Let our networking expand to right the wrongs!

by Susan Lambert, BCTF first vice-president

As the first ever collaboration between the BCTF and the B.C. Federation of Labour, the April 3–5 Rights Not Wrongs conference represents a historic gathering of human rights and social justice activists from across the province. The idea crystallized last year during a meeting of the B.C. Federation of Labour Human Rights Committee when it was discovered that both the BCFed and the BCTF intended to hold spring 2008 social justice conferences. It seemed logical to embark on a joint venture with a focus on networking across unions to strengthen our voices.

Keynote speakers Stephen Lewis, Dr. Paul Shaker, Jinny Sims, and Adelle Blackett will doubtless inspire and move us to take action. Panelists Grand Chief Ed Johns, Emmanuel Rozental, Colombian physician, surgeon and human rights activist, and Tara Scurr from Amnesty International will further focus us by sharing their lenses on human rights, from local to national to global. An amazing lineup of workshops ranging from a discussion of the legalization of prostitution, to the rights of migrant workers and in-home caregivers, to the changing face of Canadian foreign policy will provide interactive opportunities to further our discussions about what needs to happen next.

But the most important thing about the conference is that it will provide all of us, teachers, trade unionists, and activists from all corners of the province, the chance to connect with one another.
A driving motivation for the conference is to build cross-union provincial networks of activists currently engaged in creating change to make right what is presently wrong and, in the process, move us toward a more socially just society. To this end, having taken inspiration and new knowledge from the workshops, panelists, and keynotes, all conference attendees will be invited to meet in smaller groups to discuss and share projects, seek support from each other, and plan for future joint initiatives. Interest/issue-based networking groups will be Aboriginal peoples, international solidarity, LGBTQ, peace, women’s issues, people with disabilities, workers of colour, poverty, and transforming unions—social justice unionism. Through sharing stories, expertise, and strengths in their chosen networking groups, participants will come to better know sister and brother activists from around the province who are working though their unions on a variety of programs to achieve social justice and strengthen human rights.

Anticipating the outcomes of this conference, I imagine the possibilities of the exponential power of all of us working together. That is the kind of power that can stop war, that brought women the right to choose, and same sex couples the right to marry. It is with such possibility and hope that we planned this conference and it is that sense of possibility and hope that will buoy our ongoing activism after the conference, at home and across British Columbia. Individually we're strong and together we can only be stronger.

What an exciting prospect!

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**Editor’s note**

*Marian Dodds*
*BCTF staff*

Welcome to this special issue of the BCTF Social Justice newsletter. In this issue, prepared for the *Rights, Not Wrongs* conference, we provide a comprehensive look at our new Committee for Action on Social Justice, appointed in the fall of 2007 and comprised of 20 members, each assigned to one of five specific action groups. As you leaf through these pages you will learn about these action groups, who is on them, and what these amazing teacher volunteers do within their union. Notice too how many outside groups we network with and support. Together with community groups, NGOs, and other unions, we have a long and proud history of taking action toward ending poverty, homophobia, bullying, violence against women, sexism, and racism in BC and beyond. We continue to be pro-active promoters of peace, global education, and environmental sustainability. Teachers have always found themselves working to create a more equitable world for their students and themselves. The BCTF is renowned for social justice advocacy and with this new and enlarged committee expect to see an even higher profile for this important work. To assist us in moving forward we are pleased to launch, on the back page of this issue, the social justice lens, a way to view our work with an aim of increasing our ability to achieve a more socially just world for ourselves and the children we teach. We invite all those attending the *Rights, Not Wrongs* conference to connect with us, discover common goals, and share both realities and dreams so that in solidarity we can create the world we want.
The Committee for Action on Social Justice (CASJ)

- advises the BCTF on social justice issues
- reviews and promotes social justice workshops
- liaises with community groups and NGOs
- develops policy on emerging issues
- reviews and develops materials for classroom teachers
- develops and supports networks of social justice contacts in the following action group areas: Antiracism, Poverty, Status of Women, LGBTQ, Peace and Global Education
- co-ordinates the work of the five action groups

BCTF Committee for Action on Social Justice

Front: Jinny Sims (EC liaison), Joan Merrifield, Roz Johns, Michael Aaku
Middle: Chris King, Greg Van Vugt, Stacey Kemp, Marian Dodds (Staff), Nancy Ingersoll, George Picken, Treena Gooleff, Karen Kilbride, Mavee Moran
Back: Louise Gonsalvez, Susan Ruzic, Janet Steacy-Stephenson, John Peterson, Greg Laing, Jane Turner (Staff)
Missing: Carol Siriani, Tina Anderson, Ilse Hill, Judith Turner

Be part of the solution

If you are not already involved in your local’s Social Justice initiatives, contact your local president and ask how you can connect with the local Social Justice Committee.

“CASJ” in action at the BCTF
Sparwood Secondary School was one of the seven schools in British Columbia fortunate to be invited to pilot the new Social Justice 12 elective course this year. The aim of the course is to raise students’ awareness of social injustices, encourage them to analyze situations from a social justice perspective, and provide students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical framework to advocate for a socially just world. This BC Ministry of Education authorized course provides a space for students to understand the significance of statistical research in the fields of social science, public policy, and political advocacy. As informed citizens, students can better understand the layers of oppression and many “isms” such as: racism, feminism, heterosexism. The course tackles contemporary and relevant issues from local and global perspectives.

The highlight of the course for my students was to attend the Africa Forum hosted by the College of the Rockies. The class spent a day with representatives from Kenya to discuss the United Nations Millennium Goals, programs to alleviate the HIV/AIDS epidemic, microcredit financing, and the eradication of poverty. Students also studied Iris Chang and the Nanking genocide. They campaigned for an apology for the atrocities that happened to the Chinese comfort women and celebrated when Motion 291 passed in the House of Commons on November 28, 2007. The class discussed Ishmael Baeh’s book A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier, examined the film Mighty Times: The Legacy of Rosa Parks, researched what countries enforced persecution, jail, or execution for gay sexual orientation, and made posters for the December 6 White Ribbon Campaign. The topics were endless and the engagement ceaseless. The course creates lively debate, concern, and compassion.

Robert F. Kennedy once stated, “It is from the numberless diverse acts of courage and belief that human history is shaped. Each time a man (sic) stands up for an ideal or acts to improve the lot of others or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope, and crossing each other from a million different centers of energy and daring, those ripples build a current that can sweep down the mightiest walls of oppression and resistance.” I would strongly encourage teachers to advocate for Social Justice 12 in their course selections. The Integrated Resource Package can be located on the BC Ministry of Education web site at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/irp/drafts/.

Free social justice videos on the Web
(for teachers and secondary classes)

reviewed by Louise Gonsalves, CASJ—Status of Women Action Group member

A World Without Water (excellent: junior and senior classes)
tinyurl.com/32vbhm
This video examines global water scarcity, access, and privatization.

Frontline—Is Wal-Mart Good for America? (good: senior classes)
tinyurl.com/3yacwob
This video examines the cost of low prices and the impact of Wal-Mart on the economy.

