

Teacher

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Teaching... a passion for the planet



British Columbia's schools reflect our global community. Here, students from Norkam Secondary School in Kamloops enjoy a moment out of class. Alistair Eagle photo, courtesy of Kamloops School District.

by Patrick Clarke

One sunny afternoon this summer, my seven-year-old daughter burst through the back door complaining of a harassing wasp, attracted to her piece of watermelon. As she finished eating the watermelon at the kitchen table, she

asked, "Dad, what are wasps good for?"

I gave her an ineloquent answer: "They eat garbage." Then I realized that I would not have asked such a question when I was seven. I knew wasps simply as pests. I recalled that during our annual exile to Keats' Island my sisters and I kept a tally of who squashed the most wasps.

What I heard in that question from this small person of the new generation was a

different consciousness. This generation's children are becoming sensitized to their planet in a traumatic way.

For today's children, the world looms as a much more complicated place than it did when we were their age.

Children of the '80s are hearing the alarms about the condition of the planet. How can they not? On a daily basis, they receive information, primarily through television, that tells them they are living in perilous times, living on a planet being polluted and depleted to the point of inhabitability, a planet unable to sustain its existing population let alone projected populations, a planet whose human inhabitants are constantly resorting to violence to resolve conflicts.

Global issues of the 1990s, their urgency, and their proximity are the greatest challenges any generation of teachers has faced.

Perhaps the critical difference between these children and those of earlier generations is that global issues are kept before them. There is no "away." Canada is no longer the "fireproof house far away from the flames" as it was once described. Global issues are not, as the big issues once tended to be, of national origin for national resolution in places far away.

Children are increasingly aware that problems in the world affect them in Canada. Children can see resource depletion on the mountainsides of their own province. If they live in larger centres, they can see polluted air and water. They are aware of species extinction. They encounter classmates who are political or economic refugees.

The proximity of these issues and the urgency for their resolution have given teachers one of their most teachable moments. We have before us a generation that is feeling challenged by the circumstances they have been born into, and in turn, they are challenging teachers to help them respond.

We educators cannot afford to let this

See "Planet" page 2

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teachable moment pass. If we do, if our response to the demand for relevance, in teaching global issues, is inaction or is simply irrelevant, we risk producing a generation that cannot or will not come to terms with the great issues of their day. Apathy and ignorance could well be the death of that generation and their planet. We need a generation of inspired and creative problem solvers; this world cannot afford many more cynics, pessimists, or "me firsters."

Fortunately, teachers have begun to develop a response, a strategy for preparing young people for the global citizenship that will characterize their lives in the 21st century. The global citizen will understand himself/herself as a part of the planet, a nurturer rather than a consumer, a partner rather than a rival, a creator not a destroyer.

These sensibilities, awareness that the planet must be taken care of, that humans are bound together as world citizens, and that the world will survive only if we co-operate to create a better world, are the central features of what is commonly called global education — not a course of study, but a way of learning that encompasses all of what schools do.

Global education: a part of all we do

The scope of global issues, the magnitude of the problems and their interrelatedness call for a more creative reply than, "Global education — sounds like a job for the social studies class." It is that and much more. If we are to avoid missing this opportunity, we must jettison traditional approaches.

Issues such as world environmental degradation, peace, north-south inequality, and technological change, which have such broad implications for the future and are so complex in their resolution, clearly cross all disciplines and have relevance for all ages. Teachers can begin now to analyze what they do in their classrooms and begin to educate whenever they can for global citizenship through global education.

As an approach to learning, global education does help us get past some of the

traps such as the pigeon hole of a particular curriculum or discipline. It encourages us to consider the broad question of how we educate for a global perspective.

Most of what we do as teachers is provide perspectives, ways of looking and understanding; scientific, technical, creative, historical, and now, encompassing all of these, global.

The Global Education Project, just beginning in British Columbia, is designed to help teachers meet the challenges of the 21st century. The project will give teachers some of the tools they need to be global educators: ideas, resources, professional development, networks, and pilot projects. It is a unique undertaking involving all the players in B.C. education and significantly supported by the federal government. The project itself is a demonstration that teachers are prepared to help resolve the global crisis by educating global citizens.

The project also provides opportunity for us teachers to step forward in our

The environment is the issue of our time . . . it has made us all realize that we are in a village, a small place where virtually everything is connected.

communities as global citizens. What we do in schools, the materials we use, and how we address curricula are the everyday demonstrations of who we are and what is important to us as role models. The global issues of the 1990s, their urgency, and their proximity are the greatest challenges any generation of teachers has faced. Yet teachers are well supported by their communities. Concern is building over these issues as is public support for honest efforts in coming to terms with them. Teachers' participation in global education is essential to the continued credibility of public education.

Certainly the children are ready. Recall the wasps. That fumbled opportunity exemplifies the preparedness of children to understand, to think, and to wonder. There is no better application of global education, no concern where it is more easily understood, than the questions children have about the environment.

This is the issue of our times; it has made us pay attention to what we do as citizens of the world. The relevance of global education, with respect to this issue, is apparent. The problem must be understood and resolved from scientific, technical, and social perspectives. The issue has been the subject of creative endeavor in the arts. It transcends nationality.

It has truly made us realize, and children sense, that we are in a village, a small place where virtually everything is connected. It embodies problems that can be resolved only through global understanding and global action, fostered by global education. And with the other great issues of our times, the prerequisite of resolution is a sensitive, knowledgeable, adaptable generation of young people who have been taught to care passionately about their planet.

Patrick Clarke is co-ordinator of the B.C. Global Education Project. He is a social studies teacher on secondment from Burnaby.

Kickstarting global education

CLASSROOM IDEAS THAT WORK

• Teachergrams

Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA) publishes and distributes teachergrams three times a year. Teachergrams, primarily of interest to secondary school social studies teachers, are usually about international development issues. They contain information for teachers and specific ideas for classroom application in an activity section.

Victoria International Development Education Association (VIDEA), 407-620 View Street, Victoria, BC V8W 1J6.

• Karimlan

The overseas development agency, CUSO, has created a simulation game on sustainable development to introduce Canadians to indigenous people's struggle for survival. The unit juxtaposes economic development with the economic, social, and political concerns of indigenous people. Suitable for senior secondary, the game is available from CUSO, 2524 Cypress Street, Vancouver, BC V6J 3N2, (732-1814) at a cost of \$15.

• Global issues in the elementary classroom

Social Science Education Consortium Inc. has produced a workbook for elementary school teachers containing a wide variety of practical strategies for teaching global issues. It includes lessons on environmental issues, differences and similarities in cultures and values, refugees, and many others. The easily understood lessons need little adaptation, although some have a U.S. perspective.

Social Science Education Consortium Inc., 855 Broadway, Boulder, CO 80302.

• Teaching about global awareness with simulations and games

The University of Denver's Center for Teaching International Relations has collected creative, original approaches to such global issues as the world's economy. It has produced a game called, *A simple but complex chocolate bar: how something so little can cost so much.* Another game is called *Nuts to you*, a simulation of the international peanut trade. Other simulations deal with war and peace, one particularly interesting one is on the outbreak of World War I.

Teachers from upper intermediate through senior secondary could use the ideas in this book. Directions for the teacher, background information, and handouts for students are all provided. Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208.

• Teaching writing skills: a global approach

This book is for language arts, social studies, and creative writing teachers of Grades 6 through 12. It contains dozens of lessons and exercises for students to work on writing skills, concept development, oral expression and communication, and perception. The lessons are around global themes such as interdependence, conflict, cultural awareness, language, perception, and human rights. Center for Teaching International Relations, University of Denver, Denver, CO 80208.

• Prime Areas, "Global Education/ Universal Curriculum."

B.C. Primary Teachers' Association journal, Winter 1989.

Most primary teachers in B.C. already know about this resource. This issue contains 164 pages of articles, lessons, and ideas on global education for primary children including peaceful co-operation, environmental issues, and international understanding. This is one of the few resource materials on global education available for primary teachers and is a must, an excellent book. Contact Debby Stagg, PSA Services, PD Division, BCTF.

Resource list compiled by Patrick Clarke.

Where is "Readers write"?

Given the tight timeline between the September and October issues of *Teacher*, letters to the editor did not arrive in time for publishing. Readers write will appear in the November/December issue of the newsmagazine.



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change\ 'chānj\ vb: to make or become different

PRESIDENT SPEAKS TO VANCOUVER SUN EDITORIAL BOARD



Ken Novakowski

Change was the theme as BCTF President Ken Novakowski and First Vice president Ray Worley met with the editorial board of the *Vancouver Sun* to outline the federation's position on the state of B.C. education.

Novakowski identified structure, curriculum/pedagogy, and education funding as areas where the government is proposing radical changes — changes that shift towards centralized authority in the ministry, changes in what is taught, and how, and changes imposed on a system that remains in desperate need of resources for just the basic program.

Structure

Teachers are now working under different labour legislation and are covered by new collective agreements. Understanding and implementing these contracts will take time and effort; this is itself a structural change in education. But the government has proclaimed a new School Act, and regulations and a new set of Minister's Orders. The relationship between this legislation and the contracts is unclear. Although the Association of B.C. School Superintendents, the Secretary Treasurers' Association, and the BCTF have all called on the minister to declare a transitional year," advising boards that the status quo should hold, the deputy minister has simply said he has faith that local associations and trustees will find creative solutions to any problems.

Minister's Orders are a new concept altogether. These directives have not passed through the legislature for debate and approval. What's more, they refer to specific classroom activities that have historically been under the authority of the teacher, things like acceptable educational resources and report card symbols.

Novakowski added that the legislation gives a new managerial definition to the work of the administrative officer. The AO has specific powers and duties outlined in Regulation 5, including 5 (6) (d), "assist in making the Act and this regulation effective and in carrying out a system of education in conformity with the orders of the minister." This direct line from the AO to the minister concerns teachers and also superintendents and secretary-treasurers, who wonder about their own roles. The technological link from the classroom to the ministry via electronic reporting of student progress has already been identified as a concern of both teachers and the public.

The Act's establishment of parent advisory councils, while welcomed by the BCTF, represents another change in struc-

ture. To develop a process for direct parental input on managing of the school will require time, new skills, and experimentation.

"Where is the locally-elected school board in this picture?" Novakowski mused. The ministers of finance and municipal affairs recently held a series of property-tax forums around the province, and they not only did not invite the education community, but they also expressed annoyance with school trustees who made presentations and raised concerns about the significant relationship between property taxes and education funding. Minister of Finance Mel Couvelier said that the "mandate of the forum was too narrow to hear from trustees."

Rumors of plans to eliminate the education-tax component of the property tax led Novakowski to wonder if the complete removal of autonomous local school boards might follow. "We see this structure in Thatcher's Britain, and we know the county system is favored by Premier Vander Zalm," he added.

Curriculum/pedagogy

The changes being introduced regarding what is taught and how it is taught are probably more important and more immediate for both parents and teachers. A flood of documents must be examined to see the pieces of this picture, including the report of the Royal Commission on Education, the ministry's policy directions, the mandate statement for public education, the school act and regulations, the minister's orders, and now a white paper, *Year 2000: A Curriculum and Assessment Framework for the Future*.

In a preliminary review of this

The direct line from the school administrative officer to the minister concerns teachers and also superintendents and secretary-treasurers, who wonder about their own roles.

document, the BCTF has identified ideas worth supporting, areas needing clarification, ideas conflicting with our basic values and policies, and ideas that contradict other ideas, in both theory and practice, the president said. "And we are to have a province-wide discussion of the paper in time to respond by the end of this calendar year!" he said with disbelief. We should be taking several years to discuss and develop a consensus around such major changes.

We are prepared, even eager, to participate in improving public education, Novakowski said. In curriculum and

pedagogy especially, our history of leadership is long and proud. Teachers have led the way in gender equity, global education, co-operative learning, whole language, the writing process, and identifying the relationship between hunger and learning problems. When we knew

"We're engaging our members in discussion and reflection and looking for genuine consultation. We'll be resisting ideas that threaten the students or the system."

Ken Novakowski, President

changes were planned, we studied the whole process of implementing educational change, he told the editorial board. "At last year's AGM, we debated and adopted a set of principles to guide our work and to guarantee that changes were improvements." The ministry's Implementation Branch recently published a document to help school districts through the change. The document was consistent with the federation's principles, and we "thought we were on the same wavelength," he reported, only to find the next week that the ministry had disbanded the branch giving responsibility for implementation to the deputy minister himself!

"It is in curriculum and pedagogy that the changes cause us the most concern," Novakowski admitted. Teachers are enthusiastically welcoming the ungraded primary program, but enthusiasm is no substitute for resources and time to do the job properly. Other proposals are not greeted with the same support. Where is the evidence supporting subject integration at the secondary level, or mandatory work experience? Where have these ideas been tried? Were there pilot projects with formal evaluation to show that such changes are improvements? "We studied the research and found that dual entry for Kindergarten should not proceed before an ungraded primary program is well-established," he said, "which is why we called for a delay." We aren't standing in the way of progress; we're acting as responsible professionals.

Novakowski dubbed the government's plans a "grand experiment" conducted system wide on 500,000 students. Not only are the risks great, but they really aren't necessary, if we move at a more sensible pace in introducing these changes, he argued.

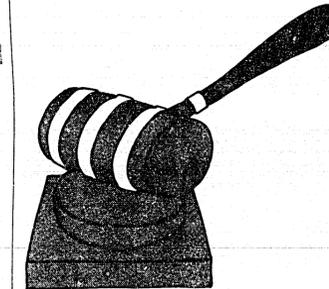
Education Finance

Finally, Novakowski addressed the question of education finance, pointing out that while restraint is no longer official government policy, the education system has not recovered from it. No "new money" has been added to the basic edu-

cation program, which is still inadequately funded. While the public has called for increased education spending, improvements made in schools result from local boards' supplementary funding initiatives, which, in turn, have meant increased property taxes. The money that the government is currently promising for education is largely targeted funds for specific purposes over which it retains control. The \$1.5 billion capital allocation is welcome, but will it compensate for the deterioration of school facilities through the restraint era? Novakowski said that if we want to talk "bottom line" on education, the "bottom line is that there isn't adequate funding for either operating or capital budgets."

Novakowski said the BCTF has turned its own organization upside down to cope with, and influence, all of these changes. "Primary teachers will be providing leadership on implementation of the new program, but we'll be demanding appropriate resources, time, and training for teachers. We still insist that the *spirit* of the Royal Commission be implemented, including the provincial curriculum committee and BCTF leadership in professional development. We're doing our research, engaging our members in discussion and reflection. We'll be demanding genuine consultation from government. We'll be resisting ideas that threaten the students or the system!"

