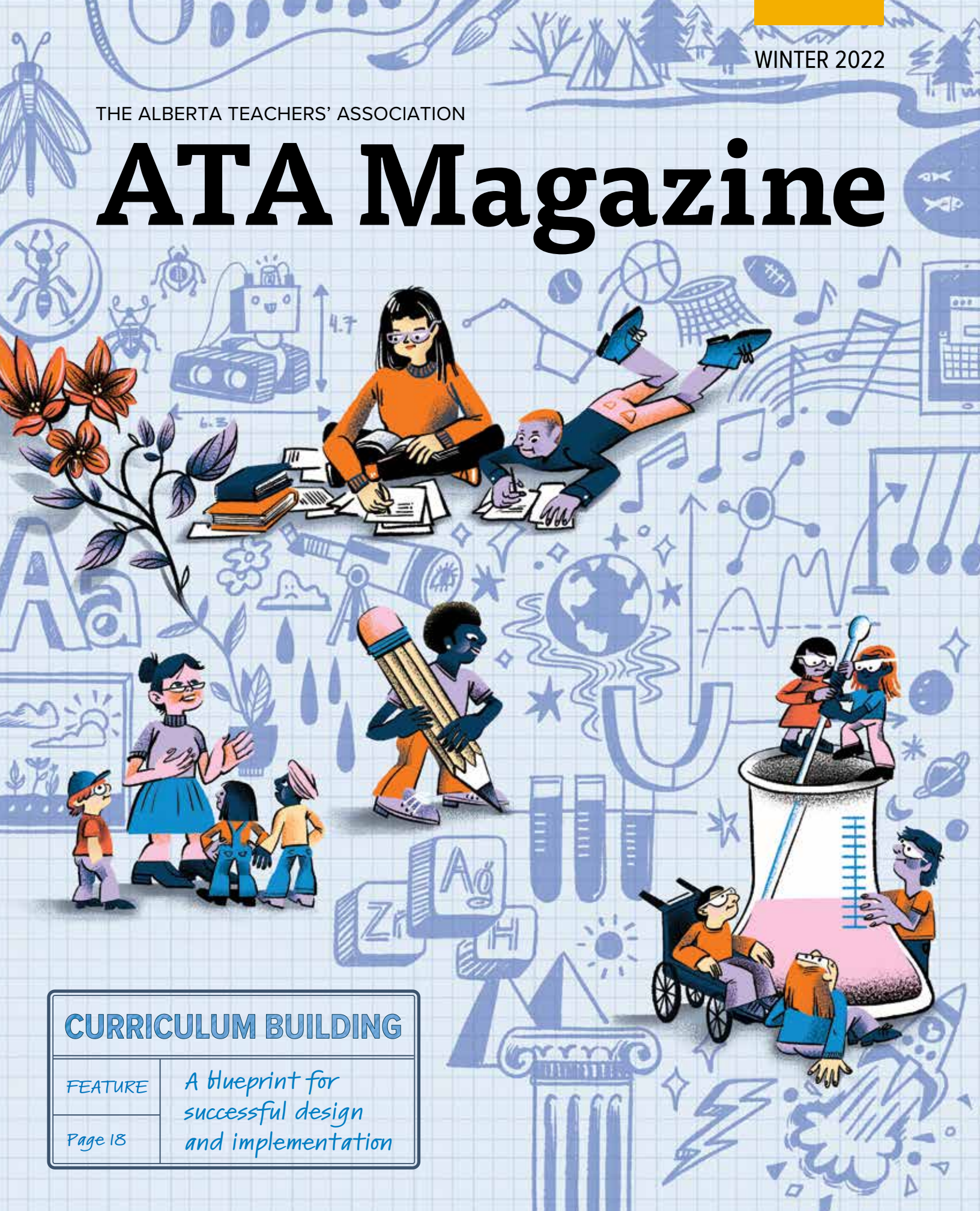


THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

ATA Magazine



CURRICULUM BUILDING

FEATURE

*A blueprint for
successful design
and implementation*

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NEW CURRICULUM

What does it look like when it's done well?



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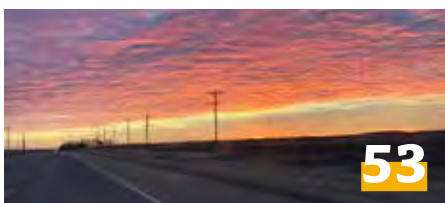
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YOUR COMMUTE

Teachers' daily travels provide diverse, spectacular views.

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SUBSCRIPTIONS

ATA members receive the *ATA Magazine*. The combined subscription for nonmembers is \$25. Single copies of the *ATA Magazine* are \$6.50. The *ATA Magazine* is published three times a year.

Articles, commentary and editorial material represent the views of the authors and do not necessarily reflect ATA policy. Acceptance of an advertisement does not imply ATA endorsement.

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 The *ATA Magazine* is a member of the Canadian Educational Press Association.

Canadian Publication Mail Agreement No. 40065477
Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to the Alberta Teachers' Association.

ISSN 0380-9102



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Cover, pp. 22 and 27



Emily Chu is an Edmonton-based illustrator and visual artist. Her illustrations have received awards from the 3x3 Contemporary Illustration

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MIA CARNEVALE | p. 10



Mia Carnevale is a freelance illustrator and artist located in Toronto.

With her work, she is interested in motifs from folktales, Mediterranean antiquities, romance and various mythologies. She strives to create artwork with strong narrative, fantastical patterns and occasionally bright colour palettes.

In her spare time, you can find Mia working on her graphic novel, searching through various collected ephemera for reference, or making homemade pasta.



TRUDIE LEE & BRIAN HARDER | p. 44



Brian Harder is a Saskatchewan boy turned Calgary photographer, and Trudie Lee is Calgary-raised from a rock-n-roll background. They have seen a lot in their 50-plus years of combined experience and have been photographing Canada's largest industries, portraits, arts and entertainment together for more than 30 years. They own and operate one of the largest photography studios in Calgary. (harderlee.ca)



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DENISE LARSEN p. 36



Denise Larsen is a professor

of counselling psychology, registered psychologist and former elementary school teacher. She leads Hope Studies Central in the faculty of education at the University of Alberta, an established research team dedicated to studying effective approaches to support student and teacher hope and mental health in schools.

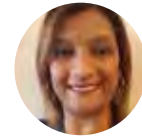


EMILY HOWELL p. 55



Emily Howell is a teacher with Edmonton Public

Schools. She has taught grades 4–9, mostly in the areas of French as a second language and English language arts. Emily has found great success collaborating with teachers online through social media platforms such as Instagram and Facebook. Through these connections, she has been able to try new things from many different parts of the world in her classroom. While not teaching, Emily enjoys reading, weightlifting and learning languages.



SAVI HOULDIN p. 56



After "retiring" in 2019, Savi spent two years as a

substitute and continued in her role as local president for Livingstone Range Local No. 14. But as of June 2021, Savi is looking forward to starting her real retirement. She hopes to be remembered as a teacher who cared about her students as learners but cared even more about them as humans.

The Alberta Teachers' Association acknowledges Treaty 6, 7 and 8 territories, the ancestral and traditional territories of the Cree, Dene, Blackfoot, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, as well as the Blackfoot Confederacy: Kainai, Piikani and Siksika, Tsuu T'ina, First Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nation. We acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples whose footsteps have marked these lands for generations. We are grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. Our recognition of this land is an act of reconciliation and an expression of our gratitude to those on whose territory we print and distribute this publication.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

Joni Turville

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

New curriculum needs some circle time


IT WAS SOMETIME IN THE 1990s WHEN

I was teaching a Grade 2 homeroom at a small school in St. Albert. There was a curriculum rewrite happening — science this time — one of my favourite subjects to teach.

I first remember seeing a draft program of studies on the staff room table. At a staff meeting later, the assistant principal explained that this was a first draft and that we would be working together to provide specific feedback. Gathering in groups, we each reviewed a section and recorded our thoughts. I recall that, in more than a few places, concepts were noted to be either out of sync with the overall curriculum or simply not appropriate, given our academic knowledge and experiential understanding of child development.

We reconvened as a large group, shared our findings and recorded our feedback, which was requested by the Alberta Education curriculum development team. This process happened more than once as the document approached readiness for field testing. When the call to participate in field testing came, several teachers volunteered. Alberta Education officials visited our district to provide inservicing and we received draft resources. All in all, it was a good experience and I was heartened to see that many of the changes we suggested became part of the final program of studies.

There's no doubt that creating programs is a difficult and time-consuming process, but done right, there are feedback loops where dialogue can happen, questions can be raised and excellent programs can be created for students.

As Margaret Wheatley notes, "**Circles create soothing space, where even reticent people can realize that their voice is welcome.**" One-off "consultations" that are merely theatre don't cut it. Only when curriculum development and field testing create circles where people feel heard, respected and included will our students have the programs of study they deserve. 

Nouveau curriculum : l'heure du cercle, un modèle à suivre


C'ÉTAIT DANS LES ANNÉES 1990, ALORS QUE J'ÉTAIS

titulaire d'une classe de deuxième année dans une petite école à St. Albert. Une refonte du curriculum était en cours, cette fois en sciences, l'une des matières que j'aimais particulièrement enseigner.

D'abord, je me souviens d'avoir aperçu une ébauche de programme d'études sur la table du salon du personnel. Plus tard, lors d'une réunion du personnel, la direction adjointe avait expliqué qu'il s'agissait d'une première ébauche et que nous allions travailler ensemble dans le but de formuler des commentaires ciblés. Des groupes ont été formés; chaque groupe devait étudier une section du document et noter ses réflexions. Je me souviens que plusieurs concepts avaient été signalés comme étant décalés par rapport au curriculum dans son ensemble ou simplement inappropriés compte tenu de nos connaissances didactiques et de notre compréhension expérientielle du développement de l'enfant.

L'équipe d'Alberta Education chargée d'élaborer le curriculum ayant sollicité nos commentaires, nous étions revenus en grand groupe afin de présenter nos observations et les consigner. Ce processus s'est répété plusieurs fois à l'approche de la mise à l'essai du document. Lorsqu'on a demandé des participants en vue de la mise à l'essai, plusieurs enseignants ont répondu à l'appel. Des représentants d'Alberta Education sont venus offrir une formation en cours d'emploi au sein de notre conseil scolaire et nous avons reçu des ressources à l'état d'ébauche. Dans l'ensemble, ce fut une bonne expérience et j'ai trouvé encourageant de voir que bon nombre des changements que nous avions suggérés avaient été retenus dans la version définitive du programme d'études.

Il ne fait aucun doute que l'élaboration de programmes est un processus difficile qui demande beaucoup de temps, mais lorsqu'on fait bien les choses, cela ouvre les voies de la communication et laisse place au dialogue, permet de soulever des questions et favorise l'élaboration d'excellents programmes pour les élèves.

Comme le souligne Margaret Wheatley : **« Les cercles créent un espace apaisant, où même les personnes réticentes se rendent compte que leur voix est la bienvenue. »** Les « consultations » uniques organisées par souci des apparences ne suffisent pas. Ce n'est que lorsque l'élaboration et la mise à l'essai du curriculum donneront lieu à la création de cercles privilégiant l'écoute, le respect et l'inclusion que nos élèves auront les programmes d'études qu'ils méritent. 

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 Joni Turville, editor-in-chief, joni.turville@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.



Feature on Black teachers promotes improved race relationships

Congratulations to the *ATA Magazine* for devoting a considerable portion of the fall 2021 edition to the topic “Black teachers share their stories.”

Gestures of this calibre definitely help to improve race relationships in the professional environment.

In 1968 I emigrated from Ghana, West Africa to teach science at H. A. Kostash School in Smoky Lake. Some residents expressed concerns about hiring a teacher from developing Africa to teach in Canada. However, after I taught for one year, parents, students and my colleagues realized that it was possible to have Black,

competent science teachers. Some of the students I taught in Ghana and in Alberta have graduated from the University of Alberta in the faculties of agriculture, computing science, dentistry, engineering, medicine and pharmacy. They acknowledge and appreciate my contribution to making them professionals.

Hopefully other professional magazines will emulate the example set by the *ATA Magazine* to promote good race relationships. The Alberta Teachers' Association is indeed a pillar of democracy.

— **Leo R. Sam**
Retired science teacher, Edmonton



Digital version available

The *ATA Magazine* is now available in a new digital format that has been maximized for viewing on your computer or mobile device. Access the digital version of recent issues by visiting www.teachers.ab.ca > News and Info > ATA Magazine.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

Jason Schilling


President, ATA
Président de l'ATA

I can't stand this curriculum ... or for it

CURRICULUM HAS HAD A LOT OF ATTENTION in Alberta recently and for good reason. As a teacher, what I teach to my students speaks to the very heart of what it means to be a teacher. Like many of my colleagues, I have my favourite sections to teach. I know which parts of the curriculum will challenge my students and which parts will bridge to what they will need to know in the future. As teachers, we know how to work with our students so they are successful and confident in their classes.

Teachers are curriculum experts and their expertise is missing from the current curriculum redesign process. Teachers know what will work in their classrooms and what will not. Teachers understand how to take complex concepts and shape them into lessons that engage students. This is why teachers have reacted so negatively to the current draft K-6 curriculum. Its design and content do not reflect the current research on elementary student learning, brain development and student engagement.

The Association will continue to ask for a moratorium on the current process and design despite the government's December announcement that it intends to slow down the planned implementation. We must get this right for our students. If the government is serious about meeting its own goals for the curriculum, it must cease work on the curriculum as it currently stands. It's important to have classroom teachers working alongside university and community experts to draft new curriculum. **Alberta students deserve a modern, respectful, diverse and researched curriculum that will set them up for a future that could hold any possibility.**


The world is changing quickly, and we need to make sure our students are well equipped for the challenges that lie ahead of them. Without a strong education system and curriculum, children in Alberta will be at a disadvantage and, as a teacher, I can't stand for that. 

Je ne peux tolérer ce curriculum... ou le défendre

RÉCEMMENT, LE CURRICULUM A SUSCITÉ BEAUCOUP D'ATTENTION en Alberta, et à juste titre. En tant qu'enseignant, ce que j'enseigne à mes élèves touche au cœur même de ce que représente la fonction d'enseignant. Comme beaucoup de mes collègues, j'ai certes une préférence marquée pour certaines parties du programme, néanmoins je sais précisément celles qui représenteront un défi pour mes élèves, et celles qui les aideront à faire le lien avec ce dont ils auront besoin à l'avenir. En tant qu'enseignants, nous savons également comment travailler avec nos élèves afin qu'ils aient confiance en eux et réussissent.

Les enseignants sont des spécialistes du curriculum et pourtant leur expertise est absente du processus actuel de refonte des programmes d'études. Les enseignants savent ce qui fonctionne dans leur classe et ce qui ne fonctionne pas. Les enseignants parviennent à transformer des concepts complexes en leçons qui suscitent l'intérêt des élèves. Voilà pourquoi, les enseignants ont réagi si négativement à l'ébauche actuelle du curriculum de M à 6. Sa conception et son contenu ne reflètent en rien les recherches actuelles sur l'apprentissage, le développement du cerveau et l'engagement des élèves du primaire.

L'ATA est plus que jamais déterminée à continuer à demander un moratoire sur la procédure et la conception actuelles du curriculum malgré l'annonce faite en décembre par le gouvernement d'en ralentir sa mise en œuvre. Nous devons rectifier le tir pour nos élèves. À ce stade de développement du curriculum, si le gouvernement souhaite vraiment atteindre ses propres objectifs, il n'a qu'une solution, tout arrêter. Il est important que des enseignants titulaires travaillent aux côtés d'experts universitaires et communautaires pour rédiger une nouvelle ébauche du curriculum. **Les élèves de l'Alberta méritent un curriculum moderne, respectueux, diversifié, et soigneusement élaboré qui les préparera à un avenir riche de toute possibilité.**

Le monde évolue rapidement, et nous devons veiller à ce que nos élèves soient prêts à affronter tout ce que l'avenir leur réserve. Sans un système d'éducation à toute épreuve et un curriculum solide, les enfants de l'Alberta seront désavantagés et, en tant qu'enseignant, je ne peux le tolérer. 



