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**CONTRIBUTORS** Gabrielle Barkany, OCT; Chantal Bélisle, OCT; Wendy Harris (reviews); Brian Jamieson; Nicole van Woudenberg, OCT; Olivia Yu

**CIRCULATION** Kerry Walford

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Studio 141 Inc.: Dave Curcio (President and Creative Director); Hannah Browne (Art Director);

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The views expressed in the articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the College.

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Letters to the editor and submissions on topics of interest to the profession are welcome. Unsolicited manuscripts cannot be returned.

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The College is trusted to regulate the teaching profession by setting standards of practice and accrediting teacher education programs.

The College also sets the requirements for entry into the profession, investigates complaints involving members and takes appropriate disciplinary action.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

In the spirit of open conversation and to support an array of perspectives, Professionally Speaking welcomes letters to the editor. The opinions expressed in letters are solely those of the authors and should not be interpreted as the view of the College. We reserve the right to edit letters for length and clarity. Letters should be sent to ps@oct.ca, be in response to content in the magazine and include the writer’s phone number and registration number.

Tell us what you think!

Calling out a lack of representation

According to Statistics Canada’s 2016 Census, 29 per cent of Ontarians identify as visible minorities. In the March 2020 article “Teaching Through the Decades,” not one visible minority group is represented, nor teachers representing any cities with populations larger than 120,000. How can we talk about how classrooms have changed in the past half century if we don’t represent the variety of perspectives within our communities? How can we ignore the largest cities in the province and a third of our population and claim to discuss our “ever-changing profession”? The lack of representation is discouraging and paints a false picture.

While teaching has changed greatly, sadly many one-sided perspectives have not.

Bhumika Munroe, OCT, is a Grade 7/8 teacher at Whaley’s Corners Public School with the Peel District School Board.

Editor’s Response: Professionally Speaking is committed to promoting and reflecting the province’s diversity in education through intent, images and language. While this article did profile teachers of different ages, in a range of locations, in English- and French-language boards, and at Catholic and secular schools, we recognize there is a cultural diversity that we did not include. We endeavour to ensure the publication is inclusive and will be more conscious in our consideration of representational criteria going forward.

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$685 - ABQ Primary, ABQ Junior, One-Session AQ, Three-Session AQ (excluding FSL Part 1)  
$745 - ABQ Intermediate, ABQ Senior, ABQ Technological Ed, Honour Specialist, FSL Part 1  
$75 - Educational Support Staff
Over these past few months, COVID-19 has turned our world upside down. We have been glued to the news and concerned for our loved ones as we adapt to the changes the global pandemic has brought to our homes, schools, workplaces and to learning itself.

We have been confined. Families have been separated. We miss our students and colleagues. Borders have been shut and instability roils the economy.

It’s easy to feel overwhelmed.

We’ve seen the panic buying and hoarding, but we’ve also seen kindness, care and compassion here and around the world. We might feel scared, but we also know it is time for exceptional ethical conduct — something teachers routinely exemplify.

Ontario’s teaching profession has always been guided by our ethical standards of care, trust, respect and integrity. This is more important now than ever.

We’ve all heard stories of how we’ve been taking care of each other. From simple phone calls, texts and video chats to check-ins and running errands for those who cannot go out. Our stories of care, compassion, collegiality and friendship are what makes us strong during these uncertain times.

The ethical standards of our profession are vital in the context of the work you do for your students. Today, these values are also life-affirming as people all over the world change their behaviour to protect others. We are being asked to respect distancing measures. We trust our government and health officials to make decisions for the public well-being. We trust each other to behave responsibly.

From the service provided by health-care workers to random acts of kindness within communities, we’re seeing integrity in action to help individuals in need. There are so many examples of people helping one another. Let’s talk about those. We recognize the teacher playing guitar for her students, the school community celebrating students’ birthdays via tweets, and the continued connections among colleagues sharing resources on all platforms.

Spread the word on how you or someone you know is making a difference. We would love to hear more by tagging the College on Twitter @OCT_OEEO, Instagram @oct_oeeo, and Facebook @OntarioTeachers.

Please continue to take good care of you and yours. We will get through this together.

Nicole Van Woudenberg, OCT
Chantal Bélisle, OCT
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At Home with Learning

Here are the Top 10 ways Ontario teachers would encourage families to keep the learning going at home, courtesy of our latest poll.

1. Read every day.
2. Encourage children to cook.
3. Work on co-operation and problem-solving with board games, card games and puzzles.
4. Design and build something with household objects.
5. Paint, draw, and do crafts.
6. Explore ideas and topics that genuinely interest each child.
7. Set aside time for journaling or creative writing.
8. Discuss and unpack current events in age-appropriate ways.
9. Care for plants or keep a pet healthy and happy.
10. Listen to or create music.
Pop Quiz with Gary Rabbior

BY LAURA BICKLE

“Show me the money.” That was the message delivered by 6,000 young people, courtesy of a survey conducted by the Canadian Foundation for Economic Education (CFEE). “Students want financial education. Teachers will find that students are usually very engaged and very motivated when it comes to learning about money,” says CFEE president Gary Rabbior. We asked Rabbior to share how CFEE’s programs can bring financial education into the classroom.

Why is it important to teach financial literacy to students? Youth need to learn to stay in control of their financial life to avoid future financial stress and anxiety — and be able to achieve personal happiness within their own limits. It is important to help students know how to make wise money decisions. This includes the key step of always considering trade-offs. Each money decision entails giving up something today or in the future.

What are the barriers to effective financial literacy instruction? Financial literacy is misunderstood. Too often there is a focus on “math” and calculations and interest. Knowledge is more likely to stick if there is a focus on developing relevant behaviours and skills and engaging students in active, participatory learning.

How can CFEE support financial education? CFEE has a wide variety of resources available through our website (cfee.org) for students of all ages. Our Money and Youth book and website (moneyandyouth.com) are popular with students in Grades 9 to 12. Free class sets of the book, in English and French, are available with only the cost of shipping.

Our “Talk With Our Kids About Money” program is used from Grades 4 to 10 with lesson plans linked to each province’s curriculum. Our teacher workshops can be tailored according to teachers’ interests and needs. There is no cost and they can be provided in English or French.

What’s next for the CFEE? CFEE has just received funding to start work on an online instructional program for youth with the working title FinLit 101. CFEE is also in discussions with those working in the mental health field to learn more about the link between financial health and mental health and well-being. Research is showing a very strong correlation between the two.

What advice do you have for teachers who are interested in teaching financial literacy? The focus should be on the development of life-relevant skills and behaviours that help prepare students, not only for future financial life, but life in general. There is opportunity for hands-on learning, which is always attractive to both teachers and students, and has very positive results when it comes to retention. Many teachers, like many parents, have learned a lot along the way — and have perhaps made mistakes that they can help students avoid.
By the Numbers: Common Ground

Communities across Ontario will welcome the reopening of schools, for all kinds of reasons, including the positive impact they have well beyond the classroom.

BY STEVE BREARTON

WITH THE PROGRAM

65%  
Percentage of Ontario parents who in a 2018 survey agreed their children’s school engages with the broader community.

PROGRAMMING AT SCHOOLS ENGAGED IN COMMUNITY INITIATIVES ACROSS THE PROVINCE INCLUDES:

- HEALTH OR SOCIAL SERVICES: 9% elementary, 21% secondary
- CHILDCARE AND FAMILY RESOURCE CENTRES: 25% elementary, 65% secondary
- SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS: 85% elementary, 93% secondary
- ARTS: 5% elementary, 19% secondary

WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

PERCENTAGE OF ONTARIO SCHOOLS IN 2018 WITH COMMUNITY LIAISON STAFF, RESPONSIBLE FOR PROMOTING SCHOOL EVENTS AND LINKING STUDENTS AND FAMILIES TO INFORMATION AND SERVICES.

- 19% elementary
- 18% secondary

OPEN DOORS

220 Elementary and secondary schools in 38 school boards across Ontario, who make their facilities accessible for not-for-profit groups to offer free or affordable community programs.

Professional Practice

This year, with the approval of my school principal, I ventured into co-teaching with two colleagues (Nicolas Guimond, OCT, and Anouschka Enders-Zigoumis, OCT).

Here’s what it’s all about. Students work in a large classroom with a flexible layout geared to teamwork. Two screens simultaneously project digital content to explain the lessons. While one teacher is giving a lesson, the other two provide support, implement accommodation measures and provide changes for students who are struggling.

This is not only positive for the students, because they benefit from the combined years of experience of three seasoned teachers, but it benefits us as well. Together, we can better support students with learning exceptionalities and address behavioural management challenges.

It’s an innovative project that can benefit students personally, socially and academically.

MÉLISSA BALTHAZAR, OCT, GRADE 6 TEACHER AT ÉCOLE ÉLÉMENTAIRE PUBLIQUE L’ODYSSÉE, CONSEIL DES ÉCOLES PUBLIQUES DE L’EST DE L’ONTARIO

Student Safety on the Move

BY STEFAN DUBOWSKI

Whether they’re in cars, on bikes or on foot, students can make their way to school safe and sound with the Ontario Road Safety Resource (ontarioroadsafety.ca). This site — designed and presented by the Ontario Ministry of Transportation, the Ontario Physical Health and Education Association (Ophea) and the Canadian Automobile Association (CAA) South Central Ontario division — is full of activities you can use in class and beyond. The material is categorized for elementary, middle and high school classrooms, and the lessons are linked to curricula such as literacy and health.

There are a few notable resources. Road-sign bingo helps familiarize young elementary students with those crucial traffic-safety markers. For middle school, there’s a “Technology and Transportation” lesson to get students thinking about the link between technology and road safety. And high school teachers will see lessons about the risks of drinking and driving, how to operate all-terrain vehicles safely and other more advanced transportation topics.

Looking to do something for not just your own classroom but a whole grade, school or maybe even the wider community? Check out the Community Engagement Kits, which provide pointers for creating larger-scale activities. Try a bike rodeo, for instance, where participants learn laws and good cycling techniques. Or run a road safety week and host community partners while tackling road safety issues over a number of days.

To put this site and its content into context, according to Transport Canada’s motor vehicle traffic collision statistics for 2018, that year saw more fatalities and injuries than 2017, although fewer serious injuries. Clearly, there’s still work to do to make our roads as safe as possible. With Ontario Road Safety’s resources, you can help.
Apps Analysis

BY STEFAN DUBOWSKI

The Human Body by Tinybop

A beating heart, gurgling guts and breathing lungs are among the lifelike features of this biology-bolstering app, designed to help youngsters get to know the skeletal, muscular, digestive and other main systems of the human body. It offers detailed models of the heart, brain and other important parts, and everything is interactive so your young scientists get to see what happens to food as it goes in and down, how eyes see and how ears hear. Aligns nicely with the Grade 5 curriculum, which involves studying the body’s organs.

Just Dance Now

With more than 500 songs and countless accompanying dance moves, Just Dance Now is an engaging way to get students up and moving. The app transforms a smartphone into a hand-held controller. Dancers hold the phone as they weave, bop and follow the footsteps of the characters onscreen. The download is free but it costs extra to access the songs for various periods of time from one hour ($1.49) to one year ($24.99). Perfect for the elementary physical fitness curriculum, which includes movement skills such as stability and spatial awareness.

