

bulletin

Vol. 55/No. 3

January/February 2012

EDUCATION WEEK 2012
SEMAINE DE L'ÉDUCATION
MARCH 4-10 MARS



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CYBERCULTURE

CYBERCULTURE

TECHNOLOGY/TECHNOLOGY

Up Front from the President



*Be aware of wonder.
Live a balanced
life – learn some
and think some
and draw and paint
and sing and dance
and play and work
every day some.*

~ Robert Fulham

As the new year unfolds I feel it is a time to consider what we have, what we have lost, what we have loved, and what bugs us too, but it is also a time to consider what we have missed. The challenges of daily life often dictate our movements and we sometimes forget to stop and smell the roses. It is sometimes through the eyes of a child that we can experience the wonder of learning new things and stop to appreciate all that we have.

This Christmas my brother and his two young daughters were at my home to celebrate the holidays. I have not had the experience of little children in my house for Christmas in many years. Their sense of excitement and wonder helped me recall the feeling of the magic and awe of the holiday season. Their presence brought back memories of a more innocent and stress free time. They rekindled that wonder, awe, amazement, innocence, belief and hope that are often lost on adults.

I experienced this same feeling recently from some new teachers when I attend-

ed the Beginning Teachers Conference sponsored by the NLTA and the Eastern School District. Their eagerness and fresh attitude toward teaching was delightful and the sense of wonder at their students' accomplishments was evident. They spoke fondly of their first experiences as teachers, their trepidations in having their own class that was their sole responsibility, their fears, hopes and goals. They spoke of the support their mentors, staffs and administration teams have given to them and they shared their personal experiences of teachers past and present and how they made positive influences in their lives. As they were talking and interacting I realized why we become teachers. Each day with our students we are provided the opportunity of wonder and excitement. It is in each of our student's eyes as they experience or learn something new, the innocence that they bring to school each day, their unending optimism as they think and know that anything is possible.

However, I think that as we put all our energies in our students we tend to forget our sense of wonder. We need to cast off that trace of doubt and the inside voice that says, "been there, done that", but begin each day anew like our students. Finding the thrill of hope and excitement in some part of our day, the clean fresh crisp night air, a full moon, the inspiration to run longer distances, the sound of snow crunching under your feet on cold winter

nights as you walk, making angels in the snow, and despite the evidence to the contrary, at times, the magic and wonder of being alive. Being a teacher is challenging, but having the wonder and magic as seen in the eyes of students each and every day makes it truly inspirational.

This is also evident for me each time I think of my step-daughter. A year ago as I wrote this *Up Front* I was with her in the ICU at the Health Sciences Complex. She had undergone two brain surgeries and no one knew what the next months would bring as she made the progression down that long road to recovery. It has been a challenging and trying year for her but she has come through miraculously unscathed. She still has a few issues but has regained her driver's licence and is no longer on any medication. What a wonderful recovery and I am truly thankful!

As we all come through the long winter months, try to see the wonder in our surroundings and in the people who we share our lives with, both at work and at home. It will make all of us feel much better. We all deserve to see the magic and wonder in each and every day.

Hilary B.

THE bulletin

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The Bulletin is published eight times a year during the school year by the Nfld. and Labrador Teachers' Assn., 3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, Newfoundland, Canada, A1B 1W1. Tel: 709-726-3223; 1-800-563-3599 Fax: 709-726-4302; 1-877-711-6582 labrowne@nlta.nl.ca www.nlta.nl.ca

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Subscription Rate: \$18 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Printing Services, Ext. 249.

Deadlines for material are:
March Issue: February 1
April Issue: March 1

ISSN-1189-9662



Member of the Canadian Educational Press Association, International Association of Business Communicators, and the Canadian Association of Communicators in Education.

Printed on Recycled Paper

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12th Annual Provincial Teacher Recruitment Fair

Monday, May 7, 2012

4:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.

Atrium, Arts Building

Sir Wilfred Grenfell College

Corner Brook

Wednesday, May 9, 2012

2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Atrium of the Inco Innovation Centre

Memorial University

St. John's

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL

NEWS

MIDDLE ARM

School fundraiser for Guatemala goes through the roof!

The Grade 2 class at MSB Regional Academy in Middle Arm found out in March 2010 that two of their teachers were going to Guatemala to work in an orphanage during the summer. The students were very excited to find out that they had the ability to help these orphans all the way from Middle Arm, Newfoundland.

With the Grade 2 class taking the lead, the staff and students at MSB Regional began a coin drive with the goal of providing some much needed money and donated goods for the orphaned children in Guatemala. "It was very important that our students focus on donating small change such as nickels and dimes," said Trish Smith, one of the teachers who travelled to Guatemala. "Such a small amount can make a huge difference in a country where the average income is only \$3.00 a day."

The school also held a sale and through the various fundraisers the staff and students raised almost

\$700 and also filled a 50-pound duffle bag with donated school supplies, toys and clothing for their great cause!

Ms. Smith said a chart marked their progress from the beginning and the students were very excited to see their money graph crawling up the wall and across the ceiling! "Congratulations to the students of MSB Regional who have shown that their pocket change really can go a long way."

WABUSH

Changing the face of men's health one moustache at a time

The students of J.R. Smallwood Middle School in Wabush saw a lot more hair this past November. As part of the school's development plan and to promote staff wellness, all male staff grew moustaches throughout the month of November in support of Movember which promotes men's health and prostate cancer research.

"Although only the male staff can grow a moustache, all staff and students have participated in this 'worth wild' cause," said Steve Loder, Guidance Counselor at J.R. Smallwood Middle School. November 30th was deemed "Moustache Day" and all students were asked to come to school sporting their own moustache in support of Movember. "This resulted in some very interesting faces for the day," explained Mr. Loder.

In addition to growing moustaches, the school and staff raised approximately \$1,000 in support of prostate cancer research. This money was raised through individual donations and a school wide ticket sale. Students whose names were drawn from the ticket sale received a variety of prizes including stickers and wristbands promoting the cause.

The main event, however, was shaving the teachers. The names of six students were drawn who had the privilege of shaving the moustache off a teacher in front of the entire school population. As a token of appreciation, teachers who had their moustache



The money collected at MSB Regional Academy went towards an extension for the orphanage in Guatemala.

shaved by a student were also awarded prizes related to the Movember movement, including razors and t-shirts.



A student at J.R. Smallwood Middle School takes great pleasure in shaving the moustache of Vice-Principal Darryn Cramm during Movember.

There were many other ways in which the entire school was involved in Movember. The male and female students with the best moustache were adorned with a sash announcing them as Mr. and Ms. Movember. In addition, the school lunch program organizers baked moustache shaped cookies for the students to enjoy. "The school participation in this 'worth wild' cause has not only raised money and awareness about men's health issues, but has also encouraged staff wellness and solidarity amongst the staff," concluded Mr. Loder.

GLOVERTOWN

School drama club visits Labrador Creative Arts Festival

The 36th annual Labrador Creative Arts Festival was a blast. Students from Glovertown Academy's Junior Drama Club wrote and presented a play entitled *I Swear I Heard Something* while at the festival in Happy Valley-Goose Bay in late November. The theme of the festival was *Shorelines* and Glovertown's play centered around fictional characters who hung out at the Old Mill on the shores of the Terra Nova River. "Our students through presenting their play in Labrador, got the opportunity to give the 'Big Land' a taste of Glovertown's local history," said Tony Norman, Vice Principal of Glovertown Academy. "They in return got to experience the many local stories from the shores of Labrador's vast interior and coastline."

Students travelled with their teacher/director Rodney Vokey and parent chaperone, Amy Hayley. They spent four and a half jam-packed days with

their billets, visiting artists and other schools from Labrador's interior and coast.

"The Labrador Creative Arts Festival is a tremendous bringing together of cultures from within our province," said Mr. Norman. "Many of the visiting artists who come to Labrador for the festival say it is truly one of a kind – simply put, there's nothing else like it. During the event many friendships were forged and countless memories that will last a lifetime were created."

Glovertown Academy was humbled as well as honoured to be the first school from the island to have ever performed at the festival. As such, the school is very grateful to Fiona Anderson and the rest of the festival committee for accepting their request to attend this amazing event and also so grateful to Tim Borlase for having such incredible vision as to start the festival thirty-six years ago.

After returning from the Big Land, the students set up a visual display in the main lobby of Glovertown Academy. A DVD of the countless photos and videos has been put together to commemorate the historic trip. Mr. Norman said that in speaking to the students it is clear that they all have a new outlook of what it means to be Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

In the words of someone who has spent many years in Labrador, "Labrador grabs a hold of you and there's always a place left in your heart for it."



Back row (l-r): Tim Borlase (Founder of the Labrador Creative Arts Festival) and Kevin Lamond (Festival Committee Member)

Front row (l-r): Glovertown Academy students Nicholas Saunders, Rebecca Pardy, Tori Hayley, Jillian Vokey, Hannah Rowe, Samantha Maher

CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH

Students at Upper Gullies Elementary help those in need

The Grade Two students at Upper Gullies Elementary School in Conception Bay South participated in two major projects this past year to help others in need. They are learning about contributing to their community, how they can help others and how it makes you feel when you help someone else.

The students recently participated in the Samaritan Purse Operation Christmas Child Project. Together, with the help of some staff members and the Kindergarten classes, they filled 110 shoeboxes for underprivileged children across the world. "Children who may never have received a Christmas gift before, got one this year because of these thoughtful and generous students," said Andrea Coffin, Grade Two teacher at Upper Gullies Elementary. "They are very proud of their efforts and were very happy to put a smile on children's faces this Christmas."

The Grade Two students are also having three food drives for the C.B.S. Food Bank throughout the school year. They recently visited the food bank to learn how important the food bank is to their community. They held one food drive at Thanksgiving with the entire school and will be having another one this coming spring.

In early December, they also held a Pajama Day at school and students were encouraged to donate a "Toonie for Turkeys" to help raise money for the C.B.S. Food Bank. The students also made Christmas cards to go in the Christmas Hampers which the Food Bank gives out each year.

"Keep up the giving and wonderful job Grade Two students at Upper Gullies Elementary! We are so proud of your efforts!"



Grade Two students at Upper Gullies Elementary display some of the 110 shoeboxes they filled for underprivileged children around the world.

SPANIARD'S BAY

Students awarded for Remembrance Day Contest

As part of its Remembrance Day celebrations, the students of Holy Redeemer School in Spaniard's Bay participated in a poster, poem and essay contest sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 9 in Spaniard's Bay. A winner from each category was selected from each grade level (K-9) and displayed at the annual Remembrance Day dinner held at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 9.

