

SPRING 2024

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

ATA Magazine

The loud

and the quiet

... and everyone *in between*

PAGE 18



UNSUNG HERO

Marie-Louise Brugeyroux, a pioneer in French language instruction.

PAGE 10

WELLNESS

Revitalize yourself with a summer reset.

PAGE 12

MOST MEMORABLE LESSON

Choosing uncertainty over routine leads to an epic night at the zoo.

PAGE 56

Retirement about to hit?



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Feature

18

THE LOUD AND THE QUIET... AND EVERYONE IN BETWEEN

Extroverts and introverts bring different strengths to our classrooms and schools.



PHOTOGRAPHED BY ETHAN CALVIN

Spring 2024 / Vol. 104 / No. 3

Feature

18 The loud and the quiet ... and everyone in between

Outlook

- 4** Letters
- 5** From the President
Mot du président
- 7** Then and Now
- 8** Looking Abroad
- 10** Unsung Hero

Bulletin Board

- 3** Editor's Notebook
Note de la rédactrice
- 12** Wellness
- 14** Technology
- 16** Diversity
- 32** Research Insights
- 48** In Profile

Learning Commons

- 38** From the Bookshelves
- 40** Kid Lit
- 43** In Focus

Teacher to Teacher

- 47** Who's Out There
- 52** In My Humble Opinion
- 55** Teacher Hacks
- 56** Most Memorable Lesson



16

DIVERSITY

Exploring the dimensions of power and privilege.



48

IN PROFILE

Métis teacher shows students the impact of dedication.



55

TEACHER HACKS

Secret windows bring social studies to life.

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KIM VANDERHELM | p. 10, 11, 18



Kim VanderHelm is an Alberta-based illustrator and designer working in digital and traditional media. Her work is inspired by the stories that surround us — the ones we tell, the ones we hear and the ones we can't forget.



DR. JONI TURVILLE | p. 12



Joni Turville, former staff officer at the ATA, is now a certified executive coach, consultant, writer and researcher. She also created an online challenge and community called "The Weekend Reset Challenge," stemming from her own experience juggling work, family and life. Try it at www.theweekendresetchallenge.com!



JIN MCRAE | p. 16



Jin McRae (he/him) is a lifelong learner and educator based in Edmonton. Jin has taught Grades 5 and 6 English Language Arts and Social Studies since 2017. As a Korean-Canadian immigrant settler, Jin is passionate about empowering underdogs and advocating for his marginalized colleagues by presenting his research at conferences, serving on committees, and writing about equity, diversity and intersectionality.



DR. ROBBIN GIBB | p. 34



As a professor of neuroscience at the University of Lethbridge, Robbin Gibb studies how experiences influence brain plasticity during development. Gibb's work in schools was recognized by the ATA in 2023 with the Educational Research Award.



JADE OLDFIELD | p. 34



Jade Oldfield is a certificated Alberta teacher who returned to the University of Lethbridge to complete an MSc in neuroscience, hoping to make a difference in the field of education. Working with Dr. Robbin Gibb, Jade is studying the impact of play on adolescent executive functions.



RAYN PERRY | p. 34



Rayn Perry grew up in Lethbridge and recently graduated from the University of British Columbia with a bachelor in human kinetics. Rayn is passionate about youth development and physical literacy, and believes in improving early education systems to achieve happier, healthier communities.



CAYLEY FLEISHMAN | p. 34



Cayley Fleishman just completed her psychology degree at the University of Lethbridge. Cayley worked in the Gibb lab for several years and contributed to the development and testing of the adolescent curriculum.



VICKI HAZELWOOD | p. 34



For the past 12 years, Vicki Hazelwood has advocated both locally and provincially for healthy childhood development. Since 2019, Vicki has worked as a research associate with the Building Brains Together project, which focuses on improving adult brain development and executive function.



DR. CLAUDIA GONZALEZ | p. 34



Claudia Gonzalez is a professor and Board of Governors Research Chair in the department of kinesiology at the University of Lethbridge. Gonzalez investigates the interactions of the sensorimotor system with cognitive processes such as language, executive function and spatial abilities.

DAMIAN ABRAHAMS | p. 48



Originally from Haida Gwaii, Damian has been calling amiskwaciwaskahikan home now for 22 years. A lifelong photographer, Damian has worked in the field professionally for the past three years, running his own company, Indigital Media, out of Edmonton. He considers photography an extension of the storytelling his people have done for generations. His daughter adds: "Make sure to tell them we have a cat named Cheese!"

BRIAN SKINNER | p. 55



Brian Skinner has been a passionate Alberta teacher for the past 15 years as well as local president for Park Plains East, executive member of Endless Skies Convention Association, junior high athletics coach, and one of eight Canadian teacher winners in the Staples We Love Teachers national contest. Brian lives with wife Sharleen and their fur babies in Wainwright.

The Alberta Teachers' Association respectfully acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 4, 6, 7, 8 and 10 territories—the travelling route, gathering place and meeting grounds for Indigenous Peoples, whose histories, languages, cultures and traditions continue to influence our vibrant community. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. We recognize the land as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory we reside on or are visiting.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

Elissa Corsi

Editor-in-Chief, ATA Magazine
Rédactrice en chef de l'ATA Magazine

Three quiet cheers for authenticity and equilibrium

I WAS 10 YEARS INTO MY TEACHING CAREER when I stepped into the role of school principal, a role that was not quite a natural fit.


As an introvert, I get my energy from within, from the quieter side of things, so the prospect of leading a school community was daunting. Staff meetings, greeting parents at special events and, most dreaded of all, school assemblies, were way beyond my comfort zone.

I vividly recall preparing for my first staff meeting as a new school principal. I was entering uncharted territory, feeling a sense of anticipation and immense pressure. I meticulously rehearsed each word I planned to say and scrutinized every detail as I strived to strike the perfect chord of friendliness, warmth and competence. Amidst this flurry of preparations, I hid in my office, gathering my thoughts and steeling my nerves, a solitary dance between the desire to retreat into familiar introspection and the need to step forward as a leader.

Once I stepped into that meeting, the uncertainty drifted away and I found my voice. It was a quiet voice, but it was authentic. And that is what mattered.

At my school, our group of teachers found its equilibrium in the dynamic interplay between the exuberance of extroversion and the depth of introversion, and it was this equilibrium that propelled us forward. It was not the loudness or the quietness that mattered, but our shared passion for teaching, learning and making a difference.

As we explore in our feature section in this issue (beginning on page 18), whether you are the quiet or the loud, or somewhere in between, you have an important role to play in the lives of your students.

As always, thank you for the work you do every day for students across the province. 

Éloge, dans le calme, de l'authenticité et de l'équilibre

J'EN ÉTAIS À MA DIXIÈME ANNÉE EN ENSEIGNEMENT lorsque je suis devenue directrice d'école, rôle qui ne m'allait pas tout à fait comme un gant.


En tant qu'introvertie, je puise mon énergie en moi, dans la tranquillité et le calme; la perspective de diriger une communauté scolaire me semblait donc intimidante. Les réunions du personnel, l'accueil des parents lors d'événements spéciaux et la situation que je redoutais le plus, les rassemblements d'école : tout cela était bien au-delà de ma zone de confort.

Je me souviens très bien de mes préparatifs en vue de ma première réunion du personnel en tant que nouvelle directrice d'école. J'entrais en territoire inconnu et je ressentais de la fébrilité ainsi qu'une pression immense. J'ai répété avec le plus grand soin chaque mot que je comptais prononcer et analysé chaque détail pour en arriver à prendre un ton mariant parfaitement convivialité, chaleur et compétence. Engagée dans ce tourbillon de préparatifs, je me suis enfermée dans mon bureau pour me concentrer et m'armer de courage, tiraillée dans ma solitude entre le désir de me réfugier dans l'introspection dont j'avais l'habitude et la nécessité de prendre ma place comme leadeure.

Une fois arrivée à la réunion, mon incertitude s'est dissipée et j'ai pu m'exprimer à ma façon. J'ai parlé calmement, mais aussi avec authenticité. Et c'est ce qui comptait le plus.

Le groupe d'enseignants de mon école a trouvé son équilibre dans l'interaction dynamique entre l'exubérance des extravertis et la profondeur des introvertis, et cet équilibre nous a permis d'avancer ensemble. Ce n'est pas l'intensité ou la douceur qui avait le plus d'importance, mais bien notre passion commune pour l'enseignement, l'apprentissage et le changement positif.

Comme nous le verrons dans le dossier thématique de ce numéro (page 18 et suivantes), que vous soyez du type réservé, expressif ou quelque part entre les deux, vous avez un rôle important à jouer dans la vie de vos élèves.

Comme toujours, je vous remercie pour le travail que vous faites chaque jour pour les élèves aux quatre coins de la province. 

Letters

We want your feedback

We'd like to hear from you! One of the ways we'd like to engage with teachers is by hearing from you regularly. In several locations throughout this magazine are sections calling for ideas and submissions from teachers. Please watch for these and send us your ideas.

Also please send us ...

- general feedback
- your thoughts on items that you particularly liked (or didn't)
- suggestions for future content
- letters to the editor for possible publication

We really do want to hear from you. After all, this is your magazine.

Email your feedback to Elissa Corsi, editor-in-chief, elissa.corsi@ata.ab.ca or Cory Hare, managing editor, cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR — GUIDELINES

Word limit: 300

Please include

- your first and last name,
- basic information about your teaching assignment (i.e. school, grade, subject).

All letters are subject to editing for length, clarity, punctuation, spelling and grammar.



Retired music teacher, Tom Spila, illustrated by Robert Carter.

Profile of music advocate earns praise

Since this latest issue of the *ATA Magazine* was released, I have had a number of people reach out, not only to congratulate me on being featured in the magazine but to indicate how impressed they were with the writing and the work of the illustrator.

Just thought that you and your team would like to know about the many complimentary comments received regarding your article.

- Tom Spila, subject of *Unsung Hero* article, Winter 2024 edition



Read the winter issue

The *ATA Magazine* is available on our website. Visit www.teachers.ab.ca/news/take-it-outside-norm to read our winter issue.

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PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

FROM THE PRESIDENT MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Jason Schilling


President, ATA
Président de l'ATA

It takes all kinds

I HAVE NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO BE THE quiet one, and I am sure my Grade 7 language arts teacher, who moved me every week, would wholeheartedly agree. In fact, if I ever was quiet, I would be asked if I was feeling ill and needed to go home. However, as verbose as I was growing up, I also liked my silence and solitude. That really has not changed much now that I'm an adult. I can be as outgoing as the next person but also just as introverted — all in the span of a day.

I have been fortunate in my teaching career to work with a variety of introverts and extroverts. As this issue's feature explores, a mix of personalities among staff is a true asset to students and the broader school community.

Teaching is about creating and refining relationships with our students and their families. Having a menagerie of personalities on staff guarantees that students can find an adult to connect with in their school. From the quiet reading nook in the corner of a library to the raucous intramural floor hockey game at lunch, teachers and school leaders provide the safe and caring atmosphere our students need to thrive.


We should celebrate the unique qualities we all bring to the profession and continue to ensure that our school staff are as diverse as the students who occupy the desks in front of us. Though I will say, when I became a teacher and had to move students around on a weekly basis, the irony was not lost on me. Who knows, maybe one of those students will grow up to discover how teaching can be a great fit for their own unique personality. 

Il faut de tout pour faire un monde

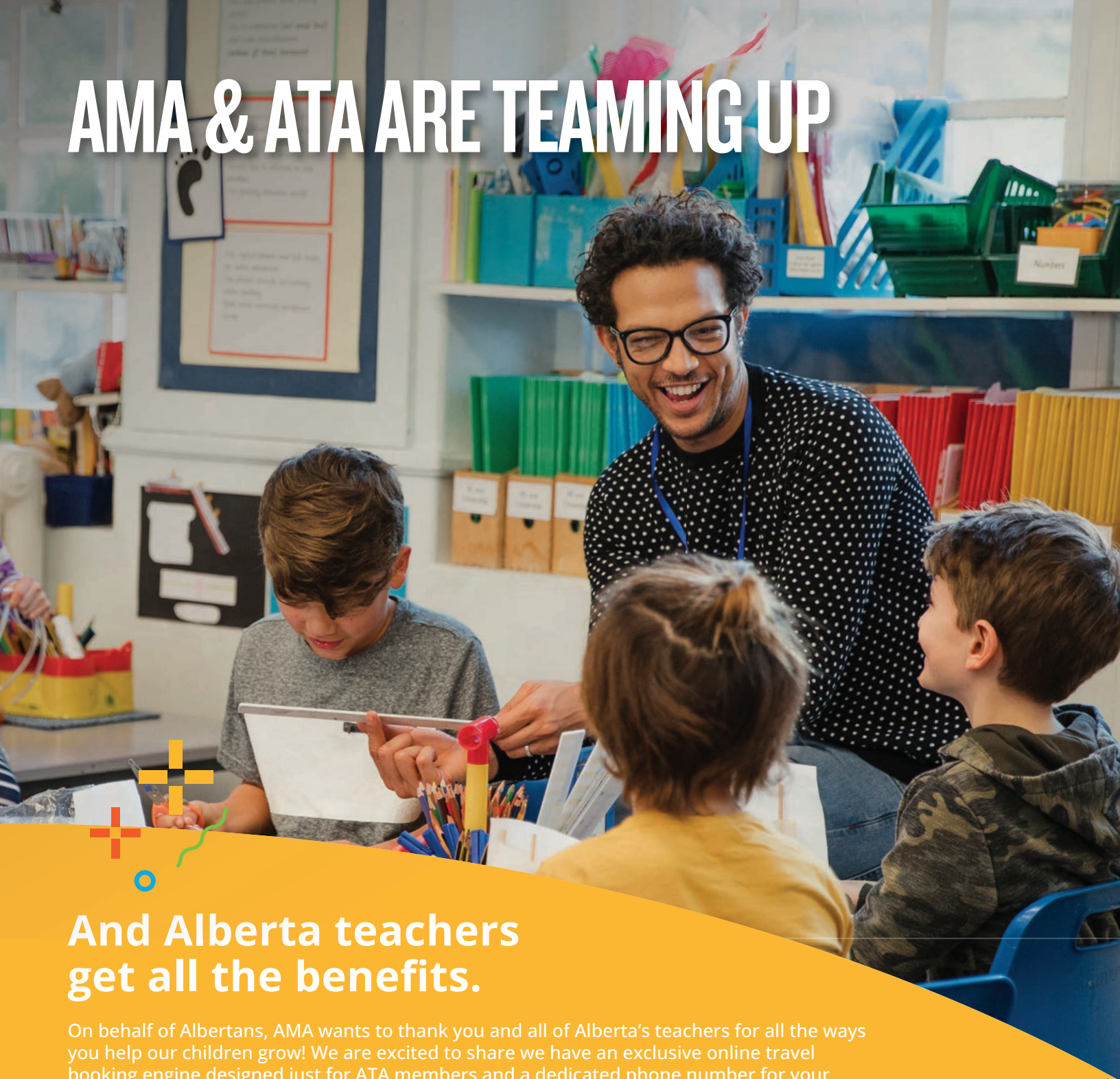
JE N'AI JAMAIS EU LA RÉPUTATION D'ÊTRE quelqu'un de calme, et je suis sûr que mon enseignant d'anglais de 7e année qui m'obligeait à changer de place toutes les semaines serait entièrement d'accord avec moi. En fait, s'il m'arrivait parfois de rester tranquille, on me demandait si je n'étais pas malade et si j'avais besoin de rentrer chez moi. Quoi qu'on en dise, même si j'étais verbeux du temps de ma jeunesse, j'aimais tout autant le silence et la solitude. Et cela n'a pas beaucoup changé depuis que je suis adulte. La preuve, je peux être aussi extraverti qu'introverti que mon prochain, et ce en l'espace d'une journée.

