

The Digital Revolution Bent Out of Shape

Dr. Gordon Neufeld

Something really big has occurred since the original publication of *Hold On To Your Kids*. In retrospect, we can say that this book amply foreshadowed, but could not have fully pictured, the impact of the digital revolution that, in the intervening years, has come to dominate our world and that of our children. That impact has been, to say the least, distressing. Technological advances that had and still have immense potential for good have, instead, caused a major cultural setback. Unless we come to our senses, the reverberations of the digital transformation will impair the healthy development of our children for generations.

What has happened? How do we make sense of the direction the digital revolution has taken us? What are the implications for parenting in the digital age? By 2010, 73% of teens were members of at least one on-line social network and, by 2012, there were one billion Facebook subscribers internationally. Studies have shown that millions of preteens are already Facebook members, even though the site stipulates that no one under age 13 is supposed to have an account. The typical teen sends over three thousand text messages each month!

“During the last 5 years, the number of pre-adolescents and ado-

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From the Editor's Desk:

Greetings from Leanne Hagglund, the newsletter editor!

Our feature story, written by Dr. Gordon Neufeld, analyzes the digital revolution and its connection to attachment issues for youth.

Our second article, by Fran Alley, head teacher at Spectrum Alternative School, looks at the importance of celebrating student artistic endeavors at the Alternative School Arts Fair, held annually each year at the Roundhouse Community Centre.

The third article, by Manny Sobral, a teacher at Eastside Alternative School, examines the role of sport, specifically boxing, as a vehicle to bring about critical change for youth.

The final article, by Kevin Hampson, sheds light on his Foods program at Spectrum Alternative.

We are constantly on the search for insightful articles to include in upcoming issues. My contact information is on page 16, so feel free to contact me with questions, ideas and articles.

Happy Winter holidays to everyone!

L Hagglund

President's Message

Mike Shaw



As you can see from the photo above, the dress code for teachers at Westside Storefront where I teach changed dramatically this year. Early Sunday morning, on the last weekend before the start of the school year, an unknown arsonist set fire to the Westbank Lions Community Hall where my program for Grades 10-12 and my teaching partner Heidi Beaman Green's Grades 7-9 program was housed in a shared basement classroom. The damage to the 85 year old building was dramatic as the fire was fuelled by the sawdust insulation in the walls. Once the smoke cleared, I, along with district personnel were allowed in to survey the damage. Miraculously, most of the desks, equipment, and resources were undamaged (although three months later they still smell smoky), thanks to the quick work of the fire department and a hall floor above the classroom that is countless layers thick.

Of immediate importance was a location for the program with the school year start just two days off. It was decided that students would take city transit into Kelowna to attend the Central Programs main campus while we looked for a new home.

What followed was an exercise in patience, and an education in bureaucracy! We

hoped to be in a new location quickly, but soon found out that the current zoning regulations prohibited us from renting any new space without passing a number of hurdles, including applying for a temporary use permit. The catch was that we couldn't apply for the permit (which required going in front of city council), until we found a location, and if we found a location, applied, and were turned down by council, we couldn't reapply for a permit for a new location for six months!

The days stretched in to weeks, and the weeks in to months. Student attendance fell off dramatically, as kids who were already reluctant learners decided that a journey to school that consisted of two bus rides totalling nearly an hour followed by a 20 minute walk from the bus loop to the school (then repeated in reverse to go home) was more than they wanted to do.

Yet somehow, the stars all aligned and we moved in to our wonderful new home for the start of December. It took the hard work of a lot of people, in particular the tireless advocacy of Doug Gray, one of my VPs, and Peter Wannop, our amazing real estate agent. Perhaps we should call ourselves the Phoenix Program as we have truly risen from the ashes! ♦

Digital Revolution

[continued from page 1]

lescents using [social media] sites has increased dramatically, “the journal *Pediatrics* noted in 2011. “According to a recent poll, 22% of teenagers log on to their favorite social media site more than 10 times a day, and more than half of adolescents log on to a social media site more than once a day. Seventy-five percent of teenagers now own cell phones, and 25% use them for social media, 54% use them for texting, and 24% use them for instant messaging. “The results, this prestigious publication concludes, are ominous. “Thus, a large part of this generation’s social and emotional development is occurring while on the Internet and on cell phones.”

