the B.C. Teacher

October/November 1987 Volume 67 Number 1

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Cover
Our thanks to teachers in staff development workshops at Caulfield Elementary School, West Vancouver, and at the North Vancouver Curriculum Services Centre. (Vera Turnbull, photographer)

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Editor's Note

This fall of '87 may set records in time and energy B.C. teachers have donated in support of their organization. The demands for meeting, training, and decision-making as we work to recreate a united, strong BCTF have rarely been surpassed in our history. And of course all of this has been in addition to the daily professional challenges of teaching, preparing, marking, counselling, and caring for our students.

Such volunteer effort has always been the backbone of the federation. Often assumed. Too rarely thanked. But deserving of all our appreciation.

The B.C. Teacher embodies this co-operative volunteer effort. Its production, from rough draft to printed page, is the result of many willing hours of writing, revising, reviewing, and proofing given by your colleagues and PD staff.

For example, in creating this issue on staff development, we sent calls out to teachers and university faculty to write on various aspects of the theme. Despite the extraordinary circumstances of the day, many said, "Yes, I'll make the time to write about that." Some willingly stole precious minutes from a hectic school start up to be interviewed for John Hardy's article or to write on special programs, as did Trevor Cole and Scott Ritter.

The editorial board (Jim O'Connell, Geoff Hargreaves, and Don Olds) reviewed manuscripts between organizing new classes, assessing students, and marking papers. Vera Turnbull, a retired Burnaby teacher and professional photographer, spent a good part of a week sitting in on PD activities in West Vancouver and North Vancouver and in a variety of classrooms and school yards in search of perfect photographs. They all deserve our appreciation for their dedicated work on behalf of all of us.

As school staffs turn to planning and directing their own school-based PD this year, we hope that this issue sparks a new idea or prompts some worth-while activity. It may also remind you of programs, themes, or exciting directions you have tried.

If you too have a story untold, an article to volunteer, we would be grateful to hear from you. It's an opportunity to share your good ideas with approximately 35,000 others.

We look forward to receiving your manuscripts.

In appreciation,
Nancy Hinds (formerly Flodin),
Editor

Opinion

"Will the College of Teachers take away BCTF professional development programs and services? If I vote for certification, does that mean we won't have PSAs anymore?"

On April 2, our teaching lives were forcibly changed by the introduction of *The Teaching Profession Act* (Bill 20). Since that day, many of you have worried that that bill, which created the College of Teachers, would jettison our traditional professional development programs and services. Some of you have worried that the decision to seek union status sounds the death knell for BCTF professional development, because you perceive that Pro-D and unionism are somehow mutually exclusive. Au contraire! Professional autonomy and teacher-determined and -designed professional development programs can best be attained through collective, unified action.

Teachers in meeting upon meeting, this fall, have reaffirmed their commitment to advance professionalism through the best route open to them: the pursuit of union status. Our historic Special General Meeting in October underscored those sentiments. The B.C. Teachers' Federation will move toward its goals: "a BCTF consisting of certified locals in every school district in the province," and a BCTF that "continues to develop and offer programs of professional development for teachers."

We are building on a history of commitment to professional development. Two years ago, in one of the most comprehensive exercises ever embarked upon by our federation, we analyzed the question of what kind of regime would best serve our professional and economic interests. That analysis produced the *Bargaining and Professional Rights Task Force Report*, which received overwhelming support, from the 1986 AGM and from members in the subsequent province-wide vote. That report, summarized, in part, below, illustrates how inextricably our bargaining rights are bound to our professional responsibilities.

As educators, we are responsible for providing the best instruction and the finest teaching that can be expected of professionally trained and experienced people. By the very nature of that responsibility, we are expected to exercise independent judgment and to assess needs, plan programs, and deliver the widest range of instructional services. We operate in a discipline that researches, develops theoretically, and values the co-operation and judgments of colleagues. Teachers have *professional responsibilities*.

But teaching takes place in an employment relationship. Teachers are not self-employed, as are some other professionals. They do not set fees, select clients, or operate outside of an organized employment structure. Teachers' commitment to a system of public education necessarily assumes that teachers are, and should be, employees of a public that values the education of its young people. The economic welfare of teachers, their conditions of work, and their rights as employees are inevitably dealt with in the framework of that employment relationship, which is why we require the comfort and security of strong contract language to protect our rights as employees and as educators.

Other professionals who, like teachers, practise their skills in an employer-employee context, have for some time had legal access to full employee bargaining rights, have exercised those rights, and have maintained and enhanced their professionalism. B.C. nurses and college instructors and teachers in other provinces are just a few examples. Employed professionals in many fields have used full collective bargaining in a manner that has benefited their interests as employees and has increased their ability to deliver professional services.

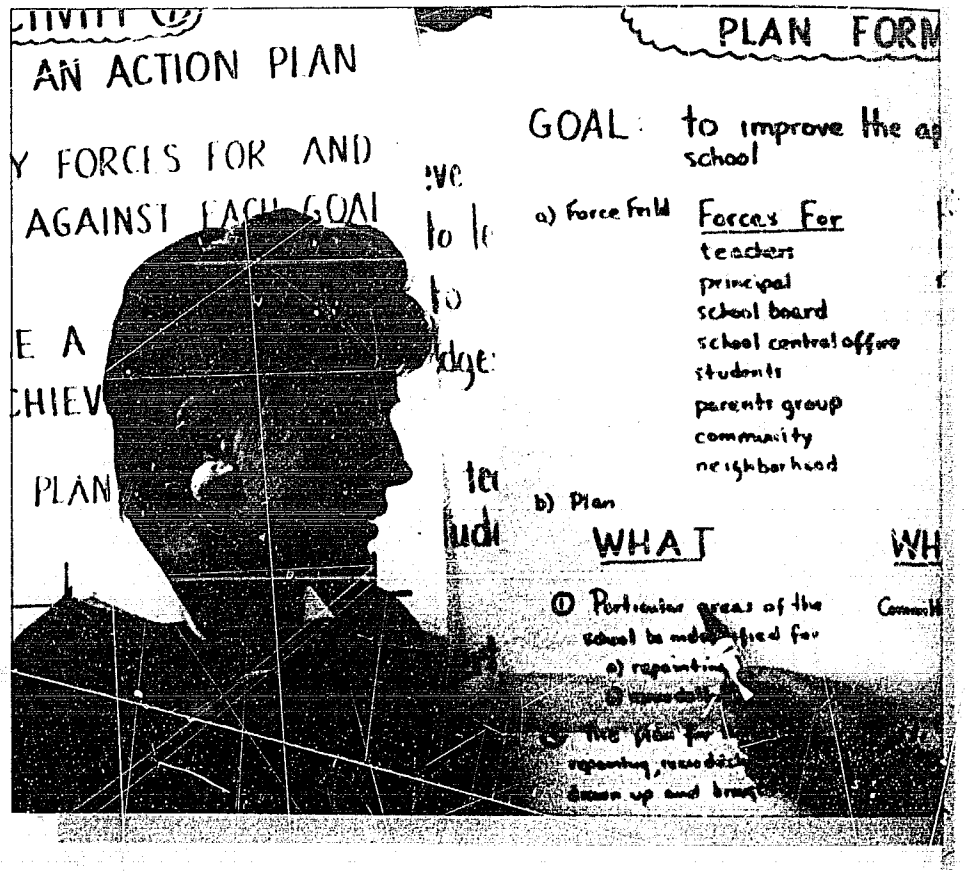
"Teachers, in meeting upon meeting, this fall, have reaffirmed their commitment to advance professionalism through the best route open to them: the pursuit of union status."

The contract language that protects our professional autonomy enables us to exercise our professional responsibilities. This is one of the main reasons we have determined to keep the college from taking over PD, and to maintain teacher control over professional development. As well, our provincial and local Pro-D committees, provincial and local specialist associations, the Status of Women program, the Program Against Racism, and the Program for Quality Teaching must continue to spotlight teachers as PD leaders. To do otherwise would be to submit to the severing of the two aspects of our professional selves, and to yield to a narrowed view of professional development.

Elsie McMurphy

Planning Staff Development in Turbulent Times

HEATHER-JANE ROBERTSON



Although professional development has always been a vehicle for change in education, many of the most significant changes have taken place *despite* rather than *because of* formal professional development. The ineffectiveness of some traditional professional development efforts in sustaining long-term change has had much to do with the distance between who is planning the changes and who is expected to change. Fortunately this distance is shrinking.

A discernible trend across Canada is away from province-wide, or district-wide, professional development toward school-based programs. In some cases, the shift has been conscious, motivated by the conviction that those affected by decisions to change should help choose, create, and evaluate them. In other cases, the paralysis created among educational leaders by conflicting goals and reduced or non-existent funding for PD has resulted in the individual school's becoming the most potent source of educational innovation and renewal.

The transition to school-based responsibility for PD affects school staffs in different ways. Some see filling the requisite number of professional development days as little more than an additional administrative burden. Others have found that choosing the scope and direction of their professional development has substantially increased their school's ability to respond to the needs of its students and community.

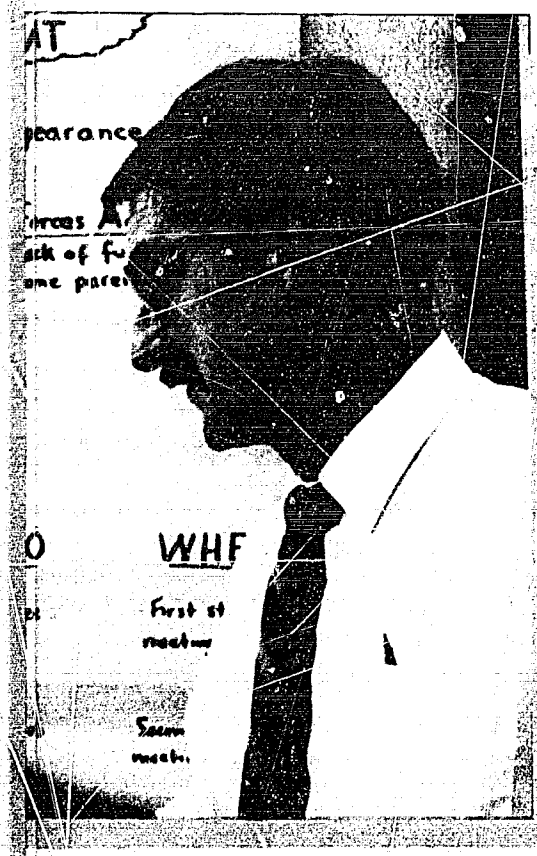
Yet whatever their initial impression, those willing to investigate the potential of school-based staff development soon face the complexity of planning for change and the need for a new set of planning competencies.

The phrase *turbulent times* is a planning term we might usefully borrow to describe the contemporary educational environment. Turbulent times, planners tell us, are characterized by a high degree of unpredictability accompanying key variables in the environment *(Translation: Who know what's going to happen next?)* and low control by the planning entity *(Translation: It's hard to change things.)* Turbulent times seems aptly to describe the situation in which many educators find themselves.

Even under more stable conditions, educational planning can be complex. There is great frustration in attempting to address simultaneously the unresolved difficulties of the past, the limitations of the present, and the largely unknowable requirements of the future. This statement is as true of planning for the management of a difficult student as it is for system-wide, long-term planning. The frustration is increased, I believe, for those who are intent on striving toward a single, perfect goal or solution.

Educational reformers and classroom teachers wishing to avoid the seduction of the simplistic, need to be reminded that education is a social enterprise that defies scientific accuracy, error-proof policies, or permanent solutions to its problems.

Given this complexity, if change is to be successful, it must be carefully planned. In this context, planning is not



School-based planning, *as exemplified here at Caulfield Elementary School, West Vancouver, is the locus for school change and relevant staff development.*

the same as agreeing to an in-service topic. Effective planning for change requires the assessment of individual and group strengths and weaknesses, an analysis of the needs of the present and future, and a commitment to multiple, meshed strategies to reach common goals. Such an exercise does not invite consensus.

If planners recognize that few of us share the same opinion on the nature of the present, let alone a common view of an ideal future, their planning for change is more likely to succeed. There are, however, some exceptions to this rule. For example, the existence of multiple viewpoints is not particularly troublesome if the planner is comfortably seated close to the top of an autocratic system.

Every teacher intuitively knows (and researchers are beginning to announce) that top-down planning works only in *tightly coupled* systems. (What you plan to do is actually what gets done; what you expect to happen actually happens; what other people think you are doing is what you really are doing; and what you told people you did is accurately reported and understood. Some outsiders have taken quite a while to realize that "tightly coupled" doesn't describe the average teacher's day.)

Schools are now being described as *loosely coupled systems*, which, to some people, is synonymous with unplannable systems. Yet those of us who care about the welfare of children and education know that to abandon planning is to acquiesce to an education system's bobbing in the waves of turbulent times. This presents a conundrum: The most unplannable enterprises are the ones that must be planned; the most controversial and complex issues are the ones on which we must seek consensus. In turbulent times, the choice is not *whether* to change but *how* to change.

The most effective locus for educational planning is the school, because planning for loosely coupled systems is necessarily decentralized. The planning itself must take into account the local characteristics of turbulent times. For strategies to be effective, any plan must be subjected to ongoing assessments, regular tinkering, and readjustment. This process is familiar to teachers, who are accustomed to classroom planning. Teachers are beginning to acquire a new set of competencies, including the ability to deal with ambiguity, in confronting the challenges of school-based planning.

Ideally, every teacher becomes a PD planner. The transition to school-based professional development is incomplete if the locus of decision-making is shifted only from central office to the principal's office. Only the involvment of teachers can transform professional development from a "done-to" to a "done-by" experience. All established principles of adult learning rotate around the conviction that adults change only when they participate in choosing to change.

What is to be planned, however, is not addressed by deciding where the planning should take place and who should take part. Until recently, the school's role in planning was that of co-ordinating the implementing of someone else's grand scheme, which is to pursue *how* rather than *what*. This approach has not only been ineffectual, but has also excluded teachers from the most important aspect of planning. Teachers need the opportunity to ask themselves and their colleagues fundamental questions about the problems and possibilities posed uniquely by each school. To plan the implementation of someone else's goals is, too often, in Elise Boulding's words, "to pursue existing irrationalities with even greater efficiency." (Boulding, 1978)

What teachers plan is as diverse as the needs of their schools. In some cases, the motivation for change may be partly external: a report on an increasing dropout rate spurs action in one province, a teenage suicide in a neighboring community stimulates a school's attention to students' emotional needs, and so forth. Such problems are not new to education, nor can all education's problems be resolved only at the political level. What is new is the recognition of the validity of each school's version of its own situation and the realization that many possible strategies might be equally appropriate and effective in addressing a given problem. Effective schools do more than cope with problems; they use planning to reach toward an ideal as well as to adapt to the undesirable. Teachers wishing to encourage students to take charge of their lives despite turbulent times can model the process themselves.

To advocate school-based planning is not to substitute it for other strategies for change in education. One does not plan instead of lobby; indeed one might plan *to* lobby. Properly conducted, planning includes thorough investigation of the present as well as the inventing of the future. If we let go of the conviction that our personal version of reality has been lifted from the authorized text, planning will give us the opportunity to escape from our hardened perceptions and to create new realities for ourselves and our students. It's worth a try in turbulent times.

Heather-jane Robertson is a staff officer with the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

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The Program for Quality Teaching

a BCTF Initiative Promoting Professional Practice

SCOTT RITTER

In the spring of 1986, our principal, Sheila Cahill, returned from a meeting at which Gary Robertson, Victoria's local association president, proposed a new program. She was enthusiastic about the possibility of some of our staff's attending the initial training session of the *Program for Quality Teaching* which was to be held in August on Saltspring Island. The program, the brainchild of BCTF's Teacher Personnel Division, was being jointly funded by the BCTF and the Greater Victoria School District.