Au cours de ma carrière d'enseignant, j'ai eu la chance de travailler avec beaucoup d'introvertis et d'extravertis. Et comme le dévoile ce numéro, un mélange de personnalités parmi le personnel est un véritable atout pour les élèves et l'ensemble de la communauté scolaire.

Enseigner, c'est établir et approfondir des relations avec nos élèves et leurs familles. Un éventail de personnalités parmi le personnel est donc essentiel pour que tous les élèves trouvent à l'école un adulte à qui se lier. Voilà pourquoi dans des espaces aussi distincts que le petit coin tranquille d'une bibliothèque ou celui de la salle survoltée où se dispute un match de hockey à l'heure du dîner, les enseignants et leaders scolaires parviennent à créer un environnement sûr et accueillant propice à l'épanouissement de nos élèves.

Nous devrions donc célébrer les qualités uniques que nous apportons tous à la profession et veiller à ce que la diversité des membres de notre personnel scolaire égale celle des élèves qui se trouvent en face de nous. Je dirais toutefois que l'ironie de la situation ne m'a pas échappé lorsque devenu enseignant, j'ai obligé certains élèves à changer de place toutes les semaines. Mais qui sait, l'un d'eux peut-être découvrira en grandissant que sa propre et unique personnalité peut faire de lui un parfait candidat pour enseigner. 

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Archival issues of the **ATA Magazine** can be just as relevant now as they were when originally published, or they can remind us how far we've come. You decide.

Check out these items from the November 1980 issue of the **ATA Magazine**, which focused on teachers in their first year of practice.



Lessons for beginning teachers

44 YEARS AGO

“

The first year of teaching is an excellent time to begin the creation of one's philosophy, if previously one has been kept from the task.

This year is especially difficult, but as one is still fairly open, the difficulties can be used to raise the questions which can water the natural philosophic seed. Why is this not working as I had expected? What am I trying to achieve anyway? And off we go, since the question of just what, fundamentally, the purpose of education is constitutes the central question of educational philosophy and the centre where all types of education questions meet.

— Foster N Walker,
“Is Deterioration Inevitable?”

“

A paradoxical situation is hauntingly prevalent in today's schools.

Beginning teachers are generally better prepared and more sophisticated than their counterparts of a decade ago. At the same time, neophytes are being bamboozled and pressured into accepting a supposed educational trend based upon such linchpins as accountability, back-to-the-basics, Canadiana, prescribed content, behavioural psychology, and standardized examinations. It does not take an educational wizard to realize that progressive and creative teachers, particularly beginning teachers, are caught in a professional dilemma of the greatest magnitude. What are they to do?

— Fred Schoenrock,
“Five Reasons to Teach”



It's only stage fright Mrs. Martin. You'll get used to it.

“

My advice to any new teacher entering the profession is throw out all the rule books.

The permissiveness of the 60s and the apathy of the 70s have been replaced by the nihilism of the 80s — and the teaching profession is on the receiving line. Get to know the attitudes, the life styles, and the reactions of the so-called non-academic students first, and you may stand a better chance of coping with the challenging new world of the young in general.

— Cy Groves, “Coping With The Children Of The Directionless 80s”



ILLUSTRATION BY MATEUSZ NAPIERALSKI

Toward inclusive and equitable quality education

UN calls for reprofessionalization of teachers and the teaching profession

Lisa Everitt

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

IN JUNE 2023, United Nations (UN) Secretary-General António Guterres announced the formation of the High-Level Panel on the Teaching Profession. The goal of the panel was to build upon the 2022 UN Summit on Transforming Education, where 130 nations came together to commit to action to meet Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” by the year 2030. The panel consisted of government ministers of education and labour; teachers; students; teachers’ union representatives; and representatives of civil society, academia and the private sector.

The panel’s report, issued in February 2024, highlights the central role of the teaching profession in the attainment of SDG 4. The 59 recommendations provide clear direction to UN members about how to ensure that SDG 4 is met and sustained. The recommendations are articulated in 10 categories as follows:

ENABLING TRANSFORMATION OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

These recommendations call on governments to set the stage for the teaching profession to thrive by establishing public services and economic policies

that support learners and teachers alike. Governments should work in collaboration with partners in education, including teachers’ unions, to provide multiple learning pathways and opportunities for students. Governments should also enable rights to education as well as decent work for teachers. This includes the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining, as well as freedom of thought and academic freedom. Finally, enabling transformation of the teaching profession includes labour force planning and recruitment, and support for a diverse population of teachers.

INVESTING IN TEACHERS

These recommendations call on governments to spend at least six per cent of gross domestic product and 20 per cent of total government expenditure on public education. Funding should be sustainable, transparent and accounted for using consistent reporting mechanisms. Finally, investing in teachers assumes adequate compensation, affordable preservice training, ongoing professional development and high-quality resources that support teaching and learning.

PROMOTING EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

These recommendations urge governments, through workforce planning, to recruit marginalized groups into the profession and provide adequate support to them throughout their careers. Further, women and equity-deserving groups should be promoted into leadership positions within the education system. Finally, teachers should have adequate living conditions, including violence-free environments.

ELEVATING THE STATUS AND DIGNITY OF THE TEACHING PROFESSION

These recommendations seek to ensure that all teachers are highly qualified and well respected within their countries and communities. Teachers should be recognized as collaborators in the educational system, and their professional judgment and contributions should be honoured.

IMPROVING QUALITY AND FOSTERING INNOVATION IN TEACHING THROUGH TRAINING AND LIFELONG LEARNING

These recommendations call on governments to ensure that initial teacher education, opportunities for training and lifelong learning are accessible and affordable. In addition, teachers should hold minimum levels of educational training before being certificated. Professional development for school leaders is also essential to successful leadership recruitment. Finally, the recommendations recognize that teaching is a collaborative venture and support the creation of collaborative spaces and time for teachers to come together and plan and evaluate programming.

ENSURING SUSTAINABILITY, PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

The teaching profession has a role in helping students understand what the global environmental crisis means for their communities as well as the world. The panel calls for professional development and access to free resources to teach youth about topics like environmental sustainability and recommends students become active agents in ensuring a better future for humanity and the earth.

FOSTERING HUMANITY IN TEACHING THROUGH DECENT WORK

These recommendations focus on providing decent working conditions, including salary equity with other professions of similar training levels, secure contractual arrangements, adequate support from other education staff for non-teaching tasks, and the establishment of working conditions that support teacher mental health and holistic well-being. Fundamental to these recommendations is the need to meaningfully consult with the teaching profession to design structures such as collective agreements that are responsive and built for the attraction and retention of teachers.

DEVELOPING LEADERSHIP IN TEACHING

These recommendations set out the need for professional development, mentorship and support for teachers who become school leaders.

ADVANCING HUMAN-CENTRED EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

These recommendations call for the use of technology to be grounded in pedagogical practice, with teachers having the ability to determine how technology is implemented in schools and classrooms. Further, governments and policy makers should collaborate with the profession and with students to ensure equitable access, transparent procurement processes,

autonomy in use of technology and evaluation of the how technology is used. "At no point should technology replace the human relationship with the teacher," the panel writes.

TRANSFORMING TEACHING THROUGH A NEW SOCIAL CONTRACT FOR EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DIALOGUE

These recommendations are based on a collaborative model that should be used to inform policy, teachers' working conditions and student learning. While teachers' unions, government, school boards and students are identified as partners, their efforts must be coordinated and intentional.

The recommendations call on those unions to take a research-based approach to the profession, including the development of standards of practice as well as implementation and evaluation mechanisms for the standards as they are put into effect.

NEXT STEPS FOR INTERNATIONAL ACTION

These recommendations tell international actors how to proceed toward 2030 and the achievement of SDG 4. The international community should develop instruments that can be used to track countries' progress on the recommendations. It should also establish a global fund for teachers' salaries to be used in times of climate emergencies, war and displacement of populations during crises. At the same time, international banks should forgive debts relating to education and eliminate austerity measures as requirements for debt repayment.

At their heart, the recommendations call for the reprofessionalization of teachers and the teaching profession and recognize and affirm the important role of schools and teachers within communities. These recommendations are relevant both globally and here in Alberta and merit close attention and adoption. ^{ATA}





Marie-Louise Brugeyroux: teacher extraordinaire

Margaret Shane

Archivist, ATA

ALL ALBERTANS OWE A DEBT to francophone educator Marie-Louise Brugeyroux (1916–2003), who drew upon unfathomable depths of talent and drive to establish access to robust French language instruction, resources, and professional development for students and teachers.

Trained in teaching at the Edmonton Normal School, Brugeyroux began teaching in 1936 in rural Alberta schools. In 1943, she moved to Edmonton Catholic Schools, where she taught until 1964. In those years, Brugeyroux earned her bachelor of education degree and a graduate diploma in curriculum. From 1964 to 1978, she served Edmonton Catholic Schools as a French language specialist and later as supervisor of second languages. Her life journey also included the study of art and French at the Université de Provence in Aix en Provence, France.

A natural leader and talented author, Brugeyroux had a passion for French language education that drove her to contribute to almost all French-language programming, curriculum, resource development and advocacy until her retirement in 1978. Among her many contributions were *Je lis* (1974), *Stratégie pédagogique* (1975) and *Friars and Friends: A History of St. Francis of Assisi Parish, 1909–1984*.

In her working and post-retirement life, Brugeyroux maintained a relentless level of community involvement, serving on many boards including: Edmonton Art Gallery, Le Théâtre Français d'Edmonton, L'Alliance Française

d'Edmonton, Canadian College of Teachers and Ecumenical Commission of the Edmonton Catholic Archdiocese.

With wide-ranging interests in the fine arts, bible study and local historical research, Brugeyroux was choir director at St. Francis Assisi church for many years, a supervisor at children's summer camps and she arranged exchange visits to Quebec. A woman of deep faith, she was honoured to have received holy communion from Pope John Paul I during the papal mass held in Edmonton in 1984.

Brugeyroux's service was recognized with various awards and honours in her lifetime, including medals celebrating the Queen's Silver (1977) and Golden Jubilee (2002). In 1989, the Alberta Teachers' Association recognized Brugeyroux's remarkable contributions by establishing the Marie-Louise Brugeyroux Gold Medal in Education, awarded annually to the top graduating student in the Faculté Saint-Jean.

Brugeyroux dedicated her career to expanding, enriching and celebrating French-language curriculum in Alberta education, and her life to serving her community. ^{ATA}

► **Got an idea?** *Unsung Hero* is a space dedicated to honouring ATA members past and present who have had notable achievements, either in the ATA or in their private lives.

If you know of a member whom you feel should be recognized, please contact section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.

Marie-Louise Brugeyroux

Recipient of a certificate from the French Canadian Association for her dedication to education and the French language in Alberta

Recipient of the Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal in 2002 and the Queen's Silver Jubilee Medal in 1977

Editor of a series of 14 French readers published under the title *La joie de lire*

ILLUSTRATION BY KIM VANDERHELM



Are you limping to the finish line?

Revitalize yourself with a summer wellness reset









Joni Turville

Freelance contributor


THE KIDS ARE READY FOR THE END of the school year, and though you love them like your own, so are you. On top of already intense and demanding work, you have report cards, cleaning duties and year-end activities to complete. You might even find yourself so tired that you start the summer being sick.

So how can you purposefully design your summer to maximize wellness and begin the new school year feeling revitalized?