During this dinner, the first and second place winners (both from Grade 9) of the Gary Churchill Memorial Award essay contest read their winning essays which were centered around the theme of Remembrance. The winning entries of the poster (Primary), poem and essay (Elementary and Intermediate) were sent to Provincial Command of the Royal Canadian Legion to be judged on a Provincial basis. Congratulations to our first place essay contest winner, Caitlin Pike, and to Hannah Smith for her second place entry.



Pictured l-r: Front Row: Mr. S. Lynch, Teacher; Mr. App Sheppard, Legion President Branch; Caitlin Pike, winner, Gary Churchill Memorial Award; Hannah Smith, second place winner; Dan Churchill, Award Sponsor; Mr. Paul Sheppard, Teacher Sponsor. Back Row: Mr. Robert Bishop, Assistant Principal; Ms. Lisa King, Principal; Ms. Marion Sheppard, Teacher

ST. JOHN'S

NLTA staff member retires



On December 31, 2011, Mary Ann Grimes retired from her position as Executive Assistant, Administration with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association. Mary Ann had been with the NLTA for 29 years and was an asset to the Association. Her enthusiasm, devotion and hard work will be missed by all who worked with her and alongside her during her time at the NLTA.

Mary Ann's career with the NLTA began in August of 1982 when she was hired as a clerk typist with the Teacher Welfare Division (now Benefits and Economic Services) with responsibility for Group Insurance. From 1988-1993 she continued with the Teacher Welfare Division as a secretary until 1994 when she moved to the position of Assistant to the Executive Director (now Executive Assistant, Administration). It was from this position that she retired.

It was Mary Ann's interest in computers and technology as well as her own personal know-how and training that led her to the enormous responsibilities in her position. As Executive Assistant she was responsible for three main areas of the Association – Administration, Human Resources, and Network Administration. She was confidential assistant to the Executive Director, organized and coordinated activities relating to Joint Council meetings, the Biennial General Meeting, and the province-wide election for President and Vice-president. She was supervisor of support staff, maintained all personnel records, and was responsible for the computer network within the NLTA infrastructure.

We wish Mary Ann sincere best wishes in her retirement and thank her for her dedication and commitment to the NLTA.

Make a change, beat cancer

The students at Macdonald Drive Junior High School (MDJH) in St. John's have once again participated in the "Make A Change, Beat Cancer" School & Youth Program to raise awareness and funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada.

"Student generosity and caring shone through with a grand total of \$451 collected in pennies and loose change," said Joan McCue, School Counsellor at Macdonald Drive Junior High. Kerry Park, a math teacher at MDJH, set up a challenge with his math classes and the competition to contribute was very engaging for his students. Students even asked for a one-week extension to the final collection day.

Some of the pennies were already rolled, but the majority were not, so Grade 8 student Brittany Wall turned out to be the school's chief penny roller, just as she had the previous year. Ms. McCue said Brittany went out of her way to help with this worthy cause and on more than one occasion would take pennies home to roll at night.

Macdonald Drive Junior High looks forward to helping out this worthy cause again next year.



Macdonald Drive Junior High raise awareness and funds for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society of Canada.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

NL Envirothon 2012

Newfoundland and Labrador Envirothon is a fast-paced, competitive, challenging event that promotes teamwork, public speaking and an understanding of Newfoundland and Labrador's natural resources. Teams of five high school students are tested in five theme areas: Soils/Land Use; Forestry; Aquatic Ecology; Wildlife; and Special Topic. The special topic changes annually. This year's special topic is: Nonpoint Source Pollution/Low Impact Development.

On the first day of competition, students complete a 15-minute field test in each of the topics listed above. They are then given a problem scenario to solve based on the current theme and allowed four hours to prepare a solution to the scenario.

On the second day of competition, teams present their scenarios to the panel of judges. The team with the most creative and effective solution to the problem, as well as the best presenting skills, wins the oral presentation component. The team with the highest combined score from the field-testing and oral presentation components wins the provincial Envirothon and qualifies to compete at the Canon Envirothon to be held in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. in 2012.

This past summer, Elwood High School's Envirothon team, team IDEK, represented the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador at Canon Envirothon 2011 in Sackville, New Brunswick. At Canon Envirothon 2011, IDEK took part in a variety of training sessions to prepare for field tests. This was followed by three days of intense competition where the students were able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of these environmental topics. There were many other opportunities to interact with some of the brightest young minds across North America such as the "Trading Session" where many interesting souvenirs from across North America were exchanged; to the "Fun Carnival" session where new friendships were formed and established; to socializing outside the residence during free time.

"From a competitive and academic viewpoint, highlights from the week included our highest event placing at the Canon Envirothon," said coaches Oral Roberts and Fred Pearson, teachers at Elwood High School. "Our 22nd placement, out of 54 teams, in the oral presentation was our best showing in recent years and probably the best placement ever for a Newfoundland and Labrador team. Also, our overall score was an improvement over the last three years." Feedback from the team in regard to the various presenters, all experts in their respective fields, was extremely positive.

Mr. Roberts and Mr. Pearson said the students were very impressed with the venue, the support staff was very accommodating, the food was excellent and lifelong friendships were developed. Returning team members, of which there are three, hope to be taking part in the competition in Selinsgrove, Pennsylvania this coming summer.

There was \$125,000 in scholarships and awards delivered to the top 10 teams at Canon Envirothon 2011. To compete at Canon Envirothon, teams must first claim the title of NL Envirothon Provincial Champions.

For more information on NL Envirothon or Canon Envirothon, please contact Peter Davison, Model Forest of Newfoundland & Labrador, pdavison@mfnl.ca, www.mfnl.ca/envirothon, Tel: (709) 637-7300, Ext. 3; Fax: (709) 634-0255.

ACT Social Media Campaign

Take a moment and check out the Alliance for the Control of Tobacco's (ACT) social media campaign on Facebook and Twitter called "Trick Yourself Out". There are chances to win prizes and most importantly, support for those who want to quit smoking or help someone they love to quit. In mid-January a cool new App was launched offering individuals a chance to upload their own picture and see how tobacco smoking can affect your looks and your wallet.

ACT can be found on Facebook at www.facebook.com/actnl and on Twitter at www.twitter.com/actnl.

NLTA presents at Pre-budget Consultations

In February, NLTA President Lily B. Cole will present the NLTA's submission to the provincial pre-budget consultations. There are five areas of concentration in the NLTA's brief as follows:

- teacher support services/inclusion;
- teacher allocations;
- teacher leaves and the provision of substitute teacher days;
- student supervision; and
- human resources support for technology.

The NLTA emphasizes the point that for the membership these are critical issues for education, for teachers and for students.

The brief will be available on the NLTA website after February 13 at www.nlta.nl.ca, under "Recent Info".



Sick Leave – Please Explain How It Works!

by DON ASH

At a recent Provincial School Administrators' Council Meeting of Regional Presidents, we were asked to write an article explaining how sick leave for teachers is calculated, and the circumstances when medical notes are required and when they are not. This article attempts to explain this often misunderstood article of the collective agreement through the following questions and answers.

Q. How much sick leave do I have?

A. TCASS is the on-line computer software package available in each school in Newfoundland and Labrador which is used to track, among other things, teacher attendance. A teacher can ask their school secretary or school administrator to look up the number of sick leave days he/she has available as of a certain date in the TCASS system. This is found next to the teacher's name under 'general attendance'.

Q. How is the amount of sick leave available to a teacher per year calculated?

A. A teacher's sick leave availability for the upcoming year is calculated for each teacher at the beginning of each school year based on the teacher's years of experience, the number of sick leave days previously used, and when the teacher first started teaching.

a) For teachers who taught in Newfoundland and Labrador prior to September 2006, sick leave is calculated by the year of service based on the table below less the total number of days used in the last four calendar years.

First year of service	18 days
Second year of service	36 days
Third year of service	60 days
Fourth year of service	89 days
Fifth year of service	117 days
Sixth year of service	146 days
Seventh year of service	157 days
Eighth year of service	168 days
Ninth year of service	179 days
Thereafter	195 days

Example: A teacher with 15 years of service would have 195 days sick leave available for 2011-12 minus the total number of days used in 2010-11, 2009-10, 2008-09, 2007-08. This type of calculation is repeated each September of a new year.

To illustrate, this teacher uses the following number of sick leave days over the last six years:

2011-12:	5 days
2010-11:	3 days
2009-10:	10 days
2008-09:	2 days
2007-08:	35 days
2006-07:	4 days

Based on this data, sick leave availability for this teacher would be calculated each year as follows:

Available Sick Leave		2012-13	2011-12	2010-11	2009-10	2008-09	2007-08	2006-07	Total
Sept 2010	195 days				- 10	- 2	- 35	- 4	= 144 days
Sept 2011	195 days			- 3	- 10	- 2	- 35		= 145 days
Sept 2012	195 days		- 5	- 3	- 10	- 2			= 175 days
Sept 2013	195 days	- ?	- 5	- 3	- 10				= ? days

b) **For teachers with no previous teaching experience prior to September 1, 2006:** These teachers accrue sick leave at the rate of 12 days for every complete year of teaching service to a maximum of 240 days. The amount available in any particular year is:

[Number of years of service] **times** [12] **minus** [any days previously used]

Example: A teacher with four complete years of service would have 48 days of sick leave minus the total number of sick leave days used in their career to date.

To illustrate, this teacher uses the following number of sick leave days over the last three years:

2011-12: 15 days
2010-11: 6 days
2009-10: 4 days

Based on this date, sick leave availability for this teacher would be calculated as follows:

Available Sick Leave	2009-2010	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	Total
Sept 2009	12 days				
Sept 2010	24 days	- 4			= 20 days
Sept 2011	36 days	- 4	- 6		= 26 days
Sept 2012	48 days	- 4	- 6	- 15	= 23 days
Sept 2013	60 days	- 4	- 6	- 15	- ? = ? days

Q. When is a doctor's note required (or not required)?

A. A medical certificate is required for sick leave in excess of four consecutive teaching days or in excess of seven days in total in any school year without a note.

Example: If a teacher is off work sick on Monday and Tuesday, and provides a doctor's note for these two days, then the teacher has NOT used any of the seven days for which a note is not required. Thus, a teacher should always provide a note if they visit a doctor, dentist, or other medical specialist while off on sick leave, thereby preserving days for which no note is required.

Q. Is the seven days without a note "extra" sick days?

A. No, all sick leave utilized, with or without a note, is deducted from the sick leave "bank" of availability explained in the previous questions.

Any questions can be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

Don Ash is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.



