

THE  
**bulletin**

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*Newfoundland and Labrador Teacher's Association*

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*Vol. 41 / No. 2 November 1998*

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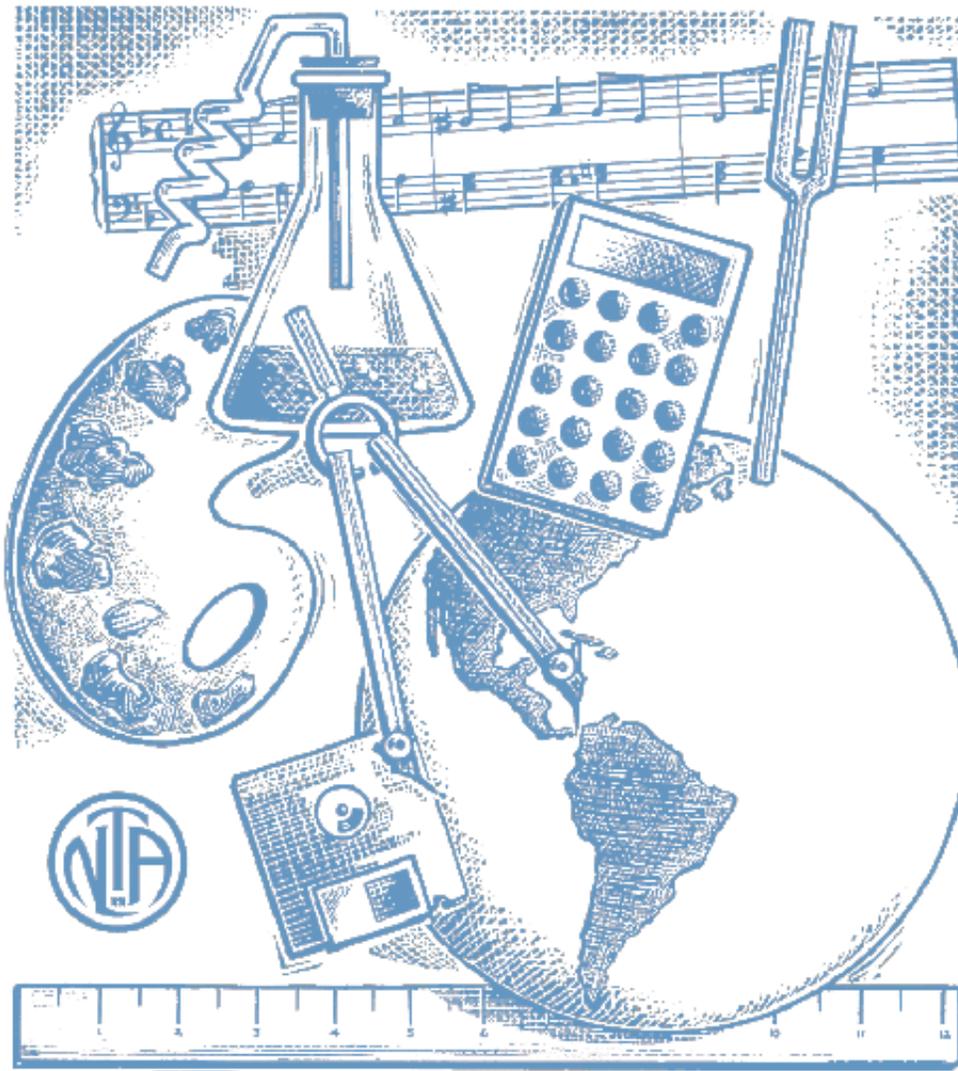




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# TUNED OUT

by Lesley-Ann Browne

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I like to eat breakfast in peace and quiet without noise, especially radio or television in the background. But since every clock in my home displayed a different time I needed to listen to the radio. So one morning recently I turned on the stereo to get the correct time. The news was on and it contained several reports of events of the previous day. I was not, however, paying attention as the news had little to do with me and I was waiting for the time to be announced. I was also distracted by a moping six year old who was doing everything but sitting at the table and eating her breakfast. It was just another typical morning and I guess, like a lot of people, I tune out a great deal of the information from the media and outside sources. The communications experts usually call this "interference" when communication is hindered or distracted. However my bright, intelligent, perceptive child tuned into the news immediately and unfortunately, for me, was not distracted in the least.

The report that caught her attention was about doctors who were murdered, attacked or injured because they perform abortions. I had heard the reporter comment on this but I was more interested in the events occurring immediately around me.

I was definitely not prepared for the questions that followed. Especially since my answers had to be selective in nature. She asked me why doctors were hurt while performing abortions. My response was a simple "because some people do not like what the doctors are doing and they try to hurt them to make them stop". I hoped that the cereal box would attract her attention or that a Spice Girl song would come on the radio. But Toucan Sam or Baby Spice were no where to be found that morning. Then came the dreaded question, "What is abortion anyway?" I gave a very simple answer making sure not to go into too much detail or to express my opinion on the matter. She will have to form her own opinion when she is mature enough to grasp the issue.

It is alarming that this information is available to her and that I no longer have total control over the material that is accessible. The defenders of media content always say that we can turn it off, tune it out or not read it. There was a time when the T.V. set was tuned to Barney and Sesame Street or anything educational. But a natural curiosity about the world around her makes every smutty program a possible target. I can turn it off but I may not always be in reach. Television, of course, is not the only source as radio proved on this particular morning. She is already hearing "information" from her schoolmates that can make hair stand on end. And of course then there is the issue of Santa Claus. Somewhere she has heard the "rumour" that he doesn't really exist and that parents give all the gifts. Now for many years I have had a problem with Santa getting all the thanks and credit but when I want her to know the difference I will tell her. Some will say that I am lying by saying that Santa is real, but a great deal can and should be allowed to exist in the world of a child's imagination. Childhood should mean magic, anticipation, and innocence. I don't want her to lose that and certainly not because of what is seen or heard from other sources. I, therefore, will continue to protect this innocence as long as I can, limit what is seen and heard from other sources, and tune out what I don't like or need to know.

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[Lesley-Ann Browne](#) is Communications Officer with the NLTA.

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## Masters Program and Graduate Courses

### Newfoundland Summer School 1999

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**NORTHERN  
COLLEGE**  
ABERDEEN & DUNDEE

Northern College of Education is an institution within the Scottish University Sector offering either a full M.Ed. Program or individual graduate courses by Supported Distance Learning. The College has developed its own unique program of courses in professional development, which have been designed or adapted for direct delivery by ICT supported distance learning to the rural and remote communities of Northern UK.

Areas of study available: Early Education, Educational Management, Educational Studies, ICT and Learning, Primary Education, and Special Educational Needs.

In recognition of the 30-40 NLTA teachers currently within our Masters Program, Northern College is planning to run a Summer School in July 1999 in St. John's. This will teach and support

a core course suitable for all Masters students --; "Understanding and Using Research".

Our intention is to offer a 2-3 week school where this course will be the taught focus with opportunities for allied discussion and support in other courses along with the production of P.L.A. evidence/portfolios.

Whether you are within the program or considering studying with us for the first time, please help our planning by e-mailing Iain Maclean, Director of Development, at i.e. [maclean@norcol.ac.uk](mailto:maclean@norcol.ac.uk) and express an interest.

#### Features

- Courses agreed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education as appropriate for approval and credit towards upgrading.
- Distance courses may be commenced at any point in the session.
- All assessable work is guaranteed to be designed to allow completion at a graduate level with a practical focus relevant to school commitments.
- Each individual course costs C\$950 including teaching materials, extensive tutor support by e-mail, fax or telephone and access to Northern College library support.

