







The Writer's Voice



Live and Learn

THE WRITER'S VOICE
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Live and Learn

This issue of The Writer's Voice is about education. Our group wanted to talk and write about education because it is so important to all of us.

We began by asking what education means. We think that there is much more to education than going to school. What we learn outside the classroom is important too.

As children, many of us had a hard time at school. Some of us were labeled "mentally retarded" or "slow learners". We felt discouraged, but now we know that all of us can learn if we have the chance.

When we started thinking about our experience at school in Canada and in other countries, we wanted to know what is going on in classrooms today. To find out, we spoke to teachers in special education classes and alternative schools.

Some of us are parents and grandparents, and we want to make sure that our children get a good education. How do we keep them interested in school?

We didn't get a good education when we were kids, but now we're learning at East End Literacy. Now we can choose what and when and how we want to learn. Learning makes us feel better about ourselves and helps us in many ways.

Finally, we want people to know that FREE help is available to adults who want to get an education.

We'd like to hear from you. Please write and let us know what you think of this issue.

Memories of School



The Lady's Name Was Bessie

by Marguerite Godbout

When I was small I was living in Broadlands, Quebec. I couldn't go to school because I was handicapped.



When I was about eight years old my mom and dad worked for a couple. Their daughter used to visit them from time to time. Her name was Bessie Adams. She used to write words on small pieces of paper and tried to get me to read them.

I didn't understand what it was all about until I was older. She was trying to get me to read!

I couldn't read the letters that my friends wrote to me. That was hard and seemed to me to be my real handicap.

Bessie is dead now, and I am going to school. She would be glad if she knew that!

My Life at St. Paul's School

by Vince Tipe

I went to St. Paul's School in 1956. The school is in Toronto. I was 9 years old when I started at St. Paul's and 16 years old when I left. It was a good school because it had mechanics and woodworking, but it was a rough school.

The kids were bad because they were brought up in rough neighbourhoods. Some of them landed up in jail but most of them have jobs and are good citizens.

When I was at St. Paul's, I studied reading, writing and arithmetic. The teachers were tough but fair, and my favourite was Miss Murphy.

Two of my best friends were Joe Britt and Al Rider. I last saw Joe in 1978, but I haven't seen Al since 1975.



Memories of School

by John Bikerdike



Roden Public School was a nice school. The first teacher I had was Mrs. Cosgrove. She was very nice to me in class. I worked hard.

School was fun. I liked it when the bell rang for recess. Playing outside with the other kids was fun.

I did a project on buildings. I made drawings of buildings from a book.

I graduated from Roden Public School in June of 1973.

Arriving from Italy

by Mario Pietrantoni

When I came to Canada I was twelve years old. I didn't speak a word of English. I was put into Grade Four at school. There were four or five like me in the school.

After three months, they put me back to grade one. I wasn't told why. It was fun, in a way, to study with six-year-olds. I remember one time one of the students was showing me objects and teaching me the words for them. The second year I went into grade three and then to grade four.

Then I went to training school. I hated it. The first year we had a combination of shops and academic courses. In the second year I had to take shop courses: sheet metal and welding. I didn't want that. I wanted to be in credit academic courses.

I felt I didn't belong there. My classmates were a bunch of animals. There was shoving, screaming and fighting. I used to say, "What am I doing in a place like this?" I asked my counsellor for a transfer but he said no. Then I spoke to the principal of another school. He agreed to take me, but my counsellor wouldn't approve the transfer. I tried again the next year but no go.

So I tried my best to cope with the school. I played some sports. In welding, I made sculptures out of metal. Then I finished school and, believe it or not, I graduated with a grade ten diploma.



Everyone Can Learn



The Writer's Voice group had a discussion on education. Many of the people in the group had been labeled "mentally retarded" when they were in school. We asked them:

"Did you believe the schools and your parents when they said you were retarded?"

Patrick: I started to believe it. It made me feel so down on myself. I went to drugs, alcohol and to stealing --- anything to prove that I wasn't.

Robert: I felt hurt that people called me retarded. I was mad. But I know I'm slow and don't do things like everyone else. And sometimes I do things wrong.

But when I'm out in the working world I can do something about it.

Eileen: I used to get upset about that, and I would ask my mom what it meant to be mentally retarded. She said, "You're not mentally retarded. You're just slow in some things that you can't do like other people. If people can do more than you, just think that you can do only so much and that's all you have to think about."