Frontline—China Blue (very good: junior and senior classes)
tinyurl.com/yw89to
An inside look at China’s blue jean factories and the mass migration to such worksites.
**Merchants of Cool** (excellent: junior and senior classes)
tinyurl.com/2z7z2o
Corporate America’s 150 billion-dollar “cool” marketing to teens is examined.

**The Yes Men** (good for teachers, some swearing, edit for a senior class)
tinyurl.com/2be7v6
This movie follows a couple of anticorporate activists who impersonate WTO officials.

**Ken Roth: Human Rights and the Environment**
(good: strong senior classes)
tinyurl.com/25ev7c
Human Rights director explains how environmental abuses have led to human rights violations in Darfur, Nigeria, Indonesia, and Angola.

**Sex Slaves** (good for teachers; or senior classes if topic is carefully introduced)
tinyurl.com/298ryo
This PBS documentary exposes the global sex trade business in the former Soviet Bloc.

**Tackling Extremism** (good for teachers or select senior class; caution—controversial)
tinyurl.com/yujwkw
The issue of how to combat extremism and improve relations between the West and the Muslim world is debated.

**The Power of Community: How Cuba Survived Peak Oil**
(very good: senior classes)
tinyurl.com/2laasw
This video examines how Cuba rebuilt its quality of life following the collapse of cheap oil from the former Soviet Union.

**Peace, Propaganda and the Promised Land: Media & the Israel-Palestine Conflict**
(good, controversial; more for teachers but could be considered for some senior classes)
tinyurl.com/2naxpb
The Palestine issue always sparks controversy but this video focuses on the role of the media in the conflict.

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Also available in French

Global Education: In and Beyond the Classroom

Global Education for a Sustainable Future

Global Education for Gender Equality

BCTF/CIDA Global Classroom Initiative

British Columbia Teachers’ Federation bctf.ca

To book a workshop, contact the BCTF Training Department at 604-871-1857 or toll-free 1-800-663-9163 (local 1857).
For more information about this project contact Marian Dodds at the BCTF, toll-free 1-800-663-9163 or 604-871-1850.
“We Can” coalition works to stop the war on women

by Jane Turner, BCTF staff

What kind of a world do we inhabit when it is a “rule of thumb” that women can be beaten by their husbands as long as the stick is no wider than their thumb. How many women had to die on the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, or along the Highway of Tears from Terrace to Prince George, before anyone launched a thorough investigation? How many women are going to be killed or beaten by intimate male friends before full funding for transition houses and rape crisis shelters gets restored?

In a compelling book entitled, The War on Women, author Brian Vallée investigates the often ignored and always under-reported crime of violence against women. On his website, (www.brianVallee.ca/war_on_women_excerpt.html) Vallée writes, “Compare the raw numbers. In the same seven-year period when 4,588 U.S. soldiers and police officers were killed by hostiles or by accident, more than 8,000 women—nearly twice as many—were shot, stabbed, strangled, or beaten to death by the intimate males in their lives. In Canada, compared to the 101 Canadian soldiers and police officers killed, more than 500 women—nearly five times as many—met the same fate.

“Those are the deaths. Then there are the wounded. In the same period, about 24,000 U.S. military were wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, while about 80 Canadians were wounded in Afghanistan.

“In the United States, it’s conservatively estimated that in addition to the 1,200 to 1,300 women killed each year by intimate partners, another 5.3 million, age 18 and older, are victims of non-lethal domestic abuse.

Based on those numbers, the violence costs the country more than $5.8 billion annually—nearly $4.1 billion in direct medical and mental health care, and $1.8 billion in lost productivity and lost earnings due to homicide.”

In three short paragraphs, Vallée articulates the reality of violence against women:

• The media doesn’t report it the same way they do for men in dangerous jobs.
• Being a woman is a dangerous job.
• There is a high price to be paid because of violence against women.

Despite successful actions by women’s organizations over the past three decades, the scale and severity of discrimination and violence against women is rising—even in Canada and British Columbia. Violence against women is both a violation of human rights and an impediment to achieving gender equality. The BCTF is part of the “We Can” coalition, a coalition dedicated to eliminating all violence against women and stopping this war on women. An alliance of organizations from diverse communities in BC, the “We Can” coalition
includes partners and supporters representing women’s organizations, immigrant service agencies, social service delivery agencies, unions, NGOs, businesses, media, and other organizations committed to a long-term and sustained process of changing social attitudes and the practices that support violence against women. In many communities in BC, violence against women is accepted as “normal behaviour” and women are left to suffer in silence. It is only by changing this perception of “normalcy” that we can bring to light the seriousness of this kind of offence. This illumination will change beliefs surrounding violence against women and, in turn, behaviour.

The “We Can” coalition seeks to trigger a person-to-person chain reaction of change in attitudes and behaviour on a scale sufficient to generate a mass social movement to end violence against women. Locals of the BCTF, as well as individuals, are encouraged to join the coalition. Find out more by visiting their website at www.wecanbc.ca.

Teaching and a parent-to-be?
What you don’t know about parental benefits CAN hurt you!

by George Popp, BCTF staff

Historically, the BCTF has been a strong advocate for parental rights. Society cannot continue without children, and must protect the health and wellbeing of the working woman and her child by guaranteeing the woman’s right to obtain and keep employment. If women are to gain employment equality with men—they must not be penalized for childbearing.

Source: BCTF Status of Women Newsletter of September/October 1981

Having and raising children presents challenges to any parent but, as employees, the costs of putting our careers on hold to have and raise children can be daunting. Maternity and parental benefits attempt to mitigate the financial impact of having children. They didn’t always exist. The first maternity leave provisions in Canada were legislated in BC in 1921, yet even into the 1970s teachers who became pregnant often had to resign their positions and the concept of leaves with benefits was not taken seriously.

In the 80s, after much work and lobbying by labour and women’s rights organizations, including advocacy through the BCTF Status of Women program, Canada, like many other developed nations, was persuaded to provide some protection in legislation with pregnancy and parental Employment Insurance benefits. When teachers won collective bargaining rights, maternity leave and top-up provisions were two of the first socially just inclusions in our contracts along with provisions for paternity leave, general parenthood leave, and leave for adoptive parents. Provision of supplementary unemployment benefits became BCTF provincial policy and a bargaining objective at the 1994 AGM. Today, most collective agreements contain clauses that provide for maternity leave with Employment Insurance benefits and supplementary benefits which, for at least part of the leave period, improve compensation beyond the usual Employment Insurance benefits. Because these were negotiated locally, provisions vary from local to local and that is why teachers need to consult local agreements. At the time these provisions were negotiated by our organization, there was significant uptake and utilization by teachers and local union offices became familiar with most of the permutations of...
implementing maternity leaves, benefits, and related issues.

Due to shifting demographics in the teaching profession, the utilization of maternity leaves diminished from a peak in the 1980s and there have been few disputes on these issues in recent years. However, the pendulum is now swinging back with more young teachers coming into the work force and some new (and old) issues are surfacing.