The APEGA Science Olympics are back this year with the opportunity to compete **virtually!**

Are Your Students Up for a Hands-On, Brain-Bending Challenge?

Feed their curiosity and sign them up for the APEGA Science Olympics. These interactive, inter-school engineering and geoscience events for students in grades 1 to 12 take learning beyond the classroom. Students will tackle complex problem-solving challenges and compete alongside other individuals and classrooms across the province. **PLUS**, they now have the chance to participate **virtually!**

► **Register by Feb. 4**, to compete in the virtual APEGA Science Olympics. Submissions are due **May 19**.

Missed the registration deadline?

Registrations will still be accepted after Feb. 4, though the submission deadline will remain the same.

Learn more and register today at

apega.ca/science-olympics



For more information, contact us at outreach@apega.ca.

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The Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta



ISTOCK ADAPTED

WE DUG INTO THE ARCHIVES to find tidbits from previous issues of the *ATA Magazine* that are worth another look, either because of their relevance today, or as a reminder of how far we’ve come. You decide.

Can you match the following excerpts with the year that they were originally published? 1953, 1967, 1992, 2008

1. A NEW HEALTH CURRICULUM

It would appear reasonable, then, to alter the existing “health” courses into a meaningful study of the function of man’s body and emotions, his cultures and sciences — including the different religions, values, and personal and social problems, and the mechanism of human behaviour.

The cognitive part of these subject matters could be gathered into three large areas: *The World Within Us*, *The World Around Us*, and *Man and His Works*.

Your guess: _____

2. A VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

There have been many quarrels among educators as to the merits of cultural versus vocational education. This is unfortunate. The obvious truth is that every human being needs both. Status and happiness rest on ability to fit into the employment pattern and make a vital contribution. There is, of course, the obvious fact that in our society money is the medium of exchange, and the ability to earn some of it is absolutely necessary for food, clothing and shelter. Tragic, indeed, is the fate of the educated person who has no sound vocational base.

On the other hand, technical skill alone does not make a life or a society. [...] As the labour movement has come to greater power and participation in community and government, its members have need for more than vocational skills. They need insight into the issues and trends of their time.

Your guess: _____

3. MUSIC ACROSS THE DISCIPLINES

Music is *science*—the science of sound that is graphed and charted with precision. Music is *literature*—the notation can be read by people all over the world, and much of it tells a story. Music is *mathematics*—its rhythmic notation relates to fractions. Music is a *foreign language*—the terminology is usually Italian. Music is *social studies*—its qualities reflect the times and places of its origin. Music is *physical education*—it takes tremendous muscular co-ordination to produce vocal and instrumental sounds as well as to dance and to engage in other movement activities. Music is *health*—the anatomy of vocal production is fascinating. And finally, and most importantly, music is *art*—it expresses universal ideas and emotions aurally.

Your guess: _____

4. LANGUAGE LEARNING

The world has more multilingual than monolingual people, and in this global village, it is even more worthwhile to speak additional languages. English may be growing increasingly popular worldwide, but it is still not spoken by three quarters of the world population. Should Canadians be left behind by Europeans, who often easily speak at least two languages? And why would anyone argue that Canadian students should not have their brains better developed by learning a second language? Learning a second language opens so many doors—it’s a portal to a different culture and often leads to a better understanding of oneself.

Your guess: _____

Answers: 1. “Family Life and Sex Education.” George Szasa. Sept/Oct 1967. 2. “Labour’s Concern for Education.” Orville C. Jones. April 1953. 3. “Let the Music Roll On!” Barbara Shave. February 1992. 4. “Alberta Leads the Way in Second Languages.” Kathryn Speck. Fall 2008.



ILLUSTRATION BY MATEUSZ NAPIERALSKI

Neoliberalism sweeps through Nova Scotia

A look at the privatization of education in Canada

Lisa Everitt

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

NOVA SCOTIA TEACHER, UNION activist and author Grant Frost explains that “in examining the province as a case of neoliberal creep, this is a textbook example of how the ideology is spread” (2020, 112). In his book *The Attack on Nova Scotia’s Schools*, Frost explores 25 years of education reform. He explains how neoliberalism took root in Nova Scotia’s governance of public education and how it culminated in the release of the Raise the Bar report, authored by Dr. Avis Glaze, an education consultant.

Citing low international test scores and failing schools, the report recommended drastic changes to the governance of Nova Scotia schools, the teaching profession and accountability measures. The Glaze

report engaged a powerful rationale that, on the face of it, is very difficult to argue against. Glaze wrote that “ultimately, it is about those children at their desks—and the grown-ups who must work together with common purpose, clear objectives, ambitious responsibilities and robust resources” (2018, 1).

It is fair to say that parents, teachers and employers all want to see students flourish and develop their gifts and talents. However, Glaze’s statement joins the chorus of critics who wish to lay all of the problems of education at the feet of public servants, including school trustees and the teaching profession.

The Liberal government accepted the bulk of Glaze’s report, introducing

legislation in March 2018. The massive overhaul of Nova Scotia’s education system was not without context: the changes followed decades of concerted efforts by the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies, a conservative “think tank,” to diminish the work of the public education system; labour unrest by the Nova Scotia Teachers’ Union (NSTU) in 2016/17; and previous reviews of the education system (Frost 2020).

‘EFFICIENCIES’ AIM TO BENEFIT PRIVATE SECTOR

One of the most striking aspects of the legislation imposed by the Liberal government in 2018 was the dissolution of English-speaking elected school boards in favour of a single appointed board. The

restructuring of school board governance was done with the claim that it would create efficiencies by streamlining administrative functions.

The “efficiencies” Glaze identifies are an opportunity to contract out to private corporations functions previously performed by public servants. This might include engagement of external payroll services and the procurement of computer software packages, testing modules or prepackaged professional development for education staff. The removal of democratically elected school boards effectively shuts citizens out of the education conversations when education reform is introduced.

However, the government did not stop with school boards. It also ordered the removal of principals and assistant principals from the NSTU without clear justification. Ironically, the report emphasized the need to relieve principals and vice-principals of administrative tasks so that instructional leadership could be a more prominent part of their work. As such, a collegial model ought to have been the preferred pathway for the teaching profession. However, the removal of nearly 1,000 members of the NSTU served only to weaken the ability of the teaching profession to advocate for teachers, school leaders and public education in Nova Scotia.

Finally, the Glaze report proposed that the Nova Scotia government create a student progress assessment office that was independent of government and establish an assessment division to develop high-quality student assessments, reporting directly to the public on provincewide results, and ensuring the assessments are aligned with the curriculum (2018, 36). To date, this recommendation has not been adopted by government, but reliance on student testing on a large scale has been a primary tool of education privatizers to justify ranking schools, defunding schools (for example, the No Child Left Behind policy in the United States) and evaluating teachers.

PRIVATIZATION AN UNPROVEN STRATEGY

Education historian and public education advocate Diane Ravitch points out that education “reformers complained that

student achievement has been flat for the past 20 years. They make this claim to justify their demand for radical, unproven strategies like privatization” (2013, 49). When student assessment data is reported to the public, it is usually not meant to provide assurance to parents that the school system is working; rather, it is a means to denigrate the work of teachers in order to destabilize public education.

While many other recommendations in the Glaze report could be analyzed, the three above illustrate the risk to public education of engaging education “experts” to provide policy advice. The Glaze report did not provide grounding in the academic literature for its conclusions, and the consultation process to gather public opinion and the report writing was done hastily—in less than three months—hardly sufficient time to justify such a significant overhaul to the Nova Scotia education system. Further, Glaze did not share how she gathered or analyzed her data. All this raises questions about the report’s legitimacy. However, if the goal all along was to marketize public education, the report becomes cover for what the government wished to do anyway.

Sadly, policymakers in Canada continue to follow the same pattern of hiring external consultants to make sweeping changes to public education. For example, in Manitoba, a commission on learning was ordered, Dr. Glaze was hired as a lead consultant and a report was released in March 2020. Many of the recommendations within that report are similar to those made in the Nova Scotia report, including the elimination of publicly elected school boards, the removal of principals and vice-principals from the Manitoba Teachers’ Society and a heavy emphasis on standardized test results.

WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF PRIVATIZATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION?

Ball and Youdell write, “Privatisation in and of public education can have a

TWO-PART SERIES

This is the second part of a two-part series examining the privatization of education in Canada. The first part appeared in the fall 2021 issue of the *ATA Magazine*.

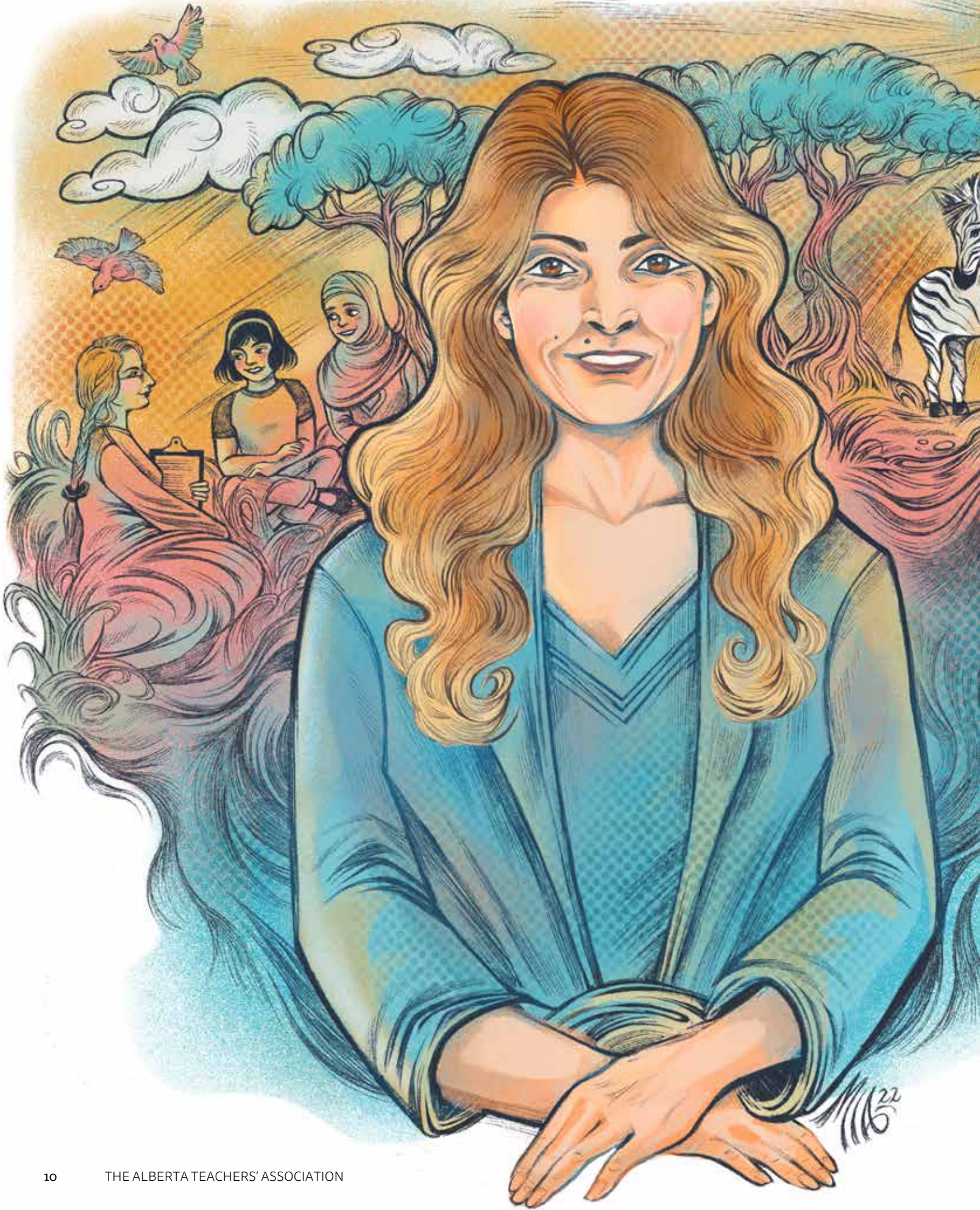
significant impact on equality of educational access, experiences and outcomes” (2008, 16). The research shows that the privatization of public education increases social stratification, including racial segregation, and lowers equity and opportunity for students. Further, it diminishes the role of schools within communities. Ravitch points out, “Our schools will not improve if we continue to close neighborhood schools in the name of reform. Neighborhood schools are often the anchors of communities, a steady presence that helps to cement the bonds of community among neighbors” (2013, 227).

Great schools for all is what public education is all about, and neoliberal approaches have been shown to benefit only corporate interests, not those of children and their families. ^{ATA}

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Mary Michailides: From teacher to visionary child advocate

Lindsay Yakimyshyn

Staff Writer, ATA Magazine

WHEN MARY MICHAILIDES began teaching in Alberta 39 years ago, she did not envision a role in leadership. Yet an unexpected turn in leadership led her to do something else unexpected: play a key role in the founding of the Zebra Child Protection Centre.

The first child advocacy centre (CAC) of its kind in Canada, Zebra was built around a collaborative model of service delivery in which the child who experienced abuse would come to one place and tell their story once, with a circle of support forming around that child.

"Why is it called Zebra? Similar to zebra in the wild, when danger appears, adult zebras form a protective circle around their young. The Zebra Centre has been a gift to many children and youth!"


The genesis for Zebra came during Michailides' first principalship when she had to contact the Edmonton Police Service after an elementary school student made a disclosure of abuse. The student was brave enough to share her story with Michailides, who immediately became an advocate for this student and for all children and youth experiencing abuse.

Michailides emphasizes that Zebra was the result of a multidisciplinary force coming together. Since its inception in 2002, Zebra has made a meaningful difference for children and youth, and their families, in both navigating the criminal justice system and accessing critical supports. Alberta now has eight

CACs and, 20 years after its founding, Zebra continues its work to foster shared responsibility for our children and youth.

"Prevention of child abuse is everybody's responsibility," Michailides says.

Michailides credits collaborative relationships and mentors for the success of her advocacy efforts and of her work in education. With such encouragement, she stepped into leadership roles, including principal, assistant superintendent and education manager for Alberta Education, and international leadership consultant. She now pays this support forward, building up colleagues and sparking visionary thinking.

Although she has made her mark, Michailides isn't done. Still involved with Zebra and in the education sphere, she recently co-authored a book on instructional leadership and is also involved in Step Up Stop Slavery, a non-profit organization aiming to end modern slavery and human trafficking. 

► **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.

Mary Michailides

Founding board member
of the Zebra Child
Protection Centre

International
leadership consultant

Co-author of *Instructional
Talk Throughs: Powerful
Assessment and
Professional Practice*

Speaker, coach
and mentor

ILLUSTRATION BY MIA CARNEVALE



External matters

Spending time outdoors promotes physical and mental health for teachers and students

Information provided by members of the ATA's Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC) and Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC).


FOR TEACHERS, THE LAST FEW years have been incredibly challenging. As a result, many of us have increased our awareness and the consideration we give to moving students from indoor learning environments to the outdoors where both teachers and students feel more safe from the potential of being exposed to COVID. It has been a cultural shift. Many teachers who, in the past, may not have felt comfortable outdoors with their students have now begun to lean into opportunities to be outside with their students more often. Teachers (and their students) are becoming more aware of the positive outcomes that being outdoors provides to personal well-being.

GO OUT AND EXPLORE

In terms of educating the whole child, being outdoors benefits the physical, affective, cognitive and social domains. Time spent outdoors is associated with an increase in moderate to vigorous physical activity and improved cardiorespiratory fitness. Both adults and youth who spend time outdoors report improved general health and better mental health. Social free play and outdoor learning sessions with teachers boost emotional resilience, self-regulation, emotional well-being and academic performance. Student-student relationships and student-teacher relationships are also perceived to be stronger when a portion of the instructional day is spent outdoors, year-round. Simply put, outdoor activities bear multiple benefits to teachers, students and society at large. When you are planning your next outdoor adventures with your students, we recommend taking a comprehensive school health approach, which includes four interrelated components: policy, teaching and learning, social and physical environments, and partnership and services. Outdoor teaching and learning opportunities may look different depending on your learners, your subject discipline and how you approach the learning outcomes. The great outdoors truly fits all and should be considered a teacher. There are many cross-curricular links to time spent in nature.