Inspired by well-known wellness frameworks and the Canadian Wellness Index, the acronym COMPASS describes a system of healthy habits that you can establish over the summer. The table on the next page briefly explains each practice, including ideas that you can build on.

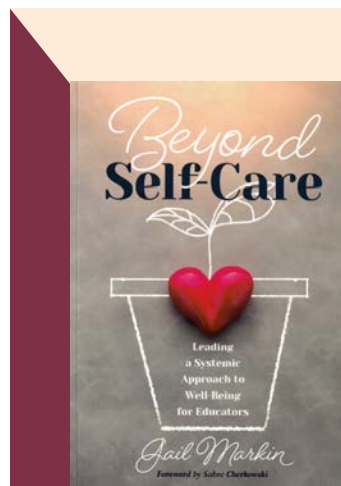
	<i>Practices</i>	<i>What it is</i>	<i>Strategies to try</i>
 C	Connect	Build and maintain relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have coffee with a friend. • Make a phone call. • Send a check-in text.
 O	Outdoors	Get outside and/or in nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Go for a walk. • Garden. • Shop at a farmer's market.
 M	Move	Move your body.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dance. • Play with a pet. • Stretch.
 P	Plan	Create a plan and put it into action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scan ahead. • Set up reminders. • Prep a meal.
 A	Appreciate	Practice gratitude.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a gratitude journal. • Send a note of thanks. • Celebrate anything and everything.
 S	Spark	Be creative and learn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on a hobby. • Listen to a podcast. • Take a class.
 S	Stillness	Be mindful, meditative and present.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practice yoga. • Turn off electronics. • Work along with a mindfulness exercise.

Set a goal to engage in each of the seven areas each week. As you build habits, try to incorporate more. Once you start to establish them, the habits that you build can help you not just over the summer, but as part of your ongoing routine.

Your body, mind and spirit will thank you. 

Want to know more?

Sign up for [The Weekend Reset Challenge](http://www.theweekendresetchallenge.com) to receive research-based strategies, and join a dynamic online community. For more information, visit www.theweekendresetchallenge.com.



RECOMMENDED RESOURCE

Beyond Self-Care: Leading a systemic approach to well-being for educators

Gail Markin

Author Gail Markin explores the importance of well-being at individual, group and system levels, as well as the role of leadership in supporting cultures of well-being.

Available through the ATA library.

Found in translation

Technology is available to help students who struggle with English

Danny Maas

Acting Associate Coordinator,
Professional Development, ATA

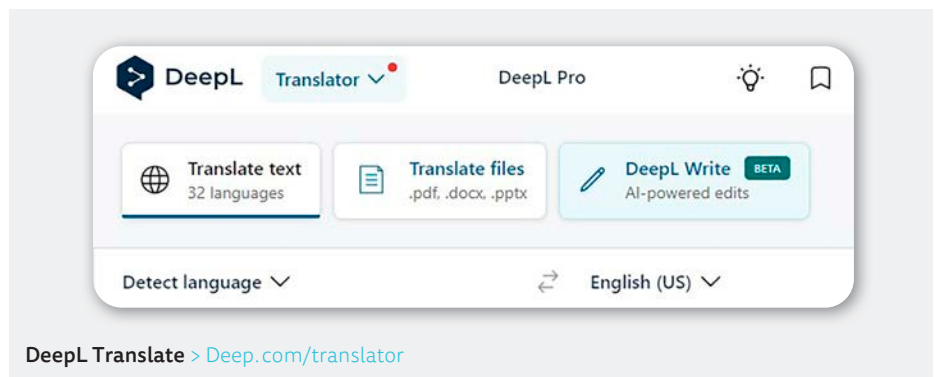
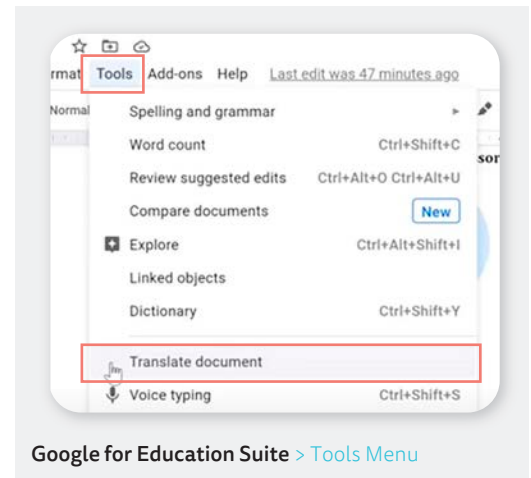
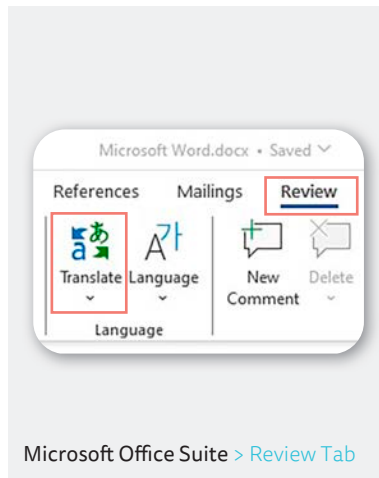
COMING TO SCHOOL

with English as an additional language can present both opportunities and challenges for students. In addition, if parents or guardians are also new to English, including them as partners in learning may require additional tools and strategies. Fortunately, several classroom technologies offer translation features that can reduce communication barriers between teachers, students and parents.



INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS

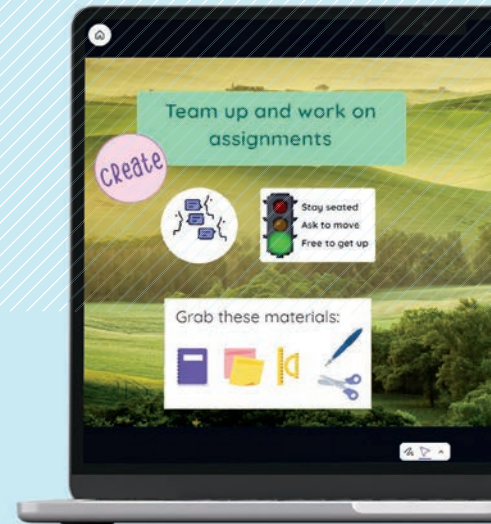
These productivity tools are readily available and offer translation features that can quickly translate the text in any document or presentation into more than 100 languages.



Some teachers note that the translations are not perfect, but being able to offer classroom materials in a different language may help students and parents complete subject-area assignments as they learn English.



ILLUSTRATED BY MICHAEL PARILLAS



Tech Tip

Classroomscreen is a versatile app that helps teachers support students with important information like schedules, timers and noise levels. The tool is essentially an online whiteboard that contains a variety of apps that are quick and easy to access. It's customizable with a variety of backgrounds and colours to fit your classroom.

Learn more from this online presentation created by the Educational Technology Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ETCATA).



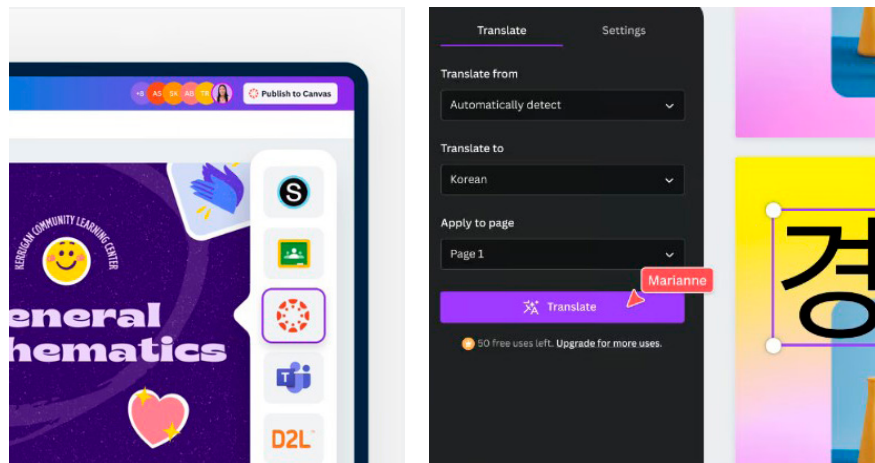
The Classroomscreen app is available at classroomscreen.com.

CONTACT ETCATA

For more support using technology in your classroom, contact the Educational Technology Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association (ETCATA) at etc.teachers.ab.ca.

HOME COMMUNICATION MATERIALS

Canva for Education is an example of a tool that's free for teachers. It can be used to create classroom newsletters and other documents. The Magic Switch menu offers instant translation into more than 100 languages.



IMAGES FROM CANVA WEBSITE

LIVE CONVERSATIONAL LANGUAGE

Numerous free smartphone apps can translate live speech into other languages.



As teachers continue to offer numerous inclusive supports to students and their families, consider how translation tools may help reduce communication barriers for those who are learning English. ^{ATA}



ILLUSTRATION BY BIANCA HO

The dimensions of power and privilege

We are all a complex combination of privilege and marginalization

Jin McRae

Member of the ATA's Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee

HUMAN DIVERSITY can be measured in countless ways. I see this every day as a teacher.

Each person has many dimensions that include visible, physical traits as well as traits that are more hidden and potentially fluid. Physical traits include size, gender, age and skin colour, whereas less visible ones include health, education, wealth and sexuality. The combinations of these dimensions, often called intersections, represent the multilayered complexity that is embodied in everyone, and affect our interactions and relationships with one another.

WHERE POWER LIES

To demonstrate the diversity dimensions, sociologists and scholars have created various visual representations or “wheels.” One version, the Wheel of Power/Privilege shown here, captures how certain traits are prioritized or privileged.

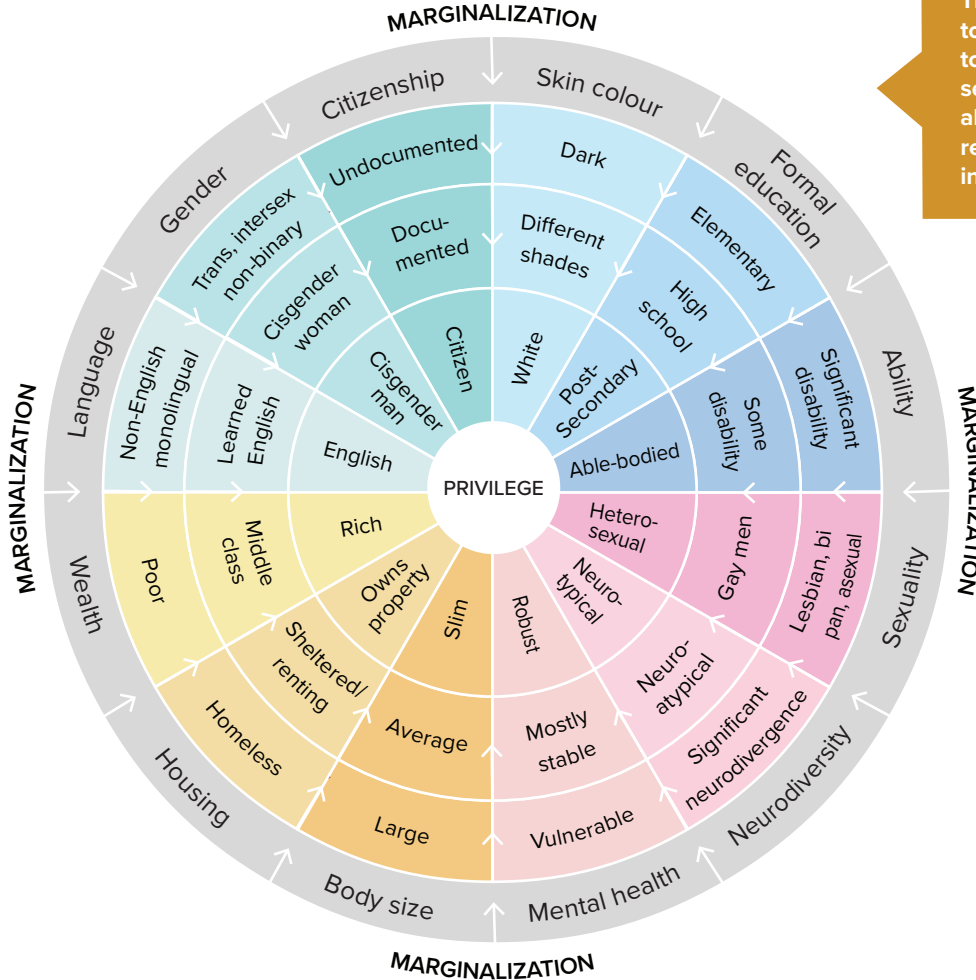
In this representation, the “powerful” traits (e.g., rich) are in the centre of the wheel, while less powerful traits (e.g., neurodivergence) are in the middle and periphery near the margins of the wheel, demonstrating the gradual decrease in privilege associated with these characteristics. For instance, more privilege is

ascribed to cisgender men, those who are white and those who are able-bodied.

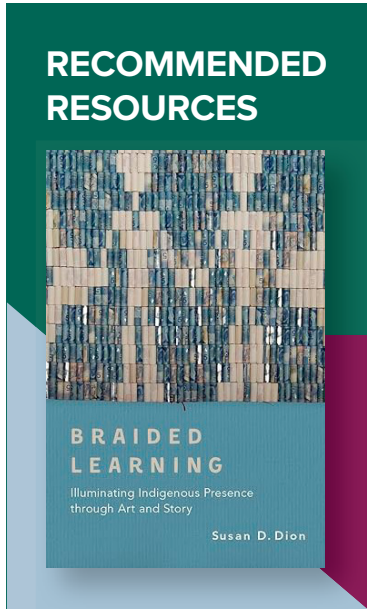
With 12 dimensions in this wheel, an individual may hold power in a number of areas, but not all. Similarly, someone may be marginalized in several dimensions but privileged in others.

