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(refer to ad on opposite page)

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From **Earning Money**

Other suggested reading:

Money Sense

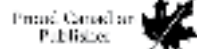
The Money Sense series introduces young readers to basic economic concepts and vocabulary in an engaging and accessible way. Child-centered scenarios demonstrate cause-and-effect relationships, encourage critical thinking skills, and reinforce the outcome of different financial choices. If you are looking to build a strong financial literacy foundation, this series fits the bill!

Reading Level: Gr 2 | Interest Level: Gr K-3

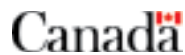
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- Supports provincial financial literacy initiatives



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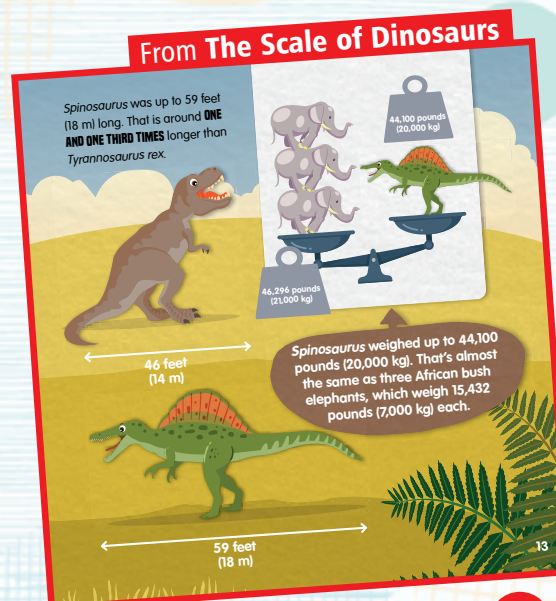
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978-0-7787-7382-5 PAP 978-0-7787-7383-2 PAP 978-0-7787-7384-9 PAP 978-0-7787-7385-6 PAP



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- Supports provincial mathematics standards - Grade 2: Measurement



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The holidays are over and everyone can break their new year's resolutions without feeling guilty. After all, what's a resolution unless it is broken? This gives you the opportunity to plan for next year and maintain that tradition. Something to look forward to.

I hope you are also looking forward to reading the content in this current issue as we tackle some fundamental and important topics. Our regular contributor, Adam Stone, writes coherently about discipline in the classroom where the old punishment and retribution strategies don't seem to work very effectively. Rather, it seems listening and getting to know students while remaining empathetic can go a long way toward securing student cooperation. Sometimes, it's hard to find the right balance when looking to maintain peace and decorum in a classroom. This article provides a hands-on approach to minimizing disruption.

Another topic of importance centres on teachers managing relations with parents. Sometimes parents, who only want the best for their kids, are disruptive. They can be a handful. High level diplomatic and comprehensive communication skills are often required to keep parent-teacher relationships running smoothly. Our contributor, Alex Newman, lays out comprehensive approaches and strategies for teachers when engaged in stickhandling these often tricky but vital relationships.

Tasha Squires is a school librarian who stumbled on the benefits of large print books. After introducing them into her school, she noted that students—those that struggle with reading and those that don't—became more engaged in the stories. Large print books offer a lot of benefits for reluctant and advanced readers. She lays out a primer on how to introduce large print books into the school library.

Since it is winter in this part of the hemisphere, our Field Trips column, encourages classes to get outdoors and jump into alpine sports while providing a partial listing of facilities and programs available. We need to encourage kids to get and stay active year round. Finally, our Webstuff column takes a look at gaming in the classroom listing what games/apps might challenge students intellectually while delivering educational benefits.

Please take a moment to check out our Resources page on our website, teachmag.com.

We'll look forward to next time.

Sincerely,

Wili Liberman

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Alpine Sports

When temperatures plummet and snow begins to fall, it's only natural to want to stay indoors and keep learning inside the classroom. Heading outdoors however, is not only a great way to fight cabin fever, but also to stay active. Alpine sports are a popular choice in the winter and many ski resorts offer Snow Schools or organized field trip activities. Ski and snowboard instructors are certified and teach kids how to stay safe while having fun. School programs and lessons also meet most physical education and health and wellness curriculums. Check out these ski resorts that let kids slide through the season and embrace winter.

1

CRABBE MOUNTAIN
CENTRAL HAINESVILLE, NB

www.crabbemountain.com/snow-school/school_trip_info

2

LES SOMMETS
SAINT-SAUVEUR, QC

www.sommets.com/en/ski-and-snowboard-lessons

3

MARBLE MOUNTAIN
CORNER BROOK, NL

<https://skimarble.com/snow-school>

4

MISSION RIDGE WINTER PARK
QU'APPELLE, SK
www.missionridge.ca/school-program

10

WHITEWATER SKI RESORT
NELSON, BC
www.skiwhitewater.com/ski-ride/snow-school

9

SPRING HILL WINTER PARK
SPRINGFIELD, MB
www.springhillwinterpark.com/school-events

8

SKI SNOW VALLEY
BARRIE, ON
www.skisnowvalley.com/your-outdoor-classroom

7

SKI BEN EOIN
EAST BAY, NS
www.skibeneoin.com

6

PASS POWDERKEG
BLAIREMORE, AB
www.passpowderkeg.com/home/school-groups

5

OWL'S HEAD
MANSONVILLE, QC
<https://owlshead.com/en/snow-school>

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How Large Print Books Can Help All Students

Author Tasha Squires

As a librarian, there are certain moments that stick with me. When one of my students unexpectedly gave me a mutinous look, I knew it was the start of one of them. Bobby had always been an affable student, but one day when I asked him to return the book he had been reading, he gave me the look. At first, I didn't understand. It was a small ask after all. The book was brand new, one I hadn't catalogued or even stamped with the school's name yet. It was not ready to be loaned out.

It turns out, I had inadvertently stumbled upon something special. Bobby, like all the 8th grade students in our school that year, was reading *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton. I just had received several copies of the title in large print so I asked Bobby to switch from reading his regular print to the larger text. I was curious to see if he would notice any difference between the two formats. Bobby obliged and spent the rest of the period quietly reading, but when the bell rang and it was time to return the book—that's when he gave me the look.

So I relented and let him keep the book. The next day when I asked Bobby why he didn't want to return the book, he responded that he didn't want to stop reading. "It was easier to read, and I didn't lose my place as much as I usually do, especially reading and then looking up, and then going back. It was easier to find my place in the large text book than the small text book."

Bobby also commented that he noticed the page color in the large print book (grayish) made reading easier than regular print (bright white). His comment about looking up and getting back into his book faster led me to capture [video of students reading large and regular print titles](#). I wanted to know what they thought and if I could see an actual difference with their reading between the texts. The numerous improvements with large print shocked me.

A student who was referred to me because he stuttered when reading aloud, suddenly stopped. Another girl who was a proficient reader, slowed down and began reading with expression. Several other students displayed physical differences; they often held books to their faces, but now sat back in a relaxed position. One student no longer needed to use her as a finger as a visual guide. All of the students were also able to find their places faster when interrupted.

