

TEACH

Education for Today and Tomorrow • L'Éducation - Aujourd'hui et Demain

LE PROF

CONTENT

**Kids On the Net:
Who's Doing What?**

**La toile et les jeunes
Qui fait quoi?**

De découverte en découverte au www.rescol.ca

School Rankings: What's the Point?

The World Hunger Project

INSIDE

8 Page Reproducible Insert

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ISSUES

EDUCATION

Contents

Features

De découverte en découverte

5 au www.rescol.ca
Par Lyse Ward

Kids On the Net: **11**

Who's Doing What?

La toile et les jeunes

13 Qui fait quoi?
By/Par Jennifer Kavur

School Rankings: What's the Point?

27 *By Sapna Nayyar*

Columns

Web Stuff *By Marjan Glavac* **4**

Futures/Le futur **7**

What parents owe Teachers/

Le devoir des parents envers

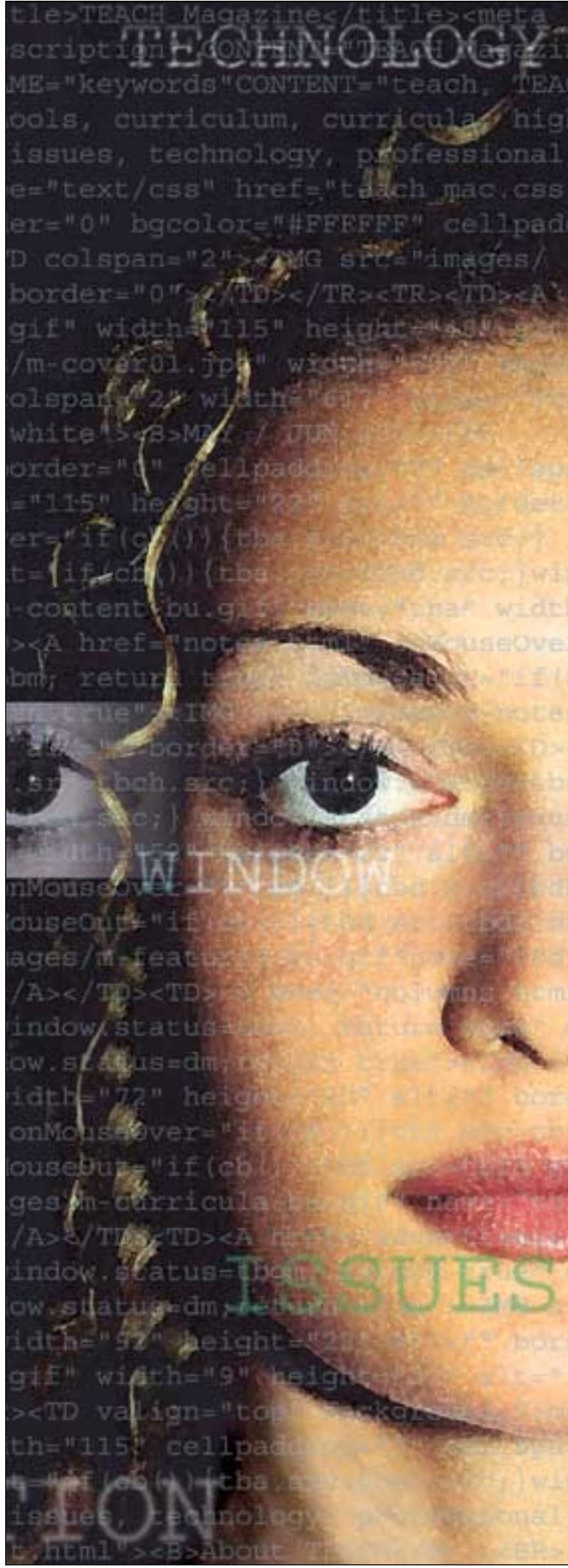
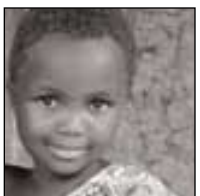
9 les enseignants
By/Par Richard Worzel

Curricula

The World Hunger Project **17**

By Doug Blackburn

Ad Index **26**





NOTES

Once again we welcome you to a new school year. Although there is the impression that teachers get a lot of time off, we know that summer holidays redress, in part, the extra time teachers put in during the school year. Many teachers use the summer months to travel while a goodly number take the opportunity to upgrade their skills through professional development courses taken in person or online.

I'm happy to report that this is the first bilingual issue of the new academic year. You will read Lyse Ward's assessment of SchoolNet/Rescol, as well as this column, Richard Worzel's Futures column and an article that explores teen Internet habits based on a landmark survey, in French as well as English. As time passes, we hope to bring you more bilingual content in subsequent issues.

In addition to the content already mentioned, we present an article that explores the ranking of schools. This past spring, the Fraser Institute released a ranking of high schools in Ontario, a controversial ranking that placed only private schools at the top. There was some question of the ranking criteria which tended to favour private schools. That said, we take a look at the ranking situation and whether there is any point to it at all.

In the CURRICULA section, we examine the cruel reality of world hunger. Complacent as we are when the refrigerator or supermarket are so handy and accessible, we cannot overlook the fact that over 900 million individuals on our planet are malnourished and that here in Canada, food bank use has skyrocketed. This is an important and compelling issue to explore with your students.

Une nouvelle année scolaire débute et il nous fait plaisir de vous souhaiter la bienvenue. Même si bien des gens ont l'impression que les enseignants ont beaucoup de temps de congé, nous savons que leurs vacances d'été compensent une

partie des heures supplémentaires qu'ils font durant l'année. Aussi, plusieurs d'entre eux profitent des mois d'été pour voyager tandis qu'un grand nombre suivent des cours de perfectionnement professionnel en personne ou en ligne, ce qui se fait d'ailleurs de plus en plus.

Je suis heureux de vous présenter notre premier numéro bilingue de l'année scolaire. Vous pourrez lire l'évaluation du Rescol de Lyse Ward, la présente rubrique, la rubrique L'Avenir par Richard Worzel, ainsi qu'un article analysant les résultats d'un sondage sur les habitudes de navigation des jeunes internautes. Avec le temps, nous espérons que le contenu des prochains numéros se fera de plus en plus bilingue.

En plus des articles susmentionnés, nous présentons un article sur le classement des écoles. Le printemps dernier, le Fraser Institute a publié un classement des écoles secondaires de l'Ontario, document d'ailleurs très controversé car seules les écoles privées occupaient les premières places. On a alors remis en question les critères d'évaluation qui favorisaient les écoles privées. Cela dit, nous jetons à notre tour un coup d'œil sur la situation du classement et sur le bien-fondé d'une telle entreprise. Dans la section CURRICULA, nous examinons la cruelle réalité de la lutte contre la faim. Malgré notre complaisance, vu la proximité et l'accessibilité du réfrigérateur et du supermarché, nous ne pouvons fermer les yeux sur la malnutrition de plus de 900 millions de personnes sur la terre et sur le fait qu'ici même au Canada l'utilisation des banques de nourriture grimpe en flèche. Il s'agit là d'un problème grave et prenant que vous voudrez peut-être aborder avec vos élèves. ©

Wili Liberman

Next Issue

- *Professional Development Supplement*
- *Web Reviews, Futures, CURRICULA and more*

TEACH

MAGAZINE

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World Vision Canada

<http://www.worldvision.ca>

The WorldVision Canada site is a great resource for teachers looking for material on socially responsible issues. A sampling of topics include the following: Children's Rights, Current Issues in Global Population, Emergency Response, War-Affected Children, A Study Kit on Aboriginal Issues, Girls! Stories Worth Telling, Know Hunger, One Deadly Step Kit, Rich World-Poor World.

There are links to these topics for ordering more information such as video and printed material. There are also online resources on a number of these topics that are linked by provincial curriculum requirements for all of the ten provinces.

One superb resource available online is Children's Rights For You And Me. This 44-page unit is available as an Adobe PDF (Portable Document Format) file. It matches the expectations of the following provincial curriculums: Alberta Grade 2 Social Studies and Grades 3-6 Language Arts, British Columbia Grade 6 Social Studies and Grades 3-6 Language Arts, Manitoba Grades 4-6 English Language Arts, New Brunswick Grades 4-6 Language Arts and Grade 6 Social Studies, Newfoundland Grades 4-6 Language Arts and Grade 4 Social Studies, Nova Scotia Grades 4-6 Language Arts, Ontario Grade 4 Language Arts, Prince Edward Island Grades 4-6 Language Arts and Grade 4 Social Studies and Saskatchewan Grade 3 Social Studies and Grades 2-5 Language Arts. The length of the unit is approximately 8 hours and includes: Five Lesson Plans, Assessment Tools, and Handouts.

This resource and site is well worth checking out.



Unique and valuable sources of information can be found under the Services category for Connectivity, Multimedia Skills Development, Content/Knowledge, Youth and Employment/Volunteering. There are links to community programs, youth employment services, computers for schools, the SchoolNet News Network program for student journalists, information on First Nations, and digital resources on Canadian history and culture. Be sure to check out the Employment/Volunteering section to see the fantastic programs that have been developed for career-related information.

Enchanted Learning

<http://www.EnchantedLearning.com>

This site has plenty to offer pre-K through grade 6 teachers. Click on the link Rhyme Coloring



Online and find 25 well-known nursery rhymes with pictures that you can colour online, read, and print out. There's even information on teaching rhymes to pre-readers, incorporating rhymes into other lessons, a nursery rhyme scavenger hunt, and instructions on how to make a nursery rhyme colouring book.

Head over to Zoom Dinosaurs, a comprehensive online hyper-text book about dinosaurs. It is designed for students of varying ages and levels of comprehension. There are over 60 printouts of dinosaurs for cut-outs used in dinosaur crafts, for colouring, and for stencils. There's also information available on making a dinosaur book and online resources for grades K-4. In keeping with the dinosaur theme, there is also a dinosaur game, jokes and quizzes, and links to museums, movies, stories, art, and stamps.

The resources don't stop with the extinction of the dinosaurs! It continues with a picture dictionary (in a number of different languages), links to over 1,000 educational activities and games, and quizzes for pre-readers and students in grades 2-3. Wonderful resources are here for the clicking: astronomy, plants, geography, explorers, inventors, rainforests, dinosaurs, sharks, whales, mammals, birds, butterflies, and many other animals.

There are hundreds of printouts, online information pages, colouring pages, illustrated glossaries, question-and-answer pages, and interactive puzzles here. You and your students will find plenty to do and have fun learning too. ☺

Canada's SchoolNet

<http://www.schoolnet.ca>

Canada's SchoolNet is packed with information on Canada as well as information for a worldwide audience interested in education. This searchable site has four main categories: SN Today, Learning Resources, Services, and Partners.



SN Today contains News, Cool Sites, Press Releases, Archives, and the SchoolNet Magazine in PDF format. The Learning Resources section presents curriculum and education support materials. There are over 5,000 learning resources here under three categories: Curriculum Areas, Educational Support, and Federal and Related Institutions. The Curriculum Area contains a wealth of information on the following curriculum subjects: Adult Education, Art, Business Education, Career and Vocational Education, Computer and Information Technology, Entrepreneurship Studies, Family Studies, Health and Wellness, Integrated Subjects and Other, Language Arts, Mathematics, Physical Education, Science, Social Science, Social Studies, and Special Needs Education.