#### For further details please contact:

i.e. [maclean@norcol.ac.uk](mailto:maclean@norcol.ac.uk)

Tel: 01144 1224 283504;

Fax: 01144 1224 283900

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### MUSGRAVETOWN

#### Correction

In a news story entitled "Student participates in nation-wide geography competition" in the September/October 1998 Bulletin, we incorrectly stated that Anthony Paddon Elementary was located in Marystown. Anthony Paddon Elementary is located in Musgravetown. We sincerely apologize for this misprint.

### TROUT RIVER

#### Students receive national recognition



Front row (l-r); Kazia Crocker (Gr. 6); Radhelle Ryan (Gr. 7); Shayvonne Snooks (Gr. 7); Sara Crocker (Gr. 5); Sarah Aubert (Gr. 4); Brittany Crocker (Gr. 4).

involved did an excellent job," says Mrs. Pye. "Besides learning a great deal about the community, they also learned a lot about what they can accomplish and that the possibilities are endless."

The "Trout River Virtual Museum" web site, an electronic tour of an early twentieth century Newfoundland outport house has been selected as Newfoundland's representative in the first issue of the national publication GirlsCan Magazine to be published this fall.

The Trout River Virtual Museum web site was created by six elementary and junior high students attending Jakeman All-Grade School in Trout River. Under the guidance of their Technology Education teacher, Mrs. Glenis Pye, students designed the web site and were encouraged to be creative in their thinking. "The students involved did an excellent job," says Mrs. Pye. "Besides learning a great deal about the community, they also learned a lot about what they can accomplish and that the possibilities are endless."

Brenda Mansfield, publisher of the British Columbia based magazine states, "We have noted with great interest the Millennium Project on the STEM~Net web site entitled Trout River Virtual Museum and feel that the web site story will be a strong addition to our collection for the first issue."

GirlsCan Magazine is a publication by and for young Canadian girls ages 8 to 14 years. The goal of the magazine is to acknowledge the thinking power of girls and to recognize and encourage their limitless possibilities with an aim of linking Canadian girls coast to coast. Included in each issue besides articles from each province and territory, are a French Language article with translation, a First Nations article with translation, features on remarkable Canadian girls and women from Canada's history as well as those who are achieving success in their fields today. Submissions of fiction, poetry, reviews and artwork are also encouraged. The magazine web site may be accessed at: <http://www.cyberlink.bc.ca/~girlscan>.

The "Trout River Virtual Museum", initially constructed as an entry in the Western Heritage Fair held at Corner Brook in May 1998 was designed by the students in celebration of the rich and colourful heritage of their community and dedicated with love and appreciation to their ancestors. The museum web site may be accessed from: <http://www.stemnet.nf.ca/~gppe/house5.html>.

### NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

#### Teacher stories wanted

"Great Oaks from Little Acorns Grow" and you are the people who help plant and nurture the acorns on their path to maturity. Michael Gifford, a photographer from Waterloo, Ontario, is in the early stages of research for a photographic coffee table book about teachers. Mr. Gifford is looking for positive stories

about children and teaching, letters that you have received from students and parents, anecdotes, quotes about teachers and learning and answers to the question, "Why do you teach?" "I know that what I am asking you to share with me is very personal," says Mr. Gifford. "That is the point I want to make in this book, that teaching is personal, and that through your words and actions you make a profound impression on our children. Like the teacher who helped a child bury a piece of paper with the words 'I Can't' on it in the school yard. That child is my son, and this teacher, through her actions, made him realize that 'He Can!'"

Please forward your letters to St. Jacobs Public School, 72 Queen Street South, St. Jacobs, ON, N0B 2N0, Attn: Michael Gifford, or e-mail: [teachme1998@yahoo.com](mailto:teachme1998@yahoo.com). Please include your name and phone number.

### **The Law Foundation of Newfoundland Legal Essay Competition winners**

In honour of the 150th Anniversary of the Law Society of Newfoundland (incorporated in 1834) the Law Foundation of Newfoundland in 1984 established a High School Legal Essay Competition for legal research writing on aspects of Newfoundland law.

The winners in the 1997-98 15th Annual Competition were: 1997-98 Provincial, and Labrador Region \$500: Erica Clarke, DNA Data Banks, A Weapon for the Police, An Invasion of Privacy for the People, Eric G. Lambert High School, Churchill Falls; 1st Honourable Mention \$100: Troy Larson, The Continuing Evolution of Rights, Menihiek High School, Labrador City; Central Region \$300: Ryan Lambert, The Young Offenders Act, King Academy, Harbour Breton; Eastern Region \$300: Karen Moores, Ancient Tradition, Midwifery --; Gone Illegal, Holy Heart of Mary High School, St. John's; 1st Honourable Mention \$100: Jeanette Langer, Battered Women: Justice Denied, Roncalli Central High School, Avondale; 2nd Honourable Mention \$100: Jody-Lynn Rotchford, The Young Offenders Act: Time For Change, Roncalli Central High School, Avondale.

The winning schools were also presented matching cash prizes (except for first and second honourable mentions) to purchase legal materials and resources for the school libraries. Total prizes of \$2,500 were awarded to students, \$1,400, and schools, \$1,100.

The Law Foundation is sponsoring its 1998-99 16th Annual Legal Essay Competition for submission of essays of not less than 750 words by February 15, 1999. The Notice, Terms and Conditions of Competition and a poster for posting in all high schools in the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador were sent in September to school principals. Students and schools are encouraged to participate in this Legal Essay Competition.

## **ST. PIERRE**

### **French teacher training**

Twenty-five teachers from throughout Newfoundland and Labrador attended a week long "bain linguistique" at the Francoforum in St. Pierre. This refresher program prepared teachers for their responsibilities in core French classes.



Teachers took a quick break from their "bain linguistique" to have their photo taken.

Harold Warr, French Programs Specialist for the District of Baie Verte, Central, Connaigre, says "Living with a French-speaking family for a week was a highlight for many teachers. They spoke French all the time which was certainly the main purpose of the trip."

The program provided teachers the opportunity to practise the French they had learned in the classroom and interact in a French community. One activity involved participants interviewing the residents of St. Pierre --; in French of course.

Teachers who attended the program thought it to be extremely beneficial and would recommend it to their French speaking colleagues.

## VICTORIA, BRITISH COLUMBIA

### **National Symposium on Arts Education**

Delegates, presenters and supporters of the arts from all across the country congregated in Victoria, British Columbia, August 9 to 12 to participate in the second National Symposium on Arts Education. The first symposium, conceived due to the instability of arts programs in Canadian schools at that time, was held in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, the previous year.

The purpose of this second symposium was to hear the outcomes of the arts advocacy commitment and Pan Canadian initiative, in addition to putting plans in place on how best to proceed. Informative sessions providing clarification and food for thought, discussion and healthy debate, were helpful in the continuing goal to protect, promote and provide arts education in all schools.

Keynote speakers highlighting the Symposium's major themes of leadership, advocacy, and communication included Julian Saxton, University of Victoria Professor Emeritus and actor; Shirley Thomson, Director of the Canada Council for the Arts; and Peter Legge, President and CEO of Canada Wide Magazines and Communications.

"It is essential that we as arts educators are continually promoting the arts and providing highest quality models for our students, parents and the general public," says Mary Dinn, President of the Music Special Interest Council of the NLTA. "The Symposium allowed delegates the opportunity to seek commonalties, and share goals among dance, drama, music and visual arts."

Encouraged by the energy and enthusiasm of the Symposium participants and by the rapidly growing interest in arts among educators, employers and the general public, the Steering Committee has already begun to organize Symposium III for the summer of 1999.

### **A&E launches 1999 Grant Program**

A&E Television Networks has launched the 1999 A&E Canadian Teacher Grant program to recognize teachers in Canada who apply innovation in the classroom.

