

Thinking differently about PLOs

Derek Wiebe

PLOs: What if we thought of these as personalized learning opportunities to engage our students in the skills they will need for a lifetime? After all, it's all about the skills. The skills our students need to hold down a job, create and use a budget, hold an interview that leaves the employer feeling as though they would be a valuable resources to their business. We are preparing them for life. At Central Programs in Kelowna, we subscribe to the belief that 'students do well if they can,' following closely the findings, research and expertise of Dr. Roland Case. That reality leads us as teachers to think outside the box of a traditional education model, trying to meet students where they are, equipping them for the success they will have after their time at school. Please note that I did not use the word graduation, as we at Central have accepted the fact that perhaps graduation is not a a feasible goal for every one of our students.

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I am working this year with Grade 7-9 students at Central's Westside Storefront location in West Kelowna. These 12 - 14 year old students come to us for a variety of different reasons, including the many different experiences and frustrations they have come across in their time at traditional schools. Sharing a one room school between 60 or more Grade 7 to 12 students has its challenges, but with help and support of our administration, the Boys and Girls Club and a great relationship with my co-teacher Mike Shaw, we are working hard to provide the best school experience for our students. To meet this end, I have begun an Applied Skills course this year to try and broaden their education experience.

Applied Skills (Foods, Woodwork, Self-Defence, Leadership, So-
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From the Editor's Desk:

I hope you're as excited as I am about the upcoming BC Alternate Education Association's conference next month. I joined the executive last year, happy to "give back" to an association that has proven to provide educators and Alternate Education support staff with what I consider to be the best conference available in BC. I have been witness, over this past year, to the amazing amount of work the dedicated members of the BCAEA Executive put in to bring you this year's line up. We have been lucky to retain again, the fascinating Gabor Maté as our Keynote Speaker, as well as his good friend, Gordon Neufeld, who is highly requested by our registrants. There are many new presenters in this year's program, bringing forth cutting edge ideas to help us continue blazing the trail into more relevant and meaningful learning experiences for our students.

The winter edition of the BCAEA newsletter gives you a preview of the talented educators and specialists presenting this year. For example, Aaron Akune can help you understand the advantages of creating a Personal Learning Network, while Georgina Robinson's article provides you with a taste of her presentation on children learning with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the challenges they face in our educational environment. Of course, there are many other fabulous speakers lined up for our 26th annual Challenge & Change conference.

If you haven't registered yet, please do so as soon as possible as we so enjoy meeting with you — one of the only times we get to collaborate with Alternate Educators from all around the province. But, in the meantime, enjoy the newsletter!



President's Message

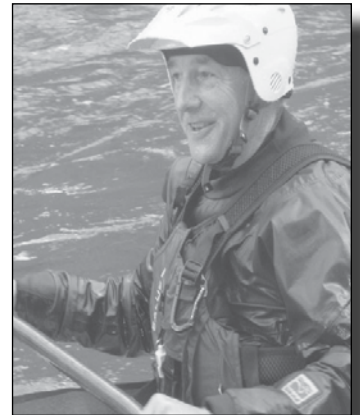
JD Duncan

Change! I am glad our conference is so appropriately named "Challenge and Change".

I believe change is always a challenge even when we initiate it ourselves, let alone having it forced upon us. The Ministry is preaching "change" these days so we find ourselves in the midst of a challenge, whether we are ready to face it or not.

As pressure continues to bear down on the system to change, and the very DNA of what the system has been built on is challenged, some of us embrace the opportunities this brings, and some of us, well, not so much. You and the not-so-much group may remember the "Year 2000" plan that arose from a Royal Commission on Education in 1985 that found that education needed two important foundations: provide stable and predictable funding; and keep the political process out of educational change. It also used the buzz word "individualized learning," but was scrapped after the next election and change in government. Perhaps we should reuse that document one more time with those two principles highlighted.

I believe our work in Alternate Education has always seen the individual and regarded the relationship that we have with students as being the critical element



before success. We have modified curriculum, adjusted time frames, focused on important learning outcomes and given our students the confidence they can learn when ready. In fact some of the proposed changes might help us and our students in terms of the prescriptive curriculum and graduation requirements.