Mr. Marjan Glavac is author of "The Busy Educator's Guide To The World Wide Web" and a teacher based in London, ON. He can be reached at marjan@glavac.com or <http://www.glavac.com>

De découverte en découverte

au www.rescol.ca

par Lyse Ward

J'ai commencé à vous parler du Rescol canadien le mois dernier. Depuis, certains d'entre vous aurez peut-être pu vous rendre au site et même faire usage de ses ressources. Pour ceux et celles qui n'ont pas encore eu le temps de fureter dans le site, je poursuis ma visite. Avant de passer aux services, j'aimerais vous rappeler que les nouvelles de Rescol changent tous les jours. C'est donc un excellent moyen de se tenir au courant des concours, conférences, nouvelles, etc. On peut aussi télécharger la revue Rescol. Donc, bien des choses intéressantes pour vous et vos élèves.

L'onglet des Services mène à des programmes de toutes sortes et à quantité d'hyperliens. Je vous les présente brièvement, faute d'espace, en vous recommandant d'aller voir par vous-même. C'est énorme!

Ordinateurs pour les écoles, initiative lancée en 1993, fournit aux écoles et aux bibliothèques du matériel informatique provenant d'entreprises, des gouvernements et de particuliers. Si votre école a besoin d'ordinateurs, voilà un bon endroit où commencer vos recherches. Éconoréseau mène aux sites de compagnies qui offrent des rabais sur le matériel informatique et les didacticiels.

Premières Nations sur Rescol se compose de ressources sur toutes sortes de sujets. Il mène aussi au site du Conseil en éducation des premières nations (CEPN) où se trouvent une foule de renseignements et du matériel pédagogique à bas prix. De nombreux hyperliens mènent à des sites amérindiens américains. J'ai particulièrement aimé ma visite à La piste amérindienne, nouveau site sur les nations québécoises dont la présentation est très réussie et plaira aux jeunes.

Le RéseauBiblio contient toute une documentation facilitant l'usage des technologies de l'information ainsi que divers cours et guides. Les hyperliens sont nombreux et mènent à des outils intéressants.

Dans le site Collections numérisées du Canada, j'ai passé quelque temps à regarder des expositions canadiennes. Souvent en anglais, malheureusement. Il faut le dire. Celle d'Oscar Peterson (à la Bibliothèque nationale jusqu'au 3 septembre 2001) était toutefois dans les deux langues officielles.

Francomania.ca est un site de ressources sur la francophonie nationale et internationale permettant également l'échange d'idées sur des sujets qui concernent ou préoccupent les jeunes. La présentation audiovisuelle témoigne de la participation de Radio-Canada : c'est beau et ça bouge! Forums éducatifs en ligne de Rescol s'adresse aux enseignants qui souhaitent discuter avec des enseignants des quatre coins du pays. ConnectAction contient une énorme base de données sur des projets, services et occasions de partager les ressources pour accroître ses compétences en matière de TIC.

D'autres sites portent sur des programmes bien établis du gouvernement fédéral, dont celui du Prix du Premier ministre pour l'excellence dans l'enseignement et celui du Programme des didacticiels multimédias et des nouvelles applications d'accès public de Rescol, dans le cadre duquel le gouvernement verse jusqu'à 20 millions de dollars en contrepartie de contributions égales de partenaires pour la production de didacticiels et d'applications d'accès public en ligne.

D'autres programmes encouragent les jeunes à présenter des projets. Vous voudrez vite vous renseigner à leur sujet. Grâce au Programme Rescol à la Source, les enseignants et les élèves créent leurs propres projets en ligne (il y a de l'argent à gagner). Le Réseau des écoles innovatrices de Rescol présente des écoles ayant fait preuve de leadership dans l'intégration des technologies de l'information et des communications en salle de classe. Le site Créateurs de sites Web de Rescol met en vedette les meilleurs sites scolaires du

Canada. On décerne des prix aux écoles qui se démarquent des autres.

Le site Rédaction de Rescol m'a beaucoup plu. Il s'agit d'un cours de journalisme électronique en ligne pour les jeunes reporters francophones. La présentation du site accrochera les jeunes. On y trouve une salle de nouvelles, des reporters, des articles, etc. Expérience sans doute extraordinaire pour les jeunes. Visite des plus agréables pour les moins jeunes. Les possibilités d'interaction d'Internet se manifestent de belle façon dans le site ConnectAction des générations. Il s'agit d'un très beau site où se tissent des liens entre les jeunes et les aînés par l'intermédiaire des technologies de l'information et des communications.

La dernière catégorie de services porte sur les programmes d'emploi et les possibilités de stages pour les jeunes. Le Programme d'emploi jeunesse de Rescol s'adresse aux jeunes de 15 à 30 ans. Réseau De Compétence.ca est un réseau de sites Web d'information sur les emplois et les carrières du Canada. Quant au programme Cyberjeunes Canada International, il propose aux jeunes Canadiens des stages axés sur les technologies de l'information et des communications. Le site contient également des liens menant aux sites d'organismes internationaux tels que CUSO, OXFAM, Jeunesse Canada Monde, etc.

Enfin, la dernière section : Partenaires. Il va sans dire que Rescol se devait de reconnaître la contribution de ses nombreux partenaires. Qu'il s'agisse de compagnies de téléphone, de technologie ou de communication, elles ont toutes leur propre site Internet (souvent en anglais seulement) auquel vous mènent autant d'hyperliens. Certains organismes à vocation éducative ont des ressources qui pourraient toutefois vous intéresser.

Voilà. D'autres ressources, d'autres liens, d'autres découvertes à ajouter à celles des autres parties du site de Rescol. Une mine d'or, vous verrez! ©

Lyse Ward, traductrice agréée, est pigiste en affectation spéciale au TEACH.

Students Read “for the love of reading”



For years, educators have been using Accelerated Reader® (AR™) software to motivate students' reading practice, diagnose student reading, and alert them when intervention is needed. Teachers using Accelerated Reader create excitement in the classroom by helping students succeed.

It was Remembrance Day in the Sir Mackenzie Bowell School, a grade-six through eight facility in Belleville, Ontario. A grade-eight student read a verse from the poem *In Flanders Fields*. What made that special was that at the beginning of the year, his reading level was 0.9, according to Betty Bentley, resource teacher and Accelerated Reader coordinator. He had gained so much in reading ability in just three months that he could read the passage aloud. Bentley said, “He is so turned on by being able to pass AR quizzes that he is becoming an avid reader. He is scoring 100 percent on quizzes, the first perfect score he has ever earned, and it is doing wonders for his self-esteem!”

Valuable data on every student

AR helps teachers motivate their students to read more books, each at a level where a student is challenged but not frustrated. Reading practice is essential to developing the critical-thinking and problem-solving abilities that ensure a lifelong love of reading and learning. AR helps teachers continuously adjust reading levels to ensure maximum growth for every student.



Betty Bentley, resource teacher and Accelerated Reader coordinator.

Bentley continued by saying, “His growth in reading ability was typical of the growth in reading ability among our population of grade-six through grade-eight students. Almost without exception, they have all shown growth in

reading ability, motivated by our use of Accelerated Reader.” Even more satisfying to Bentley is the way students have started to read for the love of reading. She said, “When we came back from Christmas holidays, 45 of our 195 students had read books during the break and were anxious to take Reading Practice™ quizzes on them.”

More teaching—less paperwork

Accelerated Reader provides the kind of accurate, reliable information an educator can use to help every student succeed. It enables the teacher to choose the appropriate intervention for each student, and solve reading problems fast. What's more, AR reduces paperwork, so there is more time to do what teachers do best – teach!

As teacher-librarian for the school, Bentley said that library circulation has quadrupled and “we are adding titles to the library on a weekly basis. We are combing the secondhand bookstores just trying to keep up with student demand. Some kids are even asking for specific titles, something I've never heard before.”

In explanation on why AR is working for her students, Bentley said, “We tested all of our students with STAR Reading® at the beginning of the school year, and made sure they were reading books within their zones of proximal development, no matter what their grade level. They all like the immediate feedback they get from the program, the good feeling that comes from succeeding while being challenged, the fact that the program shows them that they truly understand what they read, and having some say in their own education by choosing their own books. When they score consecutive 100s on AR quizzes, I move those choices of books up to the high end of their reading ranges or into the next reading range.”

Monitor reading progress—effortlessly

Since 1994, more than 300,000 educators have attended Reading Renaissance™ training to learn how to motivate students to read more and better books. AR has Reading Renaissance tools included in the software. It automatically monitors not only the time the student reads independently, but also time spent reading to and with the student. The program monitors the individual book-level goals of each student and if the books read are fiction or non-fiction.

Bentley attended a Canadian Reading Renaissance professional development seminar in Toronto. She characterized the session as “excellent in the way it put the program in perspective.” She learned so much about Accelerated Reader that could be put to good use immediately, especially in the areas of individual goal setting, using the many reports the program generates, and motivational techniques.

As motivators, Bentley awards certificates each week to readers who lead their classes in percent correct on quiz scores, and also awards small items such as bookmarks. All students in the school get 35 minutes a day for silent reading and she said the school is hoping to increase that to 60 minutes by year end. She said the program has the “100 percent cooperation and support of Principal George Wilson,” which is a key contributor to its success.

Bentley concluded by saying, “I've had my teaching certificate for more than 30 years and I've never encountered anything like Accelerated Reader to motivate children to read!” ☺

To learn more about Accelerated Reader and Reading Renaissance techniques, please call Renaissance Learning of Canada toll free at (800)267-3189.





What Parents owe Teachers

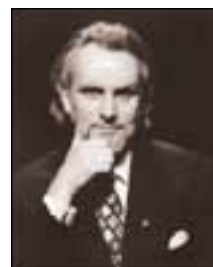
Your child's teachers are entrusted with helping to create your child's future welfare and happiness. That makes them very important in your life. So if you want to help your child succeed, then you need to do everything in your power to support and assist your child's teachers. Here's how to start:

A ccept your own responsibilities first. Parents have the primary responsibility for their children. This means that until your children are legally responsible for themselves and living outside of your home, you are responsible for what they eat, what they wear, how much time they spend with television and computers, and, most importantly, how they behave.

- Deliver a child who is ready to learn. A teacher can only continue what the parents have started. This means that if your child is undisciplined, disruptive, inattentive, and rude at home, he'll be that way at school. A child who isn't interested in learning, and has no respect for his peers and teachers, won't learn no matter how good the teacher is. Your child will learn to love or hate learning before he ever sets foot in school. You teach him this love or dislike by the way you behave. Do you read to him? Do you read yourself? Do you encourage his curiosity, and help him find ways to satisfy

it? Do you restrict worthless activities, such as television and computer games? Do you spend all your free time as a couch potato? Are you rude to people who cross you, or do you deal with people politely? Do you show respect for your child's teachers, or are you constantly bad-mouthing them? Your child will pay attention to your actions, and ignore your words, so live the lessons you want him to learn.

- Accept that all children need discipline, including yours. Our society has systematically stripped away virtually all forms of discipline so that school kids know they can get away with almost anything, including violence, and the teacher is powerless to stop them. If you want your child to get an education, then work with the parents association and the school principal to develop an appropriate code of conduct, complete with consequences for misbehaviour. Then support that code, especially if it's your kid that breaks it. And if your child comes home complaining of



by Richard Worzel

the injustice he's suffered, don't immediately take his side. Instead, contact the teacher and get the other side of the story, then work with the teacher to make sure the child is getting the same message at home as he is at school: behave, or suffer the consequences. All children are born savages. Consistent discipline is the only way they can become civilized human beings.

- Develop an alliance with your child's teachers. Working together, you can get far better results both at home and in school. Children are great at playing adults off against each other. Teamwork means agreeing on a course of action, then supporting each other in making it happen. So talk to your child's teacher, and stay in regular contact. Ask what would help her in the classroom, and what you can do at home to help your child. Then do it.

- Be involved in the PTA. Having sat through more than my share of PTA meetings (I'm a past president), I know how tedious they can be, but having parents, administrators, and teachers working together can make a school a success, even when other factors work against it. The biggest problem with most PTAs is the mass of parents who expect results, but never lift a finger to help. The valued parent is more likely to get extra support and assistance for his child. Be valuable – get involved.