Flute Master — Learn Recorder

This may be the only instance in which students are encouraged to use a musical instrument to help out a mythical creature. Designed for budding musicians learning to play the recorder, the app presents Cornelius the dragon, sworn to protect his tower of strawberries from invading bats. Players help him out by tooting the correct notes on the recorder to shoot fire from the tower and scare off the bats. The more students play, the more they learn the notes. The app ties in with the elementary arts curriculum, which includes the recorder.
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Being the Change

Young people are leading the charge to create the world they want to see. Help direct their efforts with these fantastic resources for teaching about — and taking action on — the big issues that are affecting their communities, countries and planet.

BY CAELI MAZARA

1) NFB Education/ONF Éducation free
Find a rich collection of English- and French-language films that spark conversations on a range of social issues — diversity, poverty, religion, and more. Films range in length from a few minutes to a couple of hours and include helpful “mini-lessons” with age recommendations.
GRADES 1–12 | VISIT nfb.ca/education; onf.ca/education

2) CBC Kids News/Mon actualité du jour (MAJ) free
Produced by CBC (with a French-language equivalent by Radio-Canada), this news site is hosted entirely by teen journalists. Mixed in with lighter fare, the video segments explore weightier issues too, including Indigenous demonstrations, climate change and how federal elections work.
GRADES 4–12 | VISIT cbc.ca/kidsnews; ici.radio-canada.ca/jeunesse/maj

3) Teaching Tolerance free
This website is a wealth of resources for teachers looking to bring social justice into the classroom. Examine the roots of racism, for example, or challenge students to recognize hidden biases. With teaching aids, lesson plans and activities for students of all ages, Teaching Tolerance explores difficult, timely and important topics.
GRADES K–12 | VISIT tolerance.org

4) The Global Oneness Project free
Started in 2006 and designed for educators, this project uses storytelling (through film and the written word) to shed light on poverty, climate change, Indigenous cultures, and more. Many of the stories include study guides and lesson plans, too.
GRADES 9–12 | Visit globalonenessproject.org

5) Deedly free
The Deedly app allows classrooms to sign up to engage in global collaborative efforts that support education, environment and health. Through learning and taking “challenges” to test their knowledge, students unlock Deed Coins, which translate to real-life donations for on-the-ground organizations.
GRADES 8 and 9 | VISIT deedly.com

6) Wee You-Things $3.99
This bright, fun app offers young children an introduction to diversity and difference through silly prose and adorable illustrations. Students will meet Paul who is tall, Claire who has no hair, and Brad who has two dads, and are then encouraged to identify their own “you-things” that make them unique.
GRADES K–2 | VISIT weesociety.com/products/wee-you-things-app

7) DoSomething free
The DoSomething program (and associated DoSomething app) motivates students to take action on the issues they care about, and encourages them to engage their friends, families and communities. Student-driven projects around the world have included clothing drives, water conservation projects, and mental health campaigns.
GRADES 10–12 | VISIT dosomething.org

8) One Globe Kids free trial
What is it like to be a kid in Indonesia, Haiti or Burundi? This app offers “day in the life” stories delivered in audio and video formats that encourage students to consider the diverse perspectives of their international peers.
GRADES K–5 | VISIT oneglobekids.org

BY CAELI MAZARA
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Character Driven

In everything she teaches, Pareen Gill, OCT, looks for ways to nurture the whole child.

BY STUART FOXMAN

At Connaught Public School in Collingwood, Ont., Ann Boucher once had a student named Pareen. School wasn’t fun for her. Pareen, the only student there with brown skin, had been bullied the previous two years. Every day, she’d come home crying. Now, in Boucher’s Grade 4 class, Pareen found an ally.

Boucher showed kindness and compassion. She sought ways to compliment Pareen, and encouraged her to try out for basketball, which Boucher coached. Pareen excelled. “She was a special girl,” says Boucher. “I tried to make her feel good about herself and increase her confidence.”

This isn’t a story about Boucher. It’s about Pareen Gill, OCT. That little girl decided on her career right then, in 1991 in Grade 4.

“That’s why I wanted to be a teacher, to help other children the way Mrs. Boucher helped me,” says Gill. “Empathy, caring and respect are values I have today because of Mrs. Boucher, who demonstrated these as a teacher. I knew one day when I was a teacher, I’d do everything to bring those traits to my students.”

She has. In 2019, Gill earned a Certificate of Achievement from the Prime Minister’s Awards for Teaching Excellence. The award summary states that for her, character “matters as much as academics.”

Gill, who teaches Grade 3/4 at Nottawa Elementary School in Collingwood, is in her 13th year of teaching. She started her career at Connaught, where Boucher was her colleague for six years.

Looking back, Gill doesn’t remember much of the curriculum from when she was in Grade 4. But she vividly recalls
It all ties back to the same teaching mission of nurturing the whole child. “Teaching character shouldn’t be seen as an ‘extra’ expectation,” says Gill. “It should be embedded within all strands we teach.”

Boucher’s character lessons. “If you’re a good person,” says Gill, “the possibilities are endless in the world.”

Nottawa focuses on 10 character traits throughout the year, highlighting one each month. The list includes the three values Gill mentioned — empathy, caring and respect — along with co-operation, courage, honesty, inclusiveness, integrity, optimism and responsibility. Gill looks for every opportunity to instil those traits with students naturally, through her approach and the subject matter.

Consider the book Stone Soup, which describes how members of a community each contributed ingredients for a soup to feed the hungry. Gill teaches the story, and tells her class that if one of them is in need, a helping hand or even a smile goes a long way.

“We have to open our hearts and minds to each other,” Gill said. “Pareen really believes in having a community of learners,” says Margaret Allard, OCT, the teacher-librarian at Nottawa.

Just having the students work together in groups, for a common purpose, teaches co-operation. If a student has completed his or her task, Gill also expects them to support someone who may be struggling with the same task. That’s responsibility and caring in action.

“It empowers them. They feel accountable,” says Gill. “When I say who’s the teacher, they say all of us. When I say who’s the student, they say all of us. We work together to get the job done.”

Gill also has students acknowledge the ways they show consideration for each other. She prints sheets that say, “You filled my bucket today,” with spots for students to write something to a classmate. One wrote, “You are my best friend because you have always accepted me. Also you are always kind.”

“She focuses on the idea of giving,” says Tamara West, OCT, a Special Education teacher at Nottawa. She calls Gill’s attitude of gratitude part of “the culture of her classroom.”

And beyond. Gill had her students write “gratitude” on a stone. At Thanksgiving, the children took out their stones and passed them around their family tables, asking everyone to state what they were thankful for.

Character education weaves into everything. For instance, Gill’s classroom has a poster chart titled “Developing a Growth Mindset.” It puts learning into perspective. Instead of feeling “this is too hard,” the chart says, try thinking “this may take some time.” Instead of “plan A didn’t work,” think “there’s always plan B.”

Gill celebrates successes, but also gives permission for failure by reframing it. She says FAIL stands for First Attempt In Learning. Another favourite saying: practise makes progress. Nobody is perfect, she says.

“It’s OK to experience challenges,” says Gill. “I want to get their thoughts working positively.”

The growth mindset fosters a sense of optimism. That and a sense of responsibility also inform how Gill structures parent/teacher interviews. She doesn’t lead the process. Instead, students sit at the centre of a half-moon table, facing her and their parents.

The arrangement sets up the student as the leader. Students create the report card and walk the parents through their work, using stars (strengths) and arrows (areas to improve) to review their progress.

“They create their own success criteria in groups, and the children are accountable,” Gill says.

Nottawa’s interim principal, Lindsay Richards, OCT, says you can tell a lot from a classroom walk-through. “I look for the atmosphere, the sense of belonging,” she says.
In Gill’s classroom, the environment is inclusive, another of the character traits. The way the students treat each other and collaborate — "You feel it," says Richards.

Beyond the classroom, Gill has had her students participate in Bowls for Beds, a fundraiser for a transitional home for youth. She talks to her students about homelessness, and at Christmas spurs school-wide donations for a women’s shelter. "I want to bring the character traits to life. How can we make a difference?" Gill says.

It’s important that her students grow in every way. It all connects. Roxi Shaw, OCT, who teaches kindergarten at Nottawa, says Gill's celebration of character creates a safer and more enriching environment. That supports overall success. Character and the curriculum “intertwine to develop an all-around person,” says Shaw.

Students will meet the curriculum expectations to different extents. Some days will be better than others. That’s reality. But all students, every day, can demonstrate a character trait.

What’s powerful is that Gill acknowledges those traits, says Barbara Op’t Hoog, OCT, who teaches Grade 1/2 at Nottawa (she taught Grade 3 with Gill last year). When Gill routinely identifies and notes something special about each child, students feel that their character matters. “When you feel better about yourself, you feel better about school,” says Op’t Hoog.

“Character education in Pareen’s classroom is the foundation on which she builds her academic program,” adds Boucher, who retired in 2018.

It all ties back to the same teaching mission of nurturing the whole child. "Teaching character shouldn’t be seen as an ‘extra’ expectation," says Gill. “It should be embedded within all strands we teach.”

“We must be models first and foremost,” she continues. “Children are more apt to listen and follow instructions if educators are genuine in our approach, through our thoughts, words and actions. Character education helps people develop ethically, intellectually, socially and emotionally.”

Gill takes the lead in the school’s empathy spirit assembly, which reinforces messages about appreciating the feelings and actions of others. One of Gill’s favourite quotes: It’s wonderful to be loved, profound to be understood.

Last year, Gill also co-ordinated Nottawa’s first ever Black History Month assembly. She shared resources with her fellow teachers, so that they, in turn, could educate their students. For Gill, the assembly was about more than a valuable history lesson. “It’s part of the big picture of character, how people weren’t treated fairly or equally. But we can make a better world, starting with our little bubble,” says Gill.

She invited a special guest to the Black History Month assembly: Boucher. “She was the first person who didn’t see me as a colour,” says Gill.

At the end of the assembly, Gill showed her old class picture from Grade 4. She asked Boucher to stand up, and spoke to the Nottawa students about her influence.

This was the teacher who showed Gill so much about doing the right thing and about hope. Boucher was the teacher that Gill turned into. The one who wants her class to succeed as students and people — to be the best possible version of themselves. And to feel they’re capable of giving their all and giving to others.

Then, in front of everyone, Gill addressed Boucher. “I said thank you for teaching me to believe in myself.”

Hitting the brain gym

Character education builds leaders. Calm classrooms build a supportive learning environment. Pareen Gill, OCT, addresses both of these goals through an exercise called “brain gym.”

Here’s how she does it.

• She starts by teaching about different parts of the brain: the prefrontal cortex (“to help us make wise decisions,” says Gill), the amygdala (which acts as their “security guard”) and the hippocampus (“our memory saver”).

• For several weeks Gill leads mindfulness sessions. The students massage the parts of their heads that serve as “energy points,” and notice how this affects their state of mind.