The wheel can support our understanding of intersectionality, as it allows us to think beyond a single dimension (such as gender or skin colour) when discussing diversity. Seeing all 12 sections of this wheel at once also allows us to think about how the different dimensions interact and exist in varying degrees of privilege and power — emphasizing just how complex diversity is.

Wheel of Power



The wheel's dimensions include descriptors and labels that may be considered too sensitive to discuss openly in certain settings. However, failing to be open about such labels amounts to ignoring real dimensions of inequality that exist in our society.



ADAPTED FROM SYLVIA DUCKWORTH

Braided Learning: Illuminating Indigenous Presence Through Art and Story

Susan D. Dion
Available in the ATA library.

National Deafblind Awareness Month

is celebrated in June, the birth month of Helen Keller. This month, events are held across the country to promote Canadians' understanding of, and comfort with, people in their communities who are deafblind.

BUILDING AWARENESS AND EQUITY

As a teacher, using a wheel like this helps me identify where my own privileges and marginalizations exist. This can help me to see how I may be perceived by others, and how I can share my powers and privileges with those who are less privileged. For example, as an Asian male teacher, I recognize that there may be instances where I can use my privilege to proactively support and advocate for students or colleagues, and instances where I may need to ask for support from my white peers. Building awareness can build allyship.

Intersections of diversity affect teachers and students alike, in multifaceted

and dynamic ways. Tools such as wheels of power/privilege foster awareness and increase understanding of diversity and intersectionality, allowing us to truly grasp how privilege and power affect each of us differently.

As teachers, increasing our understanding of the complexities around diversity is vital. By appreciating that everyone, including our students, their families and our colleagues, may be privileged in some ways but also disadvantaged in others, we can work more effectively to support safe and equitable learning spaces for all. ^{ATA}

The loud

and the
quiet

...and everyone
in between

Extroverts and introverts bring different strengths to our classrooms and schools



PHOTOS SUPPLIED AND ADAPTED

Cozy Haze

Managing Editor,
ATA Magazine

A

school gymnasium. Waves of electronic blips and pulsating percussion. A stage lined with dancers — some a bit stiff, some as lithe and carefree as cats. A whirling throng of limbs and gyrations.

The song blasting from the PA system is “I Gotta Feeling”, by the Black Eyed Peas, with its signature

lyric “tonight’s gonna be a good night.” The carefully choreographed performance is aimed at pumping up the K-9 students who fill the seating area. Every teacher on staff is present and giving it their all. Well, sort of.

For three of the teachers, this activity is less outward facing than was envisioned. Instead of showcasing their moves on stage, they’re hiding in the nearby storage room, listening for the song’s last strains so they can slip into the sea of dancers just in time for the final “ta-da!”



This scenario happened several years ago at a Calgary school. One of the teachers hiding in the storage room was Andrew Finlay.

A 24-year teaching veteran, Finlay dislikes group performances and small talk. He likes teaching one on one and spending time alone at the end of the day. In short, he identifies strongly as an introvert and says that being forced to be extroverted is one of the biggest challenges he faces as a teacher.

“I hate it when we have to do the theme days or perform something extra special for the kids,” Finlay says. “That’s tough for me.”

As someone who values routine and structure, Finlay finds several aspects of teaching challenging — starting



I think introverts are not understood, because we don't go out there and explain ourselves, so when there is one in the classroom, I understand what they are like.”

Andrew Finlay ▶ *introverted teacher*

fresh at a new school, teaching a new grade and even facing that annual fall ritual that some of his colleagues find most exciting.

“I still get fairly nervous on the first day of school,” Finlay says. “I do not sleep the night before the kids come.”

Over the years, Finlay has developed strategies for dealing with his introversion on the first day of school. He tells his students point-blank that he’s nervous and that he doesn’t like talking in front of people. He even shares with them some of the ways he gets around his introversion.

One of Finlay’s strategies, even in his own classroom, is to avoid being the centre of attention. Rather than employing stand-and-deliver lessons, he structures his classes so he can roam among students as they work.

“I do much better at building a one-to-one relationship with students,” he says.

Despite the challenges he faces as an introvert in a profession that demands a certain amount of outward

demonstration, Finlay feels like teaching is a good fit. He finds the work deeply rewarding and feels that his personality type is an asset in a school setting.

For one, his introverted nature has made him a good listener. He is also able to recognize those students who don't want to be in the spotlight or who don't have a lot of friends and to make space for them to be who they are.

"The quieter kids that prefer one-on-one interaction — I think I understand them more," Finlay says.

Paradoxically, Finlay says he can sing a campfire song in front of hundreds of people, but he won't want to do it again the next day. And, overall, he's never warmed up to the forced extroversion of all-staff dance presentations and special performances.

"That's not what I'm here for," he says.

EXTROVERT SPEAKS OUT

Esther Dada is quite the opposite. For the Grade 3 teacher, life is a continuous dance party.

During her morning commute to Edmonton's Lauderdale School, Dada cranks the Beyoncé tunes in her sporty Toyota crossover, and she repeats the process on her way home at the end of the day. Throughout the school day, she will spontaneously break into song and dance.

"We have dance parties almost daily," Dada says.

In case you haven't guessed, Dada identifies strongly as an extrovert.

"I just have a bubbly personality," she says. "Sometimes I can be loud — people say the life of the party."

What gets Dada most excited is being around other people, particularly students.

"It's almost electric, when I see my students. I am at a whole different level," Dada says. "They energize me. They're my motivation to keep going, to keep being excited, to keep being positive."

A school environment is best served by a healthy blend of introverts and extroverts.



We [extroverts] bring a lot of joy, positivity — a lot of fun."

Esther Dada ▶ extroverted teacher



PHOTO SUPPLIED AND ADAPTED

Dada has noticed that her extroverted energy brings out the same in a certain group of students, those who are the first to join her in energetic activities, like dancing or group chants. She says her energy, and that of the other extroverts in her school, has the effect of loosening everybody up, regardless of their personality.

"Even the quieter people — you can see that they start to come out of their shells, slowly but surely. Not to the extent that we [extroverts] do, but they're still able to pull out their fun side more," Dada says.

As someone who gets her energy from being around other people, Dada isn't a big fan of being alone, but she is learning to be more comfortable with it.

"I think sometimes [being alone] is a good thing, because I'm able to just relax and calm myself," she says.


For the most part, however, Dada is all about bringing the energy . . . all the time.

"I always say life is more fun when you're doing things that excite you," Dada says. "For me, it's dancing and singing. When I'm not dancing or singing, something is wrong."

A HEALTHY MIX

Finlay and Dada both say that a school environment is best served by a healthy blend of introverts and extroverts.

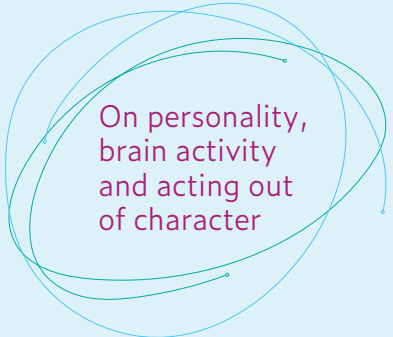
"We complement each other," Finlay says.

"I think it's important to have a mix," Dada says, "because sometimes, looking back, I think I'm a little too much!" 

Do you know your way to your OLA?

Cozy Haze

Managing Editor,
ATA Magazine



On personality, brain activity and acting out of character

THE BIG FIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS

Researchers generally agree that the diverse ways that humans differ in personality can be reduced to five major factors, which are summarized by the acronym CANOE or OCEAN:


- Conscientiousness
- Agreeableness
- Neuroticism
- Openness
- Extraversion

“The big five traits are dimensions along which all people can be placed, with most falling in the middle regions and others spread out along the full range,” writes Brian R. Little in *Me, Myself and Us: The Science of Personality and the Art of Well-Being*.

According to Little, within each of us, the big-five traits are formed through a combination of three natures.

1. **Biogenic** nature (our genetics)
2. **Sociogenic** nature (what our culture teaches us)
3. **Idiogenic** nature (something that’s particular to the individual)

When people are assessed for their “CANOE score,” the genetic component of each of these dimensions accounts for roughly 50 per cent of their score.

If you’d like to see where you land with respect to these traits, the gold standard assessment tool for the big five is the Revised NEO Personality Inventory (NEO PI-R) developed by Paul Costa and Robert R. McCrae, Little writes. 

EXTROVERSION VS INTROVERSION

The terms *extroversion* and *introversion* were introduced by Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung in 1921. Jung described these traits in terms of energy expenditure and recovery.

Introversion and extroversion exist on a continuum, and a person’s place on the continuum is variable.

Some resources spell it **extraversion**.


“It’s helpful to think in terms of preferences or tendencies rather than absolute labels,” writes David Posen in his book

Authenticity: A Guide To Living In Harmony With Your True Self.

That’s because most people have a mix of introverted and extroverted traits and behave differently in different situations.

Many experts in the field of personality psychology subscribe to the neocortical arousal model, which posits that humans naturally strive for an **optimum level of arousal (OLA)**, a state of balance within the neocortex part of the brain that allows us to function effectively.

According to this model, brain activity in extroverts is typically under the OLA needed to perform their tasks, so they seek stimulation from their environment in the form of action, busyness, louder sounds and brighter lights to get to a level where they can effectively engage in work and other activities.


Introverts, on the other hand, are chronically overstimulated, so they seek solitude, quiet and less busyness to lower their brain activity to a point where they can function effectively. 

In betweener

SITTING IN THE MIDDLE of the spectrum between extreme introversion and extroversion is the ambivert, someone whose energy level naturally sits at the optimum level. These people sometimes seek out solitude to recharge and sometimes contact with others to increase stimulation.

Shannon Dube considers herself an ambivert. As a numeracy co-ordinator for the Fort McMurray Public School Division,

Dube’s job involves a blend of school visits and solitary work. On the flip side, she’s a local president, which involves many meetings and interactions with others. The combination of solitary and group work is a good mix for her.

“Sometimes I’m in the mood for people,” she says, “and other times I’m like, get me away.” 

“Sometimes I’m in the mood for people and other times I’m like, get me away.”

▶ Shannon Dube, ambiverted teacher

Compare & contrast

Cory Hare

Managing Editor, ATA Magazine

What communication style are you?
Check these lists to see where you fit.

COMMUNICATION STYLES

Introverts

- Think before speaking
- Less intense, more subdued
- Speak quietly
- Not very demonstrative
- Make good eye contact when listening but less when speaking
- Use oblique, contingently complex language

Extroverts

- Speak spontaneously
- Stand closer
- Speak more loudly
- Touch, poke and even hug
- Make good eye contact when speaking but less when listening
- Use direct, simple, concrete language

INTROVERT EXTROVERT
50 : 50

Some measures suggest that 25 to 30 per cent of the population are introverts and 70 to 75 per cent are extroverts, but according to the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator, the ratio in America is 50:50. There appears to be no gender difference.

► David Posen, *A Guide To Living In Harmony With Your True Self*

PEXELS AND UNSPLASH ADAPTED

Editor's Note: The comparisons we've gathered are generalizations that can help explain the actions and motivations of those who identify with the extreme ends of the continuum between introversion and extroversion. The editors acknowledge that there are many complex, inter-related variables involved in people's personalities and behaviour. The following information is intended to be explanatory and is not meant to suggest that a particular personality trait or type is better than any other.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN/GETS OLD FAST

Introverts like silence because they need time to think, to process what's going on and to formulate ideas.

Extroverts talk a lot and are uncomfortable with silences. They get impatient waiting for a response and interpret silence as rudeness, purposeful withholding or even incompetence.

WORK HABITS

Introverts prefer to approach their tasks slowly and carefully. Their aim is quality. They prefer to plan carefully and account for every detail.

Extroverts prefer to work quickly and get things done, even if it means making a few mistakes. They tend to be procrastinators. The pressure of doing tasks close to a deadline increases their arousal and performance. This is called the "scaloping effect."

CONFLICT, RISK AND MOTIVATION

Introverts are uncomfortable with conflict and will avoid it wherever possible. They are less motivated by reward cues and more sensitive to punishment cues. Their aversion to danger and discomfort leads them to play it safe.

Extroverts are highly sensitive to reward cues and opportunities. They give more weight to potential positives and downplay negative possibilities. This can lead to impulsive or risk-taking behaviour.

MEMORY SERVES

Memory is organized differently in introverts and extroverts.

Introverts have better long-term memory and do better on long-term memory tasks.

Extroverts have better short-term memory and do better on short-term memory tasks. This helps them "think on their feet."

WINE ANYONE? CAFFEINE?

Introverts and extroverts react differently to drugs and chemicals.

Alcohol is a central nervous system depressant. In moderation, it can quiet the overactivity in the brain of introverts, enhancing their performance in social situations.

Caffeine is a cortical stimulant. It helps extroverts perform more effectively but worsens the performance of introverts.

IN THE NURSERY

Researchers discovered that when they make a loud noise in a nursery, some babies will show keen interest in the sound while others will turn away. Researchers found that the babies who are attracted to the sound tend to grow up to be extroverts, whereas those who turn away from the noise are more likely to grow up to be introverts. ^{ATA}



Playing against TYPE

AT TIMES, in response to life's challenges, it's necessary and beneficial to suppress natural traits and act out of character, but doing so causes arousal in the autonomic nervous system, and allowing this for regular, prolonged stretches without time to recuperate can be detrimental to a person's physical and psychological health.

