

CopTalk: The Methamphetamine Reality

Cst. Shelley Arnfield, School Resource Officer, RCMP Port Alberni Detachment

Pregnant at 15. Living in foster care or on the streets. In and out of trouble with the law since the age of 12. Tiffany (not her real name) is an unlikely success story. But a success story she is, because she beat the odds. The staggering odds of being able to quit Crystal Meth.

I'm a police officer assigned to work in the schools. I split my time many ways: investigating crimes that occur in schools, teaching DARE, hanging out with kids, doing talks on anything that a teacher wants. This year the hot topic is meth-amphetamines.

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Cst. Shelley Arnfield

used it for weight control. In the 1970's it was called "speed" and users were called "freaks".

Today, its popularity has increased over 1,000%. It is five times more potent and twice as pure. Cost and accessibility add to its increased appeal. Sold in "points," a tenth of a gram costs \$10. Ingredients can be purchased at the drug store and hardware store and can be "cooked" anywhere there is a heat source. *...continued on page 3*

I'm no expert but I've done the research. And it scares me. I just want to grab every kid I talk to and make them promise with their lives that they won't fool around with this stuff. Because that is what it will cost them if they do – their lives.

Methamphetamines are nothing new. First synthesized in the 1890's, methamphetamines were used in the 1920's and 30's to treat asthma, narcolepsy and attention deficit disorder. Soldiers, pilots, truckers, students and athletes used the stimulant drug in the 40's and 50's to keep awake, stay alert, study longer, train harder. Women

From the Editor's Desk:

Featured in this edition are this year's Award and Bursary recipients. Congratulations to you all. Imagine the delight that will be felt by these students when they learn that your Association will also be rewarding their success because you encouraged them to make application. The BCAEA is proud to support your commitment to these young people. If your students were not among those acknowledged, then please let me remind you to get those applications in. Our kids deserve this recognition.

Thanks to Anita Chapman for taking some of the mystery out of the new grad requirements as they pertain to our kids. Her article, titled Alternate Routes to a Dogwood Certificate will help us appreciate how we can help our students meet their graduation goals within the new rules

We have also included an article from Ren Abear of Abbotsford who was proud to discuss and showcase the successes of his art students. Thanks Ren. I would expect that Ren will show his students that their work was featured in this publication, again acknowledging their work. If you too are proud of the work you do, and I'm certain you are, please take the time to share your successes with the rest of us.

The last edition featured a success story of a young man, formerly a student in an Alternate program before going on to fulfill his dream of becoming a successful chef in an upscale restaurant in Vancouver. I'd like to feature many more of these articles. Please take the time to write an article describing the success of one (or more) of your students and submit it to me (jrblawson@sd70.bc.ca) for publication in upcoming editions. Let's celebrate our students' successes!



President's Message

Jim Lawson



In June 2005, I will complete my 2-year term as BCAEA president. Rick Fitch, elected at the 2005 AGM, will assume the presidential duties July 1st. It has been a very enjoyable and rewarding time for me as president of the Alternate Education PSA, especially when you consider the following:

- Each year, your association disburses approximately \$6000 in awards, bursaries and grants to students who have met with success and to programs that reflect the goals of the BC Alternate Education Association.
- The BCAEA Newsletter, which is published 3 times a year, is circulated to approximately 675 subscribers.
- The BCAEA PSA boasts a membership list of 290 members. The annual BCAEA Conference, "Challenge and Change," presents a highprofile, dynamic, keynote speaker and some 28 different workshops aimed at educating and informing over 450 delegates, including teachers, Youth Care Workers, and administrators.
- The association hosts a website where educators, YCWs and others can access valuable information, resources and connect with colleagues, all at the click of a mouse. To find out more visit www.bctf.ca/bcaea. All of this is made possible because of the support of the membership, the BCTF, and your very dedicated executive.

It is no wonder that I am very proud to have served as president and represented our association to the best of my ability.

Thanks to all of you who have supported me. I wish to express a particular thanks to both DJ Pauls and Joyce May (long serving executive members of the BCAEA,) who have provided endless wisdom and valuable guidance to me on many occasions.

I have now assumed the duties of the BCAEA Newsletter Editor and I hope to continue the excellence established by my predecessors. ♦

Methamphetamine Reality

(continued from page 1)

What makes this drug scarier than cocaine, its more expensive counterpart? Its addictive properties for one. Try meth once and you have a reported 42% chance of being addicted. Try it again, and the odds are 96% that you're hooked. Want off? The success rate for kicking this habit is less than 20%. So once you're hooked, chances are it's for life.

And what might that life look like? At first you feel in control, smart, confident. Your high can last 16 hours. That's bang for your buck. But soon you're using more and more meth, not to feel good, but just so you don't feel bad.