- Show respect for your child's teachers. Society seems bent on belittling teachers, which is a thoughtless contradiction. On the one hand, we say that education is crucial. Then we turn around and say that the educators we've selected are lazy louts. Make up your mind. If you're going to entrust your child to teachers, then you must give them the support and respect that goes with the job. If you don't think they're up to it, then find another solution, whether it's a different public school, home schooling, private school, or a major political movement to fire these people and replace them with people who will be better. But don't stand on the sidelines and bitch about the professionals who are trying to do the job that you've indirectly hired them to do. Put up or shut up.

- Finally, show appreciation. Most teachers are dedicated professionals, and want to do what's best for your child. Most of them take money out of their own pockets to buy things their classes need. Most of them work a lot longer than 9 to 3 to create an environment that helps your child and enables him to succeed. And when they get praise, it's usually from the kids, not the system or the parents.

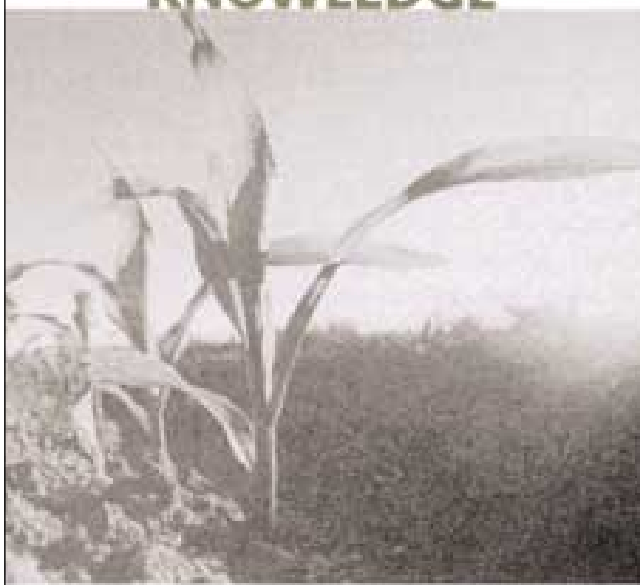
I'm sure you've been in situations where you've worked your butt off to do something great – and the only "appreciation" you got was people complaining about how it should have been better. Remember how irritated and unmotivated you felt? That's just business as usual for teachers these days. So break the pattern, show your child's teachers how much you appreciate what they are doing. It doesn't have to be a big deal. It can be as simple as a handshake, a smile, and a simple "Thanks for all you're doing. It means a lot to me."

Our children's futures will be shaped by what their teachers do today. And the world you live in when you've retired will be shaped by how well today's children learn. It's not just your child's future that lies in the hands of his teachers, it's yours as well. Help them to make it a good one – or suffer with the consequences. ☺

Richard Worzel is a Toronto-based futurist who volunteers his time to speak to high school children. He can be reached through this magazine, or by e-mail at futurist@futuresearch.com

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THE SEEDS OF KNOWLEDGE



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Le devoir des parents envers les enseignants

Les enseignants ont le mandat d'aider à bâtir le bien-être et le bonheur futurs de votre enfant. Ils jouent donc un rôle important dans votre vie. Alors, si vous voulez aider votre enfant à réussir, vous devrez faire tout en votre pouvoir pour appuyer et aider ses enseignants. Pour commencer, vous pouvez :

● Accepter vos propres responsabilités. Jusqu'à la maturité de leurs enfants, ce sont les parents qui en ont la responsabilité première. Ce sont eux qui sont responsables de ce qu'ils mangent, de ce qu'ils portent, du temps qu'ils passent à l'ordinateur ou devant la télé et, surtout, de leur comportement.

- Confier à l'école un enfant qui est prêt à apprendre. L'enseignant peut seulement poursuivre ce qui a été entamé par les parents. Cela veut dire que si votre enfant est indiscipliné, dissipé, inattentif et insolent à la maison, il le sera à l'école. L'enfant qui n'est pas intéressé à apprendre et n'a aucun respect envers ses camarades et ses enseignants n'apprendra rien, quelles que soient les compétences de l'enseignant. Votre enfant aura appris à aimer ou détester apprendre bien longtemps avant de commencer l'école. C'est par l'exemple que vous lui inculquerez ou pas le goût d'apprendre. Lui faites-vous la lecture? Lisez-vous vous-même? Est-ce que vous éveillez sa curiosité et l'aidez à trouver réponse à ses questions? Limitez-vous les activités sans valeur, telles que la télé et les jeux d'ordinateur? Est-ce que vous passez, vous-même, tous vos moments de loisir sur le divan à regarder la télévision? Avez-vous tendance à répondre insolemment aux personnes qui vous contrarient ou usez-vous toujours de politesse? Faites-vous preuve

de respect envers les enseignants de votre enfant ou parlez-vous toujours contre eux? Vos enfants remarqueront vos gestes sans se préoccuper de vos conseils; alors, mettez vos propres leçons en pratique.

- Reconnaître que tous les enfants ont besoin de discipline, y compris le ou la vôtre. Notre société a presque enrayé toute forme de discipline, de sorte que les enfants savent qu'ils peuvent faire ce qu'ils veulent à l'école, même des actes de violence, sans que les enseignants puissent intervenir pour les en empêcher. Si vous voulez que votre enfant s'instruise, travaillez avec le conseil de parents et la direction de l'école à établir des règles de conduite et des sanctions pour ceux et celles qui contreviendront aux règlements, puis soutenez-les, surtout si votre propre enfant y contrevient. Et si votre enfant rentre à la maison en se plaignant de l'injustice dont il a été victime, ne lui donnez surtout pas raison sans même connaître les faits. Communiquez plutôt avec l'enseignant pour entendre sa version de ce qui s'est passé, et de concert avec lui ou elle, veillez à ce que votre enfant reçoive, à la maison comme à l'école, le même message : comporte-toi comme il faut ou subis les conséquences de ta mauvaise conduite. À la naissance, les enfants n'ont pas le moindre savoir-vivre. Seule une stricte discipline peut en faire des êtres humains civilisés.



par Richard Worzel

- Vous allier aux enseignants de votre enfant. En travaillant ensemble, vous obtiendrez de bien meilleurs résultats, tant à la maison qu'à l'école. Les enfants sont passés maîtres dans l'art de monter un adulte contre l'autre. Travailler en équipe veut dire s'entendre sur un mode d'action, puis s'appuyer mutuellement pour le mettre en pratique. Parlez donc à l'enseignant de votre enfant et restez en contact avec lui ou elle. Demandez-lui de vous dire ce qui lui faciliterait la tâche en salle de classe et ce que vous pouvez faire à la maison pour aider votre enfant. Et faites-le.

- Vous impliquer dans le conseil de parents. Je sais que les réunions de conseils de parents sont parfois pénibles. J'en ai moi-même eu plus que ma part (je suis un ancien président). Mais il n'en reste pas moins que le travail concerté des parents, de la direction et des enseignants, et des enfants en temps opportun, peut assurer le succès d'une école, même lorsque d'autres facteurs agissent en sens inverse. Le grand problème des conseils d'école, c'est que la majorité des parents s'attendent à des résultats sans jamais offrir d'aider. Les parents qui se méritent l'estime de l'école sont plus aptes à obtenir de l'appui et de l'aide pour leur enfant. Alors, impliquez-vous!

- Témoigner du respect envers les enseignants de votre enfant. Notre société semble s'évertuer à dénigrer les enseignants, ce qui est une contradiction irrationnelle. D'une part, on dit que l'instruction est cruciale. Puis, d'autre part, on dit que les enseignants qui en sont chargés sont des bons à rien. Décidez-vous! Si vous donnez aux enseignants la responsabilité d'instruire vos enfants, vous devez aussi leur fournir l'appui et le respect se rapportant à l'emploi. Et si vous croyez qu'ils ne sont pas à la hauteur, trouvez une autre solution : une autre école publique, l'enseignement à domicile, l'école privée ou un parti politique assez puissant pour mettre ces gens à la porte et les remplacer par d'autres qui feront mieux. Mais ne restez pas à l'écart à vous plaindre des professionnels qui essaient de faire le travail pour lequel vous les avez vous-même engagés, quoique indirectement. Alors, assez parlé, faites quelque chose!

- Enfin, montrer votre appréciation. La plupart des enseignants sont des professionnels dévoués qui veulent le bien de votre enfant. La plupart d'entre eux dépensent leur propre argent pour acheter ce dont leurs élèves ont besoin. La plupart d'entre eux travaillent au-delà du 9 à 3 pour créer un environnement susceptible d'aider votre enfant et propice à son succès. Mais les compliments qu'ils reçoivent proviennent habituellement des enfants et non du système ou des parents.

Il vous est sûrement arrivé de travailler d'arrache-pied à faire quelque chose de formidable pour obtenir comme remerciements des plaintes de la part de personnes qui voulaient plus encore. Vous vous rappelez le sentiment de colère et de découragement que vous avez ressenti. Ces jours-ci, l'enseignement est devenu un travail comme les autres. Alors, changez l'ordre des choses. Montrez aux enseignants de votre enfant combien vous appréciez ce qu'ils font. Il suffit de peu. Quelque chose d'aussi banal qu'une poignée de main, un sourire ou un simple « Je vous remercie de tout ce que vous faites. Ça représente beaucoup pour moi. »

Ce que les enseignants font aujourd'hui pour nos enfants aura un impact sur leur avenir. Et ce que les enfants apprennent

aujourd'hui aura aussi des incidences sur le monde dans lequel vous vivrez votre retraite. Il n'y a pas que l'avenir de vos enfants qui dépende de leurs enseignants; il y a le vôtre également. Aidez-les donc à bâtir un bel avenir...ou préparez-vous à souffrir des conséquences de vos manquements. ☺

Richard Worzel est un futurologue torontois qui parle bénévolement aux jeunes du secondaire, selon sa disponibilité. Vous pouvez communiquer avec lui par le biais de TEACH Magazine ou en écrivant à futurist@futuresearch.com. La permission de reproduire l'article ci-dessus est accordée, par la présente, pourvu qu'il soit reproduit dans son intégralité et diffusé gratuitement.



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Kids On the Net:

Who's Doing What?

by Jennifer Kavur



Daniel says his mother has really no idea what he does online. She doesn't sit beside him when he's surfing, and she doesn't even bring up the subject in conversation. She knows about one of his email accounts, but she doesn't know about them all. She never checks his browser's history and hasn't put any filters on the computer. Even if she did, says Daniel, he knows more about computers than she does. Basically, when it comes to the Internet, Daniel can do whatever he likes, whenever he likes, and his mother never knows. Daniel is thirteen years old. He is your average Canadian child.

Caught in disbelief? If so, you are the average Canadian parent. But of course you know what your child is doing online, you say. You know what sites he visits and you talk to him all the time about the Internet. He doesn't visit chat rooms, most especially those unmonitored ones, and instant messaging really isn't his thing. What does he use the Internet for? Well, homework, of course.

Try to be realistic (or honest) for one moment. Keeping in mind children's general tendencies and behaviours, ask yourself what would truly motivate a child to willingly spend so much time online. You'll come across two answers: to socialise with friends and to be entertained.

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) suspected this was the case. Anne Taylor, co-director of MNet, explains that the Network felt there was a "disconnect" between how parents said their kids used the Internet and what we thought kids were doing online. We also thought there was a discrepancy between parents' perceptions of their supervision of their kids' online activities and what actually happens in the home." MNet's first survey, Canada's Children in a Wired World: The Parents' View, confirmed their suspicions. "So we engaged Environics Research Group to conduct a second survey," says Taylor, "this time of kids themselves, to see how they actually use the Internet and whether their online behaviour is jeopardizing their safety in any way."