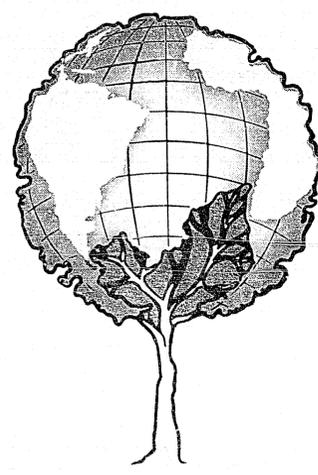
- Elaine Decker



Executive Committee highlights

The BCTF Executive Committee met September 22-23. Major decisions included the following:

- approving grant requests for local association offices for Nisga'a, Arrow Lakes, Queen Charlottes, and Howe Sound;
- recommending to the Representative Assembly that an amount of up to \$75,000 for grievance and advocacy training be a charge against the Reserve Fund;
- seeking a meeting with representatives of the College Council to discuss college discipline procedures;
- approving grants to a maximum of \$1,000 per zone to cover costs related to zonal endorsement of College-Council candidates;
- endorsing, in principle, an employment-equity strategic plan;
- recommending to the RA additional charges against the Reserve Fund for first contract support and legal costs related to sign-up/certification;
- confirming moral, legal, and financial support for the Mission District Teachers' Association strike action;
- approving PSA Council's recommendations for pilot projects on education policy;
- approving a policy on staff committees for circulation and input prior to consideration at the January EC.



Discipline task force studies changes in BCTF Code of Ethics

As a result of Bills 19 and 20, legislation that fundamentally altered the employment status of teachers and the nature of their professional organization, the BCTF's Executive Committee has struck a five-person task force to conduct a full review of the BCTF Code of Ethics and implementation processes. Members of the task force are Percy Austin, Pauline Galinski, Maureen MacDonald, Maureen McPherson, and Charlie Wyse.

Present code-of-ethics procedures are cumbersome, time consuming, and disproportionately complex considering the nature of most offences and the potential consequences of violations. The task force is attempting to streamline processes, offering more options for resolving cases. Most cases in years past pertained to verbal offences by one member against another. Mandatory mediation, fact finding, and other means of resolving such cases without "trial and punishment" are being explored.

Because suspension and expulsion from BCTF membership would not necessarily mean prohibition from teaching, the task force is re-examining penalties. Furthermore, penalties are reviewable by the Industrial Relations Council, and a variety of Industrial Relations Act provisions may limit the application of certain sanctions such as removal of member privileges.

Achievement of union status and the right to strike have raised in many members an appetite for penalties to be assessed in the event of picket-line violations and other job-action transgressions.

Input is being sought from interested groups and individuals before final drafting of recommendations. Task force chairperson Maureen McPherson, of Cowichan, will make interim reports to the Executive Committee and the Representative Assembly as work progresses.

The task force hopes to report to the 1990 AGM.

- Ralph Sundby

Kids as consumers

Citing statistics from the Youth Monitor survey of 1,200 children aged 0-15, *Oregon Education* noted that:

- 92% have regular chores
- 82% want additional spending money more than anything else
- 72% influence purchases of sneakers
- 53% select their brand choices rather than those of their parents
- 30% buy their own toys
- 23% prepare some of their meals
- most view print advertising as more truthful
- kids watch less TV than adults watch

Source: *Oregon Education*, 5/89, 1 Plaza Southwest, 6900 SW Haines Road, Tigard, OR 97223.

1990 INTERNATIONAL LITERACY YEAR



They have documents shoved in front of them and are told to sign with their thumbprints.

They are often cheated and exploited. They feel unable to comprehend and powerless to influence decisions that affect their lives.

They suffer high rates of unemployment and are often paid below the legal rates.

They get lost when they travel because they cannot read signs on buses or along roads.

They might endanger their own or their children's lives because they cannot understand labels on medicines.

THEY are the nearly one thousand million illiterates from all corners of the world.

"You are left in the darkness . . ." says a woman who cannot read or write. "It's like living in a different world."

Despite two decades of progress in extending primary education and combating illiteracy, large areas of the world are facing an educational crisis. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), more than a quarter of the world's adult population is illiterate. One hundred million children have no school in which to learn.

"Education is the key to the future, and literacy is the most essential of education skills," says Federico Mayor, the director-general of UNESCO. That is why, he explains, the United Nations General Assembly has declared 1990 International Literacy Year and invited UNESCO to be the lead agency for the year.

It's like a shadow

The statistics on literacy present a gloomy picture. Because of the recent economic crisis and recession in the developing world, many countries have cut back on social programs and education. Most illiterates live in developing countries. Nearly two-thirds are women. The highest illiteracy rate is in Africa, where more than half the population cannot read or write.

The Canadian Teachers' Federation is conducting a national study, funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, to obtain teachers' views on the extent and types of literacy problems and strategies for addressing them. The two-part study includes small-group discussions or focus groups (several occurring in B.C.) and a questionnaire to be distributed in November to selected teachers across Canada.

But even industrialized countries have discovered the serious, often hidden, problem of functional illiteracy, the lack of reading and writing skills sufficient to cope with the modern world. The United States, according to different estimates and varying definitions, has between 17 and 65 million functionally illiterate adults. In Canada, a survey by *Southam Incorporated*, a national newspaper chain, came up with startling figures: one out of four Canadian adults cannot read, write, or use numbers well enough to meet the demands of today's society.

"It's like a shadow; it's always with you," says Lome Gibson, a Canadian learner, referring to her inability to read.

Dual approach

UNESCO argues that if illiteracy is to be checked, a "dual-track approach" is needed: universal primary school for children, and large-scale programs to serve out-of-school youth and adults.

"Education of children is, in large part, determined by their parents, especially their mother," argues Colin Power, UNESCO's assistant director-general of education. "Hence, resources invested in the education of parents is often doubly effective, serving both to train the parents and to improve the educational prospects of their children."

Yet, some development experts argue that literacy should wait, given the world's

more urgent crises such as hunger and disease. Why not tackle those first, they say, and then start the literacy campaign? UNESCO answers that literacy is central to all health and development initiatives, not only because it helps people be independent, informed, and in control of their own lives, but also because literacy and productivity and survival are linked.

UNESCO, as lead agency for the year, now has the opportunity to mobilize major international efforts to implement a 10-year plan of action. Its initial objective is to eliminate illiteracy by the year 2000, an objective not easily attained, given the lack of available resources and the upward spiral of illiteracy figures. Two large conferences will be held during the year, both aimed at mobilizing the support of the international community and fixing objectives and priorities: The World Conference on Education for All - Meeting Basic Educational Needs (March 1990, Bangkok) and the Forty-Second Session of the International Educational Conference (September 1990, Geneva).

Momentum is building. Idealism is being turned into action.

Source: Article and graphics from UNESCO news feature and media release, September 1989. UNESCO, place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France.



Alcohol and drug abuse among B.C. youth

1987 MINISTRY OF HEALTH SURVEY

Alcohol is the drug of choice among secondary school students.

One in five B.C. secondary school students uses alcohol at least once a week.

33% said they had consumed more than five drinks at once in the last month.

30% of students had used marijuana in the past year. 19.3% of students had used marijuana in the last month.

6% of students had used cocaine in the past year.

1.6% have used "crack." 1.2% have tried a hallucinogenic drug.

25% said they had been drunk at least once in the last month.

28.5% had smoked in the last year (more girls than boys).

20% smoked more than 10 cigarettes a day.

15.1% have used barbiturates or tranquilizers in the last year.

Source: *Substance Abuse Prevention: Policies and Programs for School Boards, Colleges, and Universities*. A survey of 15,000 students at 151 schools. Prepared by Shannon & McCall for BCCLEA.

by Lynn Green

the public hears facts like those above, teachers and school boards are being asked about their plans for addressing the issue of substance abuse. Programs like TRY do raise awareness of the problem, but increasingly emphasis is on comprehensive preventative school health education programs.

Remember the drug education programs of the '70s, when experts visiting the classroom focused on the long-term health dangers of drug and alcohol abuse. Drug information and scare tactics did not produce the desired changes in smoking and drinking behavior. Instead of this crisis-oriented approach, recent literature indicates the effectiveness of comprehensive school health programs that, "are long-term and sequential; utilize learning theory; recognize social influences such as peers, family, and the media; combine objectives for the affective domain, for example, decision making skills, with specific information on drugs; allow for student practice of "refusal skills;" and incorporates techniques such as role-playing, peer leadership, assertiveness training, and critical thinking." (Bernard, et al, 1987.) Such programs can effect student attitudes, behaviors, and knowledge if they are comprehensive and extend over 50 hours of instruction.

Comprehensive school health programs are not in place in many schools in the province. However, the new *Learning for Living* (health and guidance) curriculum is a significant step in addressing the need for an effective preventative program.

This curriculum recognizes that substance abuse prevention must be part of a comprehensive school health and guidance program. It integrates a number of topics including family-life education, child abuse prevention, career education, healthy living, mental well being, safety and accident prevention, and substance abuse prevention. These content areas are included within a curriculum framework consisting of the four themes of individual awareness and responsibility, relationships, social awareness and responsibility, and lifelong development. Decision making is a common thread running throughout. The draft curriculum guide, released by the Ministry of Education in June 1989, suggests that the *Learning for Living* curriculum is one component of the comprehensive approach. In order to be effective, services for students and a healthy school environment also should be in place.

Does comprehensive school health education work? The *School Health Education Evaluation* (1984), the largest study of school health education in North America, stated that it does. However, there are critical elements educators must be aware of as *Learning for Living* is developed and implemented. They include: "sequentially-developed curricula; continuance K-12; content appropriate to developmental needs of student; rich teaching/learning resources; articulation with other subjects; involvement with family; community and health agency support; planned and on-going in-service education; healthy school environment; efficacious implementation; broad curricula assessment; leadership and co-ordination." (Vertinsky.)

This list implies major change and commitment of the Ministry of Education and school districts to ensure that teachers have a well-developed curriculum with adequate resources, training and support for implementation. It is also evident that curriculum in schools is not enough. Causes of substance abuse such as adolescent curiosity and risk taking, easy availability of drugs and alcohol in many communities and families, peer pressure, modelling of behaviors at home, cultural acceptability promoted by the media, and parental ignorance (*The Practitioner*, 1982) make it obvious that there must also be community-wide initiatives. In addition, services must be in place for effective early intervention. School counselling services must be available in elementary and secondary schools to support implementation of the curriculum and provide support to students as they disclose experiences and needs.

Substance abuse by youth is a national problem. A comprehensive school health and guidance program such as *Learning for Life* may be part of the solution. However, responsibility for addressing the problem must be shared through collaboration between schools, support agencies,

community organizations, families and various levels of government. A co-ordinated effort must be made to encourage healthy lifestyles among children and youth.

Lynn Green is president of the B.C. School Counsellors' Association.

References:

- Bernard, Bonnie, et al. *Curriculum Update*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, February 1987.
- Vertinsky, Patricia. *Substance Abuse Prevention Programs: the state of the art in school health*. *The Practitioner*, National Association of Secondary Principals, April 1982.

Drug Awareness Week: Nov. 19-25

During Drug Awareness Week, over 350 community organizations will be involved in local campaigns to raise and drug problems in our society.

Find out what is planned in your area. Get involved. Here are some resources that will help you inform yourself. They may also be helpful in your classroom, and in your community.

The complete TRY Test is available from Drug Awareness Co-ordinator, 1019 Wharf Street, Victoria, BC V8W 2Y9.

Project CODE, a Canadian offensive on drug education initiated by the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police was announced by the solicitor general on September 12. Three packages are available, one for Grades 2 to 4, one for Grades 5 and 6, one for Grades 7 and 8. Each package contains a video, teaching kit, and poster. The Ministry of Education is currently being consulted about the utilization of this program in B.C. schools. Contact your local RCMP detachment.

Kaiser Substance Abuse Foundation, 1500 West Georgia Street, Vancouver, BC, V6G 2Z8, 681-1888. The Kaiser Foundation produces a directory to substance abuse services in B.C. Your school or district may already have it. The foundation does not produce learning resources, but they are an excellent source of advice and information for individuals or groups who want to act on substance abuse.

Substance Abuse Prevention: Policies and Programs for School Boards, Colleges and Universities. Shannon & McCall, for B.C. Council for Leadership in Education. This thorough handbook was produced with support from alcohol and drug programs, Ministry of Labour and Consumer Services, government of British Columbia. Chapters include a review of model policies, programs and curricula, and recommended readings. It is available from BCCLEA, c/o 1133 - 160A Street, White Rock, B.C. V4A 7G9.

The Try test

Prepared with the assistance of the Alcohol-Drug Education Service, the TRY TEST is an informative quiz designed to test your level of awareness of the alcohol and drug problems in our society. Section 1 is printed here.

1. What is the most used and abused drug in Canada today?
2. What is the estimated cost to Canadians each year, in reduced labour productivity, of alcohol abuse? (a) \$500 million (b) \$950 million (c) \$1.8 billion (d) \$2.5 billion.
3. Where does B.C. rank among Canada's 10 provinces in terms of alcohol consumption per person? (a) first (b) third (c) fifth (d) eighth.
4. What is the average age at which people first drink? (a) 12 (b) 14 (c) 16 (d) 18.
5. What percentage of B.C. students (Grades 8-12) report being drunk at least once in the last month? (a) 4% (b) 12% (c) 24% (d) 36%.
6. What percentage of B.C. students (Grades 8-12) report that their parents do not know how much they (the students) drink? (a) 8% (b) 15% (c) 29% (d) 40%.
7. At what blood alcohol level could a person's ability to drive be impaired? (a) .01 (b) .05 (c) .08 (d) 1.0.
8. In B.C., how many traffic injuries per year are attributed to drinking and driving? (a) 1,000 (b) 3,000 (c) 5,000 (d) 7,000.
9. How much do you think it cost British Columbians to deal with the negative effects of drinking and driving in 1987? (a) \$400 million (b) \$800 million (c) \$1.6 billion (d) \$2 billion.
10. What percentage of adult British Columbians have experimented with cocaine? (a) 6% (b) 12% (c) 18% (d) 24%.
11. What percentage of first time cocaine users go on to use cocaine again? (a) 34% (b) 56% (c) 78% (d) 100%.
12. Which drug do more B.C. students (Grades 8-12) smoke? (a) Tobacco (b) Cannabis (also known as marijuana and hashish).
13. What is the average age of a first time cannabis user? (a) 12 (b) 15 (c) 18 (d) 21.
14. What percentage of Grade 12 students report having used a hallucinogenic drug (LSD, PCP, magic mushrooms, mescaline)? (a) 5% (b) 10% (c) 15% (d) 20%.
15. What percentage of B.C. students (Grades 8-12) report using prescription sedatives (barbiturates or tranquilizers) during the past year? (a) 5% (b) 10% (c) 15% (d) 20%.

Answers on pages 16 and 17



Maxine Wilson, President of the B.C. Parent Teacher Home and School Federation, is shown here with her own children, James and Heidi.

To teachers of British Columbia

by Maxine Wilson

My name is Maxine Wilson. I'm the parent of James, aged 14 and Heidi, aged 12. I am also the new President of B.C. Parent Teacher Home and School Federation. I've been a parent activist since 1984, attracted by restraint and the havoc it was creating in the education system.

The most destructive force of the past decade has been the devaluation of the roles of parents and teachers by our society. If we, as a society, truly believe that children are our most valuable resource, then when we plan for the future, we must do all that we can to empower parents and teachers. They are children's most influential mentors.

We've been through some difficult years in the education system but, I hope, the recommendations in the Sullivan Report have given us the impetus to refocus the resources available in society to enabling children. And this is where parents have a dynamic role to play.