I began reading the introductory literature:

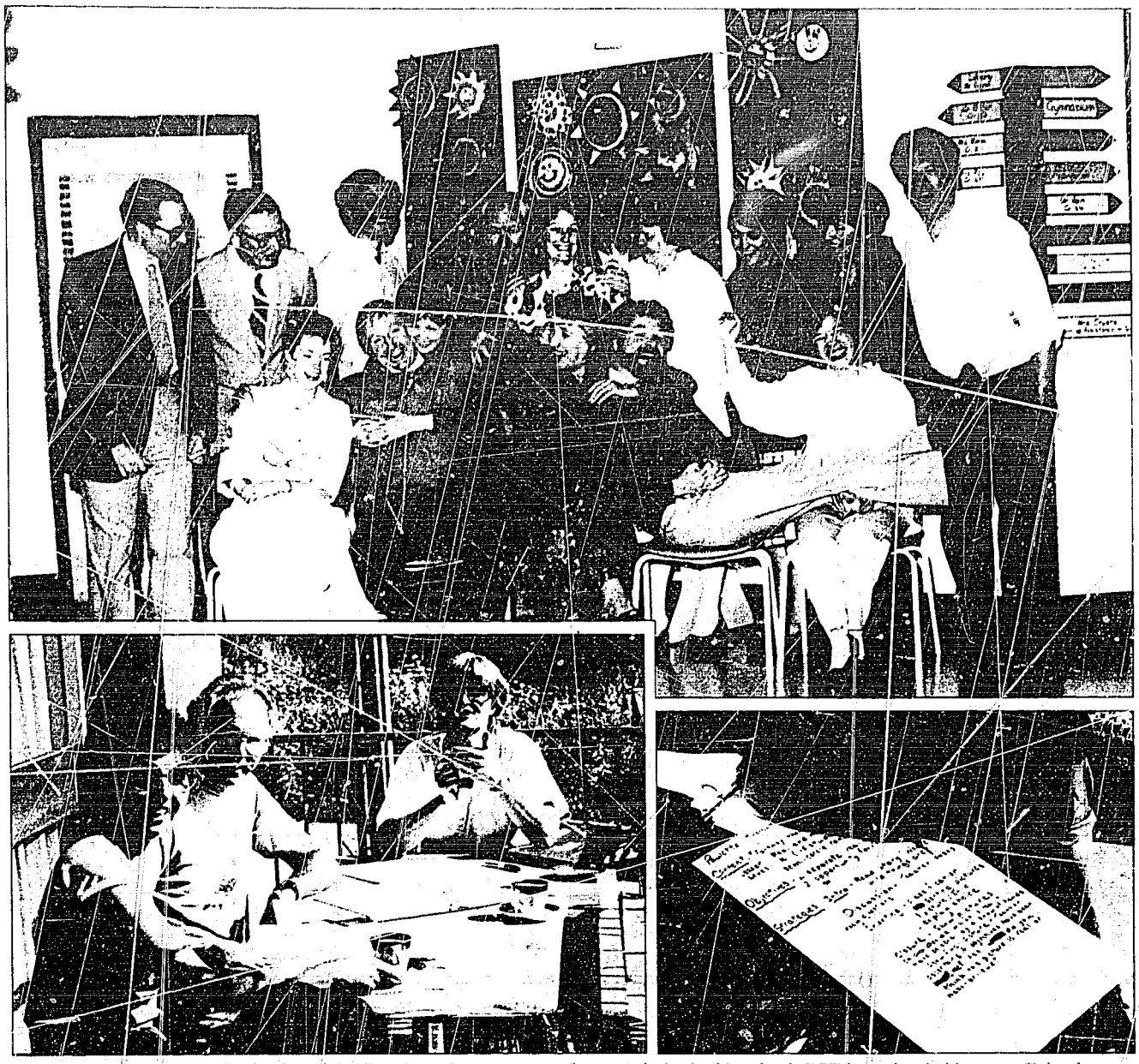
"The Program for Quality Teaching (P.Q.T.) . . . teachers and principals working closely as colleagues in the analysis and development of teaching over an extended period of time can produce significant and rewarding changes in their professional practice . . ." Those and other phrases appealed to me. I felt the need for some rewarding changes. That the program fell during the dog days of summer, that time well into August when I often felt the need for some motivation and re-energizing before diving back into the frenzy of classroom organization, helped to convince me. Also, one of the speakers was to be Dr. Ted Aoki, a person I have come to know and respect in my work as a peace associate for the BCTF. Ted's wisdom and gentle reflections on life never fail to move me. My principal and another colleague were interested in attending as well, and the beginnings of a possible focus for future professional-development activities started taking shape.

As will all summer holidays, the end of August arrived all too quickly, and my two colleagues and I found ourselves, along with two dozen other Victoria teachers, at a somewhat ramshackle but beautifully situated hotel near Ganges on Saltspring Island. The week was crammed with work, and the conference was incredibly well organized by the combined efforts of our team of facilitators, who included Mohammed Shamsher and Chris Schut of the BCTF, and Mike Suddaby of Maple Ridge. Our two main presenters were Neil Smith, a former Kamloops teacher pursuing graduate studies at the University of Oregon, and Dr. Keith Atchison, from the same university.

Our week on Saltspring focussed not only on the mechanics of collegial observation, but also on the philosophy of what it means to be a teacher. We worked as teams to develop skills in pre-conferencing, observation and data collection, and post conferencing. We learned that the focus for the observation of a colleague comes from the colleague's desire to grow, change, and improve teaching skills. It doesn't come from our own desire to advise or attempt to change someone. For many teachers, and particularly for administrators, this was a difficult concept, coming as we do from models of supervision geared toward pointing out weaknesses and promoting movement to some standardized norm of teaching that may not be appropriate for a particular individual teacher, a school, or indeed the rapidly changing society we live in. P.Q.T. encourages each of us to build on our strengths, to experiment with new styles of teaching, to recognize and evaluate our own shortcomings, and to learn from our colleagues through the open exchange of ideas that the program promotes.

In returning to school in the fall of 1986, my colleagues and I, from Northridge School, were able to share our experiences with the rest of our staff. With the help of Neil Smith and Keith Atchison, we had familiarized the staff with the workings of P.Q.T by January. Between January and June, 1987, each staff team was able to undertake at least three observation cycles with pre- and post-conferencing time provided by substitute funds built into the program. Some teams even did additional observations on their own time. We at Northridge will be making formal evaluation of P.Q.T. this fall and looking for new areas of focus in which to continue the program this year. I believe the initial three observation cycles were just a taste of what can be done. I have gained increased respect and admiration for the skills of colleagues; I have confirmed some of my own thoughts about my abilities as a teacher and about the effectiveness of different physical arrangements in my classroom. On one occasion, data collected by my observer partner was useful in obtaining remedial help for a student. That data served to confirm and add weight to what had previously been the lone voice of a teacher.

This year I hope to experiment more with co-operative learning ventures in my classroom. I hope the data of a partner observer will help me to pick out the strengths and weaknesses of such



The Northridge Elementary School staff, in Victoria, enjoy a moment of camaraderie. In this school, PQT has taken hold as a staff-development priority (top picture). In an intensive week long PQT training, participants develop the skills of collegial observation and feedback; and refine their understanding of teaching practice (bottom left). Lessons are planned and taught within supportive school-based teams (bottom right).

a program. We'll need to look at the clarity of my instructions, the type of questioning I use, how certain children function in small groups with others, and any number of other factors. Who knows what I'll want to develop as a focus for next year. With the self-evaluation P.Q.T. provides, I can see myself growing and improving throughout my career. In a profession in which stagnation and burnout take a high toll, such growth is one of the greatest benefits of P.Q.T.

I feel fortunate that my school was small enough and the staff trusting enough to undertake such a commitment as P.Q.T. I'm aware that in other schools it wasn't so easy. Two teachers from one school attended the 1986 P.Q.T. summer sessions and returned to their school with the same enthusiasm I felt. They were, however, unable to involve the rest of their staff. Yet through their own commitment to and practice of P.Q.T. process they were able to interest nine staff members and the principal in attending the 1987 summer session. The principal is now thoroughly behind the concept, and the whole staff will be undertaking P.Q.T. this year. The commitment from administrators seems crucial. Only in an atmosphere of trust and co-operation will teachers feel safe to experiment and grow. The recent enforced split of administrators and teachers will do much to pollute that atmosphere. A lot of effort on behalf of all parties can keep the Program for Quality Teaching alive and vital. If schools are going to continue to improve and adapt to the needs of students and society, programs like P.Q.T. must survive with the participation and commitment of teachers and administrators. Programs such as the Program for Quality Teaching can foster revitalization and growth in education.

Scott Ritter is Grade 3 teacher and administrative assistant at Northridge Elementary School in Victoria. He attended the initial P.Q.T. training session in August of 1986 and after working with the program during the 1986/87 school year, returned again for the 1987 session as a facilitator assistant.

Teacher as Researcher

Throughout North America, Australia, and Europe teachers are engaging in classroom research. Far from the ivory-tower variety, this research is a self-determined inquiry into real-life problems related to curriculum, teaching, and learning.

MARVIN F. WIDEEN

Staff development frequently conjures up the image of teachers' needing repair, because they lack something. They sit, they listen, they learn what others apparently know about how they should improve. The teacher-as-researcher concept produces another image: a practising professional identifying his/her own problems and seeking ways to solve them. I would argue that the latter is the much more effective staff-development model.

The concept *teacher as researcher* has been around for a long time: undertaking research in one's own classroom and school is a powerful way one can improve one's work and grow professionally. This research is not an esoteric project one takes on in addition to one's work; nor is it research in the traditional sense. It is closely tied to the work the teacher does. Hopkins, in *A Teachers' Guide to Action Research*, refers to research as "an act undertaken by teachers either to improve their own or a colleague's teaching or to test the assumptions of educational theory or practice."

I have worked with teachers attempting to apply what they had learned from university coursework, and I have also observed teachers who have simply undertaken, on their own, to change their practice to achieve improvement they have seen necessary. Let me illustrate the notion of teacher as researcher by describing what I saw in one school where I spent several days observing and talking to teachers.

A case in point

The students are told that this is their language-arts period and that they have three choices. They may write, read, or illustrate their stories. Following some housekeeping chores, the Grade 3s begin different activities. Some remain in their seats and begin printing on what appears to be a rough notebook; others are drawing. Another group proceeds to different parts of the room to read. The cushions at the back of the room and the several corners created by colorfully decorated book cases are soon occupied by other pupils who are paired off and sharing in reading books.

Two queues have now formed. One leads to a student teacher who is typing student stories; the other, to a volunteer who is helping the pupils edit their materials. The teacher, Cheryl, moves about the room helping different individuals. Pupils talk to one another, sometimes in a friendly, joking manner, but on task. As a visitor, I am presented with a 10-page story book. I feel surprised that a Grade 3 has produced it.

How different and how changed was that classroom from the language-arts

teaching typical in most classrooms. I saw no prescribed textbooks nor basal readers. I learned from Cheryl that she had developed the approach herself with the help of another teacher in the school, Pat. All teachers in the primary section of the school teach language arts similarly. What led to the innovation?

Woodfort, the school in which Cheryl teaches, is an older school in a rapidly growing suburban community. Residents are in the upper middle class, relatively ambitious people.

Within that community, Cheryl took her first teaching position, seven years ago, after graduating from a local teacher-training institution. She found that her teacher training had not prepared her particularly well for her first job, nor had it offered perspectives on how to improve the classroom instruction for children over what she had experienced as a student and observer during her teacher training. She reports having disliked her first year of teaching, simply because she knew it was not the best learning experience for children. In language arts (the subject I concentrated on during my observation), she found herself teaching from a basal reader and using workbooks and worksheets.

During a year's leave of absence from teaching, she substituted in a Grade 3 classroom in Woodfort. There she encountered a different approach to language-arts teaching. The classroom teacher was Pat, who had initiated the approach four years earlier amid storms of protest. Cheryl requested a transfer to Woodfort primarily to learn from Pat and others in the school. Cheryl attributes much of her success to the earlier efforts of Pat, who had introduced an alternative to language arts in her classroom. Her first realization, in coming to the school, was that she could not merely adopt what Pat was doing in her classroom; she had to develop her own approach. Having people who had had similar experiences, with whom to discuss difficulties, was crucial, however. Cheryl talked about the long process of trial and error that she found necessary to clarify both what she wanted to do in language arts and how she was going to implement it.

Can this be called research? Normally, when we think of research, we think of solving problems, testing ideas, and accumulating knowledge by building on our work and the work of others. Where do such factors operate in this example?

One way of viewing a problem is to describe it as a discrepancy between an ideal condition and the current condition. Sometimes discrepancies arise out of something we do not know, such as an event we cannot explain according to our expectations of reality; at other times, they arise out of something we wish to do but cannot. Our struggle to understand our universe and to make it better is essentially one of solving such problems.

In the case of Cheryl and Pat, their teaching of language arts concerned them. Each had a vision of how their teaching could become better, however fuzzy that vision may have been in the early stages. The discrepancy between vision and practice became the problem. Clarifying the vision and putting it into practice became the way to solve the problem. In many ways, the problems Cheryl and Pat faced are no different from those scientists and social scientists tackle. There *are* differences in scale and perhaps generalizability, but the essentials are the same.

Once a problem is identified, its solution comes about through a process of testing and refining hypotheses or ideas that will solve that problem. The garage mechanic will successively test such things as the spark plugs and the battery, using the hypothesis that the electrical system is what's at fault. Scientists in the '30s systematically tested different strains of wheat to find the one that best resisted wheat rust. Cheryl, in her attempt to find a better way of teaching language arts, tested different approaches until she found one that worked for her.

In terms of building on experience, we are well aware of the tremendous background of skill and knowledge a scientist brings to a problem. What is often overlooked is the background of experience and knowledge a teacher draws upon in solving problems. Cheryl, in developing the program that was eventually to solve her problem, drew on the work of Pat and others in the school. Both she and Pat drew on a background of information gained through in-service education, university coursework, and various other sources.

Cheryl and Pat's case is similar to research in two other ways: reflection and support. The mindless application of some laboratory technique by a person in a white coat does not constitute science. Research is often distinguished from non-research by what someone once termed the *constant application of intelligence*. People who do research think, ponder, and struggle with ideas and alternatives. They take time to reflect rigorously and deliberately. In the case of teachers, the mindless application of programs passed on from high places does not constitute research. What is impressive in Cheryl and Pat's case is how they both struggled with their problems. Cheryl took a year away from teaching simply to explore alternatives and think about teaching. Pat confronted a school board. Both actions required thought and reflection.

People who are engaged in problem solving rarely work alone. They normally benefit from a support group of peers. Scientists consult other scientists, read journals, and attend conferences. Cheryl joined a school that had a certain type of language-arts program in order to benefit from it. The entire primary section of the school became her support group.

While we do not normally think of teachers as potential researchers, this brief analysis illustrates that when teachers attempt to solve problems they face, they are doing a form of research. This recognition has prompted numerous projects throughout Europe, Australia, and North America, aimed at promoting the concept *teacher as researcher*.

The value of classroom research

Those who have studied and written about the approach point to a number of advantages. First, it is a powerful means for staff development. Second, it offers an effective method of school improvement. Third, it avoids teacher burnout. And fourth, it gives teachers the means to control their professional activities.

The concept of the teacher as researcher is imbedded within certain social and political perspectives. Let me start there. As Elliot Eisner points out in one of the chapters of his book *The Educational Imagination*, people take different perspectives on curriculum. One commonly held view sees curriculum as a top-down process. Once developed by experts, curriculum becomes a blueprint to be implemented and followed by teachers who are agents responsible for carrying out policies set by the ministry and the district. This perspective views research designed to determine principles of learning and practice on which such curriculum is to be based as an

activity also done by experts. In short, theory developed by experts drives practice. Supervision then becomes a process of judging the extent to which such a curriculum or teaching practice is implemented or in place. This perspective also favors the use of final examinations.

Those who argue for teacher as researcher take a very different perspective. Curriculum, for them, becomes that which the teacher organizes and plans for his/her own classroom. They talk of the teacher as an autonomous professional designing that curriculum. Within that context, the teacher is a potential researcher, testing ideas. Research findings and the curriculum guide are not facts and directives to be applied, but hypotheses to be tested by the teacher. Thus, the theory/practise relationship is of a dialectic. Supervision is helping and development aimed at improving the teacher's performance against his/her own standards rather than assessing whether curriculum has been implemented. Consistency of practice across teachers is relatively unimportant in this perspective, giving way to progress on a broken front.

In practice, these two perspectives are not incompatible. It is quite possible to be the teacher as researcher within most school jurisdictions even though their policies may be "top-down."

Let me then return to the question of why a teacher might perform research.

One of the most important reasons for classroom research is professional development. Learning does not occur without participation, involvement, and doing. Through classroom research, a teacher is doing something about his/her own practice, is participating and involved in one's own improvement. In all the project reports I have read, participants most frequently emphasize the opportunity for learning as the most important aspect of such projects.

As educators, we are committed to improving the educational institutions in which we work. Teachers' classroom research offers the most hope in terms of achieving this goal. Wherever exemplary schools are singled out because they are "effective schools," the message is always the same. They have become effective because teachers and principals have worked to make them that way. How that process actually begins and works is not currently well known. But it usually starts with teachers' beginning to work on improving some part of their practice and going from there. The larger the critical mass of people working together in any one school, the better.

Why propose to busy teachers that they add to their work by performing research in their classrooms? I expect that stress and ennui are contributing causes of burnout. One begins to feel that teaching is no longer fun, and the actions of many of our politicians have devalued teaching. Engaging in teacher research can change such feelings. Teaching can become a type of social inquiry; one learns from one's practice, rather than merely carries out an activity at the behest of others. Also, acting as a classroom researcher soon brings one to the limit of one's knowledge. One seeks outside information and help. The process is stimulating. Also, one sees progress, which is reinforcing in itself. The question of burnout burns out.

Classroom research allows the teacher to take control. Cheryl and Pat are in control of what they are doing. They are not engaged in social revolution, trying to subvert the system wherever possible. Rather, they are exercising the freedom they have as teachers.

A place to start

Much has been written about how to do research in the classroom. The references available on request provide some starting points. But as the vignette illustrated, one does not need to spend an enormous amount of time learning how to do classroom research. Just start doing it. I offer three suggestions.

Find a problem. A problem doesn't come nicely wrapped in a box with the word *problem* written on the outside. Usually one begins with a sense that some aspect of one's teaching can be improved. You might want to implement a particular method in your classroom. You might feel that the organization of your classroom is problematic. Perhaps too many interruptions occur during your teaching day. All you really need is an idea that something might be improved. Ask yourself: What is happening now? Why is that a problem? What might I do about it?