The second survey, Young Canadians in a Wired World: The Students' View, brought in over 5600 responses from 77 schools in 31 school boards. The results were released this past June. "Nearly 80 percent of parents say they talk to their kids quite a bit about the Internet, but less than a quarter of kids say this is so," says Taylor. "Seven out of ten parents say they're in touch with their kids' online activities, but less than half of the kids agree. Of the 70 percent of kids who are on email, 44 percent say their parents don't even know about all their email accounts. The majority of parents say they supervise their kids' Internet use closely, but 69 percent of the youngest group in the survey, the 9-10 year-olds, tell us they are alone most of the time while surfing the Net. On average, 80 percent of kids 9-17 years of age are alone when they go online, 'always' or 'most of the time.'" Taylor adds, "We expected a gap between what parents say and what kids say, but we were surprised by the extent of the gap."



"There's also a gap in how parents and kids perceive how kids use the Internet. The parents say that kids use the Internet mostly for homework (66%), whereas the kids say they use it mostly for downloading music (57%), email (56%), surfing for fun (50%), downloading games (48%), getting information other than for homework (41%), instant messaging (40%), and chat (39%). We think parents are inclined to see the Internet as a static

source of information rather than the interactive communication tool that their kids have embraced," she states.

If this is shocking to you, keep in mind that no awful truth has been revealed. Most children don't commit horrendous Internet crimes or actively seek sites of evil. In fact, if you think about it, children that spend a couple hours a day sending emails and instant messages and hanging out in chat rooms are simply utilising new methods of communication – modern versions of telephone calls and note passing. They probably wouldn't have telephone conversations with their friends with you are sitting right next to them on the couch. They also keep their online social activities private. And even though it's not on the top of the list, children do use the Internet constructively. "Eight out of ten kids say they use the Internet for homework," says Taylor, "and they rate it ninth as an activity they use the Internet for. As a homework tool, 44 percent rate the Internet as their first choice."

So what's the problem? Is there an issue? The issue is one of safety. When a child goes online, in a very real sense, he becomes prey. He exposes himself to the entire world-people of all ages, with all sorts of agendas.

So what's the problem? Is there an issue? The issue is one of safety. When a child goes online, in a very real sense, he becomes prey. He exposes himself to the entire world-people of all ages, with all sorts of agendas. And he lacks the life experience that teaches one to be cautious about developing relationships with strangers, trusting others, and giving out personal information. He's vulnerable to the powers of persuasion. Even more, his innocence can make it unable for him to imagine or understand what manipulative and sick intentions an adult could have. And even if a child did possess all of the skills and sensibilities needed to adequately protect himself, he must still carry enough self-discipline to uphold ethical and moral responsibilities that even adults find it difficult to initially establish, much less adhere to. "If we are going to prepare kids to be functionally literate in the world today," remarks Taylor, "we're going to have to help them develop critical thinking skills for dealing with the Internet. They'll have to learn to be savvy about protecting their personal privacy and online safety, and to be discriminating about Internet-based information."

This is where teachers come in. Teachers occupy an ideal setting for action. Parents are ultimately responsible for their children. They are the ones who should do the educating, many would argue. But that doesn't mean that parents do and it doesn't mean that teachers can't. In this particular situation, the teacher can definitely make the difference.

For teachers seeking guidance on how and what to teach, MNet offers three professional development workshops – one about online safety, another on marketing to kids and the protection of personal privacy, and a third on authenticating online information. MNet has also developed the Web Awareness Canada program for Internet education. Web Awareness Canada provides a wide range of resources for teachers, such as practical advice on Internet environments, information on filtering and blocking software, useful tips on decoding online marketing strategies and evaluating Web site privacy policies, Internet guidelines for the home and classroom, and games that address cyber-hate, online privacy, and the authentication of online information.

Teachers can also take advantage of chat rooms and instant messaging tools by using them in the classroom. Taylor offers some suggestions: "There are teachers who've set up specific instant messaging groups with students, on a particular topic with a chosen expert, or in preparation for exams. Some school board servers provide an intranet that can host subject-specific discussion groups. And of course any group of students working on a long-term project together can set up instant messaging as a working tool....Some teachers are already making terrific use of the Net's interactive tools. Kids around the world are communicating with each other safely, through established programs like e-Pals or through other email accounts controlled by the teacher."

Now that Internet access is commonplace in homes across the country, we want to know how it will affect the next generation, and we want to ensure that this effect will be a positive one. If you are a teacher, and you want to act, and you want to act now, here is one suggestion. Accept that your students use the Internet on a regular basis in their homes without supervision. Accept that there is really not much you can do to prevent or control this. And realise that one thing you can teach them is this - if they're going to use the Internet, they should use it safely - and then show them how. ☺

The Media Awareness Network (MNet) is a non-profit educational organisation whose mandate is to support and encourage media and information literacy in Canadian homes, schools, and communities. For more information on MNet's surveys, professional development workshops, and the Web Awareness Canada program, visit MNet's Web site at www.media-awareness.ca

La toile et les jeunes

Qui fait quoi?

par Jennifer Kavur



Daniel dit que sa mère n'a aucune idée de ce qu'il fait en ligne. Elle ne reste pas à côté de lui pendant qu'il navigue et n'aborde jamais le sujet dans leurs conversations. Elle est au courant d'un seul de ses comptes de courriel. Elle ne regarde jamais l'historique pour retracer les sites qu'il a visités et n'a pas installé de filtres dans l'ordinateur. Même si elle le faisait, ajoute Daniel, il s'y connaît plus qu'elle en informatique. En fin de compte, pour ce qui est d'Internet, Daniel peut faire ce qu'il veut, quand il le veut et sa mère n'en sait rien. Daniel a treize ans. C'est un enfant typique.

Vous avez peine à le croire? Vous êtes donc vous-même un parent typique. Vous direz sans doute que vous savez ce que votre enfant fait en ligne. Que vous savez quels sites il visite et lui parlez souvent d'Internet. Qu'il ne participe pas aux séances de bavardage, surtout pas à celles de sites non surveillés, et que la messagerie instantanée ne l'intéresse pas vraiment. Que fait-il donc dans Internet? Ses devoirs, bien sûr.

Essayez un instant de voir les choses de façon réaliste (ou honnête). En gardant à l'esprit les tendances et les comportements des enfants, demandez-vous ce qui pourrait bien les porter à passer tant de temps en ligne. Vous trouverez deux réponses : vie sociale et divertissement.

Le Réseau Éducation-Médias s'en doutait bien. Anne Taylor, co-directrice du Réseau, a expliqué qu'ils avaient l'impression qu'il y avait une contradiction entre ce que les parents disaient au sujet de l'utilisation d'Internet par leurs enfants et ce qu'ils croyaient être les véritables activités des enfants en ligne. « Nous sentions également qu'il y avait contradiction entre les perceptions des parents quant à leur surveillance des activités en ligne de leurs enfants et ce qui se passe vraiment au foyer. » Le premier sondage du Réseau, Les jeunes Canadiens dans un monde branché: la perspective des parents, allait confirmer leurs soupçons. « Nous avons donc engagé le groupe de recherche Environics pour effectuer un second sondage, a précisé madame Taylor, cette fois-ci auprès des enfants, pour voir comment ils utilisaient vraiment Internet et si leur comportement en ligne compromettrait de quelque manière leur sécurité. »

Le second sondage, Les jeunes Canadiens dans un monde branché: la perspective des élèves, a fourni plus de 5600 réponses provenant de 77 écoles de 31 conseils scolaires. Les résultats ont été dévoilés en juin dernier. « Tandis que près de 80 pour cent des parents disent parler souvent d'Internet à leurs enfants, moins du quart des enfants ont dit que c'était le cas, a dit madame Taylor. Sept parents sur dix ont dit être au courant des activités en ligne de leurs enfants, mais plus de la moitié des enfants n'étaient pas d'accord avec cette affirmation. Sur les 70 pour cent des enfants qui avaient une adresse de courriel, 44 pour cent ont dit que leurs parents ne connaissaient pas toutes leurs adresses. La majorité des parents disent qu'ils surveillent de près l'utilisation d'Internet de leurs enfants; pourtant, 69 pour cent du groupe le plus jeune, celui des 9-10 ans, ont affirmé que la plupart du temps ils naviguaient tout seuls. En moyenne, 80 pour cent des enfants de 9 à 17 ans sont seuls lorsqu'ils se rendent dans Internet, "tout le temps" ou "la

majeure partie du temps”. Nous nous attendions à un écart entre ce que disent les parents et les enfants, a ajouté madame Taylor, mais l’ampleur de l’écart nous a surpris. »

« Il y a aussi un écart entre la perception des parents et des enfants par rapport à la façon dont les enfants utilisent Internet. Les parents disent que les enfants utilisent Internet surtout pour leurs devoirs (66 %), tandis que les enfants ont dit le faire surtout pour télécharger de la musique (57 %), pour le courriel (56 %), pour naviguer par plaisir (50 %), pour télécharger des jeux (48 %), pour obtenir de l’information sur autre chose que les devoirs (41 %), pour la messagerie instantanée (40%) et pour bavarder (39 %). Nous croyons, a déclaré madame Taylor, que les parents ont tendance à voir Internet comme une source statique d’information au lieu de l’outil de communication interactif que leurs enfants ont adopté d’emblée. »

Si ces résultats vous choquent, sachez qu’aucune atroce vérité n’a été révélée par le sondage. La plupart des enfants ne commettent pas de crime horrible dans Internet ni ne recherchent activement les sites malveillants. En fait, en y pensant bien, les enfants qui passent une ou deux heures par jour à communiquer par courriel et par messagerie instantanée ou à fréquenter les forums de discussion utilisent simplement les nouvelles méthodes de communication, c’est-à-dire les versions modernes du téléphone et des petites notes. Ils ne parleraient probablement pas au téléphone quand vous êtes sur le divan à côté d’eux; de même, leurs activités sociales en ligne sont privées. Et même si cela ne figure pas en tête de liste, les enfants utilisent Internet de façon constructive. « Huit enfants sur dix disent utiliser Internet pour leurs devoirs, a dit madame Taylor, et cette activité est la neuvième de leur liste d’activités en ligne. Comme outil pour les devoirs, 44 pour cent ont fait d’Internet leur premier choix. »

Alors, où est le problème? Y a-t-il un problème? C’est une question de sécurité. L’enfant qui va en ligne devient, de façon bien réelle, une proie. Il s’expose au monde entier, à des gens de tout âge, qui ont toutes sortes d’objectifs. Et il n’a pas l’expérience de vie qui apprend à user de prudence le moment venu de développer des relations avec des étrangers, de faire confiance aux gens ou de donner des renseignements personnels. Il est vulnérable au pouvoir de persuasion des gens. Pis encore, la naïveté de l’enfant peut l’empêcher d’imaginer ou de comprendre les intentions manipulatrices et perverses dont l’adulte est capable. Enfin, même si un enfant comprenait et savait ce qu’il faut faire pour se protéger, il lui faudrait aussi la discipline nécessaire pour assumer des responsabilités morales et éthiques que les adultes ont de la difficulté à déterminer et, encore plus, à observer.

« Si nous voulons que nos enfants puissent faire face au monde actuel, a fait remarquer madame Taylor, il va falloir que nous les aidions à développer la pensée critique nécessaire pour naviguer dans Internet. Il faut qu’ils apprennent à se protéger en ligne en usant de perspicacité et à juger avec discrimination de l’information disponible dans Internet. »

C’est là que les enseignants peuvent intervenir. Ils sont très bien placés pour agir. Il est vrai que la responsabilité des enfants incombe avant tout aux parents. Ce sont eux qui doivent les

éduquer, diront certaines personnes. Mais cela ne veut pas dire que les parents le feront ni que les enseignants ne peuvent pas intervenir. Pour ce qui est d’Internet, l’enseignant peut avoir un grand impact.