Add to the mix the disturbing statistics regarding Internet pornography, the existence of cyber bullying and the predominance of gaming, and we see plenty of reasons to be concerned that young people between the ages of 8 and 18 spend an average of over ten hours a day engaged with technology of one form or another,

We, the authors, have often been approached by parents feeling anxious about the impact of digital media on children and wanting to know how to control their children’s access to computers, games and other digital devices, and when to introduce such technology to children. These chapters were written to address such concerns. However, as with parenting in general, it is not a matter of specific practices or recommendations. We have emphasized throughout that parenting is not a set of skills and behaviors, but above all a relationship. As the epigraph to this book states, without understanding relationship, any plan of action will only breed conflict. What we offer here is not a precise recipe

but an understanding, an explanation, along with broad guidelines. How these will apply to each child and each family will depend on the parents’ ability to foster the necessary relationship with their offspring. There are no age-specific recommendations possible—a child’s relationship with the parents and his/her level of emotional maturity dictate what needs to be done. It is futile to suggest universally applicable, rigid rules. How, then, to fathom the impact of the digital transformation on our children’s lives? Discerning the contours of a phenomenon that is so big, and one that we are still in the middle of, is like trying to determine the shape of a cloud that has enveloped us. Without a working knowledge of the most preeminent human drive, attachment, there is no way to explain what has taken place.

Attachment is the key to explaining the shape the digital revolution has assumed, and an understanding of peer orientation in particular is necessary to account for the facts and figures involved. Without such understanding, the facts and figures are bewildering. Nor, without appreciating the centrality of attachment in human life, can we explain the wild popularity of social media, the dynamics of cyber bullying or the seductive appeal of video games and online pornography—all issues to be further explored in these two chapters on the digital age.

The cultural milieu in which our book was written was already characterized by the increasing peer orientation of our young people, but that was before Facebook was launched and Twitter came on the scene, before video games came to preoccupy our youth and online pornography accounted for 30% of Internet activity, and before ...*continued on page 10*

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Arts Fair

Fran Alley

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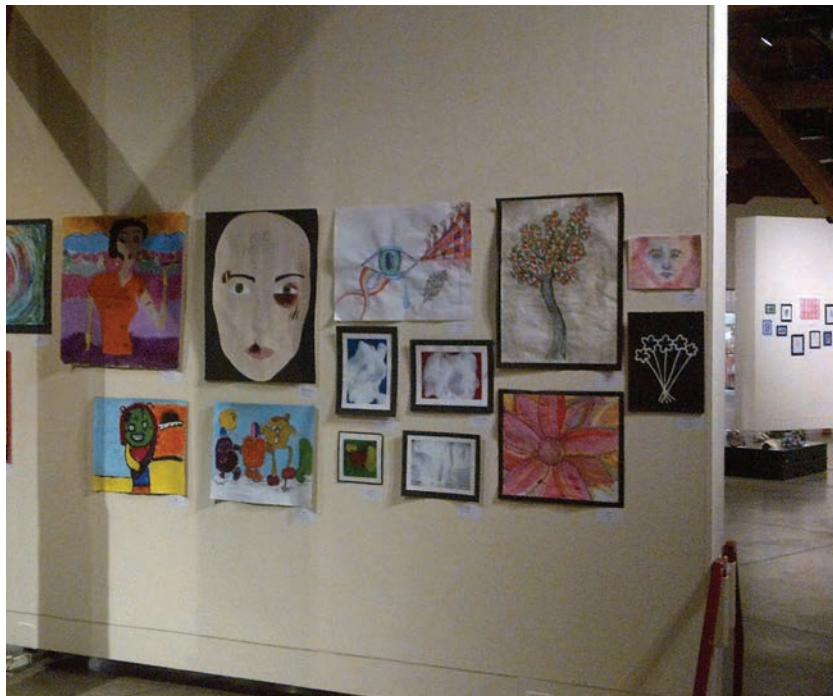
The hanging committee is looking at the images of a small bald child. A montage of flesh colour, hospital blue and cream tubing. The pictures fall under the category of “Photography”. Unlike most high school art it is hard to look at, it is hard to look away. The images permeate our hearts with a deep compassion for children in pain and empathy for those that love them. The artist is the sister of the child in the photographs. This piece like all the work in the show gives a voice to the marginalized, those that don’t fit in, and those looking for a place to be seen and heard. We are alternative and this is our art show.