Take on a relatively small-scale manageable project. Try to ensure that the project will be worth while for your students and that it is educationally sound. This is one place where outsiders can offer help. Then get on with it.

The experience of people in numerous projects underscores the importance of keeping a reflective journal in which to write about the experience. This helps you to clarify and reflect on what you do.

Set out an action plan. Action plans vary greatly from person to person and from project to project. Describe what you plan to do differently, identify some hypotheses to test, and plan data collection. If it's too early to write down what you plan to do differently because you simply do not yet know, your action plan might be a set of steps to learn what the alternative is: Collect some data from your students, talk to others, visit other classrooms, or attend workshops or courses.

Once you have a vision of where you want to go, be as specific as you can about it. Go back to your problem and try to determine if by achieving this goal you will address your original problem. This link between the plan as a way of solving your problem is a hypothesis. Your activities over the next while are a test of that hypothesis. Think about the data you will need to collect along the way to assess your success.

Assess the results. Collect data at every step of the way to keep an eye on how much progress you have made. Three points are critical. First, gather some base line information before you start the process: tape record your class, record how many children do a particular activity, or review the notes made by the colleague who observed your teaching.

Once you have begun, make periodic checks on how much progress you have made in implementing your action plan. Remember, your action plan is a hypothesis about improving your teaching.

At some point, you may want to bring the project to closure and move on to something else. Make a final assessment. Invite that colleague back into your classroom, but make certain you know exactly what you want the person to observe. This is your problem, your investigation, and your staff development — your chance to star in your own movie. Enjoy it!

A bibliography on teacher as classroom researcher is available on request.

Marvin Wideen is a professor in the Faculty of Education, Simon Fraser University.

Sparkling Staff Development

British Columbia teachers are waiting for no one when it comes to tackling school and curriculum change. Charged with new information, exciting research, or techniques "that work," they are setting a new standard for professional growth and development. Colleagues and students are the beneficiaries. Here are some examples.

JOHN HARDY

One of the ancient adages of teaching is "show me how it works." In fact, teaching is a practical profession. Let us see how this applies to staff development.

Several years ago, David Mitchell presented a paper to the school board in Port Hardy showing how school-based staff development could work in the district. The plan was modelled on BCTF PD-Associate training, using such principles and practices familiar to teachers as needs assessment, "teachers teaching teachers," supportive research, and supportive networking. What would follow is a good example of how a teacher, through his/her own sense of staff development, can make a difference and institutionalize change.

In Powell River, during the same time, Pauline Galinski was helping get school-based PD established, using the same model, using PD Associates in needs-assessment and goal-setting workshops, and showing that those PD processes (needs assessment and goal setting) can work and can make a difference.

Both teachers were coming from a common base, the Professional Development Advisory Committee (PDAC), lodged in the BCTF structures somewhere between the Executive Committee, which it advises, and a constituency of local-association PD committees. PDAC is ideally situated to hear the professional concerns and aspirations of teachers at the classroom level and translate them into policies.

It has done that. You can find the results of endless rounds of discussions on the latest research, of brainstorming with the familiar PD tools of chart paper, felt pens, and masking tape, all translated into policies in the *Members' Guide to the BCTF*. Starting from a shared vision, the policies express a set of social, political, and pedagogical values that speak of the self-directing professional, of teaching practice based on research, of sharing information with colleagues, and of establishing professional standards.

Participants in PDAC over the years began to function less in the conventional style of a committee and more in the professional-development style. Dave Mitchell and Pauline Galinski were working in their zones with a highly developed personal sense of professional development.

In Mitchell's case, former superintendent of Vancouver Island North Hank Stefaniak must have thought he'd found the sorcerer's stone in school-based PD, which produced, as he says, "a bustling in-service." He says that Mitchell not only sold teachers on the value of school-based PD, but also organized staff reps, formed staff committees, provided information, and gave workshops. "Even through the years of restraint, Dave never once faltered in his efforts and pursuit of his vision. We really valued this."

Stefaniak is not sure about how an evaluation could be made on the project because people simply got caught up in it. But Werner Manke, a principal of one of the participating schools, says that teachers who were involved from the outset feel good about the program, now in its third year, and everybody has recognized the changes.

Pauline Galinski, in Powell River, worked with a joint management committee composed of elected teachers and a trustee in Powell River to get school-based PD established. The committee took a leadership role in the project. Brian Bennett, a principal and a member of the committee at the time, says people are convinced that school-based PD is an important part of their work.

Initially, PD Associates did the needs-assessment and goal-setting workshop, but now there are enough local teachers with good workshop skills who can share information in the schools. Sharing is crucial for an isolated district. Entire school staffs come to the Lower Mainland, observe other schools, evaluate and share with other district schools when they return. Schools plan their own PD days and set their own dates so a teacher from a school that's in session can observe another school that's having a PD day, then share information with his/her own staff.

Galinski says, "There's a lot of energy at work in the district. The key to the whole thing is planning two- or three-year plans, where teachers come up with what they want. It makes a good year-long team-building exercise. Pro D works when there's ownership."

Ownership. Teacher-initiated PD. "Teachers teaching teachers," shar-

ing information, networking, and establishing standards of practice fit the other great network within the federation that uses these PD processes, the provincial specialist associations.

Consider the Association of B.C. Drama Educators. Because drama teachers can be so isolated, the provincial and regional conferences meet a need for information and training. As with any of the provincial specialist associations, journals keep drama teachers in touch with each other, with current research and practice. A PSA serves as a support system particularly when changes come to the curriculum.

Integrating drama into the curriculum is an ongoing task. Illene Jo Roitman, ABCDE past president, demonstrates one interesting way of how to do it: She serves as a drama co-ordinator for the district and as English Department head in the school, teaching five courses in drama and two in English. The two subjects go "hand in hand," she says. To help integration, the PSA has a resource list of contacts and personnel that it can offer to any district. The PSA is also planning a January conference, featuring an elementary specialist in fine arts from Chicago, to assist teachers in implementing the new B.C. fine arts curriculum.

Roitman says the association's executive, which is composed of elementary and secondary teachers from around the province, will hold five meetings during the year. One of the tasks they set themselves was to produce a manual, unveiled at the October Zone Festival Co-ordinators Workshop, on how to put together a zone conference that has standards of practice.

PSAs are an integral part of BCTF professional development; therefore the core PD concepts such as teachers teaching teachers, sharing information, developing professional standards, and practice based on research have long been standard usage to meet member needs. Most members of PDAC and local PD committees will be members of PSAs, a crossover or linkage in the networks that will be reflected in the processes and policies of BCTF PD.

Then there is an informal network that is a teacher-directed, child-centred, skill-built approach called *whole language*. Perhaps it's more tidal wave than network. The language of whole language conveys what is happening: mind maps, word banks, psycholinguistics, peer coaching, side-by-side teaching, modelling with teachers, and modelling with students, all aimed at having students reading, writing, speaking, listening, and thinking in every subject.

Somewhere in the wave is Susan Close, a language arts K-12 teacher in Langley, who says teachers don't want little recipes anymore but seek a total approach with built-in learning styles and strategies. "We are becoming teacher researchers," she says, "as we observe what the students are doing. We are a bridge between theory and practice."

"We ask a question, then we turn to research to support what we are doing and to further our thinking." The answers are in the research coming from Australia, New Zealand, England, and many of the provinces.

Whole language has become a symbol for something well beyond itself, cutting across the curriculum, changing how teachers are teaching, changing how teachers are teaching teachers. There's always been a restless energy in professional development, in the leading practitioners, the cutting-edge people, frustrated in the old ways and existing structures. So the whole-language movement is cutting across existing structures.

The experience of the young writers' network is pointing the way. Linda Kaser, who pioneered it when she was working in the ministry, says the video tapes drew strong responses of support from teachers who were able to gain a feeling for what a classroom could be like. Video tapes proved an effective link in a province as geographically large as B.C.

One has a feeling that the provincial PD mind mapping has overflowed the chart paper and exhausted the number of colors available in felt pens. PD as a dynamic, teacher-sparked activity is alive and well.

John Hardy is an assistant director in the BCTF Professional Development Division.

Parallel Conference on South Africa

NORA GREENWAY

When Commonwealth heads of government met in Vancouver October 10-18, they were called upon to act in support of the peoples of South and Southern Africa. The call came from the Parallel Conference on Southern Africa where the presenters voiced concerns about human rights violations, education, boycotting of South African goods, and demands for compulsory sanctions against South Africa. Issues related to children and education were front-and-centre.

Archbishop Ted Scott and Anne Mitchell, of the International Defence and Aid Fund, discussed issues relating to children as detainees, children in prison, and South Africa's security laws versus children. An estimated 15,000 children are currently in prison in South Africa. Children as young as seven are incarcerated and tortured for rejecting apartheid. Children and youth of South Africa are participating in the struggle for democracy.

In Southern Africa, the privilege of education is for few. Black students must pay for their education, whereas white students' education is free. The South African government pays 100 rand per black student in the system, and 1100 rand per white student. The literacy rate of blacks in Southern Africa is very limited, but improving. For example, in Mozambique 500,000 blacks attended school in 1974. Mozambique gained independence in 1975, and by 1976, school attendance had risen to 1.5 million. However, school supplies are still scarce, in some areas, totally lacking. Teachers' access to good education is limited; consequently, many teachers are inexperienced and underqualified.

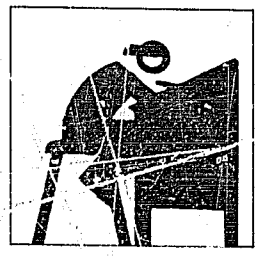
Black South African women have organized with few resources. They have set up co-operatives and parent detainee committees in an attempt to sustain an essence of community. With families separated because of the migratory labour system, war, or fear of attack, the homelands and women's support afford the only home for many black youth.

The conference was divided into three segments: national, provincial, and student. Discussed were strategies to deal with education, support for the front line states, imposition of sanctions, boycotting of South African products, lobbying the Canadian government to take a more direct stand on apartheid, and a campaign to free child detainees.

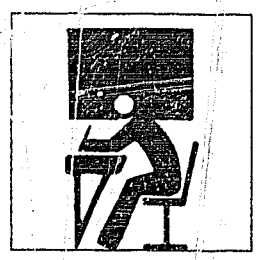
Teachers and students can become twins with South African schools or adopt a South African school by providing basic school supplies. For information on twins, contact Judy Davis at 731-8121 or 1-800-663-9163.

Nora Greenway is the BCTF co-ordinator for the Program Against Racism.

BCTF Staff Development Workshops

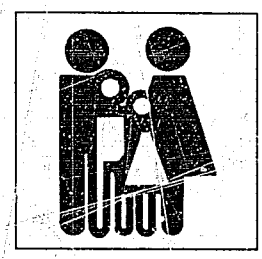


Goal setting — needs assessment

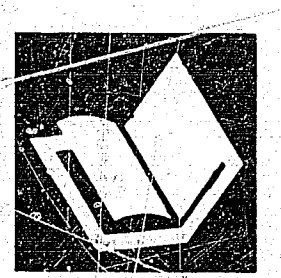


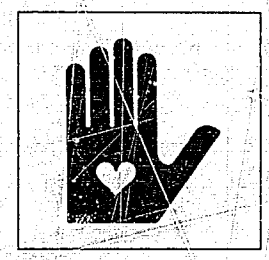
Learning styles

Communicating with parents/ community relations

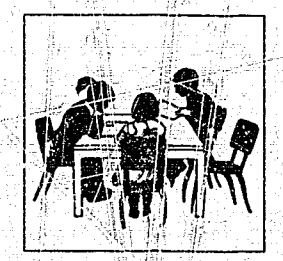


Teaching for thinking





Improving school-wide discipline



Co-operative learning: learning together

Child abuse and neglect

FOR MORE INFORMATION

CONTACT THE BCTF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
(731-8121 OR 1-800-663-9163)

Teachers : Remembered

In-Service	Died	Last Taught In
Vera Balch (Young)	March 20, 1987	Shuswap
John F. Bisal	April 20, 1987	Fernie
Eric G. Coffin	March 28, 1987	Mission
Wendy Rae Gardner (Sandman)	May 4, 1987	Peace River North
Kenneth N. Geary	August 1, 1987	Penticton
Mary Leitao (Dias)	July 25, 1987	Nisgha
Eileen Morrissey	April 24, 1987	Central Okanagan
Joseph Sunter	May 14, 1987	Nanaimo
Kenneth J. Zmuda	March 18, 1987	Greater Victoria

Retired	Died	Last Taught In
Molly Acheson (Hughes)	March 5, 1987	Cowichan
Maysie Bailey (Simpson)	January 2, 1987	Vancouver
Pansy Bartle	August 10, 1987	Prince Rupert
Mildred Beattie	April 16, 1987	Greater Victoria
Mildred Blake (Punter)	May 7, 1987	Greater Victoria
Mary Borne	April 27, 1987	Nechako
Jean Bothwell	June 1, 1987	Richmond
Margaret Brett (East)	July 13, 1987	Penticton
Edith Bristow	May 9, 1987	Merritt
Harold Buckle	April 11, 1987	Kimberley
John S. Burton	March 14, 1987	Burnaby
Irene Carnwath	May 24, 1987	Vancouver
Grela Curwen	June 19, 1987	North Vancouver
Marjory Easton (Fowler)	May 22, 1987	Vancouver
Mirian Eby (Carson)	January 13, 1987	Kamloops
Donald Few	April 8, 1987	Chilliwack
Austa Forbes	April 13, 1987	Kamloops
Grace Foster	March 27, 1987	Vancouver
Martin Goheen	May 13, 1987	Surrey
Silina Hall (Dixon)	July 16, 1987	Maple Ridge
John D. Hayhurst	May 16, 1987	Coquitlam
Rachel Henderson	June 17, 1987	Vancouver
Mary Hercus (Stewart)	May 8, 1987	Sunshine Coast
John Humphries	August 3, 1987	Creston-Kaslo
Florence Hurdz (Ripp)	February 27, 1987	Vancouver
Jessie Johnstone (Moffat)	May 10, 1987	Summerland
Muriel Jones (McManus)	March 30, 1987	Cowichan
Fannie Kinney (Stevens)	July 7, 1987	Prince George
James O. Kirk	June 26, 1987	Courtenay
Arthur Kuetbach	May 11, 1987	North Vancouver
Isabelle Lambert	June 22, 1987	Greater Victoria
Marjorie Leeming	June 10, 1987	Vancouver
Mary Le Page (Ross)	July 1, 1987	Vancouver
Nida Lighthall (Maxwell)	March 31, 1987	Coquitlam
John Litch	July 1, 1987	Nanaimo
Margaret MacMillan	March 22, 1987	North Vancouver
Mary McCaw (Kerr)	August 1, 1987	Chilliwack
Mary McGlashan (Herd)	April 5, 1987	Vancouver
Alexander McKay	July 5, 1987	Penticton
Martha McKay	August 1, 1987	Surrey
Earl Meek	July 18, 1987	Vancouver
Charles J. Merrick	April 14, 1987	Vancouver
Irene Mess (Fraser)	June 11, 1987	Penticton
Esther F. Moase (McNair)	June 14, 1987	Langley
Louis Monasch	July 2, 1987	Vancouver
Katherine Morrison (Mitchell)	July 5, 1987	
Constance Munro	June 8, 1987	Vancouver

Retired	Died	Last Taught In
Margaret Nicholls	April 27, 1987	Vancouver
Jeanette Nieminen (Zrebin)	August 8, 1987	Burnaby
James Nimmo	February 26, 1987	Sooke
Mary O'Do vd (Kelfoyle)	July 12, 1987	Greater Victoria
Gladys Owen	March 23, 1987	Vancouver
Elsie Pain (Relance)	June 3, 1987	Vancouver
Grace Patrick	July 9, 1987	Vancouver
Phyliss Paulson (Arrowsmith)	June 20, 1987	Windermere
Grace Plitcher (Smith)	June 8, 1987	Burnaby
John Plommer	April 17, 1987	Penticton
Eifion Pritchard	August 25, 1987	Nanaimo
Charles M. Reid	June 10, 1987	Lake Cowichan
Thelmah Riddell (Vance)	April 11, 1987	North Vancouver
Frances Sayers (Oxland)	July 21, 1987	Bulkley Valley
Raymond Scott	April 20, 1987	Vernon
Walter Scott	April 16, 1987	North Vancouver
Margaret Searles (Steaver)	May 19, 1987	Port Alberni
Dorothy Silverthorn (Fe:)	July 3, 1987	Vancouver
Ronald Smith	April 20, 1987	Kamloops
Andrew Soles	July 17, 1987	Castlegar
Harvey St. Clair	April 19, 1987	Burnaby
Marguerite Stanton (Zimmerman)	July 9, 1987	Prince Rupert
Jean Story	April 1987	Vancouver
William Taylor	August 8, 1987	Greater Victoria
Elsie Thornley (Frost)	March 12, 1987	Vancouver
Harold Todd	May 26, 1987	Bulkley Valley
Alice Warda (Galle)	April 14, 1987	Chilliwack
Henry G. Wedge	May 25, 1987	New Westminster
Reg Wilkinson	May 27, 1987	Vancouver
Isabella Wilson (Herd)	April 21, 1987	South Okanagan
Patricia Woolston (Holmes)	April 23, 1987	Langley
Katharine Yoredall	June 3, 1987	Greater Victoria
Bernard York	April 3, 1987	Vancouver
May Young (Higgins)	April 1, 1987	Vancouver

Unlocking

Reading success for all

JOHN SUTHERLAND

I went *icetin den* I *pal*
I went ice skating; then I played
hoce din no bac gross
hockey on our back grass.
the *scor wus* 4 to 5.
The score was 4 to 5.
Written by Tom,
15 years old, Grade 5.