Aux enseignants qui souhaitent des conseils sur le sujet et sur la manière de l’enseigner, le Réseau offre trois ateliers de perfectionnement professionnel : un premier sur la protection en ligne, un deuxième sur le marketing auprès des enfants et la protection de la confidentialité des renseignements personnels, et un troisième sur l’établissement de l’authenticité de l’information en ligne. Le Réseau a également élaboré le programme de formation sur Internet appelé La toile et les jeunes. Le programme fournit toute une gamme de ressources pour les enseignants: des conseils pratiques sur l’environnement Internet, de l’information sur les logiciels de filtrage ou de blocage, des conseils utiles sur le décodage des stratégies de marketing en ligne et sur l’évaluation des politiques des sites Web en ce qui a trait au caractère confidentiel des renseignements personnels, des lignes directrices pour le foyer et la salle de classe sur la navigation dans Internet, et des jeux portant sur les messages haineux, la confidentialité des renseignements personnels et la vérification de l’authenticité de l’information en ligne.

Les enseignants peuvent également tirer avantage des forums et des outils de messagerie instantanée en les utilisant en classe. Madame Taylor nous a fourni quelques suggestions. « Des enseignants ont formé des groupes d’élèves reliés à un expert par messagerie instantanée pour qu’ils puissent discuter d’un sujet en particulier ou se préparer à des examens. Les serveurs de certains conseils scolaires fournissent un intranet qui peut accommoder des groupes de discussion sur divers sujets. Et bien sûr, n’importe quel groupe d’élèves travaillant ensemble sur un projet à long terme peut se servir de la messagerie instantanée comme outil de travail. Certains enseignants utilisent superbement les outils interactifs d’Internet. Les enfants du monde entier communiquent entre eux en toute sécurité, par l’intermédiaire de programmes bien établis tels que les cybercorrespondants ou par le biais de comptes de courriel surveillés par leurs enseignants. »

Maintenant que l’accès à Internet est répandu partout au Canada, nous voulons savoir comment il affectera la prochaine génération et voulons nous assurer que son effet sera positif. Si vous êtes enseignant et que vous souhaitez faire quelque chose et le faire tout de suite, voici une suggestion. Admettez d’abord que vos élèves utilisent Internet régulièrement dans leur foyer sans surveillance. Acceptez qu’il n’y a pas grand chose que vous puissiez faire pour les en empêcher ou les contrôler. Et reconnaissez qu’il y a une chose que vous pouvez leur enseigner : c’est que s’ils souhaitent utiliser Internet, ils doivent le faire de façon sécuritaire. Puis, enseignez-leur comment le faire. ☺

Le Réseau Éducation-Médias est un organisme à but non lucratif dont le mandat est d’appuyer et de promouvoir l’éducation médiatique à la maison, à l’école et dans les autres lieux communautaires. Pour plus de renseignements sur les sondages, les ateliers de perfectionnement professionnel et sur le programme canadien La toile et les jeunes, veuillez vous rendre au site du Réseau Éducation-Médias à l’adresse www.reseau-medias.ca

Classroom Resources

Focus on Immigration



Strangers Becoming Us is a new secondary school resource package that was released to high schools in the spring of 2001. It provides the most recent immigration facts in a solid educational package.



There is a lot of expertise behind this resource. It was developed in partnership with CERIS, the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement. CERIS researchers work with other experts in the field to conduct research on immigration. Their research is used by policy makers, the press, and educators.

Strangers Becoming Us evolved from a popular radio series on immigration hosted by Dr. Morton Beiser, Director of CERIS and Professor of Cultural Pluralism and Health at the University of Toronto. Dr. Beiser worked with Classroom Connections, a non-profit resource development company to produce a really innovative, classroom-ready resource package. The student activities were written by award-winning high school teacher Tom Morton, and were designed to increase understanding of the issues and questions surrounding immigration. The program provides an up-to-the-minute and well-balanced look at Canada's current and historical immigration picture. Thought-provoking activities encourage exploration of questions like: "Who won and who lost in the history of immigration in Canada?" "Who should get in?" and "How can immigrants strike a balance between their traditions and mainstream Canadian life?"

Reviewing teachers in History, Politics, Law and ESL have found the materials to be thorough, current, and easy-to-use in single lessons or as a unit. They reported the activities to be engaging and clear and also emphasized the value of the program in developing an inclusive environment for multi-cultural classrooms.

The resource was developed to meet the curriculum expectations of Secondary

School Social Science programs (Grades 10–12), specifically Canadian History. The package consists of an audio CD, a transcript of the CD, a 44-page teacher's resource guide and the book, *Strangers at the Gate*, by Dr. Beiser. All the resources are fully reproducible. There is an equally exciting elementary version that has also been distributed to schools across the country.

Copies of the Strangers Becoming Us Secondary or Elementary programs can be obtained through your school's history/social studies department or through your librarian. These resources are provided free to schools through Classroom Connections, a non-profit organization that supports publicly funded education by providing free curriculum-based resources to schools and community groups across Canada. These free educational programs and materials are made possible through the joint efforts of business, school, government, and community organizations. If you are unable to locate the resource in your school, contact Classroom Connections at: (888) 882-8865, or email: classroomconnections@sympatico.ca. To view or download the full selection of free resources produced by Classroom Connections, visit their Web site at www.classroom-connections.com. ©

The following page is an excerpt from one of the lessons in the resource package. Although this sheet is reproducible as is, the objectives, background information, and teacher instructions have not been included due to space restrictions. The full lesson can be found on pages 33 to 43 in the Strangers Becoming Us Student Activity Guide.

Case Studies: Choosing Refugees

Case Study: Rwandans

Rwanda is a small country in central Africa, just south of the Equator. In 1990, about 85% of its population were Hutus, and 15% were Tutsis. They share the same language and many cultural traditions. Intermarriage between the two groups is common; however, there has also been a long tradition of conflict. Beginning in 1990, the conflict grew so severe it led to genocide.

In 1994, the two Hutu presidents of Rwanda were returning by plane from talks in neighbouring Tanzania with other African leaders. The talks were about how to end the ethnic violence. Their plane crashed and they were both killed. The Hutus blamed the deaths on the Tutsis, and Hutu soldiers started to massacre Tutsis. Shortly after, Tutsi rebels attacked the Hutu government soldiers and a civil war broke out. More than 500,000 were killed.

After the Tutsi rebels seized power, there was another massacre, this time with the Hutus as victims. About 1.5 million Hutu fled to United Nations supervised camps in neighbouring countries. Among the refugees are former soldiers of the Hutu army.

Case Study: Kosovars

Kosovo is a small area that makes up the southern part of Yugoslavia. In 1988, most of the population was Albanian, and 10 % was Serbian. The problem was that, in most of the rest of Yugoslavia, the Serbs were the majority, and they controlled the government. The Albanian population of Kosovo wanted greater independence from the government of Yugoslavia. Clashes began to take place between the Serbian and Yugoslav security forces and the Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). The security forces began a reign of terror, punishing the population for its

supposed support of the KLA. By late September, 1998, more than 350,000 persons had lost their homes.

In 1999, NATO (the military organization led by the United States) began an air war against Serbian forces. By the end of the war, more than 800,000 people, mostly Albanians, had fled from Kosovo.



Once NATO had won, many thousands of these Albanian refugees returned to their homes. However, fearing retaliation from the returning Albanians, most of the 200,000 Kosovo Serbs ran from their homes to other parts of Yugoslavia.

Consider these questions as if all this were happening today:

1. *Should Canada consider these people, either Albanian or Serbian, as refugees?*
2. *If yes, how many should Canada accept?*

After you have considered these questions, find out what actually happened.



C U R R I C U L A

THIS IS AN 8 PAGE REPRODUCIBLE INSERT TO BE USED AS A TEACHING TOOL

World Hunger

Food is perhaps the most basic of human needs. It is the fuel that gives us energy and keeps us growing and healthy. It is a lifeline that connects us to our friends, our family, our culture and our land. It is a central part of our celebrations. For some, growing or preparing food is also a livelihood.

For most Canadians, the food we desire is as close as our refrigerator, or at most, a nearby store. But for many, a regular healthy diet is far from reach.

- Worldwide, 826 million people are undernourished. (UN Food and Agriculture Organization)
- Over half the 30,000 child deaths per day in the developing world are linked to malnutrition. (World Health Organization)
- Almost 730,000 Canadians used foodbanks in the year 2000; 40% were children. (Canadian Association of Foodbanks)

This resource examines the challenge of achieving food security and improved nutrition for all. Each reproducible page can be used as a student handout, suitable for intermediate and junior high students. Student exercises and teaching notes are provided on page 7.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After using these materials students will:

- ◆ communicate the main effects of malnutrition, using a variety of presentation methods
- ◆ describe the scope and scale of hunger in the developing world and in Canada
- ◆ give examples of food security and nutrition-based approaches to reducing hunger
- ◆ give examples of Canada's role in improving food security and nutrition globally
- ◆ use charts, diagrams, the Internet and independent research to gather and process information

Sources

Primary sources: State of Food Insecurity in the World 2000 (United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization); The State of the World's Children 1998 (UNICEF); Human Development Report 1999 (United Nations Development Program); Child Poverty in Canada Report Card 2000 (Campaign 2000). Complete sources can be found in the expanded online version of World Hunger at www.worldvision.ca/resources.

1: WHAT HUNGER DOES

Most of us have experienced the pangs of passing hunger at some time in our lives – a long space between meals may produce a rumbling pain, a headache or dizziness. These are actually just healthy signals from our bodies that it's time to eat. The effects of ongoing, every day hunger are something different altogether. Chronic (ongoing) hunger has far-reaching impacts on individuals and their families, and by extension, on communities and whole societies.

What is Hunger?

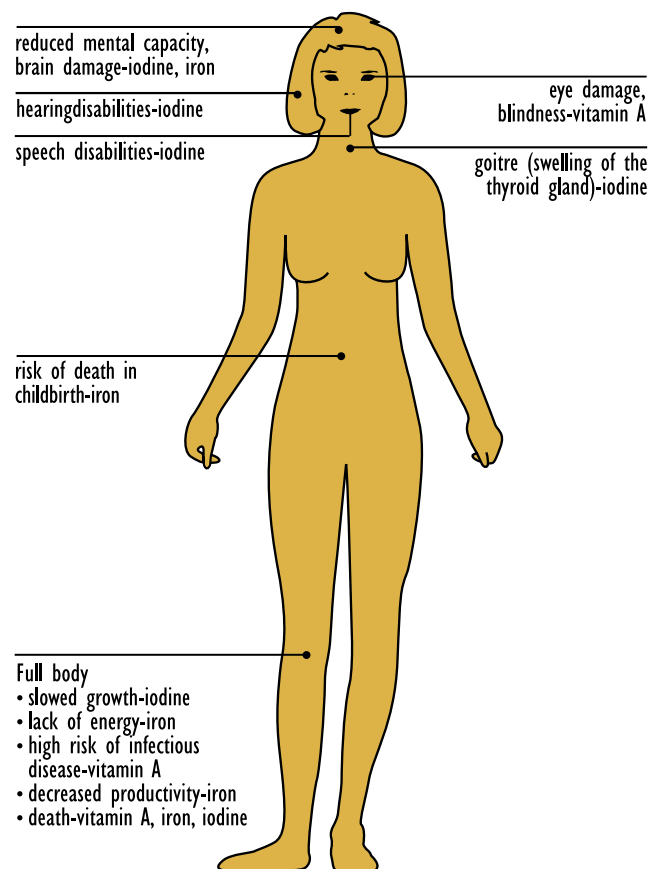
Undernourished is a condition of having inadequate food energy, as measured by the number of calories consumed. Worldwide, 826 million people are undernourished.