The Alternative School Arts Fair is held at the end of April every year in Vancouver. I

am a teacher, and Mary Beth Sullivan is a youth and family worker at Outreach, and we coordinate the exhibition. The Arts Fair has been displaying secondary school artists for over thirty years. This would not happen without the work of some very dedicated people in the alternative education system. Art and drama teachers, youth and family workers along with support staff encourage and nurture a population that often does not see much attention until it is too late. The organization VASAP, Vancouver Association of Secondary Alternative Programs financially supports this endeavor with the help of our District Alternative Principal Ron Bergeron.

Pencil, charcoal, pen and ink, ballpoint pen, scribbles and scratches fill a blank mono-

lithic wall near light infused windows, which look out onto a concrete courtyard. Drawings austere, impulsive at times and stark with visions of predilections and fantasies line up neatly in rows. Sketches of gangsters, elfish women and self-portraits are de rigueur. Some are torn from notebooks, some on quality paper. I wonder where are the



doodles from the duo tangs and hard cover binders? Nothing is turned away at the Arts Fair.

Our venue is the Roundhouse Community Centre in Yaletown, where once the former Expo Transportation exhibits were. We are hoping that our Arts Fair, too, transports and inspires others. The Roundhouse is light and airy with a high ceiling



ings and lots of square footage. The kindness and expertise of those that work at the Roundhouse is not lost on us who assist with set up. The hanging committee, a combination of staff members from participating alternative schools, hangs up to 500 pieces of art in a day. The show stays up for five days and is open to the public. There is a performance component to the show where students perform everything from Spoken Word to Opera. There are two performances during the Arts Fair, one at night for the public, family and friends and a final show just for alternative students. Same performers, two shows, run on adrenaline.

The Roundhouse theatre fits 270 people. It is a small and intimate setting. The matte black interior is a paradox of intimacy and www.bctf.ca/bcaea

intimidation. Sound checks are edgy; most participants have never held a mike or performed in front of an audience. Spoken word is a popular choice. A small First Nations teen takes the stage, all bravado, masking angst. She falters, composes herself, falters again. The audience is filled with her contemporaries and rallies with chants of support. Floating on fleeting courage she speaks about the difficulties of her existence, the importance of resiliency and hope. There are smatterings of swear words thrown in just in case your attention waned during the rapid dissertation. It is impressive.

Outside community connections also bolster our youth's confidence. The Sarah McLaughlin School ...continued on page 6

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Students perform everything from Spoken Word to Opera
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Arts Fair

(continued from page 5)

of Music and Emily Carr University spend large amounts of time working with at risk youth, igniting imaginations, discovering talents. The Sarah McLaughlin School of Music extends its scope to encompass all Vancouver Alternative students into its Outreach Program. Classes are held at Spectrum Learning Centre and students are introduced to a wide range of contemporary skills. The musicians perform multiple times during the year and their finale is at the Roundhouse. Emily Carr students facilitate artistic workshops with two alternative programs, Outreach and 8J/9J. They support and work with students to incorporate their personal stories into visual art, the results being a series of unique pictorial portraits of their relationships with urban and rural environments.