The eye drooler sucks people's eyes
out. Then he spits them out and steps
on them. Then he picks them up and eats them.
Written by Bill,
15 years old, Grade 5.

"Lay the leather to him; he's just a damn nuisance."
Teacher comment about John,
16 years old, Grade 10.

This boy suddenly dropped from a Grade Four reading level to Grade One. After two weeks it was learned that following the arrival of a baby brother, the boy thought that he would be traded in! After reassurance, the reading level returned to its former, normal, level.
Description of Sam,
9 years old, Grade 5.

Literacy

We've all known such students. The four pupils — typically, boys — reveal different types of problems the teacher working with severely retarded readers faces. The school records of these boys all indicated relatively low IQ levels, but when tested individually with a non-reading intelligence test, they placed in the average or above-average range.

Often such students are labelled "dyslexic" and "learning disabled," but I have yet to find precise and universally accepted definitions of the terms. The word *dyslexia* is frequently used in a manner that suggests a disease and, as such, frightens both students and parents.

The phrase *learning disabled* is a misnomer in the majority of cases. In the early years, some 15 to 20% of pupils need to use senses other than sight and sound for word recognition and for spelling. Most retarded readers react well to a combination of auditory and lip-throat kinetic approaches; they need to associate the sensation in the lips, tongue, throat, and voice box with the sound they make when they look at the word and pronounce it. Gradually, with practice, the pupils can drop these preliminary steps and respond to the visual stimulus alone. Such readers are "different" learners, as opposed to "disabled" learners. Terms that explain little and alarm a great deal should be abandoned.

In the early stages of helping different learners, progress will be much faster if the pupil's own vocabulary is used. John had an excellent oral vocabulary. I used it instead of the usual modified vocabulary to teach him how to recognize syllables and how to pronounce them. I taught John to run the index finger of his writing hand under the syllables from left to right as he slowly sounded them. The "damn nuisance" aspect of his behavior soon disappeared: he needed to experience success. John graduated from Grade 12 with a C+ average, and he had even been elected president of his class.

Currently I am working with a left-handed boy who has been looked upon as "learning disabled" and who is benefitting from this approach. In applying the syllable technique, I noticed that he ran his left index finger from right to left; he was seeing the syllables backward. It is essential, in such cases, that spelling by letters be eliminated from the learning-how-to-spell process. For instance, the word *cat*, when spelled by letter, produces a three-syllable word, since to be named, all consonants require that vowel sounds be used. The result is *see-ay-tee*. For non-visual learners, this factor is important. For spelling, the process resembles that used for word recognition: sounding slowly, by syllables, until the sound pattern is established. The temptation to sneak a look at the word as one is writing from recall of the sound pattern is very strong; it takes time and patience to overcome.

From the beginning of remediation, oral and silent reading and composition and spelling are best taught as interrelated and complementary aspects of one subject, with the presentation of thoughts first by the pupil and then by the author of the article or book. I started Tom, Bill, and Sam on this path with stories of their own. The statement commonly used to avoid writing for the first time is "I don't know what to write." When assured that spelling won't count as long as they can "read" their own story, almost all will make the effort. The transcribing procedure, as seen in Tom's story, is a slow process, but the results are pleasing. Students almost always enjoy dictating and reading each other's stories. These techniques have been especially successful with native children in areas like the Yukon when the white, middle class, suburban readers offer little relevance.

Some retarded readers are said to owe their deficiency to an "emotional block." In the majority of cases, the emotional block is the result of rather than the cause of the reading difficulty. Much time is lost if teachers assume that the emotional problem must be overcome before reading remediation can be undertaken. Even if an emotional problem is the underlying factor, success in the reading and writing skills can gradually eliminate the distress and develop instead a healthy outlook.

Bill is an excellent example of the emotional-block syndrome. The home environment, affected by alcoholism, was unstable and upsetting. At the first meeting, the boy got down on his hands and knees and began to crawl around on the floor. It took two months of quiet acceptance of such behavior before he agreed to write his "story." He succeeded after a year's help in establishing himself in the upper middle level of his Grade 6 class. When asked what he thought of his first story, he replied, "I wouldn't write like that today."

It takes a special teacher to persevere with special students. Such teachers require special training, and if possible, they should have had several years of classroom experience. Counsellors, too, can help if they have been carefully trained in testing for reading difficulties. Above all, however, those involved must be endowed with patience, for the habits that pupils developed in the early years must be replaced. All that takes time.

I believe the vast majority of severely retarded readers can be helped when teachers bear in mind that no two students learn in the same way. Their methods may vary, but whatever the approach, teachers must, from the start, create the essential feeling of success. The job is difficult to do, but it is one we can ill afford to leave undone.

John is a good example of the frustration experienced by pupils who are intelligent but who have failed to learn to read. Many of them drop out, and their frustration may lead them through illegal activities to penal institutions. Published statistics reveal that some 70% of the male inmates of our penal institutions are functional illiterates. It takes some forty thousand dollars a year to keep each in jail. Intelligent politicians should be able to see that spending that amount of money to prevent illiteracy would be far more cost effective, for both the individual and society. We have the tools and the knowledge to assist students via their different learning styles. All we need is the time and the will to act.

John Sutherland is a retired teacher and former BCTF president.

The Educated Person

Recently our Ministry of Education issued a description of *the educated person*. Such a description is designed to set a context for curriculum development in British Columbia.

We asked a few individuals to review the ministry's description and to offer their own versions of *the educated person*.

The educated person is one who is a thinking individual, capable of making independent decisions based on analysis and reason. The individual is curious, capable of, and interested in learning, capable of acquiring and imparting information, and able to draw from a broad knowledge base. The individual appreciates and is able to contribute to creative expression. The individual is self-motivated, has a sense of self worth, pursues excellence, strives to be physically healthy and is able to achieve satisfaction through achievement. The individual has sound interpersonal skills, morals and values, and respects others who may be different, understands the rights and responsibilities of an individual within the family, community, nation and the world and is aware of Canada's cultural heritage. The individual is flexible, and has skills necessary to function in and contribute to the world of work.

Ministry of Education

THOMAS R. BERGER

I think the minister's definition of the educated person is so comprehensive as to be virtually meaningless.

Let me try:
The educated person knows who we are, how we got here, and is prepared, if necessary, to question the assumptions by which we live.

Tom Berger is a Vancouver barrister and solicitor.

HANNAH POLOWY

Defining *the educated person* is mainly for reasons of curriculum changes in our B.C. school system. Therefore, two assumptions must first be made.

Children of B.C., pursuing today's curriculum, are the adults of tomorrow. The educated person of tomorrow is just beginning the process of "becoming educated." The requirements for an educated person living in the next century must be considered as a guideline.

The educated person will know how to express empathy and sympathy toward his/her fellow human, will be able to express emotions and feelings in an acceptable, understandable and beneficial way, and will accept himself/herself as well as others without prejudice. The educated person will also respect his/her cultural heritage and allow others to do the same. The educated person will be able to anticipate, identify, and solve problems individually as well as collectively and make individual as well as cooperative decisions in a democratic way. He/she will be able to use daily experiences to creatively bring alive the various knowledges he/she attains from a multitude of sources and mediums. For the educated person, communication with others is based on positive human relationships, using the human skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing and the supporting technologies. The educated person will use technological knowledge to assist human creativity, ability, and progress and will assist others to become educated.

The educated person will partake in community life as well as speak out clearly for truth and justice.

The educated person will appreciate the natural environments of our planet and the beneficial human creations and will know how to establish and live in a world of peace.

Hannah Polowy is a professor of early childhood education in the Department of Psychology of the Faculty of Education at U.B.C.

TED AOKI

The educated person, first and foremost, understands that one's ways of knowing, thinking, and doing flow from who one is. Such a person knows that an authentic person is no mere individual, an island unto himself or herself, but a being-in-relation with others, and hence, at core, an ethical being. Hence, such a person knows that being an educated person is more than possessing knowledge or acquiring intellectual or managerial skills and that being an educated person is dwelling aright in thoughtful living with others.

The educated person, thus, not only guards against disembodied forms of knowing, thinking, and doing that reduce self and others to things, but also strives, guided by the authority of the good in pedagogical situations, for embodied thoughtfulness that makes possible a living as human beings.

Moreover, the educated person speaks and acts from a deep sense of humility, conscious of the limits set by human finitude and mortality, acknowledging the grace by which educator and educated are allowed to dwell in the present that embraces past experiences and is open to possibilities yet to be.

Thus, to be educated is to be ever open to the call of what it is to be deeply human and, heeding that call, to walk with others in life's ventures.

Ted Aoki is a professor emeritus in the Faculty of Education, University of Alberta, currently residing in Vancouver.

ROLAND TEAPE

in my working life before returning to university. I thought of myself as most integrally associated with the mason trades, which I worked at periodically as both helper and trainee. The project on which I learned the most was the construction of a stone seawall buttressing various parts of Granville Island (Vancouver); I mixed virtually all the mortar now holding the granite matrix in place.

The experience gives me a metaphor for the teaching duties I am now qualified to undertake. The contents of any liberal arts course I might instruct are like the building blocks of the great wall that is human knowledge. In accord with Platonic ideals, I believe that learning forms a bulwark against the sea of unreason, and what instruction I can offer my fellows is part of the mortar that holds the various components of the wall together. In this model, the difficulties and obstacles to scholarship are analogous to problems masons face on the construction site. A mortarman must not only look to the correct proportions of material in a mix while avoiding the hazards of getting it to the builders, but also work to the deadlines of both masons and climatic conditions. The chemical reaction lime promotes in "mud" is quick, particularly in hot weather, so frequently an unrelenting dispatch is called for in order that stones be set. In addition, one of the masters on a marine project is the demanding tide, for all installation depends upon its tempo. So for the vagaries of teaching.

Now, difficulties with educational material and its transmission on schedule are no poor parallel to masons' criteria. Mason-trades instructors refer to "filling the voids" with the appropriate units and the glue that binds them. The higher educator's job is surely not dissimilar; students wishing to be taught bring their minds, a receptive void to be conscientiously filled with the elements of the curriculum. Thus rises, grows, and is kept in repair the learning wall by which our species gains its harmonious survival. In whatever way an educator views it, proper work on the wall is of paramount importance, because the transmission of knowledge and the habits that foster it are the rational link between humans, and between their generations.

Thus in the masonic metaphor I find the inspiration for my manifesto of education, and I therefore owe a debt to the masons, as I do to subsequent teachers and professors of many sorts.

Roland Teape recently graduated with a Master's degree in English from the University of Alberta.

JEAN SWANSON

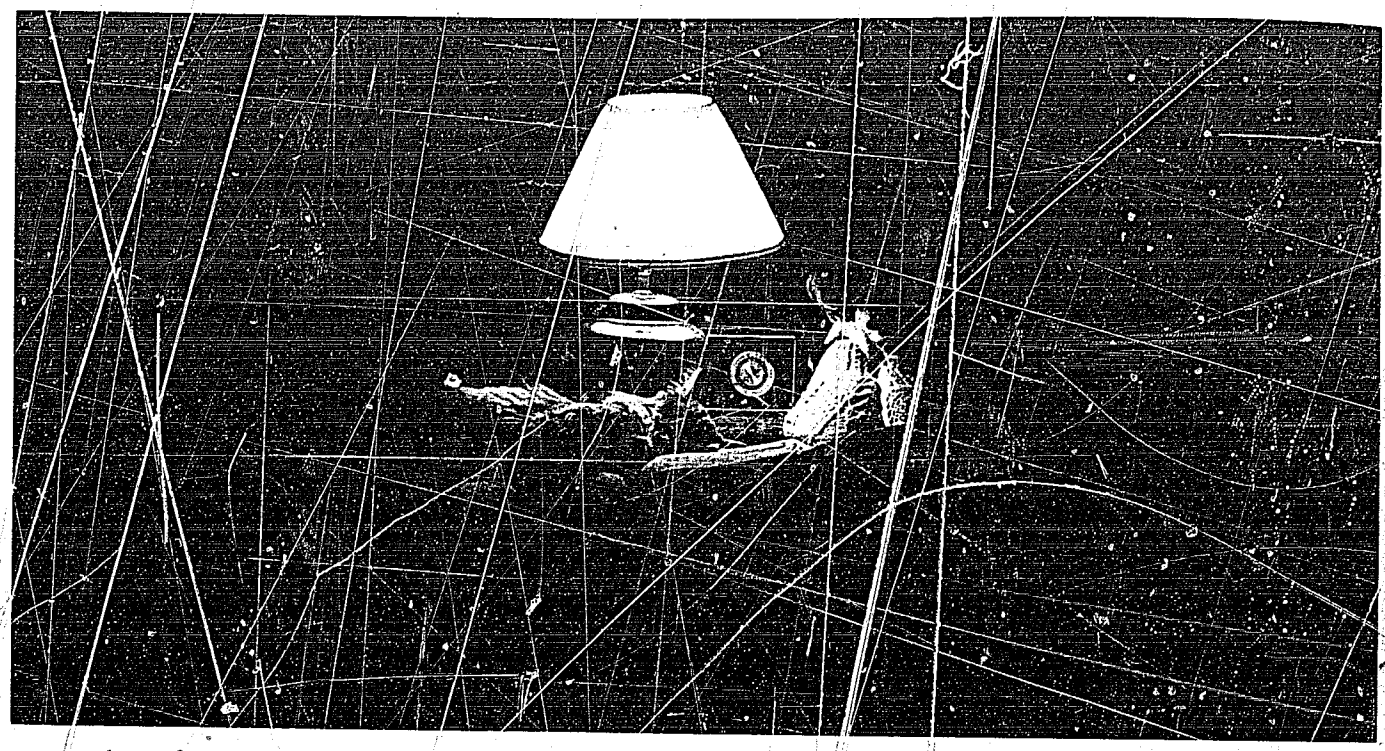
The education ministry has asked what is the ideal "individual" the school system should try to produce? It calls this idealized individual "the educated person." I would ask a different question: How can the school system help promote a just and democratic society in which *all* people can develop to their full potential? Society would encompass individuals with many different qualities. Each individual would have a respected and equal place in the society.

Reasoning, analyzing, acquiring a broad base of knowledge, and being self-motivated are abilities that can be used to help or hurt other individuals. The school system should help provide a foundation of caring, co-operation, and responsibility so that learned abilities can help people work together to improve their communities.

The school system should help individuals recognize and care about pain, injustice, poverty, war, and our environment. It should help them realize that we *can* affect what happens to us and to others. It should help us learn how to co-operate and participate with others in working for a just society.

Jean Swanson is the co-ordinator for End Legislative Poverty.

Should dedication to educatior



It has often been said that education is a calling as much as it is a profession.

Certainly if dedication is any rule-of-thumb, we can't think of many people who would seriously argue.

But should dedication and the growing mountain of paperwork, in this day and age, automatically stretch your working week into 60 or 70 hours and beyond?

EDUCATORS DESERVE A HOME LIFE TOO.

During heavy work periods when homework takes precedence over the last three episodes of Masterpiece Theatre or the family has been banished to the basement two nights in a row, isn't it time to call a halt and find another way?

When you think about it, you do have a choice.

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With an Apple at home, most of the homework that takes you into the wee small hours could be over before dinner.

Who wants to be doing report cards, attendance records, scheduling and student grades at 10 and 11 at night? With an Apple they can all be formatted, then just up-dated while you enjoy a leisurely cup of coffee.

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In fact any homework, personal projects or records involving words, numbers, charts and graphics can very often be reduced from hours to minutes.

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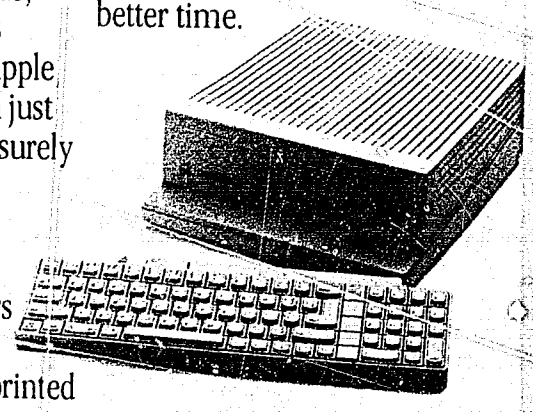
If you're an accredited Canadian educator* and you're seriously interested in buying a new Apple system or adding to an existing one, there'll never be a better time.



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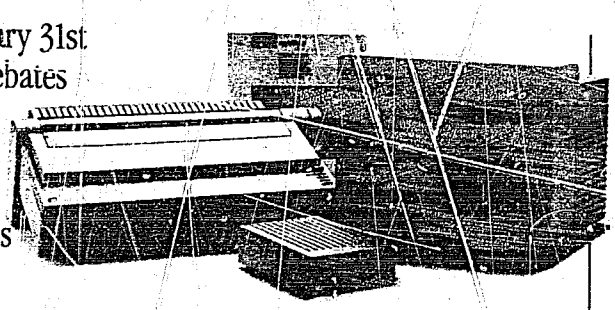
The Apple IIGS™ was introduced as the greatest teaching aid since the invention of blackboard and chalk. It creates graphic images of near photographic quality - and even gives you sound. It's 32-voice synthesizer can reproduce anything from The Flight of the Bumble Bee to a reading of The Lord of the Flies. Of the 281 highest-rated education software programs currently available, 271 run on the Apple IIGS.

mean an 80 hour work week?