"The A&E Canadian Teacher Grant program promotes new ideas and learning in the classroom," said Shelly Blaine Goodman, Vice-President, A&E Television Network Canada. "Teachers who use 'Cable in the Classroom' programming to make learning in the classroom more constructive, enriching and rewarding deserve the praise and national recognition this program offers."

To participate, teachers create a unique classroom project using A&E programming. Each entry will be judged by an independent panel of educators, education advocates and television professionals on the basis of four key criteria: teaching objective; integration of A&E programming into curriculum; innovative approach; and benefit to students.

A&E Television Networks, through the A&E Canadian Teacher Grant, awards teachers with personal savings bonds to advance their own goals and awards their schools with video equipment to further develop the use of cable television in the classroom.

The first prize, a \$2,000 grant will be awarded to the winning teacher. Additional grants of \$1,500, \$1,000 and \$500 will be presented to second, third and fourth place winners. In addition, a colour TV, VCR and an A&E Video Library will be donated to the school of each prize winner. Grant winners will receive an all expenses-paid trip to Ottawa for an awards ceremony to be held in May.

Teachers can obtain registration forms by calling 1-800-722-6146 or writing to: A&E Canadian Teacher Grant, P.O. Box 3690, Markham Industrial Park Station, Markham, ON, L3R 3L0. The deadline for submission is April 1, 1999.

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NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR  
**TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION**

**ON LOCATION REPORT**  
for The Bulletin

To have your story told in On Location News... please complete this report and submit to:

Lesley-Ann Browne, Editor, [The Bulletin](#),  
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association,  
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL, A1B 1W1

Name

Position

School

School  
Address

Postal Code

Telephone

E-mail

Event Date(s)

Type of Event

Event  
Description

Colorful Quote(s) from Participant(s)

Most Significant Result of the Event

Send

bbbb

Reset

# PURCHASE OF APPROVED LEAVE

by Edward Hancock

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The following information was provided to all schools early in September and is included here as a further attempt to ensure all members are aware of the "buyback" provisions.

The Collective Agreement which was finalized in late June included a new Schedule D [Memorandum of Understanding re Pensions]. Section 6 (b) of that Schedule provided that, as of September 1, 1998, teachers would have a six-month period in which to elect to purchase, and have recognized as worked service, previous periods of approved leave without pay. All teachers are advised to carefully read Section 6 (b) of Schedule D in the new Agreement in order to determine whether any of the provisions with a six-month deadline date apply to them. The purpose of this article is to advise teachers on the process for purchasing, as worked service, previous periods of approved leave without pay.

## A. What Constitutes a Leave?

A letter from the School Board granting leave without pay is the first and most obvious evidence that an individual was on a period of unpaid leave. This applies to unpaid leave for any reason. However, if the absence from teaching was for the purposes of university study to upgrade teacher qualifications, a university transcript as proof of attendance at university will be accepted in lieu of a letter granting leave. In order for such a period of absence from teaching for university study purposes to qualify as a period of leave, without the necessity of providing a letter granting leave, the following conditions must apply:

- The period of absence was for university study purposes during which the teacher had the intention of returning to teaching immediately following the period of teacher training and did indeed return to teaching at that time. [That is, the period of absence for study purposes must be completely bounded by employment as a teacher under the TPP. There must have been employment as a teacher under the TPP immediately before and immediately following the period of absence.]
- The employment as a teacher before and after the period of study need not be with the same employing School Board, but must be within the province and must be service recognized under the Teachers' Pension Plan.
- A university transcript must be provided as proof of full-time attendance at university during the period of absence from teaching.

To reiterate, **any** existing periods of approved leave without pay for any reason may be purchased as worked service if a letter of leave is provided. Periods of absence for university study may be purchased as worked service without the necessity of providing a copy of a letter of leave, **provided the above conditions are met**. Periods of absence without a letter of leave for reasons other than university study [eg. a teacher resigns from a teaching position and is employed in some other line of work for a period of time and then regains employment as a teacher] do **not** constitute a period of approved leave for purposes of recognition as worked service.

## B. What is the Cost of Such Purchase?

The cost to purchase such service is determined on the basis of the contribution rate and member salary at the date of election to purchase. [Eg. A teacher at the top of Certificate VI:  $\$48,186 \times 8.5\% = \$4,095.81$ ] For teachers who had previously purchased such a period of approved unpaid university study leave as **pensionable** service, the cost to purchase the leave as **worked** service will be reduced by the amount, with interest, previously paid to purchase the service.

These favourable rates apply for a period of six months from September 1, 1998. The arrangement to

purchase **must** be in place by **February 28, 1999**. After that date, the cost will be the full actuarial cost or the amount calculated by the above formula, whichever is **greater**.

### **C. What Purchase Methods are Available?**

As noted above, the arrangement to purchase must be in place by February 28, 1999 if the lower purchase rates are to apply. However, if the teacher is purchasing the service through payroll deduction, the deductions may be spread over a period of time equal to the period of time being purchased. If not being purchased through payroll deduction, payment must be made in a lump sum by cheque or transfer from an existing RRSP. Individuals who are retiring before the full period of leave is purchased may begin the payroll deduction process before February 28, 1999 and arrange to have any outstanding balance paid by transfer from their severance pay at the time of retirement. The full lump sum payment or the start of payroll deductions must be in place before February 28, 1999.

### **D. Who May Access these Purchase Provisions?**

The provisions for purchase of periods of leave as worked service are accessible to only those teachers who are current active contributors to the plan. Teachers who join the TPP after September 1, 1998 will be governed by the provisions of 6 (b)(iv) of Schedule D.

### **E. How Do I Apply for Such Purchase?**

Any teacher wishing to access these purchase provisions must provide a written request for same to Mr. Fred Simms, Supervisor of Pension Benefits, Department of Finance, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NF A1B 4J6. This letter should provide the details of the period of leave and provide the necessary documentation as outlined in (A) above [i.e. a letter from the School Board granting such leave or, for periods of absence for university study purposes, a university transcript to verify attendance for the period of time in question]. The letter should request information concerning the cost of purchase and provide instructions as to the method of payment preferred. Those teachers who will become eligible to retire immediately upon the purchase of this additional time, and who plan to retire at that date, should provide their application letter **immediately** to the Pensions Division.

After teachers receive information on the cost to purchase, the full lump sum payment or the start of payroll deductions must be in place by February 28, 1999 in order to access the preferred rates. Simply asking the Pensions Division for information on the cost and receiving a reply does not constitute an election to purchase.

Any members with questions concerning the new purchase provisions may contact the Teachers' Pension Division at 729-5198 or 729-3931, or contact any member of the Benefits and Economic Services Administrative Staff by calling 1-800-563-3599 or 726-3223.

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[Edward Hancock](#) is Assistant Executive Director with the NLTA.

# GRIEVANCES AND ARBITRATIONS

by Lloyd Hobbs

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A summary of the grievance and arbitration activities of the Benefits and Economic Services Division is submitted to the Provincial Executive of NLTA annually. Every effort is made to protect the confidential nature of each case and, in this report of the Division's activity from February 21, 1997 to February 20, 1998, only statistical information is provided.

The grievance and arbitration process, as outlined in our Collective Agreement, is a conflict resolution process for disputes arising between the Association and the Employer. Upon request, the Benefits and Economic Services Division assists individuals and groups of teachers in initiating grievances and, upon approval from the Association, proceeding to arbitration with unresolved grievances.

During the period covered by this report, there were 115 grievances filed. This can be compared to 168 grievances for the 1996 year and 189 for 1995 year. While the number reflects a decline in overall grievances filed, there are in fact many hundreds of teachers represented by some of these cases, since in the Spring of 1997 some Boards laid off hundreds of teachers while awaiting the restructuring decisions of non-denominational education. On a number of occasions one grievance was filed on behalf of all affected teachers within the Board.