**International
Women's Day**
March 8, 2012

CONNECTING GIRLS, INSPIRING FUTURES

Each year around the world, International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8. Thousands of events occur not just on this day but throughout March to mark the economic, political and social achievements of women. Organizations, governments, charities and women's groups around the world choose different themes each year that reflect global and local gender issues.

The day has been observed since the early 1900's, a time of great expansion and turbulence in the industrialized world that saw booming population growth and the rise of radical ideologies.

If every International Women's Day event held in 2012 includes girls in some way, then thousands of minds will be inspired globally.

www.internationalwomensday.com



The Benefits of Having Long Term Disability Insurance

by PERRY DOWNEY

Q. I am getting close to retiring; should I opt out of my Long Term Disability Insurance?

Q. I opted out of the Long Term Disability Insurance in the past; can I re-apply?

These two questions are often asked by teachers who are planning to retire at the end of a school year who have accumulated sufficient sick leave days to cover them to the end of the school year if they were to become ill or by those who had opted out of the insurance coverage in the past. The answers to these questions are not a simple “yes” or “no” because there are other benefits and factors that must be considered.

What is Long Term Disability Insurance?

Long Term Disability Insurance (formally called Salary Continuance) is an insurance that is intended to provide, as a benefit payment, a percentage of income to an insured member in the event that a medical disability prevents the insured member from performing his/her duties as a teacher beyond the expiry of paid sick leave benefits.

What do I need to do if I am off work on sick leave and getting close to exhausting my sick leave?

LTD insurance does not automatically “kick in” or begin when an insured member exhausts their sick leave credits. Insured members **MUST** apply for the benefit and are strongly encouraged to request an application form from the NLTA Group Insurance Program Plan Administrator, Johnson Inc., within 30 to 60 days of exhausting their sick leave, or immediately for those who have fewer than 30 days of sick leave remaining. When all sections of the application are completed and submitted, the insurance underwriter will complete a medical adjudication and determine whether or not benefits are payable as per the insurance policy. Detailed and conclusive medical information must be provided to the underwriter

during the application process confirming that the individual has a disability that will continue beyond the individual's sick leave.

What level of benefits can I anticipate if I am approved for LTD?

If an LTD claim is approved, the current amount of monthly benefit is 66⅔% of gross monthly earnings, up to a maximum of \$8,000 per month. However, if an insured member is entitled to receive income from other sources, such as Canada Pension Plan Disability or Teacher Pension Plan Disability, these amounts are deducted from the LTD benefit. The total income from all sources cannot exceed 85% of net earnings on the date of expiration of sick leave. Note: The LTD benefit is non-taxable because the employer does not pay any portion of the premium.

How long am I eligible to receive LTD benefits? OWN versus ANY Occupation

The maximum period for which benefits are payable to insured members who have been medically deemed to be totally disabled from performing the essential duties of their *own* teaching position is 24 months. Benefits payable beyond 24 months can be maintained until age 60 if a medical adjudication by the underwriter confirms a total disability from *any* occupation for which an insured member is or may become qualified by education, training, and/or experience.

If I were injured while working as a teacher, am I entitled to receive sick leave and LTD benefits?

Under the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Act, any injury sustained by a worker in the province during the performance of their job, where the employer and/or an attending physician becomes aware of the injury, **MUST** be reported to Worker's Compensation within 72 hours. For all “lost-time accident” injuries, except those sustained in a motor vehicle accident, the injured worker is disqualified from receiving paid sick leave and will

receive compensation from the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC).

Given the current salary cap on which WHSCC benefits are calculated, most teachers will experience as much as a 45% to a 60% reduction in their take “home pay” while in receipt of a WHSCC benefit. This substantial reduction in take home pay often creates undue and unnecessary financial hardships on individuals and/or families.

However, as of September 2007, the Group Insurance Trustees introduced a “Worker’s Compensation – LTD Top-up Benefit” provided under the LTD policy. As a result, if an insured member is injured on the job, the amount that they receive from WHSCC will be “topped-up” to 85% of their pre-injury net income. Pre-injury net income is determined as follows: Gross Income – (Income Tax + Canada Pension Plan premiums + Employment Insurance premiums). For many insured teachers who are at the top of their salary scale, this can mean that they will receive more financial assistance from their LTD insurance than they would from WHSCC.

In answer to the first question that was stated at the beginning of this article: I am getting close to retiring; should I opt out of my Long Term Disability Insurance?

Given the impact that WHSCC has on the amount of income that an injured teacher would receive in benefits from Workers Compensation, we strongly advise ALL insured members to maintain their LTD coverage until they retire or until they reach age 60, whichever occurs first. LTD coverage and benefits cease at age 60. Also, a teacher who retires in June of any year will only pay LTD premiums to the end of June and will not have any further LTD premiums deducted from their summer holdback pay during July and August.

In answer to the second question: I opted out of the Long Term Disability Insurance in the past; can I re-apply?

YES. If you are a teacher who previously opted out of the Long Term Disability Insurance, we would strongly encourage you to re-apply in order to have insurance on your income beyond the expiration of paid sick leave, as well as for the added protection and benefits associated with an injury on the job. This is especially important for teachers who are at an early stage in their careers.

Any new teacher under age 40 who is hired into a permanent, term or replacement contract is automatically enrolled in the LTD policy. Anyone over the age of 40 who enters the profession for the first time

in a permanent, term, or replacement contract must apply for coverage.

Applications are available by contacting the Plan Administrator, Johnson Inc. at 1-800-563-1528. Completed applications will be forwarded to the underwriter of the policy and approval or rejection of the application will be determined by medical staff based on medical evidence provided and/or requested.

If you wish to have more details regarding the coverage and benefits associated with the LTD policy or if you have any additional questions or inquiries, please feel free to contact Johnson Inc. at the number stated above.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

NLTA Discount Program for Teachers

The following links on the Members Only section of the NLTA website offer discounts for teachers.

Go to “For the Teacher” and then click “Discount Program for Teachers”.

Teacher Discount List

CPEAC Discount Program

(<http://cpeac.org/>)

Hotel Discounts Around the World

(www.reservetravel.com/v6?&siteid=23903¤cy=CAD&useKilometers&streetview=true&pagesize=25&cid=nlta)

Magazine Program

(www.nlta.nl.ca/magazine_prgrm)

DISCOUNT PROGRAM



Recent Arbitration Ruling on Discrimination and the Hiring Process

by STEVE BROOKS

During the 2009-10 school year, the Association engaged in the arbitration process with one of the five provincial school boards. The issue being contested was whether the school board had discriminated, on the basis of age and proximity to retirement, against a teacher in the hiring process. The arbitration panel ruled that the employer had not discriminated against the grievor in the hiring process and dismissed the grievance. This particular ruling highlighted the importance of a number of key articles within the collective agreements and outlines the test in which a claim of discrimination must meet if it is likely to be successful.

Articles 6.03 and 42.05 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and the Labrador West Collective Agreement respectively state the following: ***The basic criteria for the selection of teachers shall be competence, suitability and qualifications as assessed by the school board.*** This contractual language provides the school boards with a fairly broad discretion in the hiring process. This discretion is partially limited by Articles 6.06 and 6.11 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Articles 42.07 and 42.09 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement. These articles outline the obligation on the school boards to reasonably accommodate requests for employment from teachers already in permanent positions with the board. As well, consideration for employment must be given to those teachers with replacement and substitute experience prior to those teachers with no experience with the school district. In addition, school districts are restricted in the hiring of teachers with certifications of III or lower.

The arbitration panel considered the meaning of Article 6.03 in the context of this case and in so doing referenced Brown and Beatty, Canadian Labour Arbitration, 4th edition:

In the first place, there is a consensus that regardless of the language of the agreement, the standard of arbitral review of management decisions that involve an assessment of the abilities of employees is less demanding than that used in discipline cases. As a general rule, arbitrators have been

reluctant to interfere with managerial decisions of this kind unless there is evidence of arbitrariness, discrimination, bias, and/or bad faith, or an indication that the employer's judgement was unreasonable in some basic and significant way.

This means that it is generally accepted that employers have the right to assess the abilities of perspective employees and make hiring decisions based upon that assessment. It is not enough for a grieving employee to state or even show that they are the most qualified of the candidates in a particular hiring competition. In this particular case the panel found that the school board had not violated Article 6.03.

In order to have a chance of overturning an employer's hiring decision, the grieving employee must be able to prove that the employer's decision was flawed due to arbitrariness, discrimination, bias, bad faith or significantly unreasonableness. In this particular grievance, the Association made the claim that the hiring process was indeed flawed due to a prima facie case of discrimination based upon age. In *Shakes v. Rex Pak Ltd.* (1981) the Ontario Board of Inquiry stated that a prima facie case of discrimination is established by proving the following:

- a) The Complainant was qualified for the particular employment;
- b) The Complainant was not hired; and
- c) Someone no better qualified but lacking the distinguishing feature which is the gravamen of the human rights complaint subsequently obtained the position.

When a prima facie case of discrimination can be proven using the above criteria an arbitration panel can rule in the complainant's favor even in the absence of an answer from the employer.

In the case in question, the arbitration panel found that the first two criteria outlined above had in fact been met. The grievor was in fact qualified for the position and he/she had not been hired. However, the panel did not find that the third criteria had been proven. In the opinion of the panel, the evidence did not establish a considerable difference in age or proximity to retirement between the grievor and the

successful candidate. As a result of this finding, the panel did not feel it necessary to consider whether the successful candidate had in fact been more qualified than the grievor.

While the arbitrators did not accept that a prima facie case of discrimination existed they still needed to consider if age had been a determining factor in the hiring process. Upon review of the evidence provided by the Association and the School Board, the panel came to the conclusion that the employer had proven that it was not influenced by the factor of age or proximity to retirement when it made the selection decision. As a result, the final ruling of the panel was that the school board did not violate the collective agreement nor act in a discriminatory fashion.

In reviewing this case two important points are made. The first being that Article 6.03 and Article 42.05 of the Provincial and Labrador West Collective Agreements provide considerable discretion to the employer when hiring. This discretion is limited by Articles 6.06, and 6.11 of the Provincial Collective Agreement and Articles 42.07 and 42.09 of the Labrador West Collective Agreement. It is quite common for teachers to make inquiries to the NLTA, especially during the staffing season, about the role of qualifications and seniority in the hiring process. The current collective agreements do not reference seniority in the hiring process and the assessment of qualifications is a management right.