NATIONAL LITERACY STUDY ECHOES CLASSROOM EXPERIENCES

[Project Tomorrow](#), an education nonprofit, recently released a [national literacy study](#) examining the impact of large print texts on students in grades 3-12. The findings reflect what I've seen in my own school. A 7th grade boy I interviewed said: "I read the book faster and I could understand it better." An 8th grade girl reported after her first experience with large print: "...felt like I was accomplishing more and I wanted to keep reading." I created a survey for my students to take after reading a large print text. To date, 226 students in 7th and 8th grades over the last two years have completed the survey.

Here are a few differences students have reported when reading large print books:

- Read for a longer period of time
- Are able to focus and stay connected to the text more
- Remember and comprehend more of what they are reading
- Enjoy the reading process (perhaps for the first time)
- Read with greater fluency

HOW TO BUILD A LARGE PRINT COLLECTION

Soon after, I decided to create a large print collection in my school library. Here are five steps I used that can be duplicated in virtually any school to successfully launch your own adventure with large print:

Step 1: Awareness. I started my career as a librarian in a public library and purchased large print books for teens there. It wasn't until two years ago that I thought to put them into the school library. Even if you've looked at large print in the past, be aware that new titles are coming out all the time. You might have an outdated perception of what is available.

Step 2: Accessibility. If a student is unable to access a text, it's very hard for that student to be productive. As a teacher mentioned in [the Project Tomorrow study](#), giving students the freedom of choice is vitally important. As a school librarian, it is imperative that I provide a variety for students, so they can find what they are comfortable with and be successful. I look at large print as another piece in fulfilling the accessibility puzzle.



Step 3: Ditch Preconceived Notions. Overcome any biased ideas you might have about large print books because the students don't have them. I thought they would be good for students with visual impairments and some of our struggling and striving readers. I had no idea how many regular education students would enjoy and appreciate large print titles.

Step 4: Organize & Display. I asked the students in my survey where they wanted the books in the library. Overwhelmingly, they wanted all the large titles pulled out and put in their own section. This immediately made sense to me. Many times, it's the format that is driving the consumption, so I created a spot in the library for the large print collection. In the online catalog, the books can be searched easily by large print, and I've created a large print call number by simply using the letters "LP."

Many of our classroom libraries have large print collections, including one of our special education teachers and our reading specialist.

Step 5: Spotlight. Highlighting large print titles is a must. For example, when I do a booktalk in classrooms, I'll mention if the book is also in large print format, and I currently host a [booktalk podcast](#) just for middle school books and let listeners know if a book is available in large print.

My suggestion is to jump right in with large print titles. We have only found positives associated with the new direction we've taken with this format. If I see a title is out in large print that I know students will enjoy, I will purchase it. I know I'm making a choice to make that book title accessible to a wider range of students than in the past.

Tasha Squires is the School Librarian at O'Neill Middle School in Downers Grove, IL. Follow her on Twitter at @tasquires.

Learning with Games

Kids love to play so there's no better way to encourage them to learn than with games. Keep your students up-to-date with the help of apps and websites that can be used to create your own games and quizzes. Teachers can create activities based on the current topics being explored in the classroom. Here are some interactive apps you can use.

KAHOOT!

Free – Android, iOS

With this platform, you can find out how much your students already know about a topic by using gamified multiple-choice and true-or-false quizzes. Create a kahoot to kick-off a lesson, introduce new concepts, or revise a lesson. You can also assign kahoots as homework. Encourage collaboration in your class by playing in team mode whereby questions appear on a shared screen and students answer on their devices. And if you're time-strapped, Kahoot!'s library offers millions of ready-to-play quizzes you can use. To learn more, visit: <https://kahoot.com>.

QUIZZZ

Free – iOS, Android

Quizizz provides millions of free self-paced quizzes covering every subject from Coding to the Roman Empire. Different modes allow students to play on their own, compete against their friends, or even play with the whole class. Quizzes can also be more interesting with the option to add things like music and memes. The app isn't just for students looking for a fun way to learn, it can also be used to prepare for tests such as the SAT, with a collection of teacher-created quizzes. For more information, visit <https://quizizz.com>.

MAKE IT FOR TEACHERS

Free – Android, iOS

Users have access to an array of activities through this app as they can create educational games, activities, books, tales, and slideshows. It consists of eight different interactive menus through which users can access a variety of themes that cater to various study areas. It can be used to test drawing, memory, art skills, etc. With 14 themes and eight templates to choose from, the user can create quizzes, memory games, game-based slideshows, and much more. The ability to import your own graphics and sound is helpful too.

WORDABLES

Free – iOS

While pushing students to process dozens of facts can be challenging, using word picture puzzles makes it easier for them. Wordables is a guessing game using pictures made up of a cloud of smaller words that form each clue. With hundreds of Wordables of varying difficulty, kids can make their way toward each step while remaining entertained. For example, if players were to guess the name of a sport, there would be a cloud filled with words relevant to the sport.

