

ISSUE TWO | SUMMER + FALL 2012

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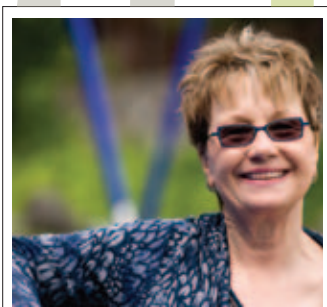
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THE MAGAZINE OF BC EDUCATION

THE MANDATE OF THE TEACHER REGULATION BRANCH

The Teacher Regulation Branch is part of the Ministry of Education. Its mandate is to regulate educators and it is empowered through the *Teachers Act* to ensure that educators who work with students in BC classrooms are competent and suitable for the important role they play in society.

KEEP IN TOUCH

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THE SELF-REGULATING STUDENT

Developmental researchers have identified self-regulation – the ability to respond effectively to various stressors and return to a state of equilibrium – as central to the ability to learn. We know this from our classroom experience. The hyperactive child and the child who can hardly stay awake will both struggle to focus, as will the child who is highly anxious or very sensitive to light and sound.

Dr. Stuart Shanker of York University is a recognized expert in this area through his work with young children with autism spectrum disorders at the Milton & Ethel Harris Research Initiative. His research on ways to help children self-regulate is resonating with BC educators, who believe this approach has the potential to create optimal learning conditions for our students.

THE SCIENCE OF SELF-REGULATION

Scientific studies of the brain tell us that learning occurs best when a child is calm, focused and alert. Yet the child is continually dealing with various levels of physical, emotional, cognitive and social stress that can make it difficult to attain or maintain this state.

Shanker defines self-regulation as “how well a child is able to deal with stressors and recover from the effort.” A child who is able to return to a baseline state of equilibrium is much more likely to learn, form healthy relationships and be self-motivated.

Gravity is a simple example of a physical stress. If we have to stand for an hour-long lecture, the physical demands of standing will likely impair our ability to absorb information. Some children, Shanker says, “may even find sitting to be as physically draining as others find standing.” If this sensitivity is not accommodated in the classroom, the child will have to work that much harder to pay attention, placing him or her at greater risk of falling behind academically.

This concept can be extended to other stressors, be they physical, emotional, cognitive or social. Recent studies suggest that when we are struggling with our emotions, for example, the parts of our brain responsible for cognitive activities may be overwhelmed by the parts of the brain processing strong negative emotions and may even receive less glucose, so that it becomes harder to learn or make good judgments. →→

Dr. Stuart Shanker of York University is a recognized expert in the area of self-regulation through his work with young children with autism spectrum disorders at the Milton & Ethel Harris Research Initiative.



Dr. Stuart Shanker —

The goal for parents and educators is to create environments where students become self-aware and discover how they can achieve a state of calm, alert focus. Successful strategies have nothing to do with imposing external control to prevent “bad” behaviour. Indeed, the traditional approach of encouraging self-control through punishment or reward is counter-productive.

External punitive approaches often create negative emotions like fear, anger, frustration and shame, which consume energy and ultimately impair concentration and attention. Conversely, Shanker says neurobiological research shows that when motivation is internally generated, the brain produces neurochemicals that actually provide fuel for the brain and give it energy.

SELF-REGULATION AND CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Many children with special needs face specific biological and physical challenges that make it particularly difficult for them to control their energy and emotional states. “What happens is that problems in self-regulation are the downstream consequence of those initial deficits,” Shanker explains. “While we can’t at this point in time change those initial challenges, we can provide kids with tools to help them manage these downstream problems.”

Shanker believes that for a great many children between the ages of five and nine, our focus should be on interventions to help them learn how to self-regulate, rather than investing valuable time and energy on assigning a diagnosis to a perceived issue.

His concerns stem from the “unbelievably high number of misdiagnoses” that occur in this age group, as well as the philosophical issue of pathologizing behaviour to the extent where, he says, “it is not uncommon these days to see a classroom in which more than a quarter of the students have had some sort of diagnosis.”

Shanker points out that once a child is diagnosed – say, for example, with oppositional defiant disorder – the diagnosis often influences the way the child is viewed by teachers and parents, changing the way they interact with the child.

“Before we get locked into looking at a child through the lens of a diagnosis, we want to work really hard at helping them learn to self-regulate,” he says.

CREATING THE PHYSICAL SPACE FOR SELF-REGULATION

According to Shanker, a well-designed physical environment can help us self-regulate more effectively. “One thing we’ve learned over the last 10 years,” he says, “is the unbelievable variability and sensitivity in children’s sensory and motor systems.”