Is it a consolation that we are not alone in all of this? There are sixty some odd school districts in our province and most are represented in the Alternate Education spectrum. The changes are further afield ; here is a link to a blog from a teacher in Saskatchewan that reflects on changing our thinking about the way we teach. <http://shelleywright.wordpress.com/2012/12/12/i-used-to-think/>

We do need to support each other as we all try to make sense of our own current reality in education. Reach out to your colleagues in your school and your community and your PSA. Let us talk about it at our conference and share our misgivings as well as the opportunities.

I did forget to mention that most forced change presents new opportunities once we get over the feelings of anger, frustration, reluctance and sense of loss. Look for these opportunities as we proceed into 2013 and beyond. ♦

PLOs

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cial Justice and anything else you can think of) has the wonderful opportunity to be anything and everything that we as a class could hope it to be! Sure we have our challenges regarding space and equipment availability, but by reaching out to the community to get involved amazing things can happen! We are all aware of how tight education budgets are today, so I won't belabour the point other than to say that by mobilizing community support and involvement, I believe mountains can still be moved.

Sushi Q's is a local Japanese restaurant no more than a five minute walk from our school, which is run by a wonderful couple, Tom and Yanny, with help from Yanny's brother Janto, and they make amazing sushi. I thought that a trip to Sushi Q's would be a chance to teach a set of skills that my kids may never have otherwise learned. Yes, there were the basic skills regarding how to properly construct, roll and cut sushi, but these in my opinion were just the direct outcomes on a list filled with less visually noticeable skills!

Watching my kids make the decision to be respectful and grateful to the owners was worth more than any fabulous unit plan or lesson I could have ever created in a classroom environment. I was so proud to hear my at-risk kids come away from the event saying how much they enjoyed their time, including being proud of how they conducted themselves. Yes, to you and me, holding a conversation without the

use of profanity may seem simple, but the pride they carried after representing our school in such a positive light is invaluable to me.

The journey we have entered into has only just begun. The learning of self-defence skills, creating art at a local gallery, increasing their kitchen abilities, building skateboards from kits, and getting involved and making a difference in our community will result in many ups and downs. My students will fail, I will make mistakes in my planning, and the best news is that it is all worth it. We work in a system that often focuses on the punitive side when dealing with at-risk youth, but being the last stop on the educational train for my kids frees me to focus on the restorative nature of what we can do as educators.

We make a difference every day, changing lives, even when the weekly doldrums attempt to numb us to this reality. I'll admit it is easier to lump the at-risk students into a category and separate them from the so-called 'regular' students. But is this not taking the easy way out? Personally I must admit that this

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Thinking Differently About PLOs

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before, but sometimes I feel as though I can easily forget that whether or not my students can remember the founders of Confederation will not help them gain employment; it's about the skills, those lagging skills that all people have. I will work tirelessly to teach my students about the proper way to write, understand mathematical

was the only solution I saw early in my career, but no more! I believe we are all called to break the self-defeated nature that has acclimatized our students to believe they are meant to fail, to be the 'crazy' ones, the lost causes. They have honoured me with the opportunity to be their teacher, to give up their time to be with me. For this reason, every student of mine will know that I will not leave them behind, and will strive to keep them from failure!

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Teaching social skills to me often feels as though I am doing the job of parents, but perhaps this is just the closest representation of the truth about the nature of a teacher. We are not simply babysitters or care providers, we have been gifted with the opportunity by parents to help educate and enrich the lives of their children. Yes, it is true that these types of lessons and training may not have ever been put in place during our teacher training, but this does not provide us with an opt out clause when it is obvious that our kids are missing the skills they will need to survive in the real world! I know this may be a statement we have all heard

problems, draw inferences and come to their own conclusions, but the so called simple skills of how to have a mutually engaging and beneficial conversation must not be overlooked.

Are we doing anything at Westside Storefront that is beyond the scope of any other school? My belief here is absolutely not! It is extra work that often goes unnoticed in the greater schemas of education, but the connections with the community, engaging students in real world learning and celebrating their successes is worth every minute! Admittedly, I will not be able to cover every single PLO this year in all of the subject areas my students are taking, but I content myself with the realization that it is the experiences they will remember, building skills to equip their lives, no matter where the journey of life takes them. ♦

Derek Wiebe is the Junior Program teacher at Westside Storefront School in Westbank, a satellite program of Central School in Kelowna.