Malnutrition stems from not getting enough of the right foods and having poor health. It goes beyond inadequate calories to include lack of essential proteins, fats, and micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Over two billion people suffer from micronutrient deficiencies alone.

Most of the world's hungry do not die of starvation. They live with the crippling effects of malnutrition as outlined in **Figure 1**. If they die, it is often from simple, preventable diseases such as measles and diarrhea. Malnutrition increases the chances of contracting these illnesses, and weakens the body's capacity to recover from illness.

Micronutrients are essential vitamins and minerals that our bodies need. Three micronutrients are particularly important to maintaining our health – vitamin A, iron, and iodine. We need only tiny amounts of these nutrients. But when they are lacking, it can lead to increased illness and disability, as shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: Effects of Missing Micronutrients



When Hunger Runs in the Family

Good nutrition is especially critical for children and pregnant and nursing women – those whose bodies face the extra demands of growth and development. Pregnant women who are undernourished gain too little weight and often nurture unhealthy babies. They also face a higher risk of pregnancy-related death and disease.

Children born of undernourished mothers face an uphill battle. Their birth weight is generally low, and their mothers do not have the fat reserves needed for successful breastfeeding. Their physical and mental development can be stunted as a result. Girls who grow up in such circumstances run a higher risk of becoming malnourished mothers, giving birth to malnourished children.

The Hunger-Poverty Cycle

"We must remember that hunger is not just a symptom of poverty, it is a cause. The damage hunger inflicts on children is often irreversible. Lasting mental and physical damage leaves them incapable of working their way out of poverty as adults. Then today's hunger becomes tomorrow's hunger." – Catherine Bertini, Executive Director, World Food Program

Each day almost 30,000 children die in developing countries.

More than half these deaths are linked to malnutrition.

Source: World Health Organization

2: MEASURING GLOBAL HUNGER

Look around you. Imagine one in every five members of your class going without enough food on a daily basis. This is the reality in the developing world. Approximately 792 million people living in developing countries are hungry – that is one in five people. Another 34 million hungry people live in industrialized countries.

There has been improvement. In 1970, one in every three people living in developing countries was undernourished. But progress has been shamefully slow in the past two decades, and in some countries the number of undernourished has risen in the last few years. In seven countries (listed in **Table 1**), more than half the national population is undernourished.

The Reach of Hunger

Hunger is found all over the world, but it is most widespread in the poorer countries of the developing world. **Table 1** lists the countries where undernourishment is affecting the greatest number of people. In total numbers, India and China, with their large populations, top the list. These two countries account for almost half of the developing world's undernourished people. However, when we consider the percentage of a country's population that is undernourished, it is largely countries in sub-Saharan Africa which head the list. These African countries located south of the Sahara Desert are among the poorest in the world.

The Depth of Hunger

Another important consideration is to look at where hunger is most severe. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) measures the depth, or severity, of hunger among the undernourished people of a country. It calculates the average kilocalorie deficit (recommended kilocalorie intake per person minus their actual intake) for the undernourished segment of the population.

Table 2 shows the ten countries with the deepest hunger. A deficit of 300 kilocalories is considered severe. In 19 of 46 sub-Saharan countries, the undernourished portion of the population has an average daily deficit of 300 kilocalories or more. By comparison, undernourished people in Canada have an average daily deficit of 130 kilocalories.

Hunger in Canada

Even in the world's richest nations people are hungry. Canada is no exception.

- In 1989 the House of Commons passed a unanimous resolution to end child poverty by the year 2000. An organization called Campaign 2000 recently issued a Year 2000 Report Card revealing that the number of poor children in Canada had actually increased 43 percent since 1989.
- According to the Canadian Association of Foodbanks, in March of 2000, almost 730,000 Canadians used food banks, double the rate in 1989. Forty per cent of users were children.



Table 1: Hunger's Top Ten

Total number of undernourished*:		Undernourished as % of population:	
1. India	(204.4)	1. Somalia	(73%)
2. China	(164.4)	2. Eritrea	(67%)
3. Bangladesh	(44.0)	3. Burundi	(63%)
4. Ethiopia	(28.7)	4. Afghanistan	(62%)
5. Pakistan	(26.3)	5. Haiti	(61%)
6. Congo DRC	(25.8)	6. Congo DRC	(55%)
7. Brazil	(16.2)	7. Ethiopia	(51%)
8. Philippines	(15.6)	8. Korea DPR	(48%)
9. Thailand	(14.3)	9. Mongolia	(48%)
10. Viet Nam	(14.1)	10. Chad	(46%)

* in millions

Source: World Food Program/FAO estimates for 1995/97

Table 2: Most Severe Hunger

This chart shows the average daily "food deficit" for the undernourished segment of a country's population.

Country	kilocalorie deficit
1. Somalia	490
2. Afghanistan	480
3. Haiti	460
4. Mozambique	420
5. Burundi	410
6. Liberia	390
7. Congo DRC	380
8. Sierra Leone	380
9. Eritrea	370
10. Niger	350

Source: FAO State of Food Insecurity 2000

3: CAN HUNGER BE BEATEN?

In the past century, there have been dramatic improvements in the standard of living, in both rich and poor countries. Overall, people have access to more resources, are better educated, and are living longer than ever before. Yet progress in the battle to reduce world hunger has been mixed. In some countries, malnutrition is on the rise.

A Growing Gap

While the overall wealth of the world increases, the distance between rich and poor continues to get wider. In 1960, the richest one-fifth of the world's population had 30 times the average income of the poorest fifth. By 1997, the richest group had 74 times more income than the poorest group.

Source: United Nations Development Program.

A Goal to Work For

In 1996, governments from around the world met at a World Food Summit in Rome to address the challenge of hunger in a world of plenty. They agreed upon a goal: to cut the number of undernourished people in half by 2015. As the most recent figures at that time showed 800 million people undernourished, the Summit target was 400 million people by 2015.

Latest estimates place the number of undernourished at 826 million. There has actually been an increase in the number of hungry people since 1996. However, the percentage of the world's population that is hungry has declined (even though the total number of people hungry has increased due to population increases). As can be seen in Table 3, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) predicts that we will meet the summit goal of 400 million by the year 2030.



Regional Differences

Table 3 also shows some differences between the major regions. The greatest gains are being made in South and East Asia. Large countries such as India and China have a dramatic impact on global figures, as their total populations are so large. Overall, in Asia the forecast is for a more rapid decline in the number of hungry people due to forecasted better economic growth combined with a slowing population rate.

The picture in sub-Saharan Africa is dimmer. This area includes some of the poorest countries on earth. Some, such as Eritrea and Burundi, endure ongoing conflict which uproots vast numbers of people. The reduction in the number of hungry people in sub-Saharan Africa is expected to be much slower, primarily due to their depth of poverty and predicted slow economic growth.

World Food Summit Five Years Later – A time to refocus?

World leaders meet in Rome in November 2001 to review progress toward the goal of cutting hunger in half by the year 2015. With latest estimates showing the world running behind on this goal by about 15 years, renewed commitment will be needed to find ways to speed up progress.



We have the resources and the knowledge to reduce hunger significantly. The following two sections outline two approaches to hunger that are used by development organizations today.

Table 3

projected trends in undernourishment

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization predicts we will only meet the goal of 400 million undernourished people by 2030 -15 years behind schedule.

	1996/1998		2015		2030	
Sub-Saharan Africa	186	34%	184	22%	165	15%
Near East/North Africa	36	10%	38	8%	35	6%
Latin America/Caribbean	55	11%	45	7%	32	5%
China and India	348	16%	195	7%	98	3%
Other Asia	166	19%	114	10%	70	5%
Total, Developing Countries	791	18%	576	10%	400	6%

 millions of people undernourished
 percentage of population undernourished

Source: FAO State of Food Insecurity 2000



4: IMPROVED NUTRITION

"My children are not ill as often and have fewer eye problems," says Edna Nkoola. She is a mother of six who lives in a small village named Domasi, in the East African country of Malawi. It is a very poor area where more than 50 percent of the children show signs of malnutrition. Mrs. Nkoola makes weekly trips to the village mill with corn she has grown. At the mill she grinds it into flour. These days, she adds small amounts of essential vitamins and minerals to the corn as it is being ground. In this way she creates an enriched flour which increases the nutritional value of the food she cooks for her family.

The program to enrich flour at a local community mill is the work of the Micronutrient And Health (MICA) program of World Vision Canada, funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Mrs. Nkoola has also learned from MICA how to grow a wider range of nutrient-rich vegetables and how to raise small animals as a source of iron and protein.

MICA – Promoting a Mix of Nutritional Interventions

As in many areas of Malawi, the people in Domasi village are quite poor, with few options to earn money to buy food. They must rely largely on what they can grow. They eat a lot of starchy foods and their diets are low in protein and essential nutrients that help a body to grow and remain healthy. The MICA programs mentioned above – adding vitamins and minerals to the flour and promoting gardening and the raising of animals – have helped Mrs. Nkoola's to keep her children healthy. The causes of malnutrition are complicated, and MICA has found that using a variety of approaches is the best way to respond to malnutrition among families (see box top right).

Many Ways to Get Vitamin A

Approximately 250 million preschool children do not get enough vitamin A. They risk eye damage, blindness, decreased ability to fight infections – and even death. Simple strategies can ensure children get this essential micronutrient:

- Dietary diversity: dark green leafy vegetables, orange or yellow fruits, and foods from animal sources are good sources of vitamin A.
- Fortification: adding vitamin A to staples such as flour is a cost effective way to meet vitamin A needs and save future health care expenses.
- Supplementation: a single vitamin A capsule every 4 to 6 months is enough to prevent blindness and build resistance to disease among children.

Health and Nutrition – Hand in Hand

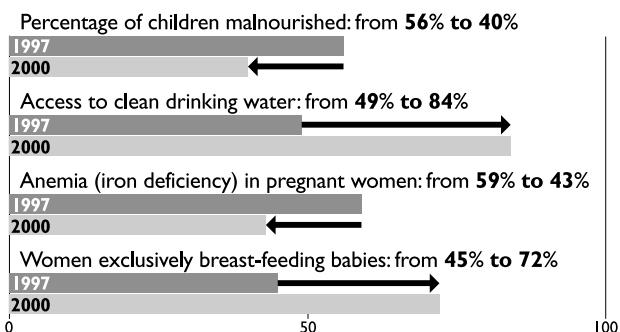
MICA also focuses on health care, as nutrition and health are very closely linked. A person who is malnourished is weak and more vulnerable to illness. Similarly, a sick person cannot absorb nutrients well, and tends to remain malnourished and with poor health. The combination of malnutrition and such illnesses as measles or malaria is the leading cause of death among children in developing countries.

To address health and nutrition effectively, MICA programs include a wide range of activities beyond the ones already described. These activities include: immunization campaigns; improving access to clean water; building latrines (washrooms); teaching about proper hygiene and food preparation; pre- and post-natal child care; educating families about health and nutrition; and lobbying government officials to improve health services and food supply in communities.

Table 4

show us the results

Donors today want to know, "What are the measurable improvements?" Numbers will never tell the whole story. The freedom from anxiety gained by knowing how to provide your children with nutritious meals cannot be measured. Other benefits are long-term, based on changes in attitudes and practices.



The data is from communities in Malawi where World Vision is working

5: SOLUTIONS – FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization defines food security as when “all people at all times have access to safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy and active lifestyle.”