• Once students know the drill, they take turns leading the sessions after recess. A chime rings, and the students “exercise” their brains to get them ready.

Gill says brain gym helps the students to self-regulate and focus. She adds, “It helps us to think, learn and behave our best.”

The Ontario Certified Teacher featured in this profile has been recognized with a teaching award and exemplifies the high standards of practice to which the College holds the teaching profession.
On the evening of November 18, 2019, Ian Williams made his way to the podium at the Four Seasons Hotel ballroom in Toronto, through a haze of colleagues’ cheers and congratulations. He’d just won the Giller Prize — Canada’s richest literary award — for his first novel, *Reproduction*. In that heady moment, in a heartfelt acceptance speech, Williams thanked Peter Lucic, the teacher who introduced him to the world of writing at Sir John A. Macdonald Sr. Public School in Brampton, Ont.

“When good things happen, people say it feels surreal,” says Williams, now a professor in the Creative Writing Program at the University of British Columbia. “It feels like you are multiple people at the same time, living multiple realities at the same time. In that instant, I was the university student who needed to thank Margaret Atwood for what her work meant to me, and I was also the 12-year-old boy who spent three magical years with Mr. Lucic.”

Lucic describes the young Williams he met in 1991 as shy. “It was hard to get a fix on him at first. But I immediately noticed his meticulous handwriting.”

“Yes, I was shy, right until university, I think,” says Williams, with a laugh. “Brainy and quiet and introverted and watchful.”

The class that Lucic taught, with his teacher partner Ursula Keuper-Bennett, was part of a Peel Board of Education program for students identified as gifted. “I spent three years with Mr. Lucic,” recalls Williams. “He made an impression on me from the beginning. A large, teddy bear kind of man. Very gentle. He was our school dad. There was such warmth from him.”

“If you have kids for three years like that,” Lucic volunteers, “you can truly personalize the work you do with them. You can almost become a kind of conduit to their futures.”

To the young Williams, it was a lot simpler. “We’d just show up and trust him, and together we’d all get our stuff done. You don’t realize you’re learning. You’re just in a space and time with someone, rather than being instructed.”

One of the things Williams remembers most vividly about Lucic is that he would read novels and stories to them aloud ... through a microphone. “We were
working in a pod situation that served two Grade 6 classes,” explains Lucic. “One very large room with a dividing wall separating it into two smaller classrooms. I needed the microphone to be heard, but I also enjoyed the drama it gave the readings.”

Williams chuckles at the memory. “Oh yes, he was a bit of a storyteller. When you’re in Grade 6, you’re a little bit too old to be read to, but you still like it.” What kind of stuff did Lucic read? “An eclectic selection,” he says. “Some award-winning books like Katherine Paterson’s Bridge to Terabithia and others that I just enjoyed, like Roald Dahl’s The Witches.”

To the young Williams, “it never felt like something was missing. It all felt really organic. In Grade 6, we wrote every single day. We’d get a seven-minute power writing exercise. We got a topic and then wrote as much as we could. We wrote poems or stories.” Lucic’s teaching partner would suggest a topic and provide the structure. “We kids just got on board and ran with it,” says Williams.

From Lucic’s memories of the time, it was a period of wide-ranging artistic experimentation. “Sometimes we’d put together journals. I remember one was called Choices. Ian wrote a really interesting poem about two sisters, one of whom was being abused by her father. It was almost scary.”

Lucic recalls an Open House activity called The Imagination Café. “During one session, I remember Ian playing the piano while his classmate Vicki read a poem. It was truly moving. Kids serving hot drinks and selling cookies. There were a lot of different coloured lights and music suited to a coffee house atmosphere. Many of the students’ poems were illustrated and printed for the audience.”

Williams now sees that “Mr. Lucic had a bunch of these old-soul kids who could nerd out on their subjects. There was a stable community in that room with a person who was looking out for us, which left us free to be ourselves.” He says Lucic understood that the best thing he could do for his students was to encourage and support them, rather than critique them. “He kept us excited about what we were doing. He was a brilliant educator.”

Lucic was also broadening his students’ horizons, introducing them to the internet many years before it would become common practice. “I came to computers fairly early,” admits Lucic. “I’d bring in these old Commodore PET computers and wire them into a primitive network. I got funding for a phone line and modem. This allowed my young authors to connect online with the International Poetry Guild at the University of Michigan and WIER (Writers in Electronic Residence) at York University.”

Williams brightens at the memory. “He had us on this makeshift computer network with guys from the University of Michigan — Americans and Canadians swapping poems in the early days of the internet! We had current affairs projects that connected us with American kids, learning about each other and the tech world that most people didn’t yet know existed. He gave us challenges. He was preparing us for a world that he saw as digital.”

Lucic brushes aside any suggestions he was a prescient educator. “You just do what you need to do in teaching and hope it will be what the child needs.”

Clearly his work suited Williams’s needs; he went on to earn his Hons. B.Sc. in psychology and English, as well as an MA and a PhD in English, all at the University of Toronto and all by the time he was 25. He then taught at Fitchburg State University in Massachusetts and published a short story collection and two poetry collections, one of which, Personals, was shortlisted for the Griffin Poetry Prize.

But Fitchburg was also where Williams lost all his worldly possessions when the condo building in which he lived burned to the ground. He moved back to Canada and started writing Reproduction shortly after.

In his mind, he now brackets the night of that fire with the night he won the Giller Prize. “Those moments have something in common because they’re very clarifying.” Williams recalls what he said to himself as he watched his life going up in flames: “Ian, you’ll have to rebuild yourself again, but you have everything you need in your head.”

He knows he began to discover that confidence in Peter Lucic’s classroom nearly three decades ago. “Something magical is possible if you trust the people who are guardians of your childhood,” concludes Williams. “And Mr. Lucic always delivered. He never disappointed that trust.” PS

In this profile, notable Canadians honour the teachers who have made a difference in their lives and have embraced the College’s Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession, which are care, respect, trust and integrity.
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Building Resilience

With isolation, social distancing and work upheaval caused by COVID-19, Ontario teachers seek ways to care for their mental well-being.

BY STUART FOXMAN

Take a deep breath. That’s what Harry Nowell, OCT, does whenever he’s hiking, running or biking along the tree-lined trail by his home. He works out all the time, alone, and hasn’t stopped during the COVID-19 crisis. If anything, his routine is especially helpful now. Being active helps his physical fitness, but for Nowell there’s more.

“It rests my mind, and is an escape,” says Nowell, who mainly teaches K–4 with the Ottawa–Carleton District School Board. “I feel mental stresses melt away within the solitude of the forest. My body is forced to just consciously breathe.” It’s important for everyone to tend to their mental health, a need that’s magnified in the time of a pandemic, isolation and social distancing.

Uncertainty is difficult for anyone. Moreover, teachers, like others in helping professions, need to be there for those they support. Students will return to a different world. So think of taking a breath in another way.

PRACTISE SELF-CARE

When you fly, you’re told something like this: “If the cabin loses pressure, oxygen masks will drop from overhead. Place the mask over your own mouth and nose before assisting children.” We must take care of ourselves first. Only then can we be of service to others.

For their own sake — and their students — teachers should practise self-care. Living through the coronavirus outbreak takes a psychological toll. Whatever you do to support your mental health during this emergency is like affixing an oxygen mask. It keeps you breathing steadily and leaves you in a better position to give.

A teacher’s normal job pressures, combined with day-to-day personal demands, can always weigh on them. What we’re experiencing now is at another level. “We’re in a different environment,” says Patrick Carney, senior psychologist and mental health lead with the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board and co-chair of the Ontario Coalition for Children and Youth Mental Health.

While the universal turmoil caused by COVID-19 is unique, the fundamentals of mental health self-care remain the same. “We can’t deliver if we’re lost in our own stress,” says Carney.

Everyone is dealing with multiple stressors. The world is upside down. We worry about health (ours and the people around us). We’re figuring out new (or no) routines. Or we’re confronting new family dynamics, along with a case of cabin fever. We also wonder what “normal” life and school will look like.

HAVE A PURPOSE

As best they can, teachers are working to support their students. That desire is “unwavering,” says Joseph Atanas, OCT, an elementary school principal with the Grand Erie District School Board.

Still, being absent from the classroom due to the outbreak is a challenge for teachers and students alike. “Teachers are grappling with an obstacle that’s straining their sense of purpose, and desire to help those who need them most,” says Atanas.

It’s a lot to handle. Taking care of your mental health begins with some basics of physical health: get enough sleep, eat healthy foods and be active. These steps help our immune system allowing us to cope with the effects of stress.

That’s just a start. It’s easy to feel adrift and anxious nowadays, says Carney. “But you can feel empowered if you’re making a plan to manage your situation.”

For our mental health, it helps to work toward a goal. Find one — big or small — daily. It can be more challenging now, so that means adapting. Teachers have a built-in advantage: they help their students to be resilient all the time.

“Resilience is [being skilled] at solving problems, understanding your own feelings, coping with challenges, and [finding] new opportunities,” Carney says.
Take charge of your mental health

Here are a few resources to learn more about coping. For immediate help, contact your board’s employee assistance program (EAP), or check the Government of Ontario’s links to mental health supports: oct-oeeo.ca/ontariogov

- Online tutorials about all aspects of mental health, from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH): oct-oeeo.ca/mentalhealth101
- Information and strategies from CAMH regarding COVID-19 and mental health: oct-oeeo.ca/covid19
- Teach Resiliency, an online library with material and tools to support mental health for educators and students: oct-oeeo.ca/resiliency
- Self-care strategies for teachers: oct-oeeo.ca/teacherwellness
- Well at Work, which showcases research, policy and practice that supports healthier, happier, more resilient educators: oct-oeeo.ca/wellatwork
- Martin Seligman’s PERMA model of happiness, including a link to a video: oct-oeeo.ca/perma
- Ten Percent Happier podcast: search on Apple, Google, Spotify, Stitcher, and more.
- Your Health Matters, a partnership between the Toronto Public Library and Toronto Public Health to recommend books on, among others, stress and mental well-being: oct-oeeo.ca/yourhealthmatters

“Resilience is [being skilled] at solving problems, understanding your own feelings, coping with challenges, and [finding] new opportunities.”

Now it’s time to practise those same strategies. Carney likes the advice Canadian astronaut Chris Hadfield gave about dealing with isolation, as he did in space: understand the actual risk, look at your constraints, focus on your mission (for the day or hour), and take action. These are important stress management tips. Know what you’re experiencing, acknowledging and deal with it, and then move on to something productive and fulfilling. We teach children that lesson in kindergarten, Carney reminds us, and it never gets old.

CHECK IN WITH YOURSELF
Some mental health self-care revolves around what we do, and some around how we think. Assess how you’re doing by seeing where you land on the PERMA model, says Carney. Each letter in PERMA stands for an element of psychological well-being.