Effective Strategies for Including Autistic Children

Georgina Robinson

As September approaches, you may be thinking about your child's upcoming school year. An article written by Crossland and Dunlap recently appeared in the Behavior Modification journal describing research-based strategies for including children with ASD in general education classrooms. This article was a review of an earlier article written by Harrower and Dunlap ten years previously. Some of the individualized interventions identified included the use of antecedent procedures. Priming, prompt delivery, and visual schedules are all examples of antecedent procedures. These proactive strategies involve making changes to something in the child's environment to either cause the desired response to occur or decrease the likelihood that the undesirable response will occur.

Offering students an opportunity to see the activity before they are asked to engage in it is an example of priming. For example, a teacher may provide the student with books to read about a country before the topic is introduced to the whole class or preview the schedule of activities before a school assembly so that the student is prepared. The use of video or internet technology can also assist students be prepared for field trips to unfamiliar places.

Prompting strategies support the student's ability to be successful and therefore motivated to try tasks that may be new or difficult. Prompts can be offered either by school staff or peers. Studies show that they are both effective in increasing appropriate behaviour. In one study, prompting by peers in social interaction situations increased the interactions with students with ASD and, more importantly, was generalized to other home and school settings.

The use of visual schedules in a school setting has been found to increase predictability thereby increasing student independence and reducing the possibility of problem behaviour. A positive outcome of this approach according to one study was evidence of increased on-task and on-scheduling responding.

Another important strategy to assist in the development of independent academic functioning is the ability to perform without continuous adult supervision and reinforcement. The results of several studies indicated that students did better in being on task and productive when their supervision schedules were unpredictable.

Teaching students to self manage their behaviour has a similar effect with regard to increasing on-task behaviour and also increasing their independence skills. Students can be taught to select their own goals, observe and record their behaviour and give themselves reinforcement. A positive side effect of this process is usually increased interaction with peers and involvement with classroom activities as they are more able to function without adult support.

A sixth strategy that contributes to the effective inclusion of students in general education classrooms is peer mediation. Peer mediators are socially competent peers who are taught techniques to interact socially with their peers with autism to increase the peer's social and academic competence.

Problem behaviour is often one of the barriers to inclusion in general education classrooms. Positive behaviour support is now the recommended intervention strategy to use to

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Why Can't Johnny Adapt?

Dr. Gabor Maté

Among the major challenges we face as a society is the widespread lack of resilience of many young people. Resilience is the capacity to overcome adversity, to let go of what doesn't work, to adapt and to mature. Growing evidence of its absence among the young is as ominous for our future as the threat of climate change or financial crisis.

A disturbing measure is the increasing number of children diagnosed with mental-health conditions characterized by rigid and self-harming attitudes and behaviours, such as bipolar disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, eating disorders and "conduct" disorders. Hundreds of thousands of American children under 12 are being prescribed heavy-duty antipsychotic medications to control behaviours deemed unacceptable and unmanageable.

Canadian statistics are less dire but typically follow that trend. University of British Columbia psychologists have warned that today's children between 6 and 12 "will be the first generation to have poorer health status as adults than their parents, if measures are not taken now to address their developmental needs." Their report was presented in Winnipeg at last week's National Dialogue on Resilience in Youth. The conference itself was a marker of the alarm among those concerned with the well-being of youth - educators, business people, people in government.

Beyond mental pathology, many young people exhibit difficulties adapting, as indicated by burgeoning drug use, aggression, bullying and

violence. These tendencies all manifest alienation and frustration - that is, an inability to deal creatively and powerfully with life's inevitable setbacks. The less resilient we are, the more prone we become to addictions and aggressive behaviours, including self-harm. We also become more attached to objects. A young Ottawa man was recently killed when he refused to surrender his iPod to a knife-wielding assailant. "I'd rather be stabbed than give up my iPod," a 17-year-old woman told *The Globe*.

Resilience begins with the capacity to sustain disappointment, to feel sadness, to accept the futility of wishing that we can ultimately control the course of events. It means adapting to circumstances we cannot change. Resilience is a natural human capacity; we could not have evolved without it. What is blocking that innate quality in so many?

