

SPRING 2022

THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION

ATA Magazine



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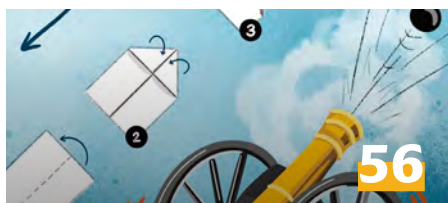
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Cover, pp. 18 – 30



Rachel Joan Wallis is a freelance editorial illustrator based in Hamilton, Ontario. She illustrates comforting nostalgic spaces and sounds in punchy, vibrant colour. Rachel gives credit to her high school art teacher, Karen Peperkorn, for helping her work find its voice.



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Lynn Farrugia is in her 36th year with Edmonton Public Schools and is currently a diversity education program coordinator. Her passion for working with English-language learners began at an inner-city school where more than 80 per cent of her students spoke a language other than English.



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Alix Scheetz is an education student at the University of Alberta. They hope to one day run a drama program to help students find their voice.

JOEL VIEHWEGER | p. 30



Joel Viehweger is a passionate guitarist, outdoorsman and educator who is pursuing a bachelor of education at the University of Calgary.

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
Rédactrice en chef de l'ATA Magazine

Arts are essential to education

AS MY SON WAS GROWING UP, watching him play sports was a great source of joy for me (even though I had to wrap myself up in sleeping bags at times). He was an athlete with heart and grit, and I loved watching him learn how to work as a member of a team, become a leader, and learn the many life lessons that come from sports. My daughter, on the other hand, hadn't found her sport at that time, but she learned the same important lessons through the arts. As a member of various choirs and theatrical productions, she found her voice, literally and figuratively. I will always be grateful for the fine staff at the Victoria School of the Arts who could see her potential as a quiet, somewhat shy student and artist.

I was also impressed by how her teachers didn't treat the arts as a separate "subject," but integrated it into learning in various subject areas. Though she is now in her late 20s, she can still sing the "photosynthesis song" she wrote when her biology teacher challenged them to create a product that would communicate the scientific process using any medium. When we value the arts and use them to leverage students' strengths, they are incredibly powerful.

These days, we hear much about making schools "efficient" and government talking points about producing "workers." Of course, education aims to have students engage in their communities as vital and productive citizens, but we cannot underestimate the value of the arts. Renowned Canadian artist Ken Danby said, "Art is a necessity—an essential part of our enlightenment process. We cannot, as a civilized society, regard ourselves as being enlightened without the arts."


As we move through these uncertain times, art may, in fact, be the thing that keeps some of our students grounded, learning and well. 

Les arts, un élément essentiel de l'éducation

À L'ÉPOQUE OÙ MON FILS GRANDISSAIT, le regarder faire du sport était pour moi une grande source de joie (même si je devais parfois m'emmitoufler dans des sacs de couchage). Comme athlète, il avait du cœur et du cran, et j'adorais voir comment il apprenait à travailler en équipe, s'affirmait comme leader et tirait de nombreuses leçons de vie de sa pratique sportive. Quant à ma fille, si elle n'avait pas encore découvert un sport qui la passionnait, elle a appris les mêmes importantes leçons à travers les arts. En tant que membre de différentes chorales et participante à une variété de productions théâtrales, elle s'est fait entendre, au sens propre comme au sens figuré. Je serai toujours reconnaissante envers le merveilleux personnel de la Victoria School of the Arts qui a reconnu le potentiel de cette élève et artiste réservée et un peu timide.

Ce qui m'a aussi impressionnée, c'est la façon dont ses enseignants faisaient des arts une partie intégrante de l'apprentissage dans plusieurs domaines, plutôt que d'en faire une « matière » distincte. Elle a beau être à la fin de la vingtaine, elle peut encore chanter la « chanson de la photosynthèse » qu'elle a écrite lorsque son enseignant de biologie leur a lancé le défi de créer un produit, peu importe le support, qui permettrait de communiquer ce processus scientifique. Lorsque nous valorisons les arts et nous en servons pour tirer parti des forces des élèves, ce sont des outils d'une puissance incroyable.

De nos jours, il est souvent question de rendre les écoles « efficaces ». Dans ses discours, le gouvernement parle de produire des « travailleurs ». Bien entendu, l'éducation compte parmi ses finalités la participation active des élèves au sein de leurs communautés à titre de citoyens dynamiques et productifs, mais nous ne pouvons sous-estimer l'importance des arts. L'artiste canadien de renom Ken Danby a affirmé : « L'art est une nécessité, une partie essentielle de notre processus d'éveil. Nous ne pouvons pas, en tant que société civilisée, considérer que nous sommes éclairés sans les arts. »

En cette période d'incertitude, il se pourrait en fait que ce soit l'art qui permet à certains de nos élèves de garder les pieds sur terre, de continuer à apprendre et de maintenir la santé. 

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 or
- 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

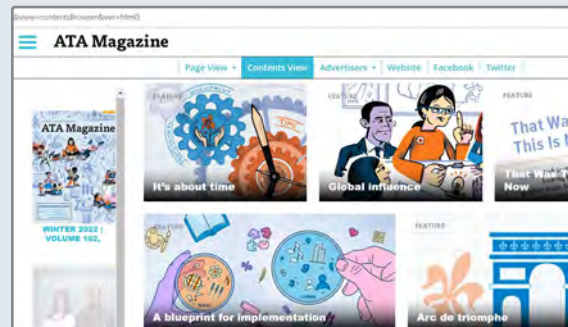
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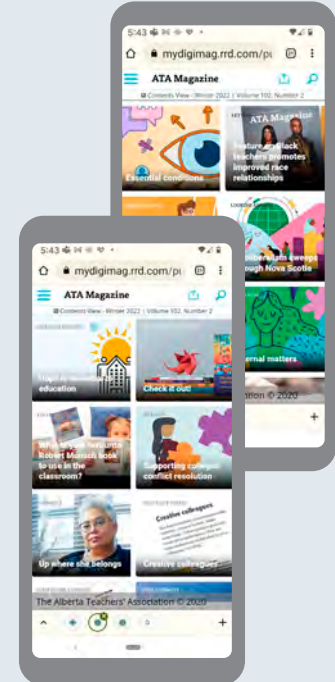
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You can access the digital version of the latest issue by visiting the ATA website.

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CATCH UP ON BACK ISSUES

Using the digital version is a good way to catch up on back issues of the *ATA Magazine*. Within Contents View, you'll see covers of previous issues stacked along the left side of the current issue.

PURPOSEFUL PRINTING

Research conducted by the magazine publishing industry shows that a significant proportion of readers still enjoy reading their favourite publications in printed hard copy. This preference, combined with knowledge about the dangers of excessive screen time, means that printed copies remain a mainstay of the *ATA Magazine*.

If your school receives too many or too few copies of the *ATA Magazine*, please inform your school representative. The number of copies received can be adjusted by emailing managing editor Cory Hare at cory.hare@ata.ab.ca.



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

FROM THE PRESIDENT MOT DU PRÉSIDENT

Jason Schilling


President, ATA
Président de l'ATA

The arts help our students shine

LIKE MANY STUDENTS, I was somewhat shy as a teenager. Academically, I did okay but didn't particularly seek the spotlight. In fact, in junior high and high school, I directed much of my energy toward trying to avoid standing out, for fear of drawing unwanted attention. It wasn't until university that I discovered my love for dramatic arts, so much so that I changed my major to drama education. I've never regretted it. It's through drama that I found the confidence to break out of my shell.

Throughout my career, I have been fortunate to work with students who also found the confidence to break out of their shells. One night, after a performance by my high school drama class, a colleague asked me how I was able to get a certain seemingly shy student to perform on stage, openly and without any inhibitions, as they had that night. My reply was that we all have that one place where we shine, and for this student, that one place was the stage.

Students will seek out the opportunities that school provides for them to grow their talent and love for a subject. Fine arts courses such as drama, art, music and dance provide important avenues for success for our students and ourselves. However, we can say the same for other courses, like CTS, physical education, options and what we refer to as the traditional core subjects. We all just need the opportunity.


As teachers and school leaders, we need to provide that place for our students to shine, to find their confidence in the things they love. A fully funded education system along with a modern and respectful curriculum are profoundly needed to help our students shine in their spotlight. 

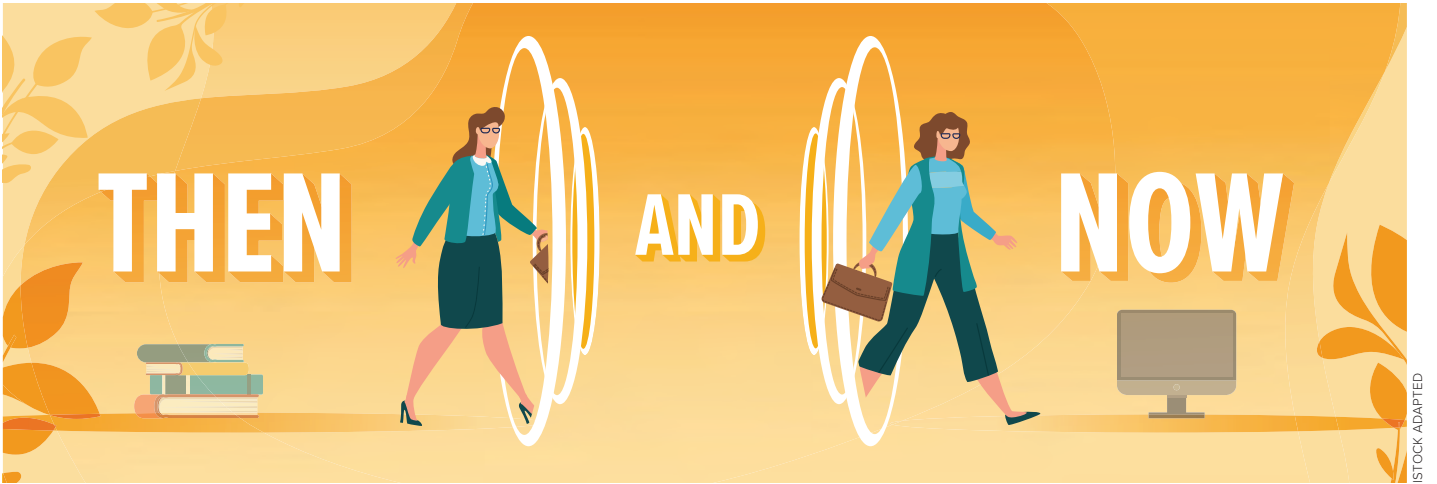
Les arts permettent à nos élèves de briller

COMME BEAUCOUP D'ÉLÈVES, j'étais un peu timide à l'adolescence. Je me débrouillais plutôt bien sur le plan scolaire, mais je n'ai jamais vraiment cherché à attirer l'attention. En fait, tout au long de ma scolarité au secondaire, je consacrais une grande partie de mon énergie à éviter de me faire remarquer, de peur d'attirer une attention non désirée. Ce n'est qu'à l'université que j'ai découvert mon amour pour l'art dramatique, à tel point que c'est devenu ma majeure dans ma formation à l'enseignement. Je ne l'ai jamais regretté puisque c'est grâce au théâtre que j'ai trouvé la confiance nécessaire pour sortir de ma coquille.

Tout au long de ma carrière, j'ai eu la chance de travailler avec des élèves qui, eux aussi, ont trouvé la confiance nécessaire pour sortir de leur coquille. Un soir, après une représentation donnée par ma classe d'art dramatique du secondaire, un collègue m'a demandé comment j'avais réussi à faire monter sur scène un certain élève apparemment timide, et à le faire jouer de bon cœur et libéré de toute inhibition, comme il l'avait fait ce soir-là. Je lui ai répondu que nous avons tous un espace privilégié où nous brillons, et pour cet élève, cet espace était la scène.

Les élèves sont souvent à la recherche d'activités offertes à l'école leur permettant de développer leur talent et leur amour pour une matière. Les beaux-arts tels que le théâtre, l'art, la musique et la danse sont des voies importantes menant au succès de nos élèves ou au nôtre. Bien entendu, nous pouvons en dire autant pour d'autres cours comme les ÉPT, l'éducation physique, les cours facultatifs ou ceux que nous appelons les matières principales. Il suffit que nous puissions saisir ces occasions.

En tant qu'enseignants et leaders scolaires, nous devons offrir à nos élèves la possibilité de briller et de prendre confiance en eux par le biais de ce qu'ils aiment faire. C'est pourquoi un système d'éducation entièrement financé comprenant un programme d'études moderne et respectueux est extrêmement nécessaire si nous voulons permettre à nos élèves de briller sous les projecteurs. 



ISTOCK ADAPTED

The constancy of self-reflection and professional growth—in various forms

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? The years you have to work with are 1920, 1939, 1987 and 2012.

1. DAILY CHALLENGE

Our daily challenge—or opportunity—should be to reflect on where we were, where we are and where we are headed. Someone once said: “Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.” I find this statement becomes truer with each passing day. Our world is changing rapidly, but for students, today is their reality, and we are the key to helping them (re)discover who they are and where and how they fit into the world.

Your guess: _____

2. BOOK CLUB

Professionalism also demands that we better ourselves academically. We find that the sub-local will again answer our demand. It can be made a book-review club or an open forum for discussion of classroom problems. The free interchange of opinions and advice cannot help but be of value. It gives an opportunity for self help. Past-president LaZerte’s course in the psychology and supervision of reading will be of great assistance in this aspect of sub-local work.