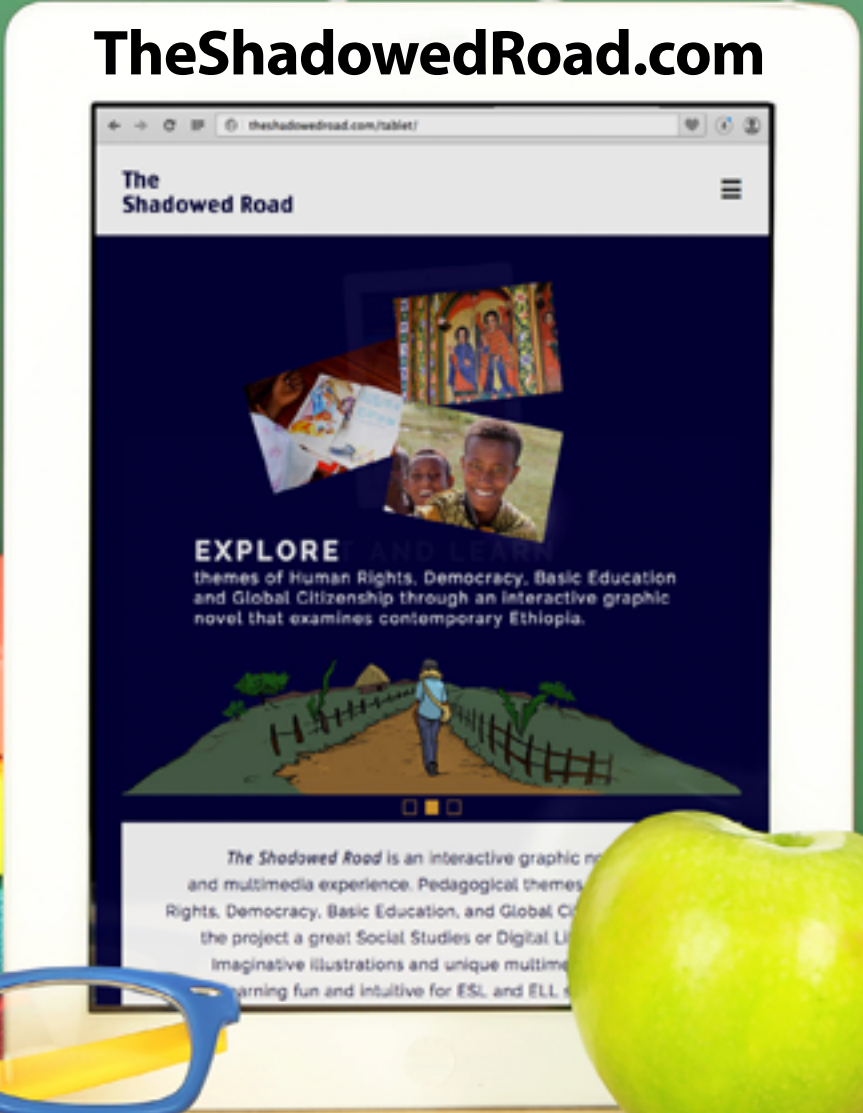


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Lesson I: Super Heroes of Canadian Politics

Grades 9 to 12

INTRODUCTION

Two remarkable individuals. Similar ages. Each with different backgrounds, upbringing, language, and culture. Both were lawyers, both were married, both felt the current political system needed reform. Both stood against violence and supported minority rights. Both opposed oppression, particularly of the large minority of Francophones in Quebec. Together they persevered, but in the beginning didn't know each other. Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine lived in Montreal and Robert Baldwin lived in Toronto. Both ran for public office and were elected. Both served in important roles in government. They formed a bond of friendship and professional connection that helped each support and lift the other to greater heights and achievements. Each remained selfless putting governance and the country first.

KEY CONCEPTS AND ISSUES

Students will learn about Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine and how they developed and implemented the political concept of Responsible

Government. Students will explore the history of the period (from 1813 to 1851 approximately), an extraordinary time in the evolution of Canada, its democratic institutions and forms of government.

DURATION:

3 to 4 classes

MATERIALS REQUIRED:

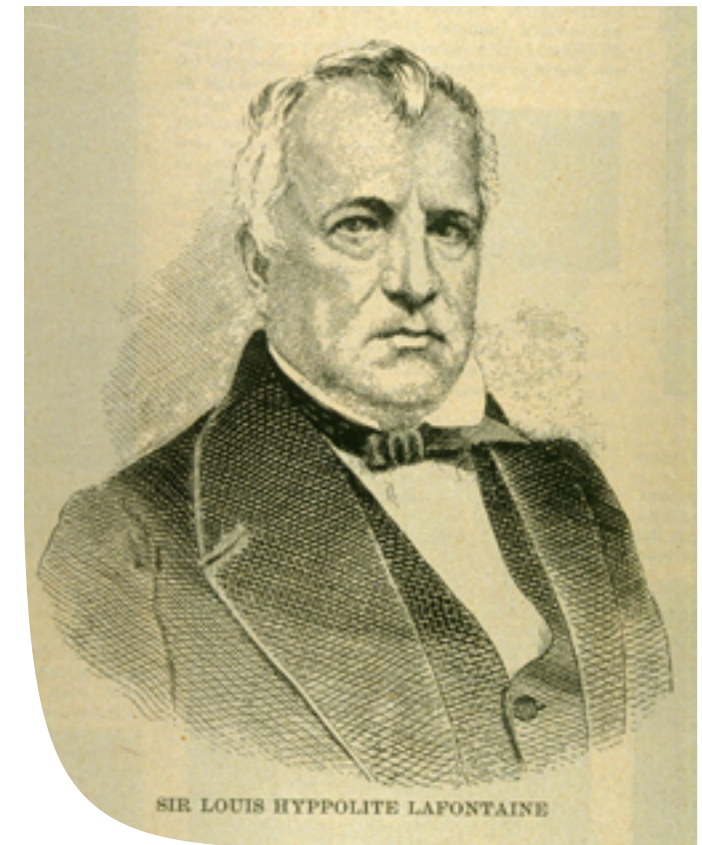
- The Road to Confederation graphic novel
- Computers or devices with Internet access
- Materials needed for preparing presentations

EXPECTATIONS/OUTCOMES

The overall expectations listed below serve as an entry point for teachers. Teachers are encouraged to make connections to specific expectations in their region and grade.

Students will:

- Increase their knowledge of Canadian history;
- Analyze the system of government of the day prior to the Reform party gaining political power;
- Examine the impact of the reforms promoted by Robert and Louis-H and their importance to Canadian politics and governance then and today;
- Explain how certain key events and personalities affected Robert and Louis-H, shaping their world view and governing their actions;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the volatility in Canadian politics at the time;
- Describe the relationship between Canada and Great Britain during the period 1800-1850 approximately and the latter's influence on Canadian life, society and government and;
- Communicate their ideas, arguments, and conclusions using various formats and styles, as appropriate for the audience and purpose.



CURRICULUM LINKS

Alberta and Northwest Territories

Canadian History 20
Local and Canadian Geography
Perspectives on Nationalism
Understanding Nationalism
Nationalism in Canada and the World

British Columbia and Yukon Territories

Social Studies 10
Social Studies 11
Geography 12

Manitoba

History of Canada: A Foundation for Implementation
Global Issues: Citizenship and Sustainability

New Brunswick

Canadian Geography 120
Social Studies 9, Canadian Identity 9



THE HON. ROBERT BALDWIN.

Saskatchewan

- Social Studies 9
- Canadian Studies 10
- Social Studies 30
- History 10
- History 30

Quebec

- History and Citizenship Education

BACKGROUND

Both Robert and Louis-H were raised in privileged circumstances. Although Louis-H's father died when he was young, his mother re-married soon after. Both men excelled in school and earned law degrees before entering politics. Losing his father at a young age drew Louis-H to those he saw as father figures, men like Louis-Joseph Papineau, a political reformer and future rebel, as well as Robert's father, William Warren, a medical doctor and elected member himself. Robert too, was very close to his father who mentored him throughout his early years and latter political career. Robert was a sensitive soul who embraced the ideals of Romanticism and believed in ideal love. He married his first cousin, Eliza, against her family's wishes. Tragically, Eliza died after a difficult pregnancy leaving Robert to raise four children on his own. Louis-H and his wife, Adele, never had children. Temperamentally, Robert was not well-suited to public life. He was quiet and reserved and not a confident speaker. Louis-H, in his early years, remained both robust and combative, acting as a de facto bodyguard to Louis-Joseph Papineau who was attacked on a number of occasions by angry mobs during his rallies. Athletic and tough, Louis-H didn't mind mixing it up when things got rough. But it was his intellect that won him plaudits such that he became one of the de facto leaders of the Reform movement in Lower Canada (Quebec). Robert also held his beliefs passionately and became a man dedicated to public life and improving the governance of Canadian society so that it was more supportive of and accountable to its citizens.