The second point is the established test for showing a prima facie case of discrimination in the hiring process. Articles 57.01 and 60.03 of the respective agreements establish the following prohibited grounds: age, sex, race, colour, marital status, political or religious affiliation, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, membership in the Association. These are the grounds by which a teacher can claim discrimination according to the collective agreement. Therefore, for a teacher to successfully claim a prima facie case of discrimination in the hiring process they must be qualified to fill the position they apply for, they must not have been hired, and the successful candidate must be no more qualified than the complainant and they must lack the distinguishing feature (one of the prohibited grounds) of the complainant.

Teachers who feel they may have been discriminated against through the hiring process are encouraged to contact an NLTA Benefits and Economic Services Administrative Officer for advice.

Steve Brooks is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.

MEDOC



Travel Insurance Plan

by PERRY DOWNEY

Over the years, the NLTA has advised teachers that before they make travel plans that they make certain they have appropriate and sufficient travel medical insurance coverage that will help protect themselves and their family members in case there is an unexpected accident, injury, and/or illness while traveling. Accident and medical costs outside of the province, especially outside of the country, can be incredibly expensive and can cause considerable undue financial hardships on individuals and families. It is not uncommon to hear of individuals who did not have appropriate and sufficient travel medical insurance having to pay tens-of-thousands of dollars for accident and/or medical expenses they incurred while away. Therefore, to help protect you and your family from these kinds of financial burdens, the NLTA strongly recommends that teachers and family members who travel consider purchasing appropriate travel insurance through the NLTA Group Insurance Travel Insurance Plan.

The Travel Insurance plan provides a choice of three plan trip durations:

- 17-Day Annual Base plan allows for multiple trips, up to 17 consecutive days each in duration
- 35-Day Annual Base plan allows for multiple trips, up to 35 consecutive days each in duration
- Supplemental Plan coverage for single trips longer than 35 days

Features of the Travel Insurance Plan include:

- Up to \$5,000,000 for Emergency Medical
- Return of Vehicle up to \$5,000
- Emergency Dental Expenses up to \$5,000
- Additional expenses for meals and hotel accommodation up to \$150 per day, to a maximum of \$1,500.

Extra Value

As part of the Travel Insurance Plan, up to \$8,000 Trip Cancellation, Interruption & Delay Insurance per insured, per trip is included. However, in order for a trip to be covered for Trip Cancellation, the Travel Insurance Plan coverage **MUST** be in effect on the day of booking your trip, or purchased: a) within 5 business days of booking your trip; or b) prior to any cancellation penalties being charged for that trip.

For more information, contact Johnson Inc. at 1-866-606-3362 or 1-800-563-1528.

Perry Downey is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.



Stress Without Distress in 2012

by JUDY BERANGER

Being successful in your teaching, having a solid philosophy of life, loving wisely, asking for help, cultivating interests, being patient and putting first things first, all go a long way toward ensuring that regular life stressors do not escalate to distress. The most normal and necessary events in our lives are stressful – as well as beneficial and pleasurable – but sometimes they cause distress. Some personality types appear to be more prone to distress than others. Most teachers are resilient, constantly adapting and reframing. Teachers, using humour as a strategy for example, “can tell it is a full moon without looking outside” as they reframe challenging classroom situations. It is critical to address unchecked stress or else risk the onset of potentially long-term negative effects on our bodies, our family and work environments.

Holding a glass of water for a few minutes is easy. Holding that same glass of water for an hour or longer creates progressive discomfort proportionate to the time held. In each case it is the same weight, but like stress, the longer it is held, the heavier it becomes. Eyebrows rose when Hans Selye, the first major researcher on stress, suggested that chronic stress causes physical disease. Neuroscience confirms that stress can harm our health by leading us to unhealthy habits such as poor sleep patterns, overeating, drinking, gambling, smoking, and other addictions. Ongoing stress keeps cortisol levels high, increasing our likelihood of getting sick. There is no way to avoid the bumps and bruises that come our way but we do have the capacity to identify our own unique stressors as well as to choose how to respond to them.

Between family and work responsibilities teachers are very familiar with the way stress can affect health and well-being. Whether intentional or unconscious, we can be adept at ignoring symptoms of stress. However, the body can run out of patience with the added burden of ignoring stress and will eventually make its discomfort known in one way or another. When stressed, chemicals released from the brain immediately go to the adrenal glands. These glands then send out their own chemicals that prime the body for heightened responses thereby increasing

body processes such as heart rate and respiration. If prolonged, this state of intensity can move the body to a state of distress.

Researchers from the University of Montreal, Harvard, and John Hopkins studying the impact of stress, have discovered protective caps of human genes called “telomeres” (similar to plastic caps on the ends of shoelaces to stop them from fraying), that can deteriorate prematurely when stress is not contained. Picture that!! This distress can cause increased muscle tension, blood pressure, poor concentration, depression, anxiety, panic, premature aging and diseases including cardiovascular, impaired immune system, high cholesterol, weight gain and, as one moves toward middle age, an increased risk of dementia. In addition, feelings of inadequacy and inferiority and living in an “imaginary world” are not uncommon for people in distress.

The same mechanism that initiates the stress response can also turn it off by no longer sending panic messages. You can use your thinking to move you to action – thereby changing your physiology for the better, improving health, creating a relaxation response and letting go of tension.

Consider these stress-reducing breaks:

- Progressive relaxation can be practiced in a chair. Tense each muscle or muscle group for five to ten seconds and then relax for twenty to thirty seconds. Let go of the tension.
- Breathing techniques: hold one nostril closed and inhale deeply through the other one for three seconds. Release your covered nostril and cover the opposite one, then exhale in a short burst. Switch sides and repeat the cycle. This is known to energize both sides of the brain for a quick mental boost while increasing oxygen.
- Yoga Stretch: Get down on all fours, then walk your hands forward and drop your forehead to the floor. Deep breathe and hold for one minute. This pose stretches the shoulders and elongates the spine, helping release built up upper body stress. The slight inversion calms the nervous system.
- Standing up straight with your legs hip-width apart and knees slightly bent, let your arms dangle by your sides, hands in soft fists. Slowly twist your torso from

right to left for 30 seconds. Let your arms and hands rotate freely and gently tap your lower back and stomach. This stretch engages and massages internal organs, balancing energy flow.

- General stretching: Any combination of stretching and conscious breathing has a calming effect on mind and mood. Sitting comfortably on the floor, gently draw your left foot in toward your groin, keeping your knee as close to the floor as possible. Cross your right leg over your left, placing the sole of your right foot on the floor, and slowly twist your torso to the right. Hold the pose for 3 to 10 deep breaths, switch sides and repeat.

- Monitor posture: Dr. James Laird of Worcester University reports that improving posture boosts mood. The brain uses body clues to gauge how it should feel, and it alters neurotransmitter production accordingly.

- Acupressure points: Learn relaxing acupressure points. Apply pressure to the point located in the hollow below your collarbone, next to the breastbone, and hold for 20 to 30 seconds. (This area is related to emotion and experts say that it can release some of the blocked energy that triggers stress).

- Massage is well known to reduce stress and have a calming effect as it reduces the stress hormone cortisol, increases levels of the soothing hormone oxytocin and boosts the immune system.

- Visualize and be specific about what you want in life. If you set, write and visualize goals it is more likely that you will not only feel less stressed but you may also discover new talents and passions. (My father took up painting after his major stroke five years ago. With his non-dominant left hand he continues to surprise himself and our family with this new talent.)

- Looking forward with an appreciative attitude helps counteract stress and anxiety. A fun University research study found that tense people will walk by a \$5 bill placed strategically within their peripheral vision. Relaxed people spot the cash! More often than not, tense people tend to see through a cloudy, restrictive lens.

There are thousands of stress-reducing, health-maintaining ideas and tips. Although we have heard most of them before, it remains a challenge for many of us to put them into practice. The simple things are the important things. A sampling of the tried and true includes:

- If over tired, have your iron levels checked.
- Close blinds to promote longer sleep.
- Take consistent time for a pleasurable hobby/activity.
- Exercise at least three times per week. Put your sneakers next to your bed and commit to a walk first thing next day.

- Include lots of fruit, veggies and omega 3 in your diet.
- Ensure adequate protein in your diet. (e.g., add a little whey powder to pancake, smoothies, etc. Whey protein is derived from milk, is easy to digest and supplies essential amino acids your body can't produce on its own.)

- A multivitamin goes a long way to keep cellular damage at bay.

- Green tea – reduces production of the fat storing cortisol in half. Studies show that green tea improves metabolism and its compounds block the absorption of sugar.

- Focused breathing helps with keeping energy flow and balance.

- Try to have 8 glasses of water each day.

- Take five minute stretch breaks during the workday (2 hour intervals).

- Keep your living environment clean. Mould flourishes on damp windowsills, shower curtains, and exposure to its spores can leave you tired.

- Give genuine compliments, be specific and practice reframing negative situations. Dr. Herbert Benson says this soothes the cortisol producing adrenal glands. Experts in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Medicine* report that positive emotions release chemicals that strengthen the immune system as does helping others.

- Hugging, touching and smooching jump start the brain's production of dopamine, a calming hormone that soothes nerves and reduces blood pressure. Physical contact with pets has a similar effect.

- If you are not feeling well it is important to report symptoms to a physician – especially if they linger longer than three weeks. Keep track of any reoccurring symptoms.

Stress is a normal and inevitable reality of life. Statements that once frustrated us like, "Must be nice to only work from 8:00 to 3:00 and have the summers free" no longer have an impact, when we choose to reframe, not be reactive and to focus on being a good influence. Fortunately, if we are well, we have the capacity to manage stress in a way that can enhance our well-being and contribute to our effectiveness both in the classroom and in our lives.

Judy Beranger is a wellness and employee assistance coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Judy Beranger (ext. 265) or Claudette Coombs (ext. 242). Suggestions for future articles for this section are welcomed.



Blended Learning in K-12

by JIM MURPHY

What is Blended Learning?

Blended Learning is an approach to course design that brings together the best of both face-to-face and online strategies. This combination aims to build from each approach to create an innovative and effective learning experience for students. The notion behind a blended approach is the planned integration of online and face-to-face instructional approaches in a way that maximizes the positive features of each respective delivery mode. For example, online materials can provide students with flexibility and a way to access engaging multimedia content.

(From: <http://cnx.org/content/m15048/latest/>)



www.mobi21.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2010/07/blended_learning.jpg

More specifically, blended learning refers to the combination of several different delivery mechanisms for teaching and learning. The concept of blended learning is rooted in the idea that learning is not just a one-time event – learning is a continuous process. Blending provides various benefits over using any single learning delivery medium alone. By no means an exhaustive list, a combination of live classroom teaching with any or all of the following would constitute a form of blended learning: virtual classrooms; internet resources; web 2.0 and social networking; learning management systems (LMSs); content management systems (CMSs); cloud computing (dropbox, skybox); digital libraries; reusable learning objects; mobile technologies (including tablet technology); streaming multimedia; Real gaming; and analytics.