Your guess: _____

3. THE ELUSIVE PUMPSI

Lean, hungry PUMPSI (Pedagogic Upwardly Mobile Promotion-Seeking Individual) professionals look the desired part in greys, charcoals and dark blues. Stick with the civil servant look, but don’t overdo it: you are not in mourning. Your car should be like-wise conservative. No Porsches or Mercedes (too intimidating) and no bottom-of-the-line domestics, either. Try midsize Chevs or Pontiacs—just the ticket—nothing too presumptuous. Just a reminder: Hollywood mufflers, roadrunner horns and Boeing-type air scoops on the hood are definitely out. So are exotic paint jobs displaying Mad Max/Rambo/Conan themes. Get the idea? Good.

Your guess: _____

4. PROFESSIONAL SPIRIT

The exodus of teachers from our cities who are taking summer courses or post-graduate work at educational institutions in eastern Canada or in the United States augurs well for a revived professional spirit. It also shows clearly enough that most teachers are willing to enlarge their professional or academic attainments if they can find the means to do so. 

Your guess: _____

Answers: 1. “Every Day is a New Day: Helping Students Create Their New Normal.” Tracy Lyons, Summer 2012. 2. “Professional and the Sub-local.” Frank Edwards, September 1939. 3. “The Making of a PUMPSI (Pedagogic Upwardly Mobile Promotion-Seeking Individual).” Peter Clapp, November/December 1987. 4. Editor’s Notes [Teachers enrolled in summer courses]. July 1920.

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ILLUSTRATION BY MATEUSZ NAPIERALSKI

From innovation to corporatization

The evolution of charter schools in the United States

Lisa Everitt

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

AMERICAN HISTORIAN and scholar Diane Ravitch (2013) wrote that since “the publication in 1983 of a report called *A Nation at Risk*, federal and state policymakers have searched for policy levers with which to raise academic performance” (p. 10). The report indicated the American way of life and standards of living were threatened. However, *A Nation at Risk* also unfairly identified the cause of the decline as the failure of public schools and the teaching profession. Subsequently, school improvement became a national conversation, spawning many educational reforms. Among these “improvements” were charter schools.

WHAT ARE CHARTER SCHOOLS?

Ray Budde, a professor at the University of Massachusetts, and Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers, are generally thought of as the originators of charter schools. In 1988, in a speech to the National Press Club, Shanker noted that the reforms introduced following *A Nation at Risk* had positive as well as negative aspects. Shanker went on to say that the work of educational reform was not complete. He proposed a new and creative collaborative model where “the school district and the teacher union would develop a procedure that would encourage any group of six or more teachers to submit a proposal to create a new

school” (p. 12). These schools, sometimes a school within a school, would provide innovative solutions to locally identified issues within the school community. They would be free to experiment and identify solutions, be responsive to students and be based on a collegial model for the teaching profession. Shanker also stated that charter schools were not intended to compete with public schools; instead, they would inform the broader educational community.

While Shanker’s vision for charter schools involved students, teachers, teachers’ unions and school officials working together to help children learn and succeed, charter schools have been co-opted by those who believe that

schools should operate like businesses. Ravitch (2013) wrote that neither Budde nor Shanker ever “imagined a charter sector that was nearly 90 per cent non-union or one that in some states presented profit-making opportunities for entrepreneurs” (p. 13). One result of the American free-market approach to charter schools has been that “charter schools became managerial driven organizations rather than a community of professionals as originally envisioned” (Malin and Kerchner 2007, 889). Further, many charter school operators are not education professionals; they are well-connected corporate insiders (Ravitch 2013).

In 1991, Minnesota became the first state to pass legislation enabling charter schools and the first school opened there the next year. By the 2018/19 school year, there were roughly 7,400 charter schools constituting approximately eight per cent of the schools and seven per cent of all students registered in public schools (National Center for Education Statistics 2021). Levin (2018) writes that charter schools exist in 43 states and the District of Columbia and that they “have employed widely different requirements for the establishment, funding, waivers from existing state and local requirements, and sponsorship” (p. 197). Epple, Romano and Zimmer (2015) observe that three types of charter school operators have evolved in the US: education management organizations (EMOs), charter management organizations (CMOs) and free-standing charter schools. EMOs and CMOs “operate multiple schools, the key distinction being that the former is for-profit and the latter non-profit” (Epple, Romano and Zimmer 2015, 4).

The evolution of charter schools in the US has been a massive social experiment, conducted without any initial evidence that they would be an effective means to improve educational outcomes for students. Policymakers and charter operators proclaim that charter schools, which are fully funded using public dollars, are open to all students. However, the truth is less clear.

With the introduction of the *No Child Left Behind Act* by George W. Bush in 2001 and its punishing forms of accountability, including withheld funding for inadequate student test scores, questions emerged about how charter schools

recruit students. Welner (2021), along with fellow researcher Mommandi, investigated the application procedures and policies of charter schools and determined there were at least 13 ways that American charter schools operate more like private schools in terms of student access. Among the strategies charter schools use to recruit students are targeted advertising, conditional acceptance, aggressive disciplinary procedures and a requirement that parents volunteer. However, even with the skimming of students and families to the charter system, Epple, Romana and Zimmer (2015) observe that “taken as a whole, the evidence suggests that, accounting for differences in population served, charter schools are not, on average, producing student achievement gains any better than TPSs [traditional public schools]” (pp. 56–57).

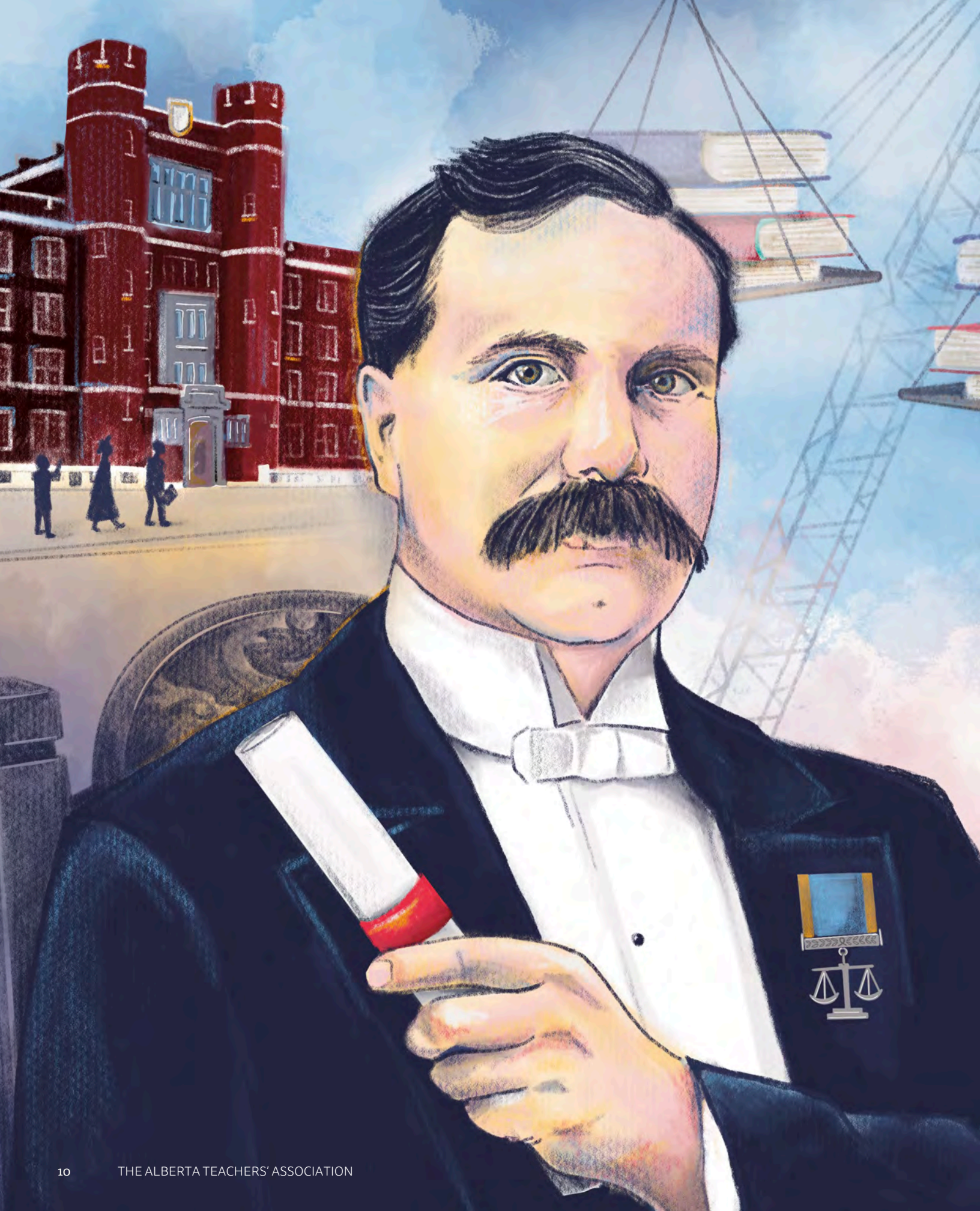
For 30 years, charter schools have operated in the US. The results for students are mixed: the results for teachers have been the imposition of a new managerialism and poor working conditions, including poor compensation; and the results for the public have been tainted by scandal. While it is true that Alberta’s charter school evolution has been much different than that of the US, the regulation around Alberta charter schools is loosening, and the current government has incentivized charter schools to expand by removing requirements to open and providing start-up funds. The charter school experiment in Alberta has been largely successful and much less scandalous than the American system, but that is due to the tight regulations that have shaped these schools. If charter schools in Alberta continue to exist, they must be well regulated and monitored to ensure they are good stewards of the public funding they receive and adopt principles of inclusion for all students. We need only peer across the border to see how badly some poorly regulated charter schools have robbed the public, students, families and teachers. ^{ATA}

“**Shanker’s vision for charter schools involved students, teachers, teachers’ unions and school officials working together to help children learn and succeed.**”

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Hedley Clarence Taylor: Relentless service helps wronged teachers

Maggie Shane

Archivist, ATA

HEDLEY CLARENCE TAYLOR WAS there at the beginning. The beginning of Edmonton. The beginning of free public schools. The beginning of the province of Alberta itself and its jurisdictional courts. The beginning of the Board of Reference.

Taylor was born in Sheffield, New Brunswick in 1864. Within a year of graduating law school, Taylor set out for the west. The year was 1892. The old Northwest Territories was still five years away from establishing a democratic legislature. The town of Edmonton had just been incorporated. Every aspect of civic life in the new town — from hospitals to policing — had yet to be established.

Taylor was dedicated to making an impact and, in his later career, presided over the first Board of Reference.

Establishing a board of reference process, whereby teachers can legally challenge unjustified dismissals, was an early objective of the Alberta Teachers' Association and a key protection of teachers' professional status. From 1926 to 1937, the Association witnessed the government's stop-and-start commitments to the Board of Reference. The teacher tenure process as we know it today was finally put in place by the Social Credit government of premier, minister of education and high school principal William Aberhart. Nevertheless, the first cases were heard by the board, including Taylor, in 1926.

Taylor was uniquely suited to adjudicate cases brought by teachers against their employing boards for wrongful dismissal. He was both a lawyer and a school trustee with ties to higher education, having served as chair and a trustee of

the Edmonton School Board, chair of the board of Alberta College, and a member of the University of Alberta's board of governors and senate.

The details of Taylor's life and career suggest a man possessed of a relentless service ethic, superb education and boundless energy. There hardly seems to be a community-building cause or concern to which he did not turn his considerable talents and leadership. A senior leader in his Freemason lodge, founding member of the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada, active in the McDougall United Church, founding member of the Edmonton Public Hospital—Taylor was everywhere.

Taylor's service to teachers, his community and his province are all but forgotten today. That his contemporaries held him in high esteem is obvious.

"Few men of Edmonton are more widely known throughout the Province and the Northwest than Hedley Clarence Taylor," wrote Archibald O. MacRae in *History of the Province of Alberta*, volume 2 (1912).

"He is a man of broad knowledge and scholarly attainments, of strong convictions and fearless in their defense, and withal gracious and considerate in advancing his views" (p. 887). ^{ATA}

Reference

MacRae, A.O. 1912. *History of the Province of Alberta*. Vol. 2. Calgary, AB: Western Canada History Co.

► **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.