Rose: My parents always called me retarded. At first I believed it. They said, "You can't go to school because you're retarded. You can't work because you're retarded." They said I was retarded because I didn't know how to read and write. I felt very bad.

When I came to East End Literacy, Sally and my other friends didn't call me that name.



A Hard Start

by Pat

I was born in Newfoundland. I had physical handicaps. I found the school system pushed me around because they didn't understand my problems. It made me angry.

When I grew up, I was rebellious against the teachers. The teachers thought I was hyperactive, but I felt they didn't care about me. Then they threw me out of school.

I went on welfare for eleven years. During those years, I was put in workshops. They were so boring it brings back nightmares. I left when I got married.

After I started adult upgrading, I got divorced and I hit the "fraud circuit" for three years.



Now I'm back in school and things are working out 90% better. I have a positive outlook on life, and I feel more comfortable with myself. I believe that you need confidence to achieve your goals.

This map shows Newfoundland and other provinces in eastern Canada.

People First

by Lesley Mackay

People First is a self-help group for people who have been called "mentally retarded". They think the word "retarded" is unfair, and they want to change the name.

Some members of their group came to visit Writer's Voice one night. Here is Lesley's story about the group:

I went to a meeting of People First. They were talking about sheltered workshops. I was in a sheltered workshop. I worked full- time putting baby clothes in boxes. They paid me only \$15.25 a week.

Before I came to East End Literacy, my parents put me in Blossom School. I didn't like that place. They were always taking my supper away because I was slow to finish eating. I like to take my time.

People have problems getting places to live on their own. I want to live on my own but no one will help me find a place.

People First is trying to solve these problems. They want people with mental handicaps to feel less alone and more in control of their lives.

When I went to People First I felt great!



Education in Group Homes

by Eileen Mullen



I think people in group homes should have more education so people won't take advantage of them.

I didn't like the group home I was in. It felt like prison. The staff put me down. They called me retarded. They didn't want me to visit my parents.

The staff wouldn't allow us to go out on our own because they didn't think we could do it. If they had taught us how to use public transportation we would have been able to go out more. We could have gone downtown or to

visit our parents.

It wasn't until I moved out that I began to take care of myself.

People should be able to read and write before they can live in the community. The staff in group homes can help people with reading and writing every night. That didn't happen in our group home.

People should do shopping on their own but with the help of the staff. Then people would know how to spend money wisely. My mother taught me that after I left the group home.

I hope that group homes are different now.

Learning in Other Countries



My Name is Abrehat

by Abrehat Gidey-Debes



My name is Abrehat.

I live in Toronto.

I came to Canada three years ago, I was born in Ethiopia. I went to a Bible school. There was only one teacher and there were about ten pupils.

We learned to read and do numbers. Sometimes I went half-days because I had to watch the animals.

When I was nine or ten I had to work in the fields all the time.

I was good at school but I did not have a chance.

When I was fifteen I went to the Sudan. I worked in Sudan for three years.

All my life was work and now I like to read and help my child read everything.



Living on the Farm

by Lee Sheridan

I was born in Alabama in 1937. I lived with my auntie and uncle in Baker, Florida. They were share-croppers there.

Every day, all the black kids on the farm would be working in the fields: picking cotton, planting peanuts or corn, ploughing with mules and shaking the dirt from the hay before we stacked it.

We started working young. If you were old enough to carry a bucket, you had to work.

We saw the white kids going to school every day in buses. After school they would be playing outside and having fun. I wished I could do that too, but I had to work. They didn't have to work because their parents owned the farms.

When I saw them going to school, I never thought about it at the time. Nobody ever talked about reading and writing. Some kids didn't want to go to school.

When I think about it now, what a break those kids had!



Growing Up in Grenada

by Carol Coard

The school system is very different in Grenada than the school system in Canada.

It is more or less like the British system in the West Indies. The test you write goes to England to be corrected, How well you do determines whether or not you go to university.

When we were growing up in Grenada, we had only a few secondary schools. Primary schools were free but your parents had to pay for everything to go to secondary schools: school fees, books and uniforms.

I think it is a good system because it is recognized in all the English-speaking countries.

I think I had a very good basic education in Grenada.

Grenada is one of the Caribbean islands.



My Education

by Morelet Nelson

My name is Morelet Nelson. I am from Manchester, Jamaica. I attended Christiana Moravian School for seven years. I started school at the age of seven but I had to stop at the age of fourteen.