From May 15th to January 31st 1988, we're offering special rebates through The Apple Educator Assistance Plan. And when we say special we really mean it. The full list of rebates are shown in the column on the right.



$60 to $100 REBATES.
In addition to computers, there's a full range of peripheral accessories to choose from too. For example, our 800K External Disk Drive, RGB Colour Monitor and many other items are available with $60 rebates. Our ImageWriter® II (printer) and our famous AppleWorks™ software program are both available with $100 rebates.

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But perhaps the most important reason is that Apple has worked closely with the education community for nearly a decade. We know what you need and we're constantly encouraging the development of new teaching tools that will allow you to expand your system in the future without breaking the bank.

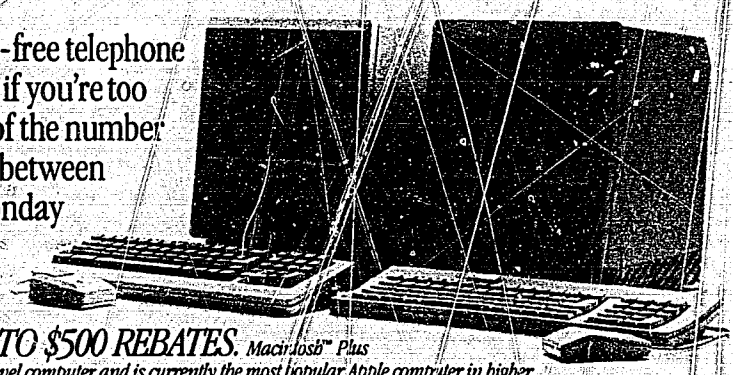
We'll tell you how the plan works. We can send you extra literature to help you choose the specific hardware and software you should have. And we can direct you to the nearest authorized Apple dealer who is participating in the plan – and has the rebate certificates you'll need.

Just one more thing, if the phones are busy it's because we're trying to help somebody just like you, so do try again.

1-800-387-4318

DO IT NOW.

Call our toll-free telephone number today. Or if you're too busy, take a note of the number and call anytime between 9 and 5 E.S.T., Monday through Friday.



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Apple IIGS	$160
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5.25" Drive-Platinum	50
AppleColour™ RGB Monitor	60
Apple Monochrome Monitor	25
AppleColour™ Composite Monitor 14"	60
Apple IIe	
Apple IIe CPU	$160
ADB™ Mouse Device-Platinum	25
Super Serial Card	25
Extended 80-Column Text Card	25
Monitor IIe, Green	25
Colour Monitor IIe-Platinum	60
5.25" Drive w/controller-Platinum	50
AppleWorks 2.0 English	100
Macintosh	
Macintosh Plus 1Mb	$360
Macintosh SE-Floppy Disk	500
Macintosh SE-Hard Disk	500
800K External Disk Drive	60
Hard Disk 20SC	160
Imagewriter-wide carriage (beige)	100
Imagewriter II-Platinum	100
MacDraw™	25
MacWrite™	25
MacPaint™	25

*To be eligible to participate in the Apple Educator Assistance Plan, customers must be a certified educator working as a full-time member of an accredited educational institution in Canada.

THE APPLE
EDUCATOR
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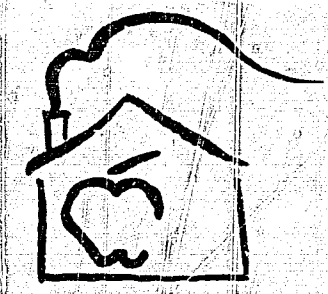


Because homework shouldn't be a full time job

Dear Mom . . . Letters dedicated to English-as-a-second language teachers

CATHERINE EDDY, ELIZABETH EISNER AND KIM REBANE

September, 1986

Dear Mom,

I have only a few minutes, but I thought I'd get a note off to you. This month at my first job, teaching English as a second language, has been hectic. But, the kids are absolutely wonderful. I have secondary students from 15 countries: Hong Kong, China, Taiwan (boy, is there a diversity among these groups), India, Vietnam, Kampuchea, Malaysia, Poland, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Chile, Argentina, Fiji, and the Philippines. Every class is a mini United Nations!

I knew that students in ESL classes were placed according to their language ability (beginner, intermediate, advanced), but I didn't realize the implications. In my beginning-level classes, I have students ranging in age from 13 to 18, with corresponding levels of maturity. I'm sure it must be as difficult for the 17- and 18-year-olds, who have acted and been treated as ADULTS in their countries, to cope with the silliness of the 13-year-olds as it is for me sometimes. It's also difficult to choose work and exercises that all will find interesting and stimulating.

We've begun to get into some curricular areas, and I think I'm getting a handle on it. I'm teaching grammar, reading comprehension, science, social studies, and math. Each of us has classes at the three levels so that we can keep a perspective about the progress of each student's language. It also helps us to maintain awareness of their development in the different subjects.

The students are still transferring in and out, but I understand that this is not uncommon at this time of year. What I can't believe is the amount of paperwork with each transaction. Kids come, and I add their names; kids go, and I cross out their names. My class register is beginning to look like a grocery list that way through a shopping expedition.

I must tell you that the support and assistance from my ESL colleagues has been phenomenal. I don't know what I would have done without it. I'm just beginning to realize how much I don't know about how a school functions, and now much I have to learn. I've gone through umpteen nerve-wracking experiences in this month alone: filling out attendance cards (I did the first two weeks WRONG), asking for equipment, finding my way around the school, discovering how the library works, and even gathering my courage to ask for a key to the washroom.

To help with the students, though, the Vancouver school system has "multicultural home-school workers," who are invaluable. They help us understand the cultural differences among our students, translate our requests to those who have little or no English, and help us communicate with parents who have similar language difficulties, among other things.

Must dash for now. Thanks for listening.

Much love from
The TEACHER in the family.

November

Dear Mom,

I'm ready to quit!!! What was I thinking when I decided to be a teacher. Teaching ESL isn't merely hard; it REALLY is next to impossible. I don't know how I can be expected to teach when there are NO specific books, NO curriculum, NO definable structures, and the students are constantly changing!! What do I know about all this stuff? We didn't have any of this, or any preparation for this, in university ESL courses.

Oh, there are lots of books around with excellent suggestions about potential content. There are almost too many books. I find myself looking for that ONE book with definitive answers about how to teach ESL. Where do I start? How can I decide on good starting and stopping points when everything is right? I tell you, Mom, I've flown by the seat of my pants before but never to this extent, when it is so scary, and things are this important. I'm really feeling pressed to DO, and I'm not quite sure WHAT I'm supposed to be doing. I'm trying to do everything, anything, and all things — and I haven't a clue what I'm supposed to do next.

Besides my not having something 'to hold on to' in terms of curriculum, the students are still constantly transferring in and out. I just get nicely settled with one group, when a new student arrives. Do I keep going and try to help him catch up, or do I take him back to square one? In addition, our department has a philosophy of moving students to a higher, more difficult, level when THEY are ready, not necessarily when it's convenient for us.

While I agree with the philosophy, it's difficult to put into practice. My classes are constantly changing. The classes are diverse to begin with, and promoting kids according to their ability means the teacher can have even fewer assumptions about what the students were taught before they joined the class.

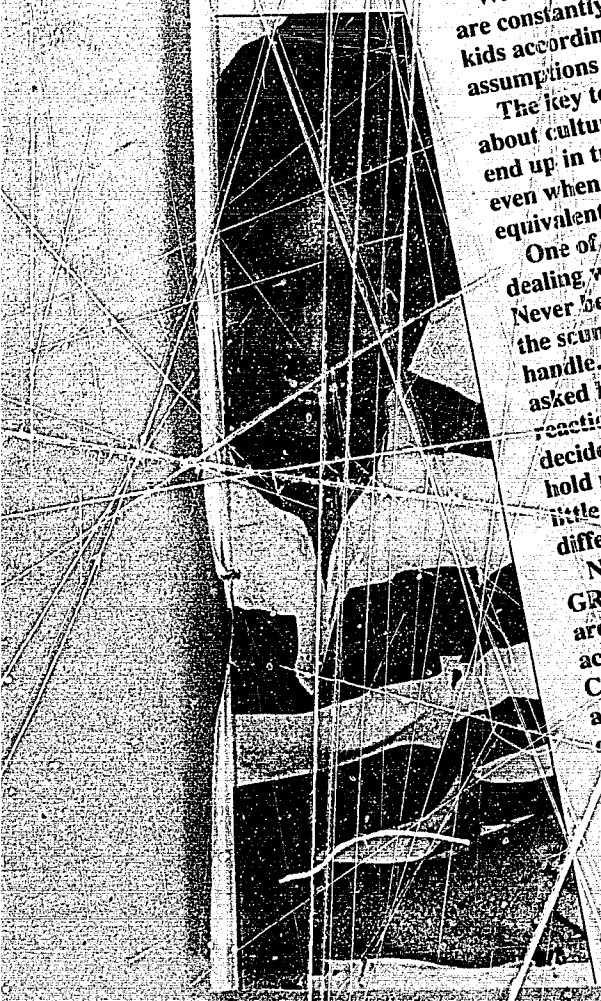
The key to teaching ESL seems to be ASSUME NOTHING — about language, about culture, about anything. If I don't check out absolutely EVERYTHING, I end up in trouble and have to backtrack. It's better to check at the beginning, even when a kid says, "Oh, I've had this before." I'm learning to say the equivalent of "Prove it!" in a wide variety of ways.

One of the greatest difficulties, and yet one of the most rewarding aspects, is dealing with the cultural differences of the students. They are full of surprises. Never before have I had to deal with a person who looked at me as though I were the scum of the earth . . . that's really happened. And is it ever difficult to handle. I had made a simple request, and Harinder looked at me as though I had asked him to marry a giraffe and spit out nickels simultaneously. My immediate reaction was to offer him a one-way ticket back to where he came from, but I decided that that wasn't the best thing to do. I NOW know that women don't hold much importance with some Eastern men, but I didn't think it was THAT little. Harinder and I have now reached a compromise about cultural differences, and I start some sentences with, "In Canada, things are different."

Not all the students are difficult. In fact, it's just the opposite. The kids are GREAT. I'm getting to know them well, and not just their school sides. The kids are beginning to come to me with a whole range of concerns, and I find myself acting as their resource person. They need to know absolutely everything about Canada and Canadian culture, for they are the ones expected to learn English and become the family interpreters. I'm flattered that this level of trust has developed so quickly, but I also find that being a resource person takes an incredible amount of time. While I'm flattered, I'm simultaneously depressed because I feel that if I fail them in these basic, necessary life skills (helping them with doctors' appointments, getting a social insurance number), there's no one else to help them.

One of the biggest differences is sorting through the university expectation of "being a teacher" and reality's expectation of "being a teacher AND a resource person." I just wasn't prepared for the latter.

Nothing detrimental to any racial group is intended by these letters. But rather may they help you understand ESL students and teaching. They are the result of a year's collaboration by teachers in one Vancouver secondary school ESL department.



I'm beginning to find that teaching ESL students is different in many ways from my practice with 'regular' students, but maybe none so clear as the degree of questioning they do — and some are questions about me as an individual. For example, the kids feel free to ask questions like: Are you married? If not, why not? Don't you want to be married? What's your homelife like? How many brothers and sisters do you have? What do you and your friends do in your spare time? And other questions related to culture and language. For example, I've been asked questions like: What does *pervert* mean? What does *f*—— mean? They want to *know*, because these things are not part of their cultural awareness.

I've also found that the ESL kids are attuned to my moods and emotions, possibly because of their own experiences and high emotional levels; I've found it surprising on many occasions. At times, when I thought I was hiding my true feelings about a particular event or situation, ZAP, I would be asked a question about the cause of my concern.

I'm also learning about differences among cultures. For example, I was getting frustrated with some eastern students who wouldn't look me in the eye when spoke to them, and I thought they were being rude or paying no attention. THEN I learned that evading eye contact was a sign of respect. I've also learned that when you want an East Indian to come to you, you beckon with your palm down and your fingers pointed toward the floor. If you beckon with your palm up, and then move your fingers, you are making an insulting gesture. Little things like that can make a big difference in total communication with students. And did you know that to new arrivals from Hong Kong, WE smell like rotten fish? Never again will I be so blithe in my judgments of other cultures.

Let me tell you about some of my kids. They're incredible people. Carol is from Korea, and she is a sweetheart. Both of her parents are dead, and she's living with an older brother, whom she doesn't care for. She's having difficulty learning English, but can she ever draw. She has the most wonderful ideas about fashion design and can create total outfits in the blink of an eye. I hope we can keep her in school long enough for her to be eligible for a tertiary training program.

Phat, from Vietnam, is another dear. He works hard, but that he had an interrupted education in Vietnam is playing havoc with his ability to try to "pin" another language on an insecure structure.

Hoa, also from Vietnam, is the opposite. She is learning English at an incredible rate, and I fully expect her to be off to regular grades soon.

Julie, whom I would gleefully bring home and adopt, is from the Philippines. She has good oral skills, but her written work still needs a lot of attention.

Robert, from Hong Kong, is in a similar situation. Both these kids have had instruction in English, and they think they should be in regular grades, but they're just not strong enough yet to cope. Needless to say, we discuss this frequently.

Thanh, dear Thanh, one of the boat people, was 15 when he arrived in Canada. He had a total of three years' schooling before he arrived, and his learning problems are so complex it'll take a very long time to figure them out.

You can tell, Mom, that I'm enjoying the kids tremendously, even the more difficult ones, but it's draining. I want to do a good job with them but I still feel I'm in a survival mode, rather than a planning mode. I know, in my mind, that language is only a tool to unlock the richness of students' experiences, but one key is English, and English is the missing component.

I feel as though I'm hanging by a thread at this point, and I don't know which swing of the pendulum is going to break it. If I hadn't had others to talk with about all of this, the thread would have broken by now. Bless their hearts for listening, understanding, helping, and supporting me as a person.

I must get back to my piles of marking and prepare for another day. I thought that when I left university I'd have a bit more free time in the evenings. I was wrong about that one too! THANK YOU for listening.

Much love from
Your traumatized offspring,

Continued on page 43

Immigrant and Refugee Students

A boon to teaching

WES KNAPP

The summer of '87 will undoubtedly be remembered as the summer of discontent for many people. Phone-ins and polls across the country bristled with anti-immigrant and anti-refugee feelings. The arrival of 174 Sikh refugees touched off another round of hostility toward refugees. As the debate dragged on, the hostility and discontent spread to immigrants in general.

What's so intriguing, and disconcerting, is that pollsters find that people believe immigrants take jobs from native-born Canadians and add to the unemployment rate. Research conducted on the subject comes to a different conclusion, however: immigrants create jobs. Moreover, immigrants and refugees stimulate the economy rather than depress it.

Let's examine one part of the economy: the education sector (K-12). Looking at the figures from Employment and Immigration Canada, we discover that immigrant children were responsible for creating a substantial number of jobs for B.C. teachers over the past decade. The figure of 2416 jobs is conservative. (See Table 1)

Many immigrant children spend a few years in English-as-a-second-language classes, where the pupil-teacher ratio is lower than the provincial average. Thus, even more teaching positions are generated. The figure of 2416 jobs does not account for the children born to immigrant parents once they are B.C. residents. Immigrant families tend to have larger families, generating still more teaching positions. And most important, *refugee* children are not included in the figure. Exactly how many refugee children are in B.C. schools is unknown but the number is considerable. Thus, it is safe to assume that since 1975, between 4000 and 5000 teaching jobs have been created in B.C. by the presence of immigrant children. This represents 15 to 20% of the public-school teaching force in B.C.

English-as-a-second-language teachers, such as Catherine Eddy, currently ESL consultant in Vancouver, are challenged to tailor the curriculum to students with a wide range of ages, abilities, and command of the English language.

Table 1
IMMIGRANT CHILDREN BY AGE (B.C. province of intended destination)

YEAR	AGE GROUP	TOTAL	PTR	FTE TEACHING POSITIONS GENERATED
1975	5-9	2,796	19.14	384.38
	10-14	2,311		
	15-19	2,250		
1976	5-9	1,727	18.61	261.53
	10-14	1,501		
	15-19	1,639		
1977	5-9	1,186	18.11	197.35
	10-14	1,048		
	15-19	1,340		
1978	5-9	804	17.81	151.32
	10-14	749		
	15-19	1,142		
1979	5-9	1,199	17.75	226.59
	10-14	1,073		
	15-19	1,650		
1980	5-9	1,826	17.30	356.47
	10-14	1,814		
	15-19	2,527		
1981	5-9	1,479	16.70	304.55
	10-14	1,552		
	15-19	2,055		
1982	5-9	1,099	17.11	227.88
	10-14	1,204		
	15-19	1,596		
1983	5-9	652	17.08	161.53
	10-14	801		
	15-19	1,306		
1984	5-9	669	17.73	145.06
	10-14	700		
	15-19	1,203		

Total FTE teaching positions generated 1975-84: 2,416.66 FTE

SOURCE: Employment and Immigration Canada, Immigration Statistics

Contrary to popular opinion, immigrant and refugee families create jobs — especially in the education sector: between 4000 and 5000 teaching jobs in B.C. since 1975.