Newfoundland/Labrador

- Social Studies 9
- Canadian Geography 1202
- Canadian History 1201

Nova Scotia

- Canadian History 11
- Geography 10
- Global History 12

Nunavut

- History, Geography, Environmental Science

Ontario

- Canadian History since World War 1
- Canadian and World Issues: A Geographic Analysis
- Canada: History, Identity and Culture

PEI

- Social Studies 8
- Canadian History 12

STEP ONE: TEACHER-LED DISCUSSION

Throughout Canadian history, we see strong characters emerge who contribute significantly to society via public life. Adjacent to the period in which Robert and Louis-H lived, we have individuals like Sir Wilfrid Laurier and members of the Canadian Suffragist movement like Emily Stowe, Nelly McClung, Flora MacDonald Denison, and others. These individuals and others were of strong moral character and powerful beliefs that guided them through a difficult process to achieve their goals.

Have students discuss in class the qualities that make up leadership and even more importantly, what sort of moral compass is required? Divide the class into teams for the purposes of discussion. Are students able to isolate or identify why these characters followed this path (with the focus on Robert and Louis-H) and what traits made a difference in their lives? Or was there a particular event that propelled them further than most? Without the intervention of Robert and Louis-H, have students surmise or imagine what sort of Canada might have resulted. Would it be radically different from what we know today? If so, how? If not, why not? Each team will present their findings to the class in an oral presentation.

STEP TWO: CREATING A PROFILE

Have students research and write a profile of one of the following who influenced Robert or Louis-H at any point during their lives and whether this influence had a positive effect on their careers:

- William Warren Baldwin
- Louis-Joseph Papineau
- Lord Elgin
- Robert Baldwin Senior
- George Etienne Cartier
- Eliza Baldwin
- William Lyon Mackenzie
- Sir Francis Bond Head
- Adele Berthelot
- Lord Durham
- Joseph Howe
- Lord Sydenham
- Augustin (Austin) Cuvillier

- Sir Charles Bagot
- Sir Charles Metcalfe
- Egerton Ryerson

The profiles will be handed in to the teacher for assessment.

STEP THREE: BRINGING A CHARACTER TO LIFE

The characters listed in Step Two all played some role in either Robert or Louis-H's personal and/or professional life and development. Yet, each was a complete human being with a full life of their own. Have students, individually, select one of the characters for the purpose of bringing that character to life. This may be done in the form of a character sketch, a short scene written in play form, a short scene or monologue performed or acted out in front of the class, a series of sketches or illustrations (could be in graphic novel format), a formal presentation, poem, song, PowerPoint, and so on. Something significant about the character should be emphasized or brought out in the presentation, no matter what format it will take. Whatever the format selected, either written or oral, shall be assessed by the teacher.

STEP FOUR: CULMINATING ACTIVITY

Have students select an individual from the following list: Mao Tse Tung, Sir Winston Churchill, Charles de Gaulle, Mahatma Gandhi, Vladimir Lenin, Nelson Mandela, Golda Meir, Helmut Kohl, Benito Mussolini, Anwar Sadat, Martin Luther King, or Juan Peron.

Students will research the individual they have selected and write a paper concerning the impact and influence that individual had on their country. What role did they play and how important was it to the country's evolution? What are the specific factors? If possible, students will highlight a time line of the development of that individual's career. Is it then possible to compare the individual selected to either Robert or Louis-H, in terms of the role each played and the importance in the development of the country? Once these profiles have been completed, they will be presented orally to the class.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION ACTIVITIES

- Although it wasn't really given a name at the time, Robert and Louis-H adhered to the principles of passive resistance, for the most part, in the face of violence. Explain the concept of passive resistance, how it works and notable campaigns globally where this concept was put into action.
- Robert believed in the Romantic concept of ideal love. After his wife Eliza, died at the young age of 25, Robert mourned her for the rest of his life. He carried her letters with him at all times and spent the day in mourning on the anniversary of her death. Explain the concept of ideal love and what it means and its influence on Robert.
- Politics during Robert and Louis-H's time could be rough and tumble, even dangerous and violent. Many times, each of them confronted violent situations and/or were threatened with violence. What factors led to outbreaks of violence during political processes and campaigns? What purpose did it serve? Was it a successful tactic? If so, how was it successful? If not, why did it fail? Students will develop role plays based on the scenarios presented in the graphic novel, Road to Confederation, and the specific sections that chronicle Robert and Louis-H's political careers. Have students work in small teams to develop these role plays and present them to the class. The teacher may list examples of situations taken from the graphic novel.
- The student debate. Have students form into debating teams. Here is the question to be debated: Be it resolved that the British colonial system worked well in colonies such as Canada and that the population benefitted from this approach. One team shall take the Pro side and the other, the Con side. Formal debating rules will be followed: http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/cur/socstud/frame_found_sr2/tns/tn-13.pdf. Those class members not on the two teams will act as judges and

select the winner of the debate. The teacher shall act as moderator.

- Literary Assessment: Each student will write a critical review of Road to Confederation graphic novel. The review will run up to two pages and will look at elements such as plot, character, illustrations, quality of illustrations and the effectiveness in the way the story was told and depicted. Did the characters appear realistic? Do Robert and Louis-H come across as 'real' people? Could the reader identify and empathize with the characters? The reviews will be handed in/submitted to the teacher for assessment.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Student Evaluation Questions Specific to the Lesson Plan

Before (Pre-Implementation)

- Do students have a general understanding of the principles of Responsible government?
- Do students have a clear understanding of the significance of the early influences on Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine?
- Do students have any prior understanding of Robert and Louis-H's importance to Canada's history?
- Are students familiar with the history of the British Empire, how widespread and powerful it was and what role it played in ruling Canada among other colonies?

After (Post-Implementation)

- Students will describe the principles of Responsible Government and list their significance.
- Students will reflect an understanding of the importance of Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine who helped establish democratic governance in the Canadian political process.
- Students will reflect on, and explain their ideas about the legacy of Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine.

Teacher Evaluation Questions

Before (Pre-implementation)

- Do you have a general understanding of the importance of the principle of Responsible government?
- Do you have a clear understanding of the significance of the relationship between Robert Baldwin and Louis-Hippolyte LaFontaine?
- Do you have any prior understanding of Robert and Louis-H's early influences?
- Are you familiar with the concept of passive resistance?

After (Post-Implementation)

- Describe Robert and Louis-H's early influences and their impact.
- Have a clear understanding of Robert and Louis-H's contributions to Canadian politics and history.
- Understand why Robert and Louis-H laid the groundwork for a modern, democratic Canada.