Hedley Clarence Taylor

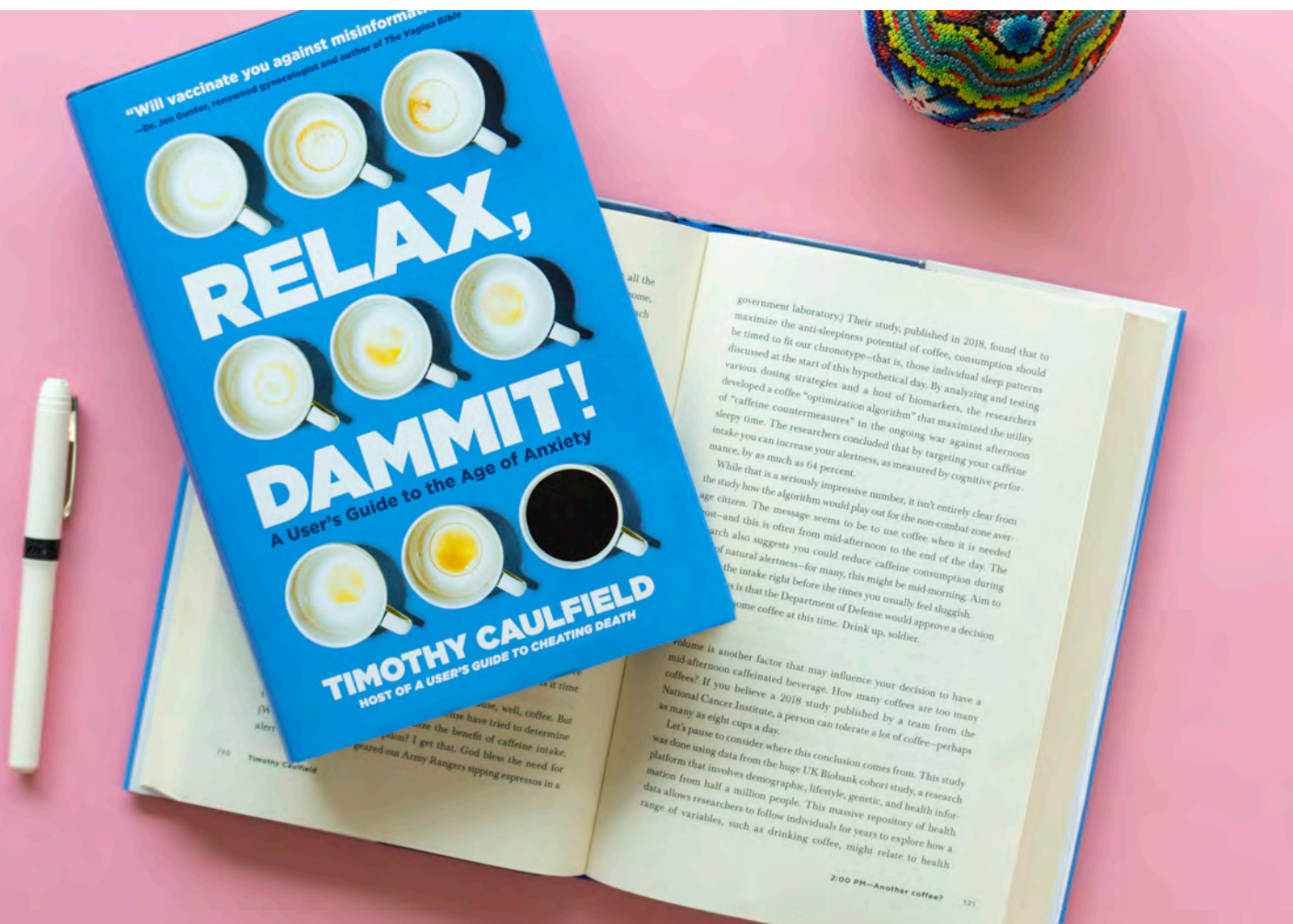
Founding member of the United Empire Loyalists Association of Canada

Founding member of the Edmonton Public Hospital

Trustee of Edmonton Public School Board

Member of Board of Reference

ILLUSTRATION BY ERIN SOLANO



Science says ...

New book by Timothy Caulfield provides guide to informed living

Shelley Svidal

Staff Writer, ATA Magazine

HOW MANY CUPS OF COFFEE is too many? Should the toilet seat be left up or down? Is multi-tasking all it's cracked up to be?

These and other burning questions are masterfully answered by Timothy Caulfield in *Relax, Dammit! A User's Guide to the Age of Anxiety*. Caulfield is a Canada research chair in health law and policy, a professor in the faculty of law and the school of public health, and research director of the Health Law Institute at the University of Alberta.

Like Caulfield's documentary series *A User's Guide to Cheating Death*, *Relax, Dammit!* explores the science behind the fads and fashions that make up our collective (un)scientific wisdom. Caulfield takes the reader through a typical day, from waking up, checking the phone and

stepping on the bathroom scale to flossing, cuddling and sleeping. In between, he encourages the reader to choose soap over hand sanitizer, paper towels over hand dryers and pasteurized milk over raw milk.

Caulfield is enthusiastic about allowing children to walk to school on their own, easier said than done given that not all children attend their neighbourhood school. The fear of stranger abduction is vastly overrated, he says.

“A 2015 position statement authored by 19 academic experts on outdoor play concluded that the chance of a child being abducted by a stranger is about one in 14 million. This makes the possibility so fantastically remote that, in terms of daily risks, it can be categorized as ‘simply not going to happen.’”

Caulfield doesn't mince words when it comes to email: “an evil, time-sucking, joy-killing grey blob that follows me everywhere I go.” Large email volume, he says, is connected to higher levels of work stress and lower levels of work satisfaction. “My suggestion is to, yep, relax,” he concludes. “Turn off your alerts, do your best to create a few blocks of email-free time, focus on the key emails, file away or delete as much as possible, and develop a strategy to simply say no.”

When it comes to exercise, Caulfield says there's nothing magical about 10,000 steps.

“This widely accepted and oft-repeated goal is completely arbitrary and, in fact, seems to have originated in a 1960s marketing campaign from Japan aimed



Relax, Dammit! A User's Guide to the Age of Anxiety

Timothy Caulfield
Published by Allen
Lane (2020).

“**If we can look past the popular culture noise, marketing pressures, and ideologically motivated spin, we can often find a science-informed, and less stressful, way forward.**”

— Caulfield, p. 3

at selling one of the world's first step counters,” he writes. “Of course, more steps per day are generally considered a very good thing. But there is no science associated with the 10,000 norm. It's just a catchy and easily remembered number.”

To support his conclusions, Caulfield relies on a plethora of research and on interviews with researchers. The research is meticulously documented at the end of his book. But the style is conversational, not academic, and the conclusions are solid. As a practical guide to daily life, this book is invaluable. ^{ATA}

Timothy Caulfield's relaxation strategies

1. Arm yourself with tools that will help you recognize misinformation.
2. Don't let fear rule your life.
3. Look to the body of evidence and recognize that science is often uncertain.
4. Don't get fooled by the illusion of difference.
5. Focus on the fundamentals and ignore the “wellness noise.”
6. Don't ignore the science that will help you relax!

Myths about mental illness

Myth: Mental illness is caused by a personal weakness.

Reality: A mental illness is not a character flaw. It is an illness that affects the brain and body and has nothing to do with being weak or lacking willpower.

Myth: If I seek help for a mental illness or a mental health problem, others might think I'm weak or even crazy.

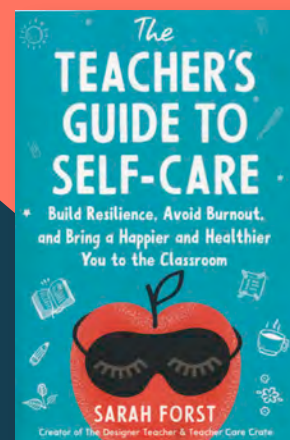
Reality: Seeking appropriate help is a sign of strength, not weakness. The best way to cope is to seek help, especially since early treatment can produce positive results.

Myth: People with mental illness never get better.

Reality: With the right kind of help, people with mental illnesses can go on to lead healthy, productive lives. While the illness may not go away, the symptoms associated with it can often be managed.

Adapted from Creating a Compassionate Classroom, available on the ATA website.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



The Teacher's Guide to Self-Care

Sarah Forst

Available through the ATA library.



From flash to fizzle

How to avoid getting lost in the sizzle of technology

Danny Maas

Executive Staff Officer, ATA

FOR THOSE WHO ENJOY experimenting with new technologies and employing them in their classrooms, it's often easy to get caught up in the excitement and novelty that new gadgets, gizmos and apps have to offer. But how can we as teachers avoid the trap of being drawn to the latest shiny thing and ensure that we're still doing our best to connect our students with the desired learning outcomes?

THREE QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF WHEN CONSIDERING USING A NEW TECHNOLOGY IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Are students learning with the technology?

Many technologies capture students' attention and interest, but student engagement with technology doesn't guarantee students are learning. Use tools

and platforms that amplify learning and reduce educational barriers. Create class routines for when and how students are to use technology, to avoid distractions and to stop using during instruction. Ensure that you are taking advantage of the features of the technology, layered with effective instructional practices, so that it's not "all sizzle and no steak."

Does this technology make my teaching life better?


Look for uses of technology that increase the effectiveness of your planning, teaching, communication and assessment. Digital lesson planning can allow you to copy common procedures, edit and extend lessons, and link to digital lesson materials. Many social media communities for educators offer shared lesson materials and ideas, bite-sized professional development and access to expert advice. Screen recording may offer an



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effective way to provide instruction and feedback to students. An effective use of technology improves the quality of your teaching life.

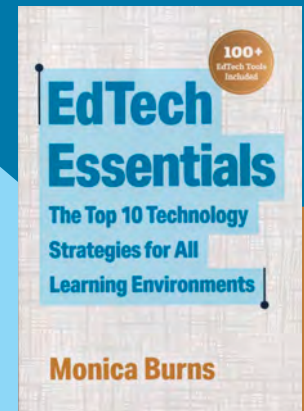
Are there privacy or security implications with this technology?

Look first to the digital tools and platforms supported by your school division. These are tools that have undergone the rigours of privacy impact assessments and where personal information, files and communication between students and teachers are securely captured and stored. Many tools allow sign-in with division accounts and connect to learning management tools. Be sure to instruct students on digital citizenship practices in using any technology-related tools. 

5 school technologies that are likely to endure beyond the pandemic

- 1 Digital meeting tools**
 Hybrid meetings of digital and in-person participation may facilitate reduced travel, easier access and time savings.
- 2 Web-based professional development**
 In-person professional development can be supplemented by on-demand or live digital PD for greater access and more content.
- 3 Learning management systems**
 Such tools may provide a way for learning materials to be organized and accessible and also serve as a communications medium.
- 4 Digital communication**
 We may have joyously returned to in-person school events, but digital communication between school and home offers convenience and access.
- 5 Student devices**
 The importance of access to learning materials and assistive technologies may require student devices.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



EdTech Essentials: The Top 10 Technology Strategies for All Learning Environments

Monica Burns

In an increasingly digital world, it is difficult to know what skills we should focus on teaching students. This book offers teachers a clear guide to the development of key skills along with recommendations of tools and projects teachers can use with students.

Available through the ATA library.

Enhance your classroom activities with maker kits

Here are some maker kits in the ATA library collection. Check the library's full listing on the ATA website.





ISTOCK ADAPTED

Handle with care

The importance of learning, respecting and uplifting names

Lynn Farrugia

Program Co-ordinator, Intercultural Services, Edmonton Public Schools

Melissa Purcell

Executive Staff Officer, Indigenous Education, ATA

NAMES CONTRIBUTE to and reflect identity.

Deepening an understanding of names can uncover and recover connections to other integral components of identity, such as family, geography, tradition, culture and language. To foster culturally responsive environments, teachers and school leaders have an important role in learning, respecting and uplifting names in our classrooms, schools and communities.

Support name reclamation

A resurgence of reclaiming and uplifting names for peoples, communities and places is spreading across the province and country. This movement recognizes the detrimental impacts on identity, kinship and sense of belonging of the imposition of Eurocentric names on Indigenous peoples or the forcible replacement of Indigenous names with numbers. Such actions were enforced through racist assimilation and colonization tactics, such as Canada’s Indian Residential Schools, the Eskimo Identification Tag System and Project Surname.

Demonstrating the inherent importance of names, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Calls to Action included a call to “enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents.”

In reclaiming their names, people reclaim and reconnect to their identity.

Learning, respecting and uplifting names becomes a form of advocacy and truth-seeking. With work being undertaken across Canada to bolster reclamation efforts, teachers and school leaders can also embrace reclaiming and honouring names.

Lead and learn by example

Taking the time to learn how to pronounce a student's name and supporting students in reclaiming their original name or preferred name are simple but crucial steps in ensuring that each and every student feels valued within your classroom and school community.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING TIPS

- **Honour** and value all names and identities.
- **Learn** to pronounce each student's name correctly. (When struggling to pronounce a student's name, remember that the student or their name is not the problem; rather, the issue lies in our ability to say the name. Try writing the name phonetically for yourself and practice it.)
- **Correct** others when they mispronounce your name.
- **Advocate** for others by correcting someone if you know they are pronouncing a name incorrectly.
- **Encourage** others to share their stories and experiences.
- **Promote** empathy and respect for cultural names and identities.
- **Advocate** for students to use their original and preferred name.
- **Be empowered** by and embrace your beautiful name!

While every culture's naming practices and systems differ significantly, the impact of a name on identity is intercultural and is deeply connected to interpersonal and community-based relationships. Learning the story behind names and finding connections to each other through names is an effective way we, as teachers and school leaders, can strengthen relationships and promote a sense of belonging. ^{ATA}

Suggested Reading

Milner, R. H. 2010. *Start Where You Are, But Don't Stay There: Understanding Diversity, Opportunity Gaps, and Teaching in Today's Classrooms*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Educational Press



IMAGE BY BARRY POTTLE

Eskimo Identification Tag System

From 1945 until the 1970s, Inuit were forced to register with the Canadian government and wear an identification tag around their neck or wrist at all times because the federal government did not understand Inuit naming systems, and the Inuit way of naming did not follow standard English spelling.

