

# TEACH

LE PROF

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## RESTRICTED ACCESS

**BANNING CELLPHONES  
IN THE CLASSROOM**



### FEATURES

BUDGETING FOR SUPPLIES  
BANNING CELLPHONES

### COLUMNS

**FIELD TRIPS:** Teacher Workshops  
**WEBSTUFF:** Podcasts

**CLASSROOM PERSPECTIVES:**  
WHY STUDENTS HATE WRITING

## TEACH MAGAZINE • LE PROF

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**M**any students and adults abhor the process of writing. This doesn't mean, however, that they don't like what they write about. Unfortunately, according to English teacher and passionate writer, Josh Schultheis, this ill-feeling harkens back to how students in school are taught to write. When a creative activity is subject to inflexible marking standards such that students are penalized in a somewhat ad hoc manner, this reinforces their negativity when it comes to writing. It doesn't have to be this way. There are solutions, none of them facile and demand additional effort. We know, however, that writing is important and is still an activity that continues into the post-education world. Good communication skills are prized and appreciated. Instilling an appreciation for writing in students will, ultimately, benefit all.

Another sticky issue with which teachers, schools, and school districts grapple is smartphone use in the classroom. Across the continent, we see a hodge-podge of rules and regulations from outright bans to active use monitored by classroom teachers. Some districts allow limited or stepped-use depending on age and grade level. Some permit such use only at breaks, lunchtime, or in the school grounds. Our correspondent Meagan Gillmore, outlines a number of scenarios highlighting the benefits of each and where teachers and schools are having success in developing their own smartphone policies and procedures.

Teachers always seem to be scrambling to provide their classes with adequate materials every year. It is widely known that teachers are often out of pocket when it comes to the purchase of school supplies, as much as \$400-\$1000 per year. Alex Newman explores the topic in detail and has some suggestions as to how to get the most out of those tight resource budgets, where to scavenge or DIY those coveted supplies and depending on jurisdiction, what governments allow for a tax credit when spending those resource dollars personally.

The columns this issue cover such practical activities as in Field Trips, detailing the host of teacher workshops offered over the summer for those who wish to stay in the loop on a range of topics; everything from tech to sustainability and mental health. Webstuff delves into a range of compelling teacher-led podcasts that offer lively discussions, practical tips and hints and reveal valued resources.

Please do check out our latest teacher-student resources:

The Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier ([www.sirwilfridlaurier.com](http://www.sirwilfridlaurier.com)), Suffrage: Canadian Women and the Vote ([www.canadiansuffrage.com](http://www.canadiansuffrage.com)), The Road to Confederation ([www.roadtoconfederation.com](http://www.roadtoconfederation.com)), and Dystopia 2153 ([www.dystopia2153.com](http://www.dystopia2153.com)).

Until next time,  
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20

## FEATURES

### BUDGETING FOR CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

*Alex Newman*

9

### RESTRICTED ACCESS

#### Banning Cellphones in the Classroom

*Meagan Gillmore*

20

## COLUMNS

### Classroom Perspectives:

#### Why Students Hate Writing, From Someone Who Teaches It

*Josh Schultheis*

6

### Field Trips: Teacher Workshops

23

### Webstuff: Podcasts

13



9



6

## CURRICULA

Wilfrid Laurier : sa vie, son époque

Première leçon ..... 16

**AD INDEX** ..... 19





# WHY STUDENTS HATE WRITING, From Someone Who Teaches It

by Josh Schultheis

I love literature. That's why I became a high school English teacher.

Recently, my sister asked me to help edit an essay as part of her medical school application. My sister, just as a brief disclaimer, is a borderline genius. Perfect GPA. Multiple college scholarships. Her task was to explain why she wanted to become a doctor. It couldn't have been any simpler. I did my part as the English teacher: corrected grammar, fixed passive voice issues, made things sound pretty, and all other typical "make this good" writing help. What confused me however, was that this portion of the application stressed her the most. "I suck at writing. I hate it," she lamented. I was utterly stunned.

She literally was writing about wanting to become a doctor—her life goal since we were in diapers. How could she *hate* this? I have come to realize this: it's not the topic (that my sister could talk about for days) she hated; she, like so many other young people, had been conditioned to hate writing because of the way it was taught.

Every year, almost every student says, "I suck at writing. I hate it." I hear this phrase far more than "Hello," "Thank you," or even "Can I use the restroom?" (Well, maybe not that last one, but you get the idea.)

Students clearly hate writing. This is not an innate human feature. The general hatred of writing is bred into the way students are taught to write throughout their lives. Writing at its core, is possibly one of the most open-ended avenues in human existence, but it's taken and subjugated into categories like math. It's also graded as such. Teachers assign categorical points from some of the most painstakingly structured rubrics to some of the most subjective topics. It is totally counterintuitive and not fair to the student. I know because I have had to do it myself all too often.

Here's an all-too-real hypothetical example.

In the rubric, there is a category called "introduction" worth 10 pts, including a bullet point saying something like, "Strong hook that connects smoothly with thesis." Here is some feedback that is eerily similar to what I have written hundreds of times: "Well, Jace, how you connected the hook to your thesis is pretty weak, so I'm going to have to take off a few points in that category." What does "weak" mean? It's arbitrary. It's subjective. Another teacher could think something completely different. That is what makes writing beautiful, but now Jace feels his story about turtles in Syria is "bad." He's 15! Of course his writing is going to improve the more he works at it, but because he has been told precisely how much his writing is worth from the age of six, Jace hates writing.

Naturally, Jace isn't going to like being told his writing wasn't "good" (look at the score), so now he hates it. He shuts down so he doesn't have to face the feelings that go along with being told that "your ideas are stupid." That hurts. For anyone. To be told that an original idea you had isn't very good is emotionally and psychologically worse than getting a random math problem wrong on a test. It makes no sense, so why do it?


"Jace," of course, is not a real student, but he epitomizes the state of the vast majority of young people in the modern education system. So, what exactly needs to change, and how? Rethinking the rigid grading system is a good start. I'm not saying we should do away with grades, but restructure what is evaluated and how it's done. It's really hard to have an exact method and calculated procedure because that is not what literature and writing is, at least not at the secondary level.