Parents should view parenting as the most important vocation they have undertaken. Regardless of qualifications, all parents remain the major influencers of their children. They can choose to be a positive force in their children's lives or they can choose to abdicate their responsibility and be a negative force. Unfortunately for society, when parents abdicate their

responsibility, they raise children to be dysfunctional adults. Parents must invest the time and energy necessary to succeed at this vital vocation.

Because parents shape their children's attitudes, their children need them to support (not control) the school system. I tell them not to take our system for granted. If they do, their children will not appreciate the tremendous educational opportunity they have been given.

Parents should become informed and then have input into the short- and long-term goals of the education system. Their knowledge of their children is a valuable contribution in shaping educational programs.

Finally, I tell parents that in a society that tends to ignore the needs of children, they must broaden their perspective and become advocates for all children. It is important that they communicate to non-parents the value of investing our society's resources into the development of children.

I am looking forward to the renewed opportunity and challenge that we parents have been given to form a partnership with teachers in achieving our common goal of meeting the needs of children in developing their potential.

Maxine Wilson is the president of the B.C. Parent Teacher Home and School Federation.

Open your doors to parents

WHAT RESEARCH SAYS

The term *parent involvement* includes several different forms of participation in education and with the schools. Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations, for example, parent-teacher conferences. They can help their children improve their schoolwork, providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behavior (such as reading for pleasure), monitoring homework, and tutoring their children at home.

Investigators have identified lack of planning and lack of mutual understanding as the two greatest barriers to effective parent involvement.



decision making. Parents come to understand something of the school's structure and its instructional programs and gain basic experience in working with school personnel. Such experiences can expand parents' knowledge and increase their credibility with school staff as they move into decision-making roles.

Engaging parents in the schools

Investigators have identified lack of planning and lack of mutual understanding as the two greatest barriers to effective parent involvement. A school staff wishing to institute effective programs will need to be both open minded and well organized in engaging parent participation.

Research has established that the most successful efforts offer parents a variety of roles in the context of a well-organized and long-lasting program. Parents will need to be able to choose from a range of activities that accommodate different schedules, preferences, and capabilities. As part of the planning process, teachers, and administrators will need to assess their own readiness to include parents and determine how they wish to engage and utilize them.

Guidelines for engaging parents in the school:

- Communicate to parents that their involvement and support make a great deal of difference in their children's school performance, and that they needn't be highly educated or have lots of free time for their involvement to be beneficial. Make this point repeatedly.
- Encourage parent involvement from the time children first enter school.
- Teach parents that activities such as reading to their children and modelling reading increase children's interest in learning.
- Help parents focus on *instruction* — conducting learning activities with children in the home, assisting with homework, and monitoring and encouraging the learning activities of older students.
- Provide orientation and training for parents, but remember that intensive, time-consuming training is neither necessary nor feasible.
- Make a special effort to engage the parents of minority students, who stand to benefit the most from parent participation in their learning, but whose parents are often initially reluctant to become involved.
- Continue to emphasize that parents are partners of the school and that their involvement is needed and valued.

Source: *School Improvement Research Series*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 500-101 S.W. Main Street, Ste. 500, Portland, OR 97204, (503) 275-9500.

Moving collective bargaining goalposts

by Al Cornes

While local associations were busy bargaining collective agreements last year, the Ministry of Education was busy drafting a new School Act. What, if anything, these two activities have in common is now the topic of widespread discussion.

The new School Act was proclaimed law on September 1, just about the time school districts were interpreting and implementing the clauses of new contracts. But the new School Act says things the old one didn't, and it doesn't say things the old one did. This makes the interpretation game interesting. The goalposts were moved in the middle of the game.

To minimize confusion, the BCTF asked the ministry to designate this a transitional year, to advise school boards to acknowledge that the terms of the contract prevail and that clauses needn't be reopened and examined in light of the new legislation.

In a recent liaison meeting, Deputy Minister of Education Sandy Peel indicated that as far as the government is concerned, teacher contracts can prevail. He said he is flabbergasted by the narrow interpretation by some boards, that he believes creative solutions can be found locally, and that no further government direction is necessary.

Peel cited as an example of this narrow view the move by some superintendents to use new Regulation 8 as a reason to cancel non-instructional days and early-dismissal procedures. Regulation 8 requires school boards to provide to students a minimum 190 days' instruction in each school year and a minimum number of hours.

Associate Deputy Minister Jack Fleming also pointed out that there is no direct link between the hours of work and days for teachers and the hours required for students. Fleming went on to say that there is a lot of flexibility in the 190-day rule in that only some students are required to enroll in educational programs. In illustrating his point, he said it is possible for most of the teachers on staff to participate in a PD activity while the counsellors hold interviews with some of the students.

BCTF President Ken Novakowski called the situation chaotic and said that the government has a clear responsibility for the situation, since it was the government that introduced the legislation. The president of the Association of B.C. School Superintendents and the president of the Secretary Treasurers' Association support Novakowski's call for a transitional year in which the status quo would prevail.

The BCTF Bargaining Division informally surveyed the province. Three boards — Cranbrook, Coquitlam, and Alberni — are eliminating early dismissal for Grade 1. Coquitlam, Bulkley Valley, and Alberni are cancelling one non-instructional day. Two boards have indicated that they will not honor some provisions of their collective agreements. No boards have made statements about new resignation dates, and none have asked locals to re-open the contract for negotiation, however.

Local leaders are determined to maintain their contracts. They will fight to preserve five non-instructional days for professional development and to retain early-dismissal procedures. Where possible, they will join with their boards in urging the minister to retain the original school calendar. They will resist all attempts to violate the collective agreement.

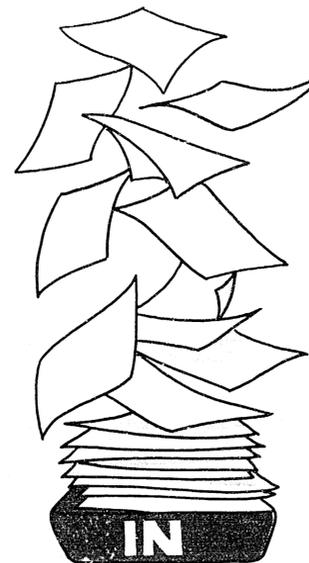
Al Cornes is the acting director of the BCTF Bargaining Division.

LAST NIGHT I FIGURED OUT HOW IT CAN BE DONE... I CAN KEEP UP WITH ALL THE LATEST MINISTRY DIRECTIVES AND ALL THE EXTRA MEETINGS AND PAPERWORK IF I EITHER GIVE UP PLANNING MY LESSONS OR MARKING THE KIDS' WORK OR EATING MENS

... I'M JUST NOT SURE WHICH ONE!



John Nolan cartoon



Paper mountain

When the experts said that we'd entered the information age, I believed them — not because of the computer on my desk, but because of the mountain of paper about to topple over and bury my computer. That the experts were referring to electronic information meant nothing to me. In my home and at work, the information that most troubles me is the old fashioned, print, kind. My problem with this kind of information is exacerbated by the undeniable fact that I'm a print-junkie; without several daily fixes of print, I feel that some basic element of my life is missing.

To avoid suffocation under my particular mound of paper, I've taken to defensive paper-management techniques.

My love of print does not extend to junk mail. I've developed two effective methods of eliminating that problem: When I join an organization, make a donation, or order a subscription, I attach a "post-it" note to the order form on which I request that my name NOT be included in any mailing lists that the company or organization may sell, lend, or otherwise distribute.

If, on occasion, I receive junk mail accompanied by a pre-stamped, pre-addressed reply envelope, I use my trusty highlighter pen to circle my name and address, and I write beside it in aggressive looking block letters REMOVE MY NAME FROM YOUR MAILING LIST IMMEDIATELY. Then I stuff all of the contents, including the original outside envelope, into the return envelope. If it's not really bulging, I add some junk mail of my own, seal the envelope and mail it back to them. When the company gets back an overweight, postage-due envelope with my message in it you can be sure I'm removed from their mailing list in a hurry!

Sometimes the junk mail is from a group I do support, although I don't want to receive their mailings. I don't create an overweight envelope for them but I do send a note back asking that my name be removed. That way they're not wasting

time and money mailing to me. I found the book *Taming the Paper Tiger* very helpful. Here are some tips from this and other sources I've found useful in keeping my information explosion under control.

Author Barbara Hemphill claims papers can go into seven categories:

• **sorting tray or in-basket**
Have only one spot in which you collect all your mail and other papers. Sort this pile regularly; handle each item only once. If you return an item to the tray because you don't know what to do with it, put a red dot on the top of it. Three red dots and you deal with it or toss it.

• **wastebasket**
Keep a wastebasket near your sorting area. Use it ruthlessly! Always ask yourself, "What is the worst possible thing that will happen if I don't keep this paper?" If you've read it and have the information, if the information could be found elsewhere when you really need it, or if the information's outdated, toss it.

• **calendar or daytimer**
Use pencil. Enter time, place, and phone number for meetings or events; then toss the notice. Write reminders and notes to yourself in your calendar. If you've agreed at a meeting to do some task, make an appointment in your calendar to start the task.

• **to-do list**
If a paper requires some action, enter the action on your to-do list. (Try to pay bills all at once — collect the bills in a "pay" file; enter a note on your calendar or to-do list.) I keep my to-do list in my calendar; post-it notes in a calendar or a separate notebook work well for some people.

• **phone or address book or card file**
Enter pertinent information under a listing you'll remember and toss the paper that contained the information. Use the rolodex for a "mini-file"; keep a list of combinations of locks under "combinations"; on a corner of the person's address card note birthdays, favorite colors, gifts given or cards sent.

• **action files**
I use separate files for pay, call/discuss, upcoming/pending, events and schedules, write, file, read, copy, and projects (separate for each project). You may have other categories. If a paper you're sorting requires an action, place it in the appropriate file. Then when you have a spare few minutes, you can sit down and attend to one of the files. Off to the dentist or doctor after school? Take the "read" file with you for waiting-room time.

• **reference files**
File only what you'll need to use again. File under the word by which you're most likely to remember the item. Any time you put something into a file, clean out that file and discard anything outdated or no longer useful.

Now, make an appointment in your calendar to begin sorting your mound of paper; clip this list and put it into your new "projects" file!

References:
Hemphill, Barbara. *Taming the paper tiger*. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1988.

Winston, Stephanie. *Getting organized: the easy way to put your life in order*. New York: Warner Books, 1979.

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- Lisa Pedrini

How was school today?

by Ron Pound and George Saunders

Parent to child: "So, how was school today?" Child: "Fine!" Parent: "What did you do today?" Child: "Nothing." As parents and educators, how do we encourage a positive interchange with our children about their school experience? What follows are some useful tips to increase that dialogue and build self-esteem.

1. When your children come home from school, greet them, be glad to see them, don't grill them about school.
2. Ask questions such as, "Tell me a word you learned today." "What picture did you paint?" Ask specific questions.
3. Instead of evaluating your child's statements or work projects, making comments such as, "The picture's great!" Use statements that draw out responses such as, "Tell me about your drawing."
4. Feel what the child feels, and state that feeling, as in the statement. "You seem to enjoy painting," or "The principal called today; it sounded as though you were really upset. Tell me about it."
5. Doing activities such as arts and crafts, sports, walks, reading, games, and other things with your children naturally stimulates conversation.
6. Sharing events about yourself with your kids encourages them to share their ideas and thoughts with you.

7. Listen to your children. Don't interrupt them as they try to get out their thoughts. Take time even if it makes you a few minutes late. Everyone will understand your priority.

8. Have a family bulletin board for messages and notes, and have everybody write on it.

9. Give active support to your school so that you know what is going on and can share experiences with your children.

10. Allow your child some space and time to be private, to unwind, before you enquire about school.

11. Notice and comment on things your child says and does, or doesn't say or do. Make statements like, "You're really quiet today; that's not like you." "What's happening?" It is important to be aware of your child's moods and changes in attitudes.

Of course, as a teacher you can use these approaches at school each day.

In the '90s, the educational mandate for our classrooms will emphasize creativity, communication, and co-operation. As educators and parents, we need to continue to develop these skills in ourselves and help our children acquire them as well.

Ron Pound and George Saunders are area counsellors in North Vancouver School District.

Outside the home, parents can serve as advocates for the school. They can volunteer to help out with school activities or work in the classroom. Or they can take a role in the governance and decision making necessary for planning, developing, and providing an education for the community's children.

Parents and school governance

Researchers and others have identified benefits beyond student achievement from involving parents in governance:

- The elimination of mistaken assumptions parents and school people may hold about one another's motives, attitudes, intentions, and abilities.
- Parents' ability to serve as resources for the academic, social, and psychological development of their children — with the potential for much longer-term influence (because of continued interaction with their children over time).
- The increase of parents' own skills and confidence, sometimes furthering their own educations and upgrading their jobs, thus providing improved role models for their children.
- The increase in parents serving as advocates for the schools throughout the community.

Research indicates that attending parent-teacher conferences and school functions, volunteering in classrooms, tutoring children at home, etc., provide the best preparation for parents in school

A TEACHER-LIBRARIAN'S EXPERIENCE ON THE OLD SILK ROAD

In the Summer of 1988, Melodie Brandon visited China under the auspices of the Ministry of Education's Pacific Rim initiatives. This is her story.

by Melodie Brandon

Last summer, under the auspices of the Pacific Rim Initiatives, 32 teachers from across the province travelled China's Old Silk Road. We represented a cross section of the profession, with primary, intermediate, junior and senior secondary teachers – specialists in such diverse disciplines as social studies, science, counselling, and music. I was the teacher-librarian.

One hot afternoon, we had two free hours in Dunhuang, an obscure town on the edge of the Gobi Desert. Jean Sewell, a teacher from Burns Lake, and I went for a walk and found a shadow puppet exhibition. The owner and exhibitor was Professor Liu, a microbiologist, a physician, and a professor at Lanzhou Medical College.

The nucleus of his collection was several very valuable puppets he had inherited from his grandfather. During the Cultural Revolution, he had buried them to prevent their destruction. Since Mao's death and the end of the Cultural Revolution, he has been travelling throughout China adding to his collection of what is now over 11,000 pieces. Many puppets are ancient, dating from the Ming Dynasty (1388-1844) and the Qing Dynasty (1844-1911). Each August, he exhibits them in Dunhuang.

The puppets, delicately carved oxhide figures depicting soldiers, elaborately gowned people, fanciful creatures, pagodas, and even flowers and trees, were displayed behind illuminated framed cotton screens. Each frame, one to two metres wide and one metre deep, told a story – usually from folklore or portraying historical events.

Professor Liu was impressed when he learned we were teachers. Teachers are highly regarded in China. When he asked about our teaching assignments, we found that the language barrier and cultural differences impeded our ability to explain just what we taught. I do not think they have teacher-librarians in Chinese schools and *librarian* was not a word he knew. Finally, after gestures and the word *bibliothèque*, he nodded understanding. I still had the uneasy impression that he did not really understand. Later, I was to know I was wrong.

Defining Jean Sewell's job was even more of a challenge. She is a learning-assistance teacher. With our inadequate language base, the three of us struggled, and finally Professor Liu got it. "Ah," he said, "you teach the stupid. That is a very significant profession." It seemed he had done some research regarding mentally handicapped children and so was excited to meet Jean. From then on, she was the object of his attention.

