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# Chalk Talk

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## Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

It is said that a **big part of being successful in life is just showing up**. This is just one part of the equation. What needs to happen just before and after you "show up"?

For adolescents who are full of hopes and dreams and on the verge of entering high school, "just showing up" can be a somewhat daunting task. In order to transition into this next stage of their lives, these young people need to be equipped with solid problem-solving skills and have developed responsible and adaptable behaviours that will help them overcome the apprehension that comes from facing the unknown. Teachers can help students build these skills and nurture self-awareness and confidence. Former students who have already made the transition successfully can provide valuable insight into what the experience of being in high school is really like.

We applaud the critical role played by teachers in the classroom to prepare adolescents for this important next step. In this issue of *Chalk Talk*, we are providing information on a symposium being organized by the Canadian Education Association that looks at ways to improve adolescent learning. Also featured is a classroom resource for grades 7 to 9, from the RBC Royal Bank® Financial Lifeskills Education Program, which can assist teachers in helping their students to identify and set goals and devise ways to achieve them.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

Your feedback is important to us. Let us know what you think!

*Mary Korach*

## Imagine the Future of Learning In Canada



### Getting it Right for Adolescent Learners CEA Symposium, Vancouver – May 15-17, 2006

What happens when 27 high school students, representing school boards from Halifax, Toronto, and Vancouver, collaborate to produce a presentation dramatizing their high school experiences, perform it before an audience of committed educators, and then ask the educators to think about how these real life experiences compare to what research tells us is the high school experience? You create a unique opportunity for educators and students to use their collective imaginations to come up with a better future for adolescent learners.

Educators are invited to participate in the upcoming CEA symposium, **Getting it Right for Adolescent Learners**, which takes place in Vancouver from May 15 to 17, featuring round table discussions, interactive studio labs, and a host of keynote speakers, including, clinical psychologist Gordon Neufeld and Galileo Educational Network co-founders Pat Clifford and Sharon Friesen.

For more information and to register for this event, please go to: [http://www.cea-ace.ca/media/en/Program\\_Symposium\\_May06.pdf](http://www.cea-ace.ca/media/en/Program_Symposium_May06.pdf) or visit the CEA website at [www.cea-ace.ca/dia.cfm](http://www.cea-ace.ca/dia.cfm).



### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

*"I have come to believe that the real hope for deep and enduring processes of evolution in schools lie with the students. They have a deep passion for making schools work. They are connected to the*

Mary Kovack

Mary Kovack

with the students. They have a deep passion for making schools work. They are connected to the future in ways that no adult is. They have imagination and ways of seeing things that have not yet been shaped by the formal education process. And they are crying out wanting to be involved, to become more responsible for their environment.”

— Peter Senge, **Schools That Learn**

A hearty thanks to those readers who wrote to us on recent *Chalk Talk* features dealing with Climate Change and the Status of Women. We hope to revisit these topics in future issues and look forward to sharing their comments with all of you. We love to hear from you, so keep your comments coming in! Just email us at [maryk@coedcomm.com](mailto:maryk@coedcomm.com).



Financial Lifeskills



**The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.** The RBC Royal Bank® Financial Lifeskills **Intermediate** Program for grades 7 to 9 can help students turn their dreams into reality as they prepare to meet the opportunities and challenges of high school.

This **free** kit includes a teacher's guide, a class set of resume builder mini posters, and a large poster. Order here: [www.4edu.ca/tors/RBC2](http://www.4edu.ca/tors/RBC2).

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## Education News

[U.S. schools better with financial aid — Report gives poor marks to Ontario](#) — Louise Brown, The Toronto Star, March 11, 2006

A point of Canadian pride is about to bite the dust. Canada's ivory tower has actually been less affordable than many exclusive schools south of the border because universities in the United States often dish out much more financial help, new research shows.

[College administration guarantees students will not lose their year](#) — Daniel Girard, The Toronto Star, March 14, 2006

More than 150,000 Ontario college students are being guaranteed completion of their semester even if a week-old faculty strike drags on, college administrators say.

[The McJob generation — Is part-time employment affecting student achievement?](#) — Shelley Svidal, ATA News, Volume 40, Number 12

The McJob generation is here, according to a study released last summer by Scotia Economics, a division of Scotiabank Group. "Back to School ... and Back to Work" reports that 35.2 per cent of Canadian students between the ages of 15 and 19 worked during the school year in 2004, an increase of almost 10 percentage points from their parents' generation.

[Ex-teacher tells why Johnny can't read](#) — Joe Fiorito, The Toronto Star, March 8, 2006

Arnie spent more than 30 years ... mostly teaching grade school in Toronto's toughest neighbourhoods. The last 10 years of his career, he was a principal. He had just finished telling me that kids who don't read at the level of their peers by the third grade almost never catch up; kids who don't catch up tend to fall back farther; and kids who fall back have no self-esteem, and those problems follow them forever.

## Facts & Figures — High School Drop-Out Rates



In 2000, Stats Can conducted a [Youth in Transition Survey](#) involving 45,000 fifteen-year-old high school students:

- By the age of 17, 3% of boys and 2% of girls had left school.
- Main reasons cited for leaving were school-related included being bored with school, problems with school



- Main reasons cited for leaving were school-related included being bored with school, problems with school work or with teachers, being "kicked out of school," and missing a few credits.
- Although both girls and boys cited school-related reasons most frequently, girls were much more likely to cite personal or family reasons, including health reasons, pregnancy, caring for own child, and problems at home, while boys more often reported work-related factors - they wanted to or had to work.
- The decision to leave high school is not necessarily final. Youth may take advantage of the "second chance system" that provides an opportunity for dropouts to finish their high school education and improve their knowledge and skills.

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