This type of learning extends the physical walls of the regular classroom into the virtual realm and makes use of a variety of technologies to enhance the face-to-face classroom. So, the more the classroom teacher can make use of available online technologies, the deeper the blend.

Interestingly, in the book *Disrupting Class* (Christensen et al), the authors state that by 2019, 50 percent of all high school courses will go online. Predictions are easy to make, but given the availability of higher bandwidth, LMSs such as Moodle, OpenClass or Blackboard Learn, and mobile apps for just about anything, I believe that blended learning will be the norm, particularly in the high school setting. Christensen predicts the following of blended learning (my comments appear after each):

1. Teaching through traditional classrooms while using online learning for supplementary material or homework, mainly through e-mail. *(There is a lot of this currently occurring. Learning does not cease at three o'clock.)*
2. Splitting class activities into traditional and online formats by deploying learning management systems (LMSs). *(Here students can continue to interact, share, comment, blog, complete learning activities.)*
3. Delivering most curricula online through LMSs and virtual classrooms, with some face-to-face sessions held from time to time. *(CDLI is a leader in this area, using mainly online technologies to deliver learning. This could also happen in traditional school settings.)*
4. Providing online labs via the use of virtual classrooms, due to shortage of teachers. *(There is a crucial shortage of specialist teachers, even right here at home.)*
5. Self-blending, in which students take up online or distance learning courses along with their traditional, face-to-face curriculum. *(Students attend regular classes in conjunction with online.)*

(From: <http://www.claytonchristensen.com/>)

How can I implement blended learning approaches in my K-12 classroom?

Many teachers in many districts in the province are already in the process of implementing blended approaches to learning in their curriculum. As a starting point, look to your co-workers or your

district for leadership in this area. Many teachers are running Moodle or Desire2Learn applications for student sharing, using discussion forums and blogging to extend thinking beyond the school day, (think of it as digital homework for students), and a host of other web-based resources to engage learners. There is a ton of research on this topic (see partial list at the end of this article) and an arsenal of ideas available on the web. From a research and student achievement perspective, check out the article on the rise and use of blended learning in K-12 at www.innosightinstitute.org/innosight/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/The-Rise-of-K-12-Blended-Learning.pdf. Although U.S. based, it provides plenty of empirical data on over 40 organizations that offer some level of blended learning program.

What are the benefits?

Online learning has the potential to transform traditional brick and mortar learning a more student-centric, personalized, and productive experience. Large changes are rightly scrutinized when they appear, but e-learning keeps proving its worth. Students become more independent learners and are more accountable for learning. For their part, teachers can challenge them through more constructivist and project-based approaches to curriculum delivery, not to mention individualizing and differentiating instruction.

This makes sense in terms of applying both 21st century learning skills and applying them to real world resources and problems. What is perhaps not measurable, but the most immeasurable, is the degree of engagement of students that can be created through more hybrid approaches to the delivery of the curriculum.

What tools are available to me if I want to implement this in my classroom?

It would be impossible to list all the tools available that you can access for educational purposes and to aid in the implementation of blended learning in your classroom. Some resources and ideas are referenced below. At the very least, educators need to consider such things as collaborative sharing and storage spaces (cloud-based storage), web 2.0 tools, learning management tools (assess, synchronous delivery tools (Elluminate Live! is available provincially) and on the list goes. Teachers and students can then avail of such tools as online gradebooks, assessments, e-textbooks, e-planners, reporting and communications tools. But realistically, start small, build on local and district knowledge and search out both academic research and web resources on the subject. There are many different definitions of blended learning and

certainly there are many different models and applications of models about which you can read.

Conclusions

- Blended learning and e-learning are more and more commonplace in schools. Many schools have actually become more hybrid-like in nature, offering a balance of online and face-to-face programming. It is perhaps not the norm, but is fast becoming an alternative.
- In a blended environment where there is more student autonomy, teachers have opportunities to facilitate and coach and mentor learners and to broaden their teaching strategies.
- Blended learning environments offer opportunities for autonomous learning, differentiated instruction and self-paced learning structures.
- Blended learning environments can offer opportunities for marginalized students to continue programs without necessarily attending a brick and mortar school on a daily basis, being able to complete some activities via technology.

In short, different models of blended learning can be readily implemented given the proliferation of resources available, from laptops, to mobile devices and tablets, to interactive whiteboards. Now more than ever, schools must endeavor to balance the digital playing field by ensuring all students have access to these tools for learning. These students thrive on social networks and are engaged in a digital world where everything is at their fingertips. It would be regrettable to ignore the tools that are available and to leverage them in order to motivate our learners so that they can thrive in an engaging blended learning environment.

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.

Resources and Sites of Interest

www.wiziq.com/blog/k-12-school-districts-using-blended-learning/
www.astd.org/LC/2002/0802_valiathan.htm
[http://baw09.pbworks.com/f/blended-learning\[1\].pdf](http://baw09.pbworks.com/f/blended-learning[1].pdf)
www.bold-research.org/
www.mobl21.com/blog/20/blended-learning-getting-the-mix-right/
<http://cnx.org/content/m15048/latest/>
www.stfx.ca/news/view/4048/
www.ifuw.org/seminars/2007/laming.pdf
www.ipadsforeducation.vic.edu.au/
www.mobl21.com/blog/14/6-ways-to-use-mobile-learning-in-your-class-today/
www.mobl21.com/Basics_Of_Mobile_Learning.pdf



Life after Retirement A Fulfilling Second Career With the Eating Disorder Foundation

by PATRICIA NASH

In June of 2010 I retired from a 33-year teaching career. I taught Language Arts to junior and senior high students at three schools in my career: Fatima Academy (St. Bride's); St. John Bosco (Shea Heights); and Leary's Brook Junior High (St. John's). It was a long and varied career where I saw some major shifts in teaching methods. My three schools were all great but very different experiences. However, by 2010 I was very ready to retire from my career in education.

I took fifteen months off completely to relax and rejuvenate. It was a pleasure to set my own agenda and not have to 'jump' for any bells! I had a wonderful break with lots of walking, yoga, swimming and two trips – one to Cuba and the other to Switzerland last spring. My Switzerland trip was amazing. I had been asked to present at a wonderful World Summit on Elder Meditation in Bern, Switzerland. It was a remarkable learning and personal experience for me. Beyond the conference presentation, the highlight of the trip was my visit to the top of Mount Klein Matterhorn in Zermatt. It was 13,000 feet up by three cable car rides to an awe-inspiring morning view of the mountains. We had a phenomenal panoramic

view of over forty mountain peaks of the Swiss, French and Italian Alps!

It was on this beautiful morning experience that I decided I was now ready to take on a new direction in my life. I remember thinking I would so very much like to become involved with something I felt very passionate about doing. Therefore it was a joy and pleasure when in October, I was fortunate enough to be offered a position with the Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador.

The area of eating disorders has been an interest of mine since the spring of 2000 when my daughter, at fifteen, was diagnosed with anorexia. As a parent I saw her struggle for three challenging years beginning with a three and a half month hospital stay. In 2000 I made the decision to move into St. John's so she could get the intensive interdisciplinary treatment she needed. During this time I reached out to any support system I could find. I gradually had accepted, like most families have to, that she had a long-term illness with no quick cure. Through two social workers, Dora Lee Pope and Nancy White, I was fortunate enough to be introduced to a parent support group in the fall of 2000. It became my lifeline and I have never left. My daughter has been in good recovery now for many years, but assisting other families in their struggle with a loved one's eating disorder has become a passion for me.

In 2002-04 I was one of the founding parents of the monthly Parents of Hope group. This is an amazing support group that has grown from four members to an email list now of about eighty people. This group has been nurtured all these years by Nancy White, an amazing social worker who is gifted in understanding the impact of an eating disorder on the family system. Her belief in the value of supporting the family and their positive impact on the client has helped so many families.



In 2005, as part of my Internship in my Masters of Counselling program, I had seen a gap in services for new families as the education group had not been offered in a number of years. With support and encouragement from my supervisor, Dr. Morgan Gardiner, I began the Bridge to Hope Family Education group that fall and have co-facilitated it many times in the years since then. This is an eight-week group that is offered to families three or four times a year. Family members hear presentations from a number of different health professionals who work with eating disorder clients. After they graduate from this group they are invited into the monthly Parents of Hope group. Efforts are now being made to branch out to families across the province through teleconference. It is the shared support that families give each other that has made both the Bridge to Hope Education Group and the Parents of Hope Group so amazingly successful. Families learn they are not alone; that others speak the same language as they do. I have had the privilege of seeing so many families transform from a feeling of defeat and hopelessness to a new strength and hope from their experiences in these groups. I am not the only parent who stayed with the group to pass this hope on to new families; an amazing number of other family members keep coming back to pass that candle of hope on to new families just learning to deal with this devastating long-term illness.

So this fall my passion in the area of eating disorders brought me to the Eating Disorder Foundation of Newfoundland and Labrador. This is a wonderful foundation begun by Vince Withers after the loss of his daughter to an eating disorder some years ago. Vince has brought much needed support, education and advocacy to this area. The Foundation is often the front door now for families or clients desperate for help and direction.

My position with the Foundation is the Outreach and Program Facilitator and my main role this fall has been a program called "Let's Talk Eating Disorders". This is a program funded by a grant from the Department of Health. Its purpose is to help educate teaching staff on the topic of eating disorders. It is our goal to visit twenty-five schools across Newfoundland and Labrador and deliver a PowerPoint presentation of about thirty minutes. The presentation gives an overview about eating disorders; its causes; how schools can try to be preventive and what resources are available for eating disorders in the province. To date, thirteen schools have been kind enough to open their doors to the Foundation and hear my presentation. From my long teaching career I fully realize how busy schools



and teachers are and the myriad of meetings staff are involved in during their day. So I have great gratitude to these amazing teaching staff and administrations that have invited me to present either during a scheduled staff meeting or at a special meeting arranged just for the presentation.

In my new work I have so enjoyed my travels throughout the province this fall. The warmth of the welcome in my schools and the genuine interest and concern to learn more about eating disorders has been fantastic. My presentations began in two of my 'former' schools – St. John Bosco and Fatima Academy. What great staffs! In each of the schools this fall I shared my information but also parts of my personal story. I believe most teachers were kind enough to hear that I was speaking not just factually, but also from my own heart-felt experience with eating disorders. In Springdale, St. Bride's and other schools, the public health nurses gave of their time to come to the presentation. In their feedback to me they appreciated the new knowledge on services that they had previously not known.