In the centre of the exhibition space is a thematic collection of ceramic sloths. It is one of many and often-anticipated collaborative projects submitted each year by Total Education. Lifelike in appearance, the sloths are languid and lethargically draped or sitting slumped on wooden boxes contrasting the fluidity of the species. Each sloth is as individual as its maker. Some expressions are mournful, some quizzical and some are impossibly buoyant given the weight of the material used. It is a project designed to unite the special beings we all are, and it works as a tribute to those imperfections we all have and must make work for us in the city jungle.

gift certificates from Tim Hortons, Subway, Cineplex and Opus paid for by VASAP. Certificates of merit are printed with each winner's name and title of piece. Members from the art and music community volunteer to do the judging. They spend many hours poring over the details, and decisions are not made lightly. All in all, over fifty prizes are given out each exposition. In an age where achievement is often downplayed, prize giving is a much-celebrated event in the alternative community. If we choose not to acknowledge our accomplishments and successes they become common, a given, which they are not. The victories in their lives are markers meant to be surpassed by them. We are proud of the good that can be done in our community.

The Arts Fair is an occasion to shine and an opportunity to support alternative youth. This year's show is April 22-25 with an evening performance on Wednesday, April 23 open to the public. Come down; you won't want to miss a thing. ♦

Fran Alley is the head teacher at Spectrum Learning Centre Alternative Program in Vancouver.

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Showing or performing art at the fair is not without rewards. Prizes are in the form of

Boxing: The Sweet Science

Manny Sobral

Boxing was termed the 'sweet science' in the early 19th century after it was determined that boxing was not as barbaric and violent as many thought.

Boxing is a sport that requires incredible aerobic as well as anaerobic muscle strength and endurance. Not only does boxing involve all the muscles of the body, including the heart, but it also exercises the mind immensely. Boxing is not just a brute strength sport as it sometimes appears, it also requires extreme mental alertness and the ability to think and act while under pressure.

Some of the best boxers in history have realized the importance of exercising the mind in an effort to attain their athletic goals. An example of this is 1988 Canadian Olympic Boxing Heavyweight gold medalist Lennox

Lewis. On his route to the gold medal, Lennox often played the game of chess to prepare his mind prior to his boxing matches.

Boxing is as tactical a sport as any. Each move that is made can be countered just as in a chess match and every counter has a counter to that counter. The more tactical the boxer, the better chance the athlete will have of ultimately prevailing. Unfortunately, as is in life, there are and can be roadblocks or mishaps that occur along the way.

With the youth that we as Alternate school teachers typically work with, these roadblocks tend to be perceived as monstrous at times. This is where boxing is often considered a microcosm of life. Things can be going totally wrong in a boxing match or a workout, things may seem dismal, hope may be lost, but then some small shift or change unexpectedly makes a big difference for the better.

This is no different than the lives we live. This ability to try another angle, to regroup and try again, to NEVER give up mirrors life. Lessons learned in the ring are carried forward to life. Life may knock you down, it may knock you down repeatedly, but you keep getting up because

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Spectrum Food Program

Kevin Hampson

I have seen a lot of changes in my students over my four years of teaching. I've seen them enter my classroom shy, standoffish, disengaged, or scattered, and leave with confidence, skills, and a sense of accomplishment. I've seen bonds made between a diverse group of students that learn to work together to create a finished product in a very short time frame. I am a Foods teacher at Spectrum Learning Centre, an alternative program in the Vancouver School Board. I run the teaching kitchen at our school where students create, serve, and enjoy the daily lunch for the entire school body. I see the results of hands on learning on a weekly basis.

sandwiches, salad and dressing, and a casserole all in one week. They learn life skills that will help them to feed and nourish themselves for the rest of their lives. They learn proper knife skills that can take them into Culinary Arts programs or prepare them to cook for themselves and their families. The students learn to use and understand culinary terms. The learning is hands on and real. This type of activity keeps previously anxious or ADHD students focused, engaged, and active for two hours. We listen to music as a group and argue over who has the best taste. They learn social skills and what it means to be a part of a team without playing a sport. Though we still talk about sports, football mainly.