His suggestions? Draw on the research of scientists and clinicians who have been studying every aspect of what a ‘self-regulating classroom environment’ should look like. Become aware of and make adjustments to the environmental elements that can overstimulate and bombard some learners’ systems. Too much colour, too much noise (volume or constant background sound) or too much of any variable can overload the student’s brain and block →→

Scientific studies of the brain tell us that learning occurs best when a child is calm, focused and alert. Yet the child is continually dealing with various levels of physical, emotional, cognitive and social stress that can make it difficult to attain or maintain this state.



SELF-REGULATION AT A GLANCE

Dr. Shanker defines optimal self-regulation as the ability to stay calmly focused and alert. We self-regulate when we adjust our level of energy depending on the task at hand – say, for example, when we take a few deep breaths before an important presentation. We self-regulate when we modify our behaviour to reach a goal (such as turning off email notification when working on a lesson plan) or when we control an angry outburst at a driver who has cut us off in traffic.

When we achieve a state of calm, alert focus, we are in a prime state for learning, completing tasks and maintaining positive relationships with others.

As Shanker describes in an article in Education Canada, the child (and adult) must learn to respond to stressors associated

with the following five categories:

- *biological (regulating our arousal states),*
- *emotional (monitoring and modifying our emotional responses),*
- *cognitive (sustaining and switching attention; inhibiting impulses; dealing with frustration, delay and distractions; and sequencing our thoughts),*
- *social (mastering rules of appropriate behaviour; and co-regulating with others), and*
- *pro-social (especially empathy).*

Numerous meta-studies show that self-regulation is more important than IQ when it comes to predicting a child's ability to do well in school, make healthy friendships and work towards personal goals. ←



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it from achieving the calm, focused and alert state a learner needs.

Shanker also recommends having devices available that help soothe the nervous system, such as Thera-Bands, Plasticine or Koosh balls. An exercise bike at the back of the class is useful for the student who needs to resolve anger or stress. Blankets draped over two desks with a mat on the floor provide a refuge for the child who is overloaded and needs some quiet time.

“But remember,” he says, “this is all about self-regulation. It’s helping the child figure out what calms them down or what brings them up. When you start to get zoned out or hyper, how do you recognize those signs and what do you do? The goal is to help students identify what it feels like to be calm, focused and relaxed.”

COMING NEXT FALL: BC’S FIRST WAVE OF SELF-REGULATING CLASSROOMS

Starting in September 2012, six school districts in BC will participate in the first multi-district self-regulation project. One or two classrooms in each district will implement a wide range of strategies, supported by training for the classroom teacher, a student support services teacher, an education assistant and the principal.

Surrey school district superintendent Mike McKay will act as project director, managing the program and bringing

together the expertise of Dr. Shanker with educators and other experts from British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario who have implemented similar projects. The initiative will assess everything from physical classroom environments to intervention strategies for various grades.

“In this first phase, we really want to learn what the best programs are to help students self-regulate” says Shanker.

“At the end of the project we’ll be in a better position to expand the initiative.”

SELF-REGULATION AT SCHOOL AND HOME

Shanker is excited about this upcoming BC-based self-regulation initiative, believing it will go a long way to create inclusive classrooms that support personalized learning. He notes, however, that the success of any project focusing on self-regulation requires support beyond the school environment.

“Parents need to be partners in this,” he says. “There are countless examples of what parents can do, and here’s a simple one: make sure your child is getting at least nine hours of sleep. Kids today get an average of two hours less sleep each night than they did just a decade ago. This has a big impact on their ability to self-regulate. Proper eating and activities that promote self-regulation – like regular physical activity – need to be encouraged as well.” ←

LEARN MORE

Dr. Shanker has a new book coming out this fall, *Calm, Alert and Learning: Classroom Strategies for Self-Regulation*. Until then, a good place to start is his article in *Education Canada*, "Self-Regulation: Calm, Alert and Learning" (www.cca-ace.ca/education-canada/article/self-regulation-calm-alert-and-learning).

Dr. Shanker spoke at the fall 2010 conference of the BC School Superintendents Association, and his presentation on The Development of Self-Regulation is available on the BCSSA website (www.bcssa.org/fallconference10.html#presentations). He was interviewed on the CBC program *Ideas* in July 2010 (www.cbc.ca/ideas/episodes/2010/07/15/neuron-therapy-listen/), and you can also watch a clip of the work he does at the Research Initiative on The National (www.cbc.ca/video/#/News/TV_Shows/The_National/1233408557/ID=2220343281).