Although the vast majority of immigrant children enrol in public schools, those who do enter private schools generate teachers' jobs as well. In fact, they generate a higher proportion of jobs, since the pupil-teacher ratio in private schools is lower than that in public schools.

Immigration's impact on the education sector is even more significant in the context of the thousands of jobs lost during B.C.'s restraint program. Some 3242 teaching positions were lost between 1981 and 1985 as a result of declining enrolment and the provincial government's cutbacks. If not for the continued arrival of immigrant families in B.C., even more teaching jobs would have been lost. Indeed, immigrant children have not only created thousands of teaching jobs, but also protected hundreds of teachers from job loss.

Of course, in another sense, 95% of the teaching jobs are due to immigrant and refugee children, since the vast majority of students are descendents of immigrant families.

Thus, as teachers, we receive not only the rewards of working amidst a wealth of cultures and races, but also the satisfaction of knowing that so many of our jobs are due to the presence of immigrant and refugee children in B.C. schools.

Wes Knapp is an assistant director in the professional development division of the BCTF.

Stimulation for the Canadian Mosaic

DAN PROPP

I concur that immigrant students have stimulated the education sector of the economy. I believe that another aspect of stimulation has remained largely dormant, however.

Although the school system is said to place high priority on social values and humanity itself, immigrant children have been ignored. The wealth of culture, religious diversity, and experience that immigrant children bring to the Canadian mosaic is magnificent.

In the regular classroom, at least, the melting pot has become much more socially acceptable than has the mosaic.

To melt in and be cool within the Canadian context has been the paved, safe, but bland, road for immigrant students to follow.

If a child arrives from India, Poland, or Viet Nam, he or she is accepted, without the regular adult forms of prejudice. However, there seems to be an unspoken rule. You become typical Canadian. Better yet, you become even more than typical Canadian. Talk hockey, sing Christmas carols, forget the turban, change the name to something "normal," and everything is great.

I remember an exception of a few years ago. He was the only one at school with a turban. He never did cave in — not outwardly — but he did pay a price for his individuality.

What did I do to help? Not enough. Not nearly enough. I had lesson plans, previews, hot-dog orders, registers, photo orders, and a multitude of other things to do, which were unrelated to pure teaching. Maybe I was trying to be cool, too.

A recent revelation was the reaction of some immigrant students when I invited adults of a similar background to talk on the nation with the common heritage. Instead of being proud, my students from that cultural grouping became disruptive. Embarrassment or denial of their roots appeared to be the reason for their behavior.

As teachers, we must ensure that the Canadian Mosaic is a reality. Either we do, or we have no right to say the mosaic exists.

A possible starting point is to study the "Religions of Our Neighbors" series, by Surrey teacher Sid Bentley. Approved by the B.C. Ministry of Education, this excellent program relates the major religions that enrich the Canadian Mosaic: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Ba'hai, and Unitarianism. Copies are available from the ministry.

Dan Propp is an elementary school teacher in Surrey.

Teachers : Retired

Most of the teachers listed below retired in 1987. A few left teaching earlier but were granted deferred allowances. The federation extends to them all best wishes for the future.

William E. Abram, Cowichan
Harold J. Adams, Delta
Mary C. Addison, Vancouver
Edgar G. Albrecht, Coquitlam
Arden W. Allingham, Nanaimo
June Anderson, Cariboo-Chilcotin
Russell L. Anderson, Surrey
Kathleen M. Andres, Peace River North
Doris D. Andrews, Vancouver
Mary A. Andrews, Burnaby
Muriel E. Andrews, Greater Victoria
Brian C. Appleby, Mission
Marjorie G. Armstrong, North Vancouver
Douglas E. Arthurson, Central Okanagan
Suzanne M. Arundel-Ross, Surrey
John Ashbridge, Maple Ridge
Lila C. Ashurst, Burns Lake
Margaret L. Avison, Vancouver
Donna L. Baker, Maple Ridge
Alec Balano, Vancouver
Norman M. Banford, Surrey
Margaret J. Barrett, Greater Victoria
Peter R. Barrett, Burnaby
Constancia Basa, Bulkley Valley
Joseph J. Baur, Greater Victoria
Hildegarde Beairsto, Burnaby
Erika G. Becker, Vancouver
Edith M. Bell, Nelson
Emile L. Beltgens, Greater Victoria
Norman Berg, Campbell River
James Bertie, Greater Victoria
Thomas J. Black, Kamloops
John E. Boel, Greater Victoria
James J. Booth, Castlegar
Lawrence E. Booth, Saanich
Suzanne M. Boychuk, Vancouver
Gwendolyn H. Boyte, Sunshine Coast
John R. Brett, Campbell River
Gloria R. Britland, Burnaby
Allan W. Britton, Courtenay
Herbert R. Brown, Surrey
Isabella Brown, Vancouver
Lois A. Brown, Surrey
Marie T. Brownlees, Maple Ridge
Edmund B. Bryans, Greater Victoria
William D. Buck, Langley
Peter M. Bulatovich, Central Okanagan
Garnet A. Bulmer, Sooke
Joan K. Bulmer, Sooke
David E. Burke, Maple Ridge
Franklin Byron, Gulf Islands
Frederick W. Cadman, Burnaby
William G. Calderwood, Vancouver
Joanetta D. Cameron, Vancouver
John B. Cameron, Chilliwack
B. Elizabeth Campbell, Kamloops
Graham G. Campbell, Vancouver
Lillian Campbell, Richmond
Elizabeth A. Carnegie, Vancouver
Johannes J. Carolissen, Abbotsford
Mary Carter, Kamloops
Joanne S. Cartwright, Surrey
Thomas A. Cartwright, Burnaby
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Kids making a difference

A peer counselling program that works

TREVOR COLE

(Photos courtesy of Larson Elementary, North Vancouver)

Peer counsellors are students (from Grade 5 and up) who support or assist other students, helping them think through, and take steps to solve, problems on their own.

In the small elementary school where I spent some of my growing years, I often felt like a freak. My ears stuck out, and my long nose dominated my entire face. The gap between my two front teeth was so wide, I didn't have to black out any teeth to look like a clown. My curiosity about the opposite sex occurred about the same time as my ability to turn bright red at any moment. How clearly I remember the bully in Grade 7, the size of the Jolly Green Giant, who scared me to death by his threats. That was the year I learned to run.

As I recall my childhood, it all seems unreal. How could children today feel as miserable as I did? Yet I realize they do each time I talk to kids or when I ask a class, " How many of you here have ever felt lonely at school?"...and they all raise their hands.

Things just don't seem fair. We live in a world of smart machines that do incredible things, yet we do not provide kids with the human answers for human questions or the support needed to overcome those everyday problems. Like pimples, the problems never seem to disappear.

As teachers and counsellors how do we reach that great mass of kids in our school? Class problems increase as class size increases. We have less time to spend giving support to individual students, dealing with behavior problems, or helping kids develop social skills. I know we try hard, but lots of times we fall short of the mark. Kids hide inside themselves, or they are too shy to ask an adult, or it's simply not cool to show that something is bugging them.

Peer Counselling can help. We can enlists kids' help in creating a supportive and caring environment.

Peer counselling is a way for students to learn how to care about others and to put their caring into practice. It relies strongly on communication, problem solving and decision-making skills, which the peer counsellors learn and

practise during a series of training sessions. Peer counsellors are not professional counsellors. They do not give advice! They are students (from Grade 5 and up in our district) who support or assist other students, helping them think through, and take steps to solve, problems on their own.

It makes sense to use peer influence in this way. Who among us wouldn't find it easier to talk to someone who has similar interests and problems and is of similar age?

Both peer counsellors and the children they work with benefit from their interactions. The peer counsellors themselves gain self-confidence and self-worth, which frequently results in a positive impact on academic performance. They learn problem solving and interpersonal skills, which they can use throughout their entire lives. They learn to understand and interact with others and to value helping relationships.

I asked some peer counsellors to help me give a workshop called "Kids Helping Kids." Their part was to demonstrate problem solving and to answer participants' questions. Someone asked, "In what way has peer counselling been special for you?" The peer counsellor paused and said, "That's a very interesting question." After another pause, she said, "I guess what I have noticed most of all is that I listen rather than want to be the centre of attention, and what is special about that is, I have increased my circle of friends, friends who seem to value me as a person." Hearing her, it was all I could do to keep myself from jumping up and giving her a big hug!

The concept of children helping each other is not new to education. Cross-grade tutoring and monitor systems have long been used in schooling. We do not have to reinvent the wheel, but we do need systematically to train and prepare the helpers and rethink the ways in which kids can help us and each other create a positive school climate.

Preparing and training students to be helpers is essential. Helpers without training are task oriented and somewhat authoritarian. In their willingness to help, untrained students fall into the trap of either taking over or giving advice to the students they are helping.

Most teachers already possess the skills to train kids in counselling skills, and resources are available from local resource centers; an example is Systematic Training for Effective Teaching.

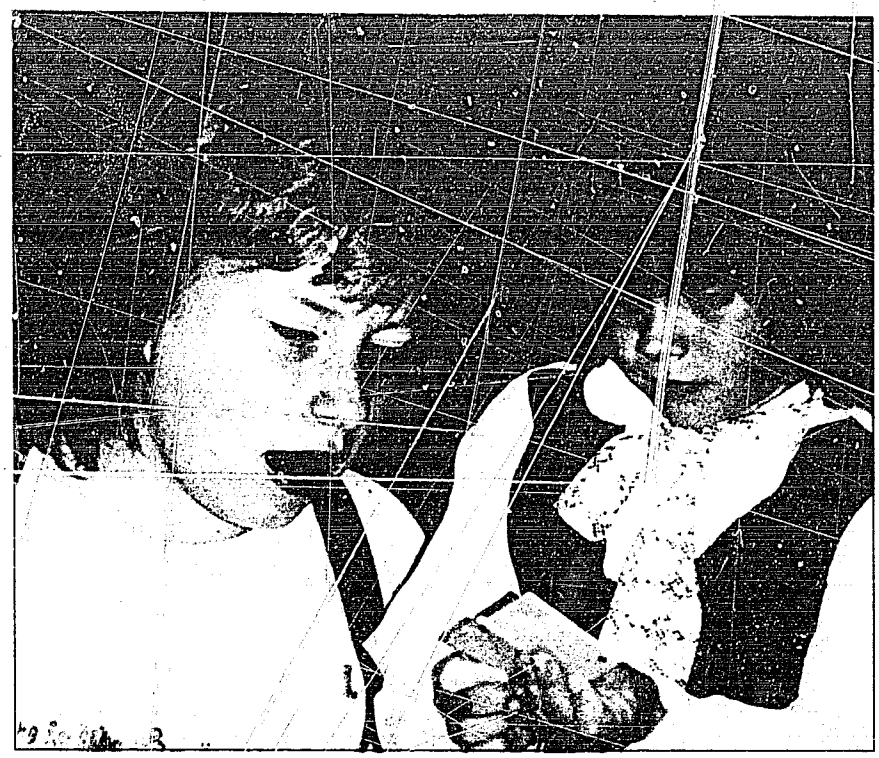
Training peer counsellors in our program takes approximately eight weeks. Each session lasts 45 minutes, and training includes the following topics: listening and communication skills; open and closed questions; problem-solving and decision-making skills; and conflict resolution skills.

Kids adopt new roles

Peer counsellors as special friends

I'm sure you identified with my growing pains. You could probably even remember names of students who were loners, scapegoats, and the school bully, and many other kids who did not fit the "normal" friendship patterns. Friendships are a major concern for children in elementary school, and they play an important part in their social development. If friendships are not nurtured, children take on unacceptable behavior, which alienates them even further from their peers.

Making new friends, feeling good about yourself, and helping others are the payoffs for both counsellee and counsellor.



The success of a peer-counselling program hinges on training the student counsellors in communication skills, decision-making and problem-solving skills, and conflict-resolution skills.

Peer counsellors can be assigned a buddy or special friend with whom they can play and work, share lunch or recess, someone they will listen to or be there for. Teaching social skills by modelling behavior is a powerful way to help the troubled child through the friendship-forming stage.

Peer counsellors as tutors

The training processs for peer counsellors allows them to learn problem-solving and communication skills. As tutors, peer counsellors help others learn these skills. Tutees receive individual attention and feel cared for. The result is a rewarding and successful experience.

Last year a letter appeared in my school mail box from a Grade 4 girl who had been in hospital for a while: "I want to thank you for getting Joy to help me. I was away for such a long time. Joy explained some of the things I missed, and we talked about other stuff too. It was hard work making up my school work, and she helped me a lot!"

The tutee emerges from the experience with the needed practice or skill but also with a change in attitude, motivation, or self concept.

Peer counsellors as problem solvers or conflict managers

Teachers are always having to resolve minor issues that crop up in the classroom or on the playground. Many times, conflicts have to be resolved during recess or lunch time. Just as you are relaxing and enjoying that cup of coffee, you hear "tap, tap" on the staff room door.

Peer counsellors learn conflict-resolution skills and can adequately mediate student problems by clarifying issues, exploring options and working toward a win/win situation for all concerned.

I remember one recess a Grade 1 boy led his friend into school. The child was crying buckets, as only a Grade 1 can. I was about to do my counsellor "stuff" when a young lady (a peer counsellor, of course) told me she would handle the problem. I went into the staff room, but my curiosity got the better of me, so I looked out to see what was happening. By this time they were all sitting on the floor, a third boy was there (who, I assumed, was the combatant), and all appeared to be giving their two cents' worth. After a short time, they all jumped up, and the two combatants put their arms around each other's shoulders and went back out to finish recess. When the peer counsellor came back to see me she just smiled as if to say, "I handled that!"

Other roles

Peer counsellors can take on many roles. Each school has its own unique and special makeup; therefore the utilization of peer counsellors can be tailored to suit the particular school. Peer counsellors have helped orient new students, facilitate parent/teacher interviews, supervise over the lunch hour, supervise games, and so on.

Effect on kids

Many incidents have shown me that schools become friendlier places through peer counselling. Older and younger students greet each other by name in the hallways. Teachers of younger grades report that their children feel more secure on the playground.

One year after a heavy snowfall, on the inner tube hill (previously the domain of the Grade 7s), the older pupils were sliding down the hill with a primary pupil or two clinging for dear life and enjoying the fun and association with the big kids.

Teachers have noticed a decline in problems on the playground at lunch and recess. Teachers note that the program developed a shift in attitude of the peer counsellors as the older kids in the school. It helped them become less self-oriented and more observant of others, resulting in a more friendly and caring environment.

Parents have been very strong supporters of our program and have also noticed marked differences in their children at home. We have had comments such as, "Since Kim became a peer counsellor she seems more open to talking and takes more interest in the family." Another said, "I have learned from my daughter how to explore options on points we disagree on and then come to a decision that suits us both."

By using peers as a resource to assist other students, we can reach the silent majority within the school — those kids with normal developmental problems.

I still have the gap in my teeth, but I have managed to camouflage my stick out ears with longer hair. And the nose doesn't look quite as large now that I have a moustache. My saving grace is that I have great supporters with whom I can now share my bag of problems; knowing I have some friends out there who care makes a big difference. I wish I'd had a peer counsellor when I went to school.

Trevor Cole, a special elementary counsellor with the Cowichan School District, invites those who are interested in peer counselling at the elementary and middle school levels to contact him with regard to resources for the training program "Kids Helping Kids."

Classified

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Financial Advice. Independent appraisals of: retirement savings plans, mutual funds, financial plans, business plans. Gord MacDonald, MBA, 943-2900 (evenings). Teachers working with teachers.

Through the Looking Glass: an opportunity to co-create supportive processes and discover new learning technologies. Susan Brown and Mary McDonough are teachers who operate an independent school. They are excited about the ways they have discovered to be in relationship with children and parents in the learning process, and want to share this with other professionals. The workshop topics are: consensus decision making, guided imagery, neuro-linguistic programming, ritual, movement and storytelling. Monthly day-long workshops are being planned. Please call the New Learning Society at 683-2015 for more information. Registration fee: $50.00.

Action for Excellence "Let's Get Motivated" Educational Conference, February 5, 1988, at the Vancouver Trade & Convention Centre. Super price of $55.00 or 2 for $87.00. Keynote speaker, Dr. Charles Garfield, University of California, Berkeley, author of No. 1 selling book "Peak Performers." Conference is guaranteed to inspire, motivate, enthuse and energize all teachers and administrators--Grades K-12. Register early as enrolment is limited. Super price! Super speakers! Super features! For further information and brochures contact Mr. Doug Downie, evenings: 437-6474; days: 987-3381. Don't miss this exciting opportunity!

REUNIONS

North Island Secondary School, Port McNeill. Teachers who taught at NISS in 1967-68 and interested in a 20-year reunion in June or July of 1988 with the grad class of 1968 are asked to contact John Ferrari, Box 188, Port McNeill, B.C., V0N 2R0, 956-3659 by January 1, 1988.