You suffer from extreme weight loss, skin rash, anxiety, mental confusion, muscle tremors. You pick at bugs on your skin that aren't there. Your confusion turns to paranoia, delusions, psychosis. You develop symptoms similar to Parkinson's disease, caused by the reduced levels of dopamine in your brain. If you can quit the drug, your psychotic symptoms can last for months or years. Or you could be among the 10% who never recover from their psychoses. Then again, you could suffer convulsions, stroke, heart attack, or any other manner of early death.

Add to this the misconception that meth comes only in the crystal form. All we hear about in the media is Crystal Meth. Sure, it's preferred by addicts. It's a more pure form of the drug and due to its distinctive ice-like appearance, it can't be cut or mixed with other substances. The high is higher. The effects last longer, ten times longer than crack cocaine. But meth also comes in a powdered form that can easily be mixed with cocaine or dusted onto marijuana. And tablets and gel caps, held out to be ecstasy or something else, are more often than not a combination of substances, including methamphetamines.

But you don't use drugs. Meth can't hurt you. Not unless your neighbour has set up a home lab and is cooking up a batch on the kitchen stove from a recipe taken from the internet. In addition to the ephedrine or pseudoephedrine that has been removed from over the counter cold remedies such as Sudafed, ingredients can include acetone, ether (engine starter), drain cleaner, battery acid, gun scrubber, red phosphorus (matches), alcohol (isopropyl or rubbing), camp fuel, farm fertilizer. One large lab in Alberta was found to contain enough ether to level six city blocks. It's a sad fact that a lot of these labs are only discovered after the explosion or fire which fills the air with toxic chemicals.

And if you're still feeling safe, consider this - one kilo of meth produces five to seven kilos of chemical waste. Waste that ends up in the sewer, empty lots, yards, streams. Areas can be rendered uninhabitable. Water supplies contaminated. Livestock dies. Forest lands destroyed.

So yes, I've done the research. But do I believe everything I read? I sat down with Tiffany, nine months clean, to hear her story of addiction. It was a classic tale of the cycle of abuse that binge users of the drug go through.

She was introduced to Crystal Meth at age 12 by her 16 year old boyfriend. Tiffany always used meth in the crystal form. She didn't trust pills or lines of the powdered form to inhale. She tried it once and it burned her sinuses and caused blind spots. She always smoked with a guy so she had protection. Asked about the 42% rate of addiction for first time users, Tiffany was sceptical: it had to be higher. Tiffany was addicted after her first "hoot" (inhalation of the smoke produced when the crystals are heated). From that second on she wanted more. She ...continued on page 18

“
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2005 BCAEA Bursary & Award Winners

Christina Christie, *Maple Ridge (\$500 Bursary)*

I have a very strong interest in art; it has been a big part of my life since a young age. My art has helped me through the good times and the bad times in my life. I have been volunteering at the Maple Ridge ACT since 2004. I help with children's art classes on the weekend and enjoy it a lot. It is fun working with the kids and to see what art they come up with. I also volunteer during the week and in the evening at the ACT's Art Gallery and shop. I want to go to college to become an artist because it is something I am good at and I love to do it. I feel I should pursue a career in something I enjoy. I have applied to go to Emily Carr Institute in Vancouver and to University College of the Fraser Valley for September 2005.

Muriel Drewin, *Kelowna (\$500 Bursary)*

I have been accepted at the new Okanagan College in the program of Human Service Worker. I am currently involved as a volunteer at the Women's Shelter Thrift Store. I value the opportunity to be involved and look forward to future community involvement as a Human Service Worker. It has taken me many years to be able to pursue my ideas on finishing my education and I was so fortunate to have found this school that accepted me and believed that I was worth the effort to educate. When I arrived at the school I had not been in school since 1968 and I was unable to even type. The ability to complete grade 12 has changed my life and given me perspective on what I am able to contribute.

Jocelyn Dunsmore, *Kelowna (\$500 Bursary)*

About two years ago I realized which direction in life I should go. I knew I was good at cooking, so I am now pursuing a career in this area. Recently I completed Food Safe and passed with high marks. I will graduate in June at the age of sixteen. I will start the Culinary Arts Program at Okanagan University College in September. After I finish my two semester course at OUC, I will have many options that I may pursue. I do know for certain that I will stay in this field and will become a chef, cook or baker. I know for certain that this is something I want to do in my life. I am excited to start college and gain knowledge that will shape my future and change many aspects in my life.