For introverts who must act as pseudo-extroverts, one solution is to find a quiet, restorative niche to escape from

stimulation. For extroverts who must act as pseudo-introverts, a solution is to escape to a situation that will re-engage and re-energize them, such as a party or busy nightclub.

"We need to be very careful when we act protractedly out of character. Sometimes we may find that we don't take care of ourselves." ^{ATA}

► Brian Little, *Me, Myself and Us: The Science of Personality and the Art of Well-Being*

Strong introverts can be **STRONG LEADERS**

Cozy Hare

Managing Editor,
ATA Magazine

As an executive staff officer in the ATA's Professional Development program area, Chris Gonsalvez spends a lot of time delivering workshops and seminars to groups of teachers, both large and small, throughout the province. Prior to joining ATA staff in 2018, Gonsalvez spent eight years as a principal for Lethbridge Public Schools, leading school staffs of more than 50 people.

Alongside these outward-facing career roles, Gonsalvez identifies strongly as an introvert. He shared his thoughts on providing strong leadership while also being a strong introvert.

What were some challenges you faced as an introverted school leader?

The public-facing aspects of the role were often the most energy draining for me. Being an upfront presence at assemblies and schoolwide events, networking with parents and other leaders and creating work-life balance for myself were among some of my greatest challenges. While I believe I was able to shine on many such occasions, many of the people I worked with did not realize the toll these challenges took on my energy levels and the time it took me to recuperate.

What were some strategies you employed to ensure you were providing effective leadership?

To ensure that I was providing effective leadership, I needed to be very intentional. Understanding who I naturally am, I would typically attempt to be over-prepared for public situations. For any event, I would create point-form speaking notes and attempt to anticipate potential questions or objections.

Additionally, one key strategy was to surround myself with excellent staff and colleagues. I empowered my teams to lead and make decisions in their own ways. Doing so freed me up to listen, plan and meet with smaller groups as we moved our school forward.

Finally, knowing that it is often difficult for me to remember names when I meet people in public situations, every June I would have my admin support team prepare me a photo directory of staff and students. During July and August, as I ate my morning cereal, I would review and memorize the names of students and staff. Knowing the names of all students and staff made large group settings much more comfortable for me.

What strengths do you bring to leadership as a result of being an introvert?

I believe that as an introverted leader, I have the strengths of listening and observation. As a principal, I would often spend staff meetings or large group situations allowing others to speak while I sat back and took in all that was being discussed and debated. Doing so allowed me to have a better grasp of the struggles of our staff and permitted me to gain understandings that may not have been evident if I had done all the speaking. Using my listening skills to gain deeper






understanding permits me to be a very strong problem solver, finding solutions that not only address the issues, but also ensure that staff feel supported and valued as we move forward.

Your role in PD involves a lot of presentations to members. How does being an introvert affect your ability to fulfill this requirement?

Somewhat ironically, even as an introvert, connecting with members and leading professional development in schools is still my favourite part of my job. I believe that I cannot use my introversion as an excuse; rather, I simply need to know how best to manage it. Before and after any presentation, I typically spend time alone reviewing my notes and reflecting on what we will be doing or have just done. I believe this reflection becomes part of my strengths as I continually strive to improve with every presentation.

To what extent did/do you feel a need to act out of character in order to be an effective leader and presenter?

While it is true that presenter/leader Chris is at times significantly different than the Chris you would meet when going out for dinner or sitting in my office, I don't know that I would say he is acting out of character. I believe that all people are multifaceted, and while my natural inclination is to be with smaller groups of people, part of me loves connecting with and serving larger groups.

It is all about balance and knowing how to recharge. When I need to sneak away, my body will tell me by getting tired and my mind starts to wander, making it difficult for me to focus on the people in front of me and the conversations around me. When this happens, I have developed mechanisms that restore my energy. Going for a run or simply sitting quietly in my car listening to an audio book can do wonders to prepare me for larger group interactions. As long as I can balance large groups with smaller groups and alone time, I have not felt out of character as much as I have felt that I am developing strengths in an area that has long made me uncomfortable. 

"Most **introverts** are actually quite *sociable* and *engaging*, and they enjoy other people's company. Like extroverts, they get a **boost in mood** from interaction with other people. But only for so long. There's a *limit* to their tolerance for long periods of socializing."

► David Posen, *Authenticity: A Guide To Living In Harmony With Your True Self*

Where do you fall on the spectrum of introversion and extroversion?



I'M RIGHT IN BETWEEN. I think it's called an ambivert. I can feel all of those extrovert feelings, but I also then need some decompression, some down time, much like an introvert would.

Throughout the day I can keep that energy up, but I'm a person who has a fairly long commute home and so that is a really good time for me. I need that time, I need that space by myself just to think, reflect, re-energize.

Sue Klein ► vice-principal, Wetaskiwin Regional Public Schools

Where do you fall on the spectrum of introversion and extroversion?



I'M RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE. I have certain things on both sides. It just depends on the time of the year too. Especially during winter, I want to be alone — I want to hibernate basically. Summer comes around, I feel like I'm more extroverted. I like to be outside hanging out with people when I can. I feel like it changes throughout the year.

Anne Wang ▶ teacher, Father Leduc Catholic School, Leduc



I THINK PRINCIPALS HAVE to be a little more on the extroversion side. You have to be comfortable with a group. I think everybody needs to recharge. Most of the time, being with a group, it's recharging. It gives you more energy. If you work all together, you have more ideas ... you get more involved and more excited about your job and student success. I think I'm more on the extroversion side.

Sometimes we have to be more introverted too. As a principal, you have to be sure you listen to everybody and be thoughtful. We cannot be 100 per cent on one side, as a teacher and as a human.

Nancy Roy ▶ principal, École Notre-Dame, Edmonton




I'M AN INTROVERT dressed up as an extrovert. I think a lot of teachers are actually introverts, but because of the profession we're in, we have to be extroverted. I'm definitely an introvert. I love being around people, but I need to remove myself from others to regenerate, relax and decompress.

Howard Kowalchuk ▶ teacher, Spruce Grove Composite High School, Spruce Grove

Tips for facilitating meetings that work for *introverts* and *extroverts*

- 1 Circulate an agenda in advance.
- 2 Discuss meeting preferences openly.
- 3 Collect input asynchronously.
- 4 Create an artifact (*something tangible to refer to, such as a draft proposal*).
- 5 Send out an advance poll.
- 6 Start with an icebreaker.
- 7 Pose questions to prompt answers.
- 8 Reinforce positive contributions.
- 9 Break into small groups.
- 10 Encourage and value written input.
- 11 Encourage anonymous contributions.
- 12 Make speaking optional, not mandatory.
- 13 Have a round of clarifying questions.
- 14 Nurture a supportive listening environment.
- 15 Give adequate processing time.
- 16 Make decisions after meetings, not during.



"There's zero correlation between being the *best talker* and having the *best ideas*."

▶ Susan Cain, *Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can't Stop Talking*

Introversion ≠ shyness

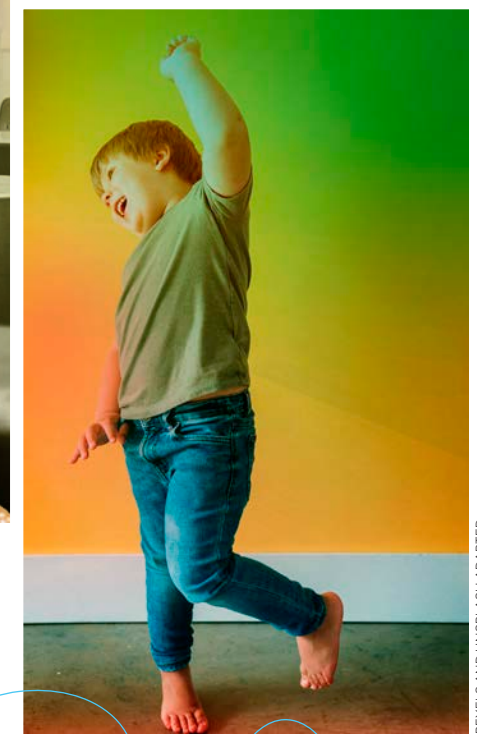
INTROVERTS ENJOY socializing with others but find too much of it to be overwhelming and draining. They don't want too much interaction.

Shyness is rooted in social anxiety. Shy people want to interact with others but feel unable to do so. For them, socializing is uncomfortable and stressful, so they avoid it.

"The shy want desperately to connect but find socializing difficult. Introverts seek alone time because they want time alone." ^{ATA}

▶ Prof. Bernardo Carducci, shyness expert at Indiana University Southeast

Source: <https://www.parabol.co/blog/inclusive-meetings-introverts/>
Article republished with permission



PEXELS AND UNSPLASH ADAPTED

What can teachers and schools do to foster personality-inclusive environments?

1. Make choice central.

It's easier said than done, but providing students with different options for how to learn and how to demonstrate that learning allows them to gravitate toward what inspires them so they can do their best work.

2. Redefine participation.

Participation is often conflated with thinking out loud, and that's something at which extroverts excel but with which introverts struggle. Participation can and should mean so much more: asking a thoughtful question, helping others, volunteering, staying after class, posting in an online forum, doing revisions of work and beyond.

3. Play with space.


Reconfiguring workspaces for different personalities and tasks is all the rage among corporations and startups. But what's a teacher to do? Turning rows of desks into collaborative pods is a tried-and-true technique, but consider balancing social spaces with quiet zones where students can zero in on a task. But don't stop there; think beyond the classroom to other nearby spaces. Make use of common areas, labs and the outdoors to change things up and spur creativity.

4. Embrace backchanneling.

Giving students a digital space where they can question, comment and discuss

during (and after) classroom activities can yield incredible results, and provide a more comfortable space for quiet and/or less confident students to speak up.

5. Create flow between social and reflective activities.

We know that great work comes from collaborations between introverts and extroverts. To facilitate this in class, follow up generative social activity with more thoughtful solo or small-group reflection, distillation and synthesis. By moving in and out of their comfort zones, students get acclimated to different styles of learning and reap the rewards from each. 

Source: <https://www.common sense.org/education/articles/5-classroom-strategies-that-help-introverts-and-extroverts-do-their-best-work>
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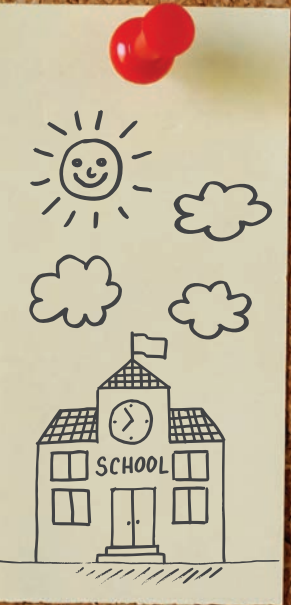
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Reimagining the profession

Teachers share their views on artificial intelligence

Phil McRae

Associate Coordinator, Research, ATA

“AI can be used to help with the administrative tasks but we still need individual research, creativity and thought processes.”

— Respondent, ATA pulse survey of teachers and school leaders

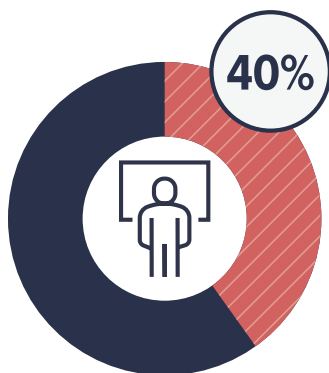
IN A WORLD WHERE EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES continue to (re) shape our daily lives, Alberta teachers are calling for careful consideration of the employment of artificial intelligence (AI) in their classrooms and schools.

A recent, and highly representative, Association research survey from December 2023 of 2,148 members (1,934 teachers and 214 school leaders) has shed light on an intriguing development: one in two Alberta teachers have explored the use of AI tools in their professional or personal lives within the past six months.

The survey paints a nuanced picture: one-third of respondents believe AI advancements will enhance teaching and learning, another third view this future with skepticism and the final third remain uncertain. It's clear that the debate is just beginning, and Alberta's teaching profession is eager to engage in meaningful conversations about the role of AI in their classrooms.

Another common thread that emerges from this ATA research study is teachers' call for increased professional involvement in AI policy and practice in K-12 education. It is a plea for a deeper understanding of this force and shows a dire need for explicit policy guidance on its use as an emerging technology in education systems. These Alberta teachers, who stand on the front lines of our future, are keenly aware of the potential that AI has to reshape our profession and are expressing a genuine desire to navigate this transformation thoughtfully. However, a substantial six in 10 Alberta teachers do not believe their schools are adequately prepared to harness AI technologies for the benefit of both students and teachers.

Interestingly, there is a positive correlation between the frequency of using AI tools and a positive outlook on AI's role in education: those who have integrated AI into their teaching methods are more likely to see the benefits it can bring to Alberta's K-12 education system. However, despite this positivity, concerns are still widespread, with 80 to 90 per cent of respondents worrying about AI's potential negative effects.



40 per cent of teachers are not worried about AI replacing their jobs.


Ban smartphones in schools—UNESCO

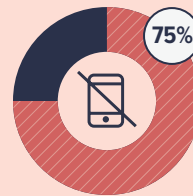
The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has called for a global ban on smartphones in schools. Not only do the digital devices disrupt teaching and learning, but they can also negatively affect academic performance, negatively impacts physical and mental well-being and make students susceptible to online risks, UNESCO states in its 2023 global education monitoring report.

Among these concerns is the fear that AI could erode trust in the teaching profession by leaving important moral decisions to machines — a moral passivity. Teachers are also worried about the possibility of cognitive atrophy in students, such as reduced memory and critical thinking skills, which may fundamentally alter their abilities to become active and engaged citizens. Additionally, there's a growing apprehension about the impact of AI on equity, with 59 per cent of respondents fearing that uneven access to AI tools could exacerbate educational disparities among students.