Think about the best teachers you had. They were different, and if you think that's easy, it's not. A great English teacher needs to be involved, devoted, intensely creative, and a genuinely self-motivated person, because that is what is required by the nature of literature and writing. They should be someone who doesn't need to fear an impending standardized test to be motivated to do their job because they understand that it is impossible to definitively test.

To understand human nature and communication is confusing no matter your age. Young people need someone

at the helm who is exceptionally creative; someone to encourage them to write and flesh out new features of themselves and others; and to consider new thoughts and ideas. That person needs to see most human problems have a lot of answers that can make sense. And, expose their students to the nature of thought in real ways with which a young mind can connect.

I've come to realize that this is what it takes to teach students to love writing (at least love it more than they do currently). Not rigid rubrics, and not vague feedback. It's very hard, but also very rewarding.



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Josh Schultheis has a B.A. from Indiana University. He has been teaching English and writing at Brownsburg High School in Indiana for the past six years.



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# BUDGETING FOR CLASSROOM SUPPLIES

by Alex Newman

While summer's long lazy days stretch before us, teachers are already thinking ahead to the fall. It's time to start prepping the classroom—and to spend money. A US Department of Education survey in 2018 revealed that 94% of teachers spend an average \$479 US of their own money, with 7% spending \$1000 US or more. The numbers are pretty much the same in Canada—results of the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) study show teachers spending an average of \$525 CDN and some a lot more.

Renee Bucholtz, a high school art and technology teacher at R. H. King Academy in Scarborough, ON, knows the drill well—in her first years of teaching, she had been about \$1000 out of pocket. It's less now, (but still in the \$400-\$500 CDN range) when she teaches art because she's better able to anticipate what she'll need, and she's built up a body of supplies.

Teachers don't like spending, but feel it's necessary to ensure their students get what they need. This is what NSTU president Paul Wozney, explains as, feeding into the gender stereotypes, especially at the elementary level, where the ratio of female teachers is higher. He says, "there is some presumption about female teachers as nurturers, that women will take care of kids and nurture and there's an assumption of their generosity. In fact, it's so deep-

seated that there's now a federal income tax code credit for teachers who spend their own money. But that lets the system off the hook."

Wozney, a former K-12 teacher himself, says it's a philosophical conundrum: "Should teachers be doing this? Fundamentally, the quick answer is no, if schools need these resources to supply kids a quality education, then these resources should be provided when they walk in."

Some teachers have been vocal about it with their union. Jane Giffen, for example, an elementary special education teacher in the Barrie, ON-area wrote to her union rep suggesting that they "show parents a dramatic example of what teachers do for the classrooms [by] mandating that teachers not spend their money. Then parents would see how awful the classrooms look."

To stop doing it, Wozney says, "would be a visible way to highlight the issue, but would also come with a price. It would fall into the category of work-to-rule and while that is an effective way to pressure government, it also extracts a price on the natural allies—engaged parents and vulnerable kids."

If it's philosophically wrong for teachers to spend their own money, why continue? "Teachers want what's best for their kids," Wozney says. "There is a parental instinct, and the law even recognizes that. Teachers don't want to see

kids suffer, and when [they] see gaps that exist, they look for solutions to fill those gaps.”

While paying out of pocket isn’t likely to change, at least anytime soon, there are ways to reduce the amount you spend as a teacher, and still have a nice classroom.

## HOW MUCH CLASSROOM DÉCOR IS ENOUGH?

Teachers are often evaluated on the appearance of their classrooms, Renee Bucholtz points out.

Giffen adds, “it’s pretty simple really—what do we need to teach kids well?” She thinks teachers could be, “more frugal. They’re all crazy for laminating, and it’s expensive—cheaper to get dry erase pockets on Amazon.”

She has seen no limit to students’ imagination even if they’re given very simple materials. She says, “a lot of creative things happen when you put things out on a table and see what kids can do. I take the knobs on the top of the squeeze applesauce [containers], water bottle tops, [and other] loose things to build with. I save the front of cereal boxes—and these I do laminate to use for finding letter combinations and words.”

Margaret Marsh, a retired French and special education teacher from Waterloo, ON, believes that “a lot [of the material] that teachers put out on walls, kids don’t notice; and some of it isn’t all that effective. Especially for kids with ADD or who are on the autism spectrum. It can drive them crazy. You want the class to be bright and attractive, and you want to have one wall reserved for artwork because kids love to see their art up, but beyond that it can be distracting.”

Marsh has also found that “children of all ages, whether they read or not, love to be read to, and setting aside a daily reading time when [a] teacher reads to them is instructive and calming.” It’s also not expensive.

She does admit, though, that special education classrooms need more than regular classrooms in terms of specialized visuals and those cost more.

## JUST ASK

Bucholtz tells students to bring in any art supplies they have access to at home, especially if they aren’t satisfied with what’s been ordered or if they run out in class. Bucholtz also asks for a \$40 CDN annual “enhancement” fee so students have access to more than the basic materials, but knows it’s not enforceable, and knows some kids’ parents can’t afford it.

While Bucholtz asks to borrow from colleagues when she runs out of things—and they do the same—she hasn’t found partnering with them all that effective “because every teacher has [a] different working style and uses different materials.”

She has also had to ask the principal for petty cash, when

things get broken, or taken home by students from other classes. It all depends on the principal, she says, but it never hurts to ask.


There are the bigger asks, such as, grants. Not just government, but retailers as well provide grant opportunities. Best Buy, for example, offers school tech grants—usually offered in the spring to elementary schools and the fall to secondary schools.

## FIND IT! – FREE, CHEAP, OR USED

Most teachers will admit to dumpster diving, as well as trolling thrift stores and garage sales looking for used things like puzzles, books, or educational toys for their class. The library can also have good used kids books for sale.

And then there’s the local dollar store. Bucholtz looks for alternatives to expensive art supplies, like ice cube trays for watercolour palettes, and hand-held mirrors to use for self-portraiture.