Project Surname

Inuit naming systems are complex and imbued with spiritual meaning. Traditionally, Inuit did not use surnames. Project Surname was an attempt by the Canadian government to replace the Eskimo tag system and force all Inuit to have a surname for legal purposes.

TIME TO LEARN, REFLECT AND CELEBRATE

May is Asian Heritage Month

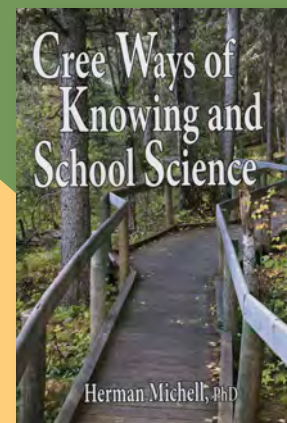
Did you know...? The first Chinese settlers in Canada — 50 artisans — arrived more than 200 years ago to help build a trading post in Nootka Sound, an inlet on the western coast of Vancouver Island. Chinese settlers first came to Alberta in 1885.

June is National Indigenous History Month

Why is National Indigenous Peoples Day held on June 21? This day is summer solstice — the longest day of the year and a traditional day of gathering, sharing and celebrating for many Indigenous peoples.

- For resources you can use in your classroom, check out the [ATA's Library Guides](#).

RECOMMENDED RESOURCE



Cree Ways of Knowing and School Science

Herman Michell, PhD

Available through the ATA library.



All four arts and arts for all

Brittany Harker Martin

Associate Professor, Werklund School of Education, University of Calgary

As a fine arts education specialist for nearly 25 years, I am often asked to provide the case for why all four arts should be required learning, as core subjects, at least in elementary school. This frustrates me because I know this is

already happening in most provinces across the country, while Alberta students only get music and visual art until Grade 6. While efforts for curricular reform have created a politically infused vortex of activity with little impact, in the meantime our programs are more than

30 years old (the oldest in the country) and our students are receiving less than kids in British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories.

My response? A poem.

Why Arts?

BY B.H. MARTIN



- why arts?* To which the **artists** said, We'll show you, come and see!
They answered in a painting that **CONNECTED** you and me.
- why arts?* To which the **DANCERS** said, We'll show you, come and learn!
They answered in such movements that it **stirred our souls** to yearn.
- why arts?* To which **musicians** said, We'll show you, come and hear!
They answered in such tender notes their **hearts** were in our ear.
- why arts?* To which **DIRECTORS** said, We'll show you, come and view!
They answered on a stage with tales familiar, yet new.
- why arts?* To which our **leaders** said, We'll show you what we'll do...
They answered by omitting them and nothing here came true.

HOW DOES THIS POEM MAKE YOU FEEL?

It was
meant to *evoke* . . . and
maybe **provoke** . . .

at least enough that you
want to **do something**
about the fact that kids in
Alberta are missing out.

The arts, like poetry,
evoke *feelings* and
provoke **responses** and
these reactions are not just in
our heads; they are **PHYSICAL**
SENSATIONS in our bodies.

In this way, the **arts** are
DIFFERENT from
other subjects because
they acknowledge our **felt**
lives. Each of the arts
provides *distinctive* ways to
ENCOUNTER, explore, express
and relate to lived experience.

To only offer a partial
arts education is to cut
off our students from the
many ways of **knowing**
that are essential for
human *connection* and
WELL-BEING.

The arts promote different ways of thinking and communicating

Each of the arts engages students in unique cognitive processes. In dance, we think through the body using movement and energy in space and time. In drama, we think through perspectives, using characters and contexts, imagination and performance. In music, we think through sound using instruments and voices, arrangements and improvisations. And in visual art we think through images using visual and tactile methods and forms.

Of course this is a simplistic view of each discipline, with the point being that each produces artworks that are actually the biproducts of unique cognitive processes. The late Elliot Eisner, a leading theorist in arts education and Stanford professor, identified four cognitive processes inherent in all arts:

1. *Inscription*: translating internal experience or consciousness into external forms
2. *Revision*: editing forms of representation through iterative, intuitive refinement
3. *Communication*: expressing thoughts, feelings and ideas through artistic literacies
4. *Surprise*: creating something with an openness to unexpected outcomes that emerge through esthetic attunedness

Each art empowers these processes, with its own system of symbols and social conventions. Some of this happens in language arts (it is language *arts* after all). In addition to that, offering all four arts as core subjects can empower interdisciplinary thinking as students learn to consider one topic through four more artistic languages. Over time, students are empowered to think in and communicate through diverse forms to acquire multiple literacies that enable communication beyond words.

If the arts are like languages, teaching some kids all four arts and others only two creates social disparity and potential for illiteracy.

The arts promote different ways for connection and well-being

Arts students put their ideas *out there* in the world, sometimes for themselves, but often to connect with others who may consider, relate and respond to the work. That connection draws on social mechanisms, including social empowerment, to draw in marginalized students through group dynamics in ways that motivate and engage.


The subjectivity of the arts often positions them as less rigorous than subjects with clear answers, but in this world where clarity is lacking and uncertainty abounds, the arts provide necessary social and behavioural mechanisms to navigate it.

With each performance or exhibit, students share something of themselves while, as audience members, they learn to appreciate the work of others. This comes from a long tradition of facilitating the arts by establishing a social safety net that builds trust, fosters teamwork and encourages risk-taking with respect for vulnerability.

The arts provide the mechanisms for students to manage uncertainty, develop confidence to express themselves, learn to critique respectfully, and be resilient to the opinions of others. This fosters a value for informed judgment based on critical and analytical thinking, and respect for difference of opinion. Through this, students can develop a sense of belonging built on a foundation that honours diversity, inclusion and well-being.

Conclusion

I hope, in this short time together, that I have made the case for teaching all four arts as core subjects, at least in elementary school. To get a more fulsome case, I encourage you to visit the online curricula of other provinces where this is already happening. There you will find robust rationales, resources, outcomes, and benefits that are informed by research, artists, best practices and educational specialists.

It's time for Alberta to join in. While most Canadian students are acquiring the multiple literacies of all four arts, our students are only getting bits and options. At some point, such disparity can only lead to disadvantage. 

References available upon request, including links to the numerous arts education curricula across the country that informed this work. Contact the author at bhmartin@ucalgary.ca.



The age of the multi-sensical

Cory Hare

Managing Editor, *ATA Magazine*

IN HIS 2005 BOOK, *A Whole New Mind*, author Daniel Pink argued that “right-brainers” will rule the world in the future after the last century was dominated by logical types like those who are adept at crunching numbers, crafting contracts and programming code. Though the left-brain/right-brain dichotomy has been questioned by some, it provides a means with which to examine how we value different ways of being in the world.

Western society, Pink stated, has been dominated “by a form of thinking and an approach to life that is narrowly reductive and deeply analytical.”

“The future belongs to a very different kind

of person with a very different kind of mind — creators and empathizers, pattern recognizers and meaning makers. These people — artists, inventors, designers, storytellers, caregivers, consolers, big picture thinkers — will now reap society’s richest rewards and share its greatest joys.”

As the world gets more complex and more global, capabilities related to logical analysis are no longer sufficient, Pink wrote. The future, he said, belongs to those who can harness the six senses: design, story, symphony, empathy, play and meaning. ^{ATA}

Daniel Pink's 6 senses

Design

Mere functionality is no longer sufficient in our products, services, experiences and lifestyles. Rather, it's important, both from an economic and personal perspective, that our creations focus on beauty and emotional engagement.

Symphony

Synthesis is another word that captures this idea of putting pieces together. It's about seeing the big picture, crossing boundaries and combining “disparate pieces into an arresting new whole.”

Play

Health and professional benefits await those who are able to avoid being serious all the time and embrace play elements such as laughter, light-heartedness, games and humour.

Story

As we're bombarded by information and data, the key to persuasion, communication and self-understanding is the ability to fashion a compelling narrative.

Empathy

Logic isn't enough. Those who thrive will do so because they are able to understand and care for others and forge relationships.

Meaning

As their material needs are met, human beings are free to “pursue more significant desires: purpose, transcendence and spiritual fulfillment.”

Dance is a form of artistic expression.

You've got to **move it, move it!**

The art of dance in less than 300 words

Yvette Timtim-Ramirez

Dance Representative,
ATA Fine Arts Council

What is dance?

Dance is a performance-based art form using the body and energy to execute choreographed or improvised movement typically set to music. Dance can be found in many different cultures and has a deep history. People dance for many reasons. Ceremonial, liturgical and worship dances tell stories, share heritage and culture, and express beliefs and prayer. Recreational dance includes social dance, education and dance training. Dance can be used as form of exercise to encourage physical fitness. Finally, dance is a form of artistic expression that may be performed by professional dancers in a theatre or some type of performance setting.

What are the main genres or styles that exist within dance?


There are many styles and genres that exist in dance. Cultural, liturgical, ballet, jazz, tap, hip hop, ballroom, contemporary and modern are examples of some of the many dance styles and genres. Within some of these dance genres, there exist further subgenres or types. For example, the waltz, tango, foxtrot and samba can be found within ballroom dance.

What skills are required to excel at dance?

In a school-based program, students may have various levels of dance skills, experience or formal dance training. Teachers can differentiate learning based on the needs of individual or groups of students. Commitment to practicing technique, the ability to take risks, set goals and

creative thinking are some basic skills that are important for students to aid in the development of overall dance abilities.

What are the benefits of dancing?

Dance is a wonderful art form that offers many benefits. Dance increases physical health, muscular strength, flexibility, social and cognitive development, collaboration and social skill development. Dance is also an opportunity for students to express themselves creatively and encourages an appreciation of the art form itself. Dance in its most basic form can be seen as a way to release stress, refocus, re-energize and express your feelings about a song ... it can be as simple as "let's get up and move!" 



The fine arts comprise four main disciplines: visual art, dance, drama and music. These can be subdivided into the visual arts, which express feelings, emotions, opinions or narratives through visual means; and the performing arts, which express opinions, emotions, feelings or narratives through means of performance.



Yvette

TIMTIM-RAMIREZ

~~~~~  
Dance 7, 8, 9, 15, 25, 35

Religious studies 7, 8, 9, 15, 25

~~~~~  
Louis St. Laurent Catholic Junior/Senior
High School Edmonton

~~~~~  
Years teaching: 20