Gregg Gilmore, *Delta (\$500 Bursary)*

The roller coaster ride that has taken me to the conclusion of my high school career has been one of a more alternate route. I knew there was no chance my passage through high school would be completed. My first month in alternate school was overwhelming. Every conservative value bestowed upon the populous in the nearby high school was shucked, and a new system of operation was adopted; a different one for every pupil. Respect, intelligence, ingenuity and the lust for knowledge had obviously gained a foothold here in this oasis of learning. I have applied for admission to Kwantlen University College's Associate of Arts Degree - History program for the Fall 2005 semester.

Crystal Omeis, Kelowna (\$500 Bursary)

As a student in the alternate education program, I have accomplished many things. I am a strong independent learner, and have successfully completed many courses maintaining an A average. I have attended Central School for 2 ½ years, and each year I have received an academic award. I was chosen out of fifteen candidates to participate in a ten month paid internship with Citizenship and Immigration Canada. During my internship, I worked full time and still managed to attend evening classes to continue my education. In September I plan to attend Foothills College of Massage Therapy in Calgary. The massage therapy course is a two year program that focuses on academic courses as well as constant hands on training.

Jerry Gill, New Westminster (\$250 Student Achievement Award)

What I have been able to accomplish at the program I am attending is the ability to make friends, gain self-confidence, pursue goals and all at the same time working towards my high school diploma. This program has allowed me to expand in areas that I felt were weak and work towards strengthening those areas. Those areas include responsibility, organization, and other values that we as students must find out for ourselves in our journey in life. I have been able to work and go to school because of the program I am at and deeply offer my thanks towards the people who have helped me on my way. I will use this award as a way towards my future goal of becoming a TESOL teacher.

Eric Li, Vancouver (\$250 Student Achievement Award)

Since I started attending the POWER program, I have been maintaining a B average because I know how important it is to do a good job with secondary education. That being said, I am determined to graduate at the end of this school year and receive my high school diploma. My future goals and aspirations are to graduate with honours and enrol myself in BCIT for an Auto Collision Repair course. Ever since I can remember, I've always had a passion for working with cars. I love working with my hands and fixing cars brings out the best of my abilities. I also enjoy working in a people oriented environment because I believe that work can be as enjoyable as you make it to be. My long-term goal is to open my own car repair shop and establish my company as a leading, reliable business.

Kesha Mitchell, Kelowna (\$250 Student Achievement Award)

About two years ago I decided to go back to school to pursue a career in Pharmacy. I have recently been upgrading some courses, currently I am taking Chemistry 12 and Calculus 12. It is definitely a challenge trying to keep everything balanced with so much going on in my life right now. So I am attending class in the mornings and working full time at the casino working the night shift. I am also a single parent of two children. I have applied to attend Okanagan College in September. I need to take two years of Science at Okanagan College and then transfer to UBC for a four year degree program in Pharmacy.

2005 Bursary & Award Winners

Elise Williams, Delta (\$250 Student Achievement Award)

I attended public high school and private schools; however, I struggled in all of them and didn't feel that any were the right place for me. My alternate school has proven to be the kind of program I needed and I am grateful because I could not have succeeded in high school without it. Now that I have realized the potential I have, I am very excited about starting my post secondary education and my future. I have always excelled in my English courses and I feel that journalism would be something that I could really enjoy. I plan to go to Kwantlen University College to start my BA and afterwards to work towards a Masters degree.

Loni Andrews, Abbotsford (\$100 Student Development Award)

The time for graduation is coming up quickly and at this moment I am very proud of myself for going this far. The Integrated Studies Program has turned my life around. It is my third year and now I have an A average. I am on the road to graduation and I have many friends along side of me because of ISP. My future goals include Social Work, as I would like to work with children, youth and families. I love to be with people, I really want to be able to help others. To do so I will need to continue my education in a college or university.

Michelle Barnhill, Abbotsford (\$100 Student Development Award)

I have been attending Abbotsford Continuing Education since September 2004. Last year my attendance was lower than 40%; this year my attendance is 84%. I did not complete any courses last year due to skipping a lot of my classes. This year I have quit skipping classes. I have completed three courses within seven months and started my fourth course. I am in grade nine and plan on graduating grade twelve. I got my first job in February (part-time). When I am older I would like to work in a law firm office or be a lawyer.

Candice McMillan, Kelowna (\$100 Student Development Award)

I first started in the alternate education program shortly after I entered into grade ten. I enrolled myself into the program mainly because I was having extreme difficulties paying attention and learning from the teachers and the lessons they were giving. Now, three years later, I feel I have accomplished so much for myself. I am graduating through Central Programs and I am doing it in a normal time frame. I don't think I could have accomplished so much without this program and I am very thankful.

Samantha Meierhofer, Prince George (\$100 Student Development Award)

In September 2003 I started my attendance at Intersect School Service. While attending I was privileged enough to meet Kathi Hughes, who helped me with my social anxiety issues, and guided me through my academic curriculum. While attending Intersect I successfully completed my Social Studies 9/10, Math 8, English 9/10, and Science 9/10; aside from my academic achievements I also was able to go on class outings into public areas and interact with my fellow students in a positive manner. Though I still have some difficulty going out in public areas, my anxiety level is not as high because of what I was able to accomplish at Intersect.