I had to stop because of my mother's death and my father was sick. We also had financial problems. When I saw my school-mates going to school I felt ashamed. I used to stay in my back yard because I didn't want to be seen by my friends.

I started to work as a domestic five years later with a Canadian family living in Jamaica. I realized it was necessary for me to improve my reading and writing skills because my job required taking down telephone messages and reading medication instructions, and reading recipes.



When the family I worked for moved back to Canada, I came with them to live in Alberta.

I decided to take correspondence courses in English and math, which I found was very helpful.

In the year 1984, I moved to Toronto to work and I am continuing my education by taking courses.

When I was a little girl I didn't realize it was so important to read and write. Now I am not going to stop until I get my Grade 12 diploma.

School in the Carribean

by Uris Jeans

My name is Uris Jeans. I went to school in Tobago.

When I was only three years of age, I started attending kindergarten. When I was old enough I was sent to an elementary school run by people of our own religion, Seventh Day Adventists. It was also the school where my mother and her sisters were educated.

I attended this school until I was about 16. I was good at everything except mathematics. I finished Seventh Grade, and then I went to high school for two years.

I dropped out and went to live in Trinidad. In Trinidad I joined the St. John's Ambulance Brigade and took a course in first aid. I also took a correspondence course in practical nursing from Chicago.

I am now working as a health care aide and hoping to continue my studies in nursing.



Atlas Experience

An atlas is a book with maps and information about places all over the world. You can get an atlas at your library or at your literacy program. Use an atlas to find out more about the places we have written about in this section of the Writer's Voice. So far, we have told you about 6 places:

Ethiopia (page 13)	Grenada (page 15)
Alabama (page 14)	Jamaica (page 16)
Florida (page 14)	Trinidad (page 17)

Here is how I found Alabama in my atlas: I looked in the index at the back of the book. I found Alabama under the letter A. This is what the listing looks like:

Akureyri	Iceland		13B1
* Alabama	State	U.S.A.	51E3 *
Alagoas	State	Brazil	57L5

This listing tells me that Alabama is a state in the country U.S.A. (United States Of America). Then it tells me to look on page 51 for the map. On that page is a map of the U.S.A.

To find the exact place on the map, I run my finger down from the letter E at the top of the map, and over from the number 3 at the side of the map. The two lines should meet in the state of Alabama.



Life in South Africa



Two people from the English Literacy Project in Johannesburg, South Africa, came to visit the Writer's Voice group. They told us about the education system in South Africa. The law there says that Black people may not go to the same schools as White people. Most Black people do not get a good education because the government will not spend enough money on their schools.

White parents don't have to pay for their kids to go to school, but Black parents do. Some Black people have to leave their homes to work far away in the city, and they aren't allowed to take their families with them.

We read some stories that were written by adults in South African literacy programs. They are a lot like us, but they have some problems we don't have. When Rose read the stories, she said:

"Why don't we try to help them?"

"I heard about this school from one of my friends. When I first came to this school, I was very frightened. I thought that people will laugh at me, such an old woman -- and I don't know how to read and write. But I found that everybody is the same as me. Sometimes we do laugh at our mistakes. But everybody laughs together. We don't laugh at people because we are all the same."

-- Rebecca

"I think children are right when they say they want education that will help them in life. At the moment you find Black people with high school diplomas working as cleaners. And people of other races have better jobs. But I still say we as parents must say what we want our children to learn."

-- Mrs. Mokoena

"If you cannot read, you are like a blind person. When you go to the shops, you can't read the prices. But if you can read, you can read books and learn about other places. You can read the Bible. I am a domestic worker. It is very lonely, far away from your family and friends. Reading helps pass the time."

-- Lettia

There is one thing that all the learners say and that is -- it is never too late to learn. They say, "People who did not go to school must not give up hope. It is better to learn than to just sit. If we can do it, then so can everyone."

This is a group of learners in Johannesburg, South Africa.



East End Literacy

265 Gerrard St. E., Toronto, Ontario, M5A 2G3 * Phone 968-6989

October 21, 1987

Learners' Committee
English Literacy Project
Johannesburg, South Africa

Dear Friends:

We heard about your program tonight from Tsela and Carola.

It was nice having them here to talk to us about your program. Eileen read out loud from your newspaper about the Learners' Committee. We found it interesting.

Hank said that without arithmetic skills, people must get cheated, just like we do most of the time. One of the many ways we learn to do arithmetic skills is by using play money or "funny money" to practice with.