Paul Wozney always looked closer to home. “My best friends were always the school custodian or the receptionist; they had the keys to the room with furniture and equipment nobody wanted. I’m built like a linebacker so the regular teacher desk wasn’t big enough. In there, I found one big



... a lot [of the material] that teachers put out on walls, kids don’t notice; and some of it isn’t all that effective. Especially for kids with ADD or who are on the autism spectrum.

enough for me, and still good for the kids. I also found a weird 12-foot-long table that was three feet off the floor, perfect for kids to do small group reading.”

That same storage room yielded two huge aquariums that ended up as “a greenhouse on wheels, and the basis of many class projects for my Grade 2 students,” he says.

Through a family friend, he found enough carpet squares heading for the landfill that were perfect for kids to sit and read in a quiet spot alone. Some even put the squares under their desks to make a private cubby for themselves.

Another time, Wozney received four computers from a friend in IT. “He was decommissioning PCs—50 of them—and he asked how many I wanted. I took four.”

Retailers in Canada and the US offer a lot of teacher discounts, from classroom supplies and books, to personal items like travel, clothes, and shoes. Look into stores like,





Michaels, MedEx (medical or dental supplies), Staples, National Geographic (free subscriptions), Home Depot (no tax on school supplies), Books-A-Million (discounts and fundraising opportunities), Apple (50% discount on most apps), and Samsung. Also, check out Amazon's bargain book section; and the Scholastic program which puts money back into the class from the books sold by their flyers.

### KNOW WHEN TO PUT IN YOUR BUDGET

Know your school board's budget timing. In Bucholtz's region, the funding period is November to May. "In May you're so busy marking you can't think about what you will need for the next year, and you often don't know what classes you'll be teaching or how many students. That's a long time before November and your class needs things in September."

Each school board allocates different amounts per student, but there's also a differential by subject. Art rooms need more, Bucholtz says, but the budgets are erratic. One year she received \$300 CDN for her whole class—consider a bucket of white paint costs \$60 CDN—and another year, she got \$100 CDN per student because of the Aboriginal culture component.

By the end of the year, Bucholtz's supplies are thin so she deliberately makes the final project broad enough so students can choose from whatever supplies she has left in a wide variety of media. "It uses up what's left and doesn't adversely affect their ability to show skill."

### CLAIM IT

In its 2016 budget, the Canadian federal government "introduced a teacher and early childhood educator school supply tax credit for 2016 and subsequent taxation years. This measure will allow an employee who is an eligible educator to claim a 15% refundable tax credit based on an amount of up to \$1,000 CDN of purchases of eligible teaching supplies by the employee in a taxation year."

### DIY

Margaret Marsh is an advocate of the discovery concept for learning, but she found the prepared, store-bought materials expensive. "Your kitchen yields many suitable alternatives. When you're teaching volume, things like yogurt and juice containers work well, as do bottle caps in different colours for teaching sorting and counting." For estimating and measuring, she would divide kids into groups and give each group things like pencils, erasers, tin cans, books of different sizes, to estimate and then measure.

Having a word wall, she found, was also an effective teaching aid especially for younger children. You can buy expensive ready-made letters and words, but they are also really cheap to make, by cutting up coloured Bristol board, using a marker, and carefully printing letters or full words that kids use all the time. "If they are writing, but don't know how to spell a word, they generally know what letter it starts with, so they look it up."

Making your own things is labour-intensive at the beginning, but as Marsh points out, "once you have a good stash of material, you don't have to spend as much time or money on the raw materials."

For those with a Martha Stewart bent, it's easy to find ideas by Googling "DIY classroom materials"—just plan on spending your summer with a hot glue gun.

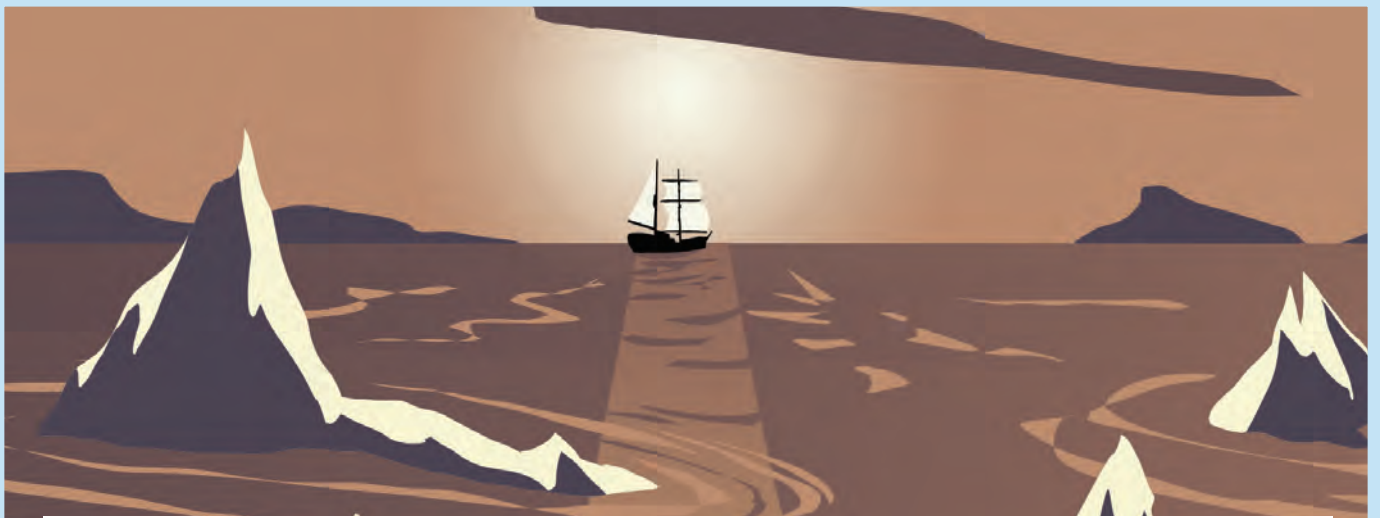
### RAISE MONEY

For larger projects, like setting up a sustainable garden, or understanding the life of insects, or a more comprehensive class trip, the costs can become high. Some teachers turn to crowdfunding—in the US, there is a specific site for that, called DonorsChoose.org. In Canada, a new charity based in Toronto, called My Class Needs, claims to have improved the learning environment for more than 88,000 kids in public schools in Canada. Some would have a problem with this funding model since it sends the wrong message to the public and lets the system off the hook, but teachers who want the best tools for their kids don't care.