Despite these concerns, the teaching profession is not shying away from integrating AI into public education. Teachers are using AI as a tool to enhance student learning, ease administrative burdens and foster a critical understanding of AI among their students. By incorporating AI, teachers are creating more interactive and engaged learning experiences while also preparing students for a future where AI is an integral part of everyday life.

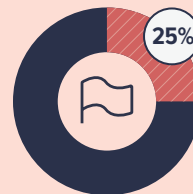
Surprisingly, 40 per cent of teachers are not worried about AI replacing their jobs. This sentiment likely arises from their deep understanding of the complex, highly relational aspects of teaching and learning that cannot be easily replicated by machines.

As Alberta's teachers and school leaders continue to grapple with ethical considerations, pedagogical innovation, curriculum development and questions surrounding AI access and equity, it's clear that their dedication to providing the best possible education for our children and youth remains unwavering. The future of education in Alberta is being shaped by the dynamic synergy between human teachers and artificial intelligence, and the journey has only just begun. It will be our job to ensure that every child continues to have a teacher to help them flourish into the future and that the highly relational spaces of teaching and learning remain predominantly human. 



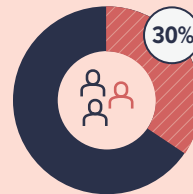
75 per cent of Alberta teachers are advocating for a smartphone-free classroom environment

Source: ATA Pulse Survey, December 2023



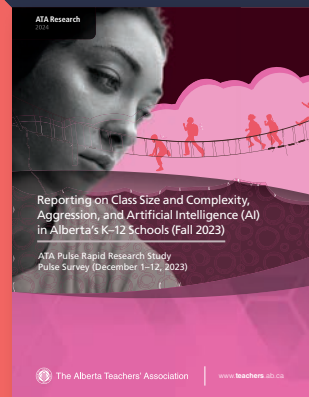
1 in 4 countries has banned smartphones in schools, through either law or guidance

Source: UNESCO Global Education Monitoring Report, 2023



30 per cent of students around the world are distracted by digital devices

Source: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Report on 2022 Programme for International Student Assessment



- ▶ The full survey can be found on the ATA website under Professional Development > Education Research.

Supporting executive function in teens through play

Robbin Gibb
Jade Oldfield

Department of Neuroscience,
University of Lethbridge

Cayley Fleischman
Claudia Gonzalez

Department of Kinesiology,
University of Lethbridge

Rayn Perry

Department of Kinesiology,
University of B.C., Okanagan

Vicki Hazelwood

Building Brains Together,
www.buildingbrains.ca

A 2023 COMMUNIQUE RELEASED by the University of Calgary School of Public Policy (Koftinoff et al. 2023) stated that “mental health concerns among children and youth are increasing, while poor mental health remains one of the largest threats to childhood in Alberta.”

Youth struggling with mental health challenges often turn to drugs and/or alcohol, and according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (2024), homelessness is also associated with substance use disorders and mental health issues, and more than 40,000 children and youth in Canada experience homelessness each year.

In order to deal with the growing issue of both addictions and homelessness, it is clear that more preventative services must be offered. The school system is one of the best places to deliver services to support youth under duress, but programming to directly address mental health concerns is limited. Strengthening executive functions (EFs) in adolescents can offset some of these mental health issues by building resiliency or the capacity to withstand or recover from adversity (Wenzel and Gunnar 2013).

EFs are a set of skills that allow an individual to set goals, then systematically engage in behaviour that will move them toward achieving those goals. It is widely accepted that there are three key elements to EF: shifting or cognitive flexibility, updating or working memory and inhibition (Miyake et al. 2000). Some researchers believe that, in addition to these three core processes, EF includes more complex attributes such as self-regulation, attentional control, planning, problem solving and goal setting (Blair and Razza 2007; Diamond and Lee 2011).

Interestingly, EF is not innate but rather learned over time from birth onward and there appear to be two windows of rapid

EF acquisition during development. The first window is in the preschool years and the second window is from age 12 to about 25 years (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child 2011).

Previously, through research conducted in preschool classrooms, our team demonstrated that EF skills could be promoted within students through teacher-led play using a play curriculum that was specifically designed to build such skills (Coelho et al. 2020; Gibb et al. 2015; Gibb et al. 2021) and that such activities prepare students for entrance into the K–12 school system.

Building on the success of that work, in 2022 we designed a play curriculum for adolescents and piloted it over the summer at our local Youth One and YMCA. Using feedback from teen participants, we dropped the games they disliked and developed a final play curriculum comprised of 10 games that offered both seated and active play opportunities and challenged EF in multiple domains.

Our research aimed to determine if this play curriculum, when delivered in classrooms in middle school, would be effective in improving EF in the student participants. To this end, 24 students (9 female) in a Grade 7 classroom were tested before and after the play program on their executive function (attention, working memory, cognitive flexibility and behavioural inhibition) using the NIH Toolbox assessment tool (Rhodes et al. 2013). A control group of students from a separate Grade 7 classroom (27 participants, 10 female) underwent testing in the pre- and post-program period but did not play the games in the classroom. Teachers were asked to journal the amount of time each student was engaged with the play activities. This would account for any student absences during program delivery. Importantly, teachers were active participants in the classroom play. Our hypothesis was that engaging with teachers in the play curriculum would improve EF in the student participants. A one-way analysis of variance was used to determine statistical significance using group as the dependent variable.

Despite the limited number of female participants in this pilot study, we saw significant improvements post-program in females. Females were better on two tests of EF (Flanker and Stroop) and, importantly, in the overall performance when all tests were considered (see Fig. 1). Males were not different than control participants in any of the EF tests. We interpret these data to mean that we may have been ahead of the optimal timing for puberty-induced brain plasticity in the males as they are typically behind females in puberty by one to two years (13 in girls, 14 in boys; Khan 2019). A significant correlation was seen with the amount of time playing the games and overall improvement in EF scores in the experimental group (see Fig. 2).

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

% of post score/pre score

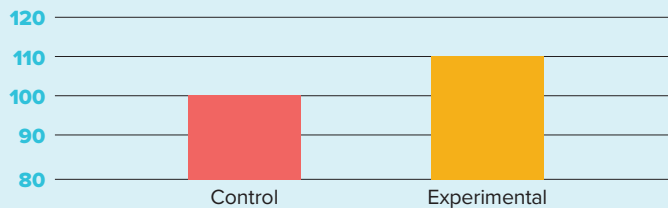


FIGURE 1.

Females showed significant improvement on the overall score of the tests of executive function (Stroop, DCCS, Flaker and WordList). Together, these tests assess attention, inhibitory control, cognitive flexibility and working memory.

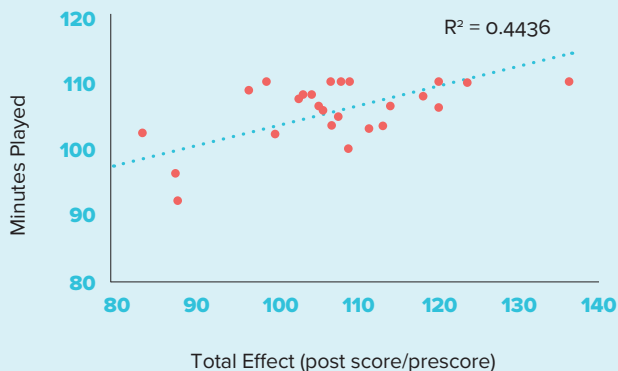


FIGURE 2.

A correlational analysis illustrates that the more time spent playing, the greater the improvement in EF score.

In addition to the objective EF tests, we also solicited feedback from teachers on the play curriculum. The teacher who was actively involved in the play reported that they developed stronger relationships with their students over the course of the play program. They felt that this enhanced their classroom management and made curriculum delivery more effective. An unexpected additional finding was that students had stronger relationships with each other after engaging in this classroom play.

Positive nurturing relationships are a consistent factor for building and maintaining a healthy brain through the lifespan. We believe that offering intentional, teacher-led play opportunities in the classroom provides a unique opportunity to develop the very relationships that will serve to optimize brain health for both students and teachers. Better EF promotes better mental health and resilience. When we work on building executive functions in adolescents, we are establishing brain connectivity that will help support academic success, physical and mental health, and later life success (Moffitt et al. 2011).

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1. *The Physics of Everyday Things: The Extraordinary Science Behind an Ordinary Day*

Excite your students about science by revealing how the physics they learn in school is used in so many devices they use every day.

2. *Chemistry for Cooks: An Introduction to the Science of Cooking*

A fantastic book for culinary arts teachers who want to incorporate more chemistry, biology and physics into their classrooms. This book is also useful for chemistry teachers who want to incorporate more delicious examples for their students.

3. *L'enfant à haut potentiel, les dys et le TDA/H*

Truffé d'exemples de terrain, ce livre aidera tout professionnel à mieux comprendre, à affiner son diagnostic et à adapter sa prise en charge tant aux niveaux éducatif et scolaire que psychologique, si nécessaire.

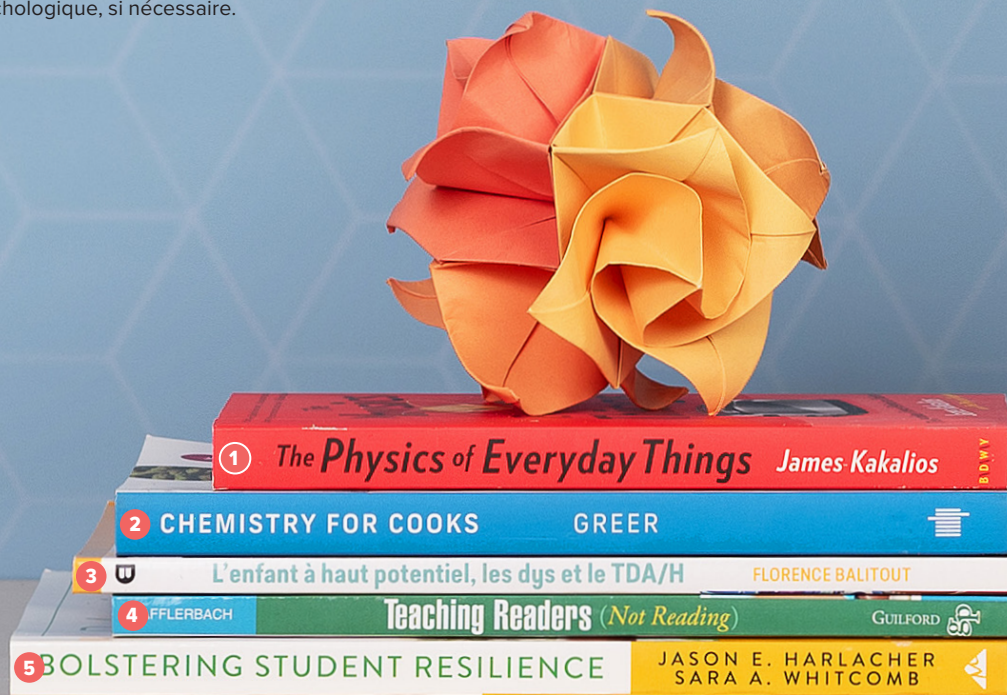
4. *Teaching Readers (Not Reading): Moving Beyond Skills and Strategies to Reader-Focused Instruction*

Moving beyond the popular “science of reading” practice is essential to reach all readers in your classroom. Author Peter Afflerbach encourages teachers to not just focus on skills and strategies but to see the bigger picture of all five areas of reader development.

5. *Bolstering Student Resilience: Creating a Classroom with Consistency, Connection, and Compassion*

After two years of Covid, we know that our students are struggling with social skills, academic achievement and have lost emotional resilience. In this engaging book, the authors discuss how everything from physical layout of the classroom to instructional practices can be used to create a space for students to bolster up their resilience.

Information provided by ATA librarian Sandra Anderson.



Your colleagues recommend

Erin Quinn

I recently read *You Know I'm No Good* by Jessie Ann Foley, a YA novel about Mia, a teen girl who gets sent away to a boarding school for troubled teens. It sounds like we've heard that story before, but this is so full of heart that it's not at all like anything you've read before.

Asia Kirkpatrick

Seven Fallen Feathers is an eye opener to the harsh reality faced by many Indigenous youth who live on remote reserves and are required to board in Thunder Bay to access their high school education.

6. *Chess for Schools: From Simple Strategy Games to Clubs and Competitions*

Chess is not a panacea for low test scores or failing grades, but it does help students develop thinking skills that are needed in school and in work environments. Author Richard James provides a range of minigames to guide teachers in successfully introducing chess in their schools.

7. *La méthode heuristique de mathématiques*

Cet ouvrage propose une méthode moderne, innovante pour enseigner les mathématiques à l'école et déjà mise en œuvre par des milliers de classes!

8. *Secondary Science: Respiration Is Not Breathing!*

Revive your passion for teaching science with intriguing new ways to inspire a love of science in your students.