- **P**ositive emotion — the degree to which you can remain optimistic, and enjoy what’s present in your life instead of what’s absent.
- **E**ngagement — doing what gives you a sense of calm or joy. “It’s where you get so engrossed in an activity of interest you are said to be ‘in flow,’” says Carney.
- **R**elationships — the bonds we forge. We can be physically distant during COVID-19, but remain socially connected.
- **M**eaning — what you get from what you do. Work can be one key to happiness, but you can find it in anything (family, pastimes, spirituality, etc.) that offers rewards and peace.
- **A**ccomplishments — having goals, and developing/practising the competencies to meet them.

STAY CONNECTED
Teachers are used to coping in many ways. James Steele, OCT, reached out often to friends and family electronically. He spent a lot of time reading, working on his own book (about Canadiana), taking long walks and playing Scrabble online in English and Spanish.

“One thing that’s helpful is surrounding myself with things I really enjoy,” says Steele.

That includes professional learning. Steele, who teaches secondary school French, Spanish and German for the Toronto District School Board, says that keeps him connected to his calling. It will also give him a boost when he returns to the classroom. Learning can happen informally, like keeping up with the literature on education through well-regarded online sources, and through formal channels.

Steele grabbed the opportunity during COVID-19 to pursue an Additional Qualification (AQ) course — International Languages — German, Part I. “It’s part of my commitment to ongoing learning, and will only help my teaching,” says Steele.

Nowell also took the time off to start another AQ — Reading, Part I. He wanted that for his mental well-being. “The AQ is something to keep my brain busy as a teacher,” he says.

TAKE TIME TO REFLECT
Others have looked inward for tranquility. Chantal Côté, OCT, has been practising guided meditation twice a day. Learning how to soothe herself will also assist her in keeping students calm when they return.

She takes some solace too from realizing that this is a collective experience. “We’re all in the same situation,” says Côté, who teaches...
Grade 2 for the Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières. That mindset can help, yet change is still taxing, says Atanas. He identifies a few keys to help himself and his team “stay positive and resilient in uncertain times.” Acknowledge that your grief is real. Know that you don’t have all the answers. Be grateful. And practise what he calls “an abundance of empathy.”

PROVIDE SUPPORT AND COMPASSION
Being empathetic means truly listening and responding to what people (students, family, friends, peers) need in a caring manner. It helps them to move forward, and helps you too. Empathy connects you with others. That can benefit your mental health now, and when you’re back in the classroom.

“In our profession, we’re fortunate to be surrounded by people who are empathetic,” says Steele. “Despite the challenges we may face in our daily lives, we generally have this inherent nature of being caring. We all need to support each other.”

Many teachers are parents of school-age children too, so the disruption affected them in multiple ways. Caroline Cantin, OCT, teaches Grades 1 and 2 for Conseil scolaire Viamonde in East Gwillimbury, Ont., and has two children ages 6 and 10. As instruction went online, she found it hard to give her full attention to everyone counting on her. Cantin felt guilt as a mother and a teacher.

She had to let go a little, recognizing that these aren’t normal times. What helped was doing something daily with her children to have fun: cycle near Lake Simcoe, have a tea party with dolls and teddy bears, or play homemade mini-golf in the backyard. “I want to make every day a good one for my kids, and create special memories with them,” says Cantin.

Without nourishing yourself in body and mind, the return to new demands at school “could be overwhelming,” says psychologist Susan Rodger. So the self-care during time off is critical. Rodger, an associate professor in the graduate program in counselling psychology at the faculty of education, Western University, says we aren’t wired for lives of solitude. The connections and routines that sustain us have all “gone out the window,” she says.

It’s OK to dwell on the upheaval — to a point. She says when you’re talking to others, give yourself 10 minutes to complain, and then move on. Being negative is a contagion too, says Rodger.

One strategy is to reframe. When bad things happen, she says, we tend to look at how they adversely affect us. Instead, think of how you as a teacher stand up for students, and have a role in keeping them safe.

Keeping perspective, as Côté has, is effective. “It’s very helpful to remember we’re not alone,” says Rodger.

KEEP PERSPECTIVE
A global outbreak of COVID-19 is beyond anyone’s control. So, in fact, are most things in life. “We can control how we react,” says Rodger. “We can slow down and notice how we do. And have the courage to say, ‘This is hard for me right now,’ and then get support in whatever form there is.”

Everyone will have their own mental health strategies. “Try new ones until you find something that works,” says Rodger. That’s essential during a crisis or any time.

For Nowell, he can breathe easier knowing that he has stayed active and engaged with the opportunity to alternately focus and clear his mind. “When students do come back [to school], the number-one thing for me is promoting a healthy, safe, stable classroom, and promoting empathy. To do that, my own self-care is important — physically and mentally.”

What’s your best mental health tip?

We asked OCTs about their advice to maintain positive mental health, especially during chaotic times.

- Be well informed through traditional and credible media, but spend less time on social media. It amplifies bad news.
  — James Steele, OCT, Toronto District School Board
- Take one day at a time and learn to let go. “Live in the present moment. Don’t worry about tomorrow; it’s too far.”
  — Chantal Côté, OCT, Conseil scolaire catholique de district des Grandes Rivières
- Stick to a regular schedule to give yourself structure, and complete one task at a time.
  — Yass Leheta, OCT, Niagara Catholic District School Board
- Stay connected with colleagues and friends to share challenges and success.
  — Caroline Cantin, OCT, Conseil scolaire Viamonde
- Do something physical, anything “to release the pent-up energy buzzing in your muscles and bones.”
  — Harry Nowell, OCT, Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Don’t downplay your situation. It’s easy to say you don’t have it as bad as someone else. You’re allowed to be down while still looking up. “I allow myself to feel frustrated at the things that have changed, the things I have no control over, and then I try to remind myself of the things that I can control.”
  — Sally Anderson, OCT, Keewayatinook Internet High School
- Go to sleep and wake up the same time every day, as you would when on your regular work schedule.
  — David Parmer, OCT, Toronto District School Board
- Keep a gratitude journal, writing every day what you’re thankful for, no matter what, and what will make the day great. “It re-centres me.”
  — Joseph Atanas, OCT, Grand Erie District School Board

June 2020 Professionally Speaking
Lesley Hoskin  
Chief Executive,  
Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand

Hayden Llewellyn  
Chief Executive,  
Education Workforce Council (EWC), Wales

Ken Muir  
Chief Executive/Registrar, General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS)

Tomás Ó Ruairc  
Director, The Teaching Council, Ireland

Paul Picard  
Former Interim Deputy Registrar, Ontario College of Teachers

International Trends in Self-Regulation

For the teaching profession, self-regulating bodies around the world face many common challenges and opportunities. To explore them, we spoke with five leaders. Their insights shed light on the operations, scope, image and future of self-regulation.

PS Is there a growing move to include other people who deliver education, not just teachers, under the same self-regulating umbrella?

LLEWELLYN Until 2015, we registered and regulated teachers only. Now, we do so for six other groups within the education workforce: school learning support workers; further education lecturers; further education learning support workers; work-based learning practitioners; youth workers and youth support workers. Wales has the widest public register of education and training professionals in the world.

PICARD There’s always a desire to work with others who can help to improve the lives of our students. In fact, there’s already a symbiosis in public education. For example, in Ontario’s kindergarten classrooms certified teachers work closely with certified early childhood educators.

PS What are the potential benefits?

PICARD Alignment of standards, operational efficiencies, cost savings and a unified voice.

Ó RUAIROC It’s understandable to want to streamline regulatory processes for all those working in the same environment. For regulatory effectiveness, this option may seem attractive. Ultimately, we need to be clear as to reasons we’re doing this in terms of the quality of teaching and learning. A wider understanding of professional standards, within and across professions, is the next right step.
PS Is there a call for alternative paths to certification in teaching?

PICARD Our goal is to have certified, qualified professionals working with students in all learning environments. In all manners of review, we want to ensure fairness, efficiency and timeliness to applicants, and also be cognizant of their ability to move and work freely within the larger education community.

LLEWELLYN Countries such as England are moving increasingly toward alternative routes. We’re open to the development of more flexible pathways.

Ó RUAIRC We’ve also seen a demand for more flexible routes to achieve the accredited qualifications in teaching.

PS What’s behind that?

Ó RUAIRC The reasons include the expectation of greater diversity in the teaching profession. We also want to overcome the challenges that people from different backgrounds can face in seeking to qualify. Competency-based assessments are an important part of the means by which we determine a person’s suitability to assume the awesome responsibility of a teacher. But it’s not the only one.

HOSKIN We’re seeking to attract a more diverse group of people into teaching. One avenue being explored is a career pathway approach, for example, a teacher aide moving toward doing a teaching degree.

PS Will we see changes to facilitate international labour mobility?

MUIR This is a major issue for Scotland and the U.K. more widely following Brexit. The Scottish government has stated publicly that it will continue to welcome workers from other countries beyond 2020. Arrangements are being put in place by GTCS to allow the registration of all non-U.K. applications after this date and support continued labour mobility — something particularly important as Scotland has a shortage of teachers.

HOSKIN New Zealand seeks to attract teachers from overseas to help fill our supply gap. In deciding whether to register a teacher from another jurisdiction, we place much emphasis on a comparison of qualifications with our own, as well as their English-language proficiency and fitness to teach. Even though we have confidence in teaching qualification regimes from other jurisdictions, this doesn’t necessarily translate into confidence in individuals or employer confidence. Investing in induction is likely to be needed.

PS In a digital world, with expectations for rapid access to information, how are you changing the way you engage with members?

MUIR We’ve invested heavily in information technology over the last five years. This has seen a move to cloud-based servers, and to start developing a customer relationship management portal. We’re also in the early stages of developing our data analysis capability to influence and inform the current education debate in Scotland, and potentially beyond.

Ó RUAIRC Our general communications with teachers have moved almost exclusively online. The most obvious example is our e-zines to enhance the awareness, understanding and application of standards.

HOSKIN We’re creating a secure teacher-only platform to conduct our business, and to provide information, resources and dialogue opportunities for teachers. We’ve been trying a range of channels to engage teachers in professional conversations including podcasts, webinars, videos, etc.
Teachers are having those conversations on digital platforms apart from the regulator. In a way, can this support the idea of professionalism?

Ó RUAIRC I often cite Twitter as a space where teachers share resources, discuss and debate all manner of relevant professional matters, all in the full glare of the public eye. This could have a positive impact on the public’s understanding of the importance of professional learning as an ongoing process for teachers.

There are growing pressures on regulators to disclose more about their decisions and processes. How do you square that with privacy needs?

MUIR While GTC Scotland’s default position is to ensure openness, transparency and accountability in all we do, there are various considerations when balancing this with privacy. [This is true] whether it’s commercial information, personal data or the rights of the individual involved in our fitness-to-teach processes.

Are there increased tensions in promoting the standards and stature of the profession without being seen as advocating for it?

MUIR Teachers have a profound impact on the learning experiences and life chances of young people. At the heart of this are professional values. Our vision to inspire teacher professionalism drives our work, and is the filter through which any tensions about our role can be managed. Of course, an important part of professionalism is accountability. Teacher professionalism, more than any other factor, will deliver the aspirations for a Scottish education system that’s characterized by equity and excellence.