Paying out of pocket is not likely going to stop any time soon, Wozney says, because "teachers want what's best for their kids. And they call them that—their kids—rather than students. It's because there is a parental instinct by teachers, regardless of gender. They don't want to see kids suffer, and when they see gaps that exist they look for solutions to fill those gaps."

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Alex Newman is a Toronto freelance writer and editor. Visit her website, [alexnewmanwriter.com](http://alexnewmanwriter.com).



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# GET YOUR HEAD PHONES READY!



The summer holidays are the perfect time to brainstorm new teaching ideas and classroom activities. Get inspired with the help of these suggested podcasts featuring useful topics for today's educators, as you gear up for the next school year.



Jennifer Gonzalez,  
Head Teacher Nerd

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### **The Cult of Pedagogy Podcast**

[www.cultofpedagogy.com](http://www.cultofpedagogy.com)

*The Cult of Pedagogy* podcasts includes interviews with educators, administrators, parents, and students about the physiological and social dynamics of K-12 schools. The host Jennifer Gonzalez dives into creative teaching strategies, classroom management, educational technology, and education reform. Find inspirational podcasts, such as "Improving the way we teach about slavery," "6 Ed Tech tools to try in 2019," and "How accurate are your grades?"

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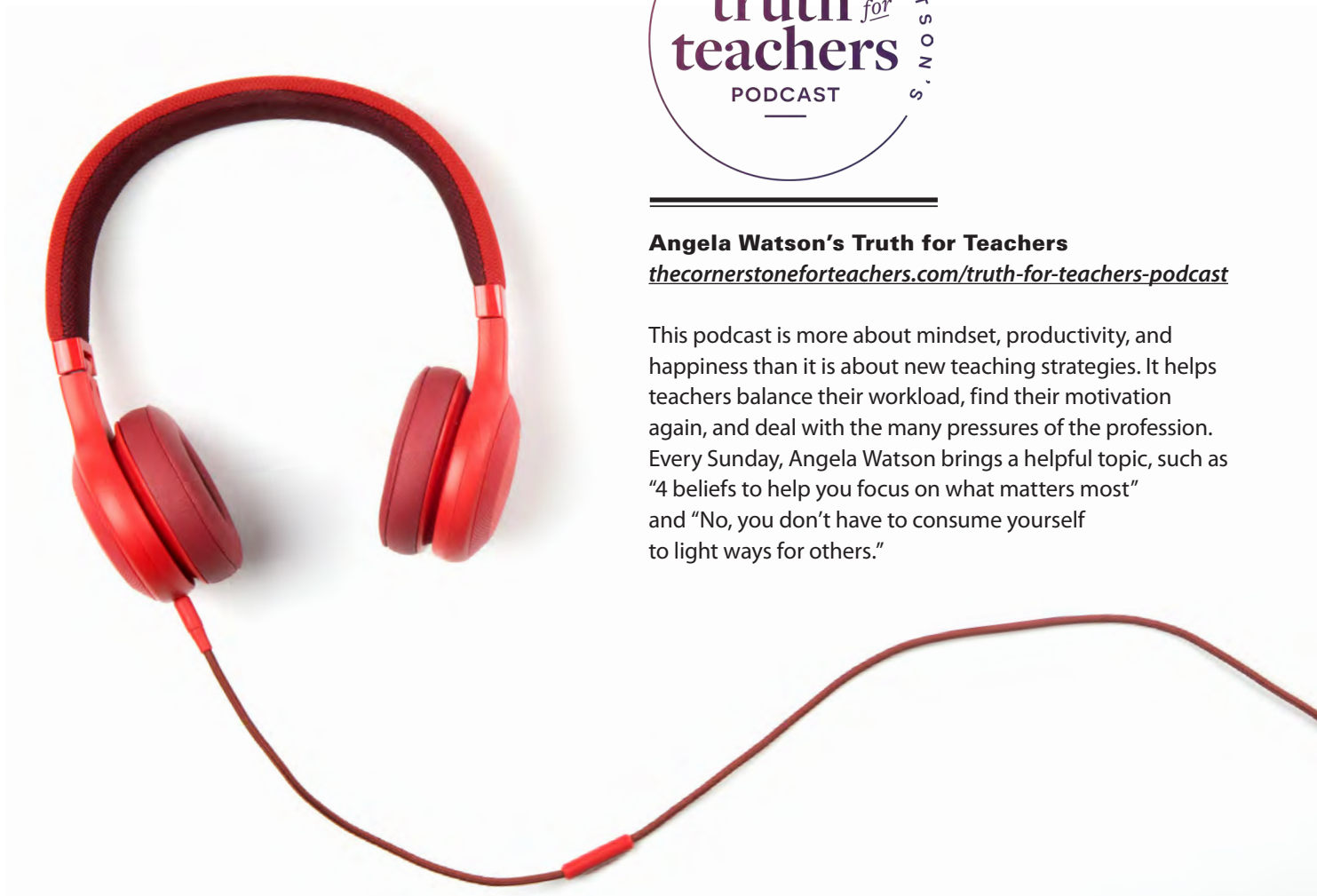
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With his goal to transform classrooms into spaces of imagination and wonder, host John Spencer delivers a podcast on conversations about growth mindset, project-based learning, design thinking, and creativity. Some examples of episodes include “Podcasting can work in any subject,” “5 reasons to pilot student podcasting projects,” and “Seven strategies for building empathy in students.”