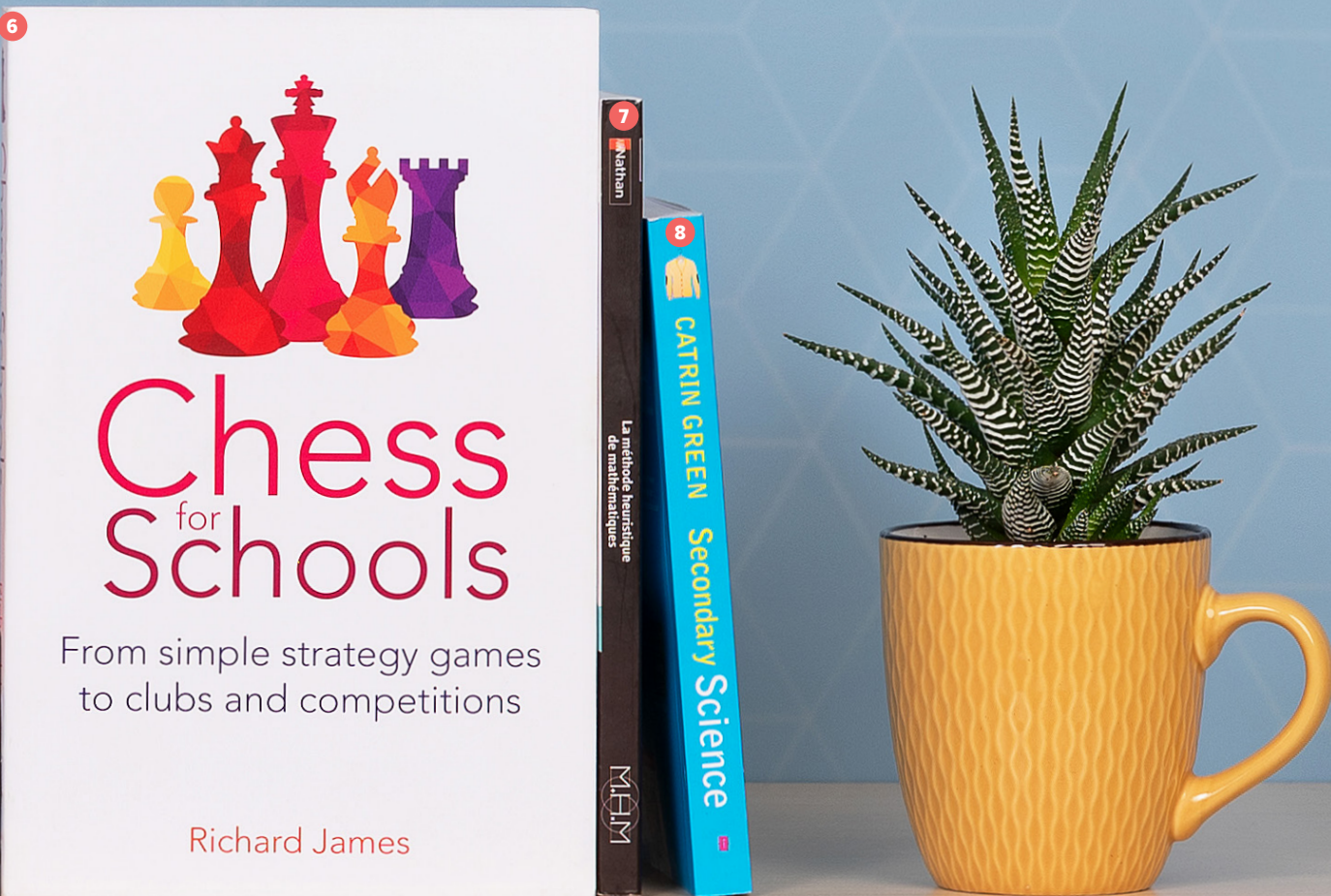


PHOTO BY YUJET CHAN

Janel Winslow-Sherwin

I'm in the mindset, finally, to read *Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle*, by Emily and Amelia Nagoski. It's quite interesting.

Lynné Vining

I'm reading *Hag-Seed* by Margaret Atwood. It's the story of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* as staged in a men's prison and the pursuit of revenge by the director. Great read so far if you are a fan of both Shakespeare and Atwood!

Lynn Karasiuk James

I need to read something light. I found a colleague who enjoys the Stephanie Plum series by Janet Evanovich as much as I do, and we share the books when they are published. My favourite memory is about 10 years old, but we were both teaching junior high ELA classes and she was laughing so hard at the part I knew was coming next in the book, I could hear her across the hall.

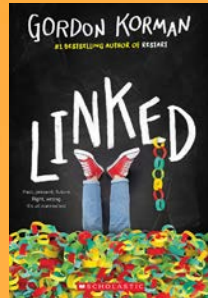
What's your favourite book for students in grades 7 to 9?



Refugee

This book, written by Alan Gratz, supports learning about how refugees are a part of our global landscape.

Sarah Cresswell



Linked

Gordon Korman is a great Canadian author who uses humour to talk about various topics. I recommend any of his books.

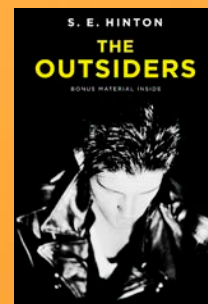
Jennifer Lacourse



The Marrow Thieves

I love *The Marrow Thieves* by Cherie Dimaline! The story is about survival, the strength of familial roots and hope. Kids feel connected to the characters and are able to share their own stories of resilience.

Andrea Stevens-Miller



The Outsiders

The Outsiders by S. E. Hinton never fails to engross even my most reluctant readers. They always read the book as fast as they can because they can't wait to see how it ends. There have been many tears shed over the book as well. It is pure magic.

Jennifer Black



Al Capone Does My Shirts: A Tale From Alcatraz

I love *Al Capone Does My Shirts* by Jennifer Choldenko. The main character is a 12-year-old boy, so kids find it easy to relate to, even though the story is set in the 1930s. Who doesn't love a story about Alcatraz?

Michelle Butchart



Tuesday

By David Wiesner, this book teaches visual literacy. Junior high deserves storybooks too!

Jackelyn Urquhart



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Resources

Access to retirement planning, financial wellness, and mental health resources.



Supporting and serving members in French

THE ATA SUPPORTS French-speaking members through the services, programming and infrastructure it provides, as well as the administrative and educational policies it upholds, in keeping with the legal foundation provided by Section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Origin story


In 1970, the Council of Teachers instructing in the French language, a specialist council currently known as le Conseil français, was established with a mandate to serve members who use French as their language of instruction. This represented the ATA's first decisive step to acknowledge its role and responsibility in responding to the needs of its French-speaking membership.

By 1989, the ATA had created a five-year plan to establish and increase French services across program areas.

French Services today

The ATA offers supports and services in French in the following areas:

- personal consultation and representation related to employer matters or regulatory affairs

- Association workshops
- expanded Professional Development (PD) programming, including through the Beginning Teachers' Conferences and teachers' conventions
- support for collective bargaining negotiations
- assessment of teacher education through the Teacher Qualifications Service
- publications with essential ATA information
- library services and materials
- teacher exchanges through the Educator Exchange Program
- translation and French editing services
- support for subgroups
 - » ATA specialist council le Conseil français
 - » l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones de l'Alberta, Local No 24
 - » Campus Saint-Jean Student Local: la Société des étudiants en pédagogie
- support for and collaboration with Canadian Teachers' Federation and ongoing representation on national committees. 

BY THE NUMBERS

- 20 ATA staff speak and/or work in French
- 35-plus workshops and presentations offered in French
- 32 new ATA documents published in French in 2023

FIND RESOURCES ONLINE

- ATA publications and resources:



- Canadian Teachers' Federation: ctf-fce.ca
- Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française: acelf.ca
- Association canadienne des professionnels de l'immersion: acpi.ca

LOOKING FOR A WORKSHOP OR PRESENTATION?

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Care and Connect: Social and Emotional Learning (French and English)
- Enseigner en milieu minoritaire: l'importance de transmettre l'amour de la langue (French only)

TEACHER EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- Teacher Safety Net (French and English)
- Teacher Compensation: More Than a Paycheque (French and English)
- Climbing the Grid: How Do Teachers Earn Education and Experience Credit (French and English)



Soutenir et servir les membres en français

L'ATA SOUTIENT LES MEMBRES

francophones grâce aux services et programmes qu'elle leur fournit, grâce à l'infrastructure dont elle dispose, et par le biais des politiques administratives et éducatives qu'elle maintient, conformément à l'article 23 de la *Charte canadienne des droits et libertés* qui en constitue leur fondement juridique.

Origine

En 1970, le Conseil des enseignants dont la langue d'enseignement est le français, un conseil de spécialistes appelé aujourd'hui le Conseil français, a été mis en place avec pour mandat de servir les membres dont la langue d'enseignement est le français. Cette étape fut la première étape décisive de l'ATA vers la reconnaissance de son rôle et de sa responsabilité à répondre aux besoins de ses membres qui œuvrent en français. En 1989, l'ATA avait élaboré un plan quinquennal pour mettre en place et développer des services en français dans tous les secteurs qui la composent.

Services en français aujourd'hui

L'ATA offre une variété de services et de soutien en français, tels :

- des consultations et représentations personnelles pour toute question liée à l'emploi ou aux affaires réglementaires
- des ateliers de tous les secteurs de l'ATA
- des programmes de perfectionnement professionnel (PP) de plus en plus nombreux offerts notamment lors des Congrès des enseignants débutants ou des Grands congrès d'enseignants
- du soutien lors des négociations de conventions collectives
- des évaluations du nombre d'années d'études des enseignants selon les critères établis par le Teacher Qualifications Service
- des publications contenant des informations essentielles sur l'ATA
- des services et ressources de la bibliothèque
- des échanges d'enseignants par l'entremise du programme d'échanges en éducation
- des services de traduction et de révision en français
- du soutien aux sous-groupes
 - » le Conseil français, un des conseils de spécialistes de l'ATA
 - » l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants francophones de l'Alberta ou section locale no24
 - » la Société des étudiants en pédagogie, la section locale d'étudiants du Campus Saint-Jean
- du soutien à la Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants avec qui elle travaille en collaboration, ainsi qu'à d'autres comités nationaux auxquels elle participe régulièrement 

EN CHIFFRES

- 20 membres du personnel de l'ATA parlent ou travaillent en français.
- 35 ou plus de présentations et ateliers offerts en français
- 32 nouveaux documents de l'ATA ont été publiés en français en 2023

POUR TROUVER LES RESSOURCES EN LIGNE

- Publications et ressources de l'ATA



- Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants : ctf-fce.ca
- Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française : acelf.ca
- Association canadienne des professionnels de l'immersion : acpi.ca

VOUS CHERCHEZ UN ATELIER OU UNE PRÉSENTATION?

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- La puissance des liens et de la bienveillance – Outils et pratiques d'apprentissage socioémotionnel
- Enseigner en milieu minoritaire : l'importance de transmettre l'amour de la langue (en français seulement)

SECTEUR EMPLOI ET BIENÊTRE

- Le filet de sécurité des enseignants (en français et en anglais)
- La compensation des enseignants : plus qu'un chèque de paie (en français et en anglais)
- Gravier les échelons : reconnaissance des formations suivies et de l'expérience acquise par les enseignants

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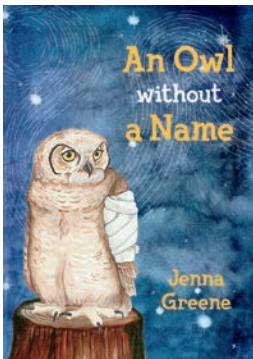
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Creative colleagues

Teachers have their own extracurricular activities. Some volunteer. Some write books. Others produce podcasts, create art or make music. Here are some endeavours undertaken by your colleagues “out there.”

BOOKS



An Owl Without a Name

Demonstrating her love for telling stories, teacher Jenna Greene has written picture books and young adult novels. Her latest release, *An Owl Without a Name*, tells the tale of a juvenile great horned owl who searches for understanding and a name to call his own after being injured and taken to the Alberta Birds of Prey Centre. Greene, who has spent many years teaching middle school and now teaches a Grade 1/2 homeroom, encourages all her students to

make magic with words.

JENNA GREENE

Lomond Community School, Lomond
jennagreene.ca
Heritage House Publishing

Stories and Poems Written from the Heart

Substitute teachers from the Calgary School Division have produced a special collection of stories and poems about their experiences subbing. A project initiated to honour the centennial anniversary of the ATA, the collection shares personal reflections that represent the new teacher, the career substitute teacher and the retired teacher returning to the classroom. This collection provides insight into the work of substitute teachers and celebrates their dedication and passion.

MARCHETA TITTERINGTON, PENNY SMITH, KAREN WILLIAMS,
MARCIA HICKS, VALSA PETER, LEE NAGY
Substitute teachers, Calgary School Division
WestBow Press

MUSIC



Musical Sunshine

Substitute teacher Laura Keith has channelled her passion for the fine arts into writing and performing eight songs for her album *Musical Sunshine*, for which she uses the stage name Lori LeRose. For the album, Keith drew on her teaching experiences in the Northwest Territories and uses her music to capture the

landscape, individuals and activities there. She is currently working on other artistic projects, including her second album, *Famous from the Woods*. *Musical Sunshine* is available on YouTube and Spotify.

LAURA KEITH

Substitute teacher, Evergreen Catholic Separate School Division
and St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic Separate School Division
Facebook: Lori LeRose

Red Deer Royals Concert and Marching Show Band

Calista Lonsdale-Pangle's love of music is evidenced by her work as music and band teacher, but also by her role as the new (and first female) director of the Red Deer Royals Concert and Marching Show Band, central Alberta's only marching band for youth. In spring 2023, Lonsdale-Pangle's work in the Red Deer music community, and specifically for the Red Deer Royals Marching Band, was recognized and featured by the Alberta Music Advocacy Alliance.

CALISTA LONSDALE-PANGLE

G H Dawe Community School, Red Deer

Business

CoCreative Seeds

Barb Hazenveld, a career and technology studies and science teacher, spends her summer days running a family business, CoCreative Seeds. Hazenveld brings her expertise as a horticulturalist to the business, trialing seeds in the foothills to produce the best cold-hardy plants for veggies, herbs and flowers for people living in this tough growing climate.