Reunion of the class of '39-'40 of the Victoria Normal School. If you were a member of that class, please write J.E. Tait, 731 Ridgeview Terrace, Kamloops, B.C., V2B 4G8, or telephone 376-9178. The present mailing list is of twenty-five names. We are planning a date in May 1990 in Victoria. An up-to-date report will be sent to all those on the mailing list. Included will be a copy of the mailing list and, if necessary, a questionnaire. We also have a complete class list if needed. Please get in touch. We need everyone's support.

Overseas Opportunities

World University Service of Canada (WUSC) is seeking teachers for two- and three-year contracts in:

Botswana **Bhutan** **Brunei**
Lesotho **Malawi** **Swaziland**

Positions are available in elementary, secondary, teacher training and administration.

Two-year contract: Qualifications: B.A. or B.Sc. in mathematics, science, agriculture, home economics, English, E S L, technical subjects (B.Ed. or certificate preferred).
Benefits: Airfare, resettlement, insurance, living allowance (approximates local salary).

Three-year contract: Qualifications: B.A. (Hons) or B.Sc. (Hons) in major subject area, and B.Ed. or teaching certificate. Minimum five years' teaching experience.
Benefits: Airfare, gratuity, insurance, local professional salary.

Curriculum vitaes are invited from people in other professions for current positions or for inclusion in WUSC's data bank.

WUSC also recruits volunteers on behalf of the **United Nations Volunteer Programme.**

Interested candidates should forward a curriculum vitae with three professional and three personal references to:

Recruitment Cocrdination Manager (BCT)
WUSC
P.O. Box 3000, Stn C,
Ottawa, Ontario
K1Y 4M8

New Zealand Teachers Exchange

Interested in working and living in New Zealand for up to one year? We currently have the following exchanges available:

- A Physical Education Teacher working in a High School in Te Anau.
- Husband and wife Elementary Teachers in a rural school near Whangarei.
- Husband and wife Elementary Teachers in Auckland.
- A West Otago teacher working with 8-12 year olds keen on Social Studies, Science, Maths, PE, Outdoor Education.
- Two jobs wanted, if possible, for a husband and wife living in the country near New Plymouth. Both work in the 5-12 year old range.
- A High School teacher working in Economics, Business Administration and Accounting. Lives in Auckland.
- An Intermediate (11-13 yr olds) School teacher in Wellington.
- Two positions wanted for a husband and wife living near Whangarei. The husband is an Intermediate Teacher (11-13 yr olds) with interests in Social Studies and PE. His wife is a High School teacher doing Economics, Business, Secretarial, Typing and PE.
A Psychologist working for our Education Department in the community. He lives in Gisborne.
- Three Primary School teachers, one in Tahape and one in Christchurch working in the 5-10 year old range, and one in Otaki.
- A female teacher working in the 10-13 year old range and living in Kaitaia. Subject interests are in Arts, Language and Sport.
- Two High School English teachers; one in Auckland and one in Christchurch.
- An Intermediate (11-13 yr olds) school teacher living in Levin. Subject interests; Drama, English, Social Studies.

For more information please write:
New Zealand Teachers Exchange
c/o Janet Parsons
#235–1665 West Broadway
Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1X1

BCTF Candidates for the

Council of the College of Teachers

DON CREAMER
COLLEGE ZONE 1:
EAST KOOTENAY
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
25 years teaching Grades 9-12 Social Studies, Kimberley

I have a long record of serving teachers locally, in the East Kootenays and at the provincial level, and I am committed to ensuring that the college serve the best interests of teachers.

(ACCLAIMED AS OF OCTOBER 15, 1987)

ROBERT JACKSON
COLLEGE ZONE 2:
WEST KOOTENAY
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
18 years teaching secondary Social Studies/Law

The College Council must ensure that the college serve the interests of teachers while keeping costs to a minimum, and without usurping the responsibilities of the federation.

WESLEY NICKEL
COLLEGE ZONE 3:
OKANAGAN
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
13 years teaching Grades 2-5

I believe the college must respond to needs of practising teachers in certification and standards for teacher education. College fees should be kept low. Teachers should expect fair treatment and the protection of individual rights in the college.

SHEILA PARK
COLLEGE ZONE 4:
MAINLINE CARIBOO
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
16 years, currently teaching Kindergarten

The College of Teachers must be structured within the guidelines of policies and zones developed and adopted by public school teachers in B.C. It must be an organization that benefits teachers and education. If elected, I shall work to achieve that goal.

MIKE CAMPBELL
COLLEGE ZONE 5:
FRASER VALLEY
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
17 years, currently teaching English/Social Studies

We will create an organization that will effectively handle teacher certification and training — but not compete with our established organization. I pledge to work to minimize the growth of the college, its fees and its bureaucracy by confining it to teacher certification and education.

PETER ELLIS
COLLEGE ZONE 6:
SURREY
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
23 years in teaching, 16 in Surrey

I support the concept of the college as envisaged by the federation. While the college has a role to play in certification and teacher training, I believe that the federation should continue to provide its excellent services in professional development and personnel services. My major goal is to ensure that professional development will remain locally based rather than centrally imposed.

MARGARET WOODLANDS
COLLEGE ZONE 7:
DELTA/RICHMOND
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
14 years including experience as teacher, local association president, and principal teacher

I believe the college is our opportunity to control our destiny as a profession and determine the conditions of entry. The college should ensure the appropriate standards of practice for the profession.

JAMES (JIM) KILLEEN
COLLEGE ZONE 8:
VANCOUVER
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
32 years teaching in Vancouver

I believe that my experience with teacher organizations at all levels enables me to protect and enhance teacher interests in this new College. My experience with the BCTF's Teacher Education and Certification Committee, the Provincial Joint Board of Teacher Education, and the T.Q.S. also provide related background.

DEBBIE GREGG
COLLEGE ZONE 9: METRO
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
10 years teaching primary grades in Coquitlam

My focus for the College of Teachers will be to ensure that well-designed teacher education programs are provided, a modest fee exists, and personnel procedures are fair and contain proper appeal avenues.

PAULINE GALINSKI
COLLEGE ZONE 10: SOUTH COAST
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
26 years, currently a Grade 7 teacher

As a college councillor, I will utilize the experience I have gained serving my colleagues in many areas of the BCTF to fairly represent the needs and wishes of the teachers and administrators in Zone 10 in the College of Teachers.

(ACCLAIMED AS OF OCTOBER 15, 1987)

COLIN SCOTT
COLLEGE ZONE 11: NORTH-CENTRAL
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
27 years as teacher and principal teacher in Prince George

If elected as the North Central representative on the College Council, I will concentrate my efforts on ensuring that the College operates to the benefit of the teaching profession.

HARVEY HARRISON
COLLEGE ZONE 12: NORTH
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
18 years teaching, specifically in secondary mathematics and counselling

I think that the college should focus on teacher certification and developing standards for teacher education and thus avoid the creation of another expensive bureaucracy. Fees must be kept low by avoiding capital expenditures and by delegating P.D. to those who have been doing it best for decades. The college must have credibility with all concerned.

G.W. (BILL) BROADLEY
COLLEGE ZONE 13: SOUTH ISLAND
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
30 years teaching Grades 6-12 in Victoria

At minimum additional cost or disruption, I will work to ensure that we have a voice consistent with principles democratically determined by us over the years through our federation.

SHIRLEY BONFIELD
COLLEGE ZONE 14: NORTH ISLAND
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
32 years teaching Grades 4-10

The Teaching Profession Act must be made to work within the legislation but framed to our needs. I am dedicated to seeing the intent of the Bargaining and Professional Rights Task Force Report become a reality. The college must not become a pervasive bureaucracy. It must ensure that due process and access to the procedures of the college are in place.

JOE PANICHELLI
COLLEGE ZONE 15: NORTH COAST
B.C. EXPERIENCE:
9 years as elementary and secondary teacher, specializing in special education

I will represent teachers in the North Coast by ensuring that college fees are kept to a minimum and that present functions of the BCTF remain with the BCTF.

Teacher Stress

New realities about old myths

BRYAN HIEBERT

Noise drifts into the hallway from several classrooms. In one room Mr. H. ASSLED is distraught. He has tried everything he knows to get his class settled down. Nothing seems to work. They just feel rowdy today. He is especially annoyed because the principal and superintendent have made surprise visits to several classrooms, and today could be his day. Mr. H. ASSLED doesn't know how to get more co-operation, but he wants everyone to be quieter. He may have to resort to being a heavy.

Down the hall, Ms. B. LASÉ also has a noisy class. The noise presents no particular problem to Ms. B. LASÉ because she knows children often make a bit of noise as they work. Further, she feels that if she wanted to, she could step in at any moment and quiet the class to a whisper. She has heard about the administration's surprise visit and knows that they would just as likely interpret the noise level as a healthy sign of children's enthusiasm for their work. Therefore she has let the noise level rise a little higher than she normally might. She might as well hedge her bets and make sure she gets a favorable report, if the administrators do happen to come in.

Further down the hall, Ms. E. AGER is having a fine day. She felt particularly enthusiastic about this lesson, and hoped that the students would really get into it. She is happy that the student reaction is positive. The whole class seems to be keen and eager to learn; they are becoming more excited about the lesson as they work on it. She hopes that the administrators will pick this day to pay their surprise visit to her classroom.

In these scenarios, we have three different teachers in similar situations, but having very different reactions. All three cases show potential classroom-management problems and the impending threat of evaluation. One person reacts by feeling quite upset, another is seemingly unconcerned, and the third is actually enjoying the whole situation. Mr. H. ASSLED is distressed; Ms. B. LASÉ and Ms. E. AGER are feeling little or no stress. Why? Stress does not reside in a situation but from our interpretation of the situation: our perceptions of the demands of the situation, our ability to cope with the demands, and the consequences we attach to either not coping or coping.

Recently, I completed a major review of Canadian research on teacher stress. My request for research reports yielded 40 responses from school boards, provincial teacher and school trustee associations, and university researchers. This suggests that much research has been done on teacher stress in Canada. In the majority of cases, the pattern of stressors Canadian teachers report is similar to that reported in other countries. Classroom management and time management usually head the list of things that teachers report as being stressful. They are followed by personal interactions: interactions with teachers, parents, colleagues, or administrators. However, even the "Most Stressful" events rarely had average scores above the midpoint of the scale. Thus, even though classroom management, time management, and interpersonal situations are reported as being the "Most Stressful", they do not represent extreme stressors for most teachers.

At first glance this seems a contradiction. The demands teachers face seem to be increasing, yet teachers do not report correspondingly high stress levels. By examining current thinking about the nature of stress, we can clarify this apparent contradiction. Most contemporary writers agree that stress results from the interaction of a person's coping resources and the demand characteristics of the situation in which the person is. When people perceive themselves as having sufficient skill to handle a situation to their satisfaction, they feel little stress. When people perceive their coping resources as being inadequate they experience more stress. The greater the mismatch between the demands of the situation and people's evaluation of their coping abilities, the greater the stress.

Thus, one teacher might feel threatened by parent-teacher interviews, feeling a lack of interpersonal skill in one-to-one situations. Another teacher might feel perfectly at ease talking to parents, but feel stress in group discussions. An observer might say that a person is performing an acceptable or even superb job; however, as long as the teacher believes a situation exceeds his/her skills, he/she would experience some stress. The stress levels would vary, according to the inequity between the teacher's evaluation of the importance of the situation, the size of the demand, the potential consequences, and the teacher's ability to meet those demands satisfactorily.

Thus, the belief that teaching is inherently stressful is largely a myth. Stress comes not from jobs (or any other demands) per se, but from people's perceived inability to cope satisfactorily with the demands they face. Yet, the coping resources of Canadian teachers are not unlimited. If the demands associated with teaching are allowed to rise unchecked, they may overtax the coping resources of most teachers. If this happens, teachers' stress will rise sharply, resulting in a sharp decline in the performance and health of teachers and a lowered quality of education.

Most of what is written about teacher stress supports the claim that teaching is stressful. However, a recent survey of articles on teacher stress revealed that about 78% of all published articles were merely statements of opinion and had no data to support their claims. Studies that did report data were mostly of the survey variety: teachers were asked to identify

the things they found stressful. Virtually all of the studies assumed that some aspects of teaching were stressful, and the task of the researcher was to uncover the source of stress. In most of the studies, teachers reported their stress levels to be low. The most frequent pattern consisted of about 30% of the sample reporting high levels of stress, about 25% reporting little or no stress, and the balance, somewhere in the middle. The average was around 2 on a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 = extreme stress), suggesting that teachers, as a group, do neither find their jobs very stressful nor stress free. In the few studies that reported comparative data, teachers reported being no more stressed than other professional groups. The reports of Canadian teachers are consistent with this general pattern.

Thus the belief that teaching is a stressful job, and that teachers, as a group, are stressed, appears to be largely without substance. Some teachers *are* stressed, and their suffering is real. However, most teachers do not report being unduly stressed. As teachers and teachers of teachers, we should avoid contributing to the myth that teaching is stressful. If teachers hear too often that teaching is stressful they might start to believe it. Worse yet, they might start to attribute any stress they feel to the *job* instead of muster the coping resources to handle the demands they face. This risks leading to a self-fulfilling prophecy in which teachers expect to be stressed and, as a result, misinterpret the ordinary demands of their jobs as excessive. Such a state would leave teachers more vulnerable to being stressed.

Dealing with stress

What can be done when teachers feel stressed? To answer this question, we must refer again to the interactional nature of stress. If a person's stressful reaction results from an inequity between the demands of the situation and the person's ability to meet those demands, and if we wish to change that reaction to make it less stressful, then we can focus on changing the situation per se, on increasing the skills that a person can bring to the situation, or on changing the person's reaction to the situation, to make it less intense. Stressor management strategies help people control stress by either altering the demand characteristics of the situation or by increasing the skills that people bring to the situation. Stress-management strategies help people react in a less emotional manner to demanding situations.

Some situations are so demanding that they overtax most people's coping resources. Physical assault, being fired, or teaching a class of obnoxious or aggressive students are examples of such demands. In such cases, it would be important to focus on reducing the demand to a level people can handle or selecting teachers uniquely able to handle the demand. For example, distributing obnoxious students across several classes instead of clustering them in one class might reduce the demand on any one teacher to a manageable proportion.

In other cases, the job demands might be reasonable, but the teacher might lack the skill to handle them effectively. Having a few disruptive students in one's class, leading group discussions, being open and frank with parents of difficult children, or defusing parent or student anger are examples of such demands. In such cases, learning the instructional skills for handling the situation more effectively will help teachers avoid being stressed. For example, when teachers learn more effective classroom-manage-

ment techniques, they find disruptive students less stressful.

People who have acquired a fluent repertoire of assertiveness skills become less stressed when they interact with angry people. It would be silly for teachers in such situations to learn stress management strategies like deep relaxation. To teach people how to be calm in the middle of bedlam when they could learn how to avoid the bedlam in the first place is senseless.

In some cases, it is sensible to learn to alter stressful responses: the demands of the situation are reasonable or, in rare cases, the demands are excessive, but it is impossible to alter the situation or the person has the skill to handle the situation satisfactorily and does handle the situation in an appropriate manner but still feels stressed. Teachers in such situations could benefit from the strategies most stress-management courses offer. They might learn progressive relaxation, self-hypnosis, or transcendental meditation, aimed at lowering physiological reactiveness. Alternatively, they might learn through reading or counselling, to make their thinking patterns more self-supportive and less self-denigrating.

Mr. H. ASSLED, whom we saw in the opening scene, would likely profit from some plan aimed at controlling his stress level. The place to start would be with an analysis of Mr. H. ASSLED's classroom-management skills. If Mr. H. ASSLED has an adequate repertoire of classroom management skills, then it would be appropriate to examine his other instructional skills, and whether the instructional strategy he was using (seat work, group discussion, etc.) was the best one for the particular lesson and the particular class. If Mr. H. ASSLED has a decent store of instructional skills, then perhaps some physical aspect of the class needs attention. He might rearrange the seating plan or request that some of the students be transferred to other classes. When such attempts to cope are exhausted or found to have little effect, it is time to explore ways to help Mr. H. ASSLED be more calm in an unpleasant situation. Perhaps when Mr. H. ASSLED learns to be less upset when things are not going as anticipated, he will be able to use more effectively the instructional skills he has.

Although much of the initial furor about teacher stress seems to have subsided, frequent reports still suggest that teachers are stressed people and that the job is the culprit. No job, including teaching, is solely responsible for *making* people stressed. Stress always comes from the same source: a mismatch between the demands of the situation, and the person's real or perceived ability to meet those demands. Although the demands in teaching continue to grow, most teachers, so far, are able to handle the increased demands without becoming unduly stressed. A change of focus is needed: away from the increasing demands and the resulting discouragement and toward the preparation, competence, and general high skill levels that enable most teachers to handle the demands effectively. This paper doesn't licence school boards and administrators to heap even greater demands on teachers, for to do so might well exceed most teachers' ability to cope. This paper suggests that we place the focus of teachers, school administrators, school boards, and members of the public on the capable and competent job teachers are doing.

A bibliography is available on request.

Bryan Hiebert is currently on faculty at the University of Calgary.

Continued from page 28

March

Dear Mom,

I've decided that I'm not ready to quit yet! I made it half way through the year. NOW there's not enough time to do all the things I want to do. Some of my frustrations have lessened, while others have intensified. I feel much better about my courses and the direction they're taking, even though I'm still constantly questioning what I'm doing. The kids are total MASTERS at questioning, too, especially the relationship between what we're doing and the real world, the world of regular grades.