For the flowering of resilience, the young must have nurturing and stability. At greatest risk are children who live in poverty - more than a million in Canada. They are at risk not because their parents do not love them, but because poor parents are often too stressed to provide an emotionally secure environment. Even to children in higher income groups, emotional security is becoming less and less available. With the loss of the "attachment village" - the clan, the community, the cohesive neighbourhood, the extended family - children are left more and more to themselves. They are diverted from human relationships by video screens, computers, television sets, handheld devices.

All too often, their primary relationships are with other children, *...continued on page 13*

A PSA of the BCTF

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Bill 22: How does it affect you?

Audrey Pfitzenmaier and Connie Easton

Bill 22 received a considerable amount of press in the media, much to every educator's disbelief and dismay, but do Alternate Educators realize how much more it will affect their teaching practice than other teachers in the province? The bill flies in the face of good practice as we know it, but Alternate classrooms will be greatly affected by two sections of the bill, both having serious implications for our Alternate programs.

First, let's take a look at parts of Bill 22 which directly affect us from the BCTF's own Executive summary. It states that:

- Bill 22 combines the bargaining issues with the government's response to Justice Griffin's April 13, 2011 decision which found that the government's 2002 stripping of teachers' collective agreements was "unconstitutional and invalid"
- The effect of Bill 22 is to make it easier to create large classes and classes with unlimited number of students with special needs
- It erodes even the minimal protections that were contained in the class size and composition legislation
- It eliminates consultation with teachers on class size and composition—there is now no accountability on these issues.

Section 14 (c) of Bill 22 continues the requirement that classes in grades 4 to 12 not exceed 30 unless (a) in the opinion of the superintendent and principal the class is appropriate for student learning, or (b) the class is in a prescribed category.

The term "prescribed category" is the important issue with Alternate Ed teachers because classes that are part of an alternate program included in

the prescribed category and so are not subject to a class size limit.

In addition to the elimination of the cap on classroom size, Bill 22 also removes all references to class composition. No longer is a class limited to three students with a ministry designation and the mandatory consultation as in the past. Now, an unlimited number of students with Ministry designations can be placed in a class—without teacher consultation. The elimination of teacher consent and consultation takes away any ability of teachers to influence the final organization.

So, how does this affect Alternate Educators? Many of the students in Alternate programs have mental health issues, social and emotional difficulties, behaviour challenges, and most often, ministry designations. Their learning needs cause them to become disenfranchised from the regular school population. The BC Mental Health Plan for Children and Youth, a report put out by the Ministry of Children and Family Development in 2003 states:

"Mental illnesses now constitutes the most important group of health problems that children suffer—superceding all other health problems in terms of the number of children affected and the degree of impairment caused. Currently, one in seven children in B.C.. are estimated to have a mental illness serious enough to cause significant distress and impair their development and functioning at home at school and in the community. The majority of these children (and their families) do not receive the services they need, with the result that impairments often continue, causing increased suffering and affecting produc-

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Connecting (Not Protecting) Ideas

Aaron Akune

The other day, I bumped into a teacher in the hallway and we engaged in a chance conversation. She had just returned from meeting with colleagues from across the school district and it was clear she was bouncing off the wall with enthusiasm as she described some of the possibilities that she now saw for her own classes.

More than anything, what stood out to me was the passion and excitement in her voice. She expressed how great it was to exchange ideas with her colleagues, and how excited she was to once again be a learner, exploring new ways of doing things with the support of others.

Her experience is a perfect example of how inspiring it can be to share our thoughts with others and how we feed off of other people's energy. It's within networks of trusting relationships where we can share our hunches, ask questions, admit mistakes, seek reassurance and describe our experiences. It's in these environments where we can connect our own hunches to what we learn from others and begin conjuring up innovative ideas. Over time, as we engage in conversations, receive support and reassurance from others, and continue to mull over ideas, we gradually reach the point when we have the confidence to transform our innovative ideas into innovative practice.

So why would anyone want to restrict themselves to learning in isolation?

Who wouldn't want to connect his/her ideas with those of others?

Why would anyone intentionally protect their ideas from others as though they were holding on to some secret intellectual property?

Who wouldn't wish to participate in a professional learning community (PLC)?

Why is it then, that so many educators are learning in isolation?