“**The great outdoors truly fits all and should be considered a teacher. There are many cross-curricular links to time spent in nature.**”

Look for opportunities to connect socially while outdoors. Walk-and-talk meetings and debriefing activities are great ways to connect with others. When students and staff feel connected to their school, they experience higher levels of perceived success and well-being.

Move outside and get to know all aspects of the physical environment surrounding your school. Look for access to natural spaces in close proximity where you could visit with your students, and encourage your students to help you locate those places. Consider traffic, trees, playgrounds and trails—make some time to explore your 2.4. The majority of school jurisdictions specify a radius of 1.6 to 2.4 kilometres as the “walk zone,” depending on the grade configuration. Go out and explore! 

References are available upon request by emailing section editor Shelley Svidal: shelley.svidal@ata.ab.ca.

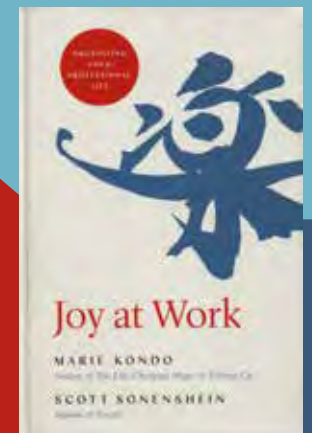


Get some help

To get you started, here are some recommended resources from the ATA's Health and Physical Education Council (HPEC), the Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC) and Ever Active Schools:

- HPEC website to connect and collaborate: hpec.ab.ca
- GEOEC website for resources, including a Mini Guide to Winter Nature: geoec.org/lesson-ideas.html
- Outdoor Learning Quickdraw: This resource is designed to provide activity and lesson ideas for classes of any age and subject area to try outside. There are four suits with 13 cards each: physical literacy, outdoor skills, teamwork and environmental action.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Joy at Work

Marie Kondo and Scott Sonenshein
Available through the ATA library.

“Nature has always been there for us, waiting. We simply need to return to her for healing.”

— Elder Bob Cardinal, 2021



Fact or cap?

Detecting false information online is an important part of teaching in the digital age

Danny Maas

Executive Staff Officer, ATA



WITH THE ADVENT OF BLOGS, YouTube and other social media, citizen journalism, entertainment and access to information has exploded. Without doubt, the internet and social media brought with them unprecedented connectedness, news not filtered by governments, and the ability to expose injustice and exploitation worldwide. It has also resulted in a world where misinformation and deception proliferate. Dr. Phil McRae’s May 2010 article in this magazine warned of the “echo-chamber effect,” and one need look no further than Facebook or Twitter to see the extreme views and how entrenched people are in their own “truths.”

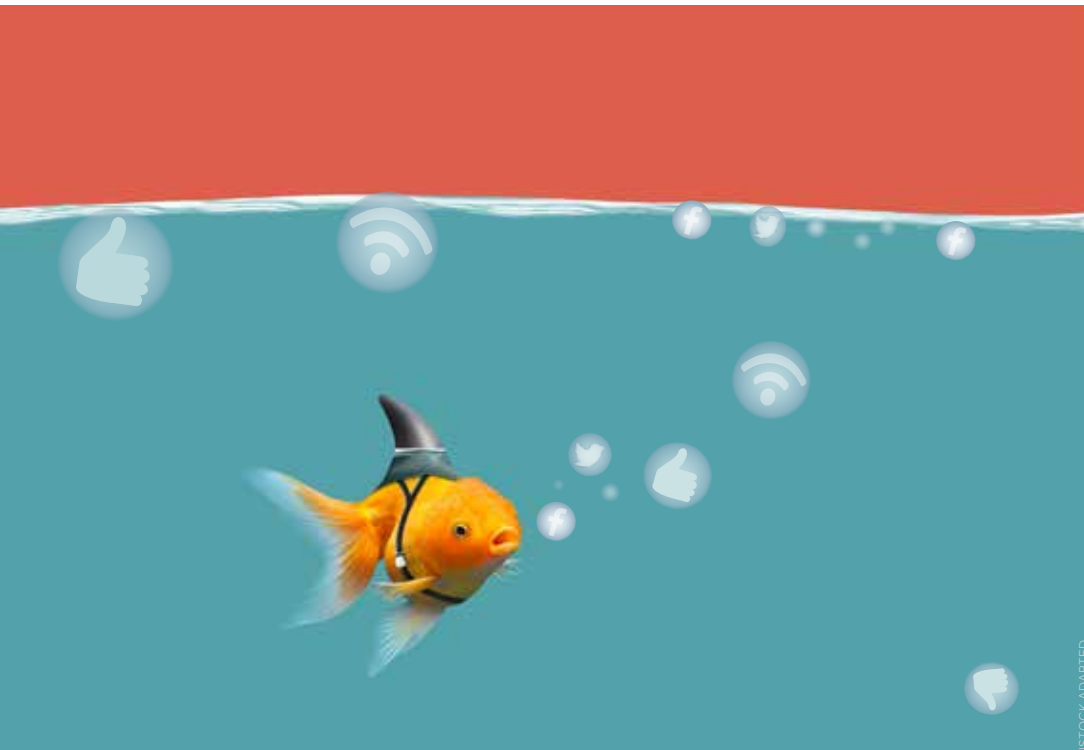
FERRETING OUT FAKE NEWS

In 2017, *Newsweek* named “fake news” word of the year, and what started with unverified text has expanded with technology to include other forms of media. While “photoshopping” has been used as a verb for some time, the ability to modify and fabricate images has extended to video and audio editing to the point where it is almost impossible to distinguish reality from fabrication.

With the advancement of technology and the surge of false information online, many teachers are left wondering how to empower their students to critically view the information they consume online and to be able to distinguish whether something is “fact or cap” (*cap* is slang for *lie* or *fiction*). Fortunately, there are many excellent resources available to schools that offer practical strategies and free lesson materials educators can use in the classroom.

In 2018, Jennifer Lagarde and Darren Hudgins released the book, *Fact vs Fiction: Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in the Age of Fake News*, which can be signed out by members from the ATA library. In the book, they remind us that “fake news” is an umbrella term for many different types of misleading information with different purposes, and that knowing the types and the purposes each serves further arms us in detecting and interpreting this information.

For example, a satirical article written in *The Beaver* has a different purpose and motivation than an article on pseudoscience or propaganda. For further information, the European Association for Viewers Interest created an excellent



infographic that describes different types of misleading news called, “Beyond Fake News — 10 Types of Misleading News.” The infographic can be found at <https://eavi.eu/infographic-beyond-fake-news-10-types-of-misleading-news-17-languages/>.

MediaSmarts.ca, Canada’s centre for digital and media literacy, has numerous resources and lesson materials available at BreakTheFake.ca, released in 2019. This

fantastic site includes lesson materials for teachers of all grade levels, quizzes, tips and resources.

In addition to finding and verifying information, MediaSmarts.ca offers numerous digital literacy lesson materials on its website. Teachers can search, “Use, Understand & Create: A Digital Literacy Framework for Canadian Schools” for more. ^{ATA}

MediaSmarts: Four strategies to tell whether something online is true

- 1 Use fact-checking tools such as Snopes.com to see if the story has been debunked.
- 2 Find the source of the story by clicking on the link in a social media post to determine the website it originated from.
- 3 Verify the source by researching it to find out whether it has a good track record or has been questioned by others.
- 4 Check other trusted sources to see if other news outlets are reporting the same story.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Fact vs Fiction: Teaching Critical Thinking Skills in the Age of Fake News

Jennifer Lagarde and Darren Hudgins

Available through the ATA library.

Did you know ...

The Educational Technology Council (ETC) of the Alberta Teachers' Association supports teachers in using technology to enhance teaching and learning.

The ETC provides its membership with

- service and support through professional development opportunities;
- effective communication through an informative newsletter, listserv and dynamic website; and
- an authoritative voice on behalf of the teaching profession through the advocacy of sound educational policies relating to information and communication technology infusion and emerging technologies.

For more information, visit www.teachers.ab.ca.



ISTOCK

It's time to reframe cancel culture

Unpacking terms and moving conversations forward

Dan Grassick

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

A LASCIVIOUS CARTOON SKUNK, the author of a series of books about a boy wizard, statues of Canada's first prime minister — these are but three of the many recent targets of online “cancellation” campaigns. Calls to “cancel” someone or something have crept from Twitter into our communities and our schools. As a result, you might be finding the phrase “cancel culture” coming up around your dinner table or in your classrooms with increasing frequency. In any conversation about cancelling or cancel culture, it's a safe bet that those involved have very different understandings of these terms.

Canceling defined

Canceling has its roots in African American vernacular English. It first appeared in pop culture in the 1981 disco song “Your Love is Cancelled” by Chic, and then appeared sporadically in movies, rap and hip hop over the next 20 years. The current emergence stems from a 2014 reality show and was a public declaration that something (typically a relationship) was over. In today’s online landscape, cancelling has become intertwined with the mass calling out of public figures for discriminatory words and actions, often with the apparent hope that they will be fired, deplatformed, depopularized or otherwise punished.

What is cancel culture?

Cancel culture is not an objective term that describes the current online canceling phenomenon. More often than not, it’s an exclamation of false outrage that privileged individuals use to attempt to diminish public calls for accountability raised by minoritized voices.

Cancel culture is a catch-all lament used to frame decisions (from Dr. Seuss’s estate discontinuing books that contain racist caricatures to renaming schools, bridges and neighbourhoods originally named after the architects of the residential school system) as slippery slopes that will result in the erasure of the prevailing culture or history.

TAKE NOTE

Black History Month (February)

In 1995, the Honourable Jean Augustine — a former elementary teacher and the first Black Canadian woman elected to the House of Commons — introduced a motion to recognize Black History Month across the country. The motion carried unanimously and February became recognized as Black History Month in Canada.

Holi Festival of Colours (March)

A Hindu festival with origins in South Asia, Holi celebrates the beginning of spring and signifies the triumph of good over evil. Holi is also widely known as the Festival of Colours, as Holi festivities often include throwing coloured powder and water.

► [Check out the ATA Library’s LibGuides for more information and resources!](#)



ISTOCK

Strategies to use with your students

When your students start throwing out the terms cancel, cancelling or cancel culture, reframe the conversation using a simple reflective approach focused on three questions — What? So what? Now what?:

WHAT?

(The facts)

What happened?
Who’s involved?
What did they do?
What’s the specific incident that led to the call for cancellation?


SO WHAT?

(The opinions)

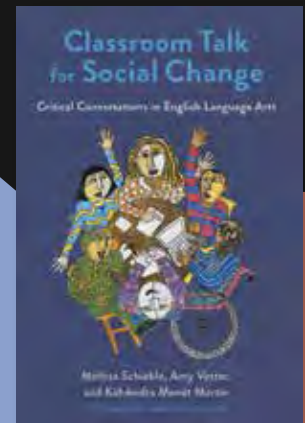
Why are people upset?
What do they think or feel about the issue?
What do your students believe?

NOW WHAT?

(Possible actions)

What should be done?
What are the logical consequences for those involved?
What could happen?
What should happen?
What, if anything, should your students do themselves to take action? 

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Classroom Talk For Social Change: Critical Conversations in English Language Arts

Melissa Schieble, Amy Vetter and Kahdeidra Monét Martin

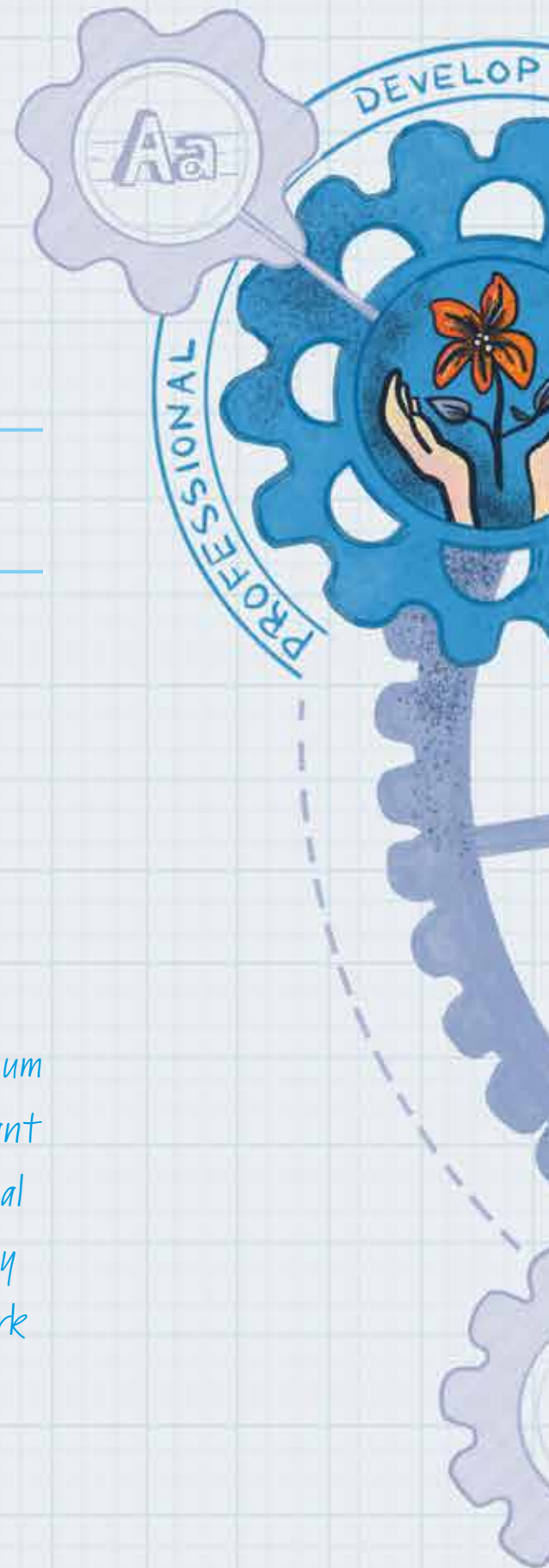
Available through the ATA library.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

Chris Gonsalvez

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

Teachers who've been part of past curriculum rollouts identify time as the most important factor contributing to success. Professional development and collaboration are also key elements. Ideally, the three elements work in combination as teachers adjust to a new program of studies.