One of the most difficult things I've had to do so far is to answer my own questions about where to draw certain lines. For example, I didn't know I had such strong feelings about arranged marriages until Jasbir came to me and told me that she wouldn't be continuing school because her marriage had been arranged. Initially I was shocked. My reaction was, "But that happens only in old movies." Not so. I admit that several other feelings went through my system as well. After the intial shock, I felt emotions like disbelief and outrage. YOU know how independent I am. WELL, the thought of having a marriage IMPOSED on me is beyond belief. AND I knew I had no right to impose my cultural values on Jasbir, regardless of what I was feeling.

And then there is Jog, from Afghanistan. He's a nice boy who was doing very well in school, and I was working hard to help him move forward as quickly as possible. I had known that money was a problem with his family, but the impact of that became VERY clear when he HAD to take a part-time job. He is employed with a fast-food chain, and he MUST work to fit their schedule, not MINE. While this is understandable, his school work is suffering terribly. I'm never sure when he's going to be at school, and it's hard to remember whether he was present when I taught a particular concept!

Lines must be drawn concerning school work, too. For example, what should the pass mark be for ESL courses? Compared to what? How much homework should I give, particularly when I know that some kids won't get it done because they're working? How lenient can I be with the working kids before I lose credibility with the other students? (Gary, from India, has got to be one of the nicest young men I've ever met, and is supporting his family of four females because his father is dead. He comes to class regularly and falls asleep in school frequently. Am I supposed to get upset because he doesn't have a particular grammar exercise done?) Such anxiety-producing issues have made me stay awake many nights.

The attitudes of the students' parents toward school are different, too. Many think school is school and home is home and never the two should mix. They are used to coming to a school only when called by the principal because of a major problem. The whole idea of speaking to the teachers and learning about their child's progress is foreign to them. This is another area in which the multicultural workers prove invaluable, bridging the gap between our worlds.

Something else that has upset me is the attitude some of my esteemed colleagues have about teaching ESL. One person said to me, "Teaching ESL is sitting back drinking coffee!" I couldn't believe it. The other extreme is people who look at me sympathetically because I'm teaching "those weirdos." They couldn't be more wrong!

That people have no idea how difficult it is to prepare a student to cope with the regular grades could be a compliment in its own backward way. We work hard to help the kids reach a level of proficiency that enables them to do well when they DO go into regular grades.

I've also decided that some education professors at the university were wrong on a couple of points regarding teaching. Reality is quite different from university. There I was in a passive role, listening to others; now I'm in an active role and others are listening to me. I can remember being told REPEATEDLY that one must never show failure or weakness in anything, but my experience with the students leads me to the opposite view. For example, you KNOW that math is not my strong point; yet I find myself teaching it. There's a certain gratification in tackling problems together, rather than my being expected to be perfect, knowing all the answers. I've also found it beneficial to let the kids do the teaching when they know, and it forces them to use English, to speak clearly and in such a way that others understand.

I've become more involved with and aware of family circumstances than I'd ever dreamed possible. Many of the students tell stories of their families openly, honestly, and with no sense of play for sympathy. BUT THE STORIES. I'm the

one devastated by what they're telling me. What they accept as a fact of life leaves me with nightmares. Things beyond my wildest imagination. For example, Vinh and Ha left home when they were 13 and 16 respectively, walked through Vietnam at night, walked through Cambodia and down the Malay peninsula to get to a refugee camp. The camp happened to be one of the worst, but they survived. They were in that camp for nearly two years, out of touch with their family, on their own, and trying to get to a free country. And then, to make matters more difficult, when they were finally accepted into Canada, Ha was sick, and Vinh had to come on his own or all of the family plans would have been destroyed. Can you even begin to imagine what he was feeling or thinking? I can't, because I can't even begin to relate to that kind of need, desire, or pressure.

And then there is Juan, who at age 15, was given the family responsibility of getting his five younger brothers and sisters out of El Salvador in the dead of night to a refugee camp in Guatemala. There he had to look after them until their parents came (It took EIGHT MONTHS before that happened.). None of these children had ever been to school before, and when we asked them about it, we were told that it had been too dangerous to go to school. No small wonder they have street smarts and find adjusting to Canadian society difficult.

There are so many other stories I can tell you about but I think I'll wait until we're together.

Even though I am still concerned with the lack of a specific curriculum, I'm also beginning to see some positive sides to it. The lack of a specific curriculum allows me to be flexible, to concentrate on areas needing attention, and integrate what I'm doing with what my colleagues are doing. For example, if they are working on particular things in science or social studies, I can prepare my grammar exercises to reinforce what they're doing and still achieve what I need to do. The system works well that way. And as I think about the kids, they are DEFINITELY the plusses. Seeing their progress academically and personally is incredibly rewarding, and enough, I think, to keep me going for the rest of the year.

Will close for now and CONTINUE marking — no end in sight. Thanks again for listening.

With much love,
Your amazed and confused offspring,

June

Dear Mom,

I made it! I didn't think this day would ever arrive, or that I would be here if it did. You have no idea the number of days I wanted to toss in the towel but then I'd start to think of the kids and what they'd been through. THAT'S when I knew I couldn't stop.

In some ways, I feel a lack of accomplishment regarding my personal and departmental objectives, and I hope that next year the feeling will lessen. Simultaneously, I feel very satisfied with particular things I did this year. There are very specific points of reward and satisfaction about the kids being able to DO certain things with a high success rate, the things I'd been teaching all year. In looking at their work, however, I still have to ask myself how many steps forward I REALLY took. I know that I moved myself and the kids forward, but I'm not sure where I am now. Maybe in another couple of years, I'll have some answers.

My young, "superior" Chinese friend left in February, only to be replaced by Mohammed. He is a young man who arrived from Afghanistan in late February. He had been sponsored into Canada by a friend and was unsure of where his parents were — he knew that they were trying to get out of Afghanistan but didn't know whether or not they had made it. If they had, they would be in Italy. Mohammed was having all kinds of problems with the Canadian Immigration authorities because of his status, and would take time off of school to go to try to straighten out things. Understandable, but unfortunately he hadn't explained where he would go. It was always "I have an appointment," which was true. But try explaining that to the 19 others when his work wasn't done and it appeared that he came to class only when he wanted to.

This year has been a series of highs and lows. Let me fill you in on some of the kids I've mentioned. Carol left to live with her sister in Edmonton and to, I hope, continue her education; Phat is still with me in ESL classes and is progressing well; Hoa moved on to regular grades and is doing incredibly well; Julie and Robert will be going into regular grades next year; Gary dropped out of school because he couldn't cope with everything going on in his life; and Thanh, dear Thanh, is still struggling along. I don't know what to do with him in terms of a program. He has so many weaknesses with the fundamentals of the English language but he has only a short time left in the public-school system. And I truly think it will be his last opportunity for formal schooling; he doesn't have the money to pay for more education. The money he makes from working he sends back to his parents in Vietnam to try to make their lives easier.

We, as a department, have a number of concerns we're addressing. They revolve around the fact that the students don't take their ESL work and courses seriously. It all seems to be a game or a big joke to them. This is reflected in their attitude toward ESL as a whole, and is demonstrated by their lackadaisical attitude toward homework and completing in-class assignments. But, by the end of the year, some of the students seemed to be more aware of THEIR responsibility to learn English, and I hope they will help us set other students on the right track early next year.

The plusses to this whole job do far outweigh the negatives. Among the greatest are the rapport developed between the students and me, the feeling of family among the group, the sense of unity among the students cross-culturally, and the growth in the student's self-confidence. At the beginning of the year, students relied tremendously on the teachers. Now, we are like parents learning to let go, with confidence that the students will move forward. Teaching ESL has got to be a form of condensed parenting. In one year, I've had more ups, downs, highs, lows, disappointments, successes, and surprises than I'd ever dreamed possible.

I'm still concerned about the lack of curriculum, but must raise the question of whether or not it's possible to have just ONE curriculum for all. Given the diversity of what the students bring to us, I'm not sure. Moving students in and out of all levels throughout the year also takes its toll. I had the feeling for months and months that I wasn't getting anywhere, and then WHAM, all of a sudden everything clicked for the students and they took off in their language usage and comprehension: it's incredible!

Now, before the seats are even cold, I already have many plans for next year, new ideas as well as ways to do things differently, and, I hope, better. One thing is certain: THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER FIRST YEAR FOR ME!

Must rush now; I have report cards to finish. I hope this time I can fill them out properly! Thanks for 'hearing' all the things that aren't written.

Much love from
Your hopeful offspring,

Catherine Eddy is currently the ESL consultant for the Vancouver School District. Elizabeth Eisner and Kim Rebane are ESL teachers at David Thompson Secondary School, Vancouver.

Hargreaves' Musings

Good old chalk!

GEOFF HARGREAVES

Chalk is utopian; it aims to improve on creation. It is a white light that strives to transcend the darkness that knoweth it not. Hence, in part, its frequent priggishness.

Like a stethoscope around a doctor's neck, chalk says more and less than it means. It is a crude slogan, a comic vulgarity, a bold archaism. It bypasses a thousand subtleties. It is cousin to happy, fat people, impossible in-laws, golden-hearted hookers, and national anthems.

It parades itself as basic decency in the shape of a stick, a fossilized rectitude. Therefore it doesn't attend workshops. With the weary air of a traditionalist, stranded on a sea of valueless modernities, chalk abandons workshops and seminars to its upstart rivals, the blunt-nosed felt pen, the typed handout and too-fluent scribblings on transparent acetate. But its antiquarian snobbery masks a death-wish. It sneers when it just wants to be left alone.

Despite its air of propriety, chalk is loud and fast. There's no "Take your Time," no "These words will outlast the Rockies." Chalk bellows, "Grab this while you can!" To remain in place for more than a few hours, chalk has to descend to the indignity of begging: "Please leave on," a pathetic cry that only highlights the willful attempt to resist the ephemerality of its nature.

Compared with acts of intimate penmanship in diaries, letters, and notebooks, there is a public confidence in chalk, a scorn for private timidities, almost a moral severity in its outspokenness, suggesting a confident possession of the truth. Chalk's former misuse as an inscriber of obscene messages on gym walls has been properly assumed by its sleazy neighbor, the spraycan. Cleared of this imposition, chalk feels it is the last of the just, a feeling it shares with others who are sexually retired.

Under pressure from a bully, chalk will snap and can scream horribly, even produce blood under the fingernail. But generally, it is a model of consideration. Especially in the fingers of a left-handed teacher, it discloses its wisdom slowly, visibly, at a human rate. Chalk's workings constitute a narrative, a temporal art; it does not overwhelm with the abrupt all-at-onceness of a handout, nor does it create distrust in the manner of an overhead projector, its first lines revealed, the subsequent ones masked like a bandit.

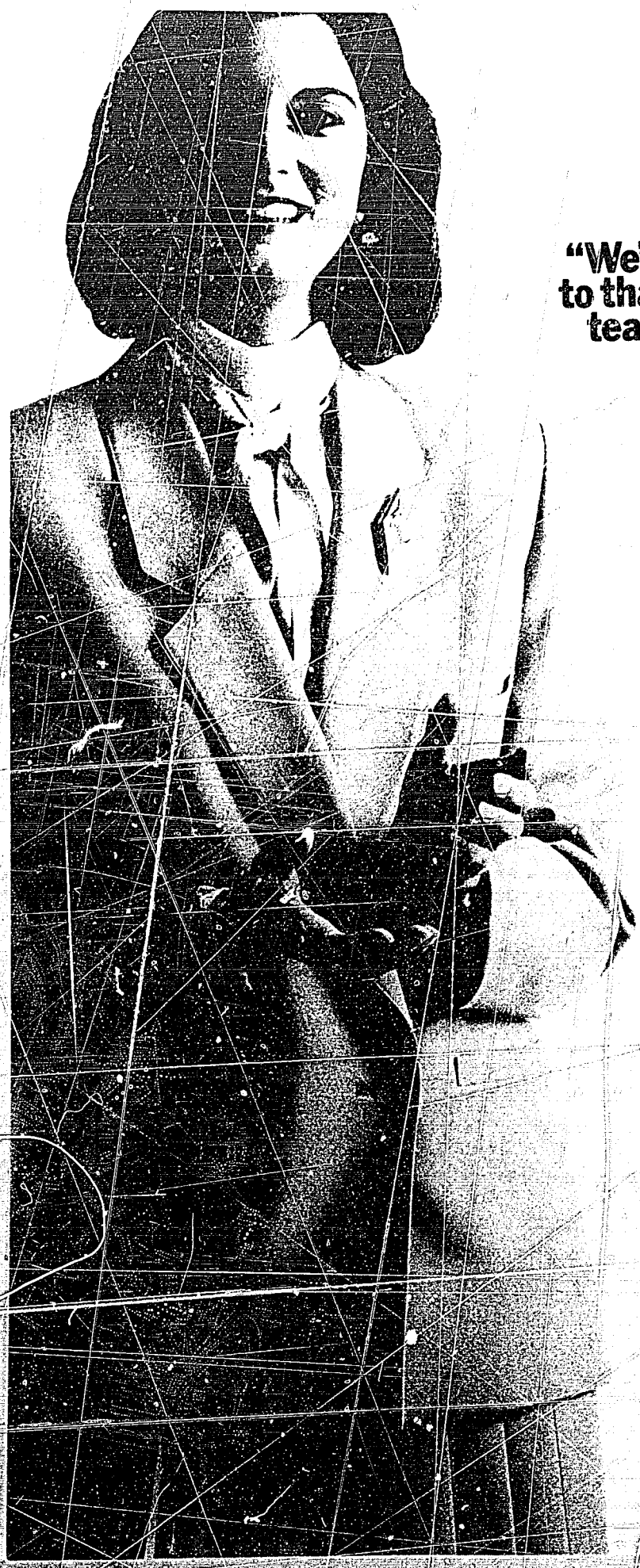
Chalk is as melancholy as cigar butts and jilted lovers. It used itself to give itself. Every stick lifted white and tapering and crisp-edged from among its companions, all standing on guard for truth, ends as a blunted stump, ugly and resented. Chalk longs to give itself entirely, to spend its last atoms in service of the ideal, to disappear absolutely in an act of dusty love. Chalk is a thwarted Buddhist.

Chalk is ashamed of its sisters, the pinks, greens, and yellows, that linger on a teacher's lapel like a harlot's cosmetics.

Chalk knows its place. It protests being dumped in pockets. A soldier primed for action, chalk turns nasty when transported idly around in civilian pockets. It fouls its nest. It respects only the front line. Upright in its box, awaiting orders, or prostrate, like a sniper in its trench at the blackboard's base, chalk knows where it is. It hates to turn up at a trendy party on Saturday night, and it leaves patent signs of its disapproval on the fingerpads of its abuser. Chalk is a workaholic; it has no time for ego-preening dilettantes.

Chalk is a survivor. Ever since it replaced the stick in the sand, its love-hate relationship with the slate and its siblings has thwarted time. It has little to fear from the computer. It admires the computer's myopic cleverness in an obligatory sort of way, but ultimately it isn't impressed. Few of us look at chalk with informal gratitude for its grimly unremunerative work. But so what? Chalk isn't done for yet. Not by a long chalk.

Geoff Hargreaves, a teacher at Cowichan Senior Secondary School in Duncan and a member of *The B.C. Teacher* editorial board, writes this column for the magazine.



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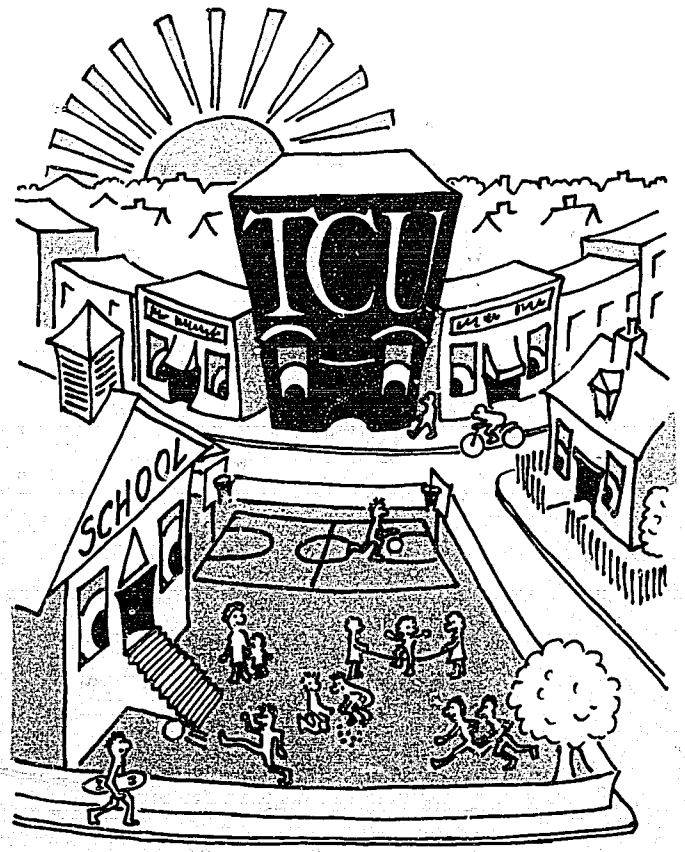

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