PICARD We have a responsibility in law to communicate to the public on behalf of the teaching profession. That includes sharing information about high standards for entry into the profession, high practice standards, and all our efforts to protect students.

Ó RUAIRC Tensions can arise in this space, particularly in public expectations of the profession and understanding of standards. A system predicated on regulation alone may be seen as robust and transparent, but without taking sufficient account of the lived human reality of the system. Equally, an approach that simply promotes may be seen as out of touch with the challenges and concerns that people are encountering. Either way, there is a disconnect, and people are less and less forgiving of disconnects in this hyperconnected world.

There’s a push for governance reforms. What could that end up looking like?

MUIR We’ll likely need to carry out an internal review of the governance structure of GTCS. Most U.K. regulatory bodies operate under a different governance structure, with smaller, all-appointed councils.

LLEWELLYN When we reconfigured to become the EWC in 2015, the government reduced the size of the council from 25 members to 14. This smaller council helps to facilitate more effective strategic
decision-making. Some regulators have registrant majorities, while others have lay majorities.

Ó RUAIRC An emerging trend has seen 50/50 balance on boards. But one voice that’s not heard in terms of governance is that of students. Jurisdictions may have different reasons why legal minors might not sit on governing boards. In light of the emphasis on inclusive education, it’s reasonable to explore how the voices of learners could be more directly included in the deliberations of teaching councils.

PS Do you sense a change in public confidence in self-regulating bodies?

PICARD Confidence in self-regulation comes down to the knowledge and understanding of how regulation works to protect them. Communication is key to bolstering that support.

PS Each of your bodies acts in the public interest. Is the definition of “public interest” static or changing?

LLEWELLYN I wouldn’t say the definition is shifting, however, I would also say that not everybody knows what it means. “Safeguarding” is more commonly understood. I also support the concept and importance of “quality.”

PICARD The definition is always evolving. We need to continue to listen closely to our stakeholders so that we can grow to meet existing and emerging needs while mitigating risks. Regulatory events or actions in one jurisdiction now have wide-spread impact within the global regulatory community.

HOSKIN Where disciplinary decisions are seen as out of step with public perspectives, or the quality of services doesn’t meet the public need, or the regulator is perceived as being ineffective, there’s pressure for change. It may only take one disciplinary case or issue for confidence to be lost.

There has been debate in New Zealand about what combination of powers is appropriate.

PICARD The public expects greater accountability and transparency from every organization they deal with. As long as organizations embrace those ideals and fulfil their mandates, the public will trust them. There could very well be ways to improve services and efficiencies that result in greater appreciation and acceptance of the regulator’s role. The notion of super-regulators — the idea of combining common organizational functions — can be considered a possible next step in the evolution of self-regulation.

LLEWELLYN Ultimately, regulators have to safeguard service users and the public. They must also do so in a proportionate and cost-effective way. Self-regulation still has a place provided these fundamental principles are upheld. PS
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Your guide to recently released books
and other teaching resources.

Freewriting with Purpose
BY KAREN FILEWYCH
Imagine the freedom of writing without the inner critic heckling: that’s wrong, that’s dumb, that doesn’t make sense! Without worrying about “getting it right” we can simply “get it down” and express how we really feel.

That’s freedom. It’s also freewriting. First coined as one word by Peter Elbow in the 1970s, freewriting isn’t something new or even complicated. But it is powerful.

With more than 20 years’ experience in education, Karen Filewych makes freewriting the backbone of her program and a game changer in any classroom. Class discussions might only engage a few students, Filewych explains, but freewriting gives each person a voice and a safe place to explore it. It helps students move past the barriers of fear, reluctance or insecurity and allows them to be more fluent and innovative in their writing. It’s a powerful skill that goes far beyond language arts, too.

Teachers of all subjects and grades will find strategies to incorporate freewriting into their classroom. Filewych also provides dozens of simple but inspiring prompts, provides strategies for modelling positive feedback and gives suggestions on how to run writing groups. She also offers guidelines for student-teacher conferencing and recommends ways to support our English-language learners.

Caroline Pignat, OCT, is a two-time Governor General’s Award-winning author. She is also a high school teacher with the Ottawa Catholic School Board.

Fostering Mindfulness
BY SHELLEY MURPHY
Do we pay full attention to what is happening around us? Are we really present for whatever life may bring us? Or half the time, do our minds wander, thinking and worrying about something other than what we are actually doing? Distraction can be a huge problem for teaching young minds how to learn. This book details strategies for teachers to retrain those wandering brains and to introduce mindfulness into their classrooms.

The author describes how students can learn to regulate themselves when they encounter stressful situations by challenging a triad of internal roadblocks: their attention, their emotions and their behaviour. By following the suggested exercises, students can learn to identify their feelings while focusing on accomplishing tasks in a socially appropriate way.

Mindful breathing, sensing what’s around them, recognizing their emotional landscape and using movement routines are all part of a step-by-step set of instructions to guide students toward mindfulness. Suggestions from other teachers who have implemented these strategies are incorporated, too, along with worksheets and templates for K–8 students.

This is a straightforward and thought-provoking book, designed to encourage teachers to prepare their students to thrive not just in school but also well beyond the classroom.

Teresa Ross, OCT, is a secondary school teacher with the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

Borrow a copy of any of the books reviewed in Professionally Speaking by connecting with the Margaret Wilson Library. Email library@oct.ca, access your College account via oct.ca, use the OCT Membership App, or call 416-961-8800 (toll-free in Ontario 1-888-534-2222), ext. 679. For reviews of French-language resources, visit pourparlerprofession.oeeo.ca.
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Awâsis and the World-Famous Bannock  
BY DALLAS HUNT, ILLUSTRATED BY AMANDA STRONG
Young Awâsis spends Sundays with Kôhkum (her grandmother), who is known for her world-famous bannock. One Sunday, she asks Awâsis to take some bannock to a relative. On the way, Awâsis has so much fun that she drops the bannock off a bridge. While trying to figure out what to do, she meets up with some other-than-human relatives who are waiting to help. During her adventures, we learn the importance of collaborating and seeking guidance from community.

This is the first book from author Dallas Hunt, a teacher, writer and member of Wapisewsipi (Swan River First Nation) in Northern Alberta. Hunt playfully introduces some Cree vocabulary throughout the book, and includes a recipe for the world-famous bannock as well.


Putuguq & Kublu and the Qalupalik!  
BY ROSELYNN AKULUKJUK AND DANNY CHRISTOPHER, ILLUSTRATED BY ASTRID ARIJANTO
Siblings Putuguq and Kublu venture off to the shoreline of the Arctic to find Kublu’s friend Lisa. On the way, they meet up with their grandfather who warns them to be careful of qalupalik, a strange sea creature that lurks underwater and takes children away. As the children reach the shoreline, they brace themselves, ready to find out if the mythical creature is actually real. Much is left to the reader’s imagination, making the book a particularly great starter for children writing their own legends.

 Nunavut-raised author Roselyn Akulukjuk, in collaboration with Toronto writer Danny Christopher, teach about contemporary Indigenous culture and traditional world views in a way that’s both playful and engaging.

Putuguq & Kublu and the Qalupalik!, Inhabit Media, Iqaluit, 2018, softcover, ISBN 978-1-77227-228-4, 44 pages, $6.95, inhabitmedia.com

Una Huna? What Is This?  
BY SUSAN AGLUKARK, ILLUSTRATED BY AMANDA SANDLAND AND DANNY CHRISTOPHER
Every morning, Ukpik sneaks out of her bed very early to play with her new, nameless puppy. She tries to think of a suitable name but can’t find one. Meanwhile, a visitor from the south arrives and introduces Ukpik’s family to cutlery. She is excited to learn how to use the knives, forks and spoons. At the same time, she worries that using the implements might be the prologue to giving up their old ways, and that means everything could change.

The story shows Ukpik’s journey as she discovers that while many things change, the love for her home and family remains constant. After this revelation, Ukpik is finally inspired to name her puppy Uummat, meaning heart, or loved one.


Majella Atkinson, OCT, is a Grade 8 teacher at St. Pius X School in Toronto.
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We Contain Multitudes
BY SARAH HENSTRA
We Contain Multitudes is a provocative and eloquent portrait of a friendship between two unlikely teenaged boys.

Adam is a quiet giant, repeating his senior year of high school. He’s a former football player and gets into his fair share of fights. Jonathan is a quirky and fiercely intelligent sophomore with a love for vintage clothes and poetry.

Paired together by an earnest English teacher’s assignment, the novel is structured as an exchange of weekly handwritten letters between the boys. The letters start off reluctantly with the telling of their daily lives.

At first, they don’t have much to talk about. But over time, they become more honest and revealing. Each realizes there’s more to the other than meets the eye. What begins as a school project transforms into a complex story of friendship, love and secrets.

Henstra, winner of the 2018 Governor General’s Literary Award, touches on many topics and themes real to teens today including bullying, siblings and family issues, peer pressure, friendship, homophobia, sexuality and more. The novel offers plenty to talk about.

Janet Cottreau, OCT, is the executive director of a family camp outside the Ottawa area.
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Bits of Code and a Dose of Reality

Empathy and real-world issues anchor this Grade 3 teacher’s technology lessons.

BY STEFAN DUBOWSKI

Laura Kerpel, OCT, and her Grade 3 students at the annual goIT Technology Summit.

THE CHALLENGE Help students make the link between school learning and the real world.

THE SOLUTION Take part in the goIT program. Have students develop mobile apps to address real-world challenges.

LESSONS LEARNED Laura Kerpel, OCT, wanted to find a way to strengthen the link between her Grade 3 students’ in-class learning with real-world experiences. So she took part in goIT, a program offered through the Toronto District School Board in partnership with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), a global technology company.

The program is a workshop wherein teachers learn about engineering design processes and come up with classroom activities to bolster concepts such as empathy, problem-solving and revision. She took this idea forward with her Grade 3s at Cedar Drive Junior Public School, in Scarborough, Ont., participating in a number of community-focused projects to help the students recognize real-world challenges and figure out practical solutions. Then she had the students think about problems they and their families faced at home, and imagine mobile-device apps to tackle those.

The students ran with it. One came up with an app that would let you take a picture of an infiltrating rodent and automatically contact an exterminator. Another student designed an app to pre-order veggies from the local food bank, guaranteeing access to produce before the stock is depleted.

Most students got as far as developing wireframes — drawings depicting how the apps would work. But a few went further and used the MIT App Inventor (appinventor.mit.edu) to transform their ideas into working programs.

Kerpel took her keenest students to the goIT Technology Summit, an annual get-together for students to develop apps in relation to global issues such as pollution. The Cedar Drive crew won three awards: Creativity, Inquiry & Entrepreneurship, Citizenship & Character and Collaboration & Leadership.

OBSERVATIONS Classroom management is always somewhat challenging, but Kerpel says that part of her work was less problematic when it came to the goIT-derived activities. “They need little to no behaviour management because the students are so focused.” The students did fortify the connection between what they’re learning in school and how it applies to the real world, which was just what Kerpel hoped they would do. But what’s more, they expanded their ideas about technology and its relation to reality.