Yes, *time* can be a factor. Teaching all day with little to no common time to meet definitely presents an obstacle. Although it is a start, even the embedded collaborative planning time that many schools have incorporated into their schedules is insufficient to spur on lasting innovation. Sharing and collective reflection amongst colleagues, whether formal or informal must be a part of the daily learning culture in order for innovative thinking to prosper.

Yes, *proximity* can also be a factor. It's challenging for teachers from different schools and different districts to meet face-to-face. The few times a year that this type of gathering takes place is again insufficient to generate any momentum in teacher learning. And even within many larger schools, teachers tend to converse and share informally with colleagues who teach in the same part of the building. While there's nothing wrong with this, groupthink can quickly occur. This is why it's important to introduce external ideas and perspectives that challenge the thinking of the group.

How do we overcome these obstacles?

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Enter social media.

Two years ago I started creating my own Personal Learning Network (PLN). Shortly thereafter, I began blogging as well. At the time, I never would have predicted how significantly the process of blogging and my PLN would have on my learning. I've assembled a collection of some of the most forward-thinking educators from around the world, individuals with whom I would never have been able to interact or learn with if I hadn't built my PLN. I've shared my learning and reflections with my PLN through my blog.

And in return, I've received feedback, connected with learning opportunities, accessed professional development resources and built camaraderie with other educators. In many cases, conversations I've started with my PLN have continued via Skype, telephone and face-to-face. In the same way that the teacher I referenced earlier was excited by the conversations she had with her colleagues, I find myself inspired daily by the conversations I have with my PLN. Sure, a digital connection has its limitations. It doesn't replace my face-to-face conversations, but it offers me an ongoing stream of perspectives, hunches, ideas and questions

to which I can connect my own thoughts. Conversations through social media may seem somewhat chaotic because of the multiple conversations that are simultaneously going on in public. But, as Stephen Johnson, author of *Where Good Ideas Come From* indicates, (search youtube to see the clip), it's in these environments where hunches can collide, and where ideas can mingle and swap.



So, for those of you who still require some convincing, I encourage you to check out the short clip Twitter for Educators, create your own PLN and take advantage of the anytime and anywhere opportunity to connect and

collide your hunches and ideas with those of others! ♦

Aaron Akune is the Vice-Principal at Delta Secondary School in Ladner B.C., and a speaker at the 2013 BCAEA Conference. His interests include personalized learning, technology and 21st Century skills. Article reprinted by permission.

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Giving Thanks

Karen Gadowsky

As Delta Secondary (DSS) celebrates its Centennial anniversary, I find myself reflecting on the historical aspects of education and community. In particular, I have become more focused on the activities we hold annually, which become our traditions, with both personal and social advantages. I know DSS has numerous traditions, many of which serve to strengthen the social fabric of community, and at the same time provide personal platforms for kids to gain confidence and security to move forward in their lives, often in an unobvious fashion.

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One tradition for Alternate and Work Options students at DSS that imperceptibly strengthens their connection to the community while providing personal growth is the “Thanksgiving Dinner Lunch.” Initiated by Carolyn Dodds and Karen Keith almost two decades ago, this full-on Thanksgiving dinner, served at lunch, on the Thursday before the Thanksgiving weekend, is a welcome favourite for the kids.

Guests are invited (Delta School Board Staff, School Administrators, Main School and District Counselors, Parents and Community dignitaries) and former graduates often ask permission to return to join in.

Both classes participate in working together to plan the Thanksgiving meal. They collaborate on the menu based on a budget, shop locally for the ingredients (often receiving donated produce from longstanding Ladner farming families), prepare and cook the food, organize the eating area and food buffet and are involved in the clean up (usually consisting of washing dishes by hand)!

Motivating, of course, is that they get to eat what is made. But over the years of continuing this Alternate Thanksgiving tradition with Carolyn’s daughter, Andrea Dodds (whom I previously taught and who now teaches Senior Alternate with assistance from Karen Keith) and my long time Educational Assistant, Karan Schwartz, I have come to realize that this tradition is much more than meets the eye!

In the weeks prior to the preparation of the Thanksgiving meal, students learn more about each other and the cultures of their ancestry. They find that many people over the millennia, including the Aboriginal people, have had “Harvest Feasts” around this time of year. They have the opportunity to personalize this holiday by reflecting on the cultural significance Thanksgiving has for their families while being encouraged to critically analyze the origins of Thanksgiving in this country and on this continent.