Jacqueline Minshull, Abbotsford (\$100 Student Development Award)

I am one semester away from graduating. I have gone through so much to get where I am today. I can truly say I did not think I was going to make it, but life is about surprises. School was a big joke to me and going to college never crossed my mind. In grade eleven I put myself into the Integrated Studies Program. I got a good taste and realized that school is one of most important things in life; you need an education to be successful. After I figured that out, I went from just passing to becoming an Honour Roll student and receiving Student of the Month certificates. I have achieved so much and hope to achieve so much more.

Brittany Poulton, Abbotsford (\$100 Student Development)

Before I came to the Abbotsford Continuing Education program I was not doing very well. I never went to school and I never finished my work. Then last year when I started attending ACE my attendance was 72% through the whole year. I only finished two courses that year. This year I've finished almost six courses and it is going to be more. My attendance this year has been 82%. I've been doing so well this year. I even went to the teachers' conference. Next year at ACE I expect to do way more work and accomplish more. My future goal would be to go to CTC and take a stylist course or I will attend ACE and do my grade 10 and then take a stylist course.

Gerry Jones, Vast Center, Port Alberni Activity: Roger Creek Enhancement Project.**David Maher, Ditidaht Community School, Ditidaht. Activity: Student Exchange with Vegreville High School.****Stuart Soward, Victoria High School Pre-Employment Program, Victoria. Activity: West Coast Trail.****Dan Thiessen, Abbotsford Continuing Education, Abbotsford. Activity: West Coast Trail.**

FASD and Standard Interventions: Poor Fits?

Diane Malbin, M.S.W.

Until recently there have been few studies exploring the effectiveness of interventions for children, adolescents and adults with FASD. FASCETS, a private non-profit organization, developed and successfully tested a model in a three-year FASD interventive study. This model provides a structure for linking research findings of FASD as a brain-based disorder with behavioral symptoms. Recognizing FASD as a physical disability redefines the meaning of behaviors, redefines the nature of the problem, and clearly redefines the approach and focus for interventions.

One place to start exploring the idea that brain dysfunction equals behavioral symptoms is to articulate the assumptions on which many techniques are based and to clarify their compatibility with neurobehavioral characteristics of those with FASD. This helps explain how good techniques simply may not be a good fit.

Most approaches to changing behaviours do not recognize brain dysfunction

FASD Standard Interventions: Potential poor fits

Most parenting and professional approaches to changing behaviours do not recognize brain dysfunction and associated primary and secondary behavioural characteristics. Instead, interventions often target presenting behaviours. These techniques are usually based on learning theory and include Behavior modification to eliminate or change behavioural symptoms.

In work with people with FASD, we are by definition working with people who have a degree of organic brain changes that affect learning and other behaviours. This brief look at learning theory, the unexamined assumptions

about cognitive abilities that are required in order for behavioural techniques to work, clarifies how these assumptions are often incompatible with the needs and neurobehavioral characteristics of people with the disability of FASD.

The following looks at common parenting interventions that rely on behaviour modification to achieve desired results. Consider the underlying assumptions about brain function and cognitive abilities that are inherent in the behavioural paradigm.

Example: Co-sequencing behaviours

Fred at age ten fails to follow through on a simple set of instructions: Pick up your room, take out the garbage, and set the table for dinner. Since this is the tenth time this same set of requests has been made and "ignored", his parents impose a consequence for failure to comply: "Go to your room and think about your behaviour."

Goal: For the unpleasantness of the consequence to result in changed behaviour now and forever in the future, including other occasions which may be similar in nature though not identical.

Unspoken expectations:

1. That the person being consequenced is functioning at an "age-appropriate" level, has intact short term auditory memory, is able to hear and understand the consequence, link the consequence with a behaviour which may have occurred some time in the past and in some other context – outside, with others – or, in other words, is able to:

2. Associate the consequence with the behaviour;
3. Integrate the meaning of the consequence with future behaviours;
4. Predict different outcomes based on anticipated future different behaviours, and;
5. Retrieve this information in yet other different circumstances at some other time.
6. Further, it is expected that the person will recall other consequences of past behaviours, perceive that there are various choices available, and anticipate potential negative consequences that could be imposed on current events. Next, memory retrieval and predictions are expected to be automatically integrated, the memory of punishment significant enough to deter some behaviours, serving as the impetus to choose what others would expect to be appropriate behaviours.