HELPFUL HINT Laura Kerpel, OCT, challenged her Grade 3s to develop apps, and the students more than managed. “People think coding or robotics or apps are for older kids,” she says. “My students are eight years old, many are English Language Learners, and many don’t have computers at home. Yet, they were able to do it.”

YOU CAN DO IT TOO!

1) Learn about and take part in the goIT program (tcs.com/tcs-goit-student-technology-awareness-program).

2) Develop classroom activities linked to key aspects of the engineering design process such as empathy, problem-solving and revision.

3) Take your star students to the annual goIT Technology Summit to help broaden their horizons even further.

The College’s professional advisory Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media — Updated (oct-oeeo.ca/ecom) guides members’ professional judgment in the use of technology.
MISSION

Placing students’ interests and well-being first by regulating and promoting excellence in teaching.

VISION

Trusted to regulate the teaching profession.

VALUES

The Ontario College of Teachers commits to:

- protect the public interest;
- quality, excellence and professionalism;
- honesty and integrity;
- accountability and transparency;
- efficiency, effectiveness and fiscal responsibility;
- sustainability;
- inclusivity and respect for diversity; and
- respectfulness and teamwork between the College Council, staff and stakeholder community, each respecting the other’s role.

OBJECTS

The College has a duty to serve and protect the public interest by carrying out the following objects in the Ontario College of Teachers Act:

- regulate and govern Ontario teachers;
- determine requirements for College membership;
- accredit professional teacher education and development programs, and provide for members’ ongoing education;
- develop, provide and accredit programs leading to additional Certificates of Qualification;
- issue, renew, amend, suspend, cancel, revoke and reinstate Certificates of Qualification and Registration;
- set and enforce professional and ethical standards for College members;
- investigate and resolve complaints against College members regarding allegations of professional misconduct, incompetence and fitness to practise; and
- communicate with the public on behalf of College members.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

1. STRENGTHEN TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY:
   - develop objective and subjective key performance indicators for the College that are measurable, observable and perceivable;
   - make improvements to the discipline process to better reflect public expectations; and
   - use plain language internally and externally in all communications to better connect the public and College members to the work of the College.

2. MANAGE RISK MORE STRATEGICALLY:
   - focus more on managing risk and less on operational issues in Council meetings;
   - increase public awareness of the ongoing professional development activities of all College members;
   - annually conduct an environmental risk scan;
   - analyze College data and trends as a basis for creating additional guidance and member resources; and
   - utilize the recommendations of the 2018 Governance Review to ensure improved governance and oversight.

3. IMPROVE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:
   - clarify and better communicate the privilege and benefits of self-regulation; and
   - enhance the effectiveness of collaboration with government constituent organizations and other regulators.
Governing Ourselves

This section provides updates on licensing and qualification requirements, notification of Council resolutions and reports from various Council committees, including reports on accreditation and discipline matters.

Fair Registration Practices Report

In March 2020, the Ontario College of Teachers submitted its annual Fair Registration Practices Report (FRP Report) to Ontario’s Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC). The FRP Report contains information about College registration practices and statistics in the 2019 calendar year.

The OFC uses the FRP Report to assess the registration practices of the College to determine if they are fair, transparent, impartial and objective. All Ontario professional regulatory organizations, for example, nurses, doctors and engineers, are required to submit an FRP Report to the OFC every year. This submission is mandated by the Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act, which also requires regulators to make the FRP Report publicly available. The FRP Report is available on the College’s website (oct-oeeo.ca/FairRegistrationReport) in English and French.

Two workgroups at the College provide information for the FRP Report, one for registration practices and the other for registration statistics. Both workgroups comprise staff from multiple College departments.

Upon reviewing the FRP Report, the OFC will advise the College if it requires further information or believes changes to registration practices should be made. In recent reviews of College registration practices, the OFC has not recommended changes. In fact, it has listed on its website a number of commendable College registration practices. PS

COVID-19 related school closures change certification requirements

Ontario applicants will not have to complete their remaining practicum to qualify for certification if they are unable to do so solely because of school closures related to COVID-19. College Council recommended regulatory changes at a special meeting Friday, April 17, 2020, and the provincial cabinet approved the changes on Wednesday, April 22, 2020.

An exemption in the Teachers’ Qualifications Regulation means that candidates in their fourth semester of a four-semester teacher education program at Ontario’s faculties of education will not be required to complete remaining practicum to qualify for certification if they are unable to do so solely because of school closures.

All other program components must be completed by December 31, 2020, or the day after Ontario’s state of emergency is over (whichever is later), and Ontario applicants must apply and be certified by December 30, 2023, otherwise they will not be able to make use of this exemption, and they will have to complete their remaining practicum in order to become certified.

Further, the College has worked closely with the government to enable Ontario faculty of education teacher candidates who complete their application on or after March 31, 2020, to be certified, with condition. The condition stipulates that the applicant must successfully complete the Math Proficiency Test by August 31, 2021.

Until recently, the Math Proficiency Test had been a prerequisite to obtain College certification. An amendment to the Proficiency in Mathematics Regulations made under the Ontario College of Teachers Act now means that Ontario applicants who meet all other applicable certification requirements will be granted initial certification with a condition to pass the test by August 31, 2021. If they do not meet this condition by this date, their certificate will expire.

A complete application includes the receipt of all required documentation and fees by the College.

The Ministry of Education will work with the Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) on options to administer the test online. Test centres will continue to offer in-person testing once public health officials advise that it is safe to do so.

The College will provide updates on its website, oct.ca, as new information becomes available. PS

Video conferencing guidelines

With Ontario’s Learn at Home program in place, the College has created guidelines to support the professional practice of teachers in the use of video conferencing technology.

The College recognizes that supporting student learning in a COVID-19 world can be challenging and confusing for teachers.

Teachers can minimize risks and model the virtual professionalism expected from teaching professionals.

Read the guidelines at oct-oeeo.ca/professionaladvisories. PS
New Appointments

Chantal Bélisle, OCT, LL.M.
Chantal Bélisle, OCT, was appointed as Deputy Registrar of the Ontario College of Teachers. She has been employed by the College since 2008, and has held numerous positions during that time.

Bélisle began at the College as an investigator, progressing to various roles including a secondment to the Complaint Resolution Program, a program officer in Accreditation, and, most recently, a position on the senior leadership team in 2015 as director of Investigations and Hearings.

Bélisle is a member of the College and holds the Principal as well as Supervisory Officer qualifications. In 2013, she completed a master of laws degree with York University’s Osgoode Hall Law School. She also holds an advanced certificate in dispute resolution and mediation from York University.

Prior to arriving at the College, Bélisle was a teacher for 16 years in Simcoe County with the Catholic as well as the public French-language school boards.

Bélisle’s other professional experience includes participation on initiatives for the Ontario Ministry of Education and as a roster member with York University’s Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) program.

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Encounters with Canada is a national youth program for teens 14 to 17 years old, offering a week-long, career-themed, leadership experience in Ottawa.

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PHOTO: GIANTVISION PHOTOGRAPHY

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www.EncountersWithCanada.ca

PHOTO: GIANTVISION PHOTOGRAPHY
Bonnie Oakes Charron
The College welcomes Bonnie Oakes Charron, who was appointed to College Council in March 2020 for a three-year term.

Based in Ottawa, Oakes Charron is an independent governance consultant, specializing in governance education, coaching and resource development.

Since 2016, she has served in various governance roles. She is an urban panel member of the City of Ottawa's Committee of Adjustment ruling on land-use and planning matters, and is a non-profit board director for Odyssey Theatre. She previously served on the board of Governance Professionals of Canada, was a Parent Involvement Committee member with the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, and was an executive committee member of the Ottawa-Carleton Assembly of School Councils.

From 2011–16, Oakes Charron served as a special assistant in governance with Colleges and Institutes Canada. She was an assistant corporate secretary with Canadian Blood Services, senior assistant secretary to the Bank of Canada board of directors, and, between 2000 and 2011, a procedural clerk in the House of Commons. In addition, she has worked in information management as a consultant, knowledge manager and documentalist, data quality analyst, national and international programs officer with the National Library, and a systems librarian for the Federal Court.

A member of the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators and the Society of NonProfit Board Directors, Oakes Charron has been recognized by the mayor of Ottawa for her community service and is a recipient of a corporate champion award from Colleges and Institutes Canada.

She holds a master’s degree in library and information science from Western University, an Honours BA from Bishop’s University, a certificate in diplomacy and social protocol from Carleton University, and is a recognized Fellow in Board Governance with the Canadian Board Diversity Council. PS

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What would you do?

The College’s Investigation Committee considers all complaints made to the College about its members and reviews all information resulting from investigations. The committee can dismiss a complaint or refer the matter, in whole or in part, to the Discipline or Fitness to Practise committees for a hearing.

The Investigation Committee may also caution or admonish the member in writing or in person, or provide written reminders or advice, or ratify a Memorandum of Agreement reached through the complaint resolution process.

By law, cases under investigation are confidential. For the education of members, the following account, based on facts from real cases, raises important questions about teacher conduct, such as what is appropriate and what is not. Details have been altered to respect confidentiality.

The College Registrar initiated a complaint against Sophia, a high school French-language teacher. The allegations against her included the following:
• not providing adequate and appropriate supervision to students while on a field trip to France;
• permitting male and female students to share the same room in a rented house;
• permitting students to consume alcohol;
• consuming alcohol during the trip while in charge of the students; and
• asking students not to reveal the alcohol consumption once they returned from their trip.

Sophia determined that she did not adequately supervise the students while on the trip, and that she did not exercise good professional judgment.

Sophia acknowledged and regretted that her behaviour and actions were inappropriate and unacceptable. She attributed her actions to stress due to personal matters.

Her lawyer stated that Sophia had been an exemplary and dedicated teacher with the board for over 15 years.

If you were a member of the Investigation Committee, what would you do?

The committee decided to refer the matter to the Discipline Committee for a hearing.
Discipline Summaries

Three-member panels of the Discipline Committee conduct public hearings into cases of alleged incompetence or professional misconduct. Panels are composed of elected and appointed Council members. The certificate of a member found to be incompetent or guilty of professional misconduct may be revoked, suspended, and/or made subject to terms, conditions or limitations. In findings of professional misconduct, the committee may also reprimand, admonish or counsel the member, impose a fine, and order the member to pay costs.

Summaries of recent disciplinary cases are published on the following pages. Where the name of an employer is withheld, it is typically to protect the identity of students or to comply with a publication ban ordered by a court or the tribunal. Copies of the full decisions are available at oct.ca > Members > Complaints and Discipline > Decisions.

The College publishes professional advisories, available at oct-oeeo.ca/advisories, which are intended to inform members’ professional judgment and practice. For more information about the Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession, please visit oct-oeeo.ca/ethical.

For a glossary of terms used in these summaries, please visit oct-oeeo.ca/DecisionGlossary.