Redundancy, reassignment and layoff again account for the major portion of grievances with 76 being recorded. The summary table reflects all areas of grievance, and one should note that the total by article exceeds the 115 total because some grievances were filed on more than one article.

Of the total, 63 were resolved for the grievor and/or by mutual agreement, 35 were withdrawn, and 10 cases were outstanding. Seven grievances proceeded to arbitration at which one was decided for the grievor, one for the employer, and five arbitration cases were ongoing.

During the same time period, this Division referred 53 other matters to legal counsel. In many of these cases teachers were looking for answers to questions relating to their roles as teachers or were seeking protection against harassment, defamation or assault by students or parents. Unfortunately, there were 20 cases of alleged physical or sexual assault/impropriety against teachers. Of these, four proceeded to the courts during the year.

On five occasions, the Association represented members at Employment Insurance appeals and on two occasions at Teacher Certification appeals. As well, assistance was provided to members dealing with Workers' Compensation issues.

The Benefits and Economic Services Division will provide advice and resources to any teacher seeking assistance in employment-related issues.

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## Grievance/Arbitration Cases February 21, 1997 to February 20, 1998

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|                        |    |
|------------------------|----|
| Disciplinary Action    | 11 |
| Employment of Teachers | 10 |
| Evaluation             | 3  |
| Injury on Duty         | 1  |

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Layoffs (Redundancy, Reassignment and Layoffs) | 76 |
| Method of Payment                              | 1  |
| Notification of Vacancies and Promotion        | 6  |
| Positions of Administrative Responsibility     | 1  |
| Probationary Period and Tenure                 | 1  |
| Redundancy Provisions                          | 6  |
| Salaries                                       | 2  |
| Schedule G (MOU): Deferred Salary Leave        | 1  |
| Schedule N (MOU): Program Co-ordinators        | 6  |
| Sick Leave                                     | 1  |
| Termination of Contracts                       | 3  |
| Transfer of Teachers                           | 9  |
| Workload                                       | 3  |

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[Lloyd Hobbs](#) is Administrative Officer, Benefits and Economic Services, with the NLTA.

## BENEFITS EXTENDED FOR RETIRED TEACHERS AGE 65 AND OVER

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The Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit, Option A4, provides protection against losses caused by an accident, 24 hours a day, anywhere in the world.

Currently, the Voluntary Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit, Option A4, is only available to active members and retirees under age 65. The Principal Sum available is in units of \$10,000, up to a maximum of \$300,000.

Effective October 1, 1998, the termination date for this benefit will be extended from age 65 up to age 75. Coverage and deductions will automatically continue unless notification has been received by the Plan Administrator, Johnson Incorporated. Coverage ceases the date you reach your 75th birthday.

Retirees age 65 to 69 inclusive will have the same coverage and rates as active members and retirees under age 65.

Retirees 70 to 74 inclusive will have the same rates as retirees under age 69 except the maximum amount of Principal Sum available is \$100,000. Also, for age 70 to 74, there is no coverage for Permanent Total Disability, Home-Maker Weekly Indemnity and Hospital Indemnity.

For enquiries regarding this benefit, please contact Johnson Incorporated at 737-1639, 737-1559 or toll free at 1-800-563-1528.

**Note:** This is a brief outline only of the changes and the terms of the master policy will govern.

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# ON THE ROAD TO SUCCESS

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## **Highlights**

In 1996 and 1997 surveys were conducted to determine the post-graduation activities of high school graduates from 1995 and 1996. Graduates from 1995 who did not attend a post secondary institution during the fall after graduation were also surveyed a year later to determine their post secondary status.

Data was collected through telephone interviews and information available from Department of Education databases. High school databases were linked to post secondary enrolment databases to determine the number of students attending various post secondary institutions in the Province.

## **Follow-Up of 1996 High School Graduates**

As of Fall 1996, 73.9% of 1996 graduates tracked were furthering their education at some level, with 69.9% attending a post secondary institution. This is an increase from 70.6% of 1995 graduates who furthered their education, with 64.7% enrolled in a post secondary program.

During the first eight months of 1997, a further 3.5% of 1996 graduates had enrolled in a post secondary institution, bringing the total post secondary enrolment, as of August 1997, to 73.4%.

Memorial University accounted for 52.5% of the 1996 graduates attending a post secondary institution in Fall 1996, down from 60.2% for the 1995 high school cohort contacted after a similar time period had elapsed.

The proportion of 1996 graduates who enrolled in private colleges increased to 18.2% from 14.0% in 1995. The public college's share also increased to 16.7% of 1996 graduates, as compared to 15.5% in 1995.

In 1996, 7.3% of high school graduates attended an out-of-province university directly from high school, up from 5.9% in 1995.

Of the 1996 graduates not attending a post secondary institution as of August 1997, 73.9% indicated they do plan to attend in the future, with the vast majority planning to attend by the end of 1998. The institution of choice for the largest group of these students was the College of the North Atlantic (38.7%).

Reasons most often cited for not attending a post secondary institution in the fall after graduation were career undecided (19.6%) and financial (18.7%).

Graduates having no plans to attend a post secondary institution reported job prospects/working (31.4%), financial (24.7%) and not interested (20.4%) as reasons for not attending.

The vast majority of those planning to attend in the future reported that they plan to fund their education using a student loan (60.3%). Over one-quarter (26.1%) indicated they expected job income to be their funding source.

## **Follow-Up of 1995 High School Graduates Who Did Not Attend a Post secondary Institution in Fall 1995**

For 1995 graduates not attending a post secondary institution in the first contact, 52.9% have since enrolled in a post secondary institution. Of the respondents who indicated in the original follow-up that they would attend a post secondary institution in the future, 59.2% actually did enrol.

Most of those who delayed enrolling in a post secondary program eventually enrolled in the college system: 34.7% enrolled in the public college and 32.5% in a private institution. Only about 23% attended Memorial University.

As of August 1997, post secondary participation for all of the 1995 high school graduates that have been tracked was nearly 80%.

Late enrollees comprised 15.4% of 1995 graduates contacted.

The primary reasons for those not attending as previously planned included financial (34.0%), working/job prospects (25.0%) and career undecided (14.5%).

Of the 804 respondents re-contacted who have not yet attended a post secondary institution, 70.6% plan to do so in the future.

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# APPLYING FOR EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

**Academic Year 1999-2000**

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The deadline for applications for educational leave (academic year 1999-2000) is February 1, 1999. Teachers who are interested should apply to their school districts in accordance with Article 20.03 of the Collective Agreement using the following application. School districts should forward approved applications to: Mr. Gary Hatcher, Director of School Services and Professional Development, Department of Education, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NF, A1B 4J6. In accordance with the Collective Agreement, the Educational Leave Committee will make its selection by March 1, 1999. Please note that only the information contained in the application will be used by the Committee in the selection process and that additional information will not be considered. The successful applicants will be notified before the end of March. Please take particular note of the eligibility requirements (20.01) and of the continuing employment commitment if your application is accepted (20.07). The corresponding article in the Labrador West Agreement is Article 32.

## **Educational Leave Selection Criteria: 1999-2000**

### **General:**

- (1) An attempt is made to award leaves so there is no disruption among the various school districts of the province in relation to the teacher population of those districts;
- (2) There is an attempt to allocate leaves to males and females in the proportion that each group is represented within the teaching force.

### **Specific:**

- (1) Financial: (a) number of dependents; (b) other awards, scholarships, fellowships, etc., received during period of leave.
- (2) Education History: (a) certificate level; (b) degrees held and dates conferred; (c) major field of study; (d) date of last course taken; (e) opportunity to upgrade at local level.
- (3) Years of teaching experience.
- (4) Professional involvements.
- (5) The educational needs of the district as recommended by the Director.
- (6) The educational needs of the province.

