

Parent Presentation

David Bouchard - *Order of Canada/Senior Editor for Rubicon and Pearson Publishers/Métis Author/Educator/Renowned conference speaker.*

Thirty percent of Ontario's grade ten students have failed another literacy test. The Minister of Education's answer to this problem is to press for new curriculum and harder working teachers.

The solution is not in new curriculum nor in harder working teachers. The solution is in modelling.

Modelling is not one way of influencing people; it is the only way.

- Einstein and Schweitzer, 1897

Too many educators and parents lack the love of reading. Getting adults to read is going to be a formidable task.

In his book *the Gift of Reading*, Bouchard and Dr. Wendy Sutton outline our respective roles and responsibilities in ascertaining that all children under our care are given the gift of reading. From the preface by David Booth: "The authors have outlined passionately what it takes for children to become confident and independent readers." Professor Bernice Cullinan of New York University says this: "In this important book for teachers and parents, Bouchard and Sutton argue convincingly that all who live and work with young people must become readers themselves and must take an active role in turning the children in their lives into avid readers. The authors include ideas for helping youngsters of all ages, from newborns to teens, learn to love books and reading."

In his presentation *the Gift of Reading*, Bouchard inspires and leaves his listeners with a concrete plan and the rejuvenation needed to face illiteracy/alliteracy head on.

... "Mr. Bouchard is a dynamic and inspirational speaker who captured his audience from the beginning with his entertaining mixture of personal anecdotes, practical suggestions and obvious belief in the importance of literacy and literature in every life. His keynote address revitalised our teaching body and sent them back to the classroom fired with enthusiasm and with workable ideas to rekindle the joy of reading in all their students." ...

Powell River Teacher's Association.

A short excerpt from his opening comments:

Parents and educators alike have lost sight of our respective responsibilities in promoting literacy! And what makes it even worse is that we don't know that we have!

How and when did this happen?

It must have been a long time ago because in looking back at my own youth, this phenomenon had already occurred by the 1960s. I was a typical high school student who had favourite teachers. I would have jumped through burning hoops for my math teacher, Mr. L. I would have likely even read a book or two had he asked me to or had he suggested a title that was one of his personal favorites. But Mr. L. was a math teacher, not a literature teacher. He never once talked books nor did he ever give me the slightest inkling that he was himself a reader. It took me years to realise what the problem was and that I had become part of it. But today, I finally have a grip on what the problem is and I now know how we can all become involved in solving it.