Professor Liu led us through the exhibits, explaining in detail each story portrayed by the shadow puppets. We had to leave for our tour bus before he could give us a puppet show. We were so impressed with the display that we promised to come back in the evening and bring our colleagues. We did.

I had expected to be able to browse at leisure, having already had the tour. The professor had another plan. "You tell them the stories," he commanded. This was my first indication that he well knew what teacher-librarians do. I was shocked and frightened. At the same time, my honor, and that of all B.C. teacher-librarians was at stake. "Face" is so important in China. But, how well did I know the stories? Had I been listening? Everyone looked at me expectantly, and so I began. The first one was easy, and the second story I remembered as well. Still, the telling was difficult because the room was huge with high ceilings, and my voice was lost. I was intimidated by the large crowd. I tried to speak loudly and clearly from the diaphragm, but I was so nervous that I was almost breathless. I found this distracting. Professor Liu kept nodding and smiling, and occasionally I'd look to him for help, which he would quietly give. In turn, would convey this information to the audience. By then, not only was our group listening, but also assorted tourists from Japan, Italy, and Spain. They didn't realize I was with the teachers, and, thinking I was employed by the professor, they asked me questions, which I answered. In this manner, we moved through the room until I felt our audience had had enough. We entered the theatre, and I assumed I had done my job.

That section of the room contained not only the stage, but many shadow puppets for sale. People began milling around, and sales were brisk. Jean sidled up to me with a stack of shadow puppets in hand. Professor Liu had given them to her. I was pleased. If her "significant profession" merited such a gift, surely...? Wrong again on two counts. I wasn't to receive any gifts, and Professor Liu wasn't finished with me.

As it happened, one of our colleagues, Judy Chan, a home economics teacher from Vancouver, is a friend of Paul Yee, author of *Teach Me To Fly*, *Skyfighter*, and *Curse of the Third Uncle*. She began to tell the professor about Yee's work – the Chinese immigrant experience in Vancouver. She told Professor Liu that she proofreads Yee's work before he sends it to the editors. Professor Liu had an idea. He has recently gone beyond collecting into creating. Here was something new – modern tales that are also cross-cultural. He would interpret these Canadian stories in shadow puppets and SEND THEM TO JEAN. Hers is such a "significant profession."

Because, as he admitted, his English is poor, he needed help with this project. Now obviously Judy is very familiar with Paul Yee's work. It was to me, however,

he looked for help. "We will collaborate. You will," he declared, "write short summaries of each story. Just put them between the pages of the books, and send them to me. I will carve the puppets, send them to you to check for accuracy; you send them back to me, and I will send them to Jean."

And I thought he hadn't understood the role of a teacher-librarian.

What is cross-cultural conversation?

In rereading the story now after some months, I recall the pre- and post-orientation meetings that inspired me later to write the story and this reflecting. The seminar on "storying" and "theming" resulted in my keeping a journal during our journey, which led to the story and a search for a deeper meaning of my meeting with Professor Liu.

For me, the little town of Dunhuang, where the memorable experience with Professor Liu took place, is no longer an obscure place on the edge of the Gobi; it overshadows the big names like Beijing and Xian that lured us in the China-tour brochure. Jeni Thom, a fellow teacher from Surrey, aptly characterized what among manifold experiences were most meaningful, when she said, "The unanimous consensus in our group was that our richest experiences during our trip were there when we were able to *mingling* with the Chinese people, to somehow get close to their experiences..."

Our conversation with Professor Liu was, for us, not only a glimpse into his subjective world, but also an authentic *mingling*, which teutonic etymology remembers as a "kneading together." Our conversation was as if we were participating in a communal kneading of life's dough, which gained deeper consistency the more we conversed.

Someone, whose name escapes me, said that "fundamentally, we are conversation; we do not so much have a conversation, as we live it." Such a thought reminds me of Hans Georg Gadamer, who said that "the more fundamental a conversation is, the less its conduct lies within the will of each partner." He goes on to tell us that an authentic "conversation is never one we conduct; rather...we fall into conversation."

So, I like to think that on that special day in Dunhuang, Professor Liu and I fell into conversation, which took its own twists and turns. As Gadamer has said, "the people conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led. No one knows what will come out in a conversation.... conversation has a spirit of its own."

Our conversation indeed had a spirit of its own. The mingling in conversation, the kneading together of Chinese puppetry, Paul Yee's stories of what it means to be Chinese Canadians, and the summary of these stories, is a palpable example of the abstraction we often call "cross-cultural" communication. Reflective theming on the story of my experience with Professor Liu on the Old Silk Road has allowed me to weave this impromptu and improbable meeting and conversation into the fabric of our shared human experience. In and through this experience of storying and theming, I have a more concrete sense of what it is to experience and live through cross-cultural communication.

I look forward with excitement to fresh kneading and mingling yet in store as I await Professor Liu's coming visit to British Columbia.

Melodie Brandon is a teacher-librarian at Senator Reid Elementary School in Surrey.

This story was adapted from an earlier version that first appeared in *The Bookmark*, newsletter of the B.C. Teacher-Librarians' Association.

Teacher pool shrinking

SEVERE SHORTAGE PREDICTED

by Rick Beardsley

schools opened in September, public media gathered round for education news. The new School Act and education reform barely caught their attention. The issue the media judged most important was the teacher shortage. They asked: Is it real? Is it happening here? What are the signs that it's actually happening? Daily we are answering these questions.

- Northern districts report hiring many new teachers from out-of-province, at least 40% of new positions filled.
- Metro districts report volatile substitute lists, with severe shortages in particular areas and subjects.
- A Fraser Valley district has initiated a forgivable loan system to attract UBC elementary student teachers for their 13 week practicum in an effort to identify new teachers for next year.

The demand

What has caused this dramatic turnaround in the demand for teachers? Despite what is happening in Surrey and elsewhere, the main factor is not burgeoning enrolments but teacher attrition. B.C. teachers, on average, are in their early 40s and tend to retire by their late 50s. As the teaching population ages, more and more teachers will retire. Attrition of younger teachers is another factor. Many young teachers leave the profession after four to seven years of experience to seek greener pastures. Reports from England and parts of the U.S. show the attrition rate of young teachers to be as high as 50% by age 30. The attrition rate alone could result in an almost complete turnover of teachers in 15 years.

Increased enrolment is the second major factor, particularly in the Lower Mainland, caused by the echo baby boom, interprovincial migration, and immigration. The echo baby boom is the result of the baby boomers' still having babies. Even though the birth rate has dropped, the baby boomers are so numerous that the number of children will rise until the baby boomers are beyond their child-bearing years.

In terms of migration, the most important factor is the influx of families from other provinces. Of students coming into B.C., approximately 60% are from elsewhere in Canada, and 40% are from out-of-country, according to Statistics Canada estimates.

The final factor affecting demand is the impact of contract settlements in this last round of bargaining. Pupil-teacher ratio, class-size, preparation-time, and professional-development provisions in contract have all contributed to the creation of new teaching positions.

The supply

Increased demand for teachers would not be a problem if the supply of new teachers could keep up. But supply can't

keep up. With some scrambling this year, most districts were able to fill their positions without major difficulties. But that may not be the case next year, or for the next 10 to 15 years.

The three universities cannot meet the demand. They produce about 1200 new teachers a year, a shortfall of 600 to 800 positions if all 1200 actually become teachers in B.C. The Royal Commission reports that in the best years of hiring in the '70s, fewer than 60% of education graduates actually entered the teaching force in B.C. Even with the recent infusion of funds, the faculties of education will be unable to catch up in the short term. The shortfall is made up by teachers from outside the province and outside the country and by former teachers seeking re-entry to the profession.

Another factor affecting supply is restraint. Layoffs, eroded salaries, worsening working conditions, and teacher bashing rendered teaching one of the least attractive professions for university graduates. While we are still living with the effects of restraint, the Royal Commission and the first round of full collective bargaining could prove to be the turning point to make teaching an attractive career once again. The universities already report a sharp increase in the quality of applicants for teacher-training programs.

The solution

To teachers, the solutions are obvious. Decent salaries and benefits, professional rights and working conditions, and proper resources will go a long way to attract and retain good people. And, the expansion of university programs is absolutely essential in order for young people in B.C. to take advantage of the growing opportunities in education. This is the positive response to the teacher shortage.

There is a downside. As school districts scramble to find the money to hire new teachers and provide new facilities and learning resources, pressures may threaten the professional status and working conditions of teachers. The pressures will be to increase class size, hold the line on (or reduce) preparation time, assign teachers to teach outside their area of interest or training, reduce certification standards, and use paraprofessionals to do the jobs of teachers. Already the shortage of substitutes is interfering with release time for professional development for teachers.

As we face the shortage of teachers, we must protect and extend working conditions and professional rights as our principal strategy in attracting newcomers to the profession. The need is clear for a collaborative approach by the BCTF, the Ministry of Education, and the B.C. School Trustees Association in attacking this issue. A shortage of qualified teachers affects all who care about education in B.C.

Rick Beardsley is assistant director in the BCTF's Professional Development Division.



Putting out a professional journal or newsletter is no small feat. Here, PSA editors receive information on printing from Don Richards, BCTF production services coordinator. Tim Pelling photo.

Education policy at the top of PSA's agenda

by Mike Lombardi

September 21 to 23, PSA presidents, treasurers, and editors participated in a BCTF-sponsored training conference. The leadership-training event launched the 1989/90 PSA Council program.

In his keynote address to the conference, BCTF President Ken Novakowski called on PSA leaders to play a key role in providing education-policy advice to the Executive Committee in dealing with the flood of government change proposals. He also invited the PSA Council to help develop BCTF bargaining objectives.

A major focus of the conference was the provincial government's discussion paper *Year 2000*. PSA leaders considered strategies for involving members in

responding to the discussion paper and other education-policy proposals.

The PSA Council recommended to the BCTF Executive a project proposal that would allow PSAs to provide leadership in the education-policy arena.

The conference also provided practical training and networking opportunities for PSA leaders. Workshops focussed on preparing a brief, planning a conference, lobbying, time management, and duties of officers.

In closing the training session, Ken Kuhn, president of the PSA Council, challenged all PSAs to be prepared to provide education-policy leadership and advice to the BCTF Executive Committee.

Mike Lombardi is assistant director in the BCTF's Professional Development Division.

Fall and winter holiday-related lesson aids

LA 8606 The Art Book, 213 p. An illustrated resource book of art activities and information compiled for teachers of art who have no special training in art. Includes a holiday Thanksgiving, Remembrance Day, Halloween, Christmas, Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and Easter. Suitable for K-7. \$13

LA 9628 Masks, 8 p., 10 colored slides. Paper bag, origami, cardboard or construction paper; papier-mache; rice, flour, and sawdust mache; and cardboard-box techniques. Elementary and secondary. \$6.90

LA 7054 Kids Cook Too!, 73 p. Illustrated, nutritionally-based metric cooking program for use in the intermediate grades. This book is designed to assist classroom teachers in organizing a regularly scheduled cooking program in their classrooms. The recipes are sequenced according to the school calendar year. Many ideas stem from seasonal themes or specific food units. Intermediate. \$5.25

LA 9065 Monsters: Research and Activity Unit, 16 p. Includes activities that may be used as an independent study project or as part of an interest centre. The pages are designed so that students require minimal assistance from a teacher or librarian. Suitable for Grades 5 to 7. \$2.60

LA 2003 The Cemetery as a Learning Resource, 5 p. Ideas for learning about a community's history and people. \$0.65

LA P212 Suggested Program for Remembrance Day, 2 p. A play for five or more students. Intermediate. \$0.35

LA P219 Earth Poster produced by the World Federalist Foundation – Our Planet. A 46 cm x 61 cm color poster of the earth. Suitable for classroom display. \$6

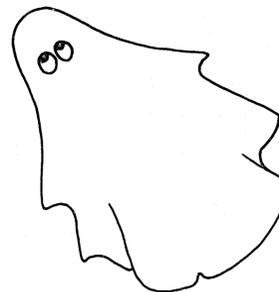
LA 9614 Let's have an Old-fashioned Christmas – Art Ideas for K-7, 92 p. Illustrated booklet of art ideas. \$7.90

LA 2510 Mid-winter Festivals and Concerts I produced by Performing Arts, Vancouver School Board, 25 p. Descriptions of multi-cultural holidays and customs including songs and plays. \$6

LA2511 Mid-winter Festivals and Concerts II produced by the Performing Arts, Vancouver School Board, 68 p. Includes multicultural new year celebrations and holiday songs. \$8.40

LA 2514 Chinese New Year, 50 p. A resource book of ideas and activities for the teacher who wishes to enrich social studies, language arts, music and art classes with a multicultural approach. Suitable for Grades 1 to 7. \$7.80

ANOTHER IN A SERIES OF TEACHER STORIES



2000

TEACHERS EXPLORE CURRICULUM-AND-ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK

Ungraded primary TAKE A CLOSER LOOK

by Gerry Lawrence

I have listened to my colleagues in B.C. debate the educational implications of the Royal Commission, especially ungraded primary. Having spent most of the past 20 years in elementary education in Alberta, I am concerned about the willingness of so many B.C. teachers to embrace the ungraded primary as a good thing without the degree of questioning and consideration that such a radical change to educational practice should command. I assure you I am well aware of the harsh realities of failure and competition that accompany the graded school. As an elementary principal, I had to work through the decision-making that led up to having a child repeat a grade, often helping excellent primary teachers cope with the stress and heart wrenching that accompanies such difficult decisions. It was also my job to work with those children, to try to get them past the *failure mentality* that often resulted. Sometimes failure was traumatic for all. Sometimes it worked.



Write to us...

The ministry's white paper, Year 2000: A Curriculum and Assessment Framework for The Future, may well be the most talked about education document this fall. As you discuss it with colleagues and respond to the proposals, you may also wish to write about issues, concerns, or elements you support. Teacher would welcome your ideas. Write to us, to the editor.

The arguments against grading, and failing, are all very real, educationally sound, child-centred, and highly motivating for those who endorse the concept of the ungraded primary. However, we must avoid taking such a novel and educationally promising idea and reducing it to this year's bandwagon by refusing to subject it to the scrutiny and critical review it deserves.

Consider for a moment the educational effect of grade promotion at the end of a school year. The bright student who is capable of achieving the grade expectations before the end of the school term needs enrichment. The weaker or disadvantaged student needs remediation and encouragement. The teacher who works with these two succeeds not only in meeting their individual needs, but also in closing the gap between them. The bright student stalls in his/her progress through the curriculum, but has time to pursue truly enriching ideas, assuming that the teacher has avoided the pitfalls of acceleration in favor of lateral program enrichment. The weaker student has time to master the material, time granted because the bright student, is pursuing the enrichment activities.

To be a successful teacher in this environment is not easy, and certainly not all primary teachers have what it takes to succeed. My own daughter did have such a teacher. That talented teacher enriched the bright and the head-starters, and remediated and motivated the less successful. She would be the first to say it was hard work that challenged her talents every day, but every parent of every child in her class would also say that their children learned and succeeded in meeting the grade expectations. My daughter also learned to have patience for the slower learner. Today, in junior secondary school, my daughter is still a willing tutor to other students, a trait she developed in the primary school. The slower learners developed the confidence to ask for help in an environment where the only *mistake* was to deny having difficulty.