West Vancouver superintendent Chris Kennedy, Surrey superintendent Mike McKay and Nanaimo-Ladysmith superintendent Dave Hutchinson have written blog entries about self-regulation; see www.cultureofyes.ca, www.mikemckay.ca and www.daves-corner.com. Hutchinson, for example, describes work being done at an inner city school in Regina that is helping some vulnerable students better regulate themselves. ←



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NEWS + NOTICES FROM THE BRANCH

BRITISH COLUMBIA TEACHERS' COUNCIL IS ESTABLISHED

The British Columbia Teachers' Council receives its mandate from the *Teachers Act* and is responsible for setting standards for teachers in the areas of teacher education, certification, conduct and competence. The members of the Council undertake their work in the public interest and not in their own personal interest or in the interests of any organization with which they are affiliated. Before taking office, Council members must take and sign a prescribed Oath of Office to abide by the *Teachers Act* and act honestly and ethically, in a manner that maintains and enhances the public's trust and confidence in the governance of the teaching profession and does not bring it into disrepute.

The first BC Teachers' Council was established in the spring of 2012, with the following individuals being either elected or appointed to sit on the Council.

- Catherine Abraham – BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils (Appointed)
- Claire Avison – Ministry of Education (Appointed)
- Rebecca Blair – BC Teachers' Federation (Appointed)
- Lynn Bosetti – Association of BC Deans of Education (Appointed)
- Don Boyd – BC Principals' & Vice-Principals' Association (Appointed)
- Bruce Cummings – Interior Zone (Elected)
- Laurence Greeff – Fraser Zone (Elected)
- Patricia Gudlaugson – BC Teachers' Federation (Appointed)
- Avinash Gupta – Northern Zone (Elected)
- John Hall – Vancouver Coastal Zone (Elected)
- Patricia Haslop – Federation of Independent School Associations (Appointed)
- Cathy Lambright – BC Teachers' Federation (Appointed)
- Andrew Leathwood – BC School Superintendents Association (Appointed)
- Monty Palmantier – First Nations Education Steering Committee (Appointed)
- Teresa Rezanoff – BC School Trustees Association (Appointed)
- Fred Robertson – Vancouver Island Zone (Elected)

The first meeting of the Council was held on May 11, 2012. Visit the website of the Teacher Regulation Branch at www.bcteacherregulation.ca to learn more about the mandate, composition and future meetings for the Council. ←

CERTIFICATE HOLDERS, UPDATE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Your up-to-date mailing and email addresses allow us to let you know when changes have been made to standards or regulations and to inform you of news that could affect you as a BC educator. Updating your contact information is easy. Log in to the Certificate Holders' Area of the website (www.bcteacherregulation.ca) and edit your profile. Remember to save your changes and log out when you have finished. ←

NEW REFUND POLICY FOR CERTIFICATE RELINQUISHMENT

The Teacher Regulation Branch will provide a refund to employers who deducted the 2012-2013 annual fee from the payroll for certificate holders who relinquish their certificates before August 1, 2012. The employers will be responsible for reimbursing the certificate holders. For more details, refer to the retirement and relinquishment information under the Certificate Services tab on the Branch website at www.bcteacherregulation.ca. ←

REQUIREMENT FOR A CRIMINAL RECORD CHECK

If you are a certificate holder and have not had a criminal record check in the last five years through the BC College of Teachers or the Teacher Regulation Branch, you are required to give your authorization for a check by completing a form and submitting it to the Branch before December 31, 2012. This deadline only applies to you if your last check was before January 1, 2007. The Branch will be mailing individualized notices in the coming months. However, **you can help the Branch save money and reduce waste.** If you are due to complete the criminal record check authorization this year, please consider submitting it now. Visit the Branch website at www.bcteacherregulation.ca, click on the Certificate Services tab, choose Criminal Record Check in the menu and follow the instructions for submitting your authorization. This will reduce the number of personalized notices that the Branch needs to mail to certificate holders. ←

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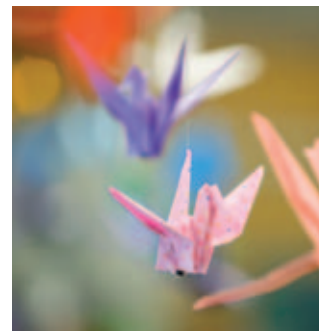
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Brenda Larsen —

TEACH ABILITY ZONE



CALM, ALERT AND SELF-AWARE: CLASSROOM STRATEGIES TO GET STUDENTS INTO THE “TEACHABILITY ZONE”

Many educators implicitly teach their students the tools of self-regulation as part of their classroom practice, understanding that this will create learning environments where students are engaged, calm and self-aware. Brenda Larsen, an intermediate teacher in Coquitlam, is one BC educator who uses classroom techniques to help her students respond to stress in a positive and healthy way.

“Before kids can start learning, they need to be in a ‘teachability zone,’” says Larsen. She uses a number of practical strategies to help her class of 29 grade four and five students at Coquitlam’s Panorama Heights Elementary School get into this zone throughout the school day.