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**The Google Teacher Tribe Podcast**  
[googleteachertribe.com](http://googleteachertribe.com)

Designed for K-12 educators, this weekly podcast gives practical ideas for making the most of the innumerable teaching tools that Google Classroom has to offer. The hosts Matt Miller and Kasey Bell help teachers with Google Docs, Forms, Slides and other tools, making learning better for students and life easier for teachers.



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**Angela Watson's Truth for Teachers**  
[thecornerstoneforteachers.com/truth-for-teachers-podcast](http://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/truth-for-teachers-podcast)

This podcast is more about mindset, productivity, and happiness than it is about new teaching strategies. It helps teachers balance their workload, find their motivation again, and deal with the many pressures of the profession. Every Sunday, Angela Watson brings a helpful topic, such as “4 beliefs to help you focus on what matters most” and “No, you don't have to consume yourself to light ways for others.”





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# CURRICULA

## PREMIÈRE LEÇON

## WILFRID LAURIER ET L'IDENTITÉ NATIONALE

À son entrée dans l'arène politique, Wilfrid Laurier était un francophone qui vivait et travaillait avec des francophones, et les enjeux qu'il traitait étaient principalement ceux des francophones. Son ascension à la Chambre des communes, puis au poste de premier ministre francophone du Canada, a cependant changé la donne. Encore tout jeune, il voulait s'initier à la culture et à l'idéologie anglo-saxonnes. C'est ainsi qu'il a pu prendre un certain recul et mieux comprendre ce qui se passait à l'extérieur de l'enceinte francophone; son éducation libérale y est d'ailleurs aussi pour quelque chose. Laurier a emprunté la voie du compromis, au point de ne satisfaire personne dans certains cas. Ses choix ne l'ont cependant pas empêché de demeurer populaire la plus grande partie de sa carrière politique : on ne tarissait pas d'éloges sur ses talents d'orateur et son entêtement à parler de lui-même comme d'un vrai Canadien. Il a remporté quatre élections consécutives, a passé 45 ans de sa vie en politique et a dirigé le Parti libéral pendant plus de 31 ans. Ce sont là de réels exploits compte tenu de l'époque, alors que les carrières politiques se terminaient aussi vite qu'elles avaient commencé. Laurier est parvenu au pouvoir à un moment où la communauté francophone avait de l'influence à l'intérieur et à l'extérieur du Québec. Il se voyait comme le maillon qui retenait ensemble les communautés francophone et anglophone. Ce qui le motivait par-dessus tout, c'était de trouver des solutions pour le bien du plus grand nombre. De quoi le Canada avait-il réellement besoin? Comment Laurier aurait-il pu orienter ce jeune pays vers le chemin de la croissance et de la prospérité?

## MATIÈRES

Histoire du Canada,  
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## CONCEPTS ABORDÉS

Les élèves verront comment se percevait le Canada en tant que nation au cours des premières années en politique et du mandat de premier ministre de Laurier. La population était-elle rangée du même côté ou l'unité nationale montrait-elle des signes de faiblesse? Les élèves se pencheront sur les réponses proposées par Laurier et détermineront s'il a été en mesure, au bout du compte, de réunir le pays autour de la même vision.

## MATÉRIEL REQUIS

- Bande dessinée *Wilfrid Laurier : sa vie, son époque*
- Ordinateurs ou autres appareils avec accès Internet
- Matériel nécessaire à la préparation des présentations

## OBJECTIFS

Les objectifs présentés ci-dessous ne servent que de point de départ. Il est recommandé aux enseignants de faire des liens avec les objectifs de leur région et de leur niveau scolaire.

Voici les résultats attendus pour les élèves :

- enrichir leurs connaissances sur l'histoire canadienne;
- analyser les incidences sociales et politiques des idées et croyances sur l'identité canadienne;
- étudier les premières années de Laurier pour déterminer comment s'est transformée à cette époque sa vision du Canada et de la société canadienne;
- étudier l'effet qu'ont eu certains événements et certaines personnes sur l'identité canadienne, les changements qui ont eu lieu et la manière dont ces changements se sont opérés;
- comprendre la politique canadienne et le système politique canadien;
- décrire la relation entre le Canada et le Royaume-Uni et l'influence de ce dernier sur la vie, la société et la politique au Canada;
- transmettre leurs idées, leurs arguments et leurs conclusions par divers moyens et dans divers styles selon le public cible et le but recherché.

## CONTEXTE

Quand on pense à un personnage comme Laurier, une question nous effleure vite l'esprit : comment a-t-il pu acquérir une telle vision du monde? Pourquoi Laurier, élevé au sein d'une famille francophone dans un milieu francophone, avait-il tant à cœur l'entraide des « deux solitudes », les francophones et les anglophones, pour faire du Canada un meilleur pays? La réponse pourrait se trouver dans l'héritage laissé à Laurier par Louis-Hippolyte La Fontaine et Robert Baldwin qui ont gouverné le Canada-Uni cinquante ans auparavant; ces derniers ont noué une relation au sein de laquelle chacun défendait les opinions et les croyances de l'autre et ont ainsi beaucoup amélioré les rapports entre francophones et anglophones. Serait-ce sinon simplement la manière dont Laurier a été élevé, c'est-à-dire dans une famille libérale où son père, Carolus, l'a encouragé à apprendre l'anglais et à s'imprégner de la culture anglo-saxonne? Laurier père encourageait le jeune Wilfrid à garder l'esprit ouvert pour que tous les points de vue soient tenus en considération. Si nous voulons bien comprendre l'état d'esprit et les convictions qui ont motivé les choix de Laurier, nous devons porter notre attention sur ses influences et les motifs derrière ces influences. Tout au long de sa carrière politique, les efforts de Laurier pour trouver un terrain d'entente n'ont pas eu les résultats escomptés, mais il a tenu avec entêtement à ses principes et croyances sans égard à leurs conséquences.