Consider what the ungraded primary school will entail for every primary teacher as he/she attempts to implement the ungraded primary concept in the classroom, at least within the form suggested by converted colleagues.

Each pupil will present a varied profile of strengths and weaknesses, as they do now, but the teacher will be expected to continue to challenge those strengths while developing strategies to strengthen weaknesses.

Enrichment will be replaced by acceleration of progress through the curriculum. A child who is ready for the next level of learning moves on. A child who is not ready for the next level continues to work at his/her own rate.

With no need to hold the bright and catch up the slow, even larger ranges of performance levels will face the teacher assigned to the older primary children. Family groupings that attempt to group pupils performing at the same level will have large age ranges.

Native pupils, like all children whose cultural heritage and primary language differ from that of the English-speaking majority, will be left behind. Children who come to school primed on preschool and Kindergarten and *Sesame Street* and supportive English-speaking parents will succeed and be permitted to move on to higher levels of learning as they are ready. Without the need to hold these children in the same grade until the end of the year, the performance gap between them and less motivated or less able or ESL or culturally or socially deprived children will widen. The ultimate end of the ungraded primary will be a separation of students into a continuum of academic progress that will reflect the demographics of the social group rather than any indicator of intelligence. The resulting ghetto within the ungraded primary school will make slower students feel as insignificant and unsuccessful as failure has in the past.

I am told that native communities both in B.C. and in the Yukon, are endorsing the notion of the ungraded primary because it protects their children from the likelihood of failure that so often results when they are forced to compete with white students on white standards. I am surprised by this support because the ungraded primary will also say that it is all right for white students to get ahead of their native classmates because their performance on curricula designed for English-speaking children and taught in white-oriented schools will enable them to move more quickly through school. My experience teaching on an Indian reserve in Alberta was that the issue was not just that native children failed more often. It was also a political realization that 14-year-old natives were not at the same place as 14-year-old whites. The desire was for age-success equity, not just for an end to failure. That goal of equity could be a lot farther away after implementation of the ungraded primary than it is now. The Royal Commission also realizes that native children are at risk in existing schools, having recommended the "head start" of compensatory programs. How is that to be reconciled with the ungraded primary?

Unsuccessful experiments with individualized learning programs have met with a common end: teachers abandoned them because they could not keep up with the bookkeeping necessary to monitor the progress of every child. Such programs usually were used successfully with small groups of children and for selected units

or subjects and for specific periods of time. The teacher in the ungraded primary faces a demand to monitor, evaluate, and enrich every child's individual performance in every academic and social area every day of the year. That teacher will need to be continually designing, implementing, and evaluating teaching strategies and units of instruction. The philosophical mind-set necessary for successful implementation of the whole language concept will have to be applied by every teacher in every subject throughout the entire day.

The concept of ungraded schools is not new. The philosophy has been successfully applied to special education students who are mainstreamed. Special education students present wide ranges of performance levels, each of which can be met within specific subjects and levels, and with a variety of carefully selected teaching strategies and materials. The success of mainstreaming is documented but the very special challenges it poses for teachers are similar to the challenges teachers will face in the ungraded primary. The success of mainstreaming is no guarantee that the concept can be applied with equal success to all children. There is also the risk that special education children will be left even farther behind when their age-peers are permitted to learn and progress at a faster pace. We recognize in the mainstreaming concept that the special education child also needs to be placed with age-appropriate children so that his/her social progress can proceed naturally. Will the ungraded primary mean that the average child is denied the same consideration?

These and other challenges that the ungraded primary presents to teachers will require commitment to in-depth, on-going support and in-service education if the advantages of the concept are to be realized while the negative possibilities are avoided.

Do the parents of children yet to enter the primary school fully understand and support the concept of an ungraded primary? Without their support, the program faces reaction and dismantling, a process that would place children caught in the reaction in even greater turmoil.

In short, the ungraded primary is a novel and radical attempt to deal with the need to make primary education more effective and more successful in helping young children master the goals of education. It presents opportunities for avoiding the social and psychological trauma faced by children selected to fail. However, there are too many uncertainties that are not addressed to warrant a hurried implementation of the ungraded primary.

Gerry Lawrence is an elementary consultant with Alberta Education in Grande Prairie. He wrote this article following discussions with teachers pursuing graduate studies at the University of Victoria.

SPEAKING OUT

Yes



by Christine Zak

Until now, work-experience programs have been a regular part of the curriculum for only a minority of British Columbia's students, mainly those in career-preparation programs. I applaud the changes outlined in the *Year 2000* draft paper that will require all senior secondary students to complete a work-experience program before graduation. My experience as both a career-preparation teacher and a work-experience counsellor has convinced me that work experience is the only effective way to help students make a successful transition from school to work.

We have assumed that the transition from school to work (at all levels of education) is simple and natural and that any necessary learning could be absorbed vicariously. Yet even excellent classroom teachers, with a continuing interest in and knowledge of their subjects, cannot recreate the workplace for their students. The classroom is not the workplace, and students cannot possibly experience the day-to-day operations of business or industry in school.

Only work, works. Planned, guided, but realistic work experience greatly benefits students. First, they can explore their aptitudes and interests within a tentative career choice, using up-to-date equipment, concepts, and processes. They can interact with experienced personnel in their chosen field, an invaluable source of expertise and advice. This hands-on participation in entry-level positions, and exposure to typical career ladders and patterns of advancement, can confirm and stimulate a student's interest in a particular career. On the other hand, the experience may reveal that the choice is poor given the student's aptitudes and aspirations. In either case, work experience helps students make more informed career choices.

No



by Gary Robertson

The Year 2000: A Curriculum and Assessment Framework for the Future proposes programs for work experience within the "Graduation Program." The document states that "Some students will spend the majority of their program time learning at various work experience locations" while "all students (with the exception of some special needs students) will be required to complete at least four units (100 hours) of directed work experience."

For work-experience programs to be effective, at least the three following criteria must be observed:

1. The experience should be relevant to the curriculum and instruction.
2. There must be liaison between the workplace and the school.
3. Employers must be committed to the concept.

These three criteria cannot be assured if we are to place every student on work experience while they complete their two-year graduation program. Failure to meet the criteria will only result in a watering down of the present, positive, program and thus cause negative repercussions around any work-experience program.

Work experience should not be relegated to the free child labour of fast food outlets. To flood the workforce with free labour is to deprive our students of actual employment.

A restricted number of students benefit from a well-developed program of awareness through experiencing relevant jobs with specific employers. To mandate total involvement of all students and include those who have not chosen involvement is to ruin our credibility within the workplace and reduce employment opportunities.

Gary Robertson teaches in Victoria and is a member-at-large of the BCTF Executive Committee.

Wht in the wrld is WHMIS?

WHMIS (pronounced wim-is) is an acronym for *Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System*. WHMIS legislation, which came into effect on October 31, 1988, was written to ensure that Canadian workers have adequate information about the hazards of the materials they use on the job.

Exposure to hazardous materials can contribute to kidney and lung damage, cancer, burns, or dermatitis. Some materials can cause fires or explosions. The goal of the WHMIS system is to reduce the incidence of illnesses and injuries caused by hazardous materials in the workplace.

WHMIS identifies controlled products as those that present a hazard. Provincial legislation outlines the employer's responsibility to education:

1. Worker education on controlled products.
2. Workplace labelling and identification.
3. A material safety data sheet for each controlled product detailing the hazards, and precautionary and emergency information on that product. The data sheets are usually provided by the supplier of the product.

Implementation of a WHMIS program

While the program will vary from one workplace to the next, key elements are similar:

1. Assign responsibility for program implementation.
 2. Establish an inventory of controlled products.
 3. Ensure that WHMIS labelling and data sheets are in place.
 4. Determine the hazards of controlled products in your particular workplace.
 5. Establish workplace controls such as ventilation, protective equipment, and special handling procedures.
 6. Establish emergency procedures for first aid, evacuation, fire.
 7. Provide worker education.
 8. Review and upgrade the program.
- In schools, employees particularly affected by hazardous materials include custodians, secretaries, and teachers, especially art and industrial education specialists.

In many school districts, a WHMIS program is in full swing. The Ministry of Education has sent information about controlled products in the secondary school *Science Safety Resources Manual*. The Workers' Compensation Board Occupational Health and Safety Division staff are available to visit school districts and conduct WHMIS workshops for staff. Trail, Castlegar, and Delta have taken advantage of this resource. In the Vancouver district, industrial education and art teachers have participated in WHMIS education, and science teachers are the target group for the fall training.

If you encounter hazardous materials in your teaching environment, check out the WHMIS program in your district. If there is no program in place, contact your local association.

- Elaine Decker

Innovative B.C. computer teachers win \$5000 national awards



BLAST OFF WITH NASA! That's what students in Audrey Lundie's classes at Seaforth's Elementary School in Burnaby are doing as they access NASA's Spacelink electronic bulletin board. Through it, they can communicate with scientists and engineers in the Space Shuttle program.



WHERE'S THE PAINT? Students entering Tom Mah's classes at New Westminster Secondary School are surprised to learn that the paintbrush has been replaced with computer graphics tools.

ational recognition was bestowed on B.C. teachers whose innovative projects using information technology in the classroom were held up as models of educational leadership by Northern Telecom, Hewlett-Packard, and Esso Canada. Teachers Brent Cameron, Audrey Lundie, and Tom Mah each received a national award of \$5,000 out of a total of nine such awards given across Canada.

Tom Mah (New Westminster Secondary School, New Westminter) pioneered the first K-12 integrated computer art program in Canada through a joint venture with IBM Canada using Deluxe Paint II on the IBM PS/2.

Audrey Lundie, teacher-librarian (Seaforth Elementary School, Burnaby) connected her primary pupils to the NASA Space Center through NASA's electronic bulletin board "Spacelink."

Gerry Morgan (David Thompson Secondary School, Invermere) co-ordinated his students' production of *The Infinite Field Trip* database for Kootenay National Park using HyperCard and videodisc.

These teachers are among the 15 educators from B.C. invited to attend the national institute co-ordinated by the Canadian Centre for Creative Technology. The 15 were among 75 educators selected from 700 applications across Canada for an all-expense paid week long forum addressed by government, industry, and academic leaders. The forum enlisted educators in developing Canada's science-and-technology culture, thereby helping Canada to compete successfully in the global economy.

The other B.C. teachers selected were **Lorri Taylor** (Emily Carr Elementary School, Vancouver), **Paul Funk** (Pineridge Elementary School, Prince Rupert), **Peni Martel** (Cariboo Hill Secondary School, Burnaby), **Dan Marriott** (Emily Carr Elementary School, Vancouver), **Mike Silverton** (Rutherford Community School, Nanaimo), **Graeme Wilson** (Rosedale Secondary School, Rosedale), **Barry Simons** (Kent Elementary School, Agassiz), **Jim Wilson** (Lakes District Secondary School, Burns Lake), **Patrick Robertson** (Isabella Dicken Elementary School, Fernie), **Susan Slater** (Lochdale Community School, Burnaby), and **Keith Southworth** (Shuswap Secondary School, Salmon Arm).

Each of the \$5,000 national awards represent \$2,500 for the teacher and \$2,500 for his/her school, to further the innovations he/she has started.

The National Institute was held at the University of Calgary in August 1989 and focussed on the theme "Tools for the Class of 2000." It was co-ordinated by the Canadian Centre for Creative Technology (CCCT), a non-profit organization.

Source: Canadian Centre for Creative Technology.

by Robert Stewart

We are all in favor of education, but we take for granted the people who provide it. If our society cares about the future, it will resume giving teachers the support and credit they deserve...

Teaching is one of those things, like editing a newspaper or managing a baseball team, that everybody thinks he or she can do better than the experts. Everybody has taught something to somebody at one time or another, after all. We begin our amateur teaching careers as children by imposing our superior knowledge on our younger siblings and playmates. As students, we pass judgment among our peers on this or that teacher's capabilities. As adults, those of us who do not teach professionally stand ever ready to criticize those who do.

An educator himself, Bergen Evans once struck back at people who presume that any fool could be a teacher. Commenting on George Bernard Shaw's aphorism, "He who can does. He who cannot teaches," Evans wrote: "The common inference from this much quoted statement, that the teacher is a sort of failure in the world of action, greatly comforts anti-intellectuals. But almost all successful people of action (all of whom think they could be teachers if they turned aside to it) have proved failures as teachers." He did not document his information, but it rings true.

In any case, Shaw's quip does not stand up to logic. Teachers *can* do something, and *do* do something; they teach. Like any other professional activity, teaching requires a cultivated ability. To be done exceptionally well, it also requires a special talent and a sense of vocation. There are born teachers just as there are born politicians or born musicians.

Practised diligently by men and women of talent, teaching is as much an art as Shaw's metier of playwriting. The trouble from the teacher's point of view is that there are a lot more teachers than playwrights or people of action like generals or financiers. Education is one of our nation's biggest industries. Because of the sheer number of those who teach in schools, colleges, and universities, teachers have become part of the landscape. Like the familiar features of a landscape, they tend to be overlooked.

Teaching, as measured by its results, does not lend itself to a division between the big leagues and the bush leagues. Those results are the quality of the people teaching shapes.

Unlike sports, politics, entertainment, the arts, or the law, teaching does not give rise to "stars." Nobody ever got a Nobel Prize for teaching. True, many academics have come in for high honors, but always for something other than their work in the classroom: a book, an economic treatise, a ground-breaking scientific experiment.

School teachers, as opposed to university professors, are particularly under-recognized. Who is to say that a woman conducting a Kindergarten class is not contributing as much to society as the most degree-laden university president? She is molding a whole class of the type of responsible citizens upon whom the well-being of our society depends.

Teaching is a creative act, never more so than in primary and secondary

It was a wise mother who asked her young son after school not "What did you learn today?" but "What questions did you ask today?"

schools. Good teachers, like good artists, have their own individual styles of performing. They also respect the individuality of their students, realizing that everybody learns through his or her own perceptions. A teacher who was asked at the start of the term what his course matter would be said, "I don't know. I haven't seen my students yet."

It would be a wonderful world if every teacher deeply understood each and every child and put that understanding into effect, but that would be asking too much of humankind. Teachers can become tired and impatient and give up on troublesome or backward children. They have their personal prejudices, and they sometimes struggle with their own personalities to give every pupil the attention he or she requires.

The world would be equally wonderful if every youngster came to school to learn. There is an element of truth, however, to the old staffroom joke that for every one who wants to teach, there are 20 not

wanting to be taught. It is part of the challenge of teaching to bring promising students around to the point where they are willing and even eager to learn.

First-class teachers seek to ignite in their students an enthusiasm for their subjects by example and leadership. They are more than instructors; they are role models for students. "The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires," William Arthur Ward wrote.

Just what makes a first-class teacher has always been a matter of debate between educational liberals and conservatives. Even the traditional method of teaching by rote — spare not the rod and spoil not the child — has its supporters among parents who feel that permissiveness in the schools has gone too far. On the other hand, there seems to be general agreement that the traditional technique of making students learn by rote produces not rounded human beings but programmed automatons. An anonymous principal once warned his staff: "Don't think that the mind is a warehouse, and that you are here to stuff it full of goods."