The general criteria are quite clear in intent and govern the overall selection of leave recipients. Numbers 1 through 4 of the specific criteria are designed to give a detailed profile of the applicant, including the concept of need and the professional background. In addition, the educational needs of the school district and the province are considerations which may vary in weight or nature from year to year.

It is important to realize that the program of study which the applicant intends to pursue is one of the factors considered in deciding on the allocation of educational leaves, and when leave is granted to an individual it is granted on the basis of the information contained on the application form. If a successful applicant finds it necessary to change his/her planned program of study from that indicated on the application, the Selection Committee will then reconsider the granting of the leave before making a final decision. All leaves granted are awarded on that basis.

Considering the above, it is to the applicant's advantage if acceptance to the program indicated is obtained prior to applying for the educational leave. Many programs are extremely limited in the number of seats available, so applicants should be reasonably sure of acceptance before listing a particular program.

No one factor of those listed in the above criteria dominates the Committee's final decision. Each member of the Committee, after thorough discussion of all the factors and after reviewing in detail the information on each applicant, has input to the final selection. Every effort is made to apply the criterion in a consistent fashion, and some aspects of the procedure may be computer-assisted.

### **Policy Regarding Awarding of Educational Leaves**

- (1) The maximum leave to be awarded any one teacher shall be 2H university semesters.
- (2) Leave shall normally be awarded for a duration of 1 or H university semesters.
- (3) A teacher will be eligible to receive an additional award five years after receiving an award.
- (4) Notwithstanding the above, a teacher may receive additional awards if that teacher is pursuing a program of studies at the request of the Educational Leave Committee or a program of studies which the Committee has identified as one to receive priority.
- (5) In any given year if the number of leaves available exceeds the number of "first-time" applicants, the additional awards will be given to applicants who have received an award previously.

### **Article 20 --; Educational Leave**

20.01 Subject to the other provisions of this article, a teacher who has been employed in Newfoundland as a teacher for five years or more may be eligible for educational leave up to one year.

20.02 There shall be an Educational Leave Committee consisting of five members, two of whom shall be appointed by the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

20.03 Teachers who are eligible for educational leave and who wish to obtain such leave shall make application to the school board. Only applications which are approved by the school board shall be forwarded to the Educational Leave Committee.

20.04 Prior to January 1 each year, the Minister shall notify the Educational Leave Committee of the number of teachers who may be granted educational leave in the coming school year. In any event, the minimum number of teachers who may be granted leave shall be 30 per year, or the equivalent.

20.05 The Educational Leave Committee shall, not later than the first day of March of the year of the award, select those teachers who are to be granted educational leave. The number selected by the Committee shall not exceed the number indicated by the Minister in accordance with 20.04.

20.06 Leave granted under this article shall be at the rate of O salary.

20.07 Upon completion of the educational leave, a teacher shall return to the school board from which leave was granted, for a period of not less than double the period of leave granted.

20.08 A teacher granted educational leave shall, subject to Article 9, on return be given the same position or comparable position in the same school, unless it is mutually agreed between the teacher and the school

board that the teacher return to a particular position.

20.09 The period in which a teacher is on educational leave with pay shall be considered as full time taught.

20.10 Nothing in this article shall be deemed to preclude leave privileges which may be available to teachers under Article 19.

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## APPLICATION FOR EDUCATIONAL LEAVE

September 1998 --; August 1999

NAME:

S.I.N.:

DATE OF BIRTH:

HOME ADDRESS:

PHONE: (Home)

PHONE: (School)

SCHOOL DISTRICT:

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PRESENT TEACHING CERTIFICATE:

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### DEGREES/DIPLOMAS:

|                                      |  |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|
| Degree/Diploma: <input type="text"/> | Major Field of Study: <input type="text"/> | Date Conferred: <input type="text"/> |
| Degree/Diploma: <input type="text"/> | Major Field of Study: <input type="text"/> | Date Conferred: <input type="text"/> |
| Degree/Diploma: <input type="text"/> | Major Field of Study: <input type="text"/> | Date Conferred: <input type="text"/> |

CURRENT TEACHING ASSIGNMENT:

DATE OF LAST COURSE TAKEN:

### NO. OF YEARS TEACHING:

In the Province:  Elsewhere:

List dependents, giving ages:

List of other awards, scholarships, fellowships, etc., which will be received for the period of leave:

List of professional involvements for the past three years:

**DATES FOR WHICH LEAVE IS REQUESTED:** (Period: September - December 1999; January - April 2000; May - June 2000)

First Choice:

Second Choice:

Educational Institution:

What program of study do you intend to pursue?

Have you been accepted for this program of studies for the semester(s) indicated? Yes  No   
(If yes, please attach confirmation of acceptance from the educational institute.)

**PURPOSE FOR LEAVE:**

(Give an indication of your educational goals, area of study to be pursued, etc. Attach an additional sheet if required.)

**I hereby certify that I fulfill the requirements for educational leave as outlined in Article 20.01 of the Collective Agreement and accept the obligation imposed by Article 20.07.**

Date:  Signature:

**NOTE:** Please forward to teacher's School District and from there it will be forwarded to: Mr. Gary Hatcher, Director of School Services and Professional Development, Department of Education, Confederation Building, P.O. Box 8700, St. John's, NF, A1B 4J6. Application must be received by the Selection Committee by **February 1, 1999.**

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# SURVIVAL TIPS

by Hector M. Earle

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Experienced and successful teachers appear to have an inexhaustible bag full of techniques, strategies, and methods going for them. Pity the first-year teacher. The new teacher comes to the profession with a nearly empty bag of experiences. Fortunate are the student teachers who have worked with outstanding and innovative training teachers as well as superb college supervisors. The advice and assistance of the training teachers and college supervisors may well prepare some first-year teachers for success. But what about the majority of new teachers? Most have not received sufficient preparation for the most difficult year of teaching --; the first year.

How can you as a principal, department chairperson, or master teacher help your first-year teachers make it through their first year? Here are some suggestions you might pass along to the new members of your faculty. The suggestions listed below, grouped by category for ease of understanding, have proven valuable for first-year teachers, based upon positive feedback from recipients.

## **Classroom Management**

- \*Distribute a clearly defined opening day "explanation sheet", including information about class procedures, disciplinary expectations, and course requirements. Carefully reviewing this information with students can provide a solid organizational framework for your entire first year.
- \*Be in class before your students arrive. Be prepared to start class as soon as the bell rings. The first few minutes are critical in successful management of your students.
- \*Rules for good classroom behaviour should be spelled out, clearly visible (posted in bold print on the bulletin board), limited, and reasonable. Be fair yet consistent in enforcing your class rules. Consequences must be known to students in advance --; no surprises.
- \*Move about your classroom; avoid being desk bound. Be alert to potential problems by keeping a pulse on the mood of your classroom.
- \*Prepare exercises that require writing and quiet time for students during the first few minutes of class time. Such exercises will settle down your class and provide time to take roll and complete necessary routines. The exercise may be math problems or a vocabulary lesson on the board, etc.
- \*Avoid being intimidated by students. Develop a posture of confidence and use the guidelines as outlined. Once your students get to know you and your organizational system, they'll be comfortable and learn to respect you.
- \*Arrange for routine student activities to be smooth and nondisruptive. For example, sharpening of pencils is to be completed before the bell rings, with students in their seats when it rings.
- \*Master body language and eye contact. Develop clear signals in your facial expressions and eyes that give messages to students. They will learn to fully understand your signals. You can eliminate many voice

commands and conserve your energy by perfecting your body language signals.

\*Be quick to praise your students. Sending home a "good-news-o-gram", informing parents of accomplishments, builds good will and support.

\*When students are working on a written exercise, either have extra bonus items as a part of the exercise, or materials available for use for quick finishers --; this applies to tests also. Materials could take the form of classroom magazines, which should be at each student's desk to eliminate movement while the exercise or test continues.