## PREMIÈRE ÉTAPE : DISCUSSION AVEC L'ENSEIGNANT

Lorsque Laurier est devenu premier ministre en 1896, le pays était bien différent de ce qu'il est aujourd'hui. Que savent les élèves du Canada de 1896? À quoi ressemblait-il? Combien y avait-il de provinces? Quelle en était la population? Qui était le premier ministre? Quel parti politique était au pouvoir? Formez des groupes d'élèves qui tenteront de répondre à ces questions ensemble. Demandez à chacun de faire un portrait éclair du Canada de 1896 en portant une attention particulière aux personnalités de l'époque. Ils devront aussi faire une recherche sur les enjeux de l'élection de 1896 et rédiger un court texte d'analyse des causes qui, à leurs yeux, expliquent la défaite des conservateurs aux mains des libéraux. Ce texte sera à remettre à l'enseignant.

### DEUXIÈME ÉTAPE : CRÉATION D'UN PROFIL

Demandez aux élèves de faire une recherche sur une des personnes suivantes qui ont eu de l'influence sur Laurier de son enfance jusqu'au début de l'âge adulte et de rédiger un profil qui explique la nature de cette influence :

- Carolus Laurier
- Oscar Archambault
- Marie-Marcelle Martineau (sa mère)
- Adéline (sa belle-mère)
- Zoé Lafontaine
- Joseph Papin
- Thomas Scott
- Louis Riel
- Joseph Lavergne
- Émilie Barthe
- Alexander Mackenzie

### TROISIÈME ÉTAPE : DES PERSONNAGES EN CHAIR ET EN OS

Les personnages de la deuxième étape ont tous joué un rôle dans le développement de Laurier depuis son jeune âge et dans sa carrière. Cependant, chacun avait une vie bien à lui. Demandez aux élèves de donner vie à un des personnages (ce ne doit pas être le même que pour l'étape précédente). Ce peut être fait sous forme de portrait écrit, de rédaction d'une scène de théâtre, de sketch ou de monologue devant la classe, de dessins ou d'illustrations (sous forme de bande dessinée, par exemple), de poème, de chanson, de baladodiffusion, de vlogue ou de présentation PowerPoint ou Prezi (la liste est encore longue). Les élèves présenteront leur travail et mettront un relief quelque chose qui ressort du personnage.

### QUATRIÈME ÉTAPE : ACTIVITÉ DE SYNTHÈSE

Demandez aux élèves de choisir un pays parmi la liste qui suit : Chine, Royaume-Uni, France, Inde, Russie, Afrique du Sud, Israël, Brésil, Allemagne, Islande, Maroc et Nouvelle-Zélande. Les élèves devront faire une recherche sur le pays qu'ils choisissent et rédiger un court essai sur l'identité nationale de ce pays. En quoi consiste-t-elle? Comment l'identité nationale se manifeste-t-elle? Quels en sont les facteurs? Si possible, les élèves pourront faire une

chronologie du développement de l'identité nationale du pays qu'ils auront choisi. Il arrive souvent que l'identité nationale soit alimentée par une personne ou un groupe de personnes. Dans le cas du Canada, nous pourrions nous demander si le hockey sur glace est vraiment la pièce centrale de notre identité nationale et si les Canadiens sont réellement plus gentils que les autres. N'avons-nous pas plutôt affaire à des stéréotypes? L'exercice a pour but de bien saisir les dimensions de l'identité nationale et d'aller plus loin que les simples perceptions courantes qui tiennent souvent plus du mythe qu'autre chose. Une fois les textes terminés, les élèves présenteront leur travail à la classe.

### ACTIVITÉS SUPPLÉMENTAIRES

- Demandez aux élèves de comparer l'identité nationale du pays qu'ils ont choisi à celle du Canada. Quelles sont les similitudes et les différences?
- Est-il possible de faire ressortir une personne ayant eu plus d'influence que les autres sur Laurier? Le cas échéant, qui serait-ce et pourquoi? Les élèves devront rédiger une analyse d'une page qui explique leur choix.
- Quels sont les symboles de l'identité nationale? Demandez aux élèves de dessiner ou d'illustrer les symboles de l'identité canadienne à côté de ceux du pays qu'ils ont choisi plus tôt. Ces symboles ont-ils changé depuis l'époque de Laurier? Le cas échéant, comment?
- Débat d'élèves : Demandez aux élèves de former des équipes pour débattre de la question suivante : il ne fait aucun doute que les Canadiens ne prennent conscience de leur identité nationale que lorsqu'ils voyagent à l'étranger et rencontrent des personnes d'autres pays. Une équipe sera pour et l'autre, contre. Il faudra suivre les règles d'un bon débat. Les élèves qui ne font partie d'aucune des deux équipes seront les juges qui décideront qui a remporté le débat. L'enseignant aura le rôle de modérateur.
- Jeu de rôles : Demandez aux élèves d'incarner des personnages tels que Laurier, Zoé, Émilie ou Carolus. Sous forme d'entrevue, faites parler les personnages sur leur vie et les événements qui en ont dicté le chemin.
- Rédaction : Chaque élève fera une critique de la bande dessinée *Wilfrid Laurier : sa vie, son époque*. Le texte fera un maximum de deux pages et se penchera sur l'intrigue, le personnage, les illustrations et la manière



dont l'histoire est racontée et dépeinte. Les personnages leur ont-ils semblé réalistes? Laurier avait-il l'air d'une « vraie » personne? Les élèves ont-ils pu s'identifier au personnage et comprendre ce qu'il ressentait? Les critiques seront évaluées par l'enseignant.

## ÉVALUATION

Chaque plan de leçon comprend tout un ensemble d'outils d'évaluation. Les enseignants devront estimer les connaissances des élèves sur chaque sujet à l'aide des questions d'évaluation s'appliquant avant et après les activités réalisées.

## QUESTIONS D'ÉVALUATION DES ÉLÈVES PROPRES AU PLAN DE LEÇON

### Avant les activités

- Les élèves comprennent-ils de manière générale l'identité canadienne?
- Les élèves saisissent-ils bien l'importance des premières influences de Laurier?
- Les élèves savent-ils déjà des choses sur l'importance que revêt Laurier dans l'histoire du Canada?
- Les élèves connaissent-ils l'histoire de l'Empire britannique, l'étendue et la puissance qu'il avait et la façon dont il gouvernait le Canada parmi l'ensemble des colonies?