Best of luck with your program in South Africa. Write when you have the time and we will write back.

Sincerely,

The Group at THE WRITER'S VOICE
East End Literacy

Learning From Life



When I went to school, I drew more than I did reading and writing. That's why I can draw very good. I drew pussycats when I was a little girl.

-- Annie

Learning From Life

School is not the only place we learn. Everyday we learn by watching others and by trying things for ourselves.

Here are some examples:

Edgar Allan Poe learned from his dreams. That's where he got his stories. I learned at school how to do dissection.

-- Margaret Anne

I have learned to tie bundles. Laundry bags go in groups of 25. I count face cloths in groups of 50 and put them on the shelves. You have to roll the orange face cloths up.

I have met some new people at work. I have learned about different people, what they are like.

-- Leslie

Things I am good at, even if I can't read and write very well:

I am good at working in the restaurant.

I am not afraid to ask for help.

I can learn when people show me.

I have learned how to fix bicycles by watching others.

My memory is very good.

-- John



Doing Well on the Job

Roger Clarke is a researcher from Kitchener. He has talked to many people who have worked at good jobs without being able to read and write. He wanted to know how they could do this.

Here is what they thought was important:

- be honest
- be polite
- work hard
- take any job
- don't be afraid
- use common sense
- work well with people
- be able to solve problems



Roger asked the Writer's Voice group what makes a good boss.

Here is what we said:

- listen to workers
- be patient and understanding
- give clear instructions and be organized
- be positive and trust other people
- be sure of yourself

It was interesting that no one said a good boss must be able to read and write.



A New Mother

by Dorothy Betts

I have been learning how to be a good mother.

My mum, my doctor Cathy, and the nurses at the hospital have been helping me. They showed me how to breathe and push the baby out.

I called the baby Natasha.

After, I went to different classes at the hospital.

They showed me how to bathe the baby, how to change the diaper, how to burp the baby and how to feed her.

Now at home I do all the work and I also play with Natasha. She has a bath at 7:00 and goes to bed at 8:00.

My life has changed a lot. I am happier now and I am much busier than I was before!



Riding a Bike



by Rose Doiron

My uncle bought me a bike.
It was my first time riding one.
I was sixteen and I did it all by myself.
My sisters did not know how to ride a bike.
They fell off three times.
They felt nervous about trying again.
I was nervous too, but I kept trying.
So I learned how to ride a bike and my sisters still don't know how.
I think that even if you're a little nervous, you should try again
and soon you will learn.

On the Road to Recovery

by Leonard Watson

When you have a drinking problem you find your spare time is spent drinking.

When you stop drinking you have to think about other things to do with your time. You will want to be with people, doing things and going places. You don't want to get bored and you don't want to go back to your old ways.





Here are some ideas for what you can do:

- relaxing walks: go to new places or go to see new friends
- reading easy books and magazines
- going to museums and art galleries
- exercising: swimming, skating and biking
- starting on long-neglected chores: do a little day by day
- trying a new hobby, such as reading and writing
- revisiting an old pastime, except drinking
- taking a course
- volunteering to do some useful service in the community
- doing something about your personal appearance: a new haircut, some new clothes, or new glasses have a very cheering effect

It is important to balance hard times with good times in everyday living. Don't do too much at once: "Easy does it."

On-the-Job Training

by Robert Collie

I used to work as a dishwasher at a restaurant.

I washed dishes. I also vacuumed the rug, cleaned the washrooms, and did other chores. When the food came in on the trucks, I helped unload it and put it in the fridge or on the shelves. I had to make sure everything was there. There were forms to sign, and I had to make sure it was done right.

When I started the job, they didn't show me how to read the forms. I thought that when you started a job, they should train you. There are a lot of people who can't read or write very well. I don't think that people who can't read or write should miss out on a good job.



It's Never Too Late to Learn



Everyone Can Learn

by Hank Guindon

All people can learn to read and write if they have the chance.

A tutor can help you to read and write. Friends with patience can help you. Someone in your family with understanding can help you when you make mistakes.

People in groups can help each other with their stories.



Improving My Spelling

by M. C.

I made the decision to go to East End Literacy when I realized that my spelling would not improve without some help.

Until this time I covered up the fact that I was a poor speller by trying to use other words that meant the same thing (synonyms), but you can't get away with that forever.

It got to the point that it took more energy to cover up my spelling problem than to confront it.