Perhaps most importantly, the students seem to behave in ways that demonstrate their understanding that Thanksgiving is really about “community” and is much more than the commercialized version of turkey dinners, pumpkin pies, “days off” and shopping extravaganza Black Fridays, as Thanksgiving has more recently become to be known on both sides of the border! As I listened to the statements of gratitude (another tradition) that students, staff and invited guests shared before eating, I heard the evidence that proves as much. Students mention things like “I am grateful that I live in a country where tolerance of diversity of culture is being practiced by most,” “I am grateful for both my biological family and my foster family” and “I am grate-

ful that they [the school board] allow programs like this because I don't think I would care about learning and school if I couldn't come here!"

Often considered as some of the most marginalized in the system, these students demonstrate that a personalized context, with community connection, can have a powerful impact on their ability to feel like they are contributing in meaningful ways and, in turn, to value others and recognize the benefits of living in a tolerant society.

For me, I am grateful that I have the opportunity to work with students in the nontraditional setting that is "Alternate," where content and real-world context becomes the primary focus and where, in the Work Options program, students find success in a practical, personalized and more hands-on approach to learning.

I am also extremely thankful for my colleagues who continue to embrace the notion that all students have gifts, and who do their best to make personalized learning a reality for students. I am especially grateful for the parents in this community who value the opportunity their children have to focus on their areas of strength in high school while preparing for the world of work that is not immediately university-focused. It is after all, with this joint effort of community that Delta Secondary in the village of Ladner, will successfully raise its children. ♦

Karen Gadowsky is the BCAEA Vice-President and Speaker Coordinator. She teaches in the Work Options Program in the Delta School District.

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Award-Winning Program in Agassiz

Sandy Balasak

Agassiz Centre for Education has developed a great relationship and rapport with seniors. It all began three years ago when Frank and Eunice Royle approached me about creating senior/teen functions at the Legion, where at-risk youth (of whom the seniors were somewhat afraid) would be paired with a senior for lunch and an afternoon activity. I was skeptical at the time whether the students would really warm up to it, but I was trying to rebuild the school, so was willing to try. We ended up with a waiting list in no time. The two groups have more in common than most might think, and before long, strong bonds were built and they were greeting each other by name when they ran into each other in the community. The Agassiz Harrison Senior Peer Support group hosts four of these days per year, and ACE hosts one day using money from their fundraising.

The next step was for ACE to organize the Christmas brunch for seniors on Christmas morning. This was geared toward any seniors who had no one to spend the morning with, and with a great deal of help from the Legion and the AHSPS, it received excellent feedback. As a result of both the regular functions with seniors and the Christmas morning, ACE and I won the Betty Urquhart Award for Community Service from the University of the Fraser Valley Board of Governors.

As September the following year came around, it occurred to me that the relationship could go one step further and ACE could provide the public schooling for seniors that many were not able to get in their youth, and they could get an actual high school diploma, or Adult Dogwood Diploma.

It just seemed logical that the school could help the seniors stay active and vibrant while getting their Dogwood, and the school would benefit from the role model and influence they provide to not only ACE students but their families and community as well. There are plenty of studies that show keeping both mentally and physically active have a positive effect on long term health. Why would we not encourage something that will improve their quality of life?"

Not only will the improved quality of life for seniors benefit the community, seniors are excellent role models for the younger generations. Their children and grandchildren see how important the education is to them and the sense of pride getting a high school diploma creates. The family of one of our seniors has been encouraging her to get her education for a very long time, and is very excited that she is finally doing it. Another senior has a daughter in her 40s who is now also getting her Diploma because her mother is. It will be our first mother/daughter graduation.

Ray Steigvilas, a teacher at ACE, goes to Cheam Village every Monday to work with the seniors on their courses, but that does not stop them from coming to the school as well. They regularly come to the school and work in class with other students in a variety of age groups. They are working hard and doing well. The success of the program is already evident and everyone is looking forward to graduation this year. This could be the largest, and will certainly be the most diverse, graduation that ACE has ever seen. ♦

Sandy Balasak is the administrator at ACE in Agassiz.