Provincially, some points that have arisen in recent grievances and arbitrations include:

- Which salary is used to calculate salary top up if a teacher has changed FTE in their assignment? For example: if you have increased the FTE in your assignment or decreased it through layoff, partial leave or job sharing (yet to be fully resolved).
- What if your child is born in the summer? Are you eligible for top-up benefits in the summer?
- Are your benefits calculated as 1/40 of your salary (based on 40 weeks) or 1/52 (based on the calendar year)? Are there pension-related and summer access implications?
- What happens if you are a teacher in a term position? What are your rights to supplementary benefits?

Members intending to utilize maternity/parenthood and adoption leaves are strongly advised to check the local collective agreement regarding maintaining benefits, seniority, and previous teaching positions while on leave.

Be sure to check what is included regarding:

- your rights and obligations with respect to maintaining pension plan contributions.
- birth fathers and adoptive parents now have access to Employment Insurance parental benefits, but few if any collective agreements recognize supplementary benefits for them.

Because provisions differ with various local collective agreements, it is crucial to know your local agreement and check with your president before applying for maternity/parenthood/adoptive benefits and leaves.

Clearly, at present we have a patchwork of provisions and need to work to increase equity across our agreement. Doubtless, these are issues we need to take on in future rounds of bargaining to clarify and improve our social and economic rights. Now is the time for members to let their views be known in order to present a cohesive vision for those who face these situations now and in the future.

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**Childcare: It’s more than babysitting**

*by Jane Turner, BCTF staff*

Teachers get annoyed when parents ask, “Who will look after my kids when school is closed?” as if all we do is provide babysitting for 5- to 18-year-olds. Childcare workers face the same conundrum, but for them it has more serious consequences.

Babysitting is about looking after children when the parents aren’t there: making sure kids are safe and don’t get into trouble. Childcare is about early learning. That is why the acronym, QUAD (quality, universally accessible, developmental) describes what the childcare coalition is asking the government to implement. But it seems that people often forget that “D” stands for developmental. Quality childcare helps children learn through play, stories, and role modelling. It is more than keeping kids safe.

When the proposed national childcare program was lost due to the federal election in 2006, parents were yet again left with a patchwork of services and on their own to make the best of a bad situation. In BC, the provincial government has drawn an arbitrary and erroneous distinction between early learning and childcare. Smart Start, a program for 3- to 5-year-olds and their parents or guardians is an early learning program. Yet, the government differentiates between it and childcare. There is an economic reason for this. Childcare providers earn minimum wage
Smart Start teachers earn substantially more than minimum wage, but not as much as teachers. All provide the same early learning opportunities, but the pay differential is huge. We need to support our childcare providers by insisting they start getting paid what they deserve. After all, it is more than a babysitting service. This is about children’s learning.

The BCTF is part of the Coalition of Child Care Advocates of BC who are working provincially and with their national organization to advocate for a community-based, publicly funded, non-profit comprehensive national childcare system. To learn more about their initiatives and policy go to www.cccabc.bc.ca.

All words, little action, no money for women

The following statement was signed by 27 organizations, unions, women, and child care advocates (including the Canadian Teachers’ Federation) on February 29, 2008 following the Canadian government’s presentation before the UN Commission on the Status of Women in New York.

The Canadian government is taking “a more focused approach” to achieving equality between women and men with the goal of “achieving real and measurable results.” At least that’s what the Government of Canada said to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) during its February 28, 2008 statement.

But the Canadian government’s actions speak otherwise.

True, the federal budget released on February 26 includes a commitment for an action plan to advance women’s equality. While women’s organizations and trade unions think it’s too little too late, we will be monitoring it closely, and expect to be an integral part of the process from the beginning.

But overall, the federal budget is a disaster for women given its focus on the wealthy. Women are mentioned six times in the budget document compared to 119 times for corporations. Most women will never benefit from the Tax Free Savings Account, since four out of ten women tax filers are too poor to even pay taxes. Women earn an average of 71 cents of what men make and comprise the majority of low-income earners.

The choices to use the surplus toward debt reduction and cuts to corporate taxes mean less revenue for important public services for women and their families. The budget does nothing to address coverage and benefits under the EI program, and provides no funding for childcare. There is no evidence of a gender analysis of any of the budgetary measures.

Women’s organizations are key to advocating for and achieving equality, and holding our governments accountable—a fact recognized even by the Secretary General of the United Nations.

Yet, Status of Women Canada continues to exclude funding for lobbying which significantly constrains the work of women’s advocacy organizations. Canada’s statement to the UNCSW makes no mention of the contribution of women’s organizations and non-governmental organizations to advancing women’s equality.

The Government of Canada must ensure that full equality is the “real and measurable” result. Women in Canada aren’t there yet. Many women remain marginalized because of their economic and social realities. Only 21% of members of parliament in the House of Commons are women. Canada has plummeted downwards on virtually every international gender equality index.

Internationally, Canada has been reprimanded for its lack of action on achieving full equality for all women. It’s time to translate words into action. It’s time to go from accountability to results. It’s time for full equality, once and for all.
We’ve all read the newspaper articles, often with attention-grabbing headlines using words like “crisis” and “disaster” about boys’ falling achievement levels. What is happening and why? What’s to be done about the problem? School districts in North America, Australia, and England have been discussing this issue and trying all sorts of ways to address the perceived problem. But is there really a problem, and will the strategies being proposed make a difference? Let’s look at the facts of what is going on with boys in the education system.

Myth 1—Boys’ achievement levels are falling. In the last few years, there has been a profound shift in how we measure the achievement of our students. We increasingly rely on statistics such as the Six-Year Completion Rates for graduation and the provincial examination marks. Those statistics show that fewer boys are graduating than girls, and if you look at a single set of statistics, this could be cause for alarm. But look at the statistics over several years and you will notice that the percentage of students that graduate are steadily improving for both boys and girls.

Boys continue to do well in their traditional areas of math and science, and girls continue to do well in reading and writing. Not much has changed over the years except more girls are taking math and science. There has never been a time when 100% of boys or girls have graduated in the six-year time frame.

But the story does not end here. Research shows us that males are much more likely to return to school to finish Grade 12. Males will make more money over their lifetime. Males continue to outnumber females in top positions in most fields. Males continue to outnumber females at the graduate school level. True, gender equity remains a goal; it is not yet reality.

We need to broaden our scope of research beyond the Six-Year Completion Rates to get a clearer picture of what is happening to boys.

Myth 2—There is clear evidence that boys and girls learn differently and therefore, we must educate boys and girls differently. As we get more and more brain research data, it becomes clear that male and female brains are significantly different. Girls learn languages quicker than boys. Girls multitask better than boys. Boys are better at spatial challenges. We now have a better idea of how the structure of the brain plays a role in learning. What we still do not know is if the learning differences are biological or due to social conditioning and how the two interact.

The central issue should not be whether individual differences exist. The real questions are, “Can we or should we attempt to alter the existing patterns that brain research shows us?” and “What can or should be done to address differences in performance?”

We also need to remember that the differences are greater within boys and girls than between boys and girls. Neither all boys, nor all girls, will benefit from the same strategies.

Proposed solutions to educating boys:

Single-sex schooling There seems to be a trend developing to separate the boys and girls in classes. Seems simple enough. Separate the sexes and teach in ways that appeal to the boys with movement,
competition, etc. What has happened however is that “all-boys arrangements can be breeding grounds for virulent sexism...or can become dumping grounds for boys with discipline problems.” (Weaver-Hightower) According to Viadero, the issue has been “overpoliticized and underresearched.”