GENERAL RUBRIC

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Discussion	Student participated poorly in the teacher-directed discussions	Student participated adequately in teacher-directed discussions	Student participated actively in the teacher-directed discussions	Student participated exemplarily in the teacher-directed discussions
Content	Student demonstrated limited understanding of concepts, facts, and terms	Student demonstrated some understanding of concepts, facts, and terms	Student demonstrated considerable understanding of concepts, facts, and terms	Student demonstrated thorough understanding of concepts, facts, and terms
Written Work	Student's written report was confusing, poorly structured, and had many grammatical errors	Student's written report was generally clear and had some structure, but numerous grammatical errors	Student's written report was clear and well-structured, but had a few errors	Student's written report was very clear, well-organized, and had virtually no errors
Presentation	Student's presentation was confusing, lacked emphasis and energy, and resulted in no discussion	Student's presentation was generally clear, but lacked energy and emphasis, and resulted in little discussion	Student's presentation was clear, vibrantly presented, and resulted in a good discussion	Student's presentation was very clear, enthusiastically presented, and resulted in an engaging discussion
Group Work	Students made a minimal contribution to the group; very little cooperation	Students made some contribution to the group, but cooperation was superficial	Students made a considerable contribution to the group, with a good level of cooperation	Students made a significant contribution to the group, with an excellent level of cooperation

SPECIFIC RUBRIC

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Step One	Student demonstrated a limited understanding of the significance of Baldwin and LaFontaine's contribution to Canada's history	Student demonstrated a basic understanding of the significance of Baldwin and LaFontaine's contribution to Canada's history	Student demonstrated a good understanding of the significance of Baldwin and LaFontaine's contribution to Canada's history	Student demonstrated a thorough understanding of the significance of Baldwin and LaFontaine's contribution to Canada's history
Step Two	Student demonstrated a limited understanding in their writing on the topic of a Baldwin and LaFontaine influencer	Student demonstrated a basic understanding in their writing on the topic of a Baldwin and LaFontaine influencer	Student demonstrated a good understanding in their writing on the topic of a Baldwin and LaFontaine influencer	Student demonstrated a thorough understanding in their writing on the topic of a Baldwin and LaFontaine influencer
Step Three	Student demonstrated minimal understanding of the character profile and a limited effort in the presentation	Student demonstrated adequate understanding of the character profile and a satisfactory effort in the presentation	Student demonstrated significant understanding of the character profile and an active effort in the presentation	Student demonstrated thorough understanding of the character profile and a substantive effort in the presentation
Step Four	Student demonstrated limited insight into the individual they selected for a profile and the impact on their country of origin	Student demonstrated basic insight into the individual they selected for a profile and the impact on their country of origin	Student demonstrated good insight into the individual they selected for a profile and the impact on their country of origin	Student demonstrated thorough insight into the individual they selected for a profile and the impact on their country of origin



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“This is 2020. Why are we still talking about discipline?”

The End of Discipline in the Classroom

Author Adam Stone



This is the article where you’ll read about the end of discipline—at least as you’ve always known it.

Sure, kids will still act out, and we’ll offer practical tips on how to deal with that, but the current thinking on discipline is preemptive, rather than reactive. Change how you run your classroom, experts suggest, and discipline issues will no longer be a problem.

“This is 2020. Why are we still talking about discipline?” asks Joanne Robertson-Eletto, a professor in the Master of Science in Teaching Literacy program at Touro College’s Graduate School of Education. “Even the word—discipline. That sounds like the paddle they gave my mother when she started teaching in the 1930s.”

What does Robertson-Eletto offer instead? “It might sound soft and fluffy, but when you approach students with a focus on respect and dignity, there just are no discipline issues. They will do whatever you ask them to do,” she says.

She’s not alone. There is a growing consensus among experts in the field that teachers who take the time to build stronger relationships with their students can markedly reduce the classroom disruptions that too

often mar the school day. This approach can also make teachers more effective in dealing with any acting-out behaviors that do occur.

A PERSONAL APPROACH

Jessica DiBiasi has seen her share of classroom tumult.

“I’ve taught in a school where I had to pat a girl down every day because she was stealing things and bringing things to school that she wasn’t supposed to have. I’ve had a first-grader who had very violent tendencies and almost broke my arm. He tore apart my classroom, attacked children,” says DiBiasi, who is presently on maternity leave from her job teaching 5th grade special education at a Bronx, NY public school.

She tried the usual remedies—the warnings and consequences. What finally worked? Getting to know the kids.

“No child is just lazy or just naughty. There’s always a reason that it is happening. A lot of negative behavior is attention-seeking, kids looking to get a rise out of other children or who can’t get enough attention

at home,” she says. “When you can identify the ‘why’ behind the behavior, when you show compassion and try to get to the bottom of it, then you can make meaningful change.”

One student would constantly sit with arms crossed, silent. “To a teacher it looks like defiance,” she says. “But I took time to speak to her mother, I got her back-story and came to find out that this was her first year in a special education setting and she was worried about the stigma that was created around that. She shut down because of those feelings, and I was then able to find ways to help her feel smarter, to be more tender in my delivery to her—and she started to open up.”

That’s just one teacher’s story, but many experts echo this view.

“Most discipline problems can be avoided ahead of time by having the right classroom environment,” says Ron Berger, chief academic officer at EL Education, a 25-year-old non-profit school improvement organization.

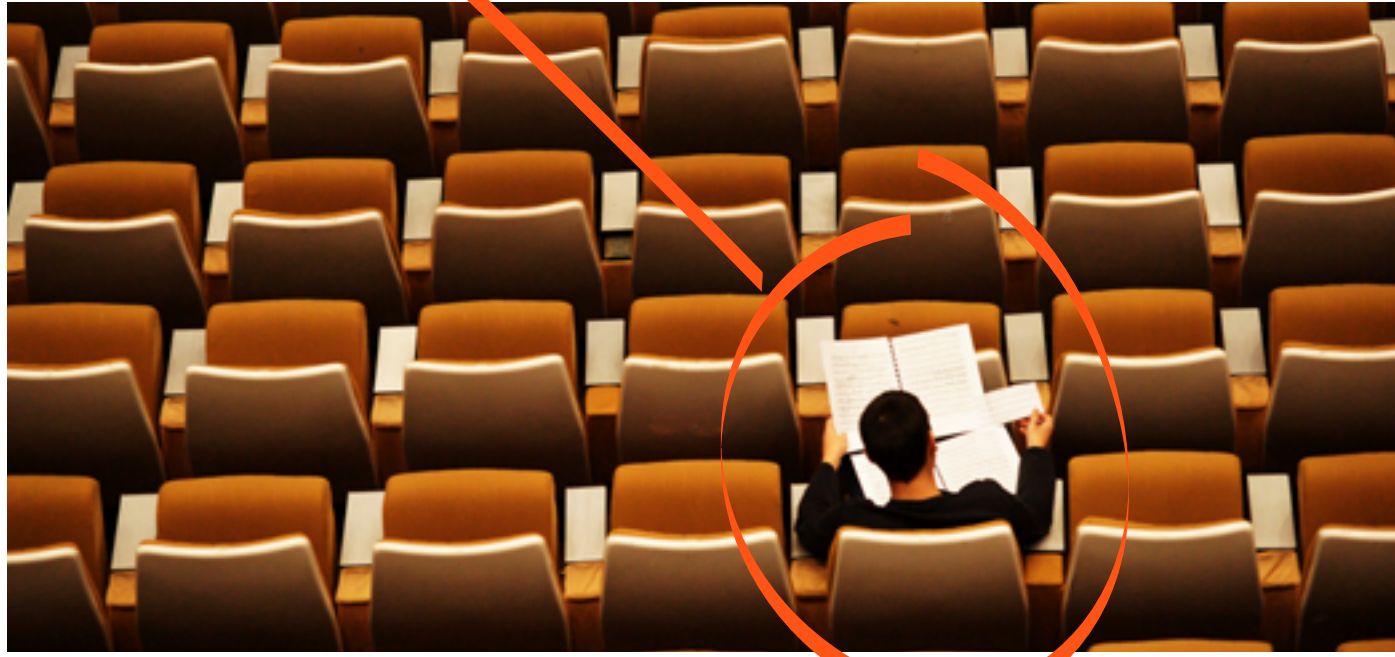
That “right” environment is one of mutual respect and understanding between the kids themselves, and