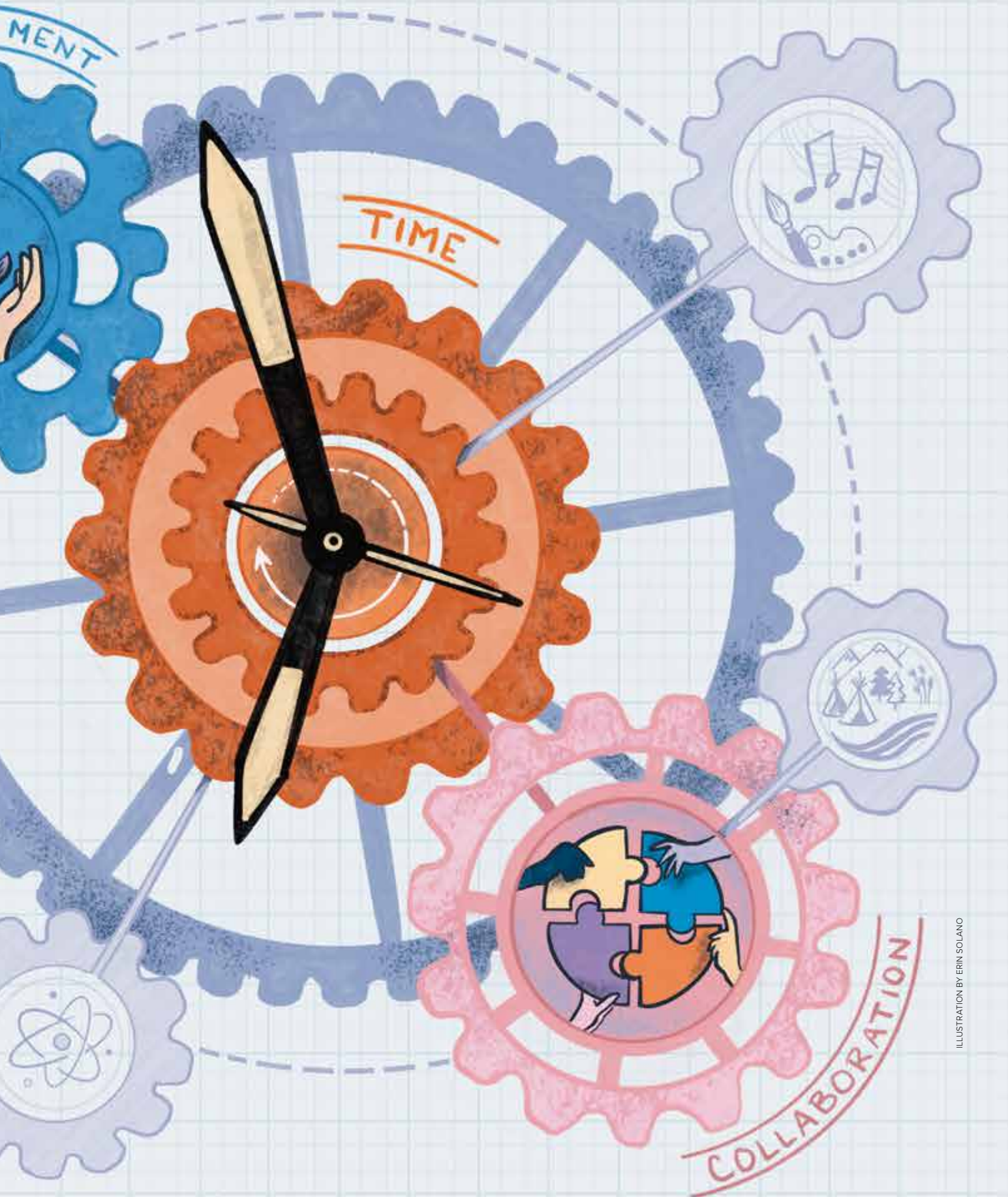


ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN SOLANO

What we've learned from implementing curriculum in Alberta

TIME

TIME TO PROVIDE INPUT

Teachers have an integral understanding of child development, pedagogy and instructional strategies, and safe classroom environments and curriculum. Providing teachers the time and opportunity to provide thoughtful input and feedback on curriculum is instrumental in implementing successful change.

TIME BETWEEN SUBJECTS BEING CHANGED

When a new curriculum is being implemented, it is like being a first-year teacher again. The amount of time required for unit, lesson, resource and assessment planning, and development is immense. Changing only one curriculum in a year enables teachers to learn and deliver the new curriculum effectively.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

TIME FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT BEFORE IMPLEMENTATION

When teachers had time to attend prioritized professional development opportunities the spring before implementation, they felt better equipped for delivery in the fall.

TIME FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING IMPLEMENTATION

When teachers had time to attend targeted professional development opportunities during implementation, it strengthened their understanding and allowed them to access “Monday ready” strategies for engaging students.

TIME FOR PEDAGOGICAL PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Even during a new curriculum rollout, teachers desire choice in their professional learning. Ensuring that there is still time for teachers to *choose* different professional development opportunities that may be outside of the new curriculum rollout is essential to their growth.

COLLABORATION

TIME FOR GRADE-LEVEL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

When teachers had embedded time to gather in grade-level teams to learn and plan together, it made for smoother implementation for teachers and better learning for students.

TIME FOR DIVISIONAL VERTICAL COLLABORATION

During the days of Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) funds, teachers had the opportunity to collaborate with teachers from the grades above and below them. These times were valuable professional learning opportunities to better understand the progression of student learning.


TIME FOR COLLABORATION AROUND IMPLEMENTATION

In some schools, teachers would meet monthly to evaluate how things were going and compile meaningful feedback on the new curriculum.

TIME FOR COLLABORATION AROUND ASSESSMENT

Teachers understand that assessment goes hand in hand with new curriculum. When time is provided to collaborate with others to develop and revise new assessments, it enhances curriculum rollout.

TIME WHEN SOME TEACHERS ARE TEACHING A NEW CURRICULUM AND OTHERS ARE NOT

Teachers are collaborative by nature. During prior implementations, they would come together to support each other. When one teacher was implementing a new curriculum, colleagues would lend additional support by helping provide extra prep time, cover supervision or pick up additional committee responsibilities. 

THE VOICES OF EXPERIENCE

Teachers provide insight based on previous encounters with new curriculum

Heather Rootsart

“The collaboration between AB ED [Alberta Education] and district staff across the province was extremely beneficial for continuity and support. It felt like we were all working together to achieve the same goals. That said, sadly, there wasn’t enough money to continue the implementation process after the first year, so areas like assessment fell short.”



Jennifer Williams

“In my school division there were funds allocated for teachers to get together during the school day. I was new to the school division and was placed with two master teachers from other schools to meet three times during the school year. Our collaboration time was invaluable.”



Erin Luong

“I was a member of the AISI team in the early 2000s. When we were rolling out our new program, I found our monthly professional development and collaboration meetings extremely helpful. These provided us not only with opportunities to connect with others, but also allowed us to reflect on our practice and modify our approaches in a timely manner.”



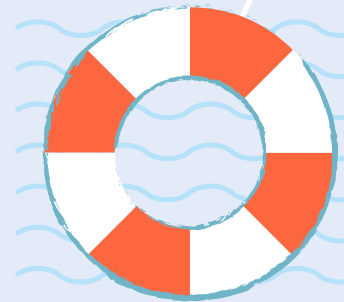
April Brown

“I benefited tremendously from PD and the math consultant hired to train teachers in the region. This consultant worked with school divisions in the region to deliver ongoing PD. It was not just a one-day event but a series of workshops over several years.”



Mark Sylvestre

“The ability to discuss with other administrators the frustrations of a problematic new curriculum was very valuable. Our conversations about the implications of an improper rollout and the supports our teacher needed revealed some great strategies and suggestions.”



THE LIFEGUARD APPROACH

Under prior models of curriculum development, it was typical to have about 10 per cent of teachers in a school implementing new curriculum in any given year. The rest of the teachers would rally around those teachers and support them by taking on other duties and extracurricular activities because they knew that, at some point, they would be the ones implementing new curriculum.

The 90 per cent of teachers serve as lifeguards to prevent the 10 per cent from drowning.

The 90 per cent of teachers serve as lifeguards to prevent the 10 per cent from drowning. If all teachers are implementing new curriculum all at once in a school, then there are no lifeguards and everyone is in danger of drowning.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ERIN SOLANO



GLOBAL INFLUENCE

Successful curriculum change requires teachers in charge

William F. Pinar

Professor in Curriculum Studies, Canada
Research Chair, University of British Columbia

Except in authoritarian regimes — even there I hesitate to generalize — there are almost no examples of successful curriculum implementation. In every instance of national curriculum reform that I have studied, each has failed. Perhaps each was intended to fail; surely policymakers knew that inadequate funding, insufficient teacher preparation, often the curriculum content itself would make unlikely the

reform's success. The point of such "reform" often appears political, a show to assure the public that whatever emergency politicians have alleged the nation or province faces will be remedied by their reform of the school curriculum.

The case of the United States may be the most familiar. After the Soviets launched Sputnik in 1957, Americans were shocked, triggering a panic over

America's military superiority. Neither the U.S. military nor the Eisenhower administration came in for criticism, however. Politicians promptly blamed teachers, inspiring John F. Kennedy to become the first U.S. presidential candidate to make the public school curriculum a national campaign issue.

After his election in 1960, the first ever U.S. national curriculum reform was initiated, led not by public school teachers or education professors but by psychologists — Harvard's Jerome Bruner most prominently — and subject-matter specialists: physicists and mathematicians were instructed to compose curriculum that would not depend on teachers' expertise, in fact bypassing teachers to deliver their sophisticated material straight to students.

That movement foundered as students, their parents and teachers struggled with both the content and structures of the new curriculum, most memorably the "new math." The Kennedy curriculum reform dissipated during the final years of the turbulent 1960s; by 1968 presidential candidate Richard Nixon was campaigning on a "back-to-the-basics" platform.

Right-wing Republicans seized the curriculum issue again in the 1980s. This time the emergency — what presumably placed the nation at risk — was not military but economic competition, and the arch-enemy was not the Soviet Union but Japan (soon to cede its position to China). No Child Left Behind (NCLB), led by the George W. Bush administration but with bipartisan support, exploited racial and income inequality to scapegoat teachers for politicians' failures to address those very issues.

The Obama administration's Race to the Top initiative was a gentler version of NCLB; today right-wing Republicans

The point of such “reform” often appears political, a show to assure the public that whatever emergency politicians have alleged the nation or province faces will be remedied by their reform of the school curriculum.

cry “emergency” over the 1619 Project and critical race theory, two efforts to study the role of race in American life. While data are not yet definitive, moving the curriculum online during the COVID pandemic appears to have been a curricular catastrophe, and not only for minority and impoverished students who lacked devices and access to the internet. Even prosperous parents were displeased with online learning. In the United States, curriculum reform has never been only or even primarily (except the 1930s *Eight-Year Study*) about curriculum reform.

To study the situations in other countries, I spent the last decade focused on curriculum studies, the field that studies curriculum reform and related topics, in Brazil, China, India, Mexico and South Africa. The project centred on interviewing emerging and senior scholars concerning their own scholarship, often about curriculum reform.


In Brazil, a key concept was “re-contextualization,” both an empirical description of how teachers responded to national and international initiatives but also a recommendation as to how teachers should respond. Creating wiggle room for Brazilian teachers to recontextualize reform is a tripartite governance structure — federal, state, municipal — that, in Rio de Janeiro at least, ensured that teachers found openings in governance structures, allowing them to reset standards according to local conditions, including their own classrooms.

In China I worked with scholars who formulated the 2001 reform — revised now several times — that mixed pre-1949 Chinese ideas with Western conceptions of student-centeredness. That landmark reform ran into the College Entrance Examination, commonly known as the Gaokao 高考. Its oversized importance,

determining not only the calibre of university to which one is admitted but one’s life chances generally, made it an immovable roadblock.

In India, exemplary educational traditions associated with Gandhi and Tagore have faced political pressure from the Bharatiya Janata Party and its program of propaganda, most recently insisting that students from kindergarten through university study the exceptionality of cows in India, a curriculum reform dictated by Prime Minister Modi’s National Cow Commission.

In Mexico, politically progressive curricula were long ago replaced by neoliberal priorities, refocusing the school curriculum from socio-economic justice toward economic development. In post-apartheid South Africa, many teachers were unprepared to exercise the academic freedom suddenly conferred upon them after decades of authoritarian control. Except for an almost century-old *Eight Year Study* in the United States, only in Finland have I found suggestions of successful curriculum reform and implementation.¹

My conclusion? In consultation with experts, it is teachers, not bureaucrats and certainly not politicians, who should be in charge of curriculum reform and implementation. 

¹ Spiller, P. 2017. “Could subjects soon be a thing of the past in Finland?” *BBC News Finland*, May 29. www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39889523 (accessed July 12, 2021).

Curriculum reform in Finland: An example of success

Phil McRae


Associate Coordinator,
Research, ATA

From 2014 to 2017, Finland reformed its national core curricula from early childhood to the secondary (high school) level. As a result, the core curricula were established in a coherent line throughout the entire education system.

The aims of the curriculum reforms were to build on the strengths of the education system and meet the challenges of rapidly evolving school communities in an increasingly complex and volatile world.

Key reforms included a focus on the meaningfulness of learning, the engagement and well-being of students, and equity as a key principle of a high-quality education that respects children and childhood.

In Finland, the collaborative relationships with teachers and school leaders through an extensive design process was essential in order to reach a common understanding of the basic questions behind the reform: Why does Finland need change? What should schools do differently? How might a new curriculum come alive in each different school community?

This participatory approach with teachers and citizens secured the commitment of all those whose input was needed to carry out the reform and make it live in schools. In Finland, the phrase “implementation of the curriculum” is seldom used. Instead, they talk about how teachers can “construct their own professional guidelines” based on the local curriculum. 

That Was Then; This Is Now

2018 Back in 2018, the future was looking bright on the curriculum front. In July of that year, the government released a draft K–4 curriculum that garnered largely positive reviews from teachers and others. Following a survey of more than 2,800 K–4 teachers, the ATA produced its *Curriculum Implementation Report*. Though the Association had concerns about the curriculum implementation plan, the main documents appeared to be ready for field testing. Here are some excerpts from that document.

The curriculum redesign process currently under way is the most ambitious and far-reaching in the recent history of education in Alberta. The government of Alberta is to be commended for taking on this often delayed and long overdue task and for doing it in a manner that has been more open and inclusive than previous efforts. The involvement of teachers via a partnership agreement with the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) has been essential to the success of the project thus far and undoubtedly accounts for much of the enthusiasm being expressed by teachers around the promise of the curriculum.

Overall, Alberta K–4 teachers are enthusiastic about the new curriculum and are looking forward to a new program of studies with less content and greater flexibility.

Statements from survey respondents

"I am excited to be able to help students think more deeply about the outcomes and to work on applying their knowledge ... rather than memorizing information."

"I am glad that there are [fewer] outcomes to cover and that there will be a focus on subject integration."

— ATA Curriculum Implementation Report, 2018

2021 By 2021, a revised draft K–6 curriculum was a major cause of concern for the ATA and a large number of its members. Following the government's release of the revised draft in March 2021, the ATA conducted a study that included input from 6,500 teachers, resulting in the report *Professional Curriculum Analysis and Critique of Alberta Education's 2021 Draft K–6 Curriculum*. Here are some excerpts from that document.

In mid-2019, the minister of education terminated the partnership agreement that existed with the Association to develop curriculum. As a result, teachers have been virtually shut out of the development process for the K–6 draft curriculum. The minister did not provide any information to the Association about the scope of the curriculum development, who was writing the curriculum or how teachers would be involved. In December 2020, the department hosted a two-day virtual meeting for 102 teachers who were nominated by school authorities and selected by the minister to provide advice and recommendations on a draft K–6 curriculum. Participating teachers were required to sign a nondisclosure agreement.


The study's key findings indicate that the draft curriculum does not meet the Alberta Education overall vision, guidelines and considerations for curriculum development.

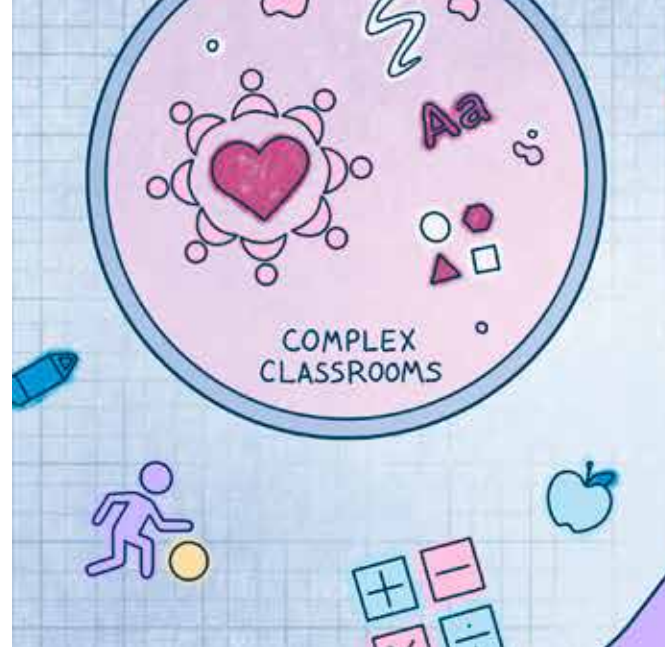
Statements from survey respondents

"Creativity is mentioned 14 times, but students are never asked to use their creativity to create anything."

