



Yves Durocher

A message from the OTF President

Dear colleagues,

The classroom as a vehicle for democracy.

We acknowledge the times we are in currently are grim. We are witnessing armed conflicts in the Levant, Congo, Sudan, Ukraine and in more than 110 areas around the world. There are nationalist governments being elected in Argentina and the Netherlands. There is a steady rise of gender-based violence and hate crimes occurring globally. Here at home, we are witnessing an unprecedented use of food banks in Ontario and an urgent need for accessible and affordable housing for the most vulnerable as winter approaches. Across the country, we are also witnessing an attack on 2SLGBTQ+ children, youth and communities. There have been protests and demonstrations that attempt to pit teachers and parents against each other, though our overarching goal is shared: to provide safety and care to young people.

Simultaneously, we are also witnessing the erosion of democratic values. From provinces like Saskatchewan and Quebec using the notwithstanding clause to override charter rights to political leaders berating journalists and each other, we can see how fragile our democracy can be.

Yet, our obligation as teachers and educators still stands strong. In this moment and beyond, we can support our democracy and the values it upholds: equality, dignity, justice, the rule-of-law, etc. While it can be difficult, there are tools at our disposal such as <https://politalks.ca/> or <https://electionsanddemocracy.ca/> to help establish fair, safe and respectful spaces in our classrooms that allow students to converse and learn without falling into the trap of the “us and them.” These tools aid in providing the skills to engage in meaningful albeit difficult conversations that strengthen our understanding of each other and the world around us.

Yours in education,



Yves Durocher
President