The opening 20 minutes of her class are devoted to “exploration time.” Students are free to do whatever they want, as long as at least one other person is participating in the activity with them. Some kids will spend the time knitting together, others make complex origami creations and a group of students recently created an intricately painted dragon out of cardboard. Any students challenged with social interaction issues have all shown significant improvements interacting with their peers.

While Larsen’s intent is that the students will independently select their activities for this block of time, she says some students need guidance. A number of boys, for instance, struggle to make activity choices – these students spend most of their free time playing video games and are less confident about how to play in the real rather than virtual world.

“Setting aside 20 minutes for exploration time is an investment that completely pays off,” she says. “My students leave behind any feelings of anxiety or stress they may have brought with them to school and they are then ready to go into math or English. Their brains are in a totally different space than they were at the start of the day.”

While the self-directed play period helps students get into a focused state for learning, other factors may prevent this from happening. Larsen says that the inextricable connection of the physical and cognitive plays itself out in obvious ways. Just like the sugar buzz all teachers are too aware of following Hallowe’en, there are other days when unsettled behaviours can be traced back to the ingestion of sugary foods before class.

Larsen also does a guided relaxation with her students before a test or prior to an activity where she wants them to tap into their creativity. She says it helps students calm down and become more open to the upcoming task.

Finally, wherever possible she designs projects so that students choose the topic they want to pursue and how they want to demonstrate their learning. “When you enable them to explore their interests, it takes the need for external motivation out of the picture – students are intrinsically motivated and ready to go.”

In these and other examples, Larsen is helping her students learn how to recognize sources of stress and minimize their impact. Like many educators, she is creating a classroom that helps her students self-regulate and be in the best state possible for learning to happen. ←



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IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST

THE DUTY TO REPORT: AN OPEN AND ACCOUNTABLE DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

One of the objectives of the new *Teachers Act* is to create a more accountable and transparent teacher regulation system – one that better protects children and puts the public interest first.

"The duty to report misconduct or incompetence remains the same under the new legislation," says Sheila Cessford, director of professional conduct at the Teacher Regulation Branch. "But there are some changes to the process for reviewing and investigating reports or complaints about an educator, and the process itself will be more open and public."

As was the case under the BC College of Teachers, school districts must notify the Teacher Regulation Branch if they have suspended or dismissed a teacher or disciplined him or her for emotional, physical or sexual misconduct towards a student. These reports will now be submitted to a government-appointed commissioner, who will review them and decide on a course of action. Parents, educators and members of the public can also submit complaints about a teacher's conduct or competence directly to the commissioner.

Possible courses of action include taking no action – for example, if the report is for a matter best addressed by the school district or if it is clear that there is no cause for concern. The commissioner can also:

- request an investigation if more information is needed,
- call a discipline hearing, or
- recommend that the issue be resolved through a consent resolution process.

The legislation grants additional powers to investigators from the Teacher Regulation Branch who need to collect information about a case. "This will make it easier for investigators to gather relevant and timely information," says Cessford. "We can enter schools, inspect records and interview the subject of the investigation or other people we consider relevant to the case."

Whether the case is resolved through a disciplinary hearing or the consent resolution process, if disciplinary action is warranted, there are several options available, including a reprimand, suspending the individual's certificate, placing limits or conditions on the certificate (such as requiring that the certificate holder comply with certain conditions) or cancelling the certificate.

One way that the new system improves transparency is by opening discipline hearings to the public. With few exceptions, discipline decisions will also be published online. "There are also new rules for notifying the person who made the complaint, the person who is the subject of the report and the school district or independent school authority about the status of the report and whether any disciplinary actions were taken," says Cessford.

The emphasis on accountability and public reporting outlined in the new legislation should increase the public's confidence that teachers who fail to meet the standards of conduct and competence are held accountable for their actions and that BC's schools are safe and supportive learning environments for our students. ←



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THE ROLE OF THE COMMISSIONER

by Sally Mercer

One of the features of the new teacher regulation system created by the *Teachers Act* is the introduction of a commissioner.

Appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council on the recommendation of the Minister of Education, the commissioner receives reports and complaints regarding the professional conduct and competency of educators who hold (or have held) British Columbia teaching certificates and then determines whether any further inquiry is necessary.

"The role of the commissioner is an important one," says Christina Zacharuk, executive director of the Teacher Regulation Branch. "Decisions must be made so that the public trust is maintained, the high quality of BC educators is preserved and the teachers who breach the standards are accountable for their actions."