"The rote-learning, formula-based approach will likely increase student fear of mathematics and result in disengaged learners."

"We find it offensive that Indigenous peoples are solely referred to in a historical perspective. Indigenous peoples are the first inhabitants and are still here."

— Professional Curriculum Analysis and Critique of Alberta Education's 2021 Draft K–6 Curriculum, 2021 



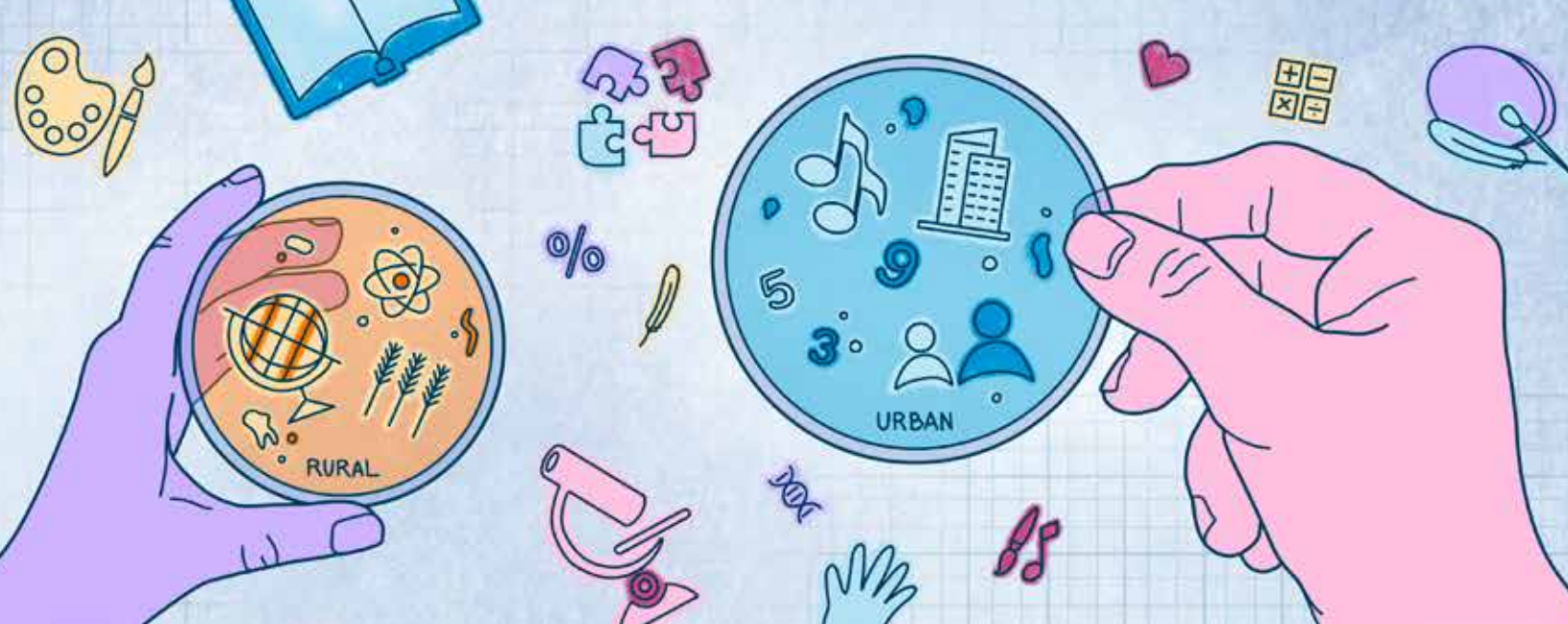
A BLUEPRINT

In 1967 the Alberta Teachers' Association developed a policy that outlines a set of steps for curriculum implementation.

POLICY 2.2.1.7

In developing and implementing a new program of studies, the Government of Alberta should follow these steps:

1. Undertake a needs assessment.
2. Formulate a statement of goals and learner outcomes.
3. Produce a draft program of studies.
4. Undertake a pilot project to evaluate the draft program of studies, the teaching and learning resources and the impact of the program on teacher workload.
5. Plan, fund, implement and evaluate inservice for teachers required to teach the new program of studies.
6. Ensure that the approved program of studies and necessary resources are available at least one school year before the date of implementation.
7. Provide school authorities with funds to purchase approved teaching and learning resources and acquire additional facilities that may be required.
8. Allow one year of optional implementation.
9. Ensure that it is fully funded.
10. Evaluate the new program of studies on an ongoing basis.
11. Revise the program of studies as needed.



FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ADDITIONAL CONTEXT FOR THE BLUEPRINT

In 1967 the Association developed the first position paper aligned with, and to provide further context to, policy 2.2.1.7. *Curriculum and Student Assessment* attempts to expand the public's understanding of curriculum generally, distinguish between the roles of the teacher and of society regarding curriculum, and articulate the difference between student assessment and standardized and large-scale assessments.

The position paper acknowledges that curriculum exists for students and must reflect what Albertans feel is important for students to learn and the management of that content over time. Of note, it speaks about the need for curriculum to be organized logically and sequentially, encouraging critical and creative thinking. The paper recognizes the essential role of teachers as those who bring the curriculum to life in their day-to-day practice and the importance of their contribution to curriculum decision making.

Related to this and required for successful implementation, the paper underscores the role of government in providing adequate funding for resources as well as adequate funding for supports and services for the pre-implementation (field test) and implementation phases. This includes ensuring that approved

programs of study are available well in advance of implementation.

Assessment, both formative and summative, has an important function in the teaching and learning process. A combination of the teacher's professional judgment and curriculum-based assessment, not standardized tests or large-scale assessments, should inform decisions about student performance for placement and reporting purposes.

The position paper is reviewed frequently and was last revised in 2018. It can be found at [teachers.ab.ca > About > What We Think > Position Papers](https://www.teachers.ab.ca/About/What-We-Think/Position-Papers).


Curriculum exists for students

WE BELIEVE

The Alberta Teachers' Association has developed 10 statements of belief about curriculum and curricular reform. Like the position paper, these statements align with Policy 2.2.1.7 and support the same steps for implementation.

1. We believe that curriculum is about what should be learned.

2. We believe that curriculum is not about how a particular curriculum outcome should be taught.
3. We believe that curriculum belongs to, and must be understood and supported by, Albertans.
4. We believe that on matters of designing programs of study, teachers must take the leading role.
5. We believe that business has a legitimate contribution to make, but that curriculum must address much more than short-term economic objectives.
6. We believe that curriculum should allow room for inclusion, local innovation and adaptation.
7. We believe that technology is a tool that can be used to support instruction.
8. We believe that assessment and evaluation must be consistent with the curriculum.
9. We believe that curriculum implementation must be properly supported.
10. We believe that it is the responsibility of teachers to lead students to mastery of the curriculum, and it is the responsibility of government and school boards to support teachers in their efforts to do so.

The full document, which includes a detailed explanation of each belief, can be found at [teachers.ab.ca > News and Info > Issues > K-6 Draft Curriculum > Key Principles for Curriculum Reform](https://www.teachers.ab.ca/News-and-Info/Issues/K-6-Draft-Curriculum/Key-Principles-for-Curriculum-Reform). 

ARC DE TRIOMPHE

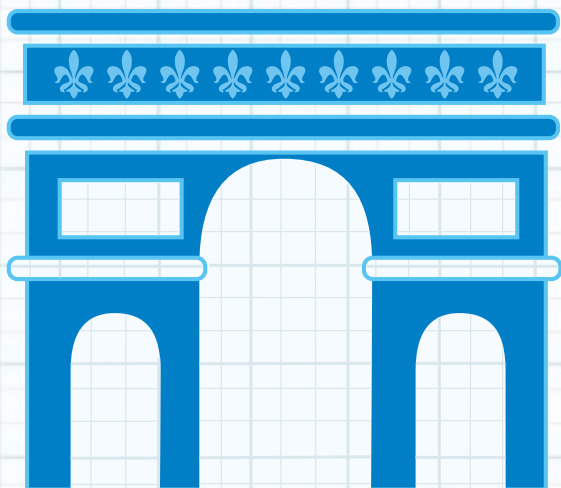
What does good curriculum, en français, look like across Canada?

Gwendolyn Shone

French Immersion Teacher,
Edmonton Public Schools and
Leadeur en éducation française

Elissa Corsi

Executive Staff Officer, ATA



Programs of study are policy documents that have an enormous impact on charter right minority groups, such as francophones; however, the topic of francophone curriculum development is not often discussed. What are the best practices and how does the development of francophone curriculum in a minority setting compare across the country?

The pillars of francophone education in a minority context

The following four pillars are common to francophone curriculum in Canada:

- Linguistic development
- Cultural and identity construction
- A sense of belonging
- Contributions to the community

These repeat across francophone minority education documents and policies in Canada. The pillars go beyond the integration of francophone history, perspectives and contributions across curricula for the majority language group. The pillars ensure language vitality and sustainability in the minority setting. Francophone curriculum must have these four pillars as a foundation.

Curriculum

The development of curriculum for francophone minorities is not consistent among provinces, but there are common themes. They can be divided into three main categories:

- Translation (from majority language without contextualisation)
- Adaptation (from frameworks to front matter to adapted statements or learning outcomes within subject content)
- Development (original and specific to minority needs by its members)

When looking at francophone curriculum, a positive outcome is that every province and territory develops French first-language arts courses that all meet the above-mentioned pillar for linguistic development. However, the pillars should be integrated into any curricula that impact minority language education, not solely language courses. Additionally, best practice suggests that francophone curriculum should be, at the very least, an adaptation of the majority language curriculum and, at best, an original development.


Approaches vary throughout Canadian provinces and territories. At one end of the spectrum, B.C., the Yukon and Newfoundland and Labrador employ only translations. At the other end, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia adapt or develop all curricula specifically for francophones. All other jurisdictions employ varying levels of translation and adaptation/development. In Alberta's current K-6 curriculum, science, mathematics and health are translations, whereas physical education and social studies are adapted. The kindergarten and music programs of study are developed specifically for francophone students.

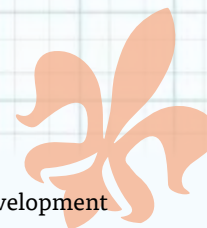
Recommendations

Strong curriculum development should include

- adequate francophone representation within the ministries of education;
- the integration of the four pillars;
- collaboration with local teachers from the minority context and subject matter experts;
- community involvement; and
- adaptation or original development of all subjects, not simply translations.

These conditions are present in varying frameworks across the country, such as Cadre des compétences transdisciplinaires, Cadre commun de français langue première (M à 12) du Protocol de l'ouest et du Nord canadienne and Le cadre de l'éducation francophone en Alberta (Framework for French First Language Education in Alberta). To counter assimilation, curriculum must provide for a rich linguistic and cultural environment that nurtures the francophone identity and sense of belonging.

Considering the trends that exist across the country, the federal government is well positioned to encourage an interprovincial, pan-Canadian curricula development and implementation framework to ensure that francophone minority language educational needs are met and that equitable opportunities exist across the nation. 



Large-scale change is tough but doable

Vanessa Weg

Human Resources, ATA



I have always been a fan of making changes. The busier and more unpredictable circumstances become, the more I love watching the process unfold.

I also love seeing the progress and the end result of a large-scale change when all the cumulative decisions and communications are over. It's like watching a real-life version of a home renovation drama on HGTV where one homeowner wants to move to a new location and the other is stuck on staying in the current space. An hour later, the before and after pictures show two gloriously different versions of the same house with two happy homeowners. "Reality" TV ... really? Change events and pleasing all people as they work through a contentious issue are never that simple.

But believe it or not, people's reactions and change readiness can be predictable, even when change comes as a surprise.

HUMAN REACTIONS TO CHANGE ARE PREDICTABLE

Reactions can be similar to the well-known grief cycle where people vacillate through the various emotional stages of shock, denial, blame and bargaining. Then the "living out of a suitcase with no home" phase arrives, with questioning and confusion amid a time of not enough answers. But this messy state is inevitable. It means change, even in small degrees, is occurring. Finally, people typically move on to acceptance and problem solving.

NATURE AND NURTURE ARE KEY FACTORS IN CHANGE RESILIENCY

How a person handles change is based on both personality factors and environmental experiences.

On the personality side of things, the Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MTBI) factors are highly influential to every individual's ability to adapt and change. Of the 16 profile combinations, someone with a strong "introvert sensing" preference will display a thoughtful and down-to-earth approach that supports change only when it is carefully planned and incrementally executed. Their opposite cousin, the "extrovert intuitive" type, typically engages with others to embrace immediate change as the earliest of adopters. Any "introverted intuitive" person will favour ideas and future vision with trust of the process, and "extravert sensing" types will organize themselves into immediate action. For more details on this, I highly recommend the nonfiction read *Type Talk At Work* by Kroeger, Thuesen and Rutledge as an excellent reference.

On the environmental/nurture side, though, a major theory claims that when a real or perceived change or threat to the lower sections of the Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs "pyramid" occurs, it will dramatically increase an individual's resistance to change because the lower sections of the pyramid are home to safety and physiological needs, which are of paramount importance to every human being.

Key steps to successful change management

- 1. Create urgency and start honest discussions.** Give convincing reasons to get people talking and thinking.
- 2. Discuss that change is necessary by identifying the "why."** Identify leaders in your organization, key stakeholders and build up a change coalition.
- 3. Create the vision.** People will work on what makes sense to them. Determine the values that are central to the change and the key historical values that will remain.
- 4. Communicate — and repeat.** Address peoples' concerns and anxieties openly and honestly.
- 5. Remove the roadblocks.** Understand what supports are needed to support change.
- 6. Generate small "wins."** Without evidence, progress can slow or stop.
- 7. Don't quit.** Real change takes patience. Build on what went right and identify what you can improve.

Don't lose heart.
While change will
never go as planned,
successes can occur.

In a work environment, these needs can be translated into any perceived threat to a person's autonomy to do their jobs independently and with desired freedom, mastery of their roles and understanding of theory to do work well, and/or a change in purpose. If the purpose for or methods by which someone is expected to work clearly do not match their values, they see no fulfillment or purpose in their work.

OBSTACLES TO EXPECT WHEN CREATING ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE

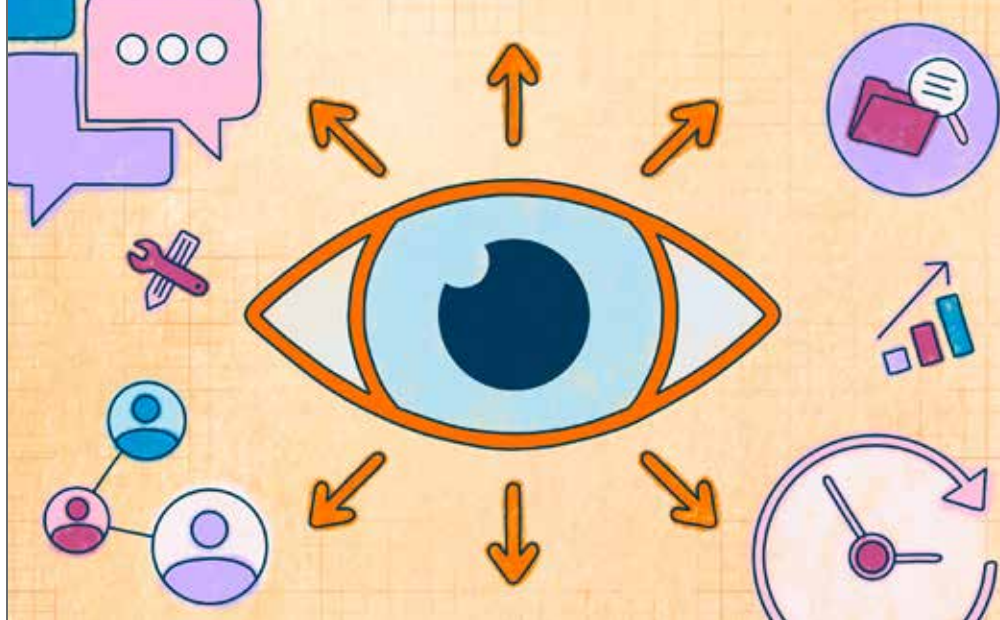
Challenges abound with large professional or organizational changes, even with the best plans in place. The factors of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) reign over all initiatives. People are called to stay agile and flexible so they can quickly adapt throughout implementation of change—not easy for a large group.