between student and teacher. Rather than a vague ideal, Berger describes this as a practical, achievable ambition. It starts with dialogue, teachers encouraging kids to talk about their feelings.

“By talking about their emotion, kids can learn how to manage those emotions. So you actually have the kids discuss how we treat each other and how we deal with it when there is a problem or when someone’s feeling gets hurt,” he says. “Then when kids get frustrated and upset, they know how to talk about it, they know how to use their words to calm themselves down and to help their peers calm down.”

At educational consultancy Conscious Teaching, consultant Katie Anderson says teachers may need to make a mental shift in order to adopt this way of working. “The biggest thing that helps is having the proper mindset,” she says.

“That means understanding that the things they do that drive us nuts are not personal. It’s easy to take it personally, but typically they are testing us. And they want you to pass the test! They are looking for safety



and structure in the classroom. They don't verbalize that, but that is what all kids crave," she says.

A teacher who views behavioral issues through this lens will be well-positioned to head off the acting out before it becomes a matter of discipline.

By necessity, the approach requires the teacher to take a highly individual approach to discipline. Advocates say the typical hierarchical strategy—warnings, loss of privilege, a visit to the principal—is simply too cookie-cutter. By tackling discipline on a student-by-student basis, they say, teachers can manage classroom behaviors more effectively.

Robertson-Eletto saw this play out in a classroom where a boy was routinely acting out. "He lives with multiple family members in a one-room apartment, he doesn't sleep well, he doesn't have breakfast before school. So this kid is jittery, he doesn't trust easily," she says.

Punishments would only have worsened the situation. "You want to redirect that student: Maybe direct them toward independent learning or buddy learning or a project approach," she says. Rather than talk about consequences, "the conversation needs to be about classroom communities that promote empathy, tolerance, respect, purposeful learning and the individual dignity of the child. It's all grounded in respect, in nurturing relationships."

Not everyone views this approach as an effective next wave in classroom management.

"Obviously great teaching that engages the kids will reduce the need for discipline. If every first-year teacher in a low-income classroom could be a great teacher on day one, that would be great. But if we could do that, we would have done it by now," says David Griffith, a senior research and policy associate at the Thomas B. Fordham Institute.

"No one is against good classroom management—that's not the point. But everyone needs a Plan B, a ripcord to pull when it doesn't work," he says.

PLAN B

The current thinking on discipline emphasizes a personal connection between teacher and student. Sometimes that connection breaks down or can't be established. Even in the best classroom, kids will act out. What then? What's Plan B?

Since most acting-out is often connected to attention-seeking, Jessica DiBiasi uses that knowledge as her starting point. "If they are not hurting anyone but just being disruptive, I will turn my attention away from them completely," she says. "Then as soon as they are sitting quietly, that very second, I will compliment them for that behavior. That works great

in the moment. When you don't react, they tend to reevaluate, and as soon as they are quiet, you reinforce that instead."

Sending kids to the principal tends to dis-empower the teacher and weaken the student-teacher bond. Still, some see a role for school administrators in helping to curb the most common discipline issue: Kids who won't put their phones away.

"It helps when there is clarity about that: absolutely no phones in the classroom or telling them you have to check your phone at the front door," says Karin McKie, an independent educational consultant in Chicago. "If that comes from above, then we are all on the same page. There is always a lot of emotion attached to enforcing rules, so if the rule is clear and non-emotional it's a lot easier for the teacher to enforce that rule."

McKie says that the phone can also be a teacher's best friend when it comes to handling discipline issues at the moment they arise.

"You can fight fire with fire: kids live in an 'immediacy' culture and so you respond with immediacy. You say, I have your parents' text on my phone. Do you want me to text them right now?" she explains. "For some kids that is the ultimate threat. It works best when the parent is actively involved and can be used as a positive lever."

In reacting to a child's misbehavior, Berger explains that one key strategy is to give the kid a way out of the corner. Harsh punishments and escalating measures can be humiliating, "and if you are humiliated in front of your peers that just breeds anger," he says.

"If you 'keep them after,' they just sit there stewing. If the focus is on punishment, that can breed resentment. The focus should be on apologizing and

compensating for the harm you did. The focus should be on healing," he says.

This approach to discipline, sometimes called restorative justice, "gives the kids a chance to work their way out of the corner they got into with their bad choice," he says. "You give the children a chance to talk about what they felt, and the restorative piece is to then [ask]: what can you do to make up for that? How can you heal the damage from your bad choice?"

Those are some on-the-spot fixes. In addition, there are some systemic things that could help teachers get ahead of the discipline curve.

Experts urge teachers to have kids collaborate on the classroom behavior policies: get their buy-in up front, and they'll be more likely to comply. They say that a steady flow of communication to parents can help too, while a strong reciprocal relationship between teachers and administrators can serve to establish a consistent school-wide culture of respect.

Know what else would help? Money.

"Right now, discipline reform is an unfunded mandate. You are asking teachers to solve society's problems with no additional funding," Griffith says.

How would dollars make a difference? "You could have an experienced teaching assistant in every first-year teacher's classroom. If you need mental health professionals, hire them," he says. "If you are not willing to pony up for those things, then maybe you don't care as much as you say you do."