Fundamentally, this approach is not bad. It may work for children of all ages who have the inherent ability to retrieve information at will, link behaviours with auditory input, compare and contrast information, anticipate consequences, develop abstract reasoning, predict, evaluate similarities and differences and generalize.

Research on FASD has found the learning and behavioural differences between people with FASD and others to be characterized by gaps in cognition in just these mechanisms:

1. May be functioning at a much younger de-

velopmental age (dysmaturity); the 7 year-old may be more like a competent 3 year old; the 16 year old may be more like an 8 year old. In order to be appropriate and effective, expectations need to be based on developmental level rather than chronological age.

2. Difficulty linking from one modality into appropriate behavior, e.g. hearing into behavior (may ‘talk the talk but not walk the walk’), thinking into speaking, seeing into writing
3. Difficulty retrieving previously stored information,
4. Difficulty making associations,
5. Difficulty comparing and contrasting,
6. Difficulty forming generalizations,
7. Difficulty with abstractions--predicting future behaviours and outcomes requires the ability to abstract and generalize,
8. Difficulty seeing similarities and differences.
9. Besides. By the time Fred reached his room to “reflect on his Behavior”, he may well have completely forgotten what just happened and why he was sent to his room because of his short-term auditory memory problems.

The above are just a few of the common gaps which would directly and specifically compromise the efficacy and ...continued on page 19

*“Expectations
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Alternate Students Lend a "Helping Hand"

Mike Shaw, Central Programs & Services, Kelowna

More
than
141,000
trees
planted
in a single
day
”

In August and September, 2003, Kelowna made the news night after night as the Okanagan Mountain Park fire marched ever closer, eventually consuming thousands of hectares of forest, and more than 240 homes. For those who lived through the fire, or who watched it on the television, the enormity of the destruction was awe-inspiring.

Yet just as awe-inspiring is the scale of a recent School District 23 "Helping Hands" initiative to celebrate Kelowna's 100th birthday by replanting areas devastated by the fire, and attempting to set a world record for mass planting in the bargain. Central Programs staff and students were amongst more than 19,000 youth and 3,900 adults who collectively planted more than 141,000 trees in more than 60 areas of the municipality in a single day.

The germ of the idea came from Alice Rees, Central Okanagan Teacher's Association president, who heard about a similar event taking place in Malaysia. There, 10,000 people planted 100,000 trees in one day.



Students and staff line up for trees and trowels



One of two busloads of Central staff and students pose for a photo after planting their trees

The logistics involved in carrying off an operation of this size are staggering. Half of those involved were able to walk from their school to their designated planting area, but about 12,500 were bused to areas on the outskirts of Kelowna. This involved 138 buses, including every bus in School District 23, 19 chartered transit buses, buses from local churches, and school buses from the neighbouring communities of Penticton, Vernon, and Armstrong.



Students were shuttled back and forth throughout the day. The first bus load of students and staff left Central at 9:00 am, full of excited chatter. After dropping us off at our planting site, it returned for a second load from the Storefront School.

Upon arrival at the site, we quickly picked up our trowels and trees, and followed our guide up the hillside to our planting area. The predicted rain held off, and people removed jackets and tied them around their waist as they heated up on the climb up the hillside. We formed a line across the slope, each spaced apart fingertip to fingertip with outstretched arms, then got down to the business of planting. Some had an easier time of it than others, the soil being quite rocky in spots. Many students used their water bottles to give their trees a first drink in their new homes.



Chantal waters her newly planted seedling

Those who participated clearly enjoyed themselves. For students and teachers alike it was a chance to get out of the classroom and interact with each other outdoors in a setting unlike the usual one they were used to.

All in all, it was a wonderful way to celebrate Kelowna's birthday, help replant areas in the municipality that sorely needed it, and give something back to the community while learning about the ecosystem.

And yes, we broke the record! ♡

“
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Ashes in the Wind, Sand in the Riverbed

Kathi Hughes, Prince George

“
Increased
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and
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resources
”

Remember when a “liberal” education incited choice, excitement, discovery, opportunity, creativity and enthusiasm? Remember when a “liberal” education ignited passion and fueled the fires of teaching and learning?

Alas, over the past four years, a “Liberal” education has extinguished the passion of both teaching and learning. We finger the somber ashes of the funeral pyres and yearn for the pre-Liberal flamboyant flames. An oppressive torrent muffles and suffocates. This is how our area of alternative education has been smothered by the Liberal torrents of drowning waters which gush accountability, increased class size, decreased resources and curriculum change (with not even a life jacket to help rescue the drowning victims expected to implement the change).

We are the chosen. We are the privileged. We are trained and inspired to motivate, encourage, accept, validate, advocate for, mentor and teach those youth deemed “at-risk” and/or “beyond-at-risk”.