Project teams or stakeholders require consultation but will not easily agree. Meetings will never be as streamlined or productive as people would like.

Time lags and missed deadlines are typical barriers as well. Large-scale change and uncertainty can drag on with no end in sight. Long implementation timelines create change fatigue and discussions lose momentum. And these are just a few of many potential disruptors.

But don't lose heart. While change will never go as planned, successes can occur. ^{ATA}

Vanessa Weg is a certified human resource professional and an AMPG certified change practitioner.



ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS

In 2010, the Alberta Teachers' Association participated in a working group of education partners including Alberta Education, school boards, superintendents, parents, faculties of education and professional development experts.

Motivated by a commitment to realizing positive change in Alberta's schools and classrooms, the working group reviewed current research, literature and promising practices to identify the characteristics of successful implementation of education policies, curricula, priorities, programs and initiatives.

The result was a 16-page publication entitled *A Guide to Support Implementation: Essential Conditions*.

Summary of findings

Research shows that successful implementation

- is a shared responsibility among stakeholders;
- is developmental and contextual;
- is systematically planned and sustained;
- is meaningful, purposeful and focused on key priorities;
- involves learning opportunities that focus on enhancing

professional practice and leadership capacity among educators;

- involves a variety of learning opportunities for all education stakeholders; and
- involves change at both organizational and individual levels.

Supporting implementation

Supporting implementation is possible in environments where education stakeholders are committed to shared responsibility (a commitment to develop a shared understanding of and commitment to respective roles) within a culture of learning (a social/emotional environment in which inquiry, risk-taking, sharing and collaboration are encouraged in order to optimize student learning).

Successful implementation

Successful implementation is possible when education stakeholders share responsibility to address the seven essential conditions

- Shared vision
- Leadership
- Research and evidence
- Resources
- Teacher professional growth
- Time
- Community engagement ^{ATA}

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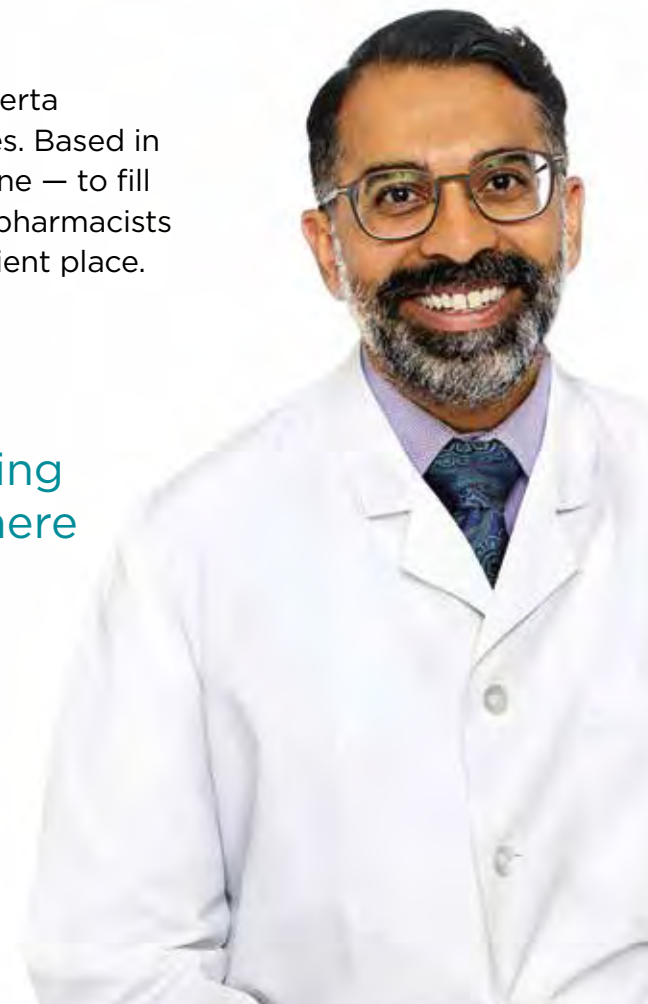
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Yatin Patel, B.Sc. Pharm, RPh
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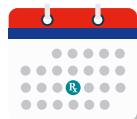
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Hope is essential to education

New study will create plan for building hope and resilience

Phil McRae

Associate Coordinator, Research, ATA



Hope is that place, and those moments, when all is good and right with the world.

To be hopeful, we have to imagine these treasured moments in time and then try to bend the arc of the universe toward them like a directional beacon.

We all navigate darkness in the course of a human life; hope is our ally, with resilience as the means to bend the arc.”

— Phil McRae



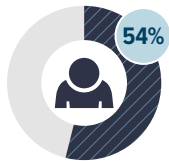
The viral spread of hope becomes a collective and rapidly spreading phenomenon and presents our schools as sites of opportunity to unlock a wider community’s chances of recovering and building resilience post-pandemic.

THE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) pandemic on public education systems around the world has been profound. It has accelerated issues such as inequity, mental health challenges and the promises (and perils) of technology across societies. In many ways, the COVID-19 pandemic is an amplifier of the chronic issues we have faced pre-pandemic in many of our schools. As we are about to confront the psychological, social and economic fallout during the recovery phase of the pandemic, expected to run from 2022 to 2024, we will be contending with acute challenges on chronic issues, a place where hope is perhaps difficult to find, and a challenge to maintain.

FEELING HOPELESS

As part of our ongoing ATA pandemic research studies into what teachers and school leaders are experiencing throughout the province, the Association designed a rapid response feedback tool known as a “pandemic pulse survey” for Alberta teachers and school leaders. These research studies are the only systematic documentation of the conditions and experiences of Alberta’s

K-12 public schools during the COVID-19 pandemic and, as such, form an important part of the historic record. In this research we gathered large data sets on our colleagues' perspectives on hope.



In 2021, **54 per cent of Alberta teachers and school leaders** identified that they felt hopeless.

In the most recent ATA pandemic rapid research studies (spring and fall 2021), using random stratified sampling of several thousand professionals, we found that 54 per cent of Alberta teachers and school leaders identified that they felt hopeless (Alberta Teachers' Association 2021). This is a stunning and deeply concerning revelation, and one that has garnered serious attention.

HOPE IS ESSENTIAL

Hope is essential to the profession of teaching, and indeed education itself. Without hope we have difficulty imagining the future, which is why teachers teach. To be hopeful in education, we have to imagine the treasured moments in our professional lives and then try to bend the arc of the universe toward them like a directional beacon. While “hope floats,” it does need a lighthouse to navigate the often stormy seas and darker waters of life. We all navigate significant challenges in the course of our vocation (think emergency remote teaching), but hope must become our ally, with resilience as the means to bend the arc.

Of particular concern as we move into a recovery phase from this global pandemic will be to establish a new declaration of hope for our Alberta K-12 schools and, in so doing, draw on individual and collective resilience that will make hope the new contagion that may spread across our schools as a social epidemic. Think of hope as contagion.

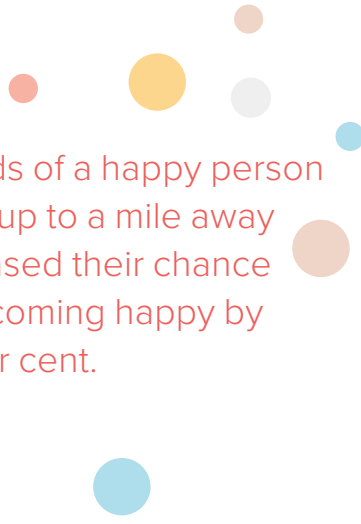


► The University of Alberta’s Hope Studies Central and its resources on “Strengths, Hope and Resourcefulness Program for School Mental Health” are available at <https://sharp.wp.educ.ualberta.ca>.

HOPE AS CONTAGION

There are now several research studies that document social contagions, such as hope and happiness. For example, Dr. Nicholas Christakis and Dr. James Fowler (2008) analyzed data gathered between 1983 and 2003 from nearly 5,000 individuals that assessed happiness by asking people to respond to statements like “I felt hopeful about the future” and “I was happy.” What these researchers discovered across more than 53,000 social and family ties was fascinating.

When a person in this study reported being happy, their spouse had an eight per cent chance of becoming happy, with the effects lasting up to one year. The data further showed that the brothers and sisters of a happy sibling had a 14 per



Friends of a happy person living up to a mile away increased their chance of becoming happy by 25 per cent.

cent greater chance of virally catching the happiness bug. Further afield, friends of a happy person living up to a mile away increased their chance of becoming happy by 25 per cent, with next-door neighbours being the beneficiaries of a 34 per cent increased chance of becoming happy. This study also found that while having more friends certainly increased happiness, it was more important to have happy friends who were key influencers of the social network's happiness.

The exact same contagion is needed for hope, where we have the potential as teachers to influence others who have up to three degrees of separation from us — a friend of a friend of a friend — and therefore positively impact people that you


may have never met in the post-pandemic world. In schools this means that the viral spread of hope becomes a collective and rapidly spreading phenomenon and presents our schools as sites of opportunity to unlock a wider community's chances of recovering and building resilience post-pandemic.

HOPE TO CHANGE

To energize this possibility in Alberta, the Association has embarked upon a research study that will bring together a partnership with University of Alberta researchers, led by Dr. Denise Larsen, to explore hope from both the health (specifically counselling psychology) and educational perspectives.

The researchers will develop a re-research plan and conduct a comprehensive environmental scan of the state of hope/hopelessness in Alberta schools coming out of the first phase (acute infection) of the global pandemic. They will then scope out a system-level research and programmatic plan that highlights opportunities for the practical application of hope (and resilience building) within the teaching profession, including a special dimensionality for school leaders and other education workers who provide caregiving interactions across Alberta schools on a daily basis.

Of note is the University of Alberta's Hope Studies Central and its resources on “Strengths, Hope and Resourcefulness Program for School Mental Health” (<https://sharp.wp.educ.ualberta.ca>), along with a database of hope research literature (Hope Studies Central 2021) that contains more than 4,500 articles and books specifically focused on the notion of hope. In this research literature, hope can be found to

- sustain mental health and motivation,
- enhance academic and athletic achievement,
- enrich relationships,
- improve a healthy sense of self and community,
- maintain physical health and psychological adjustment,
- lower substance use in youth (alcohol/cannabis) and
- help to develop (and move toward) career goals. 

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Research program brings hope to classrooms

Denise Larsen

Professor, Faculty of Education,
University of Alberta

HOPE IS THE ABILITY to envision a future in which we wish to participate. It is an ally—helping to see us through dark times. It is also the unacknowledged foundation of those moments when all seems right with the world—when hope is alive and being realized. Research tells us that hope is key to sustaining mental health, a motivator for achievements, and firmly wed to a sense of healthy self and community. So often *hope* and *education* are used interchangeably, but their relationship is rarely unpacked. Just how can hope be an effective focus when teaching? And what are the benefits of focusing on hope in the classroom?

Edmonton teacher Amy Badger intentionally and actively structures her yearly planning around hope. She has done so for years and she has many research-based reasons for this choice. Her classroom stories about hope are powerful—stories of what she has seen it do for students and the impacts it has had on her as a teacher. Sit with her over coffee and she may tell the story of a sweet and quiet girl from one of her classes, whom we'll call Karley.

The story stands out for Badger because she was never quite sure just how much Karley was actually understanding. Karley was pleasant, yet she was also one of those students you can spend an entire year with and still not feel as though you really know. At the end of the year, Karley brought Badger a card. She told Badger it had been a very difficult year. Karley's parents were divorcing and there was a lot of fighting at home. If it had not been for learning about hope all year, Karley said, she did not think she could have made it through. In a dark year, Badger's hope-infused lessons had helped Karley stay educationally focused and mentally healthy.


Through the COVID-19 and budgetary disruptions that repeatedly impacted

the 2020/21 academic year, Badger and several teacher colleagues across grade levels and school divisions joined forces with researchers in the faculty of education at the University of Alberta. They formed a community of practice and together developed the Strengths, Hope and Resourcefulness Program for School Mental Health (SHARP-SMH). The goal of the program is to develop and refine proven, positive psychological practices for easy integration and implementation into curriculum and classroom routines. A hope-and-strengths focus builds on the strengths of students and the teacher, recognizing that difficult realities, like a global pandemic or even family divorce, can co-exist with hope.

Embedded in classrooms from Grades 2 to 10, the SHARP-SMH program is an applied research program, built on a foundation of more than 25 years of research at Hope Studies Central in the faculty of education at the University of Alberta.

The SHARP-SMH project was planned pre-pandemic and quickly pivoted to support teachers and students moving to online and blended delivery. With hope practices designed for clarity and flexibility, any teacher can choose the practices that align with the needs of their class and pick up new lessons for use in their own classroom.

KEY TAKE-AWAYS FROM SHARP-SMH

1. Hope is closely associated with personal meaning.
2. Hope engages even the most challenging students.
3. Teacher hope is as important as student hope.
4. One way to foster teacher hope is to collect teacher hope stories.
5. Hope can be easily integrated across much of the curriculum. 



A hope-and-strengths focus builds on the strengths of students and the teacher, recognizing that difficult realities, like a global pandemic or even family divorce, can co-exist with hope.

LOOKING FOR LESSON PLANS?

The SHARP-SMH website offers many lesson plans for teacher use and modification. Teachers are most welcome to use these evidence-based resources in their own classrooms. <https://sharp.wp.educ.ualberta.ca/>

PROJECT PARTICIPATION

Interested in participating in future projects related to SHARP-SMH? We would love to hear from you! Contact sharpasmh@ualberta.ca.

Contributors

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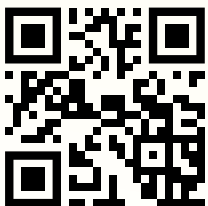
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1. *The Day I Reached My Tipping Point...: Compassion Fatigue and Educators*

This book is designed to educate teachers about compassion fatigue, its causes, coping strategies and how to work toward recovery if you have gone over the tipping point. A timely book for all teachers after an extremely challenging year.

2. *Tackling the Motivation Crisis: How to Activate Student Learning Without Behavior Charts, Pizza Parties, or Other Hard-to-Quit Incentive Systems*

Extrinsic rewards for learning can work against intrinsic love of learning. Mike Anderson shares how teachers can foster self-motivation in students with six high-impact motivators.