Curriculum changes
“Promising strategies for raising the achievement of boys are, in fact, strong and effective practices for all students.” (Bodkin) The current research shows us that girls benefit as much as boys and continue to be ahead in language-based activities.

Male role models
Expecting male teachers to come into schools as role models has a problem. What if they don’t have the professional development, skills, and training to present the kind of models we need for boys? “It is unrealistic to expect boys to challenge the dominant culture of masculinity, if adult men are not challenging it themselves.” (C. Davis)

Teacher education training
The vast majority of teachers today and in the past have never had any training in addressing sex role differences or learning needs. Will a single lecture or even one course at university give teachers the tools they need to address the issues? How do we address this complex issue without a knowledgeable teaching force?

Masculine identity issues
There is no doubt that something is wrong with what is happening to boys in our education system and in the world at large. For some reason, a vast majority of men will not even consider doing “women’s” work even if this is where most jobs are found today. Those who are not able to find a “man’s” job appear to be increasingly inclined to opt for social alienation and idleness. What we have failed to address is the notion of multiple masculinities competing with each other for dominance instead of honouring and encouraging a variety of masculine identity models. We have broadened the life roles that females see for themselves but not for the males. Barry MacDonald sums it up well by saying “Our goal is to lead boys to become courageous, caring, and ethical men.”

A final word or two
The issues around achievement for all of our students are complex and multi-faceted. Neither boys nor girls rule in schools. There is little doubt that boys and school are not now, nor have they ever been, a match made in heaven. It is now up to us to make schools fairer and more humane environments for all of our students. To do this, we will need to educate ourselves and keep the discussions happening wherever we can.

Resources for further reading
Barry MacDonald website
www.mentoringboys.com


Myriam Miedzian—Boys Will Be Boys—Breaking the Link Between Masculinity and Violence ISBN0-385-42254-7


“F or many women, especially those who are single mothers, aboriginal, recent immigrants, disabled, or former foster kids, education and health care offer little hope for better times. Their voices remain, though too often unheard in BC’s political corridors.

Yet, for all the dismal Throne speeches that leave the majority forgotten, champions of a better deal—from the vice-regal to the modest—exist everywhere. Unions, women’s centres, service organizations, community activists, non-profits, progressive scholars and politicians, and individual women and men are documenting public policy failures and, still more importantly, offering alternatives. Hope for social justice lies ultimately in government commitment to a range of policies that work to ameliorate the inequities identified above. Rather than continuing the current path, the Liberal government should adopt policies that will promote women’s equality. These policies include: increased access to unionization for women; minimum wage of $10.00 an hour, commit to develop accessible and affordable childcare; repeal changes to employment standards; stop the drift to privatization of public sector work; institute pay equity and employment equity policies; reinvest in social housing; increase benefits for those on social assistance and with disabilities; promote equal educational opportunities; reinvest in single-tier public health care, including home care; support women’s safety by reinstating funding for Women’s Centre’s, sexual assault centres and transition houses; re-institute a Ministry for Women’s Equality that can help to ensure gender equality is central to all government practices and progressive taxation. Citizens of British Columbia should expect no less.”

View the complete report on the BC Federation of Labour’s website at tinyurl.com/36a5m9.
Peace and Global Education

Workshops
- Global education for gender equality
- Global education for a sustainable future
- Global education: In and beyond the classroom
- Creating cultures of peace (elementary and secondary)

Activities
- International Development Week (February)
- Global Campaign for Education: Global Action Week (April)
- War Toys to Peace Art project
- Engaging in our Communities as Global Citizens project

Mandate to
- Promote teaching from a global perspective
- Incorporate peace education into classroom practice
- Develop an analysis of the forces affecting globalization
- Be involved in BCTF environmental/green initiatives

Peace and Global Education Action Group
Greg Van Vugt, Susan Ruzic, Janet Steacy-Stephenson, Missing: Tina Anderson

Teaching and Learning for Global Perspectives Graduate Diploma Program

A graduate diploma program developed collaboratively by SFU and the BCTF in Teaching and Learning for Global Perspectives is now underway. A first cohort of this program is being hosted and sponsored by the Vancouver School Board. The cohort of practicing teachers currently enrolled will work with SFU faculty, sessional instructors, and mentors over two years to investigate their own teaching practice with regards to incorporating a global education approach. Topics of inquiry include global education and systems thinking across the curriculum; popular culture and media; race, gender, ethnicity, class, and sexual orientation in formal and informal curricula; controversial issues in the classrooms; perspective consciousness; social justice across differences; development and sustainable education in communities; and peace education and conflict resolution. These nine topics will guide the focus of each teacher’s field study investigations and development of a working portfolio as they move through a process of assessing their own assumptions, understanding the theories, identifying critical questions, observing, investigating, analyzing, and taking action. As the first course, Ideas and Issues in Global Education, is wrapping up, it is clear that the experience promises to be a transformative one for all involved.

For more information about this program, please contact Betty Gilgoff, Inservice Faculty Associate, Field Programs, SFU at Betty_Gilgoff@sfu.ca.

Global education: an example of transformative pedagogy

by Clay McLeod, Central Okanagan teacher

There are negative conditions and situations in the world, including illness, violence, war, discrimination, exploitation, poverty, and ecological degradation. Regardless of their root causes, problems and injustice manifest around the globe, and profound troubles confront people in every corner of the planet. As participants in and citizens of the world, we have an obligation to address the problems that face humanity. These issues are part of students’ reality, so school should address them in order to equip
students to effectively deal with them—as well as similar and related issues and problems that may arise in the future.

The world is a system that is characterized by social, ecological, political, and economic interdependence. The implication is that suffering, injustice, and negative conditions in one part of the world threaten positive conditions in other parts of the world. For teachers and students, this has two-fold relevance. First, because of the profound impact that global conditions have on local conditions, crisis or injustice affecting a distant corner of the world could soon have a real impact in one’s own neighborhood, even if it doesn’t at first. Second, and perhaps more importantly, because of the nature of our interrelationship with people in other parts of the world, we are accountable for the existence of suffering and injustice in other parts of the world, even when it doesn’t have a direct effect on us.

Our choices about how to act in the world have impacts far and wide. We do have the power to make choices that support happiness and justice rather than suffering and injustice. The essence of social responsibility is to stand up for what is right and take action to support it. This provides a basis for a fundamentally transformational approach to teaching. This approach to teaching is represented by the conception of global education presented by Graham Pike and David Selby.

The Efficacy of Global Education

School is an effective place to address real-world problems for two reasons. First, to be effective and ethical global citizens, students need to learn about negative or problematic situations and injustice so that they can know about the condition of the world and make informed decisions. Second, students are motivated and engaged in learning when they learn about real-world problems and what they can do to address them. In other words, not only is it ethical to encourage students to make ethical choices and live ethical lives; it is pedagogically sound to do so.

School is an ideal place to introduce students to the notion of justice, to inform them about the state of affairs in the world, and to empower them to take action to address problems that exist in the world. Global education does exactly that.