\*Establish a plan to handle the problem of test or homework make-ups for absent students. For example, have a labeled basket containing the missed homework assignments with very specific directions, including deadlines (works well with fifth graders and above). There should be an in-basket clearly marked for turning in make-up work.

\*Establish charts, graphically displaying the records of students who have or have not completed homework assignments. Designate a percentage of completion of assignment as an indicator for a reward. For example, if homework assignments are turned in, the class may be excused from a weekend assignment.

\*Clearly define grading procedures, making sure they are consistent with school policy. Students need to know what is required to achieve an A, B, C, etc. Address the problem of students doing poorly during the quarter and then trying to do extra work to improve grades. A good policy is to restrict the value of extra work to no more than 5% of a grade.

\*Maintain an up-to-date calendar time line to be prepared to meet the required and seemingly relentless deadlines for reports, grades, etc.

\*Calling parents is a good idea. A call home to discuss a behaviour problem or academic problem always pays dividends. Calling home to discuss positive things does too!

\*Have a room environment that is pleasant and exciting. Set the mood for your class with imaginative bulletin boards.

### **Classroom Discipline**

\*Address discipline problems. Ignoring a problem will not make it go away. Quickly address any student who is out of line. If students know you will take action and that there will be consequences for poor behaviour, your in-class behaviour problems will be fewer.

\*Remember --; hands off students at all times. You should only physically intervene to prevent physical injury to a pupil. Voice control is a far more effective technique, especially if you have earned the respect of your students.

\*Remember, you were young once and made your share of mistakes. Be compassionate and understanding, but be fair and consistent in administering discipline.

\* Avoid punishing the whole class for the misbehavior of the few. It is not only unfair, but will gain you a poor reputation with your class, colleagues, administrators, and parents. Zeroing in on an individual for a private discussion or even a public reprimand is a more effective technique.

\* Be positive in your discipline methods. Do not use sarcasm or ridicule your students as a method of discipline.

### **Instruction**

\* First-year teachers should prepare extensive and detailed lesson plans. Well-developed plans will assist until such time as you have gained the experience to rely less upon such detailed plans.

\* Have back-up plans to use when the planned lesson appears to be falling apart. Do not be afraid to start again with a different approach. In your detailed lesson plans, note specific fall-back activities. For example, if your plan includes reading a play aloud, and the class is a bit active, have a quiet reading plan noted in your lesson as an alternative.

\* Use audio-visual equipment properly. Test your equipment before class to ensure it is in working order. Aside from eliminating embarrassment, effective use of an overhead or video tape may enhance your teaching style and effectiveness.

\* Monitor your students' progress; reviewing lessons and quizzes will show you whether students are retaining what you have taught. Let students know in positive terms how they are doing.

\* Test for understanding rather than designing tests to show how tough your class is. Using quizzes often, rather than a test occasionally, allows for constant review and learning. The name of the game is student success and understanding of what you have taught.

\* Vary the pace of lessons. Varying the length of sustained time per class hour is important. Depending on the age of your students, adjust your lesson to have between two to four breaks, switching from one subject to another.

\* Know your subject matter prior to giving a lesson. Winging it or flying by the seat of your pants will not be appreciated and will often cause discipline problems.

\* Know you have academic freedom as a teacher, but also note that such freedom requires mature responsibility when presenting controversial material, as well as giving pupils an opportunity to always hear opposing viewpoints.

\* Keep on supporting your kids. Do not give up on them. Some may be slow, but keep plugging away; you will find they retain more than you think. Your students will rise to meet higher expectations, and you will gain respect by being demanding of them.

### **Professional**

\* Dress as a professional; you are a model for your students. Professional appearance sets a businesslike environment in your class. Casual appearance may be fine, but grubby jeans and a wrinkled blouse or shirt

will not do much for your professional image.

\*Be very cautious in preparing anything in writing for students or parents. Misspelled words or sloppy copies will only cause you grief. Review written work with a colleague before releasing it to pupils or parents.

\*Carefully develop the reputation you want to project --; organized, efficient, effective, fair, and consistent. Students next year will know the reputation you created this year when they walk into your classroom.

\*Whatever you do, learn from your mistakes --; you will make plenty in the first year. Be determined not to make the same mistake twice.

\*In most schools, staff members are expected to do extra-duty assignments. Before being given an assignment you may not want, volunteer for an assignment that suits you and you can handle well.

\*Learn from successful veterans on your staff. Seek out established, respected teachers, whose advice will be invaluable.

\*Be especially considerate of custodians and clerical staff. Your reward will be their willingness to go the extra mile for you, particularly when time is short and your nerves are on edge.

\*Be a restrained and positive contributor at faculty meetings. Listen, assess, learn; do not attempt to address issues about which you are not fully knowledgeable.

\*Use appropriate time to correct students papers, such as during prep periods. Do not correct papers during faculty meetings. It may be convenient, but may be unwise since most administrators will consider your lack of attention disrespectful.

\*Mix socially; avoid being a loner. You will develop valuable friendships and gain advice from colleagues. In other words, do not eat lunch alone in your classroom every day to try and stay ahead of the game.

\*Try to be positive and upbeat to avoid gaining a reputation of being a negative teacher who whines, moans, and complains. Your colleagues will avoid you --; no one likes being around a chronic complainer.

\*Your comment should be positive about your school, your colleagues, and your administration. If you must be critical, make sure the criticism is constructive.

\*The classroom is the focus of your attention. Do not bring your personal problems into the classroom. Physical, psychological, or financial problems should not become a burden for your students.

\*Be flexible; avoid being rigid in how you handle students who are asked to help with assemblies, attend student councils, etc. If you feel kids are missing too much class, do not take it out on them; take the matter up with the administration and/or involved advisor.

\*Remember, you are a professional teacher, and your actions off campus may affect how the community perceives teachers as professionals. In other words, use discretion in your off-campus personal life.

These basic survival guidelines are not meant to be comprehensive, but are ways to assist new teachers in getting off to a solid start during the most difficult year of a teacher's career. With time and patience, the new teacher will gradually develop the wherewithal and skills necessary to become a successful professional.

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Hector M. Earle is Principal of Ridgewood Pentecostal Academy in Stoneville, Newfoundland.

# HOW TO BOUNCE BACK

by Claudette Coombs

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What is resilience? Resilience is our ability to face life, despite its trials, while still believing in the positive. There is no expectation that only good things will happen, but there is an understanding of how to handle the bad things when they come our way. Resilience requires a continuous and active process of resetting the compass. This is done as unexpected events and circumstances move us off our planned pathway or as we prepare for expected but unpleasant events. It is essential for us to constantly readjust.

Resilience is more than just survival. It is really being able to live. It does take into account the pain which exists in our personal worlds yet it allows us to move beyond the past and the unwanted parts of the present. We acknowledge our experiences and look for something better --; and we find it!!

Resilience means having faith: faith that things will improve; faith that we can learn from all difficulties; faith that we can take action to make a positive difference; and faith that there is more to life than our trials. It is an evolving process which develops and becomes more refined with regular practice. Unless we were/are blessed with near perfect environments, it takes consistent work to develop and maintain an attitude and atmosphere of resilience.

## **How resilient am I?**

Check this out how do I react when faced with crises or daily irritants? how do I feel about my future and that of my family? what fears do I have about my health and ability to do the things in life that I want to do? what happens to me when things go wrongly? Do I believe:

- "things will improve" or, "look out there's more to come";
- "I don't know how I'll make it" or, "I'm glad I have friends (etc.)";
- "why me" or, "I can handle it";
- "what will I do if " or, "I have a plan".

You get the idea. If our view is one of gloom, then we could benefit from enhanced resiliency. We are alive therefore we will face a lot of things that we would rather not. It's our choice to face them with resignation or with resolve.