The commissioner is responsible for:

- establishing rules and practices for the just and timely resolution of matters related to misconduct or incompetence,
- conducting preliminary reviews of reports or complaints made about teacher conduct or competence,
- dismissing complaints or reports, or ordering investigations,
- making and accepting consent resolution agreements with educators, which set out admissions and disciplinary consequences,
- taking no further action following investigation of a report or complaint, and issuing the reasons for that decision, and
- issuing citations for a hearing by a panel if necessary.

The commissioner is also responsible for establishing hearing panels and overseeing pre-hearing matters.

Zacharuk adds that both the staff of the Teacher Regulation Branch and legal counsel provide advice, analysis and administrative support to the commissioner, and the commissioner may delegate some of his or her duties to staff if it is appropriate.

With the introduction of the *Teachers Act*, Dianne Flood was appointed the acting commissioner. A competitive, merit-based process to select a commissioner is under way and is expected to be concluded this summer.

To read more about the legislation authorizing the commissioner's appointment and responsibilities, visit the Teacher Regulation Branch website at www.bcteacherregulation.ca and click on the Professional Conduct tab. ←

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ENGAGING STUDENTS: WHAT WORKS

by Farley Cannon, Maddee Nash and Lauren Utter



Learn asked students from the Gulf Islands Secondary School to write a column sharing their thoughts on the importance of student engagement in BC's education system. This is their contribution, written from their own perspectives. They want the reader to know that they do not intend to speak for all students. Our thanks to Farley, Maddee and Lauren for their thoughtful and frank student perspective. →→

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Lauren Utter —



Farley Cannon

Student engagement is an essential component of education. When students are engaged, they are inspired to be creative and collaborative, to develop goals and passions, and to become interested and invested in their own education. Engagement becomes the core of learning as students are not only physically present in their studies, but mentally absorbed as well. This requires the involvement of two sides, student and teacher. The foundation of the school system as it has existed in the past and, in many cases, still exists today, is based upon lecture-style teaching, which in its nature is one-sided, and

thus does not have the capacity to fully engage students.

How learning is assessed and graded is also important. The present grading system often does not emphasize the importance of students being engaged during the process; rather, evaluation often focuses solely on the final product – the grade. Within this system of evaluation, students can easily become disengaged when they are not invited into the process as equal participants in their own assessment and success. Too often students are not even aware of how or why they received the grades they did. If students are not involved →→

Too often students are not even aware of how or why they received the grades they did. If students are not involved in the process of their own learning, the grades will have no meaning.



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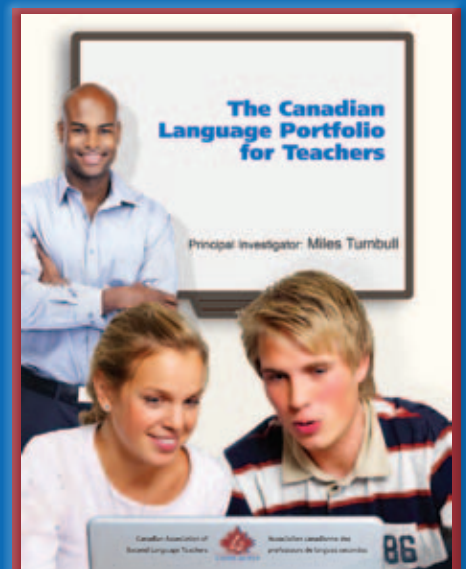
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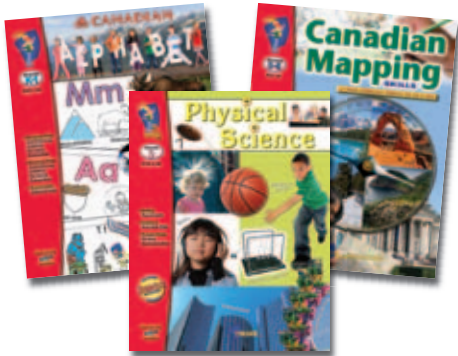
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Lauren Utter, Farley Cannon
and Maddee Nash – Gulf Islands
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in the process of their own learning, the grades will have no meaning.

What works better for students? Assessing learning processes and competencies, and the ability to think critically, for example (rather than factual learning outcomes), will promote and encourage students to engage and focus on their education. All the learning that goes on before a grade is assigned cannot be reduced to a single letter of the alphabet. Even students who receive “good” grades are often no longer challenged by what they are learning; instead their challenge lies in continuing to prioritize school above all of their interests. Students in this situation often have to

forgo valuable learning opportunities, whether in or out of school, due to the abundance of redundant school work. In these cases, school is taking away from possible educational experiences instead of providing them.