Previously, this definition included those youth who required extra services and resources in order to develop and maximize their potential. Now, this definition refers to almost all youth in the school system.

The current “Liberal” attitude towards education leaves this legacy for alternative education students and teachers:

- increased class size and decreased resources within schools for these “special needs” students so that teachers are burned out and learners are enraged and frustrated – and, hence, “drop-out” or “fade-away” from the system – (wow

- true graduates of the new Liberal system!)
- teaching self-paced, visual curriculum to a variety of 17 kinesthetic, behaviorally and emotionally needy learners (many of whom are reading at the grade 3 – 4 level) with no classroom support!
- before the fire was doused, we would perhaps have 10 – 12 of these very needy youth – and have supports such as teacher assistants and/or youth-care workers
- inexperienced staff working with the neediest of youth – those of us with experience “just can’t do it”; our integrity is too great – to save our sanity, we must leave or hide or withdraw
- fewer counselors to help the increasingly needy and disenfranchised youth
- fewer appropriate mainstream classes available for including our students
- fewer support staff, such as Learning Assistance teachers, to help assess youth and provide resource materials
- fewer support staff, such as psychologists and speech-language pathologists, to provide assessment, adjudication and direct service
- diminished supports such as youth care workers and teacher assistants so that students no longer receive the help they need within the classroom, the school and the community
- decreased teacher-librarians so that services for students who require extra assistance with library skills do not get the help they deserve

- decimation of District supports and resources for these students and teachers
- diminished pride in environment: classrooms can't be cleaned as custodial services are cut; computers crash and tech support just doesn't seem to be a priority for our kids
- major changes in curricula demands
- new courses without new monies to administer the changes and the courses
- increased need for resources – with no monies to purchase the resources
- a linear system of provincial exams for non-linear students who learn at their own pace, thus penalizing our learners and totally frustrating their already fragile selves
- a change in funding and eligibility for our 1701 students
- what an irony: we get to label students "Moderate Behaviour and Serious Mental Illness" but we get no additional funding to provide services!
- what an irony: schizophrenia and Aspergers are no longer considered chronic health in the world of the Liberal
- a growing reliance on corporate sponsorship for essential items
- increasing competition between school for meagre resources and a corresponding growth of individual school egocentrism as we struggle to close our doors to protect our own and a decimation of collaboration with other agen-

cies as we all adopt our Liberal attitude of "it's your problem, not mine"

- and, finally, quality time for teaching and interacting with students – alas, not....as we must dutifully complete our accountability forms on crashing computers and dysfunctional printers!

Are our students drowning? Are we drowning? Will there be any ashes for the next non-Liberal government to sift through their fingers? Or are we just as blown away and burnt out as "Ashes in the Wind"? Or are we simply crushed pebbles as "Sand in the Riverbed?"

The intrepid *Kathi Hughes* may have retired from the BCAEA Executive, but she never stops advocating for kids and alternate education.

A linear system of provincial exams for non-linear students

Art: Key to Learning and Self-Esteem

Ren Abear, Abbotsford

“
*Make their
 remarkable
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”

October of 1998 saw the beginning of an Art Program at Abbotsford Continuing Education. Twelve eager students and me, their teacher, began a buzz of creativity in a small room in the basement of the main school building. Despite the size of the room, big, bold and beautiful 3-D animals with wings were created using wire, coloured tissue and acrylic. The use of this medium, incorporating a different theme each year, has continued in the Art 12 classes. This year, for example, my students have created amazing "Food Hats". Each hat, like the learning style and personalities of "Alternate" students, is unique.

Working within a theme has been successful in providing the students with a baseline to work from, to unleash their creativity. The Art 12 classes, as well as younger students at A.C.E., work in a variety of mediums with an emphasis on 3-D Art. I have found that a 3-D approach works well because most students, especially those who are anxious about drawing, relate more easily to creating something that occupies space. One of the more popular projects available to



Megan shows off her new hat



Jen with a plaster cast of her hand

all students is making a wax cast of their hand, then casting it in Plaster of Paris. The hand is then mounted on a decorated base and often an object is created to place in the hand.

I think making Art available to students in



JT shows off his birthday cake hat

Alternate Schools can be an important key to learning and to developing higher levels of self-esteem. I have found that the success many students can achieve in the Art Room is transferable to their academic courses. Having the supportive administration of Zeke Doerksen and George Boer, who understand the value of linking Art to self-image and academic achievement, has greatly helped make the Art Program at A.C.E. a success.

The successful completion of an art project, especially when it is visible, 3-dimensional and commented on positively by others, is a boon to levels of self-esteem.