## **What threatens my resilience?**

Being alive is the major risk factor for losing resilience. It is also the most significant factor in reviving resilience. Daily we are faced with misfortunes and decisions about personal, family and career concerns. If we can confront these immediately, take positive action and continue with "normal" life, then we are likely to maintain a balanced view of life's pros and cons. However, we are susceptible to serious personal impact:

- if the misfortunes become chronic, rather than episodic (eg. develop a chronic health problem); or
- when negatives are repeated (eg. not being with one school board long enough to receive tenure and having to leave your "new" school every year); or
- when consequences are significant (eg. becoming redundant after just renewing a mortgage and having a child go away to university); or
- if the effect is pervasive (eg. experiencing the end of a personal relationship which you thought would last forever).

Experiencing any of these risk factors makes us vulnerable to becoming more negative and losing our

ability to bounce back. Our usual coping mechanisms are pushed to the limits --; and maybe beyond. Our ability to see the positive is clouded by the continuous reinforcement of negatives. Our mental and physical energy to search for something better is drained by the mental pain of losing what was most important to us.

When we predict, or recognize, our exposure to any of these threats, we must act quickly. There is too much at stake to delay or to have false confidence in our current abilities. The first need is to ensure that we can survive intact; the next is to guarantee that we still have enjoyment in life and future potential for pleasure.

### **How do I create my personal resilience?**

There are many things we can do to ensure that we are in the best possible position to deal with whatever life delivers. Most days we are somewhere on the scale between the basement and Cloud 9. Of course, we would prefer to be as close to the top of the scale as possible but that isn't always the way life works! We can use the following guidelines to assist us in creating an attitude and lifestyle which promotes resilience:

- Stay as healthy as our bodies permit. Stay active; eat, sleep, relax and socialize appropriately; and, include mental and physical recreation.
- Protect our emotional and mental perspective. Keep a balanced view on what's happening and the expected "normal" response. Remember how we would view things if they were happening to someone else.
- Incorporate protective factors into our lives. Establish clear boundaries or limits on what we can realistically expect of ourselves and others. Recognize and respect the beliefs and behaviours of others, without feeling that we have to adopt or condone them. Celebrate our talents and acquired abilities/skills. Increase our capacity to tolerate change or undesired conditions, by being more flexible. Minimize criticism but maximize constructive responses. Avoid ascribing negative motives to others. Reserve judgement. Share responsibilities --; don't try to make ourselves indispensable everywhere.
- Learn skills which help to effectively deal with common stressors. These can include: communication; goal setting; decision-making; time management; priority recognition; assertiveness; positive thinking; conflict resolution; impulse control; values clarification; and emotional management.
- Prepare for potential future losses. This doesn't mean that we become fixated on them. Instead, put the necessary provisions in place and put the issue away until we have to face it immediately. Don't waste valuable current resources (time, energy) with worry and dread.
- Regularly ingest a diet of inspirational wisdom --; from friends, tapes, books, church.

Resilience can be seen as encompassing three phases of daily living. The first is in daily routines. We look for the good and live to share it while also recognizing personal vulnerabilities and carefully preparing for them. Next is adjusting our reactions (attitudes, physiology, behaviours) to survive through the difficult times. The final phase is incorporating long-term changes that enable us to move beyond just surviving to really living.

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Claudette Coombs is an EAP Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for teachers. For confidential assistance contact [Claudette Coombs](#) (ext. 265), or [Kathy Burford](#) (ext. 242).

# COMING OUT

by Ann Shortall

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On December 11, 1997, Premier Brian Tobin announced publicly that Term 17, an amendment to Newfoundland's Terms of Union with Canada, coupled with Bill 21, will protect teachers from being fired because of their sexual orientation. The impact of this statement cannot be discounted. After centuries of denominationally controlled schools, we cannot be fired because we are lesbian, gay, or bisexual anymore. We can finally come out of our classroom closets! But will we? Should we? Who would benefit? Would there be repercussions?

This past decade has certainly been a progressive period for lesbian, gay, and bisexual rights in Canada. There have been so many improvements that this decade has been coined as the "Gay 90s". To name just a few advancements, in 1992 Canada lifted its ban on lesbians and gays in the military. In a 1993 nationwide survey, it was reported that 55 percent of all Canadians considered homosexuality "morally acceptable". Further, in 1996 the federal government amended its Human Rights Code to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination.

Newfoundland has also reaped the benefits of the "Gay 90s". After more than a decade of lobbying by gay and lesbian activists, and numerous other liberal organizations, in December of 1997, the provincial government finally passed Bill 21. Similar to the federal code, this Bill amends the Newfoundland Human Rights Code to include sexual orientation as a prohibited ground of discrimination. This means that gays, lesbians, and bisexuals in our province are protected in the areas of employment, housing, and goods and services (i.e. services in stores or volunteers in community organizations) equal to that of our heterosexual counterparts.

Previously, under the denominational education system in Newfoundland, schools operated under boards which contained by-laws that excluded teachers from the Provincial Human Rights Code. Therefore, school boards had the right to hire and fire teachers based on sexual preference, along with many other discriminatory practices such as hiring based on one's religious affiliation or marital status.

While the Newfoundland education system may have been discriminatory, ironically the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association has proven to be one of the most progressive unions in our province. Under the leadership of Ms. Barbara Lewis (the former Staff Consultant of Equity Issues in Education Committee), lesbian and gay teachers were afforded same-sex insurance benefits. Specifically, if you and your partner have been living together for six months, s/he qualifies for health, dental, and spousal insurance under your plan. In a meeting with a Johnson's Insurance representative, my partner and I were informed that we were the only homosexual couple who availed of these benefits. The insurance representative believes people are afraid of taking advantage of these benefits, as teachers fear their sexual orientation will be disclosed to their employers.

Another proposal from the Equity Issues in Education Committee was an amendment to Article 42 in its definition of "spouse". The NLTA Collective Agreement now defines "spouse" as a person who is married to the teacher in a marriage-like relationship for a six-month period and, for all purposes under this Agreement, with the exclusion of any references to pension benefits, the marriage-like relationship may be between persons of the same gender.

Recently I completed a thesis entitled "Homophobia and Heterosexism in the Newfoundland Education System". From my interviews with gay and lesbian teachers, all reported being out to only a few staff

members. While they explained that the main reason for not disclosing their sexual orientation was fear of being fired, other fears were also conveyed. Some teachers fear losing credibility from their colleagues and students. One such teacher stated that she did not want to be known as the lesbian teacher on staff. She believes that our school system does not appear to allow for a teacher to be both a lesbian and a good teacher. Other teachers reported that they feared parents would not want us teaching their children. Unfortunately, some parents may believe we are trying to recruit their children to be gay, and some even believe we are child molesters because of our sexual orientation. Fear was also expressed that students may taunt us because of our sexual orientation. All teachers reported that they constantly fear being ousted by an unfriendly colleague, student, or parent. Consequently, lesbian and gay teachers spend an exorbitant amount of energy dealing with unexpected questions pertaining to their personal lives. Some cut their answers short, some avoid the questions, while others answer them indirectly.

However, the mental anguish and feelings of isolation from being in the closet can be overwhelming. Lesbian and gay teachers often feel like outsiders in their own staff rooms. One teacher I interviewed reported that before coming out she would listen to what everyone did on the weekend and say nothing. Finally, she told five or six of her colleagues, so that she could "exist".