The Evolution of Food Security

The understanding of food security has evolved along with our understanding of the causes of hunger and responses that work. Most agencies recognize three key components to food security – availability, access and use.

The earliest understandings of food security dealt only with the supply, or availability, of food – was enough food being produced to supply the needs of the people? In the early 1980s, analysts recognized that even in areas with enough food, many families still had poor health because they did not have access to food. This is the case when families can't afford to buy food that is for sale or cannot get to the markets where it is sold.

Later, agencies began to realize the importance of how households use the food they have. This includes the sanitary preparation of food, knowing how to prepare nutritionally-balanced meals, and making sure women and children get the food they need. In the 1990s, World Vision Africa added a fourth component to its understanding of food security: asset creation. In the wake of the terrible famine in Ethiopia that occurred in the mid 90s, World Vision recognized the importance of having buffers in the food system, such as community food storage, seed banks, and contingency plans in case of emergency.

Food Security in Mongolia – A Case Study

The breadth of the food security approach is evident in Mongolia, where winters are long and growing seasons are short. Here, a key aspect of food security is learning how to increase food production in an uncooperative climate. World Vision Mongolia addresses this need through gardening and livestock projects. Modern techniques such as the use of improved seed stock and the nurturing of vegetables under plastic lengthen the growing life of gardens. Women are trained in the new gardening techniques and in the proper way to store and cook produce. Families who depend on livestock for their income learn about animal management and how to care for the land and water supplies that support their animals.

But the food security approach does not stop there. Mongolia is one of the poorest countries in the world, with an average per capita income of roughly \$500 Canadian per year. In this situation, the money available for food and other basic goods can soon run out. Increasing family income – so that families can better access food and other essentials – is a pillar of food security. World Vision trains households in income-generating skills such as the processing and marketing of wool products. The wool that the animals regularly produce is now another valuable food security resource.

Food: A Human Right

Working towards food security starts with a recognition that people have a fundamental right to food. This right is recognized in several major international covenants, including:

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

“Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including food...”

The Convention on the Rights of the Child (1990)

“(We)...shall take appropriate measures to combat disease and malnutrition through the provision of adequate nutritious foods, clean drinking-water and health care.”

Rome Declaration on World Food Security (1996)

“We...reaffirm the right of everyone to have access to safe and nutritious food, consistent with the right to adequate food and the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger.”



An expanded version of World Hunger can be found at www.worldvision.ca/resources.

The Internet version includes:

- additional information and activities for secondary students
- links to other online sources
 - youth group exercises
 - “what you can do” ideas

World Hunger

Student Exercises and Teacher's Notes

The questions, activities, and projects below may be used for assessment, enrichment, extension, and extra support to meet the needs of mixed-ability classrooms. Additional exercise material can be found in the expanded online version of this resource at www.worldvision.ca/resources.

- Knowledge/Understanding evaluates basic comprehension and invites students to express personal views on what they have read. Responses can be shared in class discussion.
- Inquiry/Communication invites students to go beyond the given content, to investigate a topic further, to practice Internet research skills, and to develop presentation skills in a variety of formats. Teachers should specify the presentation format to meet the needs and learning styles of individual students.
- Making Connections (at the end of the unit) invites students to move beyond awareness to personal involvement – emphasizing the difference our actions can make locally and globally.

1: WHAT HUNGER DOES

Knowledge/Understanding

1. Are there more people who are undernourished or who suffer malnutrition? Explain why.
2. In your own words, describe some of the effects of malnutrition on individuals.
3. How 'micronutrient aware' are you? Brainstorm a list of sources of Vitamin A, iron and iodine.
4. Why are women and children more susceptible to malnutrition?
5. Explain how hunger traps families in poverty. What impact do you think this would have on society as a whole?

Inquiry/Communication

Use the Internet to learn more about why the needs of children require urgent attention. Research the impacts of malnutrition and undernourishment on children and present your findings. Two excellent resources to start with are UNICEF's (www.unicef.org) Nutrition Overview, and the World Health Organization's (www.who.int) Global Database on Child Growth and Malnutrition.

2: MEASURING GLOBAL HUNGER

Knowledge/Understanding

1. On a globe or map, find the countries listed in the two charts on this handout. Which country ranks among the "top ten" according to all three measures of hunger?
2. On which continent do you find the greatest number of undernourished people? Why?
3. On which continent do you find the highest percentage of the population undernourished and the most severe hunger? Why?
4. Which of the three ways to measure hunger used on this page do you find most insightful for understanding world hunger? Explain why.
5. On a scale of one to ten, rate Canada's performance in dealing with hunger in the last decade. In your view, what can individuals do to help diminish hunger in Canada? What can governments do?

Inquiry/Communication

Several countries rank among the worst affected by hunger in terms of both percentage of the population that is undernourished and depth of undernourishment. Choose one of these countries and find out more about the underlying causes of hunger in it. The UN World Food Programme provides background on countries where it operates in the "Field Operations" section of its Web site (www.wfp.org).



3: CAN HUNGER BE BEATEN?**Knowledge/Understanding**

1. As a class, brainstorm a list of improvements in standard of living over the past century. Use categories such as health care, transportation, knowledge, communications, etc.
2. Graph the data listed in **Table 3**. Make two tables – one for millions of people undernourished and one for percentage of population undernourished.
3. Analyze the data directly from **Table 3**. What trends do you notice? What are some reasons for concern? What are some signs of hope?
4. How optimistic do you feel about the world's ability to feed itself?

Inquiry/Communication

Canada is a signatory to the World Food Summit Action Plan and the Rome Declaration on World Food Security (these can be found on the UN FAO Web site, www.fao.org). Write a letter to the Prime Minister, asking what Canada is doing to meet these goals for reducing world hunger. Send your letter, postage free, c/o House of Parliament, Ottawa, Canada, K1A 0A6.

4: SOLUTIONS – IMPROVED NUTRITION**Knowledge/Understanding**

1. Mrs. Nkoola is enriching her own flour at a local mill. What products do we eat or drink that are enriched?
2. Why do you think using a variety of nutritional approaches works best?
3. Explain in your own words, the relationship between nutrition and health.
4. Make a web diagram of the different ways that the MICAH program addresses hunger in Malawi. Show how the different methods are connected to each other.
5. Look at the results listed for the MICAH work in Malawi from 1997 to 2000. For each number, list as many future benefits as you can think of. For example, the decrease in the percentage of children malnourished means these children will have fewer illnesses, will do better in school, and will grow up to be healthier adults.

Inquiry/Communication

Over the course of a week, keep track of the foods you eat. Use Canada's Food Guide (available on Health Canada's Web site (www.hc-sc.gc.ca)) to analyze whether you are getting enough of each food group to meet your nutritional needs. At the end of the week, decide whether you want to modify your eating habits to improve your nutrition. Make a plan that works for you and suits your tastes and lifestyle.

5: SOLUTIONS – FOOD SECURITY FOR ALL**Knowledge/Understanding**

1. Use your own words to define food security.
2. Using your own family as a case study, and the four key elements of food security as an outline, list some of the ways in which your family enjoys food security.
3. List the concrete steps used by World Vision Mongolia to build food security.
4. How do you think food security issues in developing countries might be different from questions of food security facing wealthier nations? What kinds of food security challenges do you think different communities in Canada might face?

Inquiry/Communication

Freedom from hunger is a fundamental human right. Yet there are still almost a billion people who go hungry. Check out the World Health Organization's summary of food as a human right at www.who.int/nut/rights.htm. Create a poster, school announcement, or other creative means to inform others about the need to work for a world in which everyone can enjoy this most basic human right.

Making Connections

1. Your class, school, youth group, or faith congregation can help reduce hunger around the world by organizing a 30 Hour Famine event. Funds raised go to projects that improve health, nutrition, and food security. Find out more at www.famine.ca or call 1-888-8famine.
2. If applicable, find out more about hunger in your own community. Organize a class trip to a local food bank or other program. Talk to staff and volunteers about who uses their services, and why. Consider getting involved with the organization by volunteering or supporting the work in some other way.
3. Raise awareness on hunger and solutions to hunger by holding a "world hunger" event in your school or community. Invite guests – from government, local food banks, and international aid organizations – to speak on hunger and what can be done about it. Give participants an action to undertake such as writing a letter to the government or supporting a hunger campaign. This could be held on World Food Day, October 16th, or any day.



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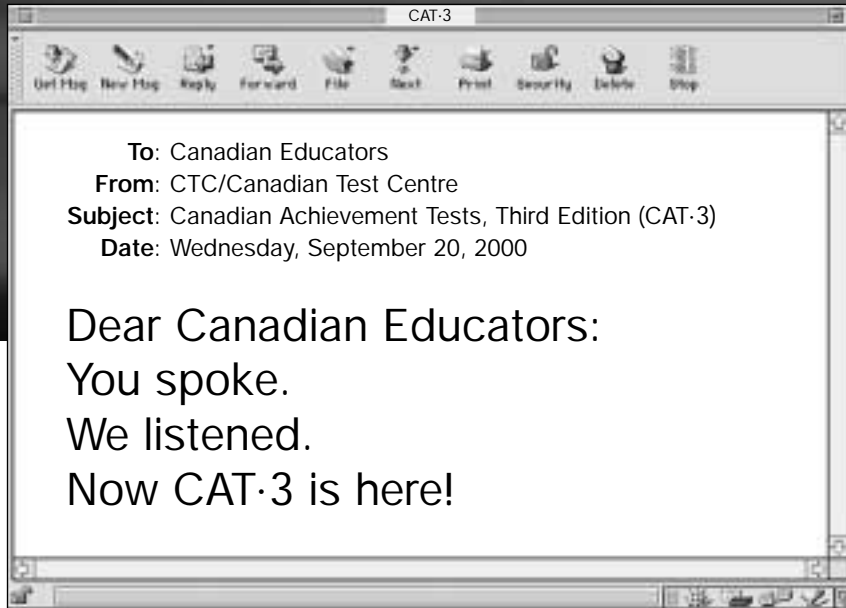


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1	Allstate _____	OBC
2	Apple Canada _____	31
3	Canadian Test Centre _____	26
4	John Deere _____	8
5	Education Canada _____	10
6	Electric Library _____	Insert Canada
7	Marjan Glavac _____	30
8	Green Street _____	25
9	National Library _____	Insert of Canada
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School Rankings:

What's the Point?

by Sapna Nayyar

Peter Cowley, director of School Performance Studies at the Fraser Institute and author of the Report Card on Ontario's Secondary Schools: 2001 Edition, released last April (http://www.fraserinstitute.ca/media/media_releases/2001/20010418.html), explains the intended use of these Report Cards: "They bring together a variety of relevant historical data regarding school performance in academics with two purposes in mind."

Says Cowley: "First, the school community-administrators, parents, teachers, students, etc. - can use the Report Card as an aid to improvement. Second, where parents have a choice of schools, they can use the Report Card - along with any other available information - when choosing an education provider."



Peter Cowley, director of School Performance Studies at the Fraser Institute.



High schools, like students, receive report cards in the provinces of Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia, and Quebec. The rankings are not published by ministries of education, but published by the Fraser Institute, a conservative think tank based in Vancouver. Now, what is the idea behind ranking schools? Is it a good practice — does it make for a good school? Does it paint an accurate picture of a school? Does it help parents and students make wise choices?

Ron Rubadeau, superintendent of School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) in Kelowna, British Columbia, believes that ranking high schools definitely keeps them on their toes. "No one wants to be at the bottom; no one wants to be last. It does change the culture within the schools that didn't think they needed to be involved. It causes the schools to take their stuff far more seriously," he says.

However, the practice of ranking high schools is not without its pitfalls, as many education authorities across Canada are aware. One pitfall is that the rankings create a greater socio-economic divide among various communities.



Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF).