Worldmindedness and Child-centredness

Global education navigates the tension between honoring the student as an individual and taking into account the entire world in which the individual finds herself or himself. Pike and Selby describe global education as bringing together these two strands of educational thinking and practice: worldmindedness and child-centredness.

Worldmindedness is an attitude about the world that recognizes the interdependence of its peoples and ecosystems and the dynamic and systemic relationships that exist between the parts of the whole. In short, worldmindedness looks at pedagogy from the perspective of the biggest picture on Earth, that of the whole planet. On the other hand, child-centeredness focuses pedagogical awareness on the individual learner, building pedagogy on the student’s background, makeup, and perspectives as an individual. In short, global education is an approach to education that aspires to honour the individual learner, both out of respect and out of a sense of pedagogical efficacy, while facilitating that learner’s development into a global citizen, committed to the interests of the “global village” and capable of achieving success on that stage.

Views of Global Education

Graham Pike (2000) points out that views of global education can range from seeing global education as “giving a broader geographical perspective to the social studies curriculum so as to equip students to compete more effectively in the global marketplace,” to “a fundamental re-evaluation of the content, organization, and purpose of schooling in line with a transformative vision of education in a planetary context” (p. 64). How one conceptualizes global education depends upon one’s broad aspirations for education itself.

Global Campaign for Action Week is April 21–27, 2008

Teach the world’s biggest lesson on April 23, 2008

Since 2003, the Global Campaign for Education has held a global action week. In past years, themes have included activities focussed on girls’ education, “send my friend to school,” and “every child needs a teacher.”

The theme for 2008 is “Quality Education for All: End Exclusion Now!”

There are many reasons why children miss the opportunity to gain an education. It might be because of disability, poverty, ethnicity, gender, conflict, geographical location, or exploitation as child labourers. These issues are explored throughout the website and in the material that you can obtain through the Canadian Global Campaign for Education. There are several ways teachers can participate in the Global Action Week (GAW). By downloading this year’s curriculum, you can implement a variety of lessons in your classroom during the GAW, or when it is most convenient for you and your students.

Download the World’s Biggest Lesson and participate in a Guinness world record attempt on April 23.

Go to www.campaignforeducationcanada.org.

Join the Peace and Global Education PSA

www.pagebc.ca

PAGE Vision

Global education is a movement and methodology that seeks to link issues of peace, human rights, environment, and equitable, sustainable development to our personal and professional lives. It also seeks to find and implement ways of infusing these interconnected issues into our existing curricula and institutions by coming to understand the natural and human-engineered systems in which they exist. PAGE members receive a journal three times a year which is filled with lesson plans, inspirations, projects teachers are doing, and a dialogue amongst teachers. We also have a listserve for members to discuss issues further. We have a yearly conference for professional development.
New on the global classroom website!

Thanks to CIDA funding, the BCTF has been able to expand our global education website. This site is packed with tools for teachers wanting to teach from a global perspective. Go to bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6218 to check out:

1. New navigational tool to find teaching resources designed by BC teachers to fit BC curricula now searchable by grade, subject, and or development theme.

2. New resource in the methodology section titled The Global Classroom: Putting Process to Content. Because global education lessons are designed to develop a sense of efficacy in students, they are almost always interactive and student centered. Focusing on educational process, this practical guide for the classroom teacher provides concrete, hands-on strategies for implementing a global education approach at all grade levels and in all subject areas. Included are:
   • strategies for establishing a positive classroom environment
   • information and advice about student grouping
   • a step-by-step guide to co-operative learning
   • information about authentic assessment.

3. An updated and more easily searchable webliography for hundreds of links to web resources. A great place for students to do research and find out about opportunities such as the Butterfly 208 contest and to learn about NGOs that focus on youth and children.

Teaching for Peace

“Peace cannot be achieved through violence, it can only be attained through understanding.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

If our schools today are to produce truly global citizens, then that puts a heavy burden on educators to stimulate critical thinking about the critical issues of the day—war and peace, global conflict and inequality, issues of gender, race, class, and so on. It’s a long list. Teaching for Peace is a new web resource where we bring it all together, and provide easy-to-use, practical classroom lessons as well as comprehensive links to resources for peace education.

With Canada at war in Afghanistan, there’s no time like today to get your students involved in a dialogue about the big issues. See www.teachingforpeace.org.

Tools for learning

Canadian Physicians for Aid and Relief (CPAR) has new tools for learning—ready-to-go global education resources that adhere to the BC curriculum. Go to www.toolsforlearning.ca to find new materials for Civics 11, Geography 12, and Social Studies 11.
Gay-Straight Alliance Conference

The Nanaimo District Teachers’ Association, BC Teachers’ Federation, and GALE BC are pleased to announce our first Gay-Straight Alliance Conference for Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast to be held Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 12, 2008, at Gabriola Elementary School on beautiful Gabriola Island.

Current research from the Ministry of Education, Safe School Survey indicates that lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students face problems that include “name calling, harassment, and intimidation in every school district in the province.” The McCreary Centre Society Report (2003) on Being Out summarized the following alarming statistics that LGBT students deal with every day in our schools:

- 80% speak of severe isolation
- 40% suffer from low self esteem
- 61% have been targets of physical abuse
- 19% report hate crimes
- 46% have tried suicide at least once and the average age of suicide attempts is 13.

This one and a half-day conference will focus on:

- fostering a climate of safety and inclusion for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning (LGBTQ) students
- building a network of support for students
- developing plans to form gay-straight alliance clubs in their school.

Secondary students, sponsor teachers, educators, and school trustees who are interested in learning more about the many issues that LGBTQ youth face in our public school system are invited to attend. Please join us for this exciting event.

For further information, contact Joan Merrifield at j.merrifield@shaw.ca, or Jan Thorsen at thorsenj@shaw.ca.

LGBTQ Action Group
Joan Merrifield, George Picken, Nancy Ingersoll

Greg Laing
Looking for in-depth advice on how to start a Gay-Straight Alliance in your school? Check out Gay-Straight Student Alliance Handbook—A Comprehensive Resource for Canadian K–12 teachers, Administrators and School Counsellors available from the Canadian Teachers’ Federation. This book provides background information, a rationale outlining why such groups are needed in our schools, and an extensive listing of excellent resources. Expect to find detailed step-by-step suggestions on how to start a group, understanding the risks and realities, the four major roles and types of school-based GSAs, information on legislation, and suggestions on school policy. Every school should have this book.

To order, go to www.ctf-fce.ca.

Cost is $20.

What is the new code of conduct from the Ministry of Education?

by Joan Merrifield, CASJ—LGBTQ Action Group member

“The school system is becoming more sensitive to students who are gay, lesbian, or transgendered, and has begun developing mechanisms to ensure their inclusion and fair treatment in school communities... The BC school system has a unique responsibility and opportunity to meet this challenge both by teaching understanding and respect for all persons, and by modeling understanding and respect for all persons in practice.”