~~~~~  
Main artistic discipline:
Dance
~~~~~

### Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?

My parents inspired me to become a teacher. Both my mother and father immigrated to Canada from the Philippines, and they instilled in me the importance of education. I also had wonderful elementary school teachers that I remember fondly and think about often.

### What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Teaching is an extremely rewarding profession. I have taught most grade levels, and working with both younger and older students has shown me that the awe of learning and discovery is exciting and inspirational at all ages. Knowing that I was a small part of my students' growth, successes and journeys as learners means a lot.

### Who is your favourite dancer and why?

Tap was always my favourite dance style; I loved the rhythm my tap shoes made and the way I could manipulate or echo the beat of a song through my feet. Fred Astaire, Gene Kelly, Sammy Davis Jr., Gregory Hines and Savion Glover are tap dancers that I enjoy watching. They have their own unique styles but make dance look easy.

### What work of art has inspired you the most?

Musicals, such as *West Side Story*, *The King and I*, *Chicago* and *A Chorus Line*, inspire me. Telling a story through song and dance is magical, creative and entertaining. Traditional ballets, such as *Swan Lake* and *The Nutcracker*, are also inspiring. The dancers are physically strong and muscular but move in such a beautiful and graceful way across the stage.

### What do you consider your greatest accomplishment as an artist?

I started training in dance at the age of three. The amount of training and experience I have gained over many years is something I am proud of. The opportunity to apply that to my career is a great accomplishment as well. I discovered something I love and have a passion for at a young age; I get to share that passion with my students, and hopefully inspire them, every day.

### What aspect of being an artist brings you the most joy?

As a dancer, I really enjoy performing and sharing my passion for dance with others. It is also rewarding knowing that I worked hard to prepare, practice and train for that performance. As a choreographer and teacher, I get a lot of joy from seeing my dancers thrive, learn and grow into their own inner artists. <sup>ATA</sup>

# Not enough with the drama, already

Confidence and self-expression  
come from celebrating mistakes

## Molly Danko

Drama Representative,  
ATA Fine Arts Council

### What is drama?

When I think of drama, I think of putting on plays with my students and playing icebreaker games. I think of journal entries and reflections on plays, movies, songs and our process of creation. I think of building puppets, sets and designing costumes. I'm reminded of a community that builds each other up, and I hear a chorus of yesses—eager voices with a willingness to try something new, or scary or silly.

When I think of drama, I think of a moment when you get to be who you are and express yourself in a way that feels true. In its simplest form, drama is a play, or the practice of creating theatre. It can range from producing a play to telling a story through movement, to improvising a scene, to creating a poem, to devising your own performance. It is often performative, but can also be a wonderful outlet to express who you are or what you are feeling.

### What are the main genres or styles that exist within drama?

The drama program of studies is broken down into five main disciplines:

1. Acting/improvisation
2. Speech
3. Movement
4. Theatre studies
5. Technical theatre  
(Directing and playwriting are added in high school.)

This highlights the variety and depth of drama and how so many can connect to different facets of it.

Movement and physical theatre often give students the opportunity to warm up to the idea of theatre and performing in a low-stakes environment — no line memorization, no wondering how they sound, or if they're "acting well." From there we can explore so many different forms of theatre, including text work with poetry, scenes and monologues; designing sets and costume pieces; building puppets; learning stage combat techniques; creating silent films; analyzing plays; breaking down scripts; writing scenes and even directing small plays.

Theatre, like any art form, has evolved over time, bringing about different forms and styles. Commedia dell'arte, epic theatre, theatre of the oppressed, physical theatre — these are just a few! Modern theatre today has influences from history as well as various cultures around the world. Japanese Noh, Nigerian Yoruba Theatre, Indian Kathakali and Filipino Sarsuwela are unique theatre practices that typically involve stories of culture, singing, dancing, and extravagant costumes, make-up, puppets and/or masks.

### What skills are required to excel at drama?

The most valuable and necessary skill to have in drama is a willingness to try. Drama is an adaptable discipline that can meet students where they are, as long as they are willing to try their best. For some, that means sitting in the circle while the class plays a game, or performing for a small group of people instead of a large audience.


Since theatre is a community that comes together to create, another important skill to have is being able to work collaboratively as a team. Whether you're working on a play with actors, directors, technicians, etc., or with a Grade 7 drama class trying something new, you need to collaborate and encourage each other to do your best. To be successful in theatre,

you also need to be empathetic, creative, disciplined, and it doesn't hurt to have some improvisation skills!

### What are the benefits of participating in drama?

It is often thought that the only people who should participate in the arts are those who aspire to have a career in them. However, drama, like many of the arts, teaches us an abundance of important skills that help in various aspects of life.

Drama teaches you to think on your feet, and can give you confidence in yourself and your abilities. Through drama you will also improve your public speaking and communication skills. If you've been in drama before, it is likely you have heard the phrase "fail forward" or "celebrate your mistakes." Those are such valuable lessons we can take away from theatre as it helps us to learn that failure and making mistakes are parts of life, and what really matters is how we move forward and what we learn from our mistakes.

We live in a world where it often feels like everything we do has to be perfect the first time we do it. Drama helps us to be okay with creating and doing for the sake of enjoyment, fulfillment and expression. 





# Molly DANKO

Senior high special education program  
Louis St. Laurent Catholic  
Junior/Senior High School, Edmonton

Years teaching: 6

Main artistic discipline:  
Drama and music



## Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?

Theatre, believe it or not! I was an incredibly shy kid in school until I started taking drama. As I neared the end of high school and looked back on how I'd grown over those three years, I realized that theatre helped me to be confident in who I was and understand myself in ways I didn't before. I realized the value the arts had in my life, and I wanted to continue creating opportunities in the arts for kids.

## If you hadn't chosen teaching as a profession, what would you be?

As a kid, I desperately wanted to be an interior designer ... or a dentist! If I had to choose now, I'd be interested in being a speech language pathologist or an urban/community planner.

## What do you enjoy most about teaching?

I love that moment when kids "get it!" I love watching them grow throughout the year and getting to know them. I love helping students understand the world around them and navigate the future as responsible citizens. And most of all, I love seeing the power they

have as unique individuals and being confident in the fact that they are our future.

## Who is your favourite artist in your discipline and why?

Audra McDonald, Cynthia Erivo and Celia Keenan-Bolger are a few of my favourite stage actors. They all have so much depth and honesty in their performances and are incredible to watch.

## What work of art has inspired you the most?

There are far too many to choose from! But I recently saw a show, *The Garneau Block*, at Edmonton's Citadel Theatre, and was inspired by the metaphor throughout about putting in the work to "clean up" our communities together and make our world a better place.

## What is the greatest life lesson you learned from your artistic endeavours?

To "fail forward," to pick myself back up, no matter what happens, and learn from my experiences and grow as I move forward ... and that there is always something to learn from someone around you. ATA

*Drama teaches you to think on your feet.*



# We are all musical beings

Interacting with others is  
the essence of being “on key”

## Kim Friesen Wiens

Member, ATA Fine Arts Council

### What is music?

What do you think about when you consider this question: what is music? Would you consider it to be the rustling of leaves in the trees or the blast of a car horn? What about spoken-word poetry, hip hop, country or electronica? Music involves sounds or the lack of sounds brought together for an individual or collective experience.

Across the province, the variety of musical experiences is growing. It is awe-inspiring to see the many ways there are to engage with music. How it happens and what form it takes vary from place to place and from day to day. Engaging in music can be an individual or collaborative experience. These experiences can include listening, singing, playing instruments, composing, moving to music and directing musical programs. Families, communities, schools, and amateur and professional musicians are all part of the living music culture found across our province.

### What are the main musical genres or styles?

When we think about various styles of music, we need to consider music from places all around the world and, specifically, local Indigenous

music. We should also include the many styles of popular, jazz, country, hip hop, electronic, folk and art music.

Descriptors in front of the word “music” can be helpful to prevent assumptions about the kind of music being discussed. It is extremely important to be clear to prevent prioritizing one kind of music over another. If I was referring to folk music or art music, I would make sure to describe it specifically as, for example, Chinese folk music or Arabic art music.

### What skills are required to excel at music?

It's widely assumed that to engage in musical activities, a person needs a specific skill set. You do not need any special skills to be musical, although there are many that are useful to have. The most useful skill for learning music is being relational, that is, interacting with other people.


Listening is another useful skill. To make music, first you need to learn to listen. What do you hear in the music? Does it sound correct? What did you learn from listening to another person sing or play? Most music from around the world is taught orally, and to learn this way, a person must engage with a culture bearer or community member.

Another important skill is a willingness to try to not get discouraged, because mistakes happen. Even professional musicians make mistakes, but mistakes can only happen, and you can only learn from them, if you are first willing to try.

### What are the benefits of participating in music?

Throughout the pandemic, there have been stories from all over the world about people turning to music as an outlet to reduce stress, to engage in joyful activities and to be part of a community of music makers even while socially distanced. The organic way that people have turned to music in their own homes, using pots and pans, bowls of water, their voices and other found instruments is a testament to the power of music.

Participating in musical activities offers many benefits. It can help with learning and recalling information more effectively, decreasing anxiety and acquiring languages. Making music with others can develop cooperation, group-work and problem-solving skills. Learning how to deal with mistakes in productive ways is also a significant benefit.

Maybe most significant is that music is accessible to everyone. All people can engage in musical activities. There is no gatekeeper. We are all musical beings and we can all make music, together or apart. 

*All people can engage in musical activities.*





# Kim FRIESEN WIENS

Elementary music  
Music director, Night of Music  
Edmonton Public Schools

Years teaching: 21

Main artistic discipline:  
Music



## Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?

I come from a family of teachers. I was inspired to become a teacher by my father. The stories he shared around our dinner table filled me with such joy. I was inspired to teach music from my grandmother. She patiently taught me music theory, then harmony and music history. She took an ornery teenager (yes, I was filled with much teenage angst) and quietly grew this love of music theory and harmony within me.

## What do you enjoy most about teaching?

My students! I just love working with students. I thrive when I am able to engage with my students, learning more about who they are and the aspects of their lives that we don't always get to see in school. I also enjoy the challenge of finding ways for students to feel connected with the musical activities that we do in class. When students challenge me on the activities or music that we use, I just love to see students taking ownership over their learning.

## What is the greatest life lesson you learned from your artistic endeavours?

Perseverance. Because of my music education, I have learned the power of persistence, repetition and what it means to practice a single phrase over and over. I have learned to not be discouraged when it seems that I have taken a step backwards, and that, in fact, that backwards step will propel me forward.

## What do you consider your greatest accomplishment as an artist?

I had the opportunity to learn the erhu (a Chinese two-stringed instrument) in China along with cipher notation. I consider this my greatest accomplishment as it opened my eyes to the fact that there is so much music outside of the Western art music tradition.

## What aspect of being an artist brings you the most joy?

I love that I can find a song or piece of music for any occasion or any topic (and many of them I know without having to use Google!). I love using this massive catalogue of music to help me work through my various moods. Alone or together with a group, I always am surrounded by those pieces to fill the moment as needed.

## What saying or adage do you live by?

I love the poem "Ode" by Arthur O'Shaughnessy and particularly the first two lines: "We are the music makers, / and we are the dreamers of dreams." These lines guide my work with children and with the ways I make music in my own life. ATA



*The visual arts reveal who we are.*

# What are you **looking at?**

Visual arts blend discovery,  
release and expression

## **Tamera Olsen**

Executive Member,  
ATA Fine Arts Council

### **What are the visual arts?**

The visual arts are a creative expression that can be appreciated by viewing. They may be produced for esthetic beauty, such as fine art with no functional purpose; decoration, think arts and crafts; and function, such as the applied arts, which also have an esthetic appeal.

We decorate our spaces with items that are personally pleasing, that have a purpose, that we form a connection with, and that may provoke an emotional response. These can take the form of wall hangings, that special coffee mug and the woven throw resting on your sofa. We intentionally surround ourselves with photographs, mementos, the artwork of our children, and in doing so, make a house a home.

The visual arts bring comfort and joy to an environment and reveal who we are.

### **What are the main genres or styles that exist in this art form?**

The visual arts encompass a broad range of expressive mediums and include painting, printmaking, drawing, sculpture, conceptual art, ceramics, photography, filmmaking, video, design, architecture, textiles and crafts; however, this is not an exhaustive list. Within each of these genres lives a range of opportunities for expression and creativity. The many varieties of painting mediums require not only an

abundance of different work surfaces but also technical diversity. Ceramics, as an applied design, includes pottery, tile and sculpture. It can be both for everyday use such as stoneware, and for esthetic purposes such as that dinosaur sculpture from junior high school.

