



The Trillium

February 2005

Ontario Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

Teaching Tales: From the young to the experienced teacher

President's Message

Take Note!

**Ontario ASCD's Third
International Conference
The Art and Soul of Teaching
April 7-9, 2005
Toronto**

**Watch for Ontario ASCD -
Eastern Ontario Regional's
Spring Event on the Website.**

**Announcing Ontario ASCD's
Scholarship Program
\$1000 Grant for New Teachers
\$1000 Grant for Teacher Candidates
Open to All 1st and 2nd year Ontario
Teachers and Teacher Candidates
For Information Please Visit the
OASCD Website: www.ascd.ca**

The Trillium is also available on our website.

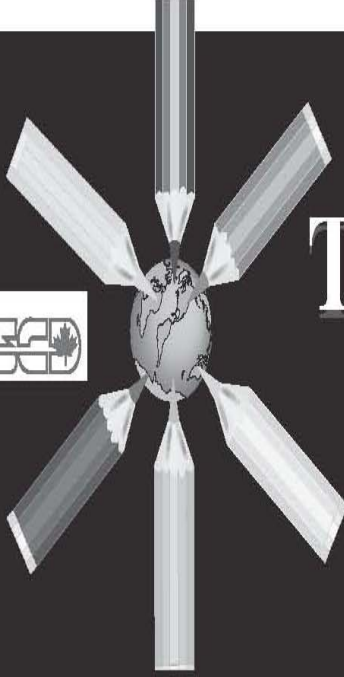
**Ontario ASCD: www.ascd.ca
ASCD International: www.ascd.org**

When I look back over my career in education, I can't remember a time that was more exciting for educators, surrounded by changes in government, philosophy, and methodology. Educators across the globe are striving to improve their students' success rate. But how do you define success in today's educational system? Success is no longer measured solely by how many students go on to university or college, but by how many students successfully complete high school and enter the working world regardless of the route taken. The Student Success initiative across the province is trying to lower the drop out rate and encourage students to stay in school until they graduate. The Student Success initiative is also attempting to re-culture the way we think about success and offer students alternative pathways to reach their chosen destinations. Teachers and administrators are the key to this success. By creating new courses and using new approaches such as differentiated instruction, educators are making a huge difference in retaining students in schools and helping them find appropriate destinations. The Ministry is pumping resources into many pilot projects and professional development training sessions for educators to improve our overall results on literacy and numeracy testing. Associations such as ASCD are providing the resources to support the training, not just in Ontario but worldwide.


Ontario ASCD is also providing an opportunity for educators to network, share ideas, and learn new strategies to make our schools more effective and our students more successful at our spring conference in Toronto entitled "The Art and Soul of Teaching: Global Implications For Classroom Practice," April 7-9, 2005. World-renowned international speakers as well as exemplary Ontario educators will inform, enlighten and infuse us with enthusiasm. Every year, educators remark on what an impact this conference has had on their educational practices and goals. Look for registration information at www.ascd.ca
- Bev Inglis

Ontario ASCD, a diverse learning community that promotes excellence in education, is dedicated to supporting the growth and success of all learners.

ASCD in Action



The graphic features a central globe with several pencils of various colors (grey, white, black) arranged around it, pointing towards the center. The pencils are positioned at the top, bottom, left, and right, with some angled towards the globe. The entire graphic is set against a dark background.



The logo for Ontario ASCD, featuring the word "Ontario" in a script font above the acronym "ASCD" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a stylized leaf or flame symbol to the right.

The Art and Soul of Teaching

Global Implications for Classroom Practice

Pre-conference April 7, 2005 - Conference April 8-9, 2005

Double Tree International Plaza Hotel, Toronto, Ontario, Canada

Confirmed Speakers to Date Include:

David Booth	Richard Elmore	Bill Lishman
Roland Case	Michael Fullan	Alan November
Lorna Earl	Andy Hargreaves	Ruth Sutton

For continuous up-to-date conference information please visit our web site: www.ascd.ca

A Successful Start: Kindling the Fire

Barbara Chamberlain

Teacher

Toronto Catholic District School Board

The famous poet Yeats said “Education is not the filling of a bucket, but the lighting of a fire”. When children come to school they are certainly not an empty bucket, but are indeed small fires having been lit by the “matchstick” of their parents.