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Every day we make soup, salad, sandwiches, main, and sometimes baking if space, students, and timing allow. We create all of our recipes from scratch and pride ourselves on the final product. Our food is nourishing, filling, and most of all comforting. It allows students to get a third of their daily intake of nutrition by being healthy and well balanced but still remains filling and comforting. Students opt into the lunch program and pay a monthly fee to the school board to ensure they have a hot meal, but no one is turned away. In recent years, the VSB has turned up the heat on healthy foods in schools. This has been a boon and not a hindrance to my program. It has allowed me to show the importance of cooking healthy meals and how fresh meals made from whole foods can be cheaper than pre-made and frozen items.

The kitchen is a space to connect and converse while doing a job that needs to be finished every day, on time, no matter what. Without fail the lunch is ready for the entire school at 12:35 p.m. [OK, we've been known to be late a minute or two from time to time but we always get it done].

Our daily lunch program allows a space for social interaction. The students line up by class in a rotating system so every class is "front of the line" once a week. They eat together along with the teachers and share a common meal. This reinforces the importance of food on a social level and reinscribes the need to share meals. Sadly, students report that they rarely do this at home as meals are often eaten alone or in front of the TV. It shows a vital part of food consumption to our students, which is rapidly eroding in our modern age.

The students rotate daily through their different duties. A learner will make soup, cookies,

Food also plays a role across the entire school curriculum as other teachers utilize it in their classrooms. Spectrum has five garden boxes that we use to grow a variety of vegetables. The garden is planted, weeded, and tended by Shirley Turner's Agriculture class. They help to produce vegetables that we in turn utilize in the school lunch program. The kitchen scraps are then returned to the garden compost to create nutrients for the soil and fed to the four hens we have on site who produce eggs for the school baking. The food cycle is real and tangible to Spectrum students because they are actively engaged in it. It is not an abstract concept from a textbook. It is a real, active, working model that they see at play in their community.

One of the most exciting results of my foods program on the children is the sense of confidence it instills in them. They enter with little to no understanding of food processes and leave with a greater confidence that will help them throughout their lives. The students rarely understand where food comes from, how food preparation and techniques alter food properties, or the importance of timing in the kitchen. They are usually only comfortable with instant meals and learn the dangers of these "convenience foods" on a health and well-being, social, and economical level. I have often heard students say, "why not just open a can or use instant" when we prepare soups or mac and cheese from scratch. To have a student actually prepare the food from start to finish shows them the ease of food production once the initial learning curve is mastered.

In addition, I have seen massive changes in how students engage with each other in the kitchen. As skills and recipes are perfected over the semester I see the focus move away from what we are cooking and what music we are listening to, and shift to social interaction. Students that were previously disengaged and labeled "at risk" make connections and engage in discussions on such varied topics as goals in life, the dangers of substance abuse, ghosts and the afterlife, date rape, the effects of language and gender stereotypes, and what is God. The kitchen is about much more than food. It is a place to live, to learn, to grow and to explore.

The Foods Program at Spectrum is an integral part of the student experience. Our students learn about food through actively engaging in its production, gathering to enjoy it together, and dealing with its remnants through composting and clean up. We offer a semestered system so there is an opportunity for a variety of students to take part in the Foods Program throughout the school year. I've noticed a correlation between the students that poke their head into the kitchen to ask what's for lunch or to inquire about a delicious smell and those that enter the program in the following semester. Food production and consumption is a tie that binds us all, and my students are learning this in an engaged, hands on, and authentic manner. ♦

Kevin Hampson is the Foods Program teacher at Spectrum Learning Centre alternative program in Vancouver.

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Digital Revolution

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anyone would have thought that within a few years 90% of children ages 8 to 16 will have viewed pornography online. Doctors had not yet expressed their concerns about the deleterious effects of screen time on children's health, nor had they yet issued their warnings of rising Internet addiction.

Pornography aside, some may ask: What's wrong with young people spending so much time online, seeking information or diversion? Do we really have a problem here?

When digital devices first appeared to manage information, it was assumed that they would be used for either business or education or entertainment. Scientists developed the web as a route for the rapid and efficient communication of complex data. The first target population for cell phones was the business community; for computers, it was the school community. After all, we need information for scientific research or to conduct business, and school is all about getting information across to students. Google went public in 2004 with its mission to organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useful. The information age had officially arrived. It was in this context that we put digital devices into the hands of our children.