"Community socio-economic factors are not taken into consideration in any such ranking," says Earl Manners, president of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) in Toronto (<http://www.osstf.on.ca>), "Schools in communities with large numbers of new Canadians will score lower than those in suburban schools with few ESL students."

Noreen Jeffrey, coordinator of research and evaluation at the Saskatoon Public School Division (<http://www.sbe.saskatoon.sk.ca/>), mentions the resulting 'Volvo Effect' where you predict a child's test score by the car that the parent drives "and that really is a socio-economic reflection rather than an aptitude reflection."



Ron Rubadeau,
superintendent of School
District No. 23
(Central Okanagan).

Ranking high schools also increases the gap between schools, in which good schools continue to improve and poor schools continue to deteriorate. For example, the highest ranked school in Rubadeau's School District No. 23 (Central Okanagan) is Kelowna Secondary School (KSS), which offers a French Immersion program and boasts a diverse group of capable and talented students. The result of KSS's prestige was fewer high-achieving students amongst the district's other schools. Rubadeau explains that more and more such students naturally gravitated to KSS, while the less privileged students were left behind.

Just as more privileged students are drawn to the higher-ranked schools at the expense of their lower ranked counterparts, parents also tend to support such schools at the expense of others. And this tendency is not limited to Canada. Jeffrey notes that even in some U.S. secondary schools many parents invest more in the better schools. "In some places in the States, where their standardized test scores are low, less money is given to those schools. The schools that have the best test results get incentive bonuses, such as higher teacher salaries," she says. Jeffrey points out that it should be the other way around, as "it's the schools that are serving disadvantaged kids that need the extra resources."

Ranking can also affect the self-esteem of students. Jim Christopher, executive director of the Canadian Educational Standards Institute (CESI) in Toronto - which uses an accreditation system instead of ranking its member schools (<http://www.cesi.edu>) - illustrates how being even a few notches below Number One can negatively affect the self-esteem of the students at a particular school. Says Christopher: "When a school is ranked 50th, the students feel crummy. They feel, 'Oh, my, I guess my school isn't all that good.' The schools that were listed even fifth or sixth down the list as soon as said, 'Oh, well, we came sixth; I guess we're not that good.'"

Another pitfall of ranking high schools that has been widely observed by the education community across Canada is the undue emphasis on numbers, as academic achievement is the only indicator evaluated. This leads to a narrow and simplistic approach, as in the case of last spring's Fraser Institute Report, which looked exclusively at the percentage of Grade 12 courses taken and passed during the 1998-99 school year. Just as there is more to a student than his or her grades, there is more to a school than its own academic success or failure.

"Numerical ratings based on limited measures and data are problematic - (ranking) is simplistic and does not capture the picture of a school," says Susan Ditchburn, principal of Havergal College in Toronto, a private school.

In a letter addressed to parents, staff, and students, Ditchburn advises against taking the ranking process at face value. "Linking a school's effectiveness to such criteria as the number of core

subjects taken, disparities in achievement by gender, and the percentage of students passing courses, does not tell the full story of the quality of a school's programs, of how well it operates, how nurturing it is, or how successful it is in building a strong community," she writes.

Ranking fails to consider the varied priorities and needs of each student in a given community, as well as individual differences between schools themselves, even within individual private and public schools. Academics may not even be a priority for some students, as not all students are academically inclined. Some schools may cater mostly to the artistic or the athletic. Some may focus on ESL students. Others may focus on "technology and trades," says Peter O'Brien, director of communications at The Bishop Strachan School (BSS) in Toronto.

For example, the students at some low ranked, inner-city, vocational high schools in Edmonton are more focused on making a smooth school-to-work transition and may not have achieved high results in a Grade 12 exit exam, says Marilies Rettig, former president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF) in Ottawa (http://www.ctf-fce.ca/main_eng.htm). Rettig refers to the misinformation and misconceptions that can result in giving only academic schools top marks. "The courses related to them, yet they ranked at the bottom 222 schools," she says.

This practice of ranking no doubt fails to take into account other types of courses that are also important. Christopher points out that the Fraser Institute rankings overlooked co-op and applied courses. "They looked only at what they considered to be core academic courses," he says. Christopher wonders where that leaves students who are not university-bound.

Since the focus is on high-achieving students, ranking fails to recognize effort and achievements on the part of disadvantaged or weaker students, who may be working to the best of their potential and doing better than expected, if not brilliantly. Ranking fails to see what a long way the student may have come, says Jeffrey. "It may be that the child has started out from a deficit, so the child's growth should be celebrated, it's not a level playing field," she says.



Ron Rubadeau mentions the importance of skills that are non-academic, such as social skills and effective career planning. These also need to be considered, but are disregarded in the ranking process.



Susan Ditchburn,
principal of Havergal
College in Toronto.



Liz Sandals, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA).

Additionally, ranking produces unreliable results, as the results are often biased in favour of private schools. It can therefore widen the gap between the two. Unlike public schools, which cater to a broad range of students and therefore offer a wide variety of courses, private schools cater to a select range of students and focus strictly on academics. "Private schools can set entrance requirements, and in fact, all the top rank private schools have competitive entrance examinations and offer exclusively academic programs," says Liz Sandals, president of the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) in Toronto (<http://www.opsba.org/>). "So when you take a look at the ranking, it's no surprise that the private schools with select students and select programs came out on top - because they would not be achieving their mission otherwise."

Regardless of differences and similarities, however, regardless of the type of school and the sector it serves, other criteria would serve as better methods of assessing schools. Christopher and Rubadeau, at opposite ends of the country, mention the importance of criteria such as success in post-secondary institutions and in the workplace. Alex Dingwall, superintendent of schools at Fredericton's School District 18, suggests developing school profiles "that would provide parents, students, and the public a clear, objective picture of the attributes of the school. If the community is able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of their school(s), they would be in a better position to make decisions on what actions to take regarding improvement."

Dingwall says indicators such as leadership, school environment, quality of instruction, high expectations, and parental/community involvement contribute significantly to a school's success. "Every school should be able to provide a clear statement of how they are performing, regarding student learning outcomes and how they expect to carry out plans for improvement." This would then make parents aware of various educational options for their children, he explains.

Perhaps what matters the most is that the school meet each student's needs.

Perhaps what matters the most is that the school meet each student's needs. A holistic approach towards evaluating high schools would therefore work better. "What is the total environment like? Are there athletic and cultural activities available? Are there leadership opportunities for the students?" asks Janet Lewis, executive director of the Canadian Association of Independent Schools (CAIS) and the Conference of Independent Schools (CIS) in St. Catharines, Ontario (<http://www.caiss.ca/>). She would like to know.

Canada's education experts are not the only people who do not believe in ranking schools. Canadians in general feel the same way. Referring to a poll recently conducted by the CTF,

Rettig says that Canadians cited factors such as students' fluency in the language of instruction, the nature of the curriculum, parent-teacher relations, class sizes, the school's financial resources, and the number of support staff as more important than student test results. (<http://www.ctf-fce.ca/E/PRESS/pr01-13.htm>). Rettig suggests that various community and education groups initiate a national dialogue that highlights the importance of these factors.

While ranking generates publicity, it actually has very little influence, if any, on the educational decisions of parents and students, according to Penny Milton, executive director of the Canadian Education Association in Toronto (<http://www.acea.ca/>). "Communities tend to have formed opinions about the available high schools. Student preference, including their future plans and where their friends are going, and the performance of the student in earlier grades, are likely the bigger factors. People know that the composite ranking for the whole school is made up of all the results of all students and is not a predictor of how an individual student will perform. In all school districts, information programs provided to parents and students before making choices about high school are probably much more important than ranking," she says.

Yet ranking high schools does serve a useful purpose. "It does generate lots of opportunities for conversations about what makes a good school and how that could be measured," Milton adds.

Yet ranking high schools does serve a useful purpose. "It does generate lots of opportunities for conversations about what makes a good school and how that could be measured," Milton adds.

However, ranking is not "the be-all and end-all of what schools are about; it's just one small piece of data in the big puzzle," says Rubadeau.

The puzzle is the recurring question; "What makes a good school?" Giving a school a good report card based exclusively on high academic results does not necessarily make a good school, or even capture the complete picture of any school. Community involvement, as well as better and broader evaluation criteria that bear in mind individual differences and needs, would more effectively find the answer. ☺

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Marilies Rettig, past president of the Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF).

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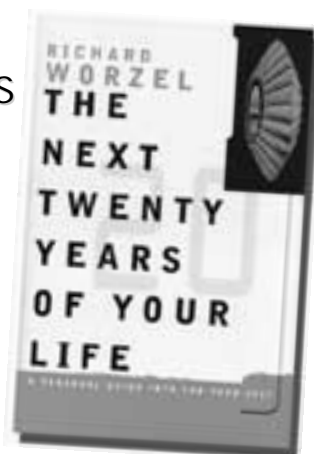
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Gifted Kids at London Centre for Excellence Get Connected with iMacs and iMovies

By Jeremy Simon / Editorial Sponsorship

How do you make school more challenging, fun and socially engaging for a child who is academically way beyond other children in his or her school grade?

This was the challenge facing several schools in the London, Ontario area. To resolve this situation, London District Catholic School Board teacher Rodd Lucier developed an innovative program for these gifted children using Apple technology that not only pushes their thinking and creativity but also helps them to connect socially.

"About a year ago, in my role as a teacher with the London Centre for Excellence, we developed a program designed to serve the special needs of our gifted students from the various schools in our district," says Lucier. "The goal of the program is to enrich these gifted kids' learning experience and help them find ways to connect," he adds.

"The goal of the program is to enrich these gifted kids' learning experience and help them find ways to connect," he adds.

In the beginning of the school year, students at 20 schools from areas surrounding London such as Woodstock, Strathroy, and St. Thomas were identified as candidates for the program and invited to participate in half day learning sessions every two weeks. The sessions took place at a nearby school or at the St. Anthony School in London where the Centre for Excellence is located. A junior workshop for students in grades 4-6 was held in the morning, and an intermediate workshop is for students in grades 7-8 took place in the afternoon.

"The gifted kids in our program are typically bored and not challenged in their regular classes. They need lots of choices and are constantly looking for ways to express themselves creatively. The iMac was created for this task. It's the perfect tool for them to really explore and push themselves to learn," says Lucier.

The workshops typically used between 5 to 7 iMacs networked using wireless Airport technology to an Airport Base Station connected to the school's network server enabling a high speed Internet connection. The Airport technology delivers a key advantage in making the program easily mobile for the purpose of travelling to different schools and enables a quick set-up at each location.

One of the first projects for the gifted kids implemented by Rodd and his team at the Centre was called the Digital Academy. Each student was asked to create an autobiographical movie using photographic images of items of importance to them. These images were fed into the iMac and layered creatively using the application iMovie to create a short film complete with titles and a soundtrack. Once finished, the iMovies were posted to the Centre's Web site so that the kids could better get to know each other



Rodd Lucier

and share a part of themselves with the larger community.

Says Lucier: "Many of the kids in our program find it often difficult to relate socially with the other kids in their regular classroom. The benefit of our program is that kids are able to communicate with other kids at their intellectual level. They find this really exciting and will jump around rapidly from topic to topic in conversations that are often mind-blowing. The technology serves as an ideal solution to feed this hunger for knowledge and expression."

In the future, the Centre is planning to broaden the program to reach more of the 50 schools in the school district. Rodd Lucier also wants to begin using a digital camcorder to empower students to more freely express themselves when making their autobiographical movies. To learn more about the gifted programs run by the London District Catholic School Board's Centre for Excellence and to view the gifted students movies in its Digital Academy, visit www.ldcsb.on.ca/schools/cfe on the Web. 🍎

Jeremy Simon is a freelance writer based in Toronto.



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