in their students. The second edition is complemented by a website which provides access to the entire content of Debout! and will facilitate the continuous updating of proposed activities and resources.

**National Strategy for Early Literacy**

The Canadian Language and Literacy Research Network has released a report calling for a national strategy aimed at improving literacy rates in Canada. The report outlines factors that have hindered literacy among Canadians, and makes four recommendations involving new initiatives for early learning, improved teaching strategies, greater community involvement and increased public awareness and resource sharing. The 58 page report is available in PDF format at http://docs.cllrnet.ca/NSEL/finalReport.pdf.

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**November 2009 CANADIAN TEACHER MAGAZINE**
A Student Centred Reading Program

A School of Readers, Books One, Two and Three are educational resources for a student centred reading program. The program encourages reading by providing teachers with a large selection of book tests which can be used to check on completion and comprehension of selected novels. Its goal is to encourage students to increase the number and variety of books they read without creating an unmanageable marking load for teachers.

The literature lists selected for these resources incorporate cultural diversity and assorted interests to appeal to all students. The readability ranges from middle school years to university level to meet teachers’ increasing challenge of stimulating students’ different intellectual needs.

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And the issues go beyond workplace challenges, to the training, professional development, mentorship and networking. With regional chapters in Montreal, young women with course selection and career planning. For the Status of Women Canada, Ontario Women’s Directorate educate them about careers in advanced technology. To help with this process, the web site will provide case studies of successful women leading technology companies. Teachers are in a prime position to provide girls (and boys) with information about careers in advanced technology and to create a climate of enquiry and encouragement. Hopefully this website will prove to be a great resource for teachers as they help young women with course selection and career planning. For more information about the initiative, visit the CATA WIT website (www.catawit.ca) or www.bringiton.ca

Talking to women across the country, it’s clear that female participation has not improved substantially over the last two decades,” said Joanne Stanley, managing director, CATA WIT. “And the issues go beyond workplace challenges, to the training pipeline, where female enrolment in many technology-related disciplines is declining.”

CATA WIT would like to reach Grade 10 girls who are about to make important decisions about course selection for the senior high school years. The goal is to convince them to continue with math, science and computer science and to educate them about careers in advanced technology. To help with this process, the web site will provide case studies of successful women leading technology companies.

The Atlas of Canada Online

The Atlas of Canada Website provides access to authoritative, current and accessible geographic information in the form of many types of products at national and regional scales. The data, presented as maps and analytical texts, are easily accessible on the Internet with effective and intuitive tools, allowing users to increase their overall knowledge of Canada.

All paper editions, published prior to 1999, have been scanned and are available on the Atlas of Canada website under the Map Archives section. The map tools include zooming in and out, panning or moving the map left, right, up or down. Users are also provided the choice to download the map file or use the special print tool. In addition to the first five editions of the Atlas, there are also other historic maps and special products. The interactive thematic maps on the website include hundreds of dynamic colour maps. Online Atlas subjects have been organized to allow users to select and view their areas of interest, quickly and easily. Subjects covered include the environment, Canadian society and basic demographic information, aboriginal peoples, the economy and history. Other topics of interest to Canadians such as Health, Climate Change and Freshwater are also available. New maps are published regularly as new data becomes available.

A variety of Reference Maps are available as colour maps of Canada and the provinces and territories, as well as black and white outline maps including both Canadian maps and international maps. The 100th Anniversary Map Series contains information for a range of geographical themes on Canada’s economy, environment, history, natural resources and population, all of which are available to print or save in JPEG or PDF formats. All reference maps were designed to be easy to print in convenient sizes ideal for in-class use.

The Atlas of Canada also delivers free access to topographic map coverage of Canada from the National Topographic System (NTS). These maps depict ground relief (landforms and terrain), drainage (lakes and rivers), forest cover, administrative areas, populated areas, transportation routes and facilities (including roads and railways) and other constructed features. The online tools allow easy access to maps and allow quick searches of features and places. All results can be either printed or saved.

You are invited to explore over 100 years of mapping of Canada at http://atlas.gc.ca
November 19 - 20, Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers Annual Convention. Montreal, QC. www.qpat-apeq.qc.ca

November 19 - 21, Mind Body Spirit Conference presented by the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta. Edmonton, AB. Register online at www.LDAA.ca.

December 1, Multiple Diversities: Child/Youth Identity and Life Outcomes. Toronto, ON. This symposium will bring together national and international experts in three fields of research—identity and diversity; migration and resettlement; child/youth health and wellbeing. www.chsrevents.ca/childyouthidentity/


February 4 - 5, Central Alberta Teachers’ Convention. Red Deer, AB. www.teachers.ab.ca

February 5, McGill University, Faculty of Education Distinguished Educators Seminar: Lori Jamison. Marvelous Mini Lessons for Teaching Writing. Montreal, QC. For Elementary Grades 1, 2, 3. www.mcgill.ca/edu-dise/centres/CEL/seminar/

February 12, McGill University, Faculty of Education Distinguished Educators Seminar: Distinguished Educators Seminar: Jon Udin. Power Struggles: What to do when a student says “Make me!” Montreal, QC. www.mcgill.ca/edu-dise/centres/CEL/seminar/


March 26, McGill University, Faculty of Education Distinguished Educators Seminar: Jon Udin. Power Struggles: What to do when a student says “Make me!” Montreal, QC. Kindergarten to Adult Ed. www.mcgill.ca/edu-dise/centres/CEL/seminar/

April 15 – 17, Grand rassemblement de l’éducation en français 2010. (Great gathering on French-language education 2010). Halifax, NS. An educational conference specifically aimed at teachers, practitioners and managers in the field of education in Francophone minority communities. Its purpose is to answer specific needs related to professional development, networking and access to practical and specialized teaching and learning tools. www.lfnc.ca/gref

April 22, McGill University, Faculty of Education Distinguished Educators Seminar: Sheryl Gilman. Connecting the Multicultural Worlds of Young Children With the Arts. Montreal, QC. Pre-K and Kindergarten. www.mcgill.ca/edu-dise/centres/CEL/seminar/


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