BARB HAZENVELD

CBe-learn, Calgary, AB
cocreativeseeds.com

- **What's new with you?** If you'd like to make a submission for publication in *Who's Out There?*, email a summary (50–75 words) to section editor Lindsay Yakimyshyn at lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca.





Homeward bound

Lorraine Ridsdale shows her students where hard work can lead

Lindsay Yakimyshyn

Associate Editor, *ATA Magazine*

TEACHING WAS NOT Lorraine Ridsdale’s plan, not at first.

Ridsdale had settled into life in Paddle Prairie, the northern Alberta Métis settlement where she was born. She was a stay-at-home mom for a few years before landing a position as secretary at the local school. She had her family, her job and her home, but she felt that something else was on the horizon.

“I’ve always had this drive inside of me,” she says, “I always felt like I could do something more and was never satisfied, wanting to be better, especially so my kids could be able to look at me and say, ‘I can, too.’”

Ridsdale pursued an early childhood development diploma in Grande Prairie, then returned to Paddle Prairie School as an educational assistant (EA).

Being in the classroom as an EA opened her eyes to what teachers do and the impact they can have on children. Every day, she would watch how the teacher worked with the kids, impressed by her approach and by how well the students responded. Then, a switch flicked.

“Looking at what the teacher was doing, I thought, ‘I’d like to do that.’”

AWAY AND BACK AGAIN

Just as Ridsdale was ready to take on a new challenge, she learned that two of her colleagues, Jill Gaudet and Martha Ghostkeeper, were thinking about becoming

certificated teachers, too. Together, they started looking into programs.

“I was procrastinating, dragging my feet on getting in my application,” Ridsdale recalls with a chuckle, “Jill made sure my application got in.”

Soon, Ridsdale and her colleagues were at Grande Prairie Regional College, now Northwestern Polytechnic, before transferring to the University of Alberta to complete their bachelor of education degrees.

“It was hard being away from home,” Ridsdale concedes, adding that being there with Gaudet and Ghostkeeper “was one of my saving graces during that time.”

After graduating in 1994, Ridsdale — with Gaudet and Ghostkeeper still by her side — returned to Paddle Prairie School as a teacher.

It was important for her to be in Paddle Prairie. Having moved in and out of the community as a child, she understood what those students needed.

“When I went away, I left with the intention of returning,” Ridsdale reflects, “I wanted to provide some stability because there is so much turnover at our school.”

Principal Lucas Whittle lauds the continuity and stability Ridsdale has brought to the school.

“Sometimes all it takes is a friendly, familiar face for students to feel safe and comfortable to learn,” says Whittle, “and Lorraine provides that to all of the students in our school, every day.”



Ridsdale is at home in her elementary classroom in Paddle Prairie.

TAKE IT WITH YOU

After teaching at Paddle Prairie School for nearly three decades, Ridsdale decided to retire from teaching in 2018. But she couldn't stay away long.

"I wasn't ready to go out to pasture," Ridsdale laughs.

Whittle is happy she wasn't ready.

"Her passion for education and students wouldn't allow her to stay in retirement," Whittle says. "When I found out that she was looking for a position again, and that we had one available for her, I was over the moon, as I knew our students would be in the best hands possible."

Ridsdale's long-term leadership in the Paddle Prairie School community has not gone unnoticed. She was recently recognized by the Métis Settlements General Council for her outstanding contributions to and achievements in education.

"The contributions that Lorraine has made over her years of teaching are difficult to quantify," Whittle remarks, "She has been a mentor to countless new and even seasoned teachers throughout the years, including myself. She truly cares for her community and the students and families in it."

Though she is reluctant to step into the spotlight, Ridsdale also recognizes this award as an opportunity to inspire her students to work hard and represent their community well.

"We always want our community to move forward," she says, "Every child I teach, I tell them, 'You are our future leaders. Whatever you learn in this school or from Elders ... you will take with you.'" ATA

LOOKING BACK ... AND AHEAD WITH *Lorraine Ridsdale*

You spent your whole teaching career at Paddle Prairie School. Did you attend the school as a kid?

Most of my childhood was going back and forth between Paddle Prairie and the south of the province. I actually mostly went to school in Taber, Picture Butte and Iron Springs, and then we'd go back up to Paddle Prairie. Sometimes I felt like a transient going back and forth all the time!

How do you feel about being recognized by the Métis Settlements General Council for your outstanding contributions to education?

I just worked hard and didn't do anything out of the ordinary. I hope that seeing this will bring awareness to our community, our children, teenagers and youth. You just need to get up, do something, work hard and you will get your dues in the end. I'm also grateful to the Northland School Division for their support and the learning opportunities that I received.

When you reflect on your career, what makes you proud?

If I could just light that little fire for students to learn something and to be excited about learning, that was it. I'm lucky, I still get to see that excitement every day.

Retirement didn't stick. What are your thoughts on retirement now?

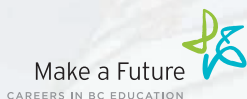
I have a few more years left. When I retire, I want to be able to do so with a clear conscience, knowing I have done all I can for my students.

- ▶ **Got an idea?** In Profile features an interesting teacher in each issue of the *ATA Magazine*. If you know of a teacher who would be a good profile subject, please contact managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

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Change management

What advice do you have for teachers who are facing a change in their assignment?

Connect with teachers who have taught similar classes and teachers who just finished teaching the subject(s). Embrace a new learning journey and be kind to yourself.

– Adedeji Bowoade

Give yourself grace and patience. Lean into your community.

– Adrienne Bieber

See it as an opportunity to innovate and re-energize. You have the skill to teach, so you can focus.

– Courtney Albrecht

Change may bring challenges, but it also paves the way for self-discovery and advancement. As we embark on unfamiliar teaching territories, let's ask ourselves: Where can this take me? What invaluable lessons will I learn from this experience? How will this new teaching assignment contribute to my personal and professional development?

– Andrea Mishio

Find a friend. Make a connection with a colleague who can help guide you with challenges and be kind to yourself. A good friend will point at what you are doing well that you don't see.

– Sinead Dullaghan

Embrace it!

– Joshua Lafleur

▶ See more at facebook.com/ABteachers.




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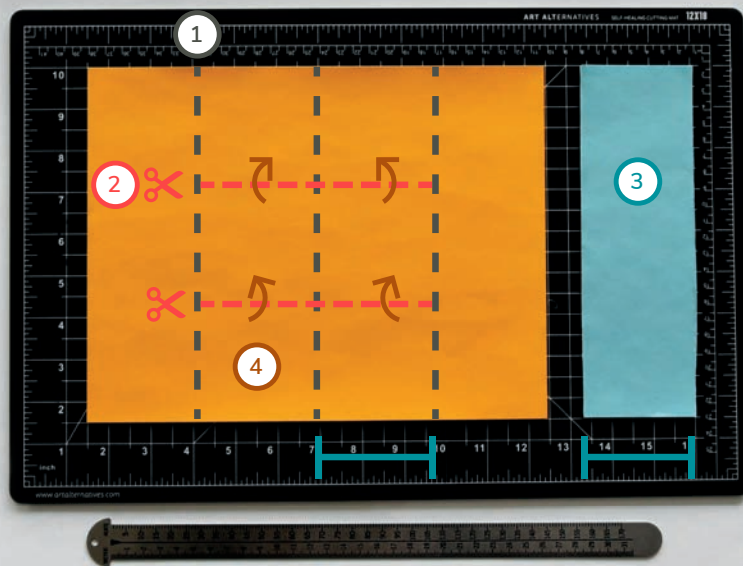
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- 1 Fold paper into quarters.
- 2 Cut horizontal slits (spaced evenly apart).
- 3 Cut two strips of paper.
- 4 Weave the paper strips through the slits.

PHOTOS BY BIANCA HO

Secret windows bring social studies to life

Engage students with interactive paper assignments

Brian Skinner

Blessed Sacrament School, Wainwright

EACH FALL MY GRADE 7 SOCIAL studies class steps into the age of exploration through the eyes of the various crews that tried to find a route to China. The adventures of 10 famous explorers can be a challenge to track, so we use secret windows instead of yet another screen-based digital assignment. (I like to go old school and do a paper project first thing in the year.)

The secret window documents that we create contain general information on the outside and increasingly interesting and obscure details inside. When properly made, they make a popping sound when the secret inner chambers are revealed.

“ I love the way it flips shut like a treasure chest of buried secrets from all the explorers!”

This assembly takes about 15 minutes of directed folding, cutting and weaving. As for content, the front cover is a postage stamp of the student’s favourite explorer and inside are 10 sections bearing the explorer’s name, portrait, two character traits and a public view of their exploration.

The hidden inner chamber contains secrets of the explorers’ adventures.

I have been teaching for 15 years and can honestly say that this is one of my favourite projects for studying content in a fun way. My students rave at how cool and fun these are. I often hear them say, “I love the way it flips shut like a treasure chest of buried secrets!”

VIDEO TUTORIAL

To find step-by-step video instructions, search “secret door card” on YouTube. ^{ATA}



PHOTO BY BRIAN SKINNER

A night at the zoo

Choosing uncertainty over routine leads to memorable adventure

Kristine Wilkinson

Staff Officer, ATA



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN SOLANO

THE CHALLENGE

How to minimize blowups while providing a once-in-a-lifetime adventure to a group of challenging students.

IN MY THIRD YEAR OF teaching, I found myself leading a specialized class of students at Gibbons School. Aged nine to 12, these were incredible, spirited students with unique challenges that included severe behavioural difficulties.

Our four-person teaching team was dedicated to venturing beyond the classroom, through practical experiences like grocery shopping, public transportation and banking. These excursions were rarely smooth and although our patience was sometimes tested, we persisted, determined to provide a holistic education and help the students grow and realize their true potential.

As year-end drew near, an idea sprouted: an overnight field trip, an opportunity for these students, often excluded from typical social events, to taste some adventure. Although routines were our lifeline with these students, we purposely chose uncertainty, and on the appointed day, we embarked on a four-hour school bus trip to the Calgary Zoo.

Upon arriving, we spent an hour exploring, then headed to the Africa building for a

“I barely slept, worried about meltdowns or someone wandering off.”

live demonstration of tribal drumming and dancing. I was waiting for one or more of the students to lose control, but even the most challenging students laughed, danced and engaged in ways I had never seen before.

The unexpected hit us at bedtime. We moved to the building that had been designated as our sleeping quarters. Strangely, it was the same huge hangar that housed the giraffes and hippopotamuses. As we lingered in the hippo viewing area, with the acrid smell of animal feces filling our nostrils, workers began to set up cots, and it dawned on us that we'd be sleeping here in the dark, dank hippo-dome.

We settled in for the night, which echoed with animal grunting and tiny feet scurrying. I barely slept, worried about meltdowns or someone

wandering off. All night I roamed, checking on each student. Some slept peacefully. Others lay with eyes wide open ... all night long.

As morning neared, I began to feel a sense of accomplishment rising within me. We had weathered the night and had etched an adventure into the lives of these students, many of whom would never experience a trip like this again.

After morning broke, we packed our memories into garbage bags, ready to journey home. The bus ride buzzed with animated chatter and kids reliving moments. When we finally met up with parents, the parking lot was abuzz with storytelling.

Seeing all this unfold, I felt immense fulfillment, grateful for having helped create these memories for the students, but also for myself. **ATA**

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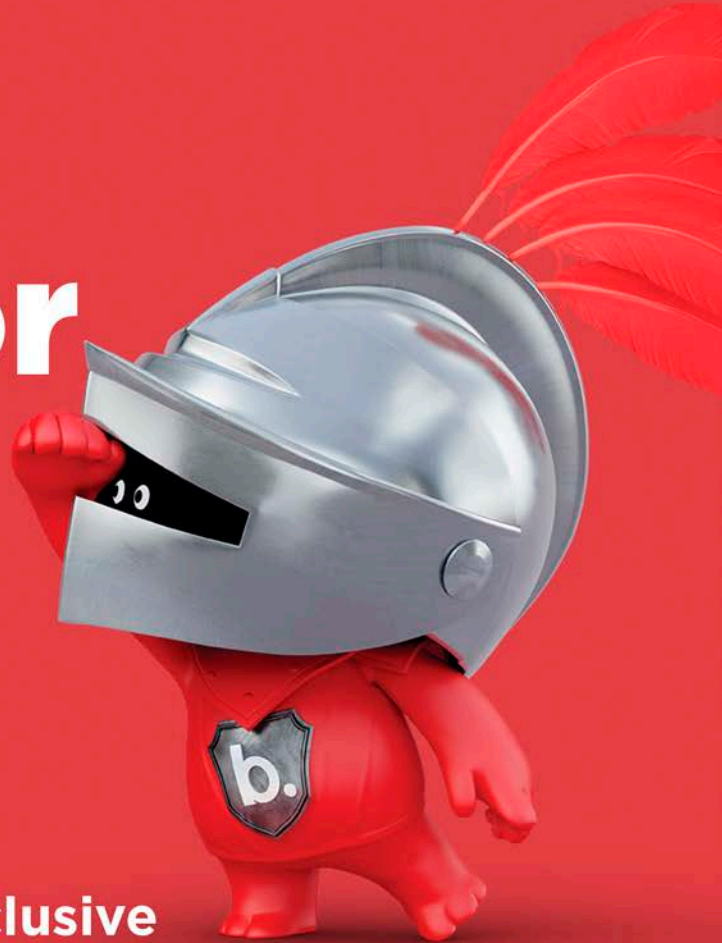
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