I have so enjoyed my travel this fall to Trepessay, Buchans, Glovertown, Lewisporte, Bishop's Falls, New Wes Valley, Fogo and Change Islands. I have had the privilege of meeting guidance counselors so dedicated to trying their best to know more about this challenging illness. On my Fogo trip in early December the Executive Director of the Foundation travelled with me. Ellen Foley is an amazing, dedicated young woman who is a strong advocate for eating disorder services. Ellen and I had a wonderful experience on Fogo Island where we co-facilitated a Public Information session. On a stormy, snowy afternoon we travelled by ferry to Change Islands

where the principal opened his doors to my presentation. We could see the close knit school community that existed on Change Islands. It renewed my faith in the small rural schools of our province. My presentation was received by not only the administration and teaching staff, but also by: the maintenance person who doubles as the breakfast program coordinator; the secretary who is highly involved with helping students; a substitute teacher who promised to share our information with the eleven other schools in the area where he works; and an amazing nurse practitioner and her clerical staff person who also attended. All of these people stayed late on that stormy evening so they would be better prepared to assist their students. I was humbled by their attention and welcome.

From the feedback from staff I know the "Let's Talk Eating Disorders" School Program has already been very successful with assisting schools to deal with cases of eating disorders with their students. It has also prepared other schools to have the resources to help students when cases of eating disorders arise. I appreciated the feedback from one administrator who emailed to say: "It will definitely enable us to help any of our students who may be faced with an eating disorder in the future... it was very much appreciated and I hope that you continue to spread your important message throughout the province". Research tells us that 10 to 15 percent of adolescents are dealing with this complicated and sometimes fatal illness. The best prognosis comes from early detection and treatment and teachers are on the front lines of assisting with making this happen.

From my discussions this fall with health professionals and school staff I would like to share a few suggestions for schools. One key point that all schools need to be cognizant about is that weighing students or doing their BMI is highly not recommended. I realize some courses in health in junior high and some senior high biology courses used to recommend doing this, but it can have a detrimental effect on students. Ellen Coady from the Department of Education tells me that memos have been sent to schools advising that this no longer be done. BMI is something that is best left to a doctor to discuss with individuals. One very impressive physical education teacher stayed behind after my presentation to make me aware of something that had happened at his school. When ski trips are planned to ski resorts it is asked that students give their weight for safety reasons. This young man had enough insight to know that his students would be very sensitive to his weighing each of them. His suggestion was to send home a slip to be filled out and he let his students know that a 10kg range would be fine instead of the exact weight. I applaud his sen-

sitivity. He is being proactive in possibly preventing a case of eating disorder.

Most, if not all schools are doing all they can to help students with their self-esteem. Research tells us that building up the self-esteem of all young people is the best defence against an eating disorder, so whatever programs schools do in this area are excellent! I would also greatly encourage media literacy at all grade levels to help students be aware of the impossible standards set up by advertisers. I recommend the short videos on the Dove website as a good starting point, especially the video "Evolution". It is on the section called "Campaign for Real Beauty". A great primary book and binder of materials was sent out by the Department of Education last year to all primary schools. It was developed by the Body Image Network and is called *Healthy Body Image*. It includes the story of Percy Pinhorn. This book teaches young people to respect diversity in people of all races, shapes and sizes. I know the resource may have gotten 'lost' amidst so many resources sent to schools, so please try and find it in your school and use it with primary students. I personally believe it could be used in any Language Arts class to initiate a great discussion on diversity. Please contact me or the Department if you cannot find your copy of this great resource.

I feel very grateful to have found this second career and I will continue with the Schools Program in the Eastern District this winter and throughout the province again in the spring. We are working on being able to use video conferencing or a webinar for schools that I cannot visit due to distance. I am also available both as a resource to counselors at any time and to try and assist families dealing with a loved one's eating disorder. If your school is interested in having me visit to present at a staff meeting or to attend a PD day, please call me at the Foundation office at 709-722-0500 or email me at patricia@edfnl.ca.

Patricia Nash is the Outreach and Program Facilitator with the Eating Disorder Foundation of NL.



Using Radical Literature to Promote Deep Cognitive Learning

by DR. PATRICIA BRISCOE



If Andy Hargreaves (2003) has predicted correctly, then we are moving toward a *knowledge society* that is identified by promoting deep cognitive learning, among other skills. Therefore, it becomes imperative to move student learning in this direction, which follows suit with the proponents of Bloom's Taxonomy. More specifically, the levels of analysis, synthesis and evaluation as it promotes deep cognitive learning and critical thinking skills. This is nothing new for most educators; however, finding a means and resources is sometimes challenging. Radical literature offers such segue.

What is Radical Literature?

Radical Literacy is a genre of literature that provides alternative perspectives from traditional literacy. Traditional literature is written from the perspective of the virtues of individualism, competition, and capitalism, all of which are predominantly Western views. Therefore, radical literature is written to explore some of the non-traditional perspectives and contains some of the following characteristics: i) social, economic, and racial struggles; ii) do not end up in triumph; iii) there are no heroines and heroes; iv) characters do not conform to the norms of a dominant society; and v) stories that do not celebrate wealth. In summary, it is literature written to represent a non-traditional perspective that begs a discussion of alternative perspectives to our dominant views.

Radical literature may sometimes be used synonymously with critical literature, however there are differences. Critical literature may or may not present an alternative or contradictory perspective, whereas radical literature focuses purely on the presentation of a contradictory or non-traditional perspective. Furthermore, radical literature's objective is to enable students to experience cognitive dissonance as the literature presents opposing views to their daily lives and deconstructs many stereotypes formed from these views.

In 2010, the elementary teachers of Riverwood Academy, myself included, conducted an action research project funded by the NLTA Centennial Education Fund. With these funds we purchased a selection of radical literature books from an independent bookstore in Toronto. Many of the books were written from a non-traditional perspective. The objective of the research project was simple: to provide students with otherwise absent alternative and non-traditional perspectives through specific literature. The goal was two-fold: to create a cognitive dissonance in students from this literature; and show that multiple and opposing perspectives are present. Both of which require cognitive learning responses via the analysis, synthesis and evaluation tools based on Bloom's Taxonomy. We achieved this by recording 'before and after' responses of students, followed by a discussion of the cognitive dissonance in their perspectives after reading the books. We noticed increased depth in their writing when asked to write from "other" perspective.

Most of the books focused on issues of war, race and the untold stories of marginalized people. This project by no means represents an activity that is all encompassing, but is a small step in beginning one of many in the process of promoting deeper cognitive learning through critical evaluations of radical literature. If you are interested in a list of titles and the contact information to order books, please email: patriciabriscoe@ncsd.ca.

Dr. Patricia Briscoe is a Grade 6 Intensive Core French Teacher at Riverwood Academy in Wing's Point, NL.

Reference:

Hargreaves, A. (2003). *Teaching in the knowledge society. Education in the age of insecurity*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.



It's a Basic Human Right of Children and Youth

by PAULINE TH  ORET

Every once in a while, you hear, see or experience something that reminds you that all is not as it should be. As classroom teachers, we may be unaware of the statistics, we may get caught up in the standardization agenda, and we may sometimes lose sight of the human being that is every one of our students. We do the absolute best we can with what we have, but sometimes we're ill-prepared to deal with a pervasive issue that has the potential to be as cataclysmic to society as any "man-made" or natural disaster. You may think this is an exaggeration, but the statistics are surprising and the impact of those statistics could be far-reaching...

... 1 in 5 – you've seen or heard of this before. 1 in 5 Canadians will suffer from mental illness. 1 in 5 young people live with a mental disorder, and 70% of these disorders become symptomatic during childhood or adolescence. Suppose you're a classroom teacher with an average of 25 students, you could potentially be dealing with five or more different mental disorders. How do you do it? How do you help? Where do you go for help? Are they really disorders or are they simply behaviour problems? Is there a difference? What's the difference? How can I help? What can I do?

So how as a profession can we communicate together to increase awareness, share tips on resources, have access to service providers and expertise, discuss anonymous situations and brainstorm effective classroom solutions? How can we help our students, and our colleagues, who are affected by or afflicted with a mental disorder not be marginalized, de-humanized or de-professionalized? As an organization, CTF is trying to help teachers to help students. In collaboration with other organizations, we're attempting to lay the groundwork for systemic change within our own education system. We're speaking out on Mental Health and we're partnering with the "Partners for Mental Health", a not-for-profit charity whose start-up is supported financially by the Mental Health Commission of Canada.

In July 2011, the Canadian Teachers' Federation released the findings of its most recent poll on National Issues, *The Voice of Canadian Teachers on Teaching and Learning*. The following are open-ended responses to two questions; open-ended responses that reflect many more similar opinions:

- On the question of "The teacher voice on the impact of challenges faced by students on their ability to succeed in school":
- *I am seeing mental health issues more frequently impacting student performance. [teacher]*
- On the question of "The teacher voice on changes they would make to the public education system to maximize students' potential and improve their quality of education":
- *Availability of mental health professionals who specialize in work with children and are attached to schools. [teacher]*

The vision of "Partners for Mental Health" is to propel a social movement that will transform the way people think about and act towards people living with a mental illness. They aim to empower individuals and organizations to take action, leading to unprecedented improvements in mental health services, mental health research funding and the mental well-being of all Canadians.

In April 2012, Partners for Mental Health will launch a grassroots-based social media site that will facilitate the sharing of information, the dialogue, and the access to resources with the goal of mobilizing the public to de-stigmatize mental illness. As teachers who work and build relationships with youth on a daily basis, the Canadian Teachers' Federation believes this social media platform focussed on mental health can be a hub where teachers go to access the tools and supports we require. Together as a profession, we can empower ourselves, help de-stigmatize mental illness and work towards systemic change that will confirm that mental health is indeed a basic human right of children and youth.

Our students – the future generation of decision-makers on matters of policy, economics and social priorities – need to be knowledgeable, understanding, empathetic, and healthy – mentally and physically. As individuals and society, we wholeheartedly invest in education, and we invest in health care. We must, however, increase our individual and collaborative investment in mental health; our future depends on it.