The judgment of the BC Court of Appeal in the Jurban vs North Vancouver School District case changed how the Ministry of Education now perceives its responsibility to provide more stringent guidelines to school districts to ensure that all public schools are providing safe learning environments. Effective October 17, 2007, the Ministry of Education passed a ministerial order (276/07-M276/07) that all school boards must ensure that the following elements are included in their codes of conduct:

a. one or more statements that address the prohibited grounds of discrimination set out in the BC Human Rights Code in respect of discriminatory publication and discrimination in accommodation, service and facility in the school environment;

b. a statement of purpose that provides a rationale for the code of conduct, with a focus on safe, caring and orderly school environments. (Authority: School Act, sections 85(1.1) 168 (2) (s.1))

This means that school districts must have codes of conduct at the district and school level that specifically protect students and staff from discrimination and harassment based on race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religion, marital status, family status, physical or mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, or age of that person or class of persons. (BC Human Rights Tribunal)

Clearly every school district has the responsibility to develop a district policy that provides protection for LGBTQ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and questioning) students and to ensure their schools have the same in their school codes of conduct. When a school or district faces a court challenge, the Ministry of Education can say that all school districts have been informed and given these guidelines. So far, only seven
school districts in the province have policies that provide protection for LGBTQ students and staff. Does your district have a policy? (To view existing policies, see www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106.)

“BC schools are striving to develop positive and welcoming school cultures, and are committed to fostering optimal environments for learning. Members of these school communities share a commitment to maintaining safe, caring, and orderly schools. They focus on prevention of problems and use school-wide efforts to build community, fostering respect, inclusion, fairness, and equity. They teach, model, and encourage socially responsible behaviours that contribute to the school community, solve problems in peaceful ways, value diversity, and defend human rights. They work together to better understand issues such as bullying, intimidation and harassment, racism, sexism, and homophobia, and to learn new skills to respond to them.”

Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools (2004)

Making Change—Taking Action

T talk: Interrupt homophobic slurs when they occur.

E educate: Book a BCTF anti-homophobia workshop, call toll-free 1-800-663-9163, local 1857, or 604-871-1857.

A act: Change school policies to specifically address homophobia.

C collaborate: Work with your teacher-librarian to buy gay-positive books.

H help: Form a Gay-Straight Alliance or Diversity Club in your school.

Five things you can say or do when you hear “That’s so gay!”

1. Say, “This is a homophobia-free zone,” “We do not tolerate anti-gay slurs here,” or “I am offended by that homophobic remark.”

2. Ask, “How would you feel if your name/identity was used repetitively instead of ‘gay’?” i.e.: “That’s so Bryce/Aisha! etc.”

3. Provide support to targeted students. “You don’t deserve to be treated that way. I am really sorry that happened to you.”

4. Use analogies between homophobia and racism, sexism, ableism, etc.

5. Download classroom posters on this topic from the BCTF web site at bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6106.
Antiracism

Workshops
- Antidiscrimination training (ADT)
- Bafa Bafa/Rafa Rafa
- Strategies for discussing controversial issues

Activities
- Black History Month (February)
- Day Against Racism (March 21)
- Educators Against Racism PSA conference
- International Human Rights Day (December 10)

Mandate to
- Promote and defend human rights
- Eliminate racism from our schools
- Work with the community to combat racism
- Survey membership/identify emerging issues

Imagine A World Without Racism

Conference sponsored by the Educators Against Racism PSA and the Cariboo-Chilcotin Teachers’ Association

Williams Lake, BC
Friday, May 2, 2008

Keynote speaker: Buffy Sainte-Marie

Image by Jane Lee, Langley student

Workshops:
- Antidiscrimination Response Training
- Restorative Justice Certificate Training
- Aboriginal PALS and EAGLE Program
- Writing About Racism
- Beyond Words—Creating Racism Free Schools for Aboriginal Learners
- Beyond the Hurt—Antibullying and Racism Program
- Classism and the Caste System in the Indo-Canadian Community
- Creating Cultures of Peace
- Poverty as a Classroom Issue
- Boundary Issues
- Strategies for Discussing Controversial Issues
- Project Overseas
- Cross Cultural Games and the Power Activity
- And more exciting workshops to be confirmed.

For more information, contact Roz Johns at rjohns@richmond.sd38.bc.ca.
At the end to Black History Month, February 2008, Morgan Freeman reminded us of the struggle minorities face to gain acceptance and appreciation. Freeman commented, “There is no white history month. You're going to relegate my history to a month? The way to get rid of racism is to stop talking about it. I don't want Black History Month. Black history is American history” (The Vancouver Sun, February 16, 2008). Literally, to follow Morgan Freeman’s words creates a dilemma for pro-active teachers who view themselves as agents of change. How can we facilitate change unless we are prepared to discuss it? The following beliefs were considered in compiling the web archive resources that follow.

Beliefs:

1. Meaningful dialogue, especially with our students, can make a difference.

2. Insight into the roots and causes of racism allows for a preventative approach. Inquiry and reflection as to our own beliefs and practices leads to self-assessment that determines whether we truly are doing as much as we can to combat racism.

3. Give us the tools and we can do something about it.

4. Motivate students to take matters into their own hands.

The following resources have been selected to assist teachers in their antiracism work.

www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/13_04/racism.shtml
Brief historical synopsis as to how the BCTF developed a program against racism, which has since evolved into an expanded present-day social justice platform. Written by a Portland, Oregon, high school social studies teacher, the article provides an objective viewpoint that lauds the BCTF for their efforts to support public education’s mission to sustain a just, non-discriminatory society.

www.ynrsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/a/depts/racerel/ AntiracismIndicators.pdf
Published by Ontario’s York School District, this document is intended for use in assessing antiracism indicators within a school setting. Meant to be a valuable tool for individuals and groups in reviewing schools/classroom practices, and in identifying strengths and areas for growth in an inclusive school.

www.stopracism.ca/pages/takeaction.php?which_page=13
The Canadian Antiracism Education and Research Society (CAERS) sponsors Stopracism.ca. CAERS is a registered non-profit organization with more than 20 years of experience in providing antiracist education and research. The objective of this website is to provide timely, accurate, and reliable information to help communities, government agencies, schools, businesses, and non-profit organizations stop racism. Although this portal takes you to the “Take Action” section of the website, make sure you peruse all the portals, as each contains relevant information. The PDF documents to the right of the web page are valuable in themselves. In particular, the checklist serves the same purpose as the aforementioned York School District document meant to assess antiracism indicators within a school setting.

www.tolerance.org/rthas/index.jsp
Published by the Southern Poverty Law Center, Responding to Hate at School is designed to help administrators, teachers, and counsellors react promptly and effectively to all bias incidents, and to involve students, as well as parents and community leaders, in finding solutions to underlying tensions. Make sure you download the free PDF publication available on the left-hand side of the web page.

tinyurl.com/2bkxyl
Read this ERIC search abstract for 10 quick ways educators can analyze children’s books and related
resources, to determine whether content is racist and/or sexist.

www.accesstomedia.org/change/
Easy-to-use antiracism lesson plans and resources for teachers.

www.naarr.org/pdf/Teacher%20Resources.pdf
Antiracism education teaching resources compiled by the Northern Alberta Alliance on Race Relations (NAARR).

www.unac.org/yfar/resource_e.htm#educational
Provides a list of educational materials that were analyzed by YFAR (Youth Forums Against Racism).

www.ag.gov.bc.ca/immigration/sam/bcamp.htm
A description of the BC government’s Antiracism and Multiculturalism Program (BCAMP) that aims to:
• provide multiculturalism and antiracism education.
• develop community partnerships and facilitate cross-cultural dialogue.
• provide critical responses to racism and hate.