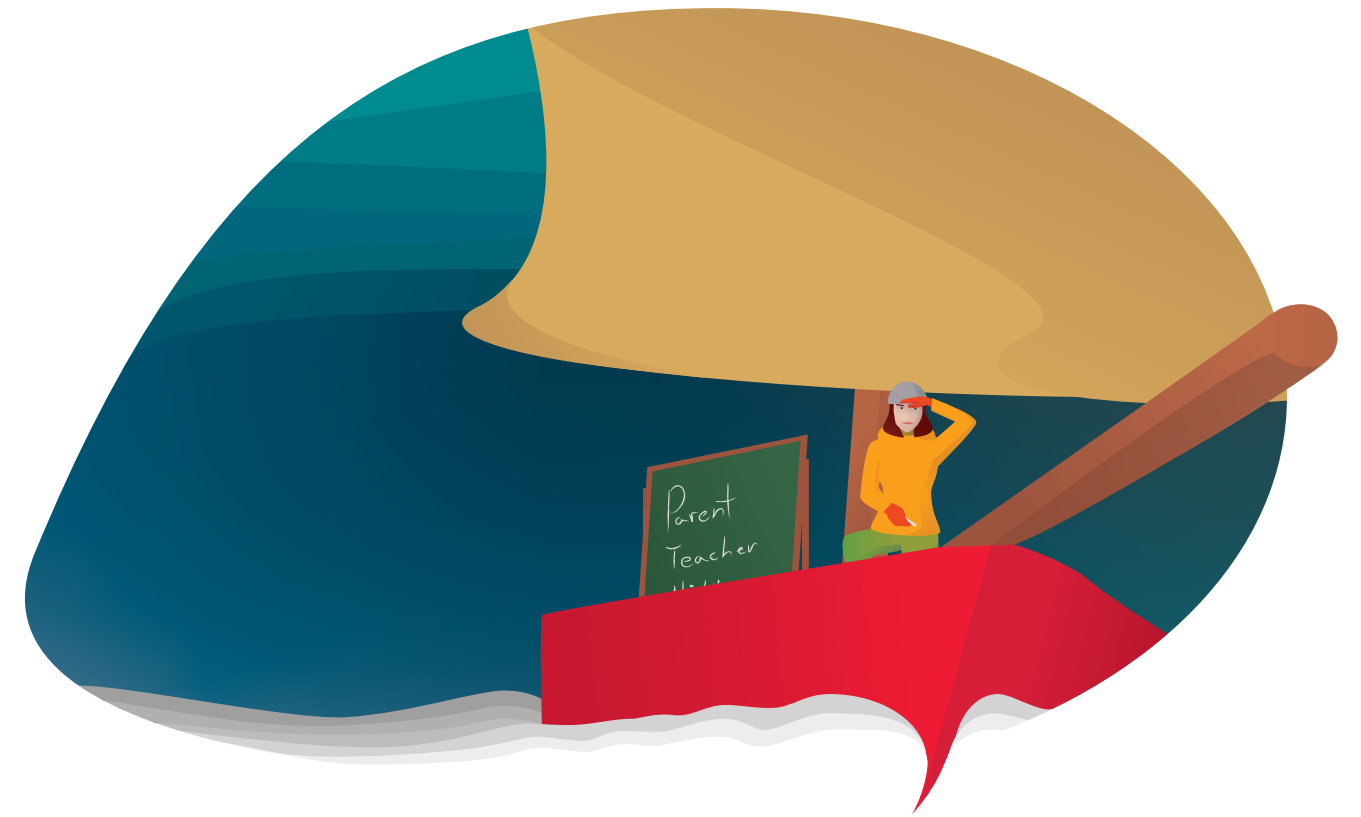
A seasoned journalist with 20+ years' experience, Adam Stone covers education, technology, government and the military, along with diverse other topics.



Long the bane of a teacher's existence, parents can make or break a year.

Meet the Parents: Navigating Tricky Waters

Author Alex Newman



Most parents are rational, reasonable, and respectful, but it's those high maintenance ones that every teacher dreads. And the situation seems to be worsening each year.

Whether they are too stretched time-wise to have the necessary patience to deal with an under-achieving child, or just plain angry—irate parents add strain to a teacher's already overloaded emotional and mental resources.

It doesn't seem fair—you took up teaching as a vocation, intent on guiding students through the wonderful world of knowledge, looking forward to those moments when the lightbulb would go off and concept would become reality.

You're doing your best, but for some parents that's not good enough. This hits some teachers, especially the very creative ones, more than others, says Jen McColl, a Toronto elementary school teacher. She's friends with a "wonderful teacher who did lots of cool stuff with kids and is now on stress leave. A lot of what he needed a break from was [the] onslaught of parental questioning

about what he was doing, and that generates conflict."

For McColl, conflict comes most when parents question everything you do, whether it's "curriculum, class management, interactions with the students, or which after-school activity I should be running."

Every year, McColl counts on one or two high maintenance parents, with "something almost every week, an email, or calls. Often, it's their perception that other kids are bullying their child, or other teachers are. Sometimes it can feel like a bit of a bottomless pit that is draining because it doesn't seem to matter what strategies I put in place, or who I consult and bring in."

Adding to matters is the issue of confidentiality, explains McColl. "Conflict between kids is private. If I find out one of the kids is hurtful, I can't share with [the] other parent that the kid is being disciplined, so the parents perceive nothing is happening."

Incidents of extreme behaviour, however, are rare. McColl figures in 14 years of teaching, she has "had maybe three cases where the relationship has broken down past the point of solving."

WHY THEY ACT THE WAY THEY DO

Being a parent herself, McColl understands, though. "Everyone is on their own journey. If a parent had adverse experiences with school growing up, or experienced teachers as the enemy, they tend to be angrier."

When you have a student with an IEP (Individual Education Plan)—and this year McColl has 9 in a class of 25—there can often be a heightened stigma as sometimes the parent had similar schooling experiences. "I'm always trying to think about different ways to switch my lens and figure out what's informing the parents in their interaction with the school."

Parents are also anxious—especially about ensuring their kids perform well academically to ensure a good future of employment. As Alex Russell, author of "Drop the Worry Ball" says: "Conditioned by society to feel responsible for their children's successes and failures... the more invested they are in their kids' outcome, the more upset they tend to get."

Most parents, though, are "not looking for a head on a platter," says Paul Wozney, a Halifax teacher who has taught elementary, middle, and high school and is president of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. He's found two types of challenging parents. One is a small but highly combative group: "parents who aren't looking for solutions and who play power games because they can and are only interested in being right. It's effectively impossible to coach them out of their thinking because they're entrenched in a pattern."

It's the other larger group, he says, that ends up paying for the drama of the first. "The group least served are those with legitimate concerns because their energy can feel the same as the energy of the irrational parent. You can associate negativity of one to the urgency of another."

AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION

In the first month of the school year, McColl tries to "call parents with a good news story. That positive

experience paves the way for smoother communication later on if there is a problem. So the parent isn't bracing themselves with, 'uh-oh what now?'"

She also sends out a monthly newsletter—although email correspondence with parents isn't recommended, McColl likes the paper trail.

This collaborative approach of parents and teachers working together—regular interaction between schools and families before conflict occurs—has been statistically proven to have benefits. In the Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines on dealing with conflict, many studies are cited. What has been found is that the greater the family's involvement in schools, the better the outcomes in terms of students' academic performance, attendance, and attitude.

When the more difficult conversations do occur, however, McColl will begin with an objective summary of what she sees, then asks the parents for input, what they see at home, and what strategies they've used in past. "The parent is still the child's first best teacher. I try treating them like the expert they are about their own child."