Coming out would not only benefit teachers. Gay and lesbian students are literally dying for healthy role models. Homophobia (an unreasonable or irrational fear or hatred of homosexuals) is rampant in our schools. Name-calling, harassment, and anti-gay violence are all acts of homophobia. This behavior affects both our homosexual and heterosexual youths. Most of the perpetrators of anti-gay violence are youths. Consequently, lesbians and gays fear coming out to their peers because they realize they could be beaten, mocked, or ostracized. Research findings indicate that gays and lesbians comprise 30 percent of completed suicides in youths. Isolation, homophobia, and lack of information regarding their sexual orientation are the causes of suicide, rather than their sexual orientation itself. Teachers need to break down the negative stereotypes regarding gays and lesbians so the entire community can grow and prosper. Learning respect and appreciation for all types of people, no matter what race, gender, ability, or sexual orientation, should be an intrinsic part of a student's education. This kind of education prepares students to interact more successfully later in society and creates a community where diversity is valued.

When I began teaching I feared coming out. Eventually I came out to a few close colleagues, later others. I don't ever want to feel that isolation again. There have been no repercussions in coming out; in fact, I feel closer to many staff members since my life is no longer a secret. My biggest fears were alleviated in December. I had been a guest on CBC's Crosstalk, discussing the amendment to the Human Rights Code from a lesbian teacher's perspective. Two days later a parent approached me and said she was proud that one of her daughter's teachers was courageous enough to come out publicly. When she told her daughter I was a lesbian, my student flippantly stated that she had known for years. My fears were all for naught.

Another lesbian teacher I interviewed informed me that when we were protected from being fired, she would dance on the staff room table and disclose her sexual orientation. So let's get dancing! Open that closet door. Take a peek; it feels pretty good being out there!

Ann Shortall is a lesbian teacher. She helps co-ordinate the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Questioning (LGBQ) Youth Group. She is also a member of the Equity Issues in Education Committee. If your school is interested in hosting a workshop on Homophobia in the Newfoundland Education System, Ms. Shortall can be contacted by e-mail ([ashortal@stemnet.nf.ca](mailto:ashortal@stemnet.nf.ca)).

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# REALITY BYTES

by Marita Moll and Bernie Froese-Germain

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Let's be realistic. Machines are an integral feature of modern life. From bread machines to bank machines, they now serve us where people once did. But when the ATM machine denies us access on a long holiday weekend, we will be banking that our networks of family and friends have survived this techno-explosion.

"Life means people, and people mean friendship, support, sustenance and love. Life is justice --; the striving for justice," says Ursula Franklin, social activist and professor emeritus at the University of Toronto. Dr. Franklin has spent a lifetime working for peace and social justice. This experience, combined with her professional life as an experimental physicist and her many years as a member of the Science Council of Canada, have given her an especially valuable perspective on the impact of science and technology on our lives. No matter which public project we are working on, she says, we need to ask "what does the new technology do, what does it prevent us from doing and what don't we do any more because the new technology is in place?"

## **Modern dilemmas**

Ivan Illich in *Tools for Conviviality* describes the characteristics of empowering tools as "those which give each person who uses them the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision." In concert with many others who have studied and written on the subject, he warns that scientific discoveries can be used both to empower us and to enslave us. This is precisely our dilemma when we consider the appropriate place of new technologies in education.

Advocates for their use are convinced that individual empowerment and control will be the legacy of such change. In fact, they say, we cannot fail to make this shift, for a new generation of techno-savvy students will accept nothing less. Education must be tailored to meet individual needs. The role of the teacher will change from gatekeeper of information to tour guide through an information-besieged society. In the new globalized economy, the current reliance on physical infrastructure and institutional mechanisms to facilitate the delivery of education must give way to a process which is accessible at any time, in any place.

Critics point out, however, that centralized monitoring and control, standardization, homogenization, and privatization are all facilitated by the new technologies. A scan of the current political environment confirms increasing centralization of power where it counts --; in curriculum design and development, in assessment and evaluation of teachers, students and the system, and in school funding. For the public school system, say the critics, this trend seems well on the way to overpowering the "decentralization and personal empowerment" features offered by the new technologies.

## **Technorealism**

Recently, a group of well-known technology commentators declared a "middle ground" in this debate. According to their web site ([www.technorealism.org](http://www.technorealism.org)), "Technorealism demands that we think critically about the role that tools and interfaces play in human evolution and everyday life." They suggest that consensus is emerging around a number of principles including: "technologies are not neutral," "information is not knowledge," and "wiring the schools will not save them" --; noting, on this point, that problems such as class size and crumbling infrastructure have nothing to do with technology.

The principles also reinforce CTF policy which states that technology can assist but never replace the essential communication process between teacher and student. "The art of teaching cannot be replicated by computers, the Net, or by 'distance learning'", the technorealist web site says. "These tools can, of course,

augment an already high-quality educational experience. But to rely on them as any sort of panacea would be a costly mistake." The high degree of similarity between these statements and the concerns we have tried to express in this series was a pleasant surprise.

The site also provides space for on-line debate and a register of supporters. We noted in Part 1 of this series that "determining the role of public education within the evolving social and economic structure must be an inclusive and ongoing social project." On-line debate can be a valuable new tool to support discussion and alliance-building. However, Dr. Franklin warns, we must keep ourselves from being distracted from the task by the power of the tools at our disposal. "When is that moment when the intangibles of the potluck far outweigh the elegance of a message on the Internet? Because in the end, what we are all concerned about is people." We expect that the technorealists would be in agreement.

### **Reserving the right of "recall"**

National and provincial technology incentive programs are not awaiting the result of public discourse on the objectives of education. As well as promoting debate, there must be some processes in place to deal with unfolding events. Dr. Franklin in her acclaimed 1989 Massey Lecture, *The Real World of Technology*, provides us with valuable principles to guide the evaluation of public projects. Her checklist for such initiatives asks: Do they promote justice and equity, restore reciprocity, favour people over machines and conservation over waste? Have we considered the losses as well as the gains? And perhaps most importantly, are we proceeding in small, reversible steps?

In this model, access to human support in educational services at all levels is clearly essential. Programs, technological or otherwise, must be diverse to maintain their relevance to the surrounding social and economic context. Above all, we must be especially conscious of the need to reserve the right of "recall" --; the right and the ability to withdraw and re-evaluate initiatives which are not living up to expectations. Massive investments are required to "retool" any process. Mistakes will be made in the process and some projects will not work out as planned. Moving too quickly could lead us down paths from which there is no easy retreat as education becomes more and more disconnected from traditional processes and resources.

### **Permissible computing**

The appropriate use of computers in education was a subject of discussion well before the Internet burst on the scene. In his 1988 book, *Permissible Computing in Education; Values, Assumptions, and Needs*, Ronald Ragsdale, now retired from the faculty at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, provides guidelines for evaluating proposed computer applications in education which were intended "not to exclude computers from the educational process, but to make informed decisions about their use." He emphasizes that no technology is value-neutral and that both supporters and detractors of computing in education base their claims on various assumptions. After examining some of these, he describes a process to determine what needs to be done in education once the question "What kind of students should the education system be producing?" has been answered in terms of establishing curriculum goals. This is followed by a process to determine how computers will help achieve those objectives. This more complex approach is certainly not an easy sell in a society accustomed to instant solutions. In the long run, however, simplistic solutions will not serve us and the kind of work proposed by Ragsdale and Franklin will have to be undertaken.

### **No easy answers**

CTF projects on the subject of education and technology include an extensive on-going document review, *Critical Issues in Education and Technology* (available at [www.ctf-fce.ca/e/what/restech/reviews.htm](http://www.ctf-fce.ca/e/what/restech/reviews.htm)). Listed there is an extensive body of critical literature which is mostly unreported and unknown to teachers and the general public. We have attempted, in this series, to reflect some of this literature.

In our own work, the information resources on the web have become indispensable, but more and more frequently, we find ourselves on the edge of information overload. While the rapid integration of e-mail has

offered us new alliance-building opportunities, it has also led to rapidly increasing workloads. It will take time to find a balance between the new and the old tools both in schools and in the workplace.

Teachers, given time, have always incorporated new tools