Smartphone cameras give everyone the opportunity to express their values and personality. While digital cameras capture imagery one way, rolling your own black and white film generates something completely different. We even define places by their art and architecture. When we experience a European cathedral or the urban planning of Canadian architect Arthur Erickson, we can appreciate the esthetic appeal. Iconic architecture characterizes a people and their values, is used to promote tourism and makes history accessible.

### **What skills are required to excel at the visual arts?**

The development of disciplinary vocabulary — the language of art — is essential. How does art communicate? Just as artists use mark making and gestural qualities to express their emotions about something they have seen or experienced, disciplinary literacy supports the student's ability to develop a positive analysis of their own and other's works, and to "make and defend qualitative judgments," as stated in the art curriculum that Alberta created in 1986.

A shared language is also vital for students to understand how artists work. What conditions, attitudes and behaviours support creativity? As modeled in classroom discussions, questioning is integral to the process of teaching and learning art and offers students a way to develop an


understanding of their motivation as artists.

To live the life of an artist, we must question and be able to defend our choices. Through this journey, growth occurs, maturity develops and technical mastery is achieved. As we foster inquiry with our students, they can authentically encounter their own truths for a deeply personal and meaningful experience.

### **What are the benefits of participating in the visual arts?**

Creating visual art helps us learn to reflect, recognize our personal identity and become empowered to communicate. To make something requires imagination and is rewarding and enriching. Using our imagination fosters mindfulness for social emotional development and supports overall wellness.

When we look at art from around the world, we become aware of social justice issues, learn about cultures and traditions, and develop compassion. Art appreciation can then be realized in other environments from the classroom to museums, to public art along laneways near a favourite spot, and can offer a lifetime of enjoyment.

It is important to develop a love for the arts as patrons, to not only enrich our lives and that of our community, but to make meaning in a world of complexity and polarization, and to connect us to others as we realize empathy as a core value. As art teachers reveal the intention of a project — where we want to go — and allow for divergence along the way, our students develop their own connections. The arts activities we engage in support conceptualization and discovery. They permit a physical release and expression that make the arts alive. 





# Tamera OLSEN

Fine visual arts  
 English language arts  
 Humanities  
 Career and technology foundations  
 Queen Elizabeth High School, Calgary

Years teaching: 3.5

Main artistic discipline:  
 Painting and drawing,  
 printmaking, photography

### Who or what inspired you to be a teacher?

My passion for the artistic process and desire to share this passion with others.

### What do you enjoy most about teaching?

Relationships.

### Who is your favourite artist in your discipline and why?

It is hard to select just one, but if I had to, Henri Matisse, for his colour, adventure, and the way he saw and represented others in his work. My favourite photo of him is the one where he has a 10-foot pole with a piece of charcoal on the end. To wield this medium, his whole body had to commit to every stroke. I must also mention Mary Cassatt, for, in a world of men, her tender images challenged traditional roles in society. She realized an audience and was one of the first women recognized in the Paris Salon.

### What work of art has inspired you the most?

*La Pietà* by Michelangelo. I saw this sculpture when I traveled on an art quest after obtaining my BFA. The Vatican was quiet, and I'd just come from the Sistine Chapel, where I was able to lie down on top of a table

to marvel at the ceiling (I know!). My emotions were elevated and when I stood before the gauze-like marble of *La Pietà*, gazing into the face of Mary and feeling the weight of the body in her arms, so fragile and vulnerable, I wept. That moment is real for me today.


### What is the greatest life lesson you learned from your artistic endeavours?

Patience.

### What aspect of being an artist brings you the most joy?

Sparking the imaginations of others to recognize and appreciate their personal expression.

### What saying or adage do you live by?

Really two, from my father: Everything in moderation, and you're as young as you feel. 



# Perspectives

FROM FORMER STUDENTS



## Ready ... set ... act?

**Alix Scheetz**

Guest Contributor

**GROWING UP**, I was always very competitive. Whether it was play or sport, I needed to be the best. The foundation of this childhood ideology was that, for some odd reason, I felt like I had to win to have fun. Naturally, as many children realize, I was not the best at everything I did. Unfortunately, this knowledge led me to feel as if I had to take everything in life seriously because, for me, it was.

Coming into junior high, it was only natural that I, a dancer, would want to take a drama class — I loved the spotlight, and I loved to perform! Drama was my opportunity to shine, right? But as I soon came to realize, I wasn't nearly as funny as the other kids — I was taking myself way too seriously.

It wasn't until I began to learn about the tenets of improv that I truly started to understand how to express myself freely with confidence. I began to realize that, in life, sometimes the gut feeling is the best one. I began to trust my instincts, and slowly but surely, I understood that life is nothing more than a collection of experiences that are no more "serious" than my own.

I am so grateful for how drama education has shaped my understanding of the world. Through acts of fearless intuition, I was able to comprehend that there's a difference between taking life seriously and fully committing to an activity out of passion and joy. Drama has helped me understand that I love art because of the way it makes me feel, not because I love the way I affect others. I began to learn from my mistakes instead of beating myself up for them. <sup>ATA</sup>

## Art is smart

**Joel Viehweger**

Guest Contributor

**I PULL UP THE HOOD** of my Led Zeppelin sweatshirt, carefully obscuring the headphones that still play quietly in my ears. Nothing, not even Ms. Partridge's very important math problem, can keep me from solving the sonic mystery of a Jimi Hendrix guitar solo. Ms. Partridge asks the class another question that I don't hear. Hands peek up above a canopy of messy hair and baseball caps. Mine is not one of them. What do I have to say anyway? I would just get it wrong.

I was not a smart student, or at least I didn't see myself as one. I didn't have an interest or a good grasp of the "serious" academic disciplines, but I loved music and I was getting pretty good at the guitar for a 13 year old. My identity was crystalizing around music, but music class at my middle school, full of good intentions but light on content, had trivialized my interest and my ability. Here music was reserved for leisure, not for serious study.

That changed in the tenth grade, after I transferred to a new high school and enrolled in the performing arts program. I became part of a community that took music seriously. Harmony and practice routine became topics of serious concern that were approached with an academic intensity that was both foreign and affirming. A serious arts education enabled me to take myself seriously. It legitimized my interests and allowed me to choose an identity as someone who was intelligent. It gave me permission to see my knowledge as valuable and to imagine a future of lifelong learning that didn't require me to change who I already was.

Through arts education, I became smart. <sup>ATA</sup>

*A serious arts education legitimized my interests and allowed me to choose an identity as someone who was intelligent.*





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# Being Indigenous in Alberta's public school system

Research project identifies common challenges and keys to moving forward

## Melissa Purcell

Executive Staff Officer, Indigenous Education, ATA



“I do love teaching. I've always wanted to be a teacher. Always. The students are the reason that I am where I am. They make my day. They always have and they always will. ... They are the reason that I am there.”  
— Project participant

“I want to honour my parents and ensure that I am doing the best for them. I want to help create a school system where my nephews can be openly proud to be Métis, where my brothers and sisters are not scared to self-identify their children for fear of discrimination.”

—Report on Indigenous Teachers and School Leaders in Alberta, 2022

**IN 2021, THE ALBERTA TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**, in collaboration with Dr. Dwayne Donald, a researcher from the University of Alberta, conducted an evaluation of the experience of Indigenous teachers and school leaders within Alberta's public education system.

The research encompassed the following three key areas:

- Conditions of practice and philosophy
- Recruitment, hiring, and retention process and conditions
- Discrimination and racism in education

In the winter of 2021, 63 self-identified Indigenous teachers and 33 school leaders were invited to complete an online survey. In total, three online focus groups were completed. As a follow-up to the study, survey participants were invited to express interest in participating in an online focus group facilitated by Dr. Donald. Three focus groups included a total of 13 Indigenous teachers and school leaders.



The following is an overview of the key insights from the focus group conversations.

### Sharing a love for teaching

Numerous focus group participants expressed a passionate and heartfelt commitment to their roles as educators. Many shared that they derive much personal meaning and satisfaction from their involvement in the teaching profession.

### Toeing the line

Many focus group participants expressed frustration with systemic structures and practices that position Indigenous education initiatives as second-rate in comparison with other educational concerns. They feel the need to “toe the line” or conform to problematic expectations to maintain their positions and continue to do the work that they know needs to be done.

*“I’ve always felt since I have been in the education field, no matter where I am at, I’ve always had to accommodate. I’ve always had to toe the line. I had to learn how to play the game. I had to learn when to put my mask on. But most of all, I’ve had to learn when to change my shoes. When do I put my shopping shoes on, my church shoes on or my ceremony shoes on. ... It’s so subtle sometimes; it’s not overt. But it’s these little pins and needles that get thrown at you. I’ve always felt that I’m not worthy enough because I am who I am. Because of my skin colour basically. Because I am visibly Aboriginal. I’ve always felt that it’s a barrier, a wall.”*

— Project participant

### Getting stuck in roles

While the focus group participants consistently expressed feelings of pride associated with their work as Indigenous

## How do we move forward?

### Dwayne Donald

Professor, Faculty of Education,  
University of Alberta

**SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS** teachers and school leaders throughout the progression of their careers is crucial to reconciliation with Alberta’s public education system. Creating authentic spaces and opportunities to learn from and with Indigenous teachers and school leaders is an integral component of advancing truth and reconciliation.

These three elements are key to moving forward effectively:



#### 1) Shared vision

The purpose of the work and the overarching action plan need to be clear to all participants.



#### 2) Cultural changes

Creating sustainable cultural changes in the daily workings of schools requires meaningful structural changes.



#### 3) Mentorship program

A support network of Indigenous educators who could offer support, guidance and mentorship to each other will help them feel less isolated, marginalized and vulnerable. <sup>ATA</sup>



► The full research monograph is available digitally on the ATA website under Public Education > Education Research > Research Publications.

*“I can take the oppression; I can speak out. When I watch others [who are being oppressed], either students or other staff members, it's really hard to take. So I feel that I'm carrying that a lot of times. That's a big reason why I won't leave where I am.”*

—Project participant

educators, many noted that they have felt stuck in roles as well. Participants used the term “pigeonholed” to describe their feelings on this. Being pigeonholed refers to a situation in which a human being is categorized in ways that fail to reflect the complexities of their actual lived realities.

### Suffering vicarious trauma

Vicarious trauma refers to the harmful effects resulting from consistent exposure to the traumatic experiences of others. In the context of this research initiative, some focus group participants reported that they suffer the effects of vicarious trauma brought on when witnessing systemic racism experienced by Indigenous students, their parents and even Indigenous colleagues with whom they work.

### Feeling isolated, vulnerable and unsupported by leaders


Many of the focus group participants wished that their school and division leaders better understood the difficulty of the jobs they do and the vulnerability they feel as Indigenous educators. In many educational settings across the province, the efforts of Indigenous educators to support student and teacher engagement with First Nations, Métis and Inuit foundational knowledges (as mandated by competency five of the Teaching Quality Standard) are still unwelcome.

### Reflecting on career opportunities, recruitment and retention

Focus group participants stated that they were not aware of any formal efforts to recruit or retain Indigenous educators to join their particular school divisions. A few participants noted that their school divisions seem to avoid recruiting from the local area and instead look as far as the Maritime provinces to recruit educators for their schools. It is important to add that participants seemed to share the view that their opportunities to serve in Indigenous education leadership roles

came mostly as a result of the support of an individual colleague who advocated on their behalf rather than any systemwide, clear commitment to retain and promote Indigenous educators.

### NEXT STEPS

The Association will work on knowledge mobilization of the key findings, highlights and insights from the research report. The full research report is available at [www.teachers.ab.ca](http://www.teachers.ab.ca) > My ATA > Professional Development > Indigenous Education and Walking Together > Research. 

#### Leadership opportunities

**38%**



of teacher respondents and school leader respondents are somewhat dissatisfied with leadership opportunities.

#### Mentorship opportunities

**33%**



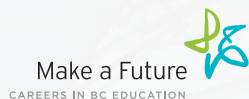
of teacher respondents and school leader respondents are somewhat dissatisfied with mentorship opportunities.



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# Thinking about classroom defensiveness

## Research explores ways to address worldview threat

**Cathryn van Kessel**

Assistant Professor, Secondary Social Studies Education, University of Alberta

**THE RESEARCH PROJECT** Teacher Education, Diversity, and Worldview Threat explored how preservice and early career teachers from a variety of subject areas might prevent and de-escalate harmful reactions due to worldview threats. Together we explored insights from existential social psychology and co-created strategies and approaches for classrooms when teaching about highly emotional topics like climate change, everyday forms of racism and more.

### FORMS DEFENSES CAN TAKE

Some worldview defenses are subtle, such as *decreased reading comprehension of worldview-threatening material or sitting closer to those we assume share our culture and farther away from those who do not*. Other defensive moves are more extreme and easily observed. Derogation occurs when other views are dismissed as inferior (e.g., insulting those with different worldviews) while *assimilation* validates our view by converting others to our own view and *annihilation* (e.g., violence, war, genocide) eliminates the opposing view (and educators might hear expressions of support for annihilation).