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION

Avoid social media contact with parents, recommends Wozney. Facebook groups are part of school communities and have a life of their own, with stories that may not be entirely accurate. "Teachers are in a bind because of confidentiality rules; they can't discuss or defend themselves in a forum like that." In fact, most teachers' union advises teachers not to have direct social media-based contact with parents.

EXERCISE EMPATHY

McColl feels most empathetic to those families who have real needs that can't be met because the system does not have the resources. In such situations, she will ask the parents how she can advocate for them.

Since most teachers were likely A-students themselves, McColl says, "we don't always understand the perspective of those struggling academically. We really need to be able to break down our decision making and communicate that to parents."

Parents' behaviour telegraphs volumes about the student as well, Wozney says. "You may have a parent

who attacks you mercilessly, but your experience with the student isn't like that at all. Or you may have a parent who makes everything a crisis, and the student overreacts to even the most reasonable corrections. I've found kids [whose parents operate that way] either overreact to situations or go into a shell."

WHAT TO DO WHEN THINGS ESCALATE

Sometimes, no matter how well you've covered the bases, a situation can escalate. When it does—in fact before—it's time to enlist the help of your principal, if you haven't already. As Wozney points out, "the levels of school leadership [principals, VPs, department heads] can be invaluable in navigating challenges with parents. Someone who can come to a meeting with a parent, who is one level removed, and not involved in the situation, can negotiate. That's an incredibly valuable role that school leadership can play. But if you have school admin who says, 'you have problems in class, you solve it,' it can put you in a tough bind."

However, McColl sees the mounting pressure on principals to please parents. "They're under a lot of pressure to keep the parent community happy because our society is increasingly litigious. I've seen kids suspended for hurting another child, then have the suspension overturned when the parent went to the superintendent. The purpose of suspension is to indicate something serious going on, and the need for more support."

At some point, though, there's a line that shouldn't be crossed. And teachers should be aware of what that line is according to the policies and procedures of their jurisdiction. Those are meant to support teachers and help keep situations in check.

CALL THE POLICE?

Teachers have the right to protect themselves and sometimes that means calling the police. It's rare, Wozney shares, but happens more often than you'd think.

In the Nova Scotia Teachers Union policy on Dealing with Harassment by Students, Parents and other Adults, teachers rights are built in: "Teachers have the right to be treated with respect and to work in an environment free from harassment and abuse.

Nova Scotia's teaching staff are increasingly reporting incidents of inappropriate behaviour from students, parents and other adults.

McColl only had one occasion where she came close to calling police. She had previously called Children's Aid (CAS) because of something a child had told her. The CAS [contacted the child's family]... and [then] the parent showed up at school furious, and scary. "If a student reports being harmed, if we see signs of abuse, we must call CAS. That's not a judgment, it's the rules," McColl says.

SILVER LININGS

There are silver linings to these potential storm clouds, especially when kids are helped in their learning journey.

In one situation, McColl advocated for a student who needed medical care. It was not a case of neglect, but simply that the child's health card had been lost. "At first, the mom was furious with me for interfering, and she felt judged... But it comes down to the child's welfare and he really needed help. We found health care practitioners who were willing to help out and were able to get the student the supports he needed."

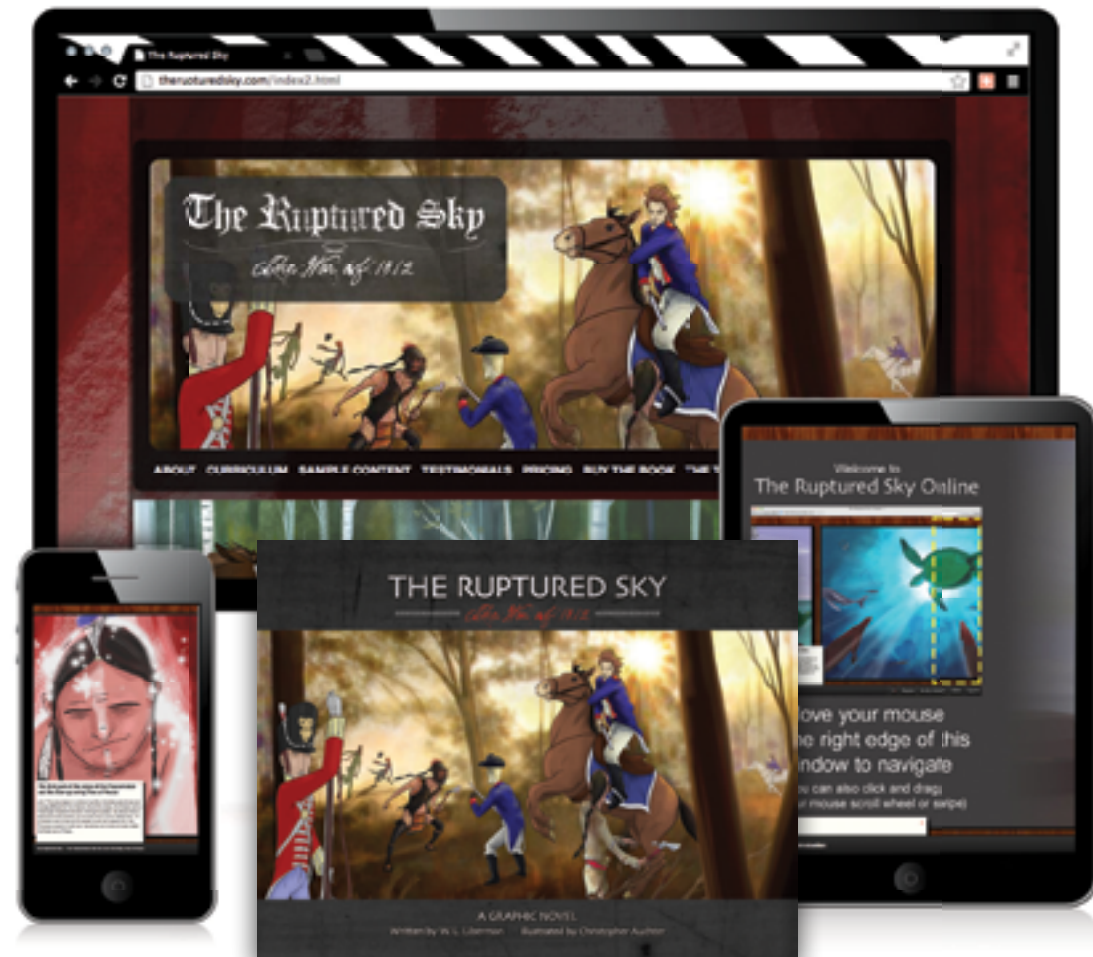
Now the student is healthy and performing well academically. And every time the mom sees McColl, she envelopes her in a hug.

"When conflict happens, it is happening for a reason," McColl says. "There are always bigger things going on, and if we can persevere, instead of thinking just get me to June, it helps everyone. Because you have to wonder, where is this situation going to be for this kid in 20 years, and how can this be an ongoing success story?"

Alex Newman is a Toronto freelance writer and editor. Visit her website, alexnewmanwriter.com.



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