Often, however, students find it difficult to connect themselves to their successful artwork and take ownership. I am always aware of this negative dynamic and work towards helping students bridge the gap to make their remarkable art work a positive experience and a reflection of themselves. ♦



Kaleigh models her new hat

2006 Challenge & Change Conference

Bonny Burgess, Speaker Coordinator

The 19th annual BCAEA Challenge & Change Conference is already taking shape, slated for January 26 & 27, 2006, and held once more at the Sheraton Vancouver Wall Centre. We are delighted this year to have Tod Maffin delivering our keynote address. As many of you know, Tod is a popular columnist, writer, podcaster, and futurist, and we look forward to hearing his take on what we do.

Other sessions will include our usual mix of new faces and old favourites. Our website will have further details as they become available, so visit www.bctf.ca/bcaea, or watch for the fall edition

of the newsletter, appearing in your mailbox in early October. The overwhelming success of online registration means that it will return for next year. And for those of you who weren't quite sure, you can register online and pay by cheque.

As always, the indefatigable Joyce May will whip up her to-die-for array of gourmet delights at the Wine & Cheese Reception.

So make sure you mark your calendar, reserve some pro-d funds, and plan to attend. We'll miss you if you don't make it, and you will miss a terrific conference. ♦

“The 2006 Conference Keynote Speaker is Tod Maffin”

Alternate Routes to a Dogwood Certificate

Anita Chapman, BCTF Liaison

There are three routes to a graduation certificate: the "old" requirements, the "new" requirements, and the adult graduation program.

The "old" grad requirements

Students who were nominally in Grade 11 or 12 in the 2004/05 school year can graduate under the 1995 requirements even if it takes them a number of years to do so. This can include students who had not yet completed grade 10 but had already taken some grade 10 courses before September 2004. The ministry website says that if students are re-entering a program after dropping out, and they have already completed some Grade 10 courses, it makes sense for them to continue on the "old" requirements.

Under the "old" requirements, only grade 11 and 12 courses count for graduation credit. This is an advantage for some students in alternate programs. It helps students who have lost some time along the way catch up and graduate at age 18 or 19. It also allows weaker students to go directly into Communication 11 and Science and Technology 11 without passing the more difficult English 10 and Science 10 courses.

"The grad portfolio will create some challenges for transient students"

Schools must indicate which graduation program students are on when they report transcript and examination information to the Ministry. The code "1996" means that the student is on the old 52 credit, 1995 Graduation Program. The code "2004" means that the student is on the new 80 credit 2004 Graduation Program.

For information on the 1995 Graduation Program requirements, see:
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/grad1995.htm

The "new" grad requirements

Students who enter grade 10 after September 2004, must graduate under the new graduation requirements. The new requirements differ from the old one in a number of significant ways.

Grade 10 is part of the graduation program and students must pass the following grade 10 courses in order to graduate: English 10, Social Studies 10, Science 10, Math 10 (Essentials, Applied, or Principles), PE 10, and Planning 10. Three of these - English, Science and Math - also have provincial exams which count for 20% of the student's mark.

The BCTF has argued that this makes the bar higher at grade 10 than at grade 12 as English 10 and Science 10 are arguably more difficult than Communications 11 and Science and Tech 11. The ministry counters that the "validation" exams data show that the addition of the exam does not cause more students to fail than fail based on classroom assessment alone. The critical difference, of course, is not how many fail these courses, but what happens to them afterwards. In the past, students who failed these grade 10 courses could go on to graduate with a regular Dogwood. Now, they will not be able to.

The second significant change is the addition of a graduation portfolio. The grad portfolio is introduced in the Planning 10 curriculum. The expectation is that students start building their portfolio then and continue over the next two years. The portfolio must be evaluated and is worth 4 credits toward graduation.

The grad portfolio will create some challenges for alternate programs with transient student

populations. Alternate programs may find that it is better to develop a grad portfolio module for students within sight of graduation in order to get this requirement done in a shorter period of time. Many of the school and district plans developed to date are likely to be unwieldy for alternate programs. It might be easier to opt out of these plans and develop ones that fit your particular program.

The third significant change is to provincial exams. All students must write a new provincial exams in the course they are using for Social Studies 11 credit - Social studies 11, Civic Studies 11, or First Nations Studies 12. Like the grade 10 exams, this exam counts for 20% of the student mark. The requirement to write a provincial exam in English 12 or Communications 12 remains unchanged. However, students now have the choice of taking other provincially-examinable courses with or without the exam.

For information on the 2004 Graduation Program requirements, see:
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/graduation/grad2004.htm>

The adult graduation program

Adult students may finish the courses necessary for receiving their regular dogwood diploma, or may work towards the adult Dogwood. To be eligible for the adult Dogwood, the student must be at least 19 years of age (or 18, out of school for a year, and have permission of the school administrator), and must take at least three of their courses leading towards graduation as an adult. The three courses can be completed by enrollment or through Prior Learning Assessment.