3. *We Belong: 50 Strategies to Create Community and Revolutionize Classroom Management*

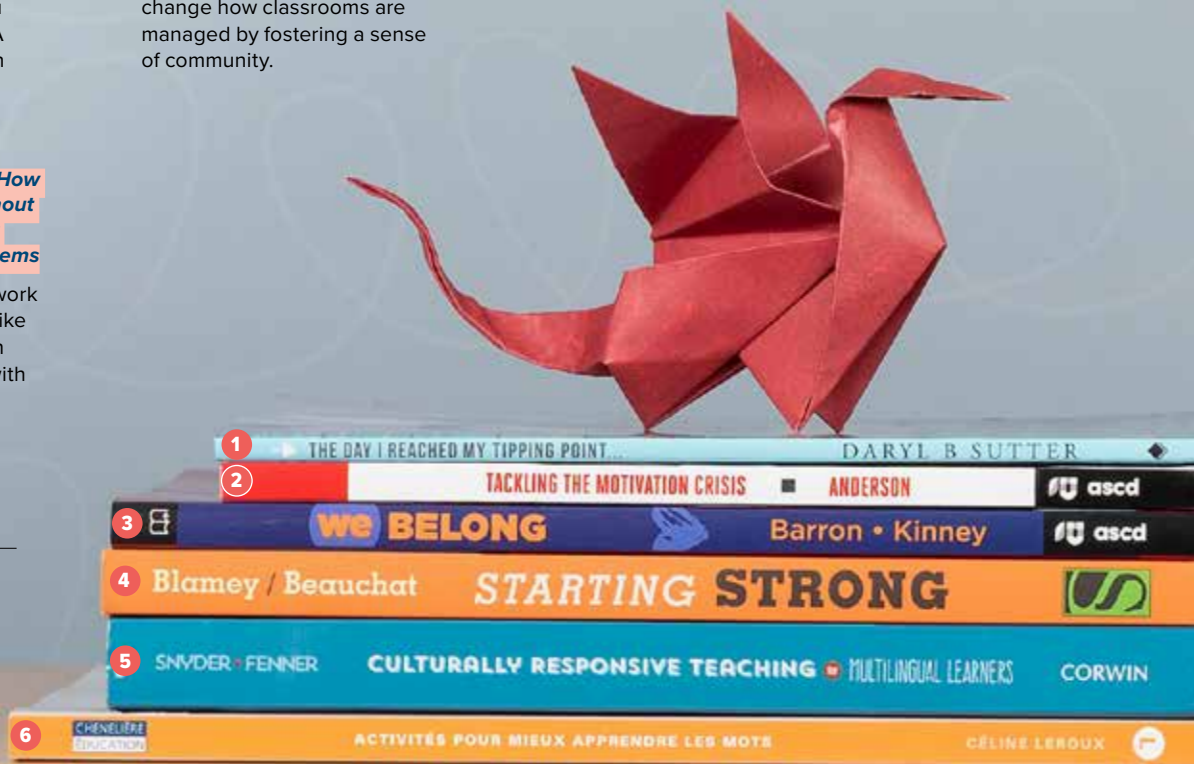
In this book, teachers will find 50 targeted strategies to increase students' sense of belonging and change how classrooms are managed by fostering a sense of community.

4. *Starting Strong: Evidence-Based Early Literacy Practices*

Figuring out the instructional practice to use in your early childhood classroom can be difficult. Katrin Blamey and Katherine Beauchat simplify that process for teachers and then recommend one of four practices for teachers to implement for literacy instruction.

5. *Culturally Responsive Teaching for Multilingual Learners: Tools for Equity*

Going beyond the normal cultural sensitivity and inclusion formula of many books, Sydney Snyder and Diane Staehr Fenner also include tools for teachers to identify their own cultural bias and deficit-based thinking. A useful tool for anyone teaching multilingual learners!



Information provided by ATA librarian Sandra Anderson

Your colleagues recommend

What are you reading these days and why would you recommend it to a colleague?

Teachers suggested these reads via Facebook.

Deborah Nicholson

I just read Thomas King's *Sufferance*. It blew me away — funny, sad, infuriating, enlightening. Loved this book!!

Asia Kirkpatrick

Braiding Sweetgrass is a beautifully written book that teaches its reader how native peoples look at the natural world and practice the concept of reciprocity and renewal. It truly opens your eyes to caring more deeply about the earth.

6. Activités pour mieux apprendre les mots : fiches d'étude et dictées quotidiennes ou hebdomadaires

Cet ouvrage est conçu pour amener les élèves à s'approprier l'orthographe des mots à l'aide d'observations qui les font réfléchir, de règles qui soutiennent leur mémoire et de dictées qui les mettent à l'épreuve ou consolident leurs acquis.

7. The Art of Teaching with Humor: Crafting Laughter

Laughter is good for the human body. It reduces stress and anxiety, releases endorphins and strengthens resilience. Author Teri Evans-Palmer discusses how moments of levity transformed and reinvigorated learning in her classroom.

8. À grands pas vers l'écriture de textes narratifs

Comprenant 21 ateliers, ce module est conçu de manière à accompagner les élèves dans leur cheminement, s'appuyant sur leurs connaissances afin d'accélérer le développement de leurs habiletés en matière de lecture.

9. Is Racism an Environmental Threat?

In this thought-provoking book, Ghassan Hage ties the mindset of colonialism to the mindset that creates wholesale environmental damage. He examines how racist attitudes have become not just a danger to people but to the whole planet.

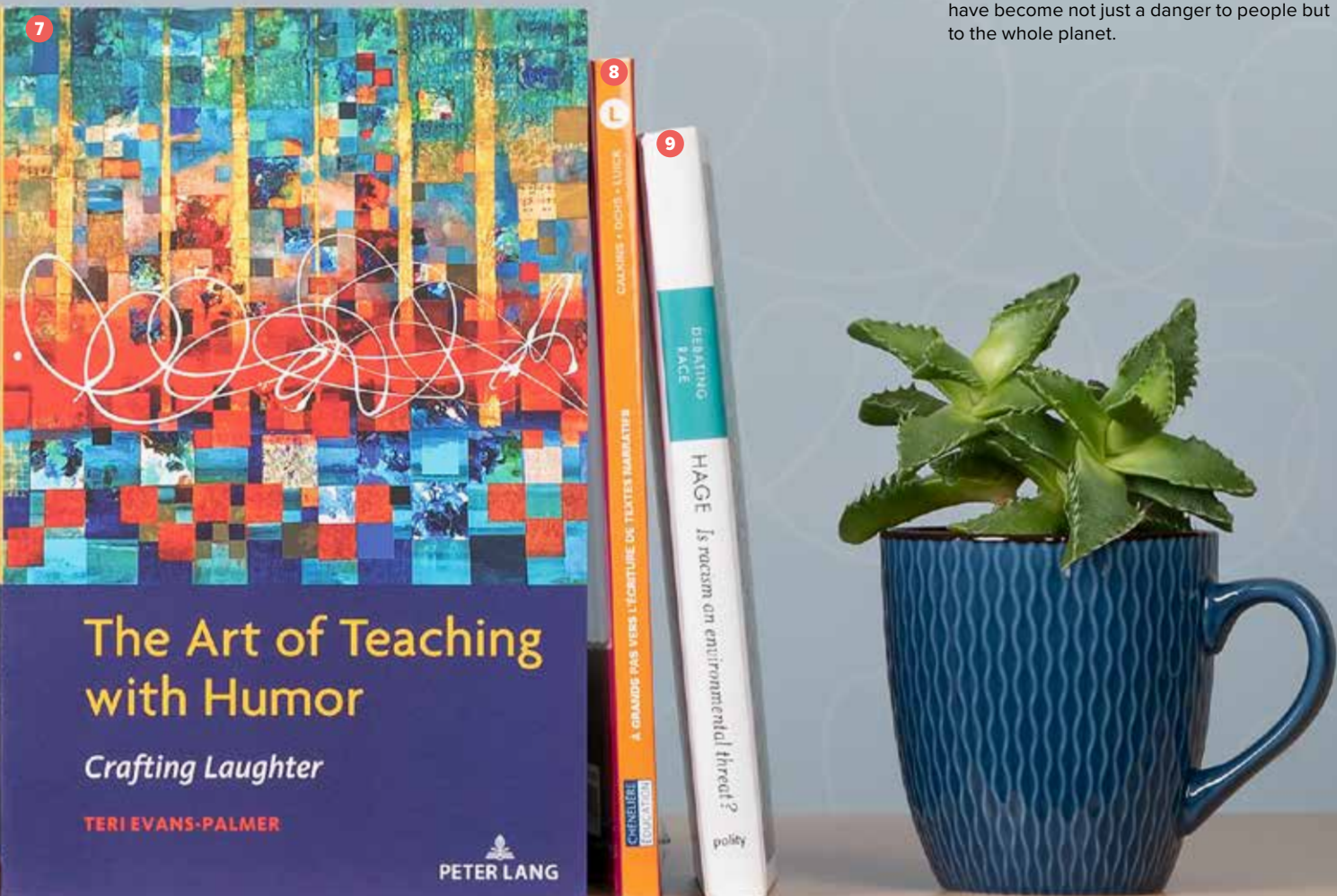


PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Jody Hertlein

The Power of Vulnerability by Brené Brown — one of her first works in her research and a powerful message of finding that team to carry you through.

Sheri Crowston

I'm almost done reading *Because of a Teacher* by George Couros. The stories by other educators are very meaningful. They remind me of my earliest years of teaching and are the tap on the shoulder to remind me that I, as an administrator, need to remember to support and encourage the new teachers on staff.

Michelle Gill Caird

The Night Watchman by Louise Erdrich. I'm recommending it for two reasons: 1) it's the 2021 Pulitzer Prize winner for fiction; and 2) it's written by an Indigenous woman and explores interesting and pertinent topics that are relevant to what we, as Canadians, are trying to reconcile.

What is your favourite Robert Munsch book to use in the classroom?

Lighthouse

This story teaches kids about grief and remembrance after a loved one passes away. I use it to teach voice in writing. Most students are familiar with Robert Munsch's funny stories. We discuss how word choice and sentence structure can impact the tone of your written work. It is beautifully written and would be a great gift for a child who loses a grandparent.

Karen Wieler

Stephanie's Ponytail

Some children are followers when they need to be their own unique person like Stephanie! Be you and love you for who you are!

Lana Pelletier

Mud Puddle

I love to discuss the dichotomy between Jule Ann's words complaining about the mud puddle and her delighted expressions as she's covered in mud in the illustrations. Plus it is so much fun to read!

Donnalyn Moreland

Paper Bag Princess

A great children's book to empower our young heroines.

Carmen Glossop

From Far Away

The book teaches love, compassion, the value of life and it's wonderful.

Garth Finlay

Boo!

It makes for a great story prompt and art project! They are all wonderful for discussion starters.

Pamela Glover

All of them

I keep *Munschworks* in my subbing bag, but my favourite is always *Mortimer* if we have a little extra time because my little brothers listened to a recording of it every night before bed and I love singing "Clang Rattle Bing Bang" the way the master sings it. And because I am a sub, the parents haven't yet tracked down who taught their kids that lovely bedtime song!

Tara Kwasney

Honouring an icon

Beloved Canadian children's author Robert Munsch announced in October that he's been diagnosed with dementia and, as a result, can no longer write.

Munsch has written more than 50 books that have sold tens of millions of copies worldwide. He's been open about his mental health and addiction struggles, stating on his website that he's worked hard to overcome his problems and has attended 12-step recovery meetings for more than 25 years.

Up, Up, Down

The kids find this book so funny when the parents get injured. The repetition of early sight words/sounds (up, ow, ou-ch) and opposites make this a great learning tool in kindergarten.

Julie Henderson



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

Announcing: The Launch of

“The Building Futures in Alberta” Program



A program of the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE) funded in part by Alberta Education to improve the financial literacy of Alberta youth



Alberta

The “**Building Futures in Alberta**” website - www.buildingfuturesinalberta.com - has a host of free resources to help teachers provide financial education for Alberta students.

Teachers will find lesson plans linked to Alberta curriculum learning outcomes from grade 7 through 12 and a new online, interactive self-instruction program “**FinLit 101**.”

“**Talk With Our Kids About Money Virtual Money Fair Challenge**”

provides an opportunity for students ages 8-14 to win up to \$5,000 while learning valuable lessons about money.

“**My Money, My Future Challenge**” provides an opportunity for students ages 15-18 to win up to \$10,000 as they create new resources to help other youth learn about money.

“The *Building Futures in Alberta*” program aims to provide fun, engaging, and participatory opportunities to learn about money and to help our youth build a successful financial future.



Funded in part by:



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CFEE IS A NON-PROFIT, NON-PARTISAN, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATION ABLE TO PROVIDE FREE RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS AND YOUTH WITH SUPPORT FROM PARTNERS SUCH AS CIBC, NATIONAL BANK, AND IG WEALTH MANAGEMENT.

CFEE

CANADIAN FOUNDATION FOR ECONOMIC EDUCATION
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Highlighting ATA programs and resources

Supporting collegial conflict resolution



ISTOCK ADAPTED

HEALTHY INTERACTIONS PROGRAM

- trains all staff in the jurisdiction in the communication and conflict-resolution skills they need to handle conflicts and other concerns;
- focuses on helping jurisdictions develop appropriate policy and protocols for addressing issues, and to organize campaigns to inform parents and the public about the program;
- includes training modules such as

Understanding Conflict in Schools, Communication Skills, The Healthy Interactions Process and An Ethos of Good Faith; and

- is available as a workshop entitled Understanding Conflict for active and associate members interested in improving their personal communication and conflict resolution skills, with a condensed, half-day version available to help individual schools target specific areas of conflict resolution.

To learn more about the Healthy Interactions program, contact tes@ata.ab.ca or 780 447 9400 (1 800 232 7208).

STAFF RELATIONS SERVICE

- provides active ATA members with a mechanism for resolving problems in staff relations that are negatively affecting the working environment and that have not been successfully resolved through informal approaches,
- uses a third-party certified mediator to facilitate a conflict resolution process with up to six staff members in conflict at a school,
- supports voluntary participation of staff members, and
- is available in English and French.

To initiate Staff Relations Service in your school, a school representative or principal can contact Teacher Employment Services at tes@ata.ab.ca or 780 447 9400 (1 800 232 7208).

GRANTS, AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The ATA Educational Trust Dr. B. T. Keeler Continuing Education Bursaries

Apply for a \$700 bursary to take an academic course related to your teaching responsibilities.

Deadline: May 1

Details on this and other grants, awards and scholarships are available on the ATA website: My ATA > Programs and Services > Grants, Awards and Scholarships.

Pleins feux sur les programmes et ressources de l'ATA

En appui à la résolution collégiale des conflits



LE PROGRAMME *HEALTHY INTERACTIONS* (OFFERT EN ANGLAIS SEULEMENT) :

- offre à tout le personnel du conseil scolaire une formation en matière de communication et de résolution de conflits centrée sur les compétences nécessaires pour gérer les conflits et autres situations difficiles;
- vise à aider les conseils scolaires à élaborer des politiques et protocoles adaptés aux problématiques, ainsi qu'à organiser des campagnes pour informer les parents et le public au sujet du programme;
- comprend des modules de formation portant sur les thèmes suivants : comprendre le conflit dans les écoles; les compétences en matière de communication; le processus entourant

les interactions saines et la mise en place d'une éthique fondée sur le principe de bonne foi;

- est offert, sous la forme d'un atelier intitulé *Understanding Conflict*, aux membres actifs et associés qui désirent renforcer leurs compétences personnelles en matière de communication et de résolution de conflits; un atelier condensé d'une demi-journée permettant aux écoles individuelles de cibler des aspects particuliers de la résolution de conflits est également offert.

Pour plus d'information au sujet du programme *Healthy Interactions*, écrivez à l'adresse tes@ata.ab.ca ou composez le 780 447 9400 (1 800 232 7208).

LE SERVICE DES RELATIONS DE TRAVAIL :

- propose aux membres actifs de l'ATA un système de résolution de problèmes liés aux relations de travail qui nuisent à l'environnement de travail et qui n'ont pu être résolus à l'aide de stratégies informelles;
- fait appel à un tiers, en l'occurrence un médiateur accrédité, afin de guider jusqu'à six membres du personnel d'une école dans le processus de résolution de conflit;
- encourage la participation volontaire des membres du personnel;
- est offert en anglais et en français.

Vous souhaitez que le Service des relations de travail vienne en aide à votre école? La direction d'école ou son représentant n'a qu'à contacter le secteur Emploi et bien-être : tes@ata.ab.ca ou 780 447 9400 (1 800 232 7208).

SUBVENTIONS ET BOURSES D'ÉTUDES

Bourses de formation continue Dr B.T. Keeler de l'ATA Educational Trust

Présentez une demande de bourse d'une valeur de 700 \$ pour suivre un cours universitaire en lien avec vos responsabilités d'enseignant.

Date limite : 1^{er} mai

Pour plus de renseignements à ce sujet, ainsi qu'au sujet d'autres subventions et bourses, consultez le site de l'ATA : [My ATA > Programs and Services > Grants, Awards and Scholarships](#).