The Basic Flaw: Ignoring Attachment

There was a basic flaw in the assumptions driving the digital revolution. At the core of our being it is not information about the world that human beings seek, nor even entertainment. When it comes to engaging the attentional mechanisms of our brains, neither in-

formation nor entertainment have priority. In fact, in our brains' hierarchy of importance, information ranks very low: it is more likely to be tuned out than tuned in. The brain filters out most sensory and cognitive data reaching it lest it lose sight of what is essential at any moment.

As we have seen throughout this book, our primary and dominant need is togetherness. It is connection we seek, not factual information about the world. Human beings—often as adults but especially as immature young creatures—are hungry for information not about the world but about our attachment status. We want assurance that we belong to those who matter to us. We are concerned that we are seen as similar to those we value, are important to them and liked by them; that we are wanted and understood by them, that we matter. We are driven to know whether or not we are invited into another's presence, and we present ourselves in the hope that this invitation will be forthcoming.

Business is not our highest priority, nor is learning, nor entertainment. What shapes our interaction more than any other factor is attachment, whether we interact in person, by mail, by phone or through the Internet. The technology may be new, but the dynamics are as old as humankind.

It is not surprising, then, and in line with the perspective originally outlined in this book, that the amazing technology originally designed for information has been pressed, instead, into the service of seeking connec-

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tion. And, by means of distraction and diversion, it has also come to act as a compensation for the frustrated attachment needs of our children. But compensating for a core issue can never resolve the difficulty; it can only make it worse. To those who are vulnerable, digital media is addictive. Our children use these means much less to learn than to form and maintain relationships, much less to solve problems than to escape from them.

Once one understands the need for togetherness, the basic human dilemma becomes clear: how to be close when apart. There are many aspects to this problem: how to feel connected to people from whom one is physically separated; how to experience a sensation of closeness when one is actually not feeling wanted; how to get a sense of significance, how to feel important when we do not seem to matter to those who matter to us.

We can “solve” the problem by recruiting dozens or hundreds of “friends” on Facebook who will “like” us, without any genuine intimacy. These scenarios are incredibly alluring as they give us the fleeting sensations we so desire. They are our modern-day sirens. They take us where we want to go with no hint of the risk involved, no inkling of what lies down that path. These attachment fixes can become more appealing than real life itself, and for many young people they have. It is far from rare, for example, to see young parents ignore their kids while engaged in texting and other digital communication.

Is there, then, no safe or useful way to introduce our youth to the benefits of the digital age? As we will show in the next chapter, it is

a matter of timing. Children and young people can be granted access to technology in a safe manner, but only when they are ready for it, when they have developed sufficiently so that the use of technology will enhance their growth rather than undermine it. Our job in the meanwhile is not to put temptation in their way.

Until they are ready, what the digital world offers young people is not what they need—in fact, it interferes with what they need, as we will see in the next section.

Digital connections allow peer-oriented kids to stay together even when apart

Traditional society was organized around hierarchical, multigenerational attachments, not peer attachments. The home was the container for the family and the village provided the supporting cast of attachments. I remember asking people in the village of Rognes, where we enjoyed a sabbatical in Provence, why so few of them were engaged in digital social networking. The answer was typically some variation of “why would we want to, we’re all here.” There is no need to substitute digital connection when you already are with those who matter most to you. We had a similar experience in Bali recently.

However, as peer orientation took root in Western civilization, a problem began to emerge. School has become the breeding ground of peer orientation in western civilization and also has functioned as the gathering place for peer-oriented kids. Recess and lunch hour and after-school activities with peers became *...continued on page 12*



To those who are vulnerable, digital media is addictive



Digital Revolution

(continued from page 11)

the attachment structures that replaced the family meal, the family walk, the family play time and the family reading time. Most peer-oriented children go to school to be with their friends, not to learn about their world.