Some students have let go of their school work for this reason in order to pursue activities and passions that are not widely perceived as educational. These students are then regarded as disengaged when really they are just not engaged in what is available to learn at school. Why is “school learning” considered to be more valuable than something extracurricular that is, in fact, engaging for a particular student? →→



As it stands, students who are “disengaged,” and even some who appear to be “engaged,” are unable to reach their full potential, whether it is because they are not being challenged in valuable ways or because they are not interested in what school has to offer. Making education an engaging and enjoyable process will result in students learning worthwhile life capacities such as critical thinking, collaboration, creativity, inquisitiveness and innovation. Acquiring these skills, not just the ability to score well on tests, should be the goals of a good education. ←



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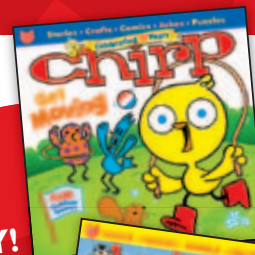
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LIVING THE ADVENTURE OF RETIREMENT

Like other retired educators, Colleen Politano is thrilled to have the opportunity to fully pursue her favourite hobby. But where many dedicate themselves to gardening, tennis or helping out with grandchildren, Colleen is using her retirement to pursue her love of learning.

She jokes that she's not good at sports and is too messy for crafts. "But I love learning and trying to solve the puzzle of finding practical activities that will help very busy educators in their classrooms."

In 2003, Colleen retired from her 36-year career as a primary teacher with the Sooke School District. When planning her retirement, she wanted to find a way to continue applying the knowledge she had gained as an educator, author

and curriculum developer for the BC Ministry of Education Primary Program.

Since her official retirement, this author of 16 books has worked as an educational consultant – conducting workshops, presenting at conferences and facilitating seminars with the US-based Bureau of Education and Research, as well as with districts across British Columbia and other provinces.

Most of her seminars focus on brain-based learning and creating classroom environments that help students manage their energy and emotional levels to achieve the calm and focused state that is essential for learning.

Colleen remembers that when she first learned of student self-regulation she thought it was the most important →

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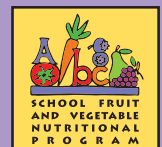
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idea she'd heard in years. "But after I got over all the sparks going off in my brain about the concept, my first thought was 'ok, how can teachers across the province use this knowledge?'"

Answering that question has essentially been the focus of her retirement. And Colleen says that being retired has given her the time to explore the intersections of theory and practice in a way that would have been difficult with the demands of working as a full-time educator.


"My workshops emphasize the practical side of things. What adjustments can we make to our classroom practice to help students be more engaged? What can we do to help all kids move from non-productive to productive activities?"

Her current strategies include tips to adjust the classroom environment, altering the pace of the day and shifting attitudes away from classifying behaviours as "good" or "bad" and instead working with students to come up with practical solutions.

Colleen clearly loves immersing herself in the latest research about how we learn as much as she loves sharing these ideas with others. For her, this process is a source of significant pleasure and defines what she calls the "adventure" of retirement.

When she's not travelling as a consultant (Colleen has been to all but eight US states), she enjoys going out with friends, reading fiction and non-fiction, exercise and spending time with her husband, also a retired teacher. "One of the great privileges of retirement," she says, "is getting to do what you want, when you want."

Her six-word motto for life perfectly sums up her buoyant and positive attitude: "Here, happy, healthy; anything else – bonus." ←




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FOUR BC EDUCATORS WIN NATIONAL AWARD Congratulations to Yrsa Jensen of Hillcrest Elementary School in Surrey, Frances Fagan of White Rock Elementary School in White Rock, Diane Nelson of Premier Sports Academy in West Vancouver, and Iona Whishaw of David Thompson Secondary School in Vancouver. These educators were recently named among Canada's Outstanding Principals for 2012. This program recognizes the contributions of principals in publicly funded schools in Canada. ←

STUDY BUDDY MENTORING PROGRAM This out-of-school program provides girls with educational support and guidance through one-to-one relationships with volunteer mentors. The program is offered by Big Sisters of BC Lower Mainland to girls aged 7-17 who live in the Lower Mainland and need academic support but are unable to access other tutoring services due to family financial constraints. With the support of their Study Buddy, Little Sisters are encouraged and equipped to improve their educational performance and meet their academic goals, contributing to their overall self-esteem. The Little Sister and Study Buddy tutor meet one hour per week for at least six months. For more information, please visit www.bigsisters.bc.ca or contact Ivy Chiang, at ichiang@bigsisters.bc.ca or 604-873-4525 ext. 310. ←

GET THE RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL Teachers who request a personal package from the publishers of *Chirp*, *chickaDEE* and *OWL* can receive free classroom resources. These award-winning magazines help students continue the love of reading and learning at home. Each magazine is targeted to a specific age group and features reading and activities that provide a parallel to the fundamental lessons learned in school. Returning this year is the popular Owlkids *Back-to-School* program. To request your personal package, contact schools@owlkids.com. ←



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ANTI-BULLYING PROGRAMS PROMOTE SAFETY AND RESPECT

In April 2012, Summerland Secondary School Teacher Trevor Knowlton (with volunteer Hal Roberts) spoke to the Standing Senate Committee on Human Rights in Ottawa about his online anti-bullying reporting program. Three years ago, Knowlton received an email showing a video of a schoolyard fight posted on Facebook; he then created a way for people to anonymously report bullying online. For more information, visit www.stopabully.ca.