MEMBER Jennifer Carolyn Allen
REGISTRATION NO 425669
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Jennifer Carolyn Allen, a teacher employed by the Toronto District School Board, for inappropriate conduct.
This matter was heard by the panel on October 17, 2019. Allen, who was certified to teach in July 1999, attended the hearing with her legal counsel.
Allen engaged in inappropriate physical contact with a student by hitting his arm and leaving a bruise.
She had previous disciplinary history with the board for similar behaviour, which led to an oral admonishment from the College.
The Discipline Committee panel found Allen guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that her teaching certificate be suspended for one month. She was directed to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Teachers are expected to serve as role models to students and refrain from acts that may cause a student injury.”

MEMBER Annie Antonenko
REGISTRATION NO 257199
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Annie Antonenko for her prolonged pattern of inappropriate behaviour despite repeated warnings by the administration of her school. She is a teacher employed by the Toronto District School Board.
Certified to teach in June 1988, Antonenko did not attend the hearing on August 26, 2019, but was represented by legal counsel.
Antonenko was repeatedly disrespectful and insensitive toward her students, especially those with a diverse cultural background. Among other things, she belittled and demeaned students, made sarcastic and racist comments to them and swore at them.
The Discipline Committee panel found Antonenko guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that her teaching certificate be suspended for five months. The panel also directed that she appear before it to receive a reprimand.
She must also successfully complete, at her own expense, a course on maintaining appropriate professional boundaries with students, classroom management, and diversity and sensitivity training. She needs to do so within 90 days prior to the date she returns to or starts a position for which a Certificate of Qualification and Registration is required.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Engaging in such inappropriate behaviour is a clear breach of the standards of the profession and is a clear abuse of her authority as a teacher.”

MEMBER Ellie Noreen L. Benn, OCT
REGISTRATION NO 101597
DECISION Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Ellie Noreen L. Benn, a teacher formerly employed by the Toronto District School Board, for unprofessional conduct.
This matter was heard by the panel on November 15, 2019. Benn, who was certified to teach in June 1996, attended the hearing and had legal representation.
Benn demonstrated a pattern of concerning interactions between her and several students. Among other things, she:
• asked students to maintain an uncomfortable physical position for several minutes;
• lightly tapped students on the buttocks three times when they were misbehaving (which a colleague reported as spanking); and
• hurt a student by picking him up and carrying him when he was not responding to instruction.
The Discipline Committee panel found Benn guilty of professional misconduct and directed her to appear before it to receive a reprimand.
The panel also ordered her to successfully complete, at her own expense, a course covering boundaries with students and anger management. She must do so within 90 days of the panel’s order.
In its written decision, the panel stated, “Members are also expected to conduct themselves in a composed and
professional manner, without yelling at students or resorting to the inappropriate use of physical force against them, even in challenging circumstances.”

**MEMBER** Marcella Mary Robbins Cadeau, OCT
**REGISTRATION NO** 197751
**DECISION** Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Marcella Mary Robbins Cadeau, a teacher employed by the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, for unprofessional conduct.

This matter was heard by the panel on November 19, 2019. Robbins Cadeau, who was certified to teach in June 1993, attended the hearing and had legal representation.

Robbins Cadeau removed about $115 from the school office, contrary to school policies and procedures, and misled the principal about what she had done.

The Discipline Committee panel found Robbins Cadeau guilty of professional misconduct and directed her to appear before it to receive a reprimand.

The panel also ordered her to successfully complete, at her own expense, a course regarding ethics. She must do so within 90 days of the panel’s order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Teachers are required to meet the ethical standards of trust and integrity.”

**MEMBER** Craig Russell Cameron
**REGISTRATION NO** 481764
**DECISION** Revocation
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Craig Russell Cameron for engaging in an inappropriate personal relationship with a female student. He was a teacher employed by the Simcoe County District School Board.

Cameron was licensed to teach in February 2005. He did not attend the hearing on October 24, 2019, but had legal representation.

Cameron crossed the boundaries of an appropriate teacher-student relationship when he started exchanging messages and sharing personal information with the student late at night and early in the morning. For example, over the course of about one month, they exchanged over 1,400 text messages.

He communicated with the student at length about personal issues including his family, his daily activities and his feelings, and he encouraged her to discuss personal issues and share feelings with him.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “The Member ought to have known that his behaviour with the Student was very inappropriate and that it could have been confusing and emotionally distressing for the Student.”

**MEMBER** Robert Young Chung
**REGISTRATION NO** 494546
**DECISION** Revocation, reprimand
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Robert Young Chung for criminal conduct. He was formerly employed by the Durham Catholic District School Board.

Chung was licensed to teach in August 2005. He did not attend the hearing on October 16, 2019, and had no legal representation. He engaged in an inappropriate relationship with a student that subsequently developed into a sexual relationship.

Chung was found guilty of sexual exploitation in a criminal court. He was sentenced to 30 months of incarceration and made subject to various ancillary orders. The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration. The panel also directed that he receive a reprimand.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Engaging in the sexual abuse of a student is a clear breach of the standards of the profession and an abhorrent abuse of the Member’s authority as a teacher.”

**MEMBER** Marc-André Coulombe
**REGISTRATION NO** 422559
**DECISION** Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Marc-André Coulombe, a teacher employed by the Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est, for verbally abusing students to the point of making them cry.

In addition, Coulombe made inappropriate remarks, fell asleep in the classroom and left students unsupervised.

This matter was heard by the panel on September 17, 2019. Coulombe, who was certified to teach in February 1999, did not attend the hearing but had legal representation.

The Discipline Committee panel found Coulombe guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for three months. He was directed to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand. He needs to do so within six months of the date of the order.

The panel also ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a course on classroom management and anger management. He needs to do so within 120 days of the date of the order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “The Member demonstrated a lack of consideration for the psychological well-being of his students and failed on several occasions to ensure a safe learning environment that promoted the students’ learning.”

**MEMBER** Darren James Dugan
**REGISTRATION NO** 276950
**DECISION** Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Darren James Dugan, a teacher employed by the Upper Canada District School Board, for inappropriate conduct.

This matter was heard by the panel on October 15, 2019. Dugan, who was
certified to teach in August 1997, attended the hearing with his legal counsel.

Dugan engaged in an inappropriate personal relationship with a female student who was described as “fragile” by the school board. He was her teacher and coach.

His actions included giving her rides in his car, providing her with his telephone number so they could keep in touch over the summer break, allowing her to stay at his house while his family was present, and accompanying her to restaurants.

As a result, the student began to see him as a “father figure.” She developed such an attachment to him that she wrote him a letter describing how much he meant to her and became distraught at the prospect of not seeing him over the summer.

The Discipline Committee panel found Dugan guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for one month. He was directed to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

The panel also ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a course on boundary violations. He needs to do so within 90 days of the hearing.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Vulnerable students may develop an unhealthy attachment to their teachers, and teachers must be careful to not foster inappropriate relationships with them.”

MEMBER Qusai Ashik Gulamhusein
REGISTRATION NO 628671
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Qusai Ashik Gulamhusein, a teacher formerly employed by the Toronto District School Board, for physically and verbally abusing students.

This matter was heard by the panel on November 15, 2019. Gulamhusein, who was certified to teach in April 2012, attended the hearing with his legal counsel.

Gulamhusein inappropriately made physical contact with several students by massaging or touching their shoulders and attempting to hug or hold them. He used inappropriate language and tone with students, including yelling, and also hit one student and tapped another with a metre or smart board stick.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for three months. He was directed to appear before it to receive a reprimand.

The panel also ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, courses on anger management, classroom management and boundaries. He needs to do so within 120 days of the panel’s order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “By swearing, yelling and using inappropriate language, the Member abused students verbally. The Member physically abused students when he hit them with a metre or smart board stick and when he massaged a student.”

MEMBER Susan Elizabeth Inch, OCT
REGISTRATION NO 478209
DECISION Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Susan Elizabeth Inch, a teacher employed by the Hamilton-Wentworth District School Board, for inappropriate conduct.

This matter was heard by the panel on October 24, 2019. Inch, who was certified to teach in August 2004, did not attend the hearing but had legal representation.

Inch made culturally insensitive remarks to a student that were psychologically or emotionally abusive. She also used her cellphone to audio record students during class, which represented a clear error in judgment.

The Discipline Committee panel found Inch guilty of professional misconduct and directed her to appear before it to receive a reprimand. It also ordered her to successfully complete, at her own expense, a course in classroom management and cultural sensitivity. She must do so prior to commencing or resuming any teaching position requiring a Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Members are expected to serve as role models for students.”

MEMBER John Werner Klassen
REGISTRATION NO 174576
DECISION Revocation, reprimand
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of John Werner Klassen for engaging in an inappropriate personal relationship with a female student.

Klassen was licensed to teach in June 1980. He did not attend the hearing on October 23, 2019, and had no legal representation.

Klassen spent time alone with the student on several occasions, resulting in them becoming confidants. He told her that no one needed to know about their conversations. He also sent her text messages, which included sexual innuendos.

Klassen also sent inappropriate text messages of a sexual nature to another female student. He made inappropriate comments about her appearance and told her that he could not stop thinking about her.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration. The panel also directed that he receive a reprimand. He needs to appear before it within six months following the hearing.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “His conduct damaged the reputation of the profession by undermining the trust which the public places in teachers.”

MEMBER Kevin Jack Joseph Marshall Laflièche (formerly known as Kevin Jack Marshall)
REGISTRATION NO 185447
DECISION Revocation
A Discipline Committee panel revoked
the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Kevin Jack Joseph Marshall Lafêche. His inadequate supervision exposed his students to the risk of injury. He was a teacher employed by the Conseil scolaire de district catholique de l’Est ontarien.

Lafêche was licensed to teach in June 1992. He did not attend the hearing on September 17, 2019, but had legal representation.

His conduct demonstrates a lack of commitment to his students’ well-being. For example, he left his students unsupervised on several occasions. He was verbally and physically aggressive toward one student. He also failed to check whether another student needed help when he hurt his back.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Teachers must always provide adequate care for the students under their professional supervision.”

MEMBER Melissa Lefebvre
REGISTRATION NO 486956
DECISION Revocation, reprimand
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the teaching certificate of Melissa Lefebvre for sexually abusing a male student. She was formerly employed by the Lambton Kent District School Board.

Lefebvre had an inappropriate personal and sexual relationship with the student, which included kissing and sexual intercourse.

She was convicted of sexual exploitation and sentenced to 14 months of imprisonment and two years of probation. She was also made the subject of a number of ancillary orders.

Certified to teach in June 2005, Lefebvre did not attend the hearing on September 18, 2019, nor was she represented by legal counsel.

The Discipline Committee panel found Lefebvre guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that her Certificate of Qualification and Registration be revoked. The panel also ordered that she receive a reprimand.

In its decision, the panel stated, “Engaging in a sexual relationship with a student is a clear breach of the standards of the profession and a violation of a teacher’s position of trust.”

MEMBER John Barry MacDonald
REGISTRATION NO 199758
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of John Barry MacDonald, a teacher employed by the Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board, for engaging in a pattern of inappropriate comments and conduct.

This matter was heard by the panel on October 22, 2019. MacDonald, who was certified to teach in June 1994, attended the hearing and had legal representation.