How do peer-oriented kids keep close to their peers in the evenings and on weekends and on holidays? And what about when they leave school? As we all know and have experienced, there is nothing more impactful psychologically than facing separation from those we are attached to. The resulting alarm is immense and pursuit of proximity desperate. The motivation to close the gap becomes all consuming.

I believe this was the force that bent the digital revolution into the shape we see now. Remember that attachment is the strongest force in the universe. The digital devices designed to serve school and business became repurposed to connect the peer-oriented with one another. The digital revolution has become, for all intents and purposes, a phenomenon of social connectivity.

The statistics speak for themselves. Internet use is now reported to be 100% among 12- to 24- year-olds, with 25 % of the time spent interacting on social media. This is a significant amount of time when you consider, as we have noted, that the average 8- to 18-year-old spends 10 hours and 45 minutes a day using digital devices.

Facebook and RENREN (its Chinese equivalent) have essentially allowed recess to go

on forever—kids can now hang out with one another full time. These social networking sites originated in colleges to serve their peer-oriented students and have become now the instruments of connection for the peer-oriented throughout the world.

I often wonder what would have happened if the digital revolution had occurred before peer orientation took hold, but after increasing mobility, job scarcity and high divorce rates had separated us from those we love. Without peer orientation perhaps a culture would have evolved to digitally connect children to their parents and teachers, uncles and aunts, grandmothers and grandfathers. Parents may be reading bedtime stories to their children through these digital tools when away from home; teachers and students creating a context of connection to facilitate learning; grandparents connecting with their grandchildren when far away.

The digital revolution favors and furthers peer orientation

If peer orientation has shaped the digital revolution, the digital revolution both favors and furthers peer orientation. First, those with digital devices and the technical competence to use them are more likely to connect with each other. As any non-tech-savvy adult who has ever fumbled with a complicated remote control can testify, this dynamic certainly favors the young and their relationships to one another. In comparison, coming together to share a meal would typically favor multigenerational attachments.

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Second, social networking sites, as well as digital technology itself, dictate the nature of the connection, favoring superficial contact over emotional and psychological intimacy. Digital devices in particular and the social media in general do not make it easy to share one's heart with another, never mind all that is within one's heart. What is shared is often contrived and shallow. It is difficult in texting to convey one's enjoyment of, or delight in, the other. The twinkle in the eyes and the warm, inviting voice are harder to convey. Emphasized are the superficial dynamics of sameness—do we like the same things and same people—rather than who we are at the core. There is no genuine self-disclosure that would lead to one truly being known. Significance, being important to those we seek connection with, becomes all about making a favorable impression than about seeking a vulnerable invitation to exist in the other's presence as we really are. As such, technology entices and rewards those with superficial attachments: the immature, the undeveloped and the peer oriented.

MIT psychologist Sherry Turkle interviewed hundreds of young people about their web-based lives for her book *Alone Together*. As Newsweek reported, "people tell her that their phones and laptops are the 'place for hope' in their lives, the 'place where sweetness comes from.' "

Third, the traditions, rituals and taboos that historically evolved to protect family and intergenerational attachments do not govern the digital world. Traditional cultures, cul-

tures where multigenerational relationships are still honored, are full of customs about who is to talk to whom, what kind of touch is allowed, who can eat with whom, with whom secrets are shared, and so on. These activities foster attachment and so must be controlled. For a culture to reproduce itself, and for the raising of children to be enabled and effective, hierarchical attachments must be preserved. The digital world is relatively devoid of any customs or rituals or taboos that would protect family attachments and hierarchical relationships. Information itself is not arranged hierarchically, in terms of importance or validity. Everything is flat-lined: equality is the rule. Even capital letters are losing ground.

Thus, peer orientation has not only become the driving force of the digital revolution and its instruments, but also its ultimate outcome. We may have put digital devices into the hands of our children for sensible reasons, but they in turn have repurposed these devices to connect with one another, both at the individual level and on the mass scale. The result is a further disastrous erosion of the ground for healthy human development. ♦

Dr. Gordon Neufeld co-wrote *Hold on to Your Kids* with Dr. Gabor Maté. He is a Vancouver-based developmental psychologist with more than 40 years experience, and a frequent presenter at our conference. He will deliver the 2014 Keynote address. Excerpt from Chapter 19 of the revised *Hold on to Your Kids* reprinted by permission.