*Accommodation* involves appropriating aspects to diffuse the perceived threat (e.g., a surface-level inclusion of another worldview) instead of engaging with the deeper differences (e.g., with Indigenous and Black History Month content). Drawing inspiration from an article in this magazine by Dwayne Donald, the practice of “infusing” and “incorporating” Indigenous perspectives can hinder deeper engagements that might challenge our worldview because teachers might feel like they’ve engaged with foundational First Nations, Métis and Inuit knowledge even though they have not.

### PLANNING BEFOREHAND

Knowing about these defenses, what might we do in our classrooms? The first step is to *develop a shared language* about the emotionality of worldview threat. We can talk about feeling uncomfortable, angry, frustrated and so on, as well as more complicated processes like wanting to convert others to our view or to withdraw from the conversation. To this end, the research team created a video for classroom use and an infographic poster. Because we know that reading comprehension can suffer when we are in a state of worldview threat, it’s important that we consider the *modality of the materials* (e.g., avoiding dense readings). A key challenge that lingers is how we might avoid superficial interactions with different perspectives and customs, so we must gently hold ourselves and each other accountable toward deeper encounters with difference.

### IMMEDIATELY BEFORE THE ENCOUNTER

Teachers can help students cope with difficult emotions by *bolstering their self-esteem and positive aspects of worldviews*. Ideally these attempts would be related to the threat (e.g., students privately listing a few of their “good” qualities before discussions about unintentional racism that put them in self-esteem threat), but even unrelated prompts can help.

Priming helpful aspects of worldviews is helpful, although it’s best to tap into the positive aspects of worldviews held by both students and whomever you are talking about; for example, before a lesson about 9/11 in a classroom with Muslims and Christians, mention quotations from

the Beatitudes—Matthew 5:1–12—about gentleness, mercy and sympathy for those who have been persecuted as well as a hadith from the Prophet Muhammad—Peace Be Upon Him—such as “kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever is not kind has no faith” (Sahih Muslim). It should be noted that such discussions are not limited to religious worldviews, and perhaps there are local shared values (e.g., from the school community).

### WHEN DEFENSES NONETHELESS BUBBLE UP

Even with careful attention to worldview threat, students may still react defensively. We can remind them about the emotionality of the situation and try to de-escalate. If a student utters a hateful comment, we must address it, and then after, we can exercise our professional judgment regarding how to deal with that student (e.g., as a class or individually, the extent to which involves administration). The hope is that a greater attention to worldview threats will minimize such reactions. <sup>ATA</sup>

### References

A complete list of references is available upon request by contacting the author at [vankesse@ualberta.ca](mailto:vankesse@ualberta.ca).

### Acknowledgements

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### 2. *Playing with Language: Improving Elementary Reading through Metalinguistic Awareness*

Metalinguistic awareness is a key factor in developing reading skills. Author Marcy Zipke offers teachers practical ideas for helping their students expand this cognitive skill through engaging games, songs, riddles and rhymes.

Information provided by ATA librarian Sandra Anderson

### 3. *Universal Design Daily: 365 Ways to Teach, Support, & Challenge All Learners Using UDL*

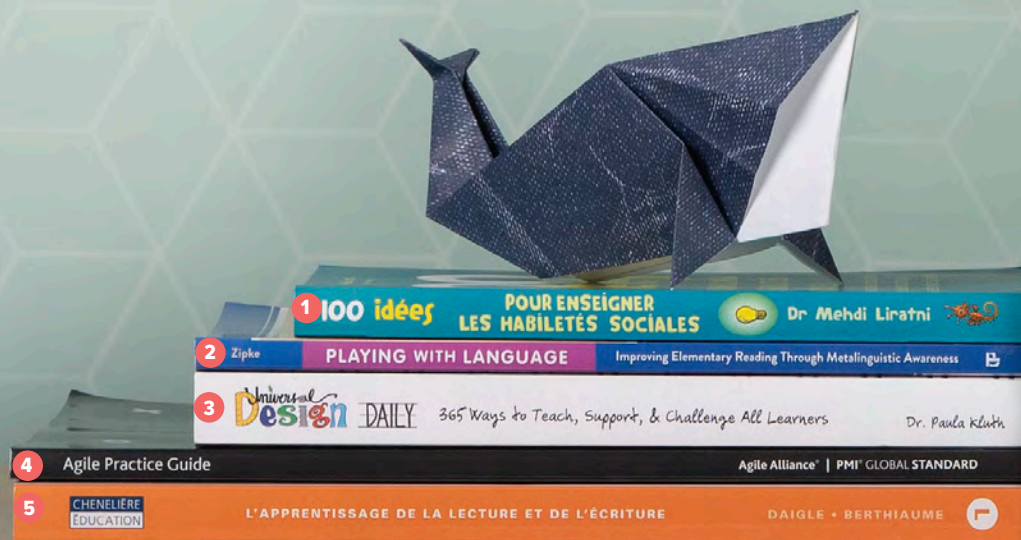
Although Universal Design for Learning guidelines are complicated, author Paula Kluth demonstrates that implementing them can be a straightforward and easy process in the second edition of this easy-to-use guide.

### 4. *Agile Practice Guide*

This practice guide provides tools, situational guidelines and an understanding of the various agile approaches available to enable better results. Filled with examples, tips and case studies, this practice guide is essential for anyone who wants to learn more about agile approaches.

### 5. *L'apprentissage de la lecture et de l'écriture : décomposer les objets d'enseignement en microtâches pour les rendre accessibles à tous les élèves, 5 à 12 ans*

Cet ouvrage permet d'outiller les enseignants, les orthopédagogues et le personnel d'intervention pédagogique afin de mieux comprendre chacun de leurs élèves et de définir leurs différents besoins en matière d'apprentissage de la lecture et de l'écriture.



## Your colleagues recommend

What are you reading

Teachers suggested these reads on Facebook.

### Barbara Weir Shepherd

*Over the Boards* by Hayley Wickenheiser. Lots of practical suggestions from a very successful person.

### James Williams

A must read for every teacher on Treaty 7 territory who strives towards reconciliation is *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty 7*. An excellent resource for Grade 7 social studies.

### Lynnsey Paige

*What Happened to You?* by Oprah Winfrey and Dr. Bruce Perry. It's so good that a few colleagues and I started a book club for it.



### 6. *Coding and the Arts: Connecting CS to Drawing, Music, Animation and More*

Art and coding are generally not taught together in the classroom, but author Josh Caldwell questions that division as he sees that coding is primarily creative and that many artists include computing in their artwork. He includes analysis of artistic programming environments for teachers and creative lesson plans.

### 7. *Breaking Hate: Confronting the New Culture of Extremism*

This fascinating and useful work is written by a former white supremacist who now helps others remove the mental programming of extremist movements. Teachers will find insights to help manage classroom discussions that reveal such programming in their students.

### 8. *Sommes-nous tous racistes? Psychologie des racismes ordinaires*

À partir des données de la psychologie sociale, cet ouvrage développe la thèse d'un présumé raciste fondamental dans toutes les sociétés, qui demande à être combattu par un acte de volonté, afin d'éviter la déshumanisation qui suit l'excès de communautarisme.



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN

#### Chelsea DePape

*The Hail Mary Project* by Andy Weir. The story is about a junior high science teacher who is on a mission to save Earth. Even after he is turned away from academia, the world's leading experts rely on his expertise and knowledge. Pretty incredible story!

#### Alexis Villetard

*The Boat People* by Sharon Bala. This would be a perfect read for Social 30. It's all about the Tamil refugees who arrived on Canadian shores in 2010 and their experience with the Canadian government. A secondary story about Japanese internment is also woven through. Very good book.

#### Sara Honey

*Teaching Well* by Lisa Bush. Excellent read and always relevant. Not the typical teaching book. Love her sense of humour and down-to-earth suggestions from someone on the front lines of teaching.

# What books of poetry would you recommend for students?

## **All the Small Poems**

This book by Valerie Worth is a great collection of short poems about plants, animals and everyday objects from a naive perspective. It's perfect to use in the classroom as a visualization exercise as it has fantastic adjectives or can be used to help teach inference skills by having students guess what the poem is about without giving them the title.

*Amber Lyons*

## **The Cremation of Sam McGee**

First, I love anything by Shel Silverstein! His books are so fun. But my favourite book of poetry is "The Cremation of Sam McGee," a poem by Robert Service about a prospector in the Yukon. For the Service poem, I like to tie in a chalk pastel or oil pastel art project and link it to the Grade 7 social studies curriculum.

*Raylene Kennedy*

## **Ain't Burned All the Bright**

This book by Jason Reynolds is just full of so much hope and is a reminder of the power of a breath.

*Tracy Evans*

## **the sun and her flowers**

The poem Broken English in *the sun and her flowers* by Rupi Kaur does a beautiful job of telling the true story of the immigrant experience. I've had students who related to it and told me it reminded them of their own parents. I've also had students who learned from it what it's like to be a new Canadian. It's also a great poem to teach motif. I've done it with a few classes, and they always have really great, thoughtful responses.

*Miya Abe*

## **Love That Dog**

This book by Sharon Creech is written in free verse from the point of view of a student who thinks writing poetry is dumb. As the book goes on, the student learns how to express himself through poetry and finds himself writing more and more and enjoying it. He writes to his teacher, but you only see his side of the conversation. Some of his entries are responses to poems his teacher has shared with the class, and those poems are all printed at the back of the book. The sequel *Hate That Cat* is a good one to follow up with. Because they're from the student's point of view, and because the student doesn't see the point of poetry at first, it's very relatable to students. I read this last year with my Grade 4 students.

*Jennifer Rodgers Samayoa*



PHOTO BY YUET CHAN





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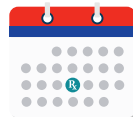
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# Find us in the field

The ATA’s staff and services are not confined to the offices in Edmonton and Calgary. What services are offered in the field? Read on.

## SUPPORT FOR ATA SUBGROUPS

- The **Government program area** assists Association subgroups in reviewing and developing policy, discussing research projects and implementing strategic plans.
- **Teacher Employment Services (TES)** offers support to locals and local executives. With TES–Collective Bargaining, it supports local Teacher Welfare committees and Bargaining Unit general meetings.
- The **Professional Development (PD) program area** provides support to convention boards and specialist council executives in organizing their PD events for members. The PD program area also supports local PD committees in their work.

## WORKSHOPS AND PRESENTATIONS

The ATA’s program areas offer in-person and virtual presentations and workshops on a variety of topics, ranging from politics and public relations to the Code of Professional Conduct and pension basics.

**Would you like a workshop or presentation for your school or subgroup?**

Go to [teachers.ab.ca](https://teachers.ab.ca) > My ATA > Professional Development > Workshops and Presentations for details on booking.



## Q&As WITH STAFF

featuring Chris Gonsalvez, PD staff officer

### What kind of work do you do in the field?

Field work is, without question, my favourite part of my job. I lead workshops and PD sessions for schools, locals, conventions and specialist councils. I also have the privilege of working with subgroup leaders as they plan and deliver outstanding learning opportunities. Additionally, I work with the post-secondary institutions in Calgary, providing feedback on their field experience programs and leading workshops and sessions for our preservice teachers, connecting them to the ATA.

### How has your field work evolved, particularly in light of the pandemic?

Much of my field work has evolved to be digital. I have delivered numerous workshops and PD sessions by Zoom, and supported many of our convention boards and specialist councils with shifting their delivery of PD to digital. Alongside the amazing PD team at the ATA, we have developed a wide array of prerecorded professional development sessions that teachers across the province can access online at any time.

### What is your favourite part about working in the field?

Every time I have the opportunity to connect with teachers or school leaders, I learn from them and am left in awe of their commitment to their students, innovative ideas and the selfless ways they support their colleagues. With the move to digital field work, I miss the authentic conversations before and after meetings or workshops where I can connect one-on-one with teachers.

### What has been one standout moment from working in the field?

Time and time again, teachers step up and do incredible things. One standout moment for me was supporting our teacher-volunteers who selflessly and tirelessly plan our annual teachers’ conventions when they shifted from planning in-person conventions to high-calibre online conventions in under five months in 2020/21. The learning curve and volunteer hours required to pull this off were simply astounding, and I was so honoured to be a part of the effort!



# Venez à notre rencontre sur le terrain

Le personnel de l'ATA n'est pas confiné dans les bureaux d'Edmonton et de Calgary et les services qu'il assure ne s'y limitent pas non plus. Quels sont les services offerts sur le terrain? Lisez la suite.

## SOUTIEN AUX SOUS-GROUPES DE L'ATA

- Le secteur **Direction** aide les sous-groupes de l'ATA à examiner et à élaborer des politiques, à discuter de projets de recherche et à mettre en œuvre des plans stratégiques.
- Le secteur **Emploi et bien-être (EB)** offre du soutien aux sections locales et aux comités exécutifs des sections locales, et son équipe chargée des négociations collectives apporte son soutien aux comités du bien-être enseignant des sections locales et aux unités de négociation lors des assemblées générales.
- Le secteur **Perfectionnement professionnel (PP)** aide les conseils d'administration des congrès et les comités exécutifs des conseils de spécialistes à organiser les événements de PP pour leurs membres. Le secteur PP soutient aussi le travail des comités de PP des sections locales.

## ATELIERS ET PRÉSENTATIONS

Les secteurs de l'ATA proposent des présentations et ateliers en personne (et virtuels) sur une variété de sujets, allant de la politique et des relations publiques au *Code de conduite professionnelle* en passant par des renseignements essentiels sur les pensions.

**Souhaitez-vous réserver un atelier ou une présentation pour votre école ou sous-groupe?**

Visitez [teachers.ab.ca](https://teachers.ab.ca) > My ATA > Professional Development > Workshops and Presentations pour les modalités de réservation.



## Q&R AVEC LE PERSONNEL

Chris Gonsalvez, cadre supérieur au secteur PP

### Quel genre de travail faites-vous sur le terrain?

Travailler sur le terrain est, sans aucun doute, un des aspects de mon travail que je préfère. J'anime des ateliers et des séances de PP pour des écoles, sections locales, congrès et conseils de spécialistes. J'ai aussi le privilège de travailler avec des leaders de sous-groupes qui planifient et offrent des occasions d'apprentissage exceptionnelles. Je fournis, en outre, aux établissements d'enseignement postsecondaire de Calgary des rétroactions sur les stages pédagogiques, et j'anime des ateliers et séances pour les enseignants en formation initiale en vue de les familiariser avec l'ATA.

### Comment votre travail sur le terrain a-t-il évolué, en particulier, à la lumière de la pandémie?

Une grande partie de mon travail sur le terrain a évolué vers le numérique. J'ai animé de nombreux ateliers et sessions de formation continue via Zoom, et aidé beaucoup de nos conseils d'administration de congrès et conseils de spécialistes à transposer leurs activités de PP en mode virtuel. D'ailleurs, en collaboration avec la formidable équipe du secteur PP de l'ATA, nous avons créé un large éventail de sessions de PP préenregistrées auxquelles les enseignants de la province peuvent accéder en ligne à tout moment.

### Que préférez-vous faire lorsque vous êtes sur le terrain?

Chaque fois que j'ai l'occasion de communiquer avec des enseignants ou leaders scolaires, je m'instruis auprès d'eux et j'admire leur engagement envers les élèves, leurs idées novatrices et la façon désintéressée dont ils soutiennent leurs collègues. Depuis que le travail sur le terrain se fait virtuellement, les véritables conversations avant et après les réunions ou ateliers où j'établissais des liens privilégiés en face à face avec les enseignants me manquent beaucoup.

### Décrivez un des moments les plus marquants de votre travail sur le terrain?

Comme je l'ai déjà dit à maintes reprises, les enseignants se montrent toujours à la hauteur de leurs responsabilités et font des choses incroyables. Un des moments les plus marquants reste celui où j'ai apporté mon soutien à nos enseignants bénévoles qui sans relâche et avec un altruisme remarquable planifient les grands congrès annuels d'enseignants. En 2020-2021, lorsque les congrès ont basculé en mode virtuel, ils ont adapté leur façon de travailler et en moins de cinq mois ont réussi à planifier des congrès virtuels de haut calibre. La courbe d'apprentissage et les heures de bénévolat nécessaires pour y arriver ont été tout simplement ahurissantes, et ce fut un immense honneur pour moi d'avoir participé à cet effort!