At East End Literacy I met with a staff member who matched me with a tutor.

At our first meeting I explained to my tutor that I lacked confidence in spelling words of more than five letters. I learned to improve my spelling by working at it.

We continued to work together over time and I have discovered that I can spell better than I thought.

The Importance of Education

I think education is the most important thing in the world today, but some people use their education to hurt others. By this I mean they employ their skills to cheat those who are not as smart as they are in business dealings.

I think if we educate our children in the proper way, we would have a better world, so let us all do our best for them.

They are the men and women of tomorrow.

-- Laurel Octavia



Education is most important to us all.

In years gone by, people made a living without much education, but it is not so today.

We must use all we learn, wisely.

-- John Faulkner

Schools Today



The System Fails

by Luna Roseman

Some people go to school for a lot of years but the system fails them. They do not get encouragement and individual attention, or they are stereotyped.

The government should make smaller classes in the schools a top priority. They study and spend money on other things like traffic lights, acid rain, rent control, and the Skydome. They don't follow through on studies about class sizes and give the kids the individual attention that they so urgently need.

They should not stereotype the kids. The school system has the idea that Black kids can only play football, basketball and other sports. They are sent to vocational schools like Castle Frank or Bathurst Tech. They don't think these kids need academic schooling.



As an adult you might want to improve yourself and need some information about programmes but you have to go to three or four places and phone schools in the telephone directory. The counsellors at the schools should have the information regarding the one-to-one programmes like East End Literacy and Beat the Street.



I had to wait a long time until I saw a story in a newspaper with a list of programmes. If I had had the information before I would have registered right away. It was good to know that Beat the Street has people who can relate to kids on the street in their language.

Kids and adults get into trouble, not because they want to break the law but because they can't read or write.

A mind is a terrible thing to waste.



School Daze

by Cathy Jones

My name is Cathy. I got the idea to write about myself and my experience with learning and medications. I am 28 years old and have been in and out of hospitals since I was 19. I have been on and off medications. I used to live in a group home. Now I live on my own.

When I was a child, school was not easy. I wrote many tests and I was put into classes that did not teach much. When we moved to Sutton I was put into grade two. I was ten years old. I had a lot of problems at home and at school. No one believed me. They just pushed me through the system.

As an adult I have been trying to improve my education for years. I would like to tell you why it has been so hard.

When I was on medication, I was so doped up I could not think or see right. It became my only way of life. I was afraid to try other ways. The drugs can be very powerful and cause you to be sleepy. I also had blurred vision.



I feel like I lost control of my life. The pills stopped me from feeling and growing. I felt I had lost a lot of confidence. Some people don't feel this way. Some people can get on with their lives. But there are many who can't.

It can be hard to learn new skills when you are doped up. When I was on medication I only did a little studying at a time. If I learned one new word, that would be great.

Now I have been off medication for six months. It takes time, but I feel like I'm getting more control of my life. I'm afraid to try new things, like school, but I also feel like I am getting old skills back. I'm feeling more like my old self again!

Word Puzzle

These words from Cathy's story are hidden in the puzzle. Put a circle around all the words you can find.

The answers are on [page 43](#).

school
system
doped
drugs
tests
confidence
skills
control

c	a	c	f	g	h	j	k	l	s
o	o	e	s	c	h	o	o	l	y
n	v	n	x	z	u	i	o	p	s
t	b	c	f	s	f	j	s	l	t
r	i	h	j	i	k	l	g	y	e
o	d	o	p	e	d	m	i	r	m
l	e	w	q	l	r	e	j	h	r
q	w	e	r	t	u	y	n	i	p
t	e	s	t	s	g	p	i	c	y
s	k	i	l	l	s	q	f	g	e

Everything Happened for the Best

by Lee Hargrove

My son, Harry, was a student at Spruce Court School. He was eight years old and still in the first grade.

I asked Harry if the teacher had been helping him. He said no. She gave him the paper and pencil and book and told him to go sit down. He couldn't do it by himself.

I went to the school and talked to her and asked her why my son was behind. She told me there were too many kids and she could not give him the attention. A lot of kids in her class didn't pass.



I went to Mr. Donahue, the Principal, and told him I wanted to get to the bottom of this, why she kept my son back like that. He said he would set up a meeting and let me know.

At the meeting, I said, "I don't want that woman to be my son's teacher." He said, "Mrs. Hargrove, I can help you." I said, "I want my son in another classroom or another school."