A certain amount of didactic learning is necessary to show the student the way. "Some flabby persons try to make education painless," one-time teacher W.E. McNeill wrote. "Do not," they say, "ask students to learn facts, but teach them to think." O thinking — what intellectual crimes are committed in thy name! How can a person think if they don't know?"

At the same time, no one would dispute that the aim of education should be to produce individuals able to think for themselves and not merely follow what someone else has told them. And the way for teachers to accomplish this is to concentrate on what M.F. Ashley Montagu called "the drawing out, not the pumping in." Teaching should excite a youngster's natural curiosity. Instead of giving pat answers, it should raise questions. It was a wise mother who asked her young son after school not "what did you learn today?" but "what questions did you ask today?"

Robert Stewart is the editor of The Royal Bank Letter.

Reprinted from *The Royal Bank Letter*, Vol. 70, No. 5, September/October 1989. Submitted for publication by Owen Corcoran, Superintendent of Schools, Burns Lake.

The conclusion of this article will appear in the November/December issue of *Teacher*.

THE IMPORTANCE OF

Gender-equity environmental impact

by Jill Moss Greenberg

Jill Moss Greenberg, of the Maryland State Department of Education, developed a brief awareness activity to help teachers assess the gender-equity climate within their classrooms. She notes that it "lightheartedly applies the environmental impact statement concept to sex equity." Greenberg suggests that after duplicating the survey for workshop or school use, you may attach a gold legal seal to make it more visually attractive and authentic.

Area of concern
Gender equity in the school environment.

Impact-on-environment score
2 points for each area of full compliance
1 point for each area of partial compliance
0 points for each area of non-compliance

Points
— *Distribution of natural resources:* Expectations for girls and boys are equal. Talents, skills, and interests of all individuals are tapped equitably.

— *Traffic patterns:* All procedures and patterns, including seating, lines, activity areas, and academic and athletic groups, are integrated, gender-fair, and race-fair.

— *Noise control:* Girls and boys are talked to in the same manner and terms and are held to the same standards.

— *Air quality:* The "air is cleared" in the same way for all students. Discipline and penalties are equal. Acceptable behavior, language, and dress are non-discriminatory.

— *Materials:* All instructional materials are non-biased regarding sex, race, age, and handicap, and they reflect the diverse abilities, activities, and options of these groups.

— *Balance of elements:* No imbalance or selectivity exists in opportunities for boys and girls to perform classroom tasks; for example, running audio-visual equipment, washing utensils.

— *Landscape:* Bulletin boards, illustrations, and other visual materials show females and males of varied racial, ethnic, age, and handicapped groups in a variety of roles.

— *Language:* Verbal and non-verbal language and cues avoid stereotyped generalizations and demonstrate non-biased models; for example, firefighter, spouse, humanity.

— *Access:* Students have equal access to resources, facilities, and placement; for example, courses, extra-curricular activities.

— *Pollution-control efforts:* Affirmative action is regularly undertaken to compensate for (filter) the effects of past discrimination in particular areas; for example,

lack of experience/exposure to mechanical or nurturing skills.

Environmental rating
0-10 points: *serious polluter* — may require federal lawsuit.

11-15 points: *moderate offender* — keep improving. Submit new environmental-impact statement in 60 days.

16-20 points: *conservationist* — pass environmental quality control. Receive "equity commendation."

For more information or ideas on creating an equitable environment, call your local Status of Women contact person, or Phyllis Westhara, Status of Women Program co-ordinator, BCTE.

Source: Copyright 1982 Organization for Equal Education of the Sexes. Used by permission. Write to 808 Union Street, Brooklyn, NY 11215, USA, for the OSES catalog of posters and other educational materials on women's history, non-traditional careers, and dropout prevention.

Children's catalogue now available

The Canadian Book Information Centre's popular annual listing of new Canadian children's books, *Canadian Books for Children and Young Adults*, is now available. The catalogue provides a convenient listing of new children's books organized into subject categories, including: books for babies, fantasy and adventure, French-language, poetry and plays, nature and science, young adult titles, and more.

Free copies of the catalogue are available to librarians and educators on request at the Canadian Book Information Centre, 260 King Street East, 2nd floor, Toronto, ON M5A 1K3.

Health Hazards and the Visual Arts: an audio-visual kit and reference manuals

Progressive school boards, colleges, and educators everywhere are increasingly concerned about health hazards in the arts and crafts.

Many arts-and-crafts materials and processes are safe, but others are hazardous to the health of students, instructors, and shop technicians.

Health Hazards and the Visual Arts has been specially produced for school boards, school administrators, educators, and college-level students. The audio-visual component is designed to give an overview of potential health hazards in the arts and crafts so that intelligent and informed decisions can be made. The accompanying manuals contain a wealth of detailed information for further study, plus a comprehensive bibliography.

Contact Ontario Crafts Council, 35 McCaul Street, Toronto, ON M5T 1V7, for more information.

Canadian Teachers' Federation, new vocabulary of meetings publication

Buzz-session, motion to sustain the chair, background, keynoter, think paper, subsidiary motion, division was called... Meetings obviously have a vocabulary all their own.

In response to numerous information requests received over the years, the CTF linguistic services has developed a reference work, which it hopes will find a permanent home on the desks of all those in meetings, whether they conduct sessions, attend sessions, or draft minutes, in contexts where English and French are the working languages.

The publication is \$7 per copy; the cost covers mailing. Orders must be accompanied by a cheque made payable to the Canadian Teachers' Federation, 110 Argyle Avenue, Ottawa, ON K2P 1B4.

Is your child at risk?

The American Association for Counselling and Development has just released the book, *Youth at Risk: A Resource for Counsellors, Teachers, and Parents*, co-edited by Dave Capuzzi and Douglas R. Gross.

Characteristics for those who are at risk of dropping out:

- tardiness, absenteeism, truancy
- acting out
- lack of motivation, poor grades, low reading and math scores
- failing one or more grades
- lack of identification with school; boredom with school
- failure to see the relevance of education to life experiences
- rebellious attitude toward authority
- verbal and language deficiency
- inability to tolerate structured activities
- being one or more graduation credits behind one's age group
- having close friends whose attitudes and behaviors also indicate alienation from school.

Source: American Association for Counselling and Development, 5999 Stevenson Avenue, Alexandria, VA 22304.

Substitute teacher wins in court.

A substitute teacher took SD #72 (Campbell River) to small claims court because of being terminated unfairly from a job. The principal apparently had expressed some concern about the health record of the substitute and replaced the person with another substitute.

The judge ruled that there was an unspoken assumption that the substitute would continue to work until the regular teacher returned, and that the principal had acted unfairly.

The judge awarded the substitute teacher 15 days' pay in lieu of notice.

Surrey teachers win right to represent adult education instructors

The Surrey Teachers' Association has won the right to represent all instructors in Surrey's high school completion, adult literacy, and adult ESL programs.

A September 1, 1989 Industrial Relations Council decision, held that the group of about 90 adult education instructors teaching courses similar to the regular K-12 curriculum, whether or not certificated teachers, was an appropriate bargaining unit. As a result, STA becomes the certified representative of the instructors, who supported the union by a 90% margin.

IRC Vice-chair Richard Longpre did not rely on that decision, but held that this group of instructors had a clear community of interest among themselves which made them an appropriate bargaining unit to be represented by the STA. The IRC suggests that the units may eventually be merged by the bargaining process.

STA president Stewart Schon said that the local is preparing to bargain on behalf of the new members. "They supported us strongly in this organizing effort, and we want to show them that the improvements we can get make it all worth-while."

Copies of the two IRC decisions are available from the BCTF's Bargaining Division.

National student chess competition

Students in Grades 1-12 in every Canadian province will soon be registering for the GEMS Chess Challenge '90. Over \$47,000 was contributed to the 1989 GEMS Chess Challenge Hero, Theresa Hicks, a Canadian nurse working in Liberia. The money was used to help build a desperately needed sanitation system.

This year's hero is Mona Kelly, originally from New Brunswick, now dedicated to caring for the disadvantaged children in a Brazilian slum.

Every penny of the money raised through the GEMS Chess Challenge '90 will go to Mona Kelly's kids while the sponsor, Computer Connection generously funds the tournament costs.

The registration is January 31, 1990. Winners from school tournaments travel to regional and provincial competitions to select 120 lucky kids for the National finals in Ottawa next May.

For more information, contact Ben Wicks, 449-A Jarvis Street, Toronto, ON M4Y 2H2, phone (416) 967-0338, Fax (416) 967-5674.

Special environment award

A Ministry of Environment "Special Environment Award" will be given to students who display the best environment-related project at each of the 11 regional science fairs to be held in B.C. this fall.

Projects must relate to resource conservation, environmental quality, sustainable development, environmentally-safe technologies.

For further information, contact Marlene Miiller, Education Co-ordinator, Ministry of Environment, Public Affairs and Communications Branch, 810 Blanshard Street, Victoria, BC V8V 1X5, Telephone 387-9417.

Cool schools on the Sunshine Coast



Langdale Elementary School Principal Anne Skelcher watches as peer counsellors help friends with a problem.

all mediate the conflict together to improve their skills. Peer counsellors make referrals to the school counsellor.

Teachers and pupils respect the peer counsellors and feel positive about the problem-solving process. Here are some of their comments:

- "Langdale's problem-solving steps have helped me learn to deal with problems in my personal life. It eases tensions in the classroom and gives everyone a way to cope with anger." Grade 2-4 teacher.
- "Well, sometimes you don't want to talk to an adult. You can talk to peer counsellors. PCs are on the playground." Jasmine, Grade 4 pupil.
- "Peer counsellors help everybody's problems around the school. They always ask if they can help with a problem. When they help solve your problem, they always come back to see if it worked." Bobby, Grade 4 pupil.
- "What a weight off your shoulders. Because of the peer counselling and problem solving, all problems are dealt with using a consistent method. There is no confusion among students. This makes for a very good teaching situation." Grade 7 teacher.
- "I lived in Roberts Creek. When I came to Langdale School, peer counselling was new to me. I had to use it — but not much. When I walked around the school grounds, I saw problems being solved. It's like a miracle. Most of this problem solving is great!" Neil, Grade 7 peer counsellor in training.
- "I think peer counselling succeeds because most kids would rather deal with a PC than with a teacher. The problem-solving method is good because the two sides get to listen to each other and a solution is agreed upon." Christopher, Grade 7 pupil, peer counsellor.
- "Students arrive at their own conclusions instead of receiving pat answers; they will own what they have learned if it comes from within them." Grade 4 teacher.

facilitate problem solving rather than take the traditional, "I said so," stance. At times, teachers engaged in the process would like to revert to, "because I said so," but teachers have to make a philosophical shift to sharing power with students, not having power over them. This is not an overnight process.

Teachers and staff at Langdale school believe that the benefits to the school have been great. A class that has learned as a group to express conflicts positively will be more cohesive and co-operative. The children take responsibility for their behavior, for themselves, and for the environment in which they are working and learning. Classroom teachers used to spend much time and energy managing classroom and personal conflicts. The objective of the conflict-resolution curriculum is to learn new and better ways of responding to problems, to build positive relationships, to learn about ourselves and others. The curriculum is designed to help elementary pupils better understand and resolve conflicts they encounter in their lives, at school, in their community, and at home. We hope for a spill over to their country and to the world. Children learn not right or wrong answers, just different points of view.

Teachers in our district are already wondering what the impact will be and how the schools will be transformed, if use of the conflict-resolution school model grows. All I have heard is positive. Staff at Langdale Elementary School feel a shift, "a burden being lifted from their shoulders," as the responsibility for solving school conflicts moves from adults to children. Teachers can focus more on teaching than disciplining. Children have the tools. Teachers no longer need to have all the answers. Our experience at Langdale has taught us that children are far more creative with their solutions and plans to implement than school staffs are. The Sunshine Coast has "cool schools" — thanks to Langdale's initiative.

Langdale School's next step is co-operative learning as children have skills to function in such a model.

Fran Jovick is an elementary school counsellor in the Sunshine Coast School District and vice-president of the B.C. Teachers for Peace Education.

How it works

In elementary schools, children volunteer to be peer counsellors. They receive 25 hours' training from the elementary school counsellor or teachers who have been trained by the district elementary counsellor or the Justice Institute. Through role playing they gain first-hand experience in dealing with playground disputes. Training builds skills in active listening, problem solving, teamwork, assertiveness, open communication, and conflict management using the eight-step model.

All children in the school receive four hours' intensive training in anger management and conflict resolution in eight weekly sessions. Initially the elementary school counsellor does the classroom training, and the teachers learn from the counsellor. Teachers supplement the eight sessions by using the program to increase students' social skills (empathy, active listening, co-operation, etc.).

Peer counsellors work in teams at recess and lunch. Children may problem solve with the peer counsellor or with the adult who is on duty. Property disputes, not playing by rules, name calling, and gossip spreading are some of the issues the peer counsellors tackle. As the kids say, "We would rather work it out ourselves, not with the teacher or principal."

When the program began, many issues arose around trust, and students did a lot of testing. Some older students refused to problem solve, expecting the principal or teachers to continue to make rulings. They refused to take responsibility for their actions. In the past, such pupils, not liking the principal's or teacher's ruling, took revenge on the teachers or the school. This is disappearing! Teachers

THANKS TO MEDIATION

by Fran Jovick

Conflict resolution is key to the Global Studies Curriculum developed for the Sunshine Coast School District. To have a different world, children must have the tools for solving conflicts. They need to know that conflict, an inevitable part of living, offers an opportunity to engage in collaborative problem solving, that conflict is not a reason for hopelessness and aggression. Problem solving builds skills and self-esteem and leads to empowerment.

Langdale Elementary School sparked "cool schools" on the Sunshine Coast. The whole staff dared to imagine, to risk, to believe, and to work to help elementary school pupils mediate playground disputes. Teachers and administrative officers also employed mediation to settle conflicts they were having with pupils. The school counsellor and other staff members mediated disputes when the children's efforts did not produce a satisfactory resolution or when children felt they were too emotionally involved to be objective.

Pupils received 25 hours' training in communication skills, anger management, and conflict resolution. I used a combination of Dr. Trevor Cole's *Kids Helping Kids*, Dr. Rey Carr's *Peer Counselling Program*, BCTF Lesson Aid *Peer Conflict Resolution Through Creative Negotiations*, and the San Francisco Community Board's idea of using elementary school children as conflict managers on the playground.

All teachers and the administrative officers supported using peer counsellors as mediators of playground disputes. At that point, no one imagined the potential effects of the peer counselling program on the whole school community.

Three years later, Langdale Elementary School has replaced many of the traditional school discipline methods with an eight-step problem-solving model (adapted by the peer counsellors from a model used by adults). Students, teachers, AO, and counsellor mediate various situations. Only when a student is out of control is there direct intervention for safety. The participants may use the problem-solving model later to ensure that the individual student is again feeling positive. Three peer counsellors are on duty daily.

At first, teachers at Langdale saw the problem solving as something only pupils would do. Within months of initiating peer counselling, teachers were requesting in-service education for themselves and their classes. Through trial and error, we developed and implemented a program. The Langdale School program is now a model for other schools in the district.

Gibsons, Cedar Grove, Sechelt, and Roberts Creek elementary schools are at various stages of implementing a similar conflict resolution program.