There are other initiatives in Canada that teachers should know about. If you're looking for tools, resources, or tutorials visit:

- Centre for Addictions and Mental Health – a bilingual website that specializes in mental health and addictions and offers educator resources and tutorials. (www.camh.net)
- Teen Mental Health – a website that houses curricula that could answer many of your questions. While this website is English only, some resources are available in both official languages. (www.teenmentalhealth.org)
- The Academy in Mental Health for Educators – a new program by Teen Mental Health was offered in early July to over 200 public school educators from Manitoba to the Maritimes. This is what teachers had to say about this new and exciting opportunity: (<http://teenmentalhealth.org/index.php/blog/post/the-academy-in-mental-health-for-educators-a-new-opportunity/>)

I have attended a number of conferences throughout my teaching career. The first Academy of School Mental Health rated extremely high. The opportunity for questions during the panel was extremely valuable. Receiving the power points prior to the conference was very helpful. Hope that these valuable presentations will be available to present back in our school boards. Thank You, Thank You. Thank You. This was indeed the highlight of my summer. [teacher]

I expected and am finding myself thinking a lot about things that were presented, students that I have had in the past and how I would deal with them differently now that I have more information. Please keep me in mind for any future conferences that will be held. Thanks to the team that put this together, a job very well done! [teacher]

Visit www.teenmentalhealth.org for information on next year's Academy.

- The School-Based Mental Health and Substance Abuse Consortium will hold its 3rd National Symposium on Child and Youth Mental Health from May 30 to June 1, 2012 in Calgary, Alberta.

So let's go back to the initial, perhaps perceived, exaggeration of not seeing the reality of mental illness as a potential cataclysm. While no one likes to put a dollar figure to something that is so personal and so human, sometimes the economic reality puts the issue into perspective – or at least it should. It was estimated in 2009 that \$51 billion was the cost of mental illness to the Canadian economy in terms of health care and lost productivity, and that mental health was the number one cause of disability in Canada. How much do you think our country allocates to mental health? According to 2008 statistics, 5.5% of health care dollars went to support mental health. We don't even know how many, if any, education funding supports mental health initiatives. If we don't join together to fix this now, a potential cataclysm could turn into a real one.

Pauline Théoret is Program Officer with the Canadian Teachers' Federation. References for this article are available upon request.

HATS OFF!

Have you recently won an award or know of a teacher who has been recognized for their contribution to the education of children in Newfoundland and Labrador? If so, we'd like to hear from you.

Please send information on the award as well as a profile of the award winner(s) to:

Lesley-Ann Browne
Editor, *The Bulletin*
Newfoundland and Labrador
Teachers' Association

3 Kenmount Road,
St. John's, NL A1B 1W1

Fax: 709-726-4302 or
1-877-711-6582 (toll free)

E-mail: labrowne@nlta.nl.ca





Technologies à l'école de langue française

par RONALD BOUDREAU

Le domaine des technologies est en constante évolution et change rapidement. Les résultats d'un sondage pancanadien sur l'utilisation des technologies par les élèves des écoles de langue française apportent une lumière sur cet aspect du contexte social des jeunes d'aujourd'hui. Cette enquête nous apprend que les jeunes francophones y sont bien présents, mais qu'il y a lieu de s'inquiéter du peu de place occupé par le français.

La construction d'une identité francophone occupe une place importante dans le mandat de toutes les écoles de langue française des milieux minoritaires. La réalité que nous découvrons grâce à cette enquête nous force à examiner sérieusement les changements qui doivent s'opérer dans nos écoles si nous voulons continuer d'accompagner nos jeunes adolescents et adolescentes dans leur cheminement identitaire. Dans le cadre de ce projet, la FCE créé un comité de travail composé de membres du personnel enseignant. Ce comité a orienté l'enquête et le présent article leur donne la parole. En effet, en plus d'analyser les données recueillies, ces enseignantes et ces enseignants ont proposé des pistes à explorer et une coordination stratégique du dossier des technologies.

Il semble tout d'abord essentiel que les écoles de langue française se dotent d'un mécanisme d'expérimentation de nouvelles stratégies d'enseignement qui intègrent les technologies et d'un moyen de faire connaître les résultats de ces expérimentations à l'ensemble des écoles. Entre autres, il devient urgent d'explorer les moyens technologiques qui encouragent la créativité et l'écriture et d'apprendre à les intégrer efficacement à l'apprentissage des élèves. À cet effet, il est même permis de se demander si les technologies ne pourraient pas servir à donner un nouveau souffle à la langue française en permettant aux élèves de se les approprier à leur façon. La création d'un nouvel espace Web pour découvrir le plaisir d'écrire librement, par exemple, pourrait mener à une dynamisation de l'élève

dans son apprentissage de diverses formes d'écriture. Le rapport mentionne par ailleurs un intérêt particulier pour cette forme d'écriture chez les garçons.

L'analyse des données de l'enquête a révélé que les environnements technologiques dans lesquels les élèves évoluent sont surtout en anglais, qu'il s'agisse de la messagerie texte ou des réseaux sociaux. Or, on n'utilise pas ce qu'on ne connaît pas. Le comité s'est demandé si les élèves connaissent les environnements et les applications qui leur permettent de communiquer ou de se divertir en français. Le rapport propose des pistes à cet effet qui tiennent compte du besoin de formation du personnel enseignant qui doit lui-même en découvrir le potentiel et apprendre à les intégrer à son enseignement. Il faudra donc envisager des activités d'apprentissage qui incitent les élèves à utiliser des appareils de poche ou les réseaux sociaux afin qu'ils développent un vocabulaire approprié, mais aussi encourager l'affichage en français de ces moyens de communication. Cependant, si nous voulons accorder une plus grande place aux technologies dans l'apprentissage et faire en sorte que les élèves soient des citoyens et citoyennes numériques responsables, il est clair qu'il faut sensibiliser les jeunes aux aspects légaux de l'utilisation des technologies. C'est en abordant ces questions dans le contexte scolaire que l'on favorisera une plus grande ouverture à l'emploi de moyens de communication technologiques en classe.

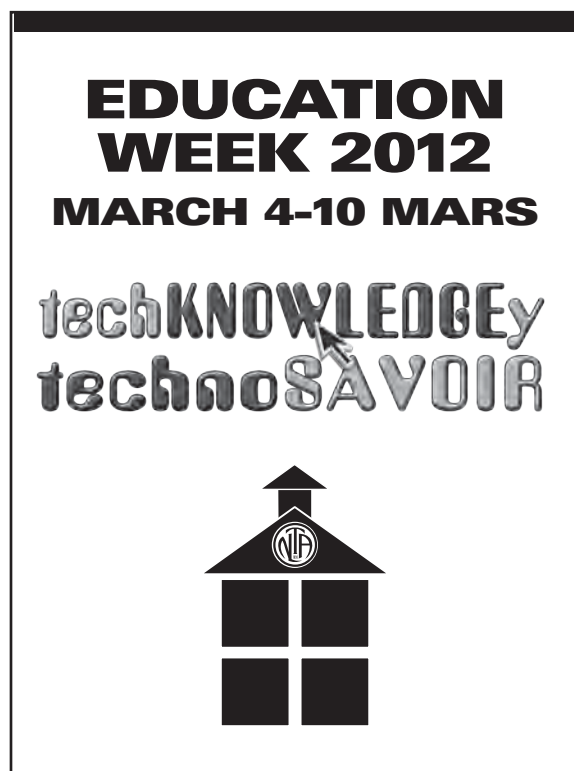
Au cours des travaux du comité, il est devenu évident que des rencontres stratégiques du personnel responsable des technologies profiteraient à l'ensemble des écoles de langue française en leur permettant d'échanger sur leurs pratiques et de déterminer les défis les plus pressants sur lesquels il est essentiel de se pencher. Plusieurs initiatives pourraient découler de ces rencontres. Entre autres, la lenteur du développement en français dans certains secteurs pose problème. Il faut se donner un mécanisme pour rendre ces ressources disponibles en français avant qu'elles ne soient connues qu'en

anglais. Une des tâches essentielles d'un regroupement tel que celui qui est proposé serait d'établir des relations avec les maisons de production de logiciels et d'applications technologiques pour faire connaître les besoins des écoles de langue française. Non seulement l'enseignement et l'apprentissage en bénéficieraient, mais c'est la communauté francophone toute entière qui pourrait assurer sa vitalité et sa pérennité dans ce contexte social en constante évolution.

Si l'école de langue française est souvent appelée à faire le contrepois au contexte socio-institutionnel, elle ne peut se soustraire à l'engouement général des jeunes pour les moyens de communication technologiques.

L'enquête complète est disponible sur le site Web de la FCE au www.ctf-fce.ca, sous l'onglet « Ressources », en cliquant sur « Écoles de langue française ».

Ronald Boudreau est le directeur des Services aux francophones de la Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants.



“Liking” a Cause

Bringing Digital Civics Into the Classroom

by ANTON VAN HAMEL

The close of the May 2011 election saw a decisive shift in the political landscape of Canada. The Conservative Party secured a majority in Parliament, the NDP took over the mantle of official opposition, the Green Party elected its first member to Parliament, and the Liberals and Bloc Québécois shrank to shadows of their former selves. Despite these decisive changes, voter turnout remained low. Some university students were proactive, coordinating large groups to swarm advance polls and then filming the event, but there is no indication these ‘vote mobs’ rallied youth who weren’t already inclined to participate (leadnow.ca). Although having an undergraduate degree is one of the few things which reliably increase the likelihood of voting, efforts to get younger youth involved politically – such as high school civics education – are far less successful.

Traditionally, high school civics curricula frames the problem of youth apathy as one of ignorance: if students only *knew* how systems of government worked, they might be more eager to vote; if youth are cynical about government, it’s only because they don’t fully *understand* all the nuances of capital ‘P’ politics. If that is the case, the prescribed dose of lectures on the foundation of the Canadian Parliament should remedy the problem. So why doesn’t it? At the same time, how can we explain all the small ‘p’ political engagement activities youth are initiating online?

Perhaps this is because teens feel *pushed out* of public life offline: politicians hardly court them, since they are not eligible to vote, and they may see their work in the civics classroom as a dress-rehearsal for adult life instead of something that is relevant to their lives right now.

By comparison, there are many features of cyberspace which *pull* youth there: all their friends are online, access is cheap and fast, users can opt into groups they are genuinely interested in, messages can spread quickly to a large audience, communication

works in both directions – the list goes on. Youth appear to be bringing civic life to virtual spaces by joining online protest groups, forwarding e-mail petitions, forming online clubs, and spreading news through social networks. On an informal basis, they are practicing digital literacy – but without much guidance or support.

In the social media world, site operators observe a rule called “paving the cow paths”. In a nutshell, this refers to monitoring how members spontaneously use a website and adjusting site features to support those behaviours. Given that young people are already informally attempting to engage in civic life through online technologies, this represents an opportunity for educators to pave the cow paths in the civics classroom. Rather than tug youth back onto the prescribed path of general classroom practice, educators might instead consider investigating how their students are already applying their digital literacy skills to civic life and help them refine those efforts.