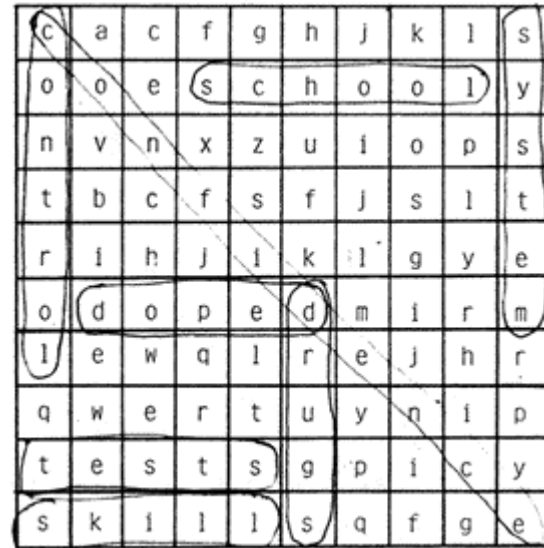
He made a lot of phone calls. He was very nice to me. I thought he was going to be mad at me, but he said, "I understand. I am a father, I'm with you. I'm not mad. Go for it, and good luck."

He took me to see another school. He said the classes were small there, just six or seven kids in each class.

Now Harry goes to this school. Now he can read, and he can spell. He's a little slow in his writing, but not bad. He could improve more.

Puzzle Answers

These are all the answers to the word puzzle on [page 41](#).



Teachers' Strike

by Linda Laplante

This fall the elementary school teachers in Toronto went on strike. They wanted more time to prepare for their classes. They asked the Board of Education to hire more teachers. If there were more teachers, then they would have more time to prepare for their classes.



The teachers were on strike for a month. The Board finally agreed to hire more teachers.

I supported the teachers in their strike but I think it would have been better to settle the dispute while the kids were on their vacation.

Since the strike, my twelve-year-old son Charlie has lost a lot of interest in school. He doesn't want to go to school anymore. I have to fight with him everyday. I'm trying to encourage him to see that he needs an education so he can get a job when he is older.

I am really hoping Charlie gets his interest back in school. I dropped out of school because I lost interest in it.

I am hoping he doesn't make the same mistake.

Alternative Schools

Nell Langley is a teacher at the West End Alternative School. We invited him to come and tell us what alternative schools are and how they are different from regular schools.

Q. Who goes to your school?

- A. - people who don't fit into regular schools
-people who have trouble getting used to high school -students who don't like high school
-students who get mad at the high school system
-students who skipped a lot of classes
-students who are turned off by high school

Q. How is your school different from regular high schools?

- A. We try to take kids in all year long, not just in September. There is just one class, with two teachers. We know people learn in different ways, and we try to help them.

Some people learn best - in big classes

- in small groups
- working one-to-one
- working on their own
- working with lots of direction

Students call me by my first name. They call me "Neil", not "Mr. Langley".

Q. How is your school different from East End Literacy?

- A. At alternative schools, students must study the school curriculum to get their high school diploma. At E.E.L., people work on whatever they feel it is important for them to learn.

Q. How do you get a high school diploma?

- A. You need 30 credits to get a high school diploma. A credit is a way of measuring what has been learned. Most people try to get eight credits a year.

Q. What is streaming?

A. The high school system is divided. into three streams:

Basic: very simple reading and writing, some technical subjects

General: a little bit harder, with technical subjects

Advanced: This is the most difficult stream. Students take mostly academic subjects, go to Grade 13, and can go on to university.

Q. Why do you think streaming is bad?

A. People who are put into the basic stream are taught to think they are "dumb". Many people are not given a choice about which high school they will go to.

Many basic students are from: - immigrant families

- single-parent families

- low-Income families



Q. When we went to school, the classes were too big and it was hard to get as much help as we needed. How big are classes now?

A. My class has 10. The special education classes are supposed to be small.

Our teachers' contract says that regular classes, for kids who aren't in special education, can't have more than 27 kids. But the kindergarten class in my school has 26, and 13 don't speak English.

Q. How is it that schools just shove kids through the system?

A. Often instead of holding a kid back and having a 12-year-old in with 6-year-olds, they mark "transferred" instead of "Promoted" and pass them on. If they get transferred once, they probably get transferred at all levels. Then in high school, they put them in a vocational program.