Peer counsellors in action

Three Grade 5 pupils are fighting on a ball court because someone ran through a game. A bystander runs to get a peer counsellor. Immediately a Grade 7 peer counsellor wearing a red baseball cap with the letters PC on it, hurries over to ask if he can help settle the dispute. Peer counsellors always ask; they never tell.

The Grade 5s, after more heated discussion, decide that the peer counsellor can help, and they all go inside, away from the crowd. The peer counsellor asks them to abide by the ground rules: no interrupting, no name calling, no blaming, no put downs or rude gestures; agree to listen and problem solve.

The peer counsellor mediates the dispute using the eight-step model. All parties tell their side of the problem, brainstorm ideal solutions, and agree on a solution they can all live with. They agree that if the incident recurs, they will make an appointment to talk to the same peer counsellor. If the problem is something that a peer counsellor cannot handle, they will ask a staff member to help. Many times, the peer counsellor asks the school counsellor to help them



by Mike Grenby

Investing can be a taxing business

Choosing the right investment from the wide variety available is a challenge. And when you do make your decision, trying to pay as little tax as possible on your income and profits is equally daunting.

In my column in May's issue of *Teacher*, I touched briefly on the importance of both the tax aspects and the underlying qualities of any investment you consider.

When you realize how much income you have earned and how much tax has been withheld this year, it's easy to be tempted by those tax-shelter promotions that really come to life between now and the end of December.

Last chance to save tax for 1989! Claim \$20,000 in tax write-offs for a \$1,000 investment! Substantial tax savings — and we guarantee the return of your capital by the end of the fifth year! Some of these deals sound almost too good to be true, and they probably are.

Tax shelters look attractive because most teachers can put relatively little into an RRSP and the registered retirement savings plan is the only tax shelter most people should consider.

The more sophisticated and risky tax shelters offer tax breaks to attract investors, who otherwise wouldn't be prepared to take the risk. Although Ottawa has cracked down on many of the tax shelter approaches, promoters will always find a way to make an investment sound attractive.

Realize, first of all, that most tax shelters base their figures on somebody who is in the top tax bracket. If your taxable income this year will fall between \$27,804 and \$55,605, the projected tax savings will be less dramatic. And if your taxable income is below \$27,804, you should probably ignore the tax shelter completely.

The trouble with many tax shelters is that while you get a big refund immediately, any losses you might suffer won't surface until years from now. That's why it's so important to assess any underlying investment (whether or not it has tax-shelter features) and to ask questions like these:

- What will your out-of-pocket expenses be each year? This is particularly crucial if you borrow to make the investment. For example, if you deduct the \$1,000 interest you paid on your loan, you will get a tax refund of perhaps \$400. But the loan will still have cost you \$600.
- How much more money might you be required to invest in future? Such a *cash call* can come as an unpleasant surprise. The investors are called on to put up more cash to complete the project, for example, if they don't, they could lose much or all of their investment.
- What is your long-term bottom line likely to be? And how realistic are the projections? Is the investment overpriced because of the tax breaks?

Let's say you get \$10,000 in tax write-offs, saving you \$4,000 in tax. But your out-of-pocket investment totals \$15,000 over the years, and you eventually get back only \$10,000.

You will still be out \$1,000 (the \$5,000 loss reduced by the \$4,000 tax saving). In that case, you might have been better to forget the tax shelter and pay the \$4,000 tax.

As I said, tax shelters are popular because they offer immediate gratification in the form of tax savings. But \$1,000 saved today is rarely worth \$2,000 lost tomorrow.

• Can you sell your investment? Whether the tax shelter makes or loses money, you might want to sell it at some point. Make sure you can.

• Will tax-shelter losses result in an Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) or Cumulative Net Investment Losses (CNIL) bill? These could cost you much, if not all, of your tax savings. Call Revenue Canada or a major accounting firm for literature spelling out the effects of AMT and CNIL.

Read the prospectus carefully. And always get expert advice. The promoter will point out the rewards. You need an unbiased person to point out the risks. Then you can decide.

Of course, nothing ventured, nothing gained. You won't get rich investing all your money in term deposits. The people who make profits on their investments are prepared to take risks. Just be sure you feel comfortable with the risks and with the percentage of your assets at risk.

Here are some other points to consider when you invest:

• Dividend income (typically from preferred and some common stocks) are taxed at a lower rate than is interest. Earning \$8 in dividends leaves you the same money in your pocket after tax as earning \$10 in interest. So a stock with an 8% dividend gives you as much after-tax income as a bond (term deposit, GIC, treasury bill, etc.) paying 10% interest. Use that 25% calculation to compare net yields for other dividend and interest figures.

• Invest for capital gains. Buy stocks for \$10,000, sell them for \$14,000 and make a \$4,000 profit (capital gain). Buy a rental property for \$80,000, sell it for \$95,000 and make a \$15,000 capital gain. Under present rules, your profit will be tax free because you may claim the lifetime \$100,000 capital gains deduction.

• Pay off non-deductible debts. If you have a \$10,000 deposit yielding 10%, you will earn \$1,000 interest, pay perhaps \$400 tax, and have \$600 left.

If you have a \$10,000 debt costing 13%, you will pay \$1,300 interest. So you will lose \$700 (the \$1,300 interest cost minus your \$600 after-tax interest income).

But look what happens if you use your \$10,000 deposit to pay off your \$10,000 loan. Because your deposit is gone, you pay no tax. And because the loan is gone, you pay no interest. You have no profit and no loss — which is certainly better than having a \$700 loss.

• Consider ethical investments. Depending on your values, you might invest in the stocks of companies that contribute to rather than detract from the well-being of society and the world in general. Or you could buy one of the several mutual funds that choose such stocks. The guidelines for what is *ethical* vary, so review them. Several ethical funds and companies have performed well — and you get the same tax advantages on their dividends and capital gains.

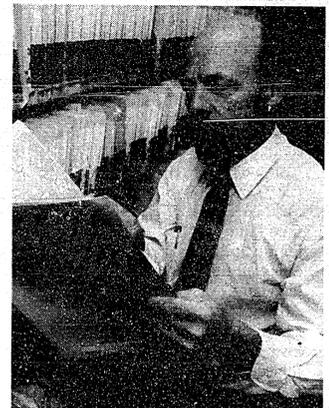
Mike Grenby writes a nationally syndicated "money" column and is an independent personal financial adviser associated with The James E. Rogers Group, Vancouver.

If you have a question about your personal finances — debt, saving, investment, banking, insurance, retirement, etc. — please write to Mike Grenby, c/o Teacher, B.C. Teachers' Federation, 2235 Burrard Street, Vancouver, BC V6J 3H9. Mike cannot reply individually, but will answer as many questions as possible in this column.

Retirement-Planning Seminars

Knowledge of your pension plan, other retirement benefits, and what retirement life is like, will better prepare you for the transition. Seminars to assist teachers and their spouses, in their mid-40s or over, plan for retirement will be held in the following locations. No pre-registration or fee is required.

- Vernon, October 28, 1989
- Village Green Inn, 09:00 - 16:00
- Fort Nelson, November 16, 1989
- Location TBA, 16:00 - 21:30
- Dawson Creek, November 18, 1989
- George Dawson Inn, 09:00 - 16:00
- Penticton, December 2, 1989
- Lakeside Resort, 09:00 - 16:00
- Burns Lake, December 7, 1989
- Bulkley Valley Regional District Office, 16:00 - 21:30
- Prince George, December 9, 1989
- Inn of the North, 09:00 - 16:00
- Sechelt, January 18, 1990
- Driftwood Inn, 16:00 - 21:30
- Powell River, January 19/20, 1990
- Inn at Westview, 19th 19:30 - 21:30
- 20th 09:00 - 13:00
- Vancouver, February 3, 1990
- Sheraton Plaza 500, 09:00 - 16:00
- Surrey, February 10, 1990
- Surrey Inn, 09:00 - 16:00
- Coquitlam, February 17, 1990
- Best Western, 09:00 - 16:00
- Richmond, March 3, 1990
- Delta River Inn, 09:00 - 16:00
- Kamloops, March 10, 1990
- Coast Canadian Inn, 09:00 - 16:00
- Victoria, April 7, 1990
- Harbour Towers, 09:00 - 16:00



Ken Smith, BCTF pensions co-ordinator, leads retirement-planning seminars with retired teachers at various locations during the fall. He's the person to call regarding questions on pensions. Tim Pelling photo.



College of Teachers

Deputy Registrar appointed

Marie Kerchum has been appointed deputy registrar of the College of Teachers, effective September 1, 1989.

Kerchum goes to the college from Vancouver Community College, where she was most recently administrative manager of the King Edward Campus. Previously, she served as an executive assistant - instructor, and as an academic counselor with Vancouver Community College. Kerchum also taught French as the second language in the Langley and Coquitlam school districts. She has a master's degree in educational administration from the University of British Columbia.

She will be assuming primary responsibility for teacher certification and the Qualifications Committee. She will be acting registrar in any absence of Doug Smart, the registrar.

College Election

Ballots will be mailed from the college October 30 to those zones holding an election. Completed ballots must be received in the college office by November 28 at 17:00.

Teachers' Deaths

Name	Died
Nellie Bailey	June 19, 1989
Marion Barrie	June 2, 1989
Emmie Brooks	July 14, 1989
Phyllis Clement (Cawley)	June 30, 1989
Frances Coulter	June 8, 1989
Herbert Draper	June 25, 1989
Kathleen Elliott	June 12, 1989
Katherine Ann Elliott	June 24, 1989
Ivan Findlay	May 8, 1989
Alice Geddes (McKinley)	April 1989
Melinda Govier	June 3, 1989
David Innes	August 2, 1989
John Ivanisko	April 21, 1989
Georgia Knox (Peden)	February 9, 1989
Jean Lane (Kos)	May 17, 1989
Arleigh Martin (Wallace)	July 24, 1989
Margaret McDonald	June 26, 1989
Elsie Miles	July 3, 1989
James Morrison	July 25, 1989
Harry Myers	July 27, 1989
Agnes Payne (Hopkins)	April 16, 1989
Frederick Reed	July 30, 1989
Margaret Reedman (Scott)	June 30, 1989
Margaret Robinson (Purdy)	June 27, 1989
William Seaton	May 8, 1989
Mildred Seymour	July 27, 1989
Gail Anne Smythe (Stewart)	May 26, 1989
Norman Thomson	August 6, 1989
Lona Waddington	July 17, 1989

Last taught in
South Okanagan
Nanaimo
Vancouver
Campbell River
Cowichan
Maple Ridge
Vancouver
Peace River North
Vancouver
North Vancouver
New Westminster
Vancouver
Fernie
Vancouver
Maple Ridge
Richmond
Vancouver
Cowichan
Victoria
Vancouver
Sooke
Alberni
Salmon Arm
Vancouver
Vernon
Gulf Islands
Surrey
Vancouver
Vancouver

PD Calendar

NOVEMBER

November 16-18
B.C. Association of School Psychologists' fall conference, Sheraton Plaza 500, Vancouver. Contact Barbara Holmes, c/o 14225 56th Avenue, Surrey, BC V3W 1H9, H: 222-0839, O: 596-7733.

November 16-19
Enhancing School Quality - Theory into Practice, an international educational conference on schools as centers of change, teacher as researcher, quality school districts, school improvement, etc., Four Seasons Hotel, Vancouver. Contact Enhancing School Quality, c/o Delta School District, 4629 51st Street, Delta, BC V4K 2V9, 946-4101, Fax: 946-3910.

November 17-18
Conference of the Association for Educators of Gifted, Talented, and Creative Children in B.C., "Spearheading Critical Thinking Across the Curriculum" Hotel Vancouver. Contact David Halme, H: 748-1955, S: 749-6634.

November 24-25
Pacific Rim Symposium to assist teachers and educators interested in Pac-Rim programs for their schools and districts. Sponsored by Canadian Cultural Exchange Society, UBC Asian Centre, Contact 526-3111.

November 24-26 OTTAWA
Canadian Council for Multicultural and Intercultural Education's fourth national conference on multicultural, intercultural, and race-relations education, "Taking Ownership," Congress Centre, Ottawa, Ontario. Contact CCME/CCEMI, 252 Bloor Street West, Suite 8-200, Toronto, ON M5S 1V5, (416) 966-3162.

November 27-29; November 30-December 2
Skills for Adolescence Workshops, Prince George. Contact Michael Wilson, 964-7956, Thomas Sawtell, 562-2131 (204), or Carolyn Aney, 563-9206.

1990

JANUARY

January 20
"Winter Wing Ding" of the B.C. Orff Chapter. A pot pourri of sessions on recorder, Dalcroze, and orchestration for Orff instruments. Contact Ann Golden Fisher, 517 Allen Drive, Delta, BC V4M 3B9, 943-3990, or Joe Berarducci, 987-3577.

January 25-27
Association of B.C. Drama Educators conference, "Starting Blocks," Sheraton Landmark Hotel, Vancouver. Hosted by Coquitlam Drama Teachers' Association. Contact Wayne Coulson, (H) 656-6781 or (S) 565-1129.

January 26-27
B.C. Alternate Education Association conference, Keith Lynn Alternate Secondary School (KLASS), North Vancouver. Contact Mike Kiss, 225 West Balmoral Road, West Vancouver, BC V7N 2T6, H: 988-9678, S: 988-5711.

FEBRUARY

February 15-20 COLORADO
Eighth Annual Residential Outdoor/Environmental Education Conference, "Today's Reality/Tomorrow's Dream," Bailey, Colorado. For information on pre-conference meeting (Outdoor Education Consortium), field trips, and winter recreation, as well as the conference itself, contact Leonard Nelson, Windy Peak Outdoor Education Laboratory School, Box 435, Bailey, CO 80421.

February 16-17
"In the Mind's Eye," B.C. Art Teachers' Association annual conference, Burnaby Central Secondary School. Contact John White, c/o 5325 Kincaid Street, Burnaby, BC V5G 1W2, 299-0611.

February 16-17
Association of Canadian Teachers of the Hearing Impaired annual conference, Victoria Conference Centre. Contact Suzanne Bancroft, c/o Uplands School, 3461 Henderson Road, Victoria, BC V8P 5A8.

MARCH
March 1-3
Special Education Association conference, Victoria Conference Centre, Victoria. Contact Dennis Brammer, 40 King George Terrace, Victoria, BC V8S 2J9, H: 592-0425, S: 385-5774.

March 15-17 CALGARY
Vistas: Windows for Change; Connection, Integration, Transition; ATACC '90, 8th Annual Conference of the Alberta Teachers' Association Computer Council, Palliser Hotel, Calgary. Contact Alan Howard, Haysboro School, 1123 87th Avenue S.W., Calgary, AB T2V 0W2, H: (403) 240-4334, S: (403) 259-5000.

APRIL

April 26-27
B.C. School Counsellors' Association conference, Kelowna. Contact Fred Gubbels, Wallace Hill Road, RR3, Kelowna, BC V1Y 7R2, H: 764-7538, S: 860-4526.

April 27-28
Catalyst '90 Conference, "Science in the Year 2000," sponsored by B.C. Science Teachers' Association and Faculty of Science, Simon Fraser University, at SFU. Contact Lon Mandrake, 8526 117B Street, Delta, BC V4C 6G2, H: 591-5839, S: 591-6166.