Check the bottom of the web page. BCAMP provides grants to support initiatives that promote antiracism and multiculturalism.

If you apply for a grant, this guide can help you plan and organize your project successfully to ensure funding.

www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf
Section two of this BC Ministry of Education document describes provincial policies, strategies, and initiatives that have been developed to encourage school systems to address diversity.

AMSSA is an affiliation of more than 80 multicultural agencies providing immigrant settlement and multicultural services in communities throughout British Columbia. This particular URL links to a guide that aims to help youth organizers plan antiracism activities in schools, social networks, and communities. The BCTF is a member of AMSSA.

unitedagainstracism.ca/index.php?action=about
See what youth can do! United Against Racism is an Aboriginal-led project; a grassroots attempt to develop an antiracism action plan or strategy for Winnipeg, Manitoba. UAR is a program initiative to build a broad alliance of schools, institutions, community groups, and individuals that will work toward eliminating racism and all forms of oppression through antiracism education and action. UAR works toward the elimination of racism and discrimination in society.

www.1001actions.org/en/about
Interested in finding out what’s being done to fight racism in the international community? The “1001 actions” campaign runs throughout 2008, which has been designated the Euro-Mediterranean Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and aims to promote the role of intercultural dialogue to:
• fight racism and xenophobia as well as any form of discrimination.
• challenge extremism from all sources and origins.
• rediscover common roots and heritage, and develop the idea that we all share a common destiny.

New Tool Available to Assist in Understanding Canadian Diversity

A new series of 15 socio-economic profiles of Canada’s largest and fastest-growing ethno-cultural communities has just been produced by Statistics Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage.


Downloadable copies are available free online at censim2.statcan.ca/cgi-win/cnsmcgg.pgm?

For more information, call toll-free 1-800-263-1136.
Imagine yourself with no home. No place to wash yourself or your clothes. No warm place to sleep or cook food. No safety or privacy. More than 10,000 people in BC face this reality every day and the number is growing. Almost every community in BC is reporting homeless people and there are many who are one step away, because they cannot find affordable housing. In Vancouver, the Downtown Eastside is a crisis zone and homeless people are everywhere. It is almost impossible to walk down a public street without meeting someone in desperate circumstances.

How did this happen?

Homelessness is still growing in our wealthy province and all levels of government bear responsibility. The federal social housing program is gone, the provincial welfare rates are completely inadequate, and local governments continue to rezone property for the benefit of developers and speculators. The problem started in 1990, when mental institutions began closing and discharging patients without enough community supports. But mental health and drug addiction have always been present and never resulted in widespread homelessness. Local, provincial, and federal governments point fingers at each other and boast about spending money. They ignore the fact that they haven’t fixed anything, and won’t begin to, until they start building new social housing—not just shelters or supportive housing—real, permanent housing. A long-term plan is required.

Citywide housing coalition—Organizing for change

Activists in Vancouver are using a simple but effective strategy called Stands for Housing. A handful of people gather in a line on strategic street corners with a large banner “Homes for All” or “Stand for Housing” facing traffic. They wear turquoise blue scarves and one or two offer leaflets to stopped cars and pedestrians. No marching, no chanting. One hour only, 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. every Saturday.

Inspired by the example of one stand maintained since October 2007 by local residents to publicize the displacement of tenants at the Little Mountain Housing Complex, the Citywide Housing Coalition has organized neighbourhood groups to stand.
at street corners every Saturday from 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. since February 23. They started with nine stands the first week. The movement is growing and includes church members, unionists, young people, and others ashamed of homelessness and concerned about affordable housing. The positive responses of passersby and enthusiastic car honks make it clear this action is welcome and needed.

The CWHC leaflet calls for a national housing strategy, increased welfare rates, and a provincial plan that is more than shelters and crisis management to make Vancouver look good for the Olympics. Change must be systemic and requires construction of new, low-income social housing by the government. Experience shows that depending on developers to dribble out one or two low-income units for every ten upscale condos has not worked.

Stands are not one-time events. They are an ongoing vigil to show that people everywhere will stand until governments respond with real solutions. CWHC would like to make this a provincial action. It works so well because it requires just a few people taking one hour each week to stand in their communities. A banner and eight colour co-ordinated scarves cost about $20 to make. Watch for more information at the social justice conference in April. Now, imagine yourself as part of a provincial movement to pressure all levels of government to address the housing crisis. We can do this.

**Links to websites:**

Citywide Housing Coalition: [www.citywidehousingcoalition.org](http://www.citywidehousingcoalition.org)


Streams of Justice: [www.streamsofjustice.org/](http://www.streamsofjustice.org/)

Chudnovsky blog on homelessness: [www.bchomelessness.blogspot.com](http://www.bchomelessness.blogspot.com)

**Three major causes of homelessness:**

1. The federal government pulled out of an annual social housing program that brought as many as 2,000 units of affordable housing to BC.
2. Welfare rates do not meet basic needs. A single person receives $375 for rent and $235 for everything else.
3. Affordable rental housing lost to redevelopment, speculation, and gentrification. Property values skyrocket while rental vacancy rates plummet.

**Did you know?**

- 1993: Federal government ended funding for the annual 1,200 to 2,000 social housing units in BC.
- 1996: End of the Canada Assistance Plan allowed provinces to deny welfare benefits and reduce rates.
- 2001: BC government cancels funding for 1,000 social housing units.
- 2002: BC government introduces new welfare rules cutting benefits to many and creating barriers to those in need of welfare.
- 2007: GVRD statistics show the number of homeless people went up 276% between 2002 and 2005 ([CBC News, March 9, 2007](http://www.cbc.ca)).
- Canada spends less on social housing at $65 per capita for all housing programs than both the USA ($156) and Britain ($226).
- Between 2003 and 2005 Vancouver lost 514 low-cost housing units. During the same period the homeless count increased by 663.
- According to a BC government study, hospital, ambulance, police, courts, emergency shelters, and food services for homeless people cost $40,000 per person a year, accounting for 86.9 million dollars annually.
- Poverty is the single greatest cause of homelessness.
- Welfare rates today are 25% lower than in 1995 once inflation is factored in.
- Raising welfare by 50% in BC would cost about 500 million dollars.
- Permanent social housing programs allow cities to build housing and neighbourhoods for all ages and incomes.
Cybertips for teachers

A new brochure from the Canadian Teachers’ Federation provides current advice to teachers on how to be prudent, professional, and prepared when using the Internet. All teachers would be well advised to review the list of activities that can result in disciplinary action against a teacher. Download the brochure at www.ctf-fce.ca.

Cyberbullying is on the increase

Find a helpful resource for teachers, parents, and students at www.cyberbullying.ca.