Up where she belongs

Quest for identity helps Janis Weasel Bear make a positive difference for Indigenous learners

Sarah Moore

Freelance Contributor

IT'S AN UNSEASONABLY WARM NIGHT

in March 2007. Janis Weasel Bear is struggling to process the sudden death of her father, whom she only met when she was in her 20s, 12 years earlier.

Now she's sitting at a picnic table in his Pincher Creek backyard, contemplating his life — and her own. As stars spread across the sky, a conversation unfolds.

"I know that you're grieving right now, but I think this is time for you to be selfish," says a voice on her phone.

The voice belongs to a colleague who is encouraging Weasel Bear to apply for a liaison job that's just opened up.

"You really need to think about what's the next step for you," the voice says.

Weasel Bear is unsure. She's worried about being restrained by colonial systems that don't always respect marginalized people.

Growing up disconnected from her father, learning he was a residential school survivor, she's grappled with identity her whole life and wants to find somewhere she belongs.

But beneath her grief and uncertainty, there's excitement. This job could be an opportunity to uplift Indigenous voices and help her community.

"I really felt that because I had skills and passion and an education, then I needed to use that," she says.

'HOW ARE YOU DOING?'

That moment 15 years ago led Weasel Bear to her current role, well-being strategist for Indigenous education at the Calgary Board of Education (CBE). It's a career path she never foresaw, despite always feeling like a natural teacher, because her own experiences as a young student were hardly inspiring.

School was a refuge from home, where she experienced socio-economic barriers and challenging family dynamics, similar to what many of her students now encounter. So she withdrew and coasted along, quietly miserable at school and unsafe at home.

"I remember wishing that somebody would notice or ask me, just once, 'How are you doing?'" Weasel Bear says.

She also didn't feel a sense of belonging in the Western-Euro world that surrounded her while she was being raised by her non-Indigenous mother.

Weasel Bear knew her father was Indigenous. The word conjured up Hollywood stereotypes: the stoic native, the noble savage. Combined with stories about her father that were tarnished with negativity, this perception of her heritage left Weasel Bear feeling ashamed.

"I remember [...] not wanting to acknowledge my Indigeneity," she says. "But deep down inside, I was so curious."



Though a sense of belonging has not been easy for Weasel Bear to find, she has no doubt that she belongs in education, creating a better system for Indigenous learners and caring for students' well-being so they can be successful.

Her curiosity didn't subside with time, and in 1995 — now a young adult — Weasel Bear reached out to her father. He was part of the Piikani Nation of the Blackfoot Confederacy, and in him she found a confidant. Their relationship became very close as she finally embraced her Indigenous roots.

Their conversations shaped Weasel Bear's life even after he died in 2007. By then, she was the director of Indigenous programs and services for YMCA Calgary. Though she loved the nonprofit, it frequently required that she work evenings and weekends, and paid an income that didn't allow her to meet her financial goals, such as becoming a homeowner or travelling for pleasure.

Her dad had helped her realize that, while material rewards weren't her priority, her well-being was. So she went for the job opening at CBE and applied her passions to the role of Indigenous education liaison, determined to empower Indigenous voices and help people understand the legacy of residential schools.

UNLOCKING LEARNING

Several years later, Weasel Bear had the opportunity to get her education degree through a program that funded Indigenous professionals employed by school boards to become teachers. She didn't leap at the chance; the commitment needed to make a positive difference as a teacher was daunting.

"I didn't know if I had it, honestly," she says.

But she realized that an education degree would enable her to take on leadership roles at the CBE and create more change. With that in mind, Weasel Bear became a teacher in 2013. Since then, she's worked tirelessly to improve students' understanding — and confidence.

"It's not about how well they perform on the tests," she says. "It's about how they feel about their learning and how valued they feel."

She remembers a Grade 6 class that was nervous about using lockers at junior high, so they played relay games to practice

opening combination locks. One student, after many failed attempts, threw his lock down and stormed away.

Later, Weasel Bear sat with him to try again. He spun the dial. Nothing but frustration.

"One moment he's like, 'This is so dumb, I'll never figure this out,' and then click! It popped open," recalls Weasel Bear. "The look [...] was absolute, child-like joy on this face [...] that was always so street-smart and so tough."


* * *

These days, Weasel Bear isn't always teaching in a classroom. The CBE restructured its Indigenous education team in 2020, and Weasel Bear started a new role: well-being strategist.

She played a key part within a larger team in designing a draft of a well-being framework for Indigenous students. At Forest Lawn and Jack James high schools, which have two of the highest proportions of Indigenous students in Calgary, she puts theory into practice, improving staff development and supporting students with cultural teachings and land-based learning.

Her passion for the work is evident, says Nan Balkwill, Forest Lawn's Indigenous education strategist. "She comes in with just such generous, positive energy."

Though, for much of her life, a sense of belonging has not been easy for Weasel Bear to find, she has no doubt that she belongs in education, creating a better system for Indigenous learners and caring for students' well-being so they can be successful.

"That's my heart," she says. "That's what I [want to] do for the rest of my life." 

► **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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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.”

PODCASTS



Mountain Mysteries

Susan Denman, as well as some colleagues in the education field, lend their voices to the *Mountain Mysteries* podcast. Part of the Nels Nelson audio drama series, *Mountain Mysteries* is a fully cast audio drama that follows private investigator Jake DeBrunt as he solves Spruce Point's latest mysteries. It is suspenseful and humorous. Only

one season is out, but the team is busy working on season two!

Mountain Mysteries is available through a variety of podcast platforms, including Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

SUSAN DENMAN

Two Hills Mennonite School, Two Hills

<https://anchor.fm/nelsnelsonaudiodramas>

BUSINESS



Paisley and Polkadots Custom Cookies

What started as a fun hobby for Kristy Moore — providing cookies for friends and family — has blossomed into a steady business. Paisley and Polkadots Custom Cookies caters to weddings, baby showers, birthdays and graduations. For Kristy, after a busy week of teaching, sitting down

to decorate cookies is a great way to decompress and relax (plus she gets to eat all the broken ones!).

KRISTY MOORE

West Dalhousie School, Calgary

Instagram: @paisleyandpolkadotsyyc;

Facebook: @paisleyandpolkadotscookies

BOOKS



1st Legion of Utopia

The newest release from Calgary teacher James Davidge, this graphic novel centers on the first meeting of the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, the political party that, in the 1960s, pressured Canada to adopt universal health care. With art by Bob Prodor and Nick Johnson, and cover, lettering and design by Ryan Ferrier, this graphic novel both

captivates and educates! Also check out Davidge's other graphic novels on Alberta history: *The Duchess Ranch of Old John Ware* and *Thirteen Minutes*.

JAMES DAVIDGE

Willow Park School, Calgary

www.jamesdavidge.ca

VOLUNTEERING



Alberta Community Bat Program

As a volunteer with the Alberta Community Bat Program, Tracy Flach has engaged in public talks on bat conservation

and outreach, and has provided art, writing and editing for public education and bat conservation documents.

Tracy recently ventured to parts of Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan on field excursions to collect bat guano at bridge sites. This guano gets sent to labs for DNA species identification, helping to map out potentially important conservation areas for different species.

TRACY FLACH

Substitute teacher, Edmonton

www.albertabats.ca

► **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.

Some kids' people ...

We asked for your best tips on cultivating positive relationships with parents. Here's what you said.

Trish Hrytsak

My second principal called us into a short staff meeting before the first parent-teacher interviews of the year and told us to remember that not all parents had a good experience in school, and if they didn't, they're likely bringing that with them to interviews. I've never forgotten that and hold it close any time I talk to a parent.

Karen Sucie
Listen.

Justine Merritt

Every Friday I send out a "next week at a glance" so the parents know what we will be doing in class. I post pics and activities up there and the feedback has been really positive!

Andrea Riquielme

Remember that their child is not just another number on a class list or the 500th kid you've taught over the last few years. Their child is not a "low," "high" or "average"... know where they are at as learners and communicate that you care.

Rebecca Larkin

Focus on the positive rather than always the negative, especially with those students that struggle with school.

Nicole Mooney

I talk to them at the beginning of the year and find out how they want to communicate. I let them know that unless it is an emergency, I won't reply during evenings or weekends.

Julaine Guitton

Talk to them. Know their kids beyond just the grade they have in your class. Recognize that parenting is hard and that all parents are doing the very best they can given their circumstances. See this in them.

Laurie Dirsa

The first call needs to be positive!! We need to make sure we call home for positive reasons more often.

Megan Cross

I set my communication parameters early in the year. I turn off notifications or delete the app from my phone during school breaks so that I make sure I focus on my family and am not consumed by work!

Michelle Fatica

Regular communication is vital. No matter the platform, set your plan and communicate to families when to expect your communication and stick with it. I do a weekly email to get families ready for the week ahead. They love it and I have never had any complaints about lack of communication.

Rosalba Politi

I use old school methods ... the telephone and email. Let them know you are both on the same "team" with the same goal: success for their child.

Kathleen DeGeer

The cycle of trauma is real and many parents are dealing with things we may never understand. Always remember that they have the same goal — success for their kids — even if it's not always shown on the surface.

▶ See more at facebook.com/ABteachers.

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Well
played.

Eleven-year-old flutist Grace is a proud member of the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta. With funding from Edmonton Community Foundation, YONA-Sistema is helping young people living in priority neighborhoods learn social skills, receive support, succeed academically, and gain confidence through music.

Donations to ECF inspire hope, create opportunity and enhance the Edmonton lifestyle. We work with our donors to give, grow and transform. ecfoundation.org hits all the right notes.



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Talonbooks
New Release



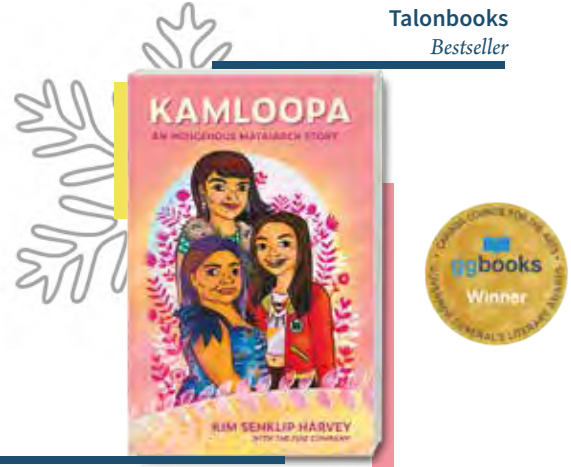
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MICHELLE BIEFER, HIGH RIVER

My view across from the lake that's next to our school as I drive in.



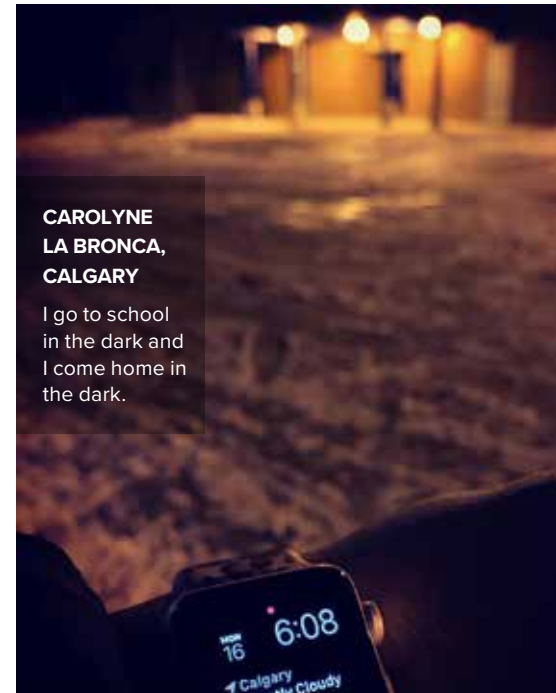
WENDY MULLIGAN, CANMORE

ANNE T. LONGSTAFF, MORINVILLE | Highway 28 north.



SHELLEY COMFORT, ST. PAUL

Morning sunrise as I arrive in the parking lot at school/work.



CAROLYNE LA BRONCA, CALGARY

I go to school in the dark and I come home in the dark.

Check out more photos in the digital version of the magazine: teachers.ab.ca > News and Info > ATA Magazine.



AMY JESSE | Heading home.



Foothills Brass
QUINTET

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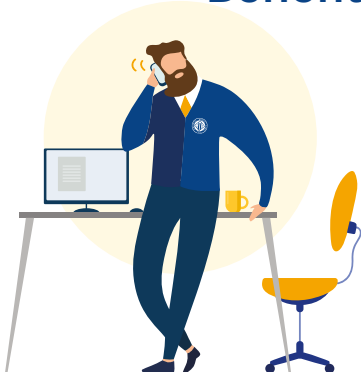
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f t in



EMILY HOWELL

Speech! Speech!

Uno! with words fosters understanding of language and story crafting

Emily Howell


ELA 7–8 and French 7–9,
Killarney Junior High, Edmonton

WHEN KICKING OFF my Grade 8's school year with a parts of speech unit, I adapted a familiar game to help students review and solidify their learning. I found that a great resource for reviewing the material was a game called *Parts Of Speech Uno*. The game is played exactly like *Uno!* but instead of numbers, the cards have words. Students have to try to match the part of speech *first* before the colour.

I found the game online. It came with five parts of speech but also some

blank cards, so I added the other three parts: interjections, prepositions and conjunctions.

Reviewing the parts of speech helped my students as they started creating their own Mad Libs (short fill-in-the-blank stories). We wrote a list of examples for each part so students could have a "cheat sheet." (In the photos you can see they were definitely used!)

After using the game to review the term vocabulary, students began working on a project to write their own Mad Lib and remove the eight parts of speech in funny spots. Once completed, we were able to do some of the Mad Libs together! 

“Reviewing the parts of speech helped my students as they started creating their own Mad Libs.”

- ▶ **Got an Idea?** Teacher Hacks is a place for colleagues to share their awesome ideas. If you have a hack that you'd like to share with your colleagues, please email a summary and photos to section editor Kim Clement at kim.clement@ata.ab.ca.

Perfect plan no match for nature

How a spectacular flop led to a long-lasting lesson

Savi Houldin

Newly-retired substitute teacher
Canyon Elementary and Matthew Halton High,
Pincher Creek



ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN SOLANO

THE CHALLENGE

How to be organized enough to plan for the best, and flexible enough to deal with the worst.

TEACHING JOBS WERE

scarce in 1987 when I graduated from university, so I spent the first part of my teaching career as a substitute. I moved back to my hometown, where I subbed in schools I had attended as a student. Former teachers thought I was still a student, and children I had babysat were shocked to see me at the front of the classroom after making comments about “messing with the sub.” The learning those first months was invaluable.

I was lucky to land a short-term position in February that stretched to the end of the school year. When the students realized I was going to be there until the end of the school year, we were able to settle in. We set up routines and expectations were clear and we got into “our groove.”

As I planned on moving in the fall, I asked for an evaluation to add to my portfolio. It was late April and our classroom had become a great place for teaching and learning. The principal, also

“ I had the perfect lesson plan, manipulatives ready, multi levels of questioning and was going to knock it out of the park.”

a parent of a student in the class, scheduled his visit for a Tuesday morning.

I had the perfect lesson plan, manipulatives ready, multi levels of questioning and was going to knock it out of the park. Everything was perfect!

Tuesday morning came and so did a huge dump of snow. Needless to say, the students were more interested in the snow outside and planning for their recess adventures than whatever was happening in the classroom, and I couldn’t get them back to the amazing lesson I had so carefully planned. My perfect lesson was a flop!

My principal was very understanding. We rescheduled for another day and I learned the importance of flexibility and good humour. That amazing lesson I had planned became one of my own best learning experiences. ^{ATA}

► **Got an idea?** Maybe you created a lesson that totally flopped or were on the receiving end of a lesson that was truly inspiring. Whatever your story, please summarize it in up to 300 words and email it to managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.

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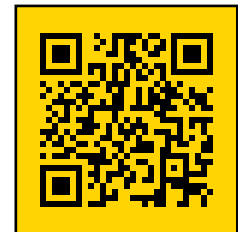
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