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It
would be
pretty cool
to graduate
with seniors
because it
would bring
us even
closer
-ACE Student
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Effective Strategies

(continued from page 5)

address problem behaviour. This well-researched approach consists of conducting a functional behaviour assessment to identify the function or purpose of the behaviour from the student's perspective then designing intervention strategies to address the behaviour of concern. The intervention plan based on the assessment generally includes introducing antecedent strategies such as those identified at the beginning of this article as well as teaching the student alternate appropriate ways to get their needs met, such as teaching the use of a picture communication system, social or self management skills.

A document provided by the British Columbia Ministry of Education on their website Teach-

ing Students with Autism: A Resource Guide for Schools which can be found at www.bced.gov.bc.ca also has information about supporting students with autism in general education classrooms. ♦

Gerogina Robinson originally wrote this article for POPARD. Reprinted by permission. Visit the POPARD website for more on autism. www.autismoutreach.com

Reference: Crosland, K & Dunlap, D (2012). *Effective strategies for the inclusion of children with autism in general education classrooms. Behaviour Modification, 36(3), 251-269*

Why Can't Johnny Adapt?

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who are incapable of offering the unconditional loving and acceptance that best fosters resilience. The result is an epidemic of defensive emotional shutdown. Accepting loss, understanding that things aren't working and facing futility require openness to vulnerability. Rigid behaviours, the ethic of "cool," drugs and aggression are all ways by which adolescents unwittingly seek to escape vulnerability.

To stay emotionally open and resilient, young people must feel connected to adults. To re-

deem their future, we must restore their emotional security. Supporting stable relationships with caring adults from birth through adolescence, in the home, in the schools, and throughout our entire society, must become an urgent national priority. ♦

Dr. Gabor Maté is a Vancouver physician and author, and our 2013 Keynote Speaker. Article reprinted by permission.

Bill 22

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tivity and functioning in adulthood. School, peer relations and community activities are critical factors in a child's life. It is therefore important that attention be directed towards reinforcing positive community factors, and overcoming destructive influences."

Teachers in these programs are crying for (and being regularly denied) more supports for their students. But, instead of being given more support, they will be given more students, which will dilute the EA support and tax the current services that these students require (counseling, etc.) even more. If these students already are not being given enough supports, how then, can increased class sizes improve this situation?

The report also states, "Resilience, or the ability to withstand adversity, is thought to occur as a result of certain protective factors being present. Several protective factors have been associated with resilience, including long-term supports from at least one consistent care-giving adult. School, peer relations and community activities are critical factors in a child's life. It is therefore important that attention be directed towards reinforcing positive community factors, and overcoming destructive influences."

For many of these at risk students, the Alternate teacher becomes the consistent adult care-giver. But to how many students can the teacher provide consistent care? Alternate teachers are already having difficulty coping with the class sizes they now have without taking on the responsibility of more students.

To make matters worse, other "prescribed categories" that are slated to have increased enrolment

by the elimination of the 30 student cap are the elective classes that Alternate teachers often integrate their students. These include the distributed learning, work experience, Planning 10 and fine arts—drama, music, choir, etc. Sending alternate students into these already overloaded classes is a recipe for disaster. The at-risk alternate students will have even less chances of success, and more chances to feel failure and stop attending class.

To add insult to injury, the government is planning on compensating teachers who accept students in their classroom over the 30 student cap. But, if there's no cap on alternate ed classes, then Alternate teachers who take on more students may not be compensated. This plan will pit teacher against teacher, and principals, knowing that the district cannot afford to compensate teachers, may increase the number of students put in the alternate programs.

Bill 22 has not been thought out very thoroughly by any of the stakeholders, and its consequences especially affect you, the Alternate Teachers. It's up to all of us to make our voices heard against the government plans and have this Bill repealed. Talk to your colleagues, your parents, your PSA members and your school trustees. Have them put pressure on the government to make the necessary changes to Bill 22 before it seriously changes your students' lives as well as your job and quality of life. We are too wealthy a province to convince ourselves that we cannot afford a good education system! ♦

Audrey Pfitzenmaier teaches in Delta and is the current Newsletter Editor. **Connie Easton** teaches in Richmond.