MAY

May 25-27
14th Annual B.C. Conference on the Teaching of Physical Education, University of Victoria. \$85.

JUNE

June 14-17 OTTAWA
Canadian Library Association conference. Contact Jane Cooney, CLA, 602-200 Elgin Street, Ottawa, ON V2P 1L5, (613) 232-9625, FAX (613) 563-9895, Envoy 100 CLAHQ.

SUMMER SEMINARS
Inter-European Educator Seminars (IEES)
July 5-21, The Alps
July 15-29, Cultures of Central Europe
July 29-August 12, Eastern Central Europe
July 8-26, The Low Countries
July 14-29, Switzerland and Southern Germany
July 9-27, Southern Germany and Austria
July 6-21, Berlin, Prague, and Two Germanies
August 5-18, Nordic Seminar
Price range: \$900-\$1300 (plus airfare). Contact Jean Peachman, co-ordinator of teacher exchanges, Ministry of Education, phone, 356-2454, Fax 356-2504.

1991

NOVEMBER

National Science Teachers' Association regional conference, Vancouver Hilton and Hyatt Regency hotels. Contact Lon Mandrake, 8526 117B Street, Delta, BC V4C 6G2, H: 591-5839, S: 591-6166.

Compiled by Debby Stagg, PSA Services Co-ordinator, Professional Development Division.

Do's and don'ts in promoting thinking skills

by Robin Burgess and Julia Gowan

Do get students involved through writing, discussion, decision making, problem-solving.

Don't let students be passive observers and/or receivers of information.

Do get students to clarify their thoughts and opinions by writing them down.

Don't insist on students' copying pages and pages of notes from the board.

Do encourage students to find the information needed to make decisions; provide initial information to get started.

Don't spoon-feed the information in pre-packaged units that require nothing of the student but regurgitation.

Do adjust teaching style to suit the needs of the students.

Don't use only the style with which you are most comfortable in spite of differences among students.

Do use strengths of some students to help those less able.

Don't assume that all students are equally able to assimilate information in the same way and at the same rate.

Do provide opportunities in evaluation for students to demonstrate decision-making/problem-solving techniques.

Don't test only objectively, requiring only factual recall.

Do give the students ownership of the problem/process/results.

Don't keep the lesson teacher-oriented, teacher-focussed.

Do work the students' personal experiences of life into the material to be covered.

Don't separate the learning from life experiences.

Burgess and Gowan developed these statements while at the 1987 Social Studies Summer Institute at Simon Fraser University.

Reprinted from the B.C. Social Studies Teachers' Association journal, *Horizon*, 27:2.

TRY test answers

From page 5

If you correctly answer: 12 or more questions, you are very well informed; 6 or more, you show an average awareness of drug use in our society; 5 or less, you are blissfully unaware and we hope you've learned something.

1. Alcohol. It's not surprising that the most readily available and most socially acceptable drug is also the most abused.

2. (d) Alcohol abuse costs Canadians \$2.5 billion in reduced labour productivity. The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) estimates that 17% of the B.C. workforce who consume alcohol are in danger of developing a dependency. Compared to the non-abuser, the typical abuser is 3-8 times more likely to miss work, up to 5 times more likely to file a

WCB claim, and 3 times more likely to incur sick benefit costs.

3. (a) British Columbians have the highest consumption of absolute alcohol - 9.05 litres per year compared to the Canadian average of 7.79 litres and the American average of 7.95 litres. British Columbia has a higher alcohol consumption than 40 U.S. States.

4. (b) The average age at which people first drink is 14. Twenty years ago the average age was 18. This means that alcoholism has the potential to develop at an earlier age. It is estimated that 521,000 British Columbians risk health damage due to excessive drinking.

5. (c) Approximately 24% of adolescent students report being drunk in the past month. Sixty percent surveyed used alcohol in the past 4 weeks; 1 in 5 reported weekly use. (Note: Study did not include teenagers no longer in the public education system.)

6. (c) Approximately 29% of students report their parents do not know how much they (the student) drink. Approximately 40% of adolescent students claim to have been on a drinking spree at least once in their lives. Almost 75% of students claim to drink at parties when adults are not present and 26.6% claim to drink in cars or while driving around at night.

7. (a) As little as .01. Even low levels of alcohol consumption can affect a person's driving skills. The amount required varies according to body weight, fat level, stomach contents, etc. It is illegal to drive while impaired and one can be charged with impairment even with a low blood alcohol level. (Note: Impairment can also occur with many drugs such as antihistamines, cold treatments, and tranquilizers.)

8. (d) Over 7,000 traffic injuries are attributed to drinking and driving. At least 50% of hospital emergency admissions are alcohol-related. In 1986/87, some \$336.4 million or 10% of the Ministry of Health's budget was spent on alcohol-related health care in B.C. (Alcohol may be said to take the lives of over 18,000 Canadians each year - the equivalent of a 747 aircraft crashing every 8 days.)

9. (d) According to a Vancouver health study estimate, the cost to British Columbians each year to deal with the negative effects of alcohol use is over \$2 billion or approximately 5 times what is earned through liquor sales.

10. (b) Just under 12% of B.C. adults have used cocaine at least once. The average user profile is male, 20-40 years, with middle- to high-range income. Cocaine use, whether snorted, smoked, or injected, is on the rise. "Crack Cocaine" with its instant and intense high, is expected to have a dramatic impact on usage statistics within the province.

11. (c) Approximately 78% of first time cocaine users will be drawn to use the drug again.

12. (b) Thirty percent of the students surveyed used cannabis in the past 12 months (19.3% in the past month); only 28.5% of students claimed to have smoked tobacco in the same 12-month period.

13. (a) Twelve years old. Not only is the average age of first time users younger than it was 20 years ago, the frequency of use due to greater availability has increased, and the cannabis itself has now become more potent, containing many more times the amount of the active agent THC than in the past.

14. (d) About 20% of Grade 12 students report hallucinogenic use in the past year. Overall, 14.2% of adolescents claim to have used hallucinogens.

15. (c) Just over 15% of the adolescents surveyed used barbiturates or tranquilizers, with slightly higher female use than male.

NEW FROM PEGUIS THE LEARNERS' WAY



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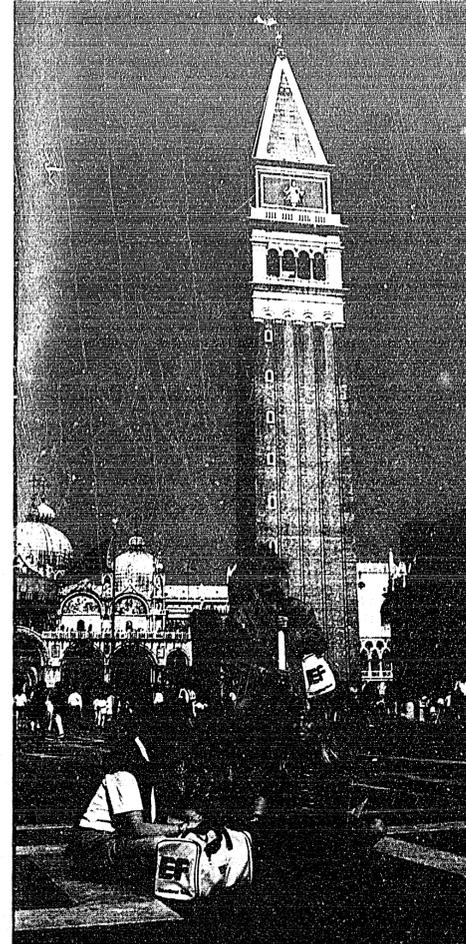
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Reflections of a primary teacher

FAMILY GROUPING IN ACTION



Across B.C., primary teachers like Mary-Eileen Johnson (above), are taking initial steps in implementing the new primary program. Her story is their story.

by Mary-Eileen Johnson

Tuesday, September 5, 1989

Today was the first day of school with the new primary program. I have 26 children in what used to be called Grades 1, 2, 3. At the end of a very long day, all I can say is, "What have I gotten myself into?" It seemed so clear on paper and in theory, but, looking at those faces, I wonder, how I am going to make this work.

Wednesday, September 6

Today was even longer than yesterday. The whole task seems monumental. How am I ever going to organize things so that all children are constructively using their time? Right now, it seems, someone is always waiting for my attention.

Math, the one area that does not integrate easily into a theme, worries me. The Year 2s (Grade 1) are such a mixed group that I should be three people to work with them. The same is true of my Year 4s, though my Year 3s seem to be ready for similar work. I feel as if I'm in a three-ring circus; I'm the clown in the middle.

The older children are standing back, not mixing with the others.

I am honestly worn out and this is only the second day of school. I think I'm too old for this. Age is one of the factors I neglected to consider when I thought of taking on a multigrade class.

Thursday, September 7

I feel better already. I'm not alone! The other teachers all admit to having felt distressed, the end of their ropes, last night.

When the class was doing some quick mental computation today, the first answers most often came from my younger students. Interesting!

During writing time, not one child refrains from writing or complains that he/she can't write. All write something. This is so different from my Grade 1 class this time last year. Must be the power of modelling.

Friday, September 8

I moved the children into groups of three with mixed ages in each group. The noise level dropped immediately. Some of the younger children looked stricken, while some of the older ones sulked. I'm really worried about the older students. They seem to view being in this class as "not cool."

I started six of the best readers on individual projects today.

We worked on another poem together. Is the pace too slow for the older children? Too fast for the younger ones? I'm surprised at how well they keep up.

I gave the Year 3 and 4 children a review sheet on addition and subtraction facts to 10 while I worked at the board with the Year 2 children. One Year 2 child asked if she could do the paper. She was one of the few to get it all right, and she completed it in about two minutes. I can see her fitting in and out of work with older children. I guess that's what it's all about.

Monday, September 11

Week Two. Here we go! I began to think that I was losing track of my theme last week, so I'm trying to refocus.

The children worked more co-operatively in small groups. I think the barriers are coming down.

Tuesday, September 12

The other teachers and I had our first planning sessions today. We discussed integration and topics in social studies. We'll have to ensure that some themes are social studies/science oriented rather than literature-based. If we broaden the themes and make them revolve around global concerns, we probably have a better chance of making them truly relevant.

Wednesday, September 13

The class is beginning to pull together. Thank God! They are a great group of kids. I just have to foster an accepting environment and promote collaboration. That sounds so easy and so obvious; yet it must remain a conscious priority.

The problem-solving abilities of some of the younger children is truly amazing. Only now, with this multi age class am I becoming aware of that. I don't know, for instance, whether I would have asked a class of six-year-olds if they could tell me what one half of 26 is. Yet, why not?

Thursday, September 14

Great day today. We read *Someday*, by Charlotte Zolotow, and then clustered ideas for things we would like to do someday. After we had shared our ideas, one of the younger children said, "That was fun!" because the children at his table had helped him print words. This is getting exciting!

We worked on the evaluation workshop for tomorrow. I think we all have hundreds of questions about evaluation. How can I manage to document the program of 26 children? (Organizational problem.) How can I clearly explain their progress to their parents? (Communication problem.) How can I reassure myself that I am cognizant of how each child is doing across the curriculum? (Immediate problem.) How can we most effectively use the program's learning descriptors? How are we going to put all of this into a report card? I could go on and on, but there is little point in promoting panic here.

I am using an "at-a-glance" folder. I can see right away which children I must consciously focus on. I am also consciously collecting work samples for each child.

I need to *know* that I know how each child is doing.

Monday, September 18

It's hard to believe but this is Week Three. I am beginning to relax with the program. I appreciate the greater flexibility though it's sometimes intimidating.

Once in a while, I catch myself slipping back to old ways of looking at things, particularly as they pertain to time. I was wondering whether I'd complete certain units by Christmas.

I'll probably zig-zag through this year: move ahead, slip back, move ahead.

Tuesday, September 19

Math is going much better, though I'm still finding it a lot of preparation. I'm doing problem-solving with the whole class, which is working well, and then I group them for centre work. At this moment, the centres and materials overlap, but later there will be different materials and very different topics. I'm still experimenting.

Wednesday, September 20

In math today we were making up story problems orally and practising writing the appropriate equations. We acted them out and had fun with them. I explained that we needed some problems written down so that we could act them out tomorrow and asked for volunteers to make some up and write them for us. *Math Quest 5* suggests this activity, but most of my volunteers were Year 2 and 3. I was very surprised.

In the past, I would not have attempted such an activity with Grade 1 children, especially in September. They continue to amaze me.

Two Year 2 girls were copying words they liked from a picture dictionary. One of my Year 4 boys at that table leaned over and said, "I think you're too young to be using a dictionary." The girls just ignored him. That he frequently looks things up in the dictionary probably prompted *them* to get a dictionary.

The younger students obviously benefit, but what about the older ones? The older ones have been working on projects related to books they are reading. They are enjoying presenting them to the class.

Thursday, September 21

Started more children on individual books today. We had a very productive day, with a lot of collaboration going on. Terrific! I am looking forward to tomorrow.

Mary-Eileen Johnson teaches primary at Highland Park Elementary School, Armstrong. Teacher wishes to thank her for her journal reflections recorded during the first few weeks of school this year.

Remembrance Day

by Dan Blake

Remembrance Day will soon be upon us and if you are like me, you will be wondering how to go about trying something different this year. I strongly recommend some films I saw recently.

The first film, *Bombs Away*, was directed by local filmmaker Peg Campbell. She remarks, "It was very important to me in making *Bombs Away* to acknowledge this fear [of nuclear war] and to point out the sanity of their [children's] concerns. My challenge was to make a film that would not perpetuate or cause

fear but would empower children to effect change."

The story is told through the eyes of Lian, a 12-year-old girl in a fictitious Vancouver family. The time is shortly before the annual Vancouver Peace March. Initially Lian is preoccupied with becoming a disc jockey at a school dance. However, as a result of coaxing from an older neighborhood friend, discussion at school, and news reports on television, Lian is convinced of the importance of doing something concrete. She agrees to go on the Peace Walk and throws herself enthusiastically into the making of banners. Toward the end of the film, we see Lian, her younger sister, mom, dad, and friend

passing out banners as they get ready to join the march. The film concludes with a shot of the march crossing Burrard Bridge. One of the two banners prominently displayed is that of the BCTF.

In an important subplot, an intense rivalry between Lian and a boy in her class is resolved. The film demonstrates that resolving conflict begins at home and at school.

Campbell notes, "The ability to resolve conflict on a personal level is crucial to solving larger global problems."

The film is for use with 9- to 13-year-olds. It is available on video and can be borrowed from the National Film Board.

The second film, *Oh Dad*, is a short (3:40) animation film. Although it is very different in style and approach from *Bombs Away*, it is appropriate for discussing peace. It also makes a compelling case

for adults, parents as well as teachers, to listen to children's concerns. If you decide to use this film, ensure that your students are watching and listening from the start. The film jumps right into the topic. The film is a dialogue (of sorts) between a father and son regarding star wars. The father seems very patronizing. In exasperation, and almost at the end of the film, the son asserts, "I do have the right to feel and think the way I do."

This film is for junior and senior secondary students. Available on 16 mm only, it can be borrowed from Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre in Vancouver, 684-3014.

I also recommend *Conditions*, shot in Vancouver. It is also available from Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre.

Dan Blake teaches English at North Surrey Secondary School, Surrey.