# A place for every voice

Teacher–leader weaves lessons about diversity and representation into music education

**Lindsay Yakimyshyn**

Staff Writer, *ATA Magazine*

**JORGIANNE TALBOT KNEW SHE WAS** onto something after her first Christmas concert as a music teacher.

She called the production *A Celebration of Carols*. It was a series of songs of joy from around the world and the grand finale was “Silent Night,” which all the students learned in English and sign language. After preparing for their own concert, the students attended a community musical performance in which the performers also sang “Silent Night.”

“The whole school of students in the audience began signing with the performers as they sang on stage. It was a magical event,” Talbot recalls.

Although it was only her first year of teaching, Talbot could already see how music could move her students while simultaneously opening their eyes to diversity and representation.

## **SHINING A LIGHT**

Being the daughter of a dedicated high school math teacher, Talbot found that her passion for music was interwoven with a love of teaching. Her journey to teaching music began with her own education.

“To be the best music teacher I could be, I first needed to be the best musician I could be,” she says.

With this in mind, after completing a bachelor’s degree in music and beginning an after-degree in education, Talbot travelled to Hungary to study the

Kodály method of music education. She continued her professional learning by completing her education degree and a master of music degree and joining the Alberta Kodály Association (she later served as vice-president and then president).

“Jorgianne is passionate about music and is able to bring her extensive knowledge of Kodály methodology to instill students with a strong foundation of musical skills,” says Bruce Cable, a colleague of Talbot’s during her time at Victoria School of the Arts.

An elementary and choral music specialist, Talbot feels fortunate to have found assignments that allowed her to teach music full time and promote students’ connection to music. She was later able to share her expertise and passion for music education with colleagues as an arts education consultant with Edmonton Public Schools, as a sessional instructor in the University of Alberta’s elementary education music department, as a mentor teacher and as an interchange (secondment) participant.

In each role she occupies, Talbot both advances literacy in music and builds learning communities in which different cultures are appreciated and represented.

“What’s special about the role of music educator and consultant is that I can bring different cultures into the classroom through the music,” Talbot says.



## HITTING THE RIGHT NOTES WITH

### Jorgianne Talbot

#### What is the best piece of advice your mom gave you about teaching?

"I don't know how you teach the little ones." and "Stay true to your passion."

#### What is your go-to song to sing?

Canon: *Dona Nobis Pacem (Grant Us Peace)*. This is also my favourite song to teach. I usually teach this Latin song (that can be sung in canon) to most of my students, as the message is one of peace, especially with all that is happening in the world.

#### Where has been your favourite place to perform?

Right here in Edmonton at the Winspear Centre, both as a performer and music educator. I remember my first experience as a teenager performing at the Winspear and thinking that the acoustics were amazing — what a wonderful performance space!

#### If you could perform in any venue, what would it be?

I hope to one day perform (or at least see a performance) at Carnegie Hall.

"I can build community within those music classes and see the impact that has on students."

## TAKING SPACE

Talbot consciously creates space for diversity through music. As she did with her first Christmas concert, she brings music and celebrations from different cultures into the classroom. She also recognizes that she makes a difference just by being in the classroom.

Talbot, a Black woman, is used to being one of a few — if not the only one — in a room who look like her. She recalls being

giddy when she first had a Black teacher. She was so excited to see a teacher who looked like her that she immediately called her friend to tell him. Talbot was 26 years old at the time.

Talbot has also had a similar impact on kids and families when they see that she's the teacher. One moment that has stayed with Talbot occurred at her first meet-the-teacher event when a student's grandmother approached her.

"Are you the teacher?" the woman asked.

"Yes," Talbot replied, surprised but steady.

The grandmother hugged Talbot.

"Finally there is someone here who looks like my granddaughter, who she can look up to."

Talbot carries this moment with her and, knowing how much representation has meant to her and her students, she also advocates for increased diversity within the profession, including its professional Association. She asks questions about representation at all levels of the profession and comments that more data is needed. Moreover, she and her personal narrative were instrumental in the creation of the Status of Racialized Teachers Working Group of the ATA's provincial Diversity, Equity and Human Rights Committee.

## SHARING HOPE

Hopeful for increased representation within education, and encouraged by what she's seen, Talbot wields music with joy, making room for students and colleagues to share their diverse voices as part of a community.

"Jorgianne always made sure every student felt comfortable to express themselves, and encouraged her students to bring their own experiences, cultures, beliefs and passions to the classroom to assist in creating a unified ensemble," Cable says.

Talbot says music is a way for her to shine light, to begin conversations.

"It is important that, as a diverse society and within my diverse classrooms, I can share a message of hope for the world through music." <sup>ATA</sup>

- ▶ **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](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).



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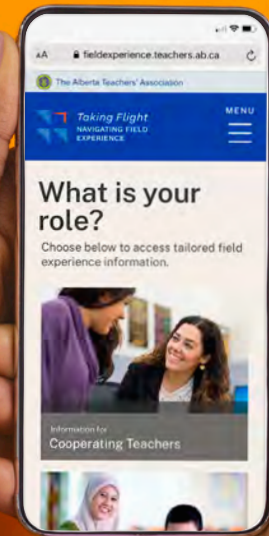


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## Creative colleagues

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

### BOOKS



#### **Finding Aloha**

In addition to teaching Grade 4, Jennifer Walker is a contemporary young adult and middle grade author. Her newest book, *Finding Aloha*, was released in February 2022. A fresh fiction, *Finding Aloha* follows 17-year-old Jess, who moves to Maui in hopes of making a new start only to be confronted with relationship complexities and a difficult choice.

*Finding Aloha*—as well as Walker's first book, *Within the Folds of a Swan's Wings*—are available on Amazon.

#### JENNIFER WALKER

Monsignor Fee Otterson Catholic School, Edmonton

[jenwalkerauthor.com](http://jenwalkerauthor.com)

Finch Books



#### **Not My Emergency: The Double Life of a Volunteer Firefighter**

For the last 21 years, Ian McLaren has worked to balance his role as a volunteer firefighter, school teacher/principal, husband and father in small-town Alberta. In *Not My Emergency*, McLaren recounts many of his most memorable calls. At the same time, the book focuses on his dichotomous life—trying to make the difficult transition from “regular life” to emergency scenes and back again while maintaining his sanity. Some of the stories are humorous, a few of them are tragic, and most have elements of both.

#### IAN MCLAREN

Eckville Elementary School, Eckville

@jianmclaren

Self-published, available on Amazon

### PHOTOGRAPHY



#### **Dawnelle Salant Photography**

Dawnelle Salant began her teaching career overseas and was always taking photos of her adventures. Photography became a passion for Salant, with her interest shifting from travel photography to wildlife, landscapes and portraits.

In 2019, she opened Dawnelle Salant Photography. Salant's photography has been published in *Landscape Photography Magazine*, *Ignite Magazine* and *Iconic Child Magazine*.

#### DAWNELLE SALANT

St. Isidore School, Calgary

<https://www.dawnellesalantphotography.com>

### TELEVISION



#### **Cooking with Kyssara**

A teacher, parent and creator, Anne Mueller set out to write and produce an uplifting, socially conscious, family-friendly program focused on teaching essential life skills. The result? *Cooking with Kyssara*,

a mini-series hosted by Mueller's 10-year-old daughter Kyssara. The show promotes nutrition, stories and poetry, and local businesses.

Created and directed by Mueller, who has previous broadcasting experience, *Cooking with Kyssara* has received several accolades—including Best Children's Short Film at the 2021 Golden Leaf International Film Festival, and Audience Choice and Best Web/TV Series at the 2021 Vegas Movie Awards.

#### ANNE MUELLER

Substitute teacher, Edmonton

[www.kyssaramueller.com](http://www.kyssaramueller.com)

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- ▶ **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](mailto:lindsay.yakimyshyn@ata.ab.ca).



# ATRF's 2021 Annual Report is now available.

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# Boundaries, movement, gratitude, connection

How have you upped your self-care game?

## Annemarie Simpson

Learning to not sweat the small stuff — a difficult but important lesson. Limiting time on social media, especially not reading comments. Sitting and watching my kids sports practice or game — just be in that moment (don't bring school work with me). Not checking work emails, messages from students, etc. after x o'clock. It's okay to spend time present with family or just yourself. Purging — amazing how much stuff clutters our spaces and our minds.

## Susanne Stroud

I write down one thing I am grateful for each day. It helps keep me focused on the positive things in life rather than Covid or pandemic pivots.

## Jessica Walker

I have started working out every morning, drinking enough water, and making sure I take some well deserved down and me time (such as massages, nails, hair, reading etc).

## Heather Terry

Fit in some form of physical activity/exercise every day and find something to be thankful for each day.

## Michelle Sherlow

I spend time with my hobby, making handmade cards, that I can give to others for occasions or just encouragement. The act of making them is my self-care and giving them is spreading kindness. It is a win-win situation!

## Shelley Pitzel

Oh sure I take baths, and I took a personal finance course at the beginning of the pandemic, but what I did to keep from burning out and to ensure that I still love my job was make sure to make connections with a few of my colleagues every day.

We text and occasionally go for dinner after work. But mostly what we do is talk — about life, work, fears and frustrations; about whether or not we feel safe at work; about more efficient ways to mark or how to group kids in that one class. We have started meeting at the end of the day to talk about three things that were good about our day so we can go home on a positive note. In a world that is ever more isolating, in a profession that has always been a bit isolating, it is important to make connections.

The other big thing I learned to do: stop working all the time. We don't, our little cohort of teachers, work evenings and weekends all the time. We have really been exploring the question, "how can we be excellent teachers and still have healthy boundaries?"

It is as important to know when and how to disconnect as it is to know when and how to connect.

## Venessa Chalifoux

Putting up boundaries and sticking to them has been important. Movement and finding moments of stillness to just breathe. Intentionally practicing gratitude as well. Giving myself permission to "fill my cup" and learning what self care is really about.

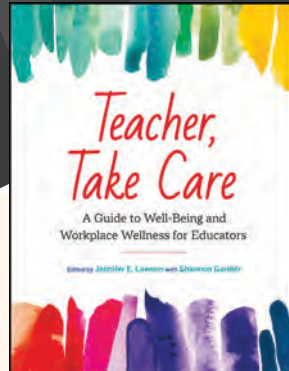
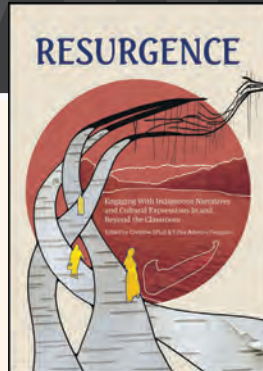
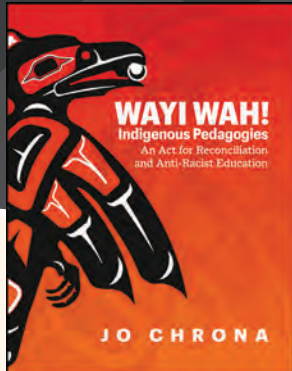
## Karlee Hren

I've worked on putting my phone on "do not disturb" and go read, listen to podcasts or draw/colour!

► See more at [facebook.com/ABteachers](https://www.facebook.com/ABteachers).



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ISTOCK ADAPTED

# Colour is king

## Visually tracking student assessment brings better outcomes and time savings

### Keri Goad


Junior High Math/Science  
David Thomas King School, Edmonton

**MY TEACHER HACK IS** that I colour-code my digital gradebook so I can see trends and patterns for individual student performance as well as overall performance for specific topics and assignments. It helps guide me in who needs support, extension and what content areas I might need to revisit.

Capturing student assessment information digitally has improved both workload and organization significantly. My initial fear was that I'd be chained to the computer for hours; however, the reality is that I've found it more effective this way. It is more work to record on paper and then enter on the computer for progress reports or schoolwide

tracking documents. Digital formatting and features like copy and paste within digital tools is game-changing!

Using the conditional formatting feature allows me to colour-code assessment results to see patterns and trends. I can visually see how individual students are doing, and how students are performing in certain areas, which then informs my teaching practice. For example, do we need to revisit this concept as a class, or do I just need to touch base with a few students?

Now I have created my own digital record-keeping document that I consider my "one stop shop." I track student coding, programming information, reading levels, student groupings and, of course, assessment information. I am able to make the document my own and easily access everything I need all within the same document. It has truly allowed me to know my students and their learning better than ever before. 

“My initial fear was that I'd be chained to the computer for hours; however, the reality is that I've found more efficiencies this way.”

- ▶ **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 managing editor Cory Hare at [cory.hare@ata.ab.ca](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).

# Loose cannon

Physics lesson veers off course into anatomy

**Ian McLaren**

Principal, Eckville Elementary School,  
Eckville



## THE CHALLENGE

When sketching ad-hoc diagrams, keep the eraser close at hand.

### I SPENT MOST OF MY

teaching career teaching early elementary students. When I took on the role of assistant principal at a K-12 school, I was assigned a Grade 6 classroom, which presented a very different set of challenges. Adding to the complexity of my new role, my daughter was one of my students (as is common in a small-town school) and I had to balance my role as a father and teacher, while trying desperately not to embarrass my daughter any more than was absolutely necessary.

One afternoon I was teaching science class, and in the course of building paper airplanes for our flight unit, we got on to the topic of how throwing the airplane was a form of thrust. For some reason, I felt this was a great opportunity to insert a little physics lesson into the class, so I began to explain the idea of Newton's third law, which states that "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

To illustrate this point, I began to draw a cannon on the

“ I had little choice but to hurriedly erase my diagram.”

whiteboard. This diagram included the cannon barrel, a set of wheels at the back (details, you know), and a set of dotted lines coming from the front of the cannon illustrating where the cannonball was flying.

As I drew, I began to hear giggles from the students behind me. I turned to ask what was so funny and that student who has no filter (isn't there always one?) asked me why I had drawn a particular part of the male anatomy.

Well, the class was effectively over at that point and, to be fair, what I had drawn did end up looking a little inappropriate. I had little choice but to hurriedly erase my diagram and try to get on with the rest of the day.

You might think something like this would just blow over, but even now, 10 years later, my daughter and her friends love to bring this up and tease me about bringing "theme five" into the science class. <sup>ATA</sup>

► **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](mailto:cory.hare@ata.ab.ca).



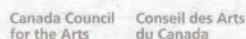
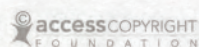
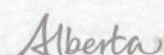
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