Understanding workplace bullying:
• its causes and sustaining myths (personal, institutional, societal)
• harm inflicted
• tactics used
• strategies for individuals to get safe
• its current legality and the problems that it causes
• opportunities for smart employers to stop it.
Go to www.bullyinginstitute.org.

www.bullying.org
“Where You Are NOT Alone!”

www.cyberbullying.ca
“Always On? Always Aware!”

www.bullyingcourse.com
“Learn to BE the Change!”

www.bullyingawarenessweek.org
“Prevention Through Education and Awareness”

Teach students to be media savvy

The Media Awareness Network and its web awareness program features lesson plans, classroom activities, background articles, and Canadian resources for media education. It also provides practical tips to help parents manage media in the home. Information at www.media-awareness.ca.

The BC-based Access to Media Society (AMES) provides media training and promotes media literacy as well as peer perspectives workshops. Preview videos such as Racism for Reel, Outlet: Queer youth speak out, and Expressions for Aboriginal Youth at www.accesstomedia.org.

Spoof ads, TV Turnoff Week, and Buy Nothing Day can be found at www.adbusters.org.

Pacific Cinematheque offers film and media education programs and resources for youth, teachers, and other community members. From intensive and engaging digital filmmaking programs to film literacy workshops and youth screenings, they aim to foster an appreciation and passion for the art of film as well as an understanding of the impact of visual media in the world around us. The website is www.cinematheque.bc.ca/education/about.htm.

Read this newsletter online to have instant access to recommended web resources. bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx?id=6352
Aboriginal territory protocol

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In efforts to improve relationships with Aboriginal people and communities, locals should take the responsibility of finding out who the local Aboriginal people are. Invite the Aboriginal people to open your meeting with traditional words or a song. If you are hosting a local meeting or a workshop, take the time to acknowledge the Aboriginal people, on whose territory you are speaking. This gesture pays respect to the Aboriginal people in your local.

Aboriginal education program workshops

Aboriginal history and culture
This workshop gives an overall background of the Aboriginal people in BC. Participants gain an understanding of how history has affected Aboriginal children’s education. These insights will affect the Aboriginal learner in a positive way.

Beyond Words: Creating racism-free schools for Aboriginal learners
This workshop discusses racism as it affects Aboriginal people, particularly Aboriginal students. Within the discussion, teachers and staff could work together to address the racism in their school. The handbook Beyond Words—Creating Racism-Free Schools for Aboriginal Learners (available from BCTF Lesson Aids for $10) could be used as a tool for the discussion.

Inclusive schools and teaching practices for Aboriginal students
It is important that schools be inviting and welcoming for Aboriginal people. If Aboriginal students are to be more successful in all aspects of school, involvement and communication between schools and Aboriginal parents are essential. This workshop offers ways to build a working relationship between the school and the community.

Working with Aboriginal youth
This workshop helps participants develop plans to create a welcoming environment, to be inclusive and caring for all Aboriginal youth, and to understand how to work with Aboriginal youth.

Employment equity for Aboriginal teachers
This workshop helps participants understand the employment equity process as it relates to Aboriginal teachers. Strategies for implementing employment equity for Aboriginal teachers will be explained.

Indigenous education
This workshop discusses the impact globalization has on indigenous education. What is indigenous education? What are the paradigms and where can we shift?
Using the BCTF social justice lens to focus our work

The British Columbia Teachers’ Federation Committee for Action on Social Justice CASJ (formerly the Social Justice Advisory Committee) has developed a lens that applies social justice theory to social justice work in our union to help guide policy, plan actions, and frame resources for social change with maximum impact.

Central to all is a commitment to equity. Social justice activists want our efforts to result in systemic changes leading to an equitable society. Instead, we often are called upon to provide temporary bandages to urgent problems. It is both preferable and necessary to achieve more systemic change. Busy activists need something succinct to animate our work. Our social justice lens was developed to assist us to both zoom in to sharpen our focus and look to wider angles to develop and expand the scope of our work within the bigger picture. It provides a common language to communicate about our work, ensuring that we are moving beyond short-term, immediate actions. It is applicable to the classroom and our work within and beyond our own union.

The lens has four distinct yet supportive and interactive sections—access, agency, advocacy, and solidarity action. Each represents an element of social justice work and, while we may focus on one section at a time, the true potential lies in engaging with all four simultaneously. A rotating outer ring, consisting of participatory democracy, civil society, transformative practice, and systemic change indicates conditions to achieve the ultimate goal of equity, found at the center.

Access
Access is the foundation of social justice work. Without access to all facets of society, there can be no social justice. Societies with institutions open only to the elite few have a high social injustice quotient. Restricted societies close off opportunities. As teachers we recognize the inherent socially just nature of the public education system and strongly voice our concerns to ensure that all students have real access to all programs and educational opportunities. It hurts us deeply when we see the harm caused by inadequate funding and we are moved to speak out on behalf of our students.

Agency
Renowned teacher and education philosopher Paolo Friere, believed that education is not neutral. It either served to help children conform to society’s norms and culture or it could “become the ‘practice of freedom’, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in and transform their world.” (Pedagogy of the Oppressed). The core of agency is the desire and ability to transform the world around us. Agency is about individuals seeing themselves as people with the right and the ability to take actions that create change for the better. It does not necessarily mean making things better for others. It does mean that people are not passive objects or victims for whom others’ actions, decisions, or agendas define and prescribe their lives. For our students, learning how to critically think about the world is a key strategy to develop their agency.

Advocacy
Closely linked to agency, but not inherently transformative, is the skill of advocacy. To advocate on your own or on behalf of others is the act of making change to make things better. People may desire to have impact their world, but knowing how to do it is another thing entirely. Advocacy requires a set of skills that allow a person to effect change using varied strategies and tactics. We teach students how to read, write, add, subtract, draw, and create so that they have skills to engage in the world using a variety of media. We teach them about point of view, perspective, and teamwork so they know who they are in relation to others around them. All are building blocks of advocacy work within a democratic society. Developing the skills to successfully advocate for oneself or others involves developing awareness (knowing what’s happening), analysis (seeing the different parts and what their impact and importance is to the whole), and action plans (knowing what to do and how to do it).

Solidarity action
As previously noted, agency implies engaging in transformative work, but not necessarily for the betterment of others. Solidarity action places the person alongside others, acting for collective betterment. While any individual may be fine in a particular circumstance, social justice work extends to include the principle that an injury to one is an injury to all. Solidarity action requires us to recognize injustice, join with others in the world in similar and/or less privileged circumstances, and causes us to act with others to right the wrongs that we see. Teaching children empathy is part of solidarity work, but empathy alone is not enough. Action must be coupled with empathy to produce meaningful solidarity.

Participatory democracy, transformative practice, systemic change and civil society, like the ultimate goal of equity, are to be kept in mind when developing plans to advance access, agency, advocacy, and solidarity action. Invoking these concepts, we challenge the power and control of elites, whether they are ruling classes in society or the bosses in our workplaces. We also must look inside to examine how our own privilege affects our actions. These are ways we choose to do socially just work and the means by which we will achieve greater equity.
A Social Justice Lens

- Access: open and available to all
- Agency: intention to effect change
- Solidarity: action collectively working for change
- Advocacy: skills to effect change

Focus on Equity

For more information about the Social Justice program at the BCTF, go to www.bctf.ca/SocialJustice.aspx