Whether or not this small fire grows into a full bonfire illuminating out and warming those around it, depends on the kind of education available, and on the delicate relationship between home and school. Studies have proven time and again that if there is frequent and good communication between parents and teachers, the child does so much better at school. Parents and teachers who support each other are giving clear messages to the child that learning is very important.

Teachers need to know and understand the inner workings of each child’s home life – family members, routines that are in place, and the expectations around chores, mealtimes, leisure activities and bedtime. Parents must have a good understanding of the modern classroom, the teaching style of the teacher, the curriculum, and the daily routines.

As a Junior Kindergarten teacher, I have the great advantage of holding an interview with each child and the family before they enter school. This is especially important when children are very young, because they often are not able to tell their own history and experiences. It is also reassuring to the parents for them to see the classroom and to discuss

the routines, activities and expectations of Junior Kindergarten. The child benefits from seeing this friendly, respectful dialogue between the parents and teacher. This also helps to alleviate any apprehension the child may feel about a new situation. Could such an interview at the beginning of each school year help to increase positive feelings and lessen any fears about the new classroom and teacher? I believe it would.

In general, children above the kindergarten level show up on the first day, usually with a combination of positive and negative feelings. They must find their way to a new classroom, meet a new teacher, and sometimes deal with a lot of new classmates. This can be very stressful. Usually a few weeks later, the school holds a “Meet the Teacher” evening. This is a fine practice but somehow seems a bit late. As well, it is often not easy for parents to share any information with the teacher privately. This has to be done at the interview for the first report card, which is sometimes not until December. If there are any major concerns, the teacher would contact the parents early on, but what about the many average kids or kids with mild problems? Surely, it would be helpful to spend some time getting to know each other early on in the school year. The relationship forged between parent and teacher cannot be underestimated in terms of its impact on the ability of a child to have a successful start in education.

The award-winning Ontario ASCD journal is seeking articles for its next issue. Visit the Ontario ASCD website for the guidelines for writers at: www.ascd.ca. Below is a description of the theme for the upcoming issue.

Teaching and Leading Strategically

Teachers are leaders and school leaders are teachers. All are educators. In today’s fast-paced world of school accountability, teachers and leaders continue to make choices based on what is best for student learning. Instructional and assessment practices, resources, use of time, organization, staff development and school initiatives need to be carefully orchestrated. Teachers and leaders think and plan intentionally, constantly asking themselves, “How will this benefit student learning? How will this benefit our school?” Teachers and leaders are informed by research, data, best practices, inquiry and reflection. Teaching and leading strategically includes asking the following questions:

How are educators strategic in their decision making?

How do educators use data for school-wide improvement?

How do teachers and leaders use internal and external research as a foundation for decision-making and nurturing resilience?

How do teachers and leaders sustain continuous student learning and school improvement?

Learning from Teaching students of a different culture

Dave Lafleur

Teacher
Nunavut

I am a first year teacher. In August I left Ontario to assume a Grade 8 teaching position in a small hamlet in Nunavut. Teaching in a different culture, one learns quickly to be flexible and understanding: it may be that half of my class is late one afternoon because they were out on ATVs chasing a polar bear out of town; or a student misses a week because they have been out on the land hunting or fishing.

I am blessed with the opportunity to teach in a community where the Inuit language and traditional culture are still relatively strong, thus making allowances for traditional life ways is important.

Facing tremendous ESL barriers I have had to jump into the fire of making modifications to every aspect of my program on a regular basis. I am thankful that all the teachers share their expertise and ideas, and

the Inuit teachers, specifically, share their tremendous insights on their culture. To gain

a new perspective I sometimes sit in on the classes of an Inuit teacher. Recognizing about one word out of twenty (if I'm lucky), I try to take that experience into my class and make changes for my students; it is an on-going process.