### Après les activités

- Les élèves décriront les symboles de l'identité canadienne et leur importance.
- Les élèves saisiront bien l'importance que revêt Laurier par ses croyances qui ont façonné le Canada.
- Les élèves feront le point sur l'héritage de Laurier comme septième premier ministre du Canada et expliqueront leurs idées.

## QUESTIONS D'ÉVALUATION DES ENSEIGNANTS

### Avant les activités

- Comprenez-vous de manière générale le rôle qu'a eu Laurier pour bâtir le Canada?
- Saisissez-vous bien l'importance qu'a eue Laurier en tant que premier premier ministre francophone du Canada?
- Savez-vous déjà des choses sur les premières influences de Laurier?
- Connaissez-vous la réputation de conciliateur de Laurier?

### Après les activités

- Vous décrirez les premières influences de Laurier et leurs répercussions.
- Vous connaîtrez bien les contributions de Laurier le premier ministre à la politique et à l'histoire du Canada.
- Vous comprendrez pourquoi on dit toujours de Laurier qu'il est l'un des plus grands dirigeants qu'ait connus le Canada.

## ADVERTISERS INDEX

ADVERTISER.....	PAGE
1 80 Degrees North .....	12
2 Canadian Suffrage: Women and the Vote .....	4
3 Dystopia 2153 .....	24
4 School Specialty .....	8
5 Shattered Ground .....	12
6 The Life and Times of Sir Wilfrid Laurier .....	15
7 Vesey's .....	3

# RESTRICTED ACCESS



## Banning Cellphones in the Classroom

by Meagan Gillmore

Lunchtime at Manhattan Beach Middle School in Manhattan Beach, CA has gotten a lot louder over the past few years.

Sounds of dodgeball and basketball tournaments replace the buzzing and pinging of cellphone notifications. Students attend club meetings instead of participating in group chats on social media.

In 2016-2017, the school initiated a policy prohibiting students from using cellphones during the school day. They can continue to use other devices in a classroom or library for schoolwork, explains Kerry Riccio Aguero, the school's vice-principal, but cellphones are not allowed.

"When [the new policy] was implemented, we got tears from some people and boos from others," she says. The goal, however, is to protect students emotionally and mentally, continues Riccio Aguero. Students were bullying each other online, and ignoring each other offline.

"[Previously,] students weren't interacting with each other," she says. "They were on their phones and they were completely tied into the digital media and not taking the time to be kids."

If the number of children playing sports at lunchtime is any indication, that's changed now. "It's been huge to watch the transition here," she states.

Most teachers recognize students will use cellphones during class, for example, to verify information and that can be a good thing. It can be frustrating or distracting, however, when students use them as mirrors or to send videos to classmates. It can be nasty when they use them to bully students during school hours. Some schools counteract this by supplying students with devices that can't access social media platforms. Others require students not to use cellphones during school at all.



In Canada, the Ontario government made headlines in March when it announced a provincial ban on cellphones during instructional time beginning in the 2019-2020 academic year. The announcement stated that cellphones can be used for “educational purposes, as directed by the educator.” Cellphones may also be used to assist students with special education needs and for health and medical purposes. Each school board must ensure its policies align with the provincial standards, the government announcement said.

Changes are also happening in other provinces. Elk Island Public Schools, that represents 43 schools in Alberta, announced a new policy to take force in September 2019. It explains that during the school day, cellphones and personal electronic devices are banned for K-6 students. Devices are allowed for Grade 7-9 students during breaks or at lunch—although teachers may allow them during class for specific educational activities. Similarly, devices can be used during spare periods for Grade 10-12 students. Students in any grade with an identified medical or inclusive education need, however, may use cellphones in class.

“I think it’s really a double-edged sword in terms of usage,” says Sam Liu, an assistant professor at the University of Victoria who is studying the impact of different cellphone policies on middle school students. Some schools in Victoria ban cellphones entirely. “I think it’s really necessary to teach kids the self-regulation skills because this is the first time they are using these cellphones or receiving these smartphones. There needs to be some kinds of teaching and having them aware that certain types of usage can be detrimental to their health and well-being,” says Liu.

Teachers need to be bold and persistent with helping students regulate their cellphone use, while communicating honestly about the impacts of cellphones.

“Try anything. In my opinion, you can’t do nothing. You’ve got to do something,” says Matthew Acheson, a teacher at St. Mary’s High School in Kitchener, ON.

“The kids that are most likely to be distracted by phones are the ones that can least afford to be. [If] students who are... close to disengaging from school [have] a phone, this is where [they’ll] end up—on their phone,” he says. “It becomes an addiction, and at that point it becomes really hard to get a kid back and re-engage them in education. A lot of them see more value in the interactions with phones than the interactions with whatever’s going on in the class,” he says.

**“I think it’s really necessary to teach kids the self-regulation skills because this is the first time they are using these cellphones or receiving these smartphones.”**

Acheson sometimes uses phone cases from the company Yondr. The cases lock the phones so they can’t be used, although music can still be played. This way, phones aren’t confiscated, but they definitely can’t be used either. Some classes resist for a few days, but then eventually accept the idea and their grades improve, shares Acheson. Yondr hasn’t worked with everyone; some students spend the class trying to break into the cases. Acheson has other methods for when this happens: he puts students’ phones in envelopes marked with their name and stores them in a locked toolbox during class.



Acheson believes teachers must stay on top of students' cellphone use if monitoring them will be effective. Ultimately, though, he explains these procedures save time.

"It doesn't take a lot of time away from the class," he says, noting how quickly phones are stored away. "In fact, it probably saves time because you're not constantly policing phone use. The classroom teacher has to decide that it's important. For me, it's definitely improved the learning environment."

An improved learning environment doesn't necessarily require a total ban on cellphones however, some teachers believe.