2012 Financial Statement

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for the Year Ended June 30, 2012

Balance, July 1, 2011		\$115,897.81
Receipts		
BCTF grant	5,000.00	
Membership/subscription fees	19,724.96	
Sale of Back Issues	247.50	
Interest	1,373.37	
Conference fees	78,551.51	
Conference exhibits/sponsorships	2,350.00	
		107,307.34
Disbursements		
Meeting - executive	12,205.91	
Meeting - annual general meeting	985.30	
Meeting - TOC costs	2,002.91	
Publication-newsletter	4,941.08	
Publications-other	737.14	
Chapter Support	300.00	
Scholarships	1,800.00	
Miscellaneous	923.00	
Conference-operating	7,647.30	
Conference-facilities	3,416.00	
Conference-catering	14,289.86	
Conference-printing	1,794.24	
Conference-promotions	539.50	
Conference-committee costs	875.00	
Conference-entertainment	13,044.42	
Conference-equipment rental	4,328.16	
Conference-speakers	12,181.55	
Conference-miscellaneous	623.03	
		(82,634.40)
Balance, June 30, 2012		\$140,570.75

Note: This statement reflects only funds held by the BC Teachers' Federation on behalf of the BC Teachers of Alternate Education.

2012-13 Budget

Income

4099921	Income surplus	115,897.81
4099923	Conference surplus	2,884.11
4099930	Membership	15,000.00
4099931	BCTF Grant @ 18.50	5,284.50
4099933	Back Issues	0.00
4099934	Interest	1,100.00
4099940	Conference fees	60,000.00
4099943	Conference exhibits	1,500.00
	Total Income	201,666.42

Expenses

4099950	Meeting executive	10,000.00
4099953	Meeting - subcommittee	0.00
4099954	Meeting - AGM	1,000.00
4099958	Meeting - TOC	5,000.00
4099961	Publications - Newsletter	2,500.00
4099962	Publications - Other	0.00
4099970	Operating	500.00
4099972	Chapter support	1,000.00
4099973	Affiliation fees and meetings	0.00
4099978	Scholarships	8,000.00
4099979	Misc	500.00
4099980	Conference - operating	7,500.00
4099981	Conference - facilities	5,000.00
4099982	Conference - catering	14,000.00
4099983	Conference - printing	2,000.00
4099984	Conference - promotions	1,000.00
4099985	Conference - committee	2,000.00
4099986	Conference - entertainment	12,000.00
4099987	Conference - equipment rental	5,000.00
4099988	Conference - speakers	20,000.00
4099998	Conference - hold	103,666.42
4099999	Conference - misc	1,000.00
	Total expenditures	201,666.42

2012–13 Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objectives	Activities	Evaluation
To advocate for appropriate programming and services for alternative education students.	Advocate for students in alternative education programs.	Provide student awards. Publish Newsletter.	Student Achievement awards given. Newsletter published and distributed.
	Enhance programming and services for alternative students	Provide Student Activity Awards. Provide Innovative Programming Award.	Student Activity Award given. Kathi Hughes Innovative Programming Award given.
	Promote observable opportunities for students in alternate programs.	Provide opportunities for alternate students to prepare food, cater, bus, and bartend at conference.	Students visible working at the alternate conference reception.
To promote alternative education programming and services provincially.	Network with other PSA's and programs that support the association's goals	Free conference registration for PSA presidents. Send Newsletter to interest groups. Maintain website on BCTF server.	PSA Presidents attend conference. PSAC receives newsletter. Website updated on BCTF server.
	Network with organizations that deal with alternative education programs and students.	Respond to Ministry and BCTF re: policy and program direction. Liase with MCFD.	Network with members via membership listserv. Network with MCFD maintained.
	Promote local chapters of BCAEA.	Provide local chapter start-up grant. Provide maintenance grant for LSA's based on membership.	LSA information provided to interested groups. LSA's established and maintained.
To support and promote professional growth and networking for alternative education teachers.	Support professional growth.	Hold annual conference. Provide information about exemplary programming and services.	Conferences held. Exemplary program and services workshops in conference program.
	Promote membership.	Include membership fee in conference registration.	Membership maintained.
	Support regional development.	Provide expertise and financial support for regional conferences and activities.	Representatives at regional conferences and other conferences.

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