Teens as a group have ample access to the Internet, but they don’t always have requisite digital literacy skills to thrive online. This is an important gap to address as more and more daily activities migrate online, especially civic life. Digital literacy is more than just *consuming text* delivered online. It also includes participation, collaboration, and action in online communities. In other words, digitally literate youth are empowered when they can *produce* as well as understand new media. It is the difference between just visiting a political website and leaving a thoughtful, public comment which forces a response from leaders. It is the difference between starting a boycott, and running a campaign online which communicates the goals and rationale of the boycott to the targeted company. Given the civic applications of digital literacy, especially for youth, it deserves a place in civic education programs.

If the long-term goal of civics education is to motivate youth to exercise their rights as citizens of a democracy, it makes sense to find opportunities for them to do this in the present through their online communities. Cultivating the attitude that one can make a difference is more important for long-term voting behaviour than a command of facts. The advantages of digital media currently embraced by politicians, activists, and students are also a blessing for civics educators: the Internet is ideally suited to enabling meaningful participation without leaving school grounds. This means that whatever causes youth care to pursue can be supported in class. Even if the causes youth gravitate towards may seem off-topic (for example environmentally-minded students asking *Facebook* to “unfriend” coal) the point of the exercise is not to learn facts about the political system but to develop an interest in being active citizens. From this, learning the facts will follow. This approach isn’t practical when civics education is confined to classrooms and limited to textbooks, but with adequate ICT access in schools it becomes a real opportunity for youth to work on civic issues that resonate for them and to make real contributions online using digital literacy skills.

Digital media can help educators make their civics courses more authentic both by facilitating student choice of topics and by empowering students to act on them using digital literacy. Digital media is already a huge part of civic and political life: how many activists could live without e-mail? How many Members of Parliament could function without their smart phone? What kind of political campaign can forego any presence on the Web? Schools remain strange hold-outs where digital media are concerned. But if our goal is for students to do civics and not merely learn about it, digital literacy is central. Indeed, those without adequate digital literacy skills risk being left out of civic life.

Media Awareness Network has published a discussion paper on the importance of digital literacy and civic engagement for educators. It is freely available at: www.media-awareness.ca/english/corporate/media_kit/reports-publications.cfm#civic.

Anton van Hamel is a Research Associate with the Media Awareness Network.

How Can You Help Kids Protect Themselves and Their Future Online?

Today's world is vastly different from that of a generation ago. Perhaps nowhere is this more evident than when it comes to information and communications technology, and media. And without question, today's youth are the first in line to deal with the effects of this change.

A generation ago, when teachers and other community leaders talked to kids about media awareness, it had to do with how onscreen images and advertisements could affect how they viewed the world and themselves. In comparison, today's youth are not just the audience, but also the actors. Advertisers not only seek to influence, but learn as much as possible about – and even track – them.

On top of it all, what kids post online can have dramatic and lasting effects on relationships with their peers and even their future academic and employment prospects. As has been said, “the Net never forgets.” Increasingly, it's important for educators, community leaders and parents to give today's kids guidance in this brave new world.

Of course, it's difficult to fill that role when many of us lack the knowledge because we lack the experience. Let's face it. It's hard to put ourselves in the shoes of kids today and their reality of constant texts, tweets, wall postings and cellphone videos that can be filmed and shared with billions of people in a matter of minutes.

While this environment has the potential for youth to show off their imagination and creative flair like never before, it also includes the unfortunate realities of “cyberbullying” and “sexting.”

Thankfully, there is a new resource which can help you learn about this world and provide guidance to your students who walk in it every day.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada has developed a resource kit to help teachers and community leaders talk with younger Canadians about protecting their privacy online.

The youth presentation package – *Protecting Your Online Rep* – offers people who work with youth the information necessary to offer an engaging and effective presentation in their own schools and communities.

The package includes a PowerPoint presentation with detailed speaking notes for each slide, along with class discussion topics, targeted at Grades 9 to 12. In addition, presentations for Grades 7-8 and 4-6 are in development and will be available later this year.

The goal of the new tool is to teach young people that technology can affect their privacy, and to show them how to build a secure online identity and keep their personal information safe.

It was built from discussions held with students and teachers across the country, whose needs and concerns influenced its content and design.

It's been made to equip educators to deliver relevant information on a sometimes difficult subject in an interesting and engaging way.

If you're interested in talking to your students about protecting their online rep in an increasingly online world, you can find the presentation materials online at www.youthprivacy.ca/en/9-12presentation.html.

For more information, please contact Kristen Yates at 613-947-7240 or kristen.yates@priv.gc.ca.

The Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada oversees compliance with both the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act (PIPEDA).

RESOURCES

THE LITTLE BEAR WHO WORRIED TOO MUCH: SUZIE BEAR GOES TO LONDON

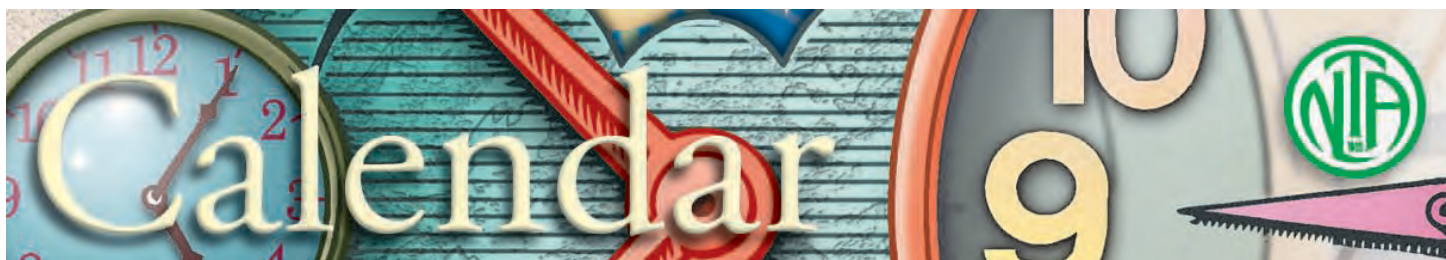
The delightful storybook *The Little Bear Who Worried Too Much: Suzie Bear Goes to London* by author Jacqueline Cook takes the bear family to the heart of London and to Hyde Park, where Suzie Bear gets lost and ends up at the police station. As her tears flow, Suzie remembers what her parents taught her: Take deep breaths and focus on happy thoughts. The police sergeant even tells Suzie how she can get to see a real princess! Suzie watches as the royal princess, wearing a tiara, of course, drives down the street. Suzie Bear learns that no matter how scary a situation, don't panic and remember that things have a way of working out.

Watch the video at www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0idwwfMI7c

The Little Bear Who Worried Too Much: Suzie Bear Goes to London is available for \$13.50 and can be ordered through the publisher's website at <http://sbpra.com/JacquelineCook> or at www.amazon.com or www.barnesandnoble.com.

Author Jacqueline Cook is a teacher in Conception Bay South, Newfoundland. This is the second book in a series. The first was *The Little Bear Who Worried Too Much: Suzie Bear and the Music Festival*.





NL ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATORS PROVINCIAL WORKSHOP

March 29-31, 2012

Pinetree Lodge, Traytown. If you would like to present at this workshop or are interested in a particular subject that could be covered in a session, please contact Alannah Hunt, Education and Research Coordinator, Model Forest of Newfoundland & Labrador and Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Educators, Tel: 709-637-7300, ext. 5.

NL ENVIROTHON 2012

April 26-28, 2012

Lion Max Simms Memorial Camp, Bishop's Falls, NL. Envirothon is a fast-paced, competitive, challenging event for high school students that promotes teamwork, public speaking and an understanding of Newfoundland & Labrador's natural resources. For more information contact Peter Davison, Model Forest of Newfoundland & Labrador, pdavison@mfnl.ca, www.mfnl.ca/envirothon, Tel: (709) 637-7300, Ext. 3; Fax: (709) 634-0255.

WOMEN IN SPORT CONFERENCE

CALL FOR PRESENTERS

May 4-5, 2012

St. John's. The conference will provide education and professional development for educators, students, and professionals interested in the subjects of physical activity, recreation and sport that target females. The event is expected to draw approximately 100 attendees with the purpose of encouraging, supporting, motivating females to participate in active programs.

Team or individual proposals accepted. Panel discussions will be considered. All presenter applications must be submitted by February 13, 2012. To submit your proposal or for more information contact: Trisha Keough-Boyer, Program Director at tboyer@sportnl.ca, Tel: 709-729-3684.

PRIMARY/ELEMENTARY SIC CONFERENCE

May 9-10, 2012

Theme: *Learning Together – Dare to Differentiate!* Details to follow.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS' CONFERENCE

May 16-18, 2012

Capital Hotel, St. John's. For information please go to www.sac2012.ca.

COSS WORKSHOP: ATTENTION DIFFERENCE DISORDER: HELPING KIDS AND TEENS WITH ADD/ADHD FROM A STRENGTH BASED PERSPECTIVE

May 18, 2012

Holiday Inn, St. John's. Speaker: Dr. Kenny Handelman, MD – child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist specializing in assessing and treating ADHD. For information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481; Fax: 709-489-5001.

COSS WORKSHOP: PEER-MEDIATED SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT: USING PEERS TO ENHANCE THE SOCIAL SKILLS OF ALL STUDENTS

September 21, 2012

Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Featuring Dr. Kimberly Maich and Dr. Carmen Hall. Sponsored by the Council of Special Services. More information will be available soon on the NLTA website.

COSS WORKSHOP: DYSLEXIA, SYMPTOMS AND SOLUTIONS

September 22, 2012

Mount Peyton Hotel, Grand Falls-Windsor. Presented by Susan Barton (author of the Barton Reading and Spelling System). Registration form available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Professional Development Opportunities". For information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481; Fax: 709-489-5001.

Dates to Remember

March 2012

- Mar 4-10 Education Week
- Mar 15 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
- Mar 22 Provincial Executive Meeting
- Mar 22-23 Pre-Retirement Seminar, Corner Brook
- Mar 23-24 Joint Council Meeting
- Mar 31 **Board Deadline:** Notice for retirement at end of school year
- Mar 31 **Deadline:** Centennial Study Award Applications
- Mar 31 **Deadline (on or before March 31):** International Conference Presenters Program Applications

April 2012

- Apr 1 **Deadline:** Johnson Bursary Applications
- Apr 15 **Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
- Apr 19 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

- Apr 30 **Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
- Apr 30 **Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2012

- May 7-11 Branch Election Week
- May 7 **Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
- May 17 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
- May 25-26 Provincial Executive Meeting

June 2011

- June 15 **Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
- June 16 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

July 2011

- July 31 **Deadline:** NLTA Scholarship Applications