Jamie Mitchell, a teacher with Ontario's Halton District School Board, decided a number of years ago to stop confiscating cellphones in class. The high school math teacher realized one summer day how much time he spent confiscating phones during class, and how little it accomplished. The next September, he told his students they could use their phones in class, but they needed to be out on the desk where he can see them.



**"I've really noticed as a teacher, as soon as I started teaching kids how to manage themselves and their own device time, the amount of disciplining I had to do around cellphone use went way down."**

"I realized there were more important conversations I could have with my students," he says. If he saw students using a game, he'd ask them to consider how math principles applied to it. He directs them to apps that can help them learn. If students use phones inappropriately, Mitchell asks them to put the devices facedown on their desk. He confiscates about one phone a year, he shares.

"Those cases are rare," Mitchell says. "I've really noticed as a teacher, as soon as I started teaching kids how to manage themselves and their own device time, the amount of disciplining I had to do around cellphone use went way down."

Teaching students how to regulate their cellphone use requires having students examine why they use them so much.

"You just so clearly see that they have this strong feeling that they will miss out on something if they're not following so-and-so and so-and-so," says Calvin Van Eek, a social sciences teacher at Waterloo Oxford District Secondary School in Baden, ON. Van Eek began teaching more than 20 years ago after working in the addictions and mental health field.

"[Cellphones] tap into some fundamental human needs," he says. "Theoretically, [students] agree with me that they shouldn't be following some [negative] people, and that they're just perpetuating things by doing [so], but at the same time they are so reluctant and resistant to the idea of removing themselves," says Van Eek, who thinks the nastiness students experience on social media is the most damaging part of their technology use.

He discusses cellphones and social media in philosophy classes. Sometimes, he tries to have students think about how their devices are subtly controlling their behaviour. He has also seen students begin to remind each other not to use phones as often.

Such interactions may become the new normal at R.F. Staples Secondary School in Westlock, AB. Beginning September 2019, students won't be able to have their cellphones out during class, although they can use them during lunch or breaks. (The school is not part of the Elk Island School District that will be implementing its new board-wide policy in September.)

Wayne Rufiange, school principal, says he became concerned that students' constant reliance on cellphones was hurting their ability to interact with each other and solve problems, contributing to anxiety and decreased mental health. He shares that students often aren't using their phones in class for educational reasons anyway, and there are other technologies students can use besides cellphones.

"If I look at the big picture, [removing cellphones is] that opportunity for kids to be unplugged for a while, get away and focus on their studies, [and] not be so distracted by what other people are doing. [It's also an opportunity] to just be in [the] moment and be mindful of what's happening around them," he says.

Rufiange says he finds it "disturbing" that our current culture teaches students to expect a lot of social media likes in a short amount of time. He also wonders if the constant ability for them to communicate with their parents when there is a problem impedes their independent problem solving skills, especially if constant connection with people contributes to anxiety.

Rufiange and his staff can't change cultural expectations entirely. They can, however, foster something different in their school.

If students don't have cellphones in the class, it might be easier for them to discuss what they're learning, he shares. Maybe, says Rufiange, less time on phones will help them "get to know their classmates in more detail than what's happening on their Snapchat story, their Instagram page, [and] have a real conversation instead of a digital conversation."

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Meagan Gillmore is a freelance journalist in Toronto, ON.

## Building Your Skill Set

There's no such thing as 'too much knowledge!' But adding professional development into a teacher's jam-packed schedule can be challenging. Consider utilizing your summer holidays to attend educational workshops that will add to your skill set. Here are some suggested workshops focusing on different topics.

### Ontario Tech University Summer Workshops for Educators – Oshawa, ON

The newly renamed Ontario Tech University provides a variety of workshops in August. Their aim is to develop activities for 21st century skills through inquiry-based and active learning. K-12 teachers can develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills using a variety of tech tools including LEGO MINDSTORMS Education EV3, Minecraft, a range of robotic devices, and other resources. One of the sessions is *Tech4Teachers* that helps participants gain critical thinking and problem-solving skills. *Turtle Island for Educators* is another session designed to enable teachers to get more familiar with culturally responsive teaching. They also offer *Creating a Makerspace 1.0 and 2.0* workshops that are designed to help teachers gain a perspective on how to create a makerspace environment in the classroom. Find more information at <https://education.uoit.ca/about/teacher-workshops.php>.

### Exploring Sustainability in the Classroom and Beyond – Vancouver, BC

This interactive program offers various workshops exploring teaching strategies that make learning about sustainability real, relevant and action-oriented. The *Shift Happens* workshop discusses water, wastewater, garbage, air quality, climate change, regional growth and ecological health. In *Get Outdoors!*, participants are taught how to use the outdoor classroom efficiently. The *Project Wet & Source to Sea* workshop integrates the story of water and wastewater in Metro Vancouver. These workshops are available by request for K-12 teachers and at no cost for groups of 15 or more. Find more information at [www.metrovancouver.org/events/school-programs/teacher-workshops/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.metrovancouver.org/events/school-programs/teacher-workshops/Pages/default.aspx).



### Addressing Mental Health Issues in the Classroom – BC

The British Columbia Teachers' Federation offers a variety of workshops that help teachers address social issues in the classroom. Some of the offerings include, Addressing Mental Health Issues, Managing Conflict, Creating Inclusive Spaces, and Exploring Placed-Based Learning. Workshops must be booked at least three weeks prior to the date of training. Find more information at <https://bctf.ca/pd/workshops.aspx?id=233053>.

### Alberta Teachers' Association Workshops – Edmonton & Calgary, AB

The Alberta Teachers' Association brings the workshops to your school. They offer a variety of workshops to encourage professional development among educators that includes, enhancing learning of students in all age groups; improving foundational knowledge about First Nations, Métis, and Inuit; developing professional growth plans; building mentoring relationships; and creating inclusive learning environments. Find more information at [www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Workshops-and-Presentations/Pages/Workshops-Courses-and-Presentations.aspx](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/For%20Members/Professional%20Development/Workshops-and-Presentations/Pages/Workshops-Courses-and-Presentations.aspx).



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