On June 1, Premier Christy Clark announced a new province-wide strategy, ERASE, to help prevent, identify and stop harmful behaviours online, at school and in the community. ERASE includes a five-year training program for educators and community partners, online tools and provincial guidelines for threat assessments to ensure that children across all 60 districts are safe, accepted and respected. ←



NFB FILMS AVAILABLE FOR EDUCATORS The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) recently launched CAMPUS, an online resource offering easy access to over 2,500 Canadian films and interactive productions in both English and French specially evaluated for educational use. CAMPUS features new search functions, customizable playlists and chaptering, study guides, and thematic channels and playlists. The NFB is also developing online learning modules and virtual classroom experiences. The NFB currently has educational access agreements with many school boards and provincial ministries of education. Teachers who already use the NFB's educational resources on NFB.ca via these agreements can easily upgrade to CAMPUS online. You can purchase new subscriptions online or through an NFB sales agent. For more information, log on to www.nfb.ca/campus. ←

CELEBRATE SPORTS DAY IN CANADA Kick off the next school year and show your support for sport by celebrating the third annual Sports Day in Canada on September 29, 2012. This is a national celebration of sport, from grassroots to high-performance levels, in communities across the country. Presented by ParticipACTION, True Sport and CBC Sports, Sports Day in Canada is a great chance to celebrate the power of sport and all it can do for schools, families, communities and our national pride. Get your school involved by creating an event that celebrates sport between September 24 and 28, 2012. It could be a try-it day, a special athletes assembly, a game, competition, walk, run or tournament – it's up to you! Or, if you're already running an Olympics Day, fall fair or fun run that week, you can register it as a Sports Day in Canada event. All school events registered by June 30, 2012 will receive a FREE event celebration kit, including event t-shirts, tattoos, banners and posters. For more information, and to register, please visit www.cbcsports.ca/sportsday. ←

ACTIVE PLAY: FUN AND FUNDAMENTAL According to the 2012 Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card, released on May 29 in partnership with ParticipACTION and the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario, active play is on the decline in Canada. Forty-six percent of kids get three hours or less of active play per week – including weekends – and kids spend 63 percent of their free time after school and on weekends being sedentary. Active play may be fun, but it's certainly not frivolous. It has been shown to improve a child's motor function, creativity, decision-making, problem-solving and social skills. For more on the Report Card and active play, please visit www.activehealthykids.ca. ←

DISCIPLINE CASE SUMMARIES

The Teacher Regulation Branch is committed to keeping children safe, ensuring a proper learning environment and maintaining the reputation of certificate holders as competent, ethical and trustworthy educators. By publishing the outcomes of discipline cases, we enhance the transparency of the processes and decisions made with respect to complaints, reports and investigations about educators. Publication is also a means of ensuring accountability for the educators involved, as well as articulating the standards expected of all certificate holders.

In an effort to improve the timeliness of reporting on discipline decisions, the cases will be listed in learn but the discipline case summaries for these decisions will appear on the website at www.bcteacherregulation.ca/ProfessionalConduct/bcct/BcctDisciplineDecisions.aspx. In addition, to help educate certificate holders about the Standards, we will also analyze one or two cases in each issue of learn to provide a better understanding of how the Standards are interpreted in actual situations. The Standards can be found on the website at www.bcteacherregulation.ca/Standards/StandardsOverview.aspx.

The following discipline case summaries are decisions made before the transition from the BC College of Teachers to the Teacher Regulation Branch of the Ministry of Education.