Q. What do you do if the school says a kid has to go to a special education class?

A. I question them closely about why, and try to make sure they can be in a regular class as much as possible. We try to build on the kid's strengths.

The law says that the school has to ask parents for permission to test their kids and place them in special education classes. Schools can be very convincing. There are not many parents' groups to help them fight for their rights.

Q. How do you teach kids to write?

A. It's important that kids learn to write, so I let them write what they want. They can write about something that happened to them or write about pictures in the classroom. They should get thoughts down on paper first. Then the teacher can slowly start correcting.

Special Education Classes



Some of the people in The Writer's Voice Group have children who are in special education classes at school.

We invited Kathy LeBlanc, who is a special education teacher, to come and answer some of our questions.

Question: What is Special Education?

Answer: Some kids do not fit into the regular classroom. There are special classes for kids who need extra help. The classes are set up for different kinds of kids:

Slow learners: They are tested for intelligence, and if they get a low score, they are "slow learners". But the test is not always fair, because some kids might be having problems at home that make it hard to write the test.

Sometimes a kid gets a low test score, but isn't a slow learner.

Learning disabled: If a kid gets a high score on the test, but still has trouble in school, they might have a learning disability that stops them from learning.

Behavioural problems: These kids have trouble acting the way the school says they should. Sometimes doctors give them drugs to calm them down. Some people say kids can't control themselves without it.

The most common drug used is called Ritalin. But this drug can cause problems:

- It can slow down growth. When the kid goes off Ritalin, she might grow really quickly.
- It is bad for your kidneys.

Physically disabled: If kids are blind or deaf, or not able to walk well, they may have trouble learning.

Gifted: Kids who learn faster than other kids need more stimulation.

Comments:

Hank: I wish they'd had those classes when I when to school. I just learned the catechism.

Annie: Those drugs can really slow you down in school.

Patrick: They wanted to put my daughter in a gifted class. But she would be in there with doctors' and lawyers' kids. Then she would want things I can't give her.



Vanilla Fudge Recipe

from Carol Coard's Kitchen

2 cups of sugar
1 cup of 2% evaporated milk
a little essence, like vanilla, peach or almond
1 teaspoon butter

Put the sugar, milk and butter in a pot on the stove.
Cook over medium heat.
Stir well.
When the fudge starts to boil,
stir it often so it won't burn.
When the fudge cooks down,
put 1/2 teaspoon of fudge in a bowl of cold water.
Use your fingers to see if it makes a ball,
take it off the stove.
Stir the fudge until it gets sugary in the middle.
Pour the fudge into a flat greased pan.



Our Next Issue:

East End Literacy will be ten years old in 1989!

To celebrate, the Writer's Voice group will be making a 1989 wall calendar. We're going to take pictures and write stories about East End Literacy and our community to go in the calendar.

If you have any ideas about what should go in the calendar, call Betsy at 968-6989. Or better yet, come to our Writer's Voice meetings on Wednesday evenings at 6:00 P.m. Everyone welcome!



We Get Letters. . .

Dear Everyone at Writer's Voice.

.....I enjoyed your stories and seeing many of you who I have met before, in the pictures. I want to bake the cookies from your recipe.

I am a City politician and I like your article about us and the municipal election

Barbara Hall
Alderman – Ward 7
Toronto

...Your book is great. We like the way you've combined personal stories and useful information.

...We admired the way you told the prisons department to write their letters in English that people can understand.

Carola and Tsela,
English Literacy Project,
Johannesburg, South Africa.

....The work you are doing with your publication is great. Our library gets everything you produce. Congratulations on a job well done.

Jean Dirkson and June Waffle,
Regina Public Library.

Dear Rose Doiron,

How are you? I like your story "Prank Calls". You have good advice. Sometimes I have Prank calls. I know what it's like. I call the cops.

Are you having fun at school? I am learning to read and write and I want to help people to learn the same as me.

Good luck!

Marlene
(a learner in Kitchener)

Thank You!

This book was written by:

Annie Akula, Dorothy Betts, John Bikerdike, Carol Coard, Rob Collie, Rose Doiron, Pat, John Faulkner, Abrehat Gidey-Debes, Margaret Anne Goheen, Marguerite Godbout, Hank Guindon, Lee Hargrove, Cathy Jones, Linda Laplante, Lesley MacKay, Eileen Mullen, Morelet Nelson, Laurel Octavia, Mario Pietrantonio, Luna Roseman, Lee Sheridan, Vince Tipe and Leonard Watson.



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