MacDonald repeatedly sexually harassed female colleagues and made a student feel uncomfortable by making inappropriate comments to her. His comments toward the student constituted psychological or emotional abuse. Among other things, he told her inappropriate jokes with foul language and unsuitable themes.

He also shared personal information with her and gave her a gift.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for 20 months. He was directed to appear before it to receive a reprimand.

The panel also ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a course on professional boundaries and boundary violations with students and colleagues. He needs to do so within 120 days of the panel’s order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Teachers are expected to maintain appropriate boundaries with students and colleagues, to treat students and colleagues with respect and professionalism, and to model positive behaviour at all times.”

MEMBER Lucas Thad McDonald
REGISTRATION NO 430101
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the teaching certificate of Lucas Thad McDonald, a teacher employed by the Durham District School Board, for retweeting numerous inappropriate posts on social media.

McDonald, who was certified to teach in September 1999, attended the hearing on October 10, 2019. He had legal representation.

McDonald’s retweeted posts included offensive comments about Muslims, immigrants, refugees and individuals who identify with a gender different from their gender assigned at birth.

The College published an advisory in 2011 warning members to maintain professional boundaries in all forms of technology-related communication, referencing the Supreme Court’s ruling in Ross v. New Brunswick School District No.15, which stipulates that teachers’ off-duty conduct is relevant to their suitability to teach.

The Discipline Committee panel found McDonald guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his certificate be suspended for 10 days. He was directed to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand. He needs to do so within 90 days of the panel’s order.

In addition, he was directed to complete a course of instruction, at his own expense, regarding appropriate communications and sensitivity training. He needs to do so within 120 days of the panel’s order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “The Member’s behaviour had the potential to jeopardize his professional relationships with students and erode the public’s trust in teachers.”

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MEMBER Albert Chi Cheong Ngai  
REGISTRATION NO 499293  
DECISION Revocation, reprimand  
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Albert Chi Cheong Ngai for sexually abusing a student. He was employed by the Toronto District School Board.

Ngai was licensed to teach in January 2006. He did not attend the hearing on July 25, 2019, but had legal representation.

Ngai and a female student began to see each other socially, which led to a personal relationship that developed into a romantic and sexual relationship. They subsequently moved in together and remain in a committed relationship.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration. The panel also directed that he receive a reprimand.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “As a teacher at the School, and, in particular, as a teacher of the Student, he stood in a position of trust and authority to her which was highly incompatible with a sexual relationship.”

MEMBER Antonietta Paik  
REGISTRATION NO 432084  
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Antonietta Paik, a teacher formerly employed by the York Catholic District School Board, for criminal conduct.

This matter was heard by the panel on October 16, 2019. Paik, who was certified to teach in June 2000, attended the hearing with her legal counsel.

Paik engaged in a pattern of fraudulent behaviour when she submitted a total of $120,493.80 in fraudulent claims to her medical benefits provider.

In a criminal court, she was found guilty of fraud and uttering a forged document. She was sentenced to 18 months’ imprisonment and placed on probation for two years.

The Discipline Committee panel found Paik guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that her teaching certificate be suspended for 12 months. She was directed to appear before the panel to receive a reprimand.

The panel also ordered her to successfully complete, at her own expense, a course on ethics. She needs to do so no more than 12 months before starting or returning to a teaching position.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Her fraudulent behaviour was disgraceful, dishonourable, unprofessional and unbecoming of a member.”

MEMBER Jeffrey Alan Reid, OCT  
REGISTRATION NO 587324  
DECISION Reprimand, conditions  
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Jeffrey Alan Reid, a teacher employed by the Kawartha Pine Ridge District School Board, for verbally abusing a student.

This matter was heard by the panel on October 28, 2019. Reid, who was certified to teach in June 2010, attended the hearing with his legal counsel.

Reid made hurtful and dismissive remarks toward a student that humiliated him in front of his peers. Though Reid did not intend to offend the student, his comments nonetheless constituted verbal abuse.

The Discipline Committee panel found Reid guilty of professional misconduct and directed him to appear before it to receive a reprimand.
It also ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a course on classroom management and professional communication. He needs to do so within 180 days of the panel’s order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “As part of their professional practice, teachers must demonstrate professionalism, respect and a commitment to student well-being in all their interactions with students.”

MEMBER Ian William McGregor Smith
REGISTRATION NO 523821
DECISION Revocation, reprimand
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the Certificate of Qualification and Registration of Ian William McGregor Smith, a teacher formerly employed by the Greater Essex County District School Board, for sexually abusing a female student.

Licensed to teach in November 2007, Smith attended the hearing on October 15, 2019. He had legal representation.

Smith had an inappropriate relationship with a student. He spent time alone with her, spoke with her about his personal issues, made inappropriate comments to her (such as complimenting her on her appearance), gave her rides in his car, invited her into his home, and hugged and kissed her.

After she graduated, he would consume alcohol and marijuana with her and had a single sexual encounter with her.

He also inappropriately and repeatedly touched another student on the back, shoulders and areas surrounding the neck.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and directed the Registrar to revoke his Certificate of Qualification and Registration. The panel also directed that he receive a reprimand.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “His behaviour towards the students constitutes physical, psychological, emotional and sexual abuse.”

MEMBER Kari Dawn Snyder, OCT
REGISTRATION NO 436266
DECISION Reprimand, conditions
A Discipline Committee panel reprimanded Kari Dawn Snyder, a teacher employed by the Toronto District School Board, for inappropriate physical contact with a student.

The physical contact caused her fingernail to scratch the student and leave a mark.

This matter was heard by the panel on October 11, 2019. Snyder, who was certified to teach in June 2000, attended the hearing with her legal counsel.

The Discipline Committee panel found Snyder guilty of professional misconduct and directed her to appear before it to receive a reprimand.

The panel also ordered her to successfully complete, at her own expense, a course on classroom management. She must do so within 90 days of the panel’s order.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Members are expected to serve as role models for students.”

MEMBER Moses Michael Vanker
Ashraf Mori Suzuki
REGISTRATION NO 619299
DECISION Revocation, costs
A Discipline Committee panel revoked the certificate of College member Moses Michael Vanker Ashraf Mori Suzuki for a pattern of unprofessional conduct.

Suzuki, who was a teacher in Manitoba, engaged in aggressive and unprofessional behaviour on multiple occasions. His behaviour included making obscene, offensive and demeaning comments to a student and the student’s parent via Facebook.

This matter was heard by the panel on July 15 and 16, 2019. Weglarz, who was certified to teach in July 2013, did not attend the hearing. He had no legal representation.

Weglarz sent highly offensive emails to school staff with sexually explicit, misogynistic and homophobic content.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for three months. The panel also ordered him to receive a reprimand.

In addition, the panel ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a course on appropriate boundaries with colleagues. He needs to do so prior to starting a teaching position or any position for which a Certificate of Qualification and Registration is required.

The member was ordered to pay $20,000 in costs within six months of the panel’s decision.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “[T]he Member undermined the reputation of the teaching profession and the trust and confidence that the public places in teachers.”

The member was ordered to pay $10,000 in costs.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “Through his repugnant conduct, the Member has demonstrated that he lacks the professional judgment to remain a member of the teaching profession in Ontario.”

MEMBER Andrew Alexander Weglarz
REGISTRATION NO 647896
DECISION Suspension, reprimand, conditions, costs
A Discipline Committee panel suspended the certificate of Andrew Alexander Weglarz, a teacher employed by a Toronto private school, for inappropriate conduct.

This matter was heard by the panel on July 15 and 16, 2019. Weglarz, who was certified to teach in July 2013, did not attend the hearing. He had no legal representation.

Weglarz sent highly offensive emails to school staff with sexually explicit, misogynistic and homophobic content.

The Discipline Committee panel found him guilty of professional misconduct and ordered that his teaching certificate be suspended for three months. The panel also ordered him to receive a reprimand.

In addition, the panel ordered him to successfully complete, at his own expense, a course on appropriate boundaries with colleagues. He needs to do so prior to starting a teaching position or any position for which a Certificate of Qualification and Registration is required.

The member was ordered to pay $20,000 in costs within six months of the panel’s decision.

In its written decision, the panel stated, “[T]he Member undermined the reputation of the teaching profession and the trust and confidence that the public places in teachers.”

Copies of the full decisions are available at oct-oeeo.ca/decisions.

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Shari Lapena’s Mysterious Ways

The writer of bestselling whodunits shares her circuitous route from lawyer to teacher to celebrated author.

BY LAURA BICKLE

- Born in Scarborough, Ont., in 1960
- Attended public schools in Toronto, Aurora and Belleville, Ont.
- Graduated from the University of Toronto with a bachelor of arts in political science and economics. Obtained her bachelor of laws from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University. Received her bachelor of education from the University of Toronto in 1991
- Did supply and long-term occasional teaching in the former City of York, mostly ESL and English
- Her debut novel, Things Go Flying, was a Sunburst Award finalist in 2009
- Happiness Economics was shortlisted for the Stephen Leacock Award in 2012
- The Couple Next Door, released in 2016, was a bestseller in Canada and internationally
- Her fourth novel, A Stranger in the House, was published in 2017, followed by An Unwanted Guest (2018) and Someone We Know (2019)

Describe yourself as a student. Well-behaved. Teachers loved me.

What were your favourite literary pieces studied at school? I loved the Shakespearean tragedies — Julius Caesar, Romeo and Juliet, Macbeth (especially Macbeth) and The Merchant of Venice. I didn’t like the comedies. And I loved Beowulf.

Who are your favourite historical figures? I loved reading about all the British and French kings and queens, and various revolutions. I read a lot about Russian history. But favourite historical figures? Honestly, there wasn’t a lot to admire.

Who are your non-fiction heroes? Right now, my real-life hero is Greta Thunberg.

Who are your favourite writers? Kate Atkinson, Hilary Mantel, Anthony Trollope — and too many others to name.

As a student, what career path did you dream of following? I wanted to be a writer when I was about nine. But I didn’t really consider it as a career path. A law degree seemed like a good idea. But I never really wanted to be a lawyer.

What natural gift did you wish to possess during your school days? And now? A photographic memory would have been nice. I don’t need that anymore. I wish I had a natural gift for technology, but I don’t. I still struggle with it.

Who is your favourite fictional teacher and school? Hogwarts for most favourite school ever, and Snape for favourite teacher.

What quality did you most appreciate in a teacher? I had a teacher who made history and politics absolutely fascinating. His name was Mr. McWhirter, and his enthusiasm really inspired me.

Your favourite extracurricular activity? I was pretty good at basketball, even though I wasn’t very tall.

Most important life lesson you learned at school? Probably organization and discipline. And how to make friends.

Fondest school-related memory? Hanging out in the halls with my best friends from high school. We still get together now.

What school experiences prepared you for your life now? I was a big reader from a very young age. That love of books is still a big part of my life. Also, learning to type was useful. High school and university opened my mind and stimulated my curiosity.

You were a teacher: how did your school experience shape your career choice? I loved literature and wanted to share that. PS
“Everyone is different; everyone needs to approach retirement in a way that suits them.”

- Susan Noda
Guidance Counsellor

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