There have been some significant changes in the Adult Graduation Program over the last year.

The biggest change in the adult program is the establishment of the new BC Adult Graduation Diploma which is to be used by both colleges and school districts.

In the adult program, 20 credits (5 full courses) are needed for graduation. Secondary school courses or college ABE courses can be taken to fulfill these requirements. For students completing the adult Dogwood in alternate programs in secondary schools, the requirements are:

- a Language Arts 12 course,
AND
- a Mathematics 11 or 12 course,
then EITHER
- 3 Grade 12 ministry-authorized courses,
OR
- Social Studies 11 or First Nations Studies 12,
AND
- 2 Grade 12 ministry-authorized courses

Accounting 11 and 12, and Financial Accounting 12 continue to satisfy the math requirements in the adult grad program even though they can no longer be used toward the regular Dogwood. The only locally developed course that can be used for credit is CPWE12.

Provincial exams are optional for all students on the Adult Graduation Program.

For information on the Adult Graduation Program requirements, see:
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/adult_graduation/

Anita Chapman is the BCTF Staff Liaison with the BCAEA. Her contact information is on the back cover.

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Methamphetamines

(continued from page 3)

didn't know anyone who had used once and turned back. She also didn't believe the 20% recovery rate. That had to be lower, probably around 15%.

And so began a three year nightmare of binging and crashing and watching friends die. Chasing that feeling, that rush she'd had from her very first hoot, she could never again achieve that high. Binges lasted one to three weeks during which time she wouldn't sleep or eat. "Meth was my world," she said. "I was even smoking in the shower."

At her worst she was smoking 24 points a day, a \$240/day habit. Then she'd crash, sleeping for a week. In between came the hallucinations and paranoia, a stage in the meth cycle of abuse called "tweaking". The most dangerous stage for users, medical and law enforcement personnel, tweakers can behave and react violently. Tiffany explained that despite the paranoia, "when you're approached, you're 7 foot 9."

A new boyfriend convinced Tiffany to get into treatment. She was 5'6" and weighed 98 pounds. Her arms and chest were covered in "speed bumps" caused by her sweat glands closing up. Treatment only lasted six days the first time. She checked out and went to Alberta and binged again until she hit rock bottom. A friend she was smoking with collapsed and died in front of her. He was 16. Tiffany checked back into treatment.

Withdrawal was "like you're dying. It feels like you're killing yourself from the inside." She was extremely depressed and suicidal as most meth users in treatment are. She dreamed about killing herself and would wake

up believing she had really died. Recrystallized shards of the drug worked their way out of her skin through her forehead and leg. She was hearing voices and spent several days in psychiatric lock up. Her psychosis lasted several months after she quit the meth.

Today she proclaims she has no more symptoms but her phobias are a lot more real now. She claims that she has no desire to use again, that she could be in a room full of people smoking and not want to join in. That feeling of confidence, believing you're in control, is a classic trait of meth users.

So we take students to visit the Downtown East Side of Vancouver where the addicts are looking more psychotic and tweakers abound. We teach them the DARE program in grade 5. We tell them the realities of methamphetamine use. Detractors say that police based programs don't work. That as many kids use drugs who've had these programs as didn't. Then what's the answer? Should we stop talking? Should we stop showing them the reality of a life on drugs? We can't take everyone by the hand and lead them through life. All we can do is supply them with the information and hope they make the right choices.

With meth you only get one chance to make the right choice. Make the wrong one, just once...

In the meantime, I've got my fingers crossed for Tiffany. ♡

Cst. Shelley Arnfield is the school resource officer with the RCMP Port Alberni Detachment. Her CopTalk column will appear frequently in the newsletter.

FASD and Standard Interventions

(continued from page 9)

appropriateness of learning theory-based interventions.

Whether time out, lecturing, grounding, or incarceration, the underlying principle is the same. Examining any technique for underlying assumptions, as in the example above, simply helps clarify whether the technique is a good fit for the person with this neurocognitive disorder.

The point is not that the technique or approach is bad; it's just that it is essential if our goals to support all children are to be met that recognition of organic challenges be consciously integrated into our interventions.

No one would tell a paraplegic to go do a high jump, that they could do it if they just tried

harder. Asking people with FASD to do mental gymnastics of the kind, which are inherent in a learning theory/behavioural approach is tantamount to asking the paraplegic to jump. We change environments to support people with other physical conditions. Organic brain differences are another kind of physical condition; environments need to change.

The goal is to provide support and prevent deterioration, neither limiting people nor enabling inappropriate behaviours. Improvements occur when appropriate, realistic, and effective approaches are used in working with people with FASD. ♦

*Diane Malbin, M.S.W., is a clinical social worker, program developer, and consultant.
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