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Boxing

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**Anyone
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 boxing
 workout**
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you know you are strong and you will overcome obstacles.

Boxing workouts allow people to develop not only the positive physical benefits, but also the mental aspects that come with the training.

Recently some Vancouver alternate schools students have been given the opportunity to workout at a local boxing gym and the results have been very positive. With some of the students who have not taken part in any type of physical activity during the year, the heavy bag, punch mitts, speed and double end bags have brought out the best in them.

The uniqueness to boxing is that anyone can easily take part in a boxing workout. It is a full body workout that incorporates the brain while you execute certain head and body punches; all this while the bottom half of your body, your feet and core, must be in the correct stance. This may sound rather easy, but try it and you will find a new appreciation for the 'sweet science.' The students of the Genesis Programs and Foundations Program in Vancouver certainly have. ♦

Manny Sobral teaches in Vancouver at Eastside Alternative. He competed in boxing at the 1988 Seoul Olympics.

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2013 Financial Statement

Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for the Year Ended June 30, 2013

Balance, July 1, 2012		140,570.75
Receipts		
BCTF grant	5,284.50	
Membership/subscription fees	22,114.98	
Sale of Back Issues	495.00	
Interest	1,861.35	
Conference fees	90,163.00	
		107,307.34
Disbursements		
Meeting - Executive	12,436.12	
Meeting - AGM	922.52	
Meeting - TOC costs	427.80	
Publication - Newsletter	10,204.48	
Publications - Other	27.10	
Scholarships	4,400.00	
Miscellaneous	134.03	
Conference-operating	4,946.00	
Conference-facilities	3,332.00	
Conference-catering	16,230.61	
Conference-printing	2,092.05	
Conference-promotions	999.31	
Conference-committee costs	3,165.23	
Conference-entertainment	11,031.58	
Conference-equipment rental	4,655.72	
Conference-speakers	14,505.32	
Conference-hold for future exp.	150.00	
Conference-miscellaneous	86.55	
		[89,746.42]
Balance, June 30, 2013		\$170,818.16

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

2013-14 Budget

Income

99921	Income surplus	170,818.16
99923	Conference surplus	3,640.84
99930	Membership	20,815.50
99931	BCTF Grant @ 20.00 each	6,480.00
99932	Back Issues	500.00
99934	Interest	1,800.00
99940	Conference fees	80,000.00
	Total Income	284,854.50

Expenses

99950	Meeting - Executive	15,000.00
99953	Meeting - Subcommittee	0.00
99954	Meeting - AGM	1,500.00
99958	Meeting - TOC	6,000.00
99961	Publications - Newsletter	3,000.00
99962	Publications - Other	0.00
99970	Operating	500.00
99972	Chapter support	1,000.00
99973	Affiliation fees and meetings	0.00
99978	Scholarships	8,000.00
99979	Miscellaneous	500.00
99980	Conference - operating	7,000.00
99981	Conference - facilities	5,000.00
99982	Conference - catering	17,000.00
99983	Conference - printing	3,000.00
99984	Conference - promotions	1,500.00
99985	Conference - committee	3,000.00
99986	Conference - entertainment	12,000.00
99987	Conference - equipment rental	5,000.00
99988	Conference - speakers	20,000.00
99998	Conference - hold	174,854.50
99999	Conference - misc	1,000.00

Total Expenditures 284,854.50

2013-14 Goals and Objectives

Goal	Objectives	Activities	Evaluation
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.	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.
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 engage new members and communicate with existing members.	Engage new members.	Send welcome letter to new members. Invite to join ListServ.	Welcome letters sent to new members. New members invited to ListServ.
	Communicate with members.	Respond to ListServ comments/questions. Invite comments/questions in newsletter.	ListServ actively used. Comments about newsletter noted.

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