Some of the things that have worked well include: using spelling words that are relevant to the week's themes or subjects; translating those words into Inuktitut and displaying them as visual reminders; utilizing both peer groupings and ability groupings; encouraging Self Selected Reading in both Inuktitut and English; ensuring that the students are comfortable speaking their first language when making sense of new concepts; ensuring that I am comfortable having them speak in a language that I do not understand, such as learning when to be able

to tell when a conversation has strayed off topic by reading body language; utilizing oral exams; modeling, modeling and modeling; including many visual elements when presenting new material; hooking new concepts unto culturally relevant experiences and ideas.

It has become evident to me that it is impossible to divorce the experience of teaching with the experience of being a member of the community. As a guest in an Inuit community I try to learn about their customs, learn some of the language, eat some of their traditional foods and participate in community events and happenings, whenever possible or acceptable. Mingling with the local people is sometimes hard when they speak a language that you cannot even begin to comprehend but they have been warm, welcoming, and patient. My journals are filled with just as

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many reflections on my teaching experiences as on my cultural experiences. I have learned that to

motivate and inspire my students is just as much my job as it is to prepare lesson plans and to facilitate information. Laughter is medicine. Attendance is a really big issue in our school, so I have learned that it is important to be an entertaining teacher, both to help students remember the enduring concepts, and to encourage more regular attendance. School should be fun, and it has been my goal to make it so, although I admit some days are harder than others.

Teaching in the North is challenging, rewarding and exciting. It gives me the opportunity to grow as a teacher and to learn about a different way of seeing and experiencing the world. I have made many mistakes, but just like I tell my students, I make sure that I learn from everyone of them. ☑

Reflections on Teaching

Margaret Talbot

Teacher

Toronto Catholic District School Board

There are rare moments in our hectic world of teaching when one is able to eat lunch in the staff room and observe and speak with your colleagues. All of a sudden I look around and I am amazed and shocked. I am one of the older teachers on staff!

One of the teachers I am chatting with went to school with my son. Ex-students are introducing me to their children. Where has the time gone?

While conversing in the work environment, I have found the professional sharing and incidental comments have boosted my enthusiasm for reentering the classroom, especially on days that seem to be not ideal.

The most wonderful part of teaching is that it is a profession that automatically ensures that one never stops learning, changing and growing. Attending conferences and fostering one's professional development is a basic for this profession.

Parental concern and involvement has not diminished over the years.

During times of labour strife

parents arranged to collect money, drive and supervise students at sporting events and walked the picket line with us because they knew that our hands were tied and we were hurting for our students who otherwise would miss out. These are times when parental support is emotionally overwhelming despite all the media reports that at times would lead you to believe otherwise.

It is well known that requiring a textbook, workbook or photocopied worksheet for every child in every subject is not necessary despite what big business and government is advocating. Our classroom, school libraries and local libraries can

support the number of books needed if they are adequately funded.

Public funds will be utilized in a more effective manner and allow children exposure to a wider choice of resources suitable to their learning style. Integration of topics and assignments is critical.

This requires planning and setting of goals, not just in our own classroom but school wide. Skills are well learned and solidified in several subject areas.

A writing skill can be demonstrated successfully in subject areas other than in Language Arts. The student demonstration will involve reading and presenting the skill in less conventional forms.

Schools ideally can and often do prepare students for the real world. Teachers can do this in a variety of ways such as requiring children to physically care for their classroom, setting dates for completion of assignments and keeping a variety of

logs. These skills all emulate what is frequently required in the workforce. We need to make it very clear to our children that there is nothing free in

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The best memories of teaching that I have revolve around mentoring and being mentored by colleagues.

I remember the pride I have had when I see students managing their classroom environment and academic responsibilities.

I recall students and parents rejoicing with me in successes no matter how big or small. ☑

Margaret Talbot has taught grades JK-6, English as a Second Language, Library and Fifth Block.

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Please send this form and your membership fee (\$30) to the Membership Coordinator at the address above.

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