Consent Resolution Agreements

MEMBER Ian Stanley Ameeralli
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Reprimand/Conditions

MEMBER Celeste Eileen Audette
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Certificate of Qualification suspended for 1 week/
Counselling

MEMBER Scott Robert Carr
FINDING Conduct unbecoming a member of the College/
College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Reprimand/Completion of College's professional boundaries
workshop

MEMBER Member CR-A12-11
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1, 2 and 4
DECISION Certificate of Qualification relinquished

MEMBER John Lindsay Davidson
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Certificate of Qualification relinquished/Agreement that
the Member not reapply for, nor would he be re-issued,
a certificate for a period of no less than 15 years

MEMBER Brittany Janelle Feenan
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standard 2
DECISION Reprimand

MEMBER Clinton Heath Fox
FINDING Professional Misconduct
DECISION Reprimand/Completion of College's professional
boundaries workshop

MEMBER Tajinder Ricky Singh Gill
FINDING Conduct unbecoming a member of the College
DECISION Agreement that Certificate of Qualification be cancelled
and that the Member not reapply for, nor would the
College grant, a certificate prior to June 22, 2016

MEMBER Thomas Christian Larisch
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Reprimand/Completion of College's professional
boundaries workshop/Condition

MEMBER Michael Alan Martindale
FINDING Conduct unbecoming a member of the College/
College Standard 2
DECISION Certificate of Qualification cancelled for non-payment
of fees/Agreement that the Member not reapply for, nor
would he be issued, a certificate for a period of no less
than 5 years

MEMBER Member CR-B12-11
FINDING Citation Rescinded
DECISION Certificate of Qualification cancelled for non-payment
of fees/Agreement that should the Member apply for a new
certificate, the agreement would be considered in deter-
mining the Member's fitness for a certificate

MEMBER Albert Norman Pozar
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Reprimand/Counselling

MEMBER Peter Henner Schmid
FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2
DECISION Reprimand →→

Consent Resolution Agreements (cont.)

MEMBER Dale Ronald Servatius

FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standard 2

DECISION Certificate of Qualification suspended for 5 days

MEMBER Jeffrey Frank Weening

FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1, 2 and 3

DECISION Certificate of Qualification relinquished/Agreement that the Member not reapply for, nor would he be issued, a certificate for a period of no less than 5 years

MEMBER Patricia Blades West

FINDING Professional Misconduct/College Standards 1 and 2

DECISION Reprimand

SAMPLE CASE

An example of a case considered by the College and its analysis follows. This case is illustrative of one type of the cases that the College previously dealt with and that the Teacher Regulation Branch now addresses.

FINDING Professional Misconduct
CONTRARY TO Standards 1, 2 and 4

The Member admitted to professional misconduct and agreed that her conduct was contrary to College Standards 1, 2 and 4. The College was notified that the Member was suspended pending an investigation into her conduct with a female student, and was then further notified when the Member resigned her position with her employer. The district investigation found that the Member and the student began spending time together, and the Member then took on a “caregiver” role with the student, eventually suggesting to the student that she could stay overnight at her house if and when the student felt she needed to or wanted to. The student accepted the offer, even though prior arrangements were not always made with her parents. On a few occasions, the Member slept in an adjacent room with no door while the student slept in the Member’s bed. At other times, the Member slept on the floor in the same room while the student slept in her bed. On at least one occasion, they shared the Member’s bed, despite alternate sleeping arrangements being available. There was no physical touching or intimate contact. On a number of occasions, the Member took the student out for meals. They also sometimes linked arms or held hands and hugged. The Member admitted that she chose not to follow the directions she received from her employer not to communicate with the student during the course of the

investigation. On December 21, 2011, the Preliminary Investigation Sub-Committee approved the Consent Resolution Agreement in which the Member agreed to relinquish her College certificate of qualification.

Analysis

Case summaries never disclose the personal details of an individual case, but it is possible to learn from them important interpretations of the expected behaviours of professional teachers. In this case, the admissions of guilt included breaches of Standards 1, 2 and 4. What boundaries were breached by the teacher?

While information about the student’s home life is not set out in the summary, and the teacher may have believed she was offering the student a helpful alternative, teachers are not social workers nor are they foster parents. The relationship they have with students must be defined through and confined to the role they play in their work and professional environment. The actions of this teacher went beyond what society and the profession expect of a teacher. Teachers should not and cannot act as a parent to their students (although they must keep students safe by acting in “loco parentis”), nor should they look to find personal, sexual or emotional relief or gratification through their relationship with a student. By her actions, the teacher breached Standard 1.

While not involving misconduct at work, the teacher also breached Standard 2 with her actions. A teacher’s behaviour can be culpable, even when “off-duty,” if that behaviour brings disrepute on the profession by causing the public, parents and students to question the teacher’s ethical and moral fitness. In addition, the teacher breached Standard 4 when she did not always inform the parents of arrangements made.

It is not the role of a teacher to try to “fix” the home life or personal situation of a student. A teacher’s duty is to help through the appropriate channels. If you believe that a student is being abused or exploited by another certificate holder, you have a legal duty under the *Teachers Act* to report this suspicion to the commissioner. In addition, anyone who believes that a child is being abused, neglected or in need of protection is legally required under the *Child, Family and Community Service Act* to report to the Ministry of Children and Family Development by calling 310-1234 – a toll-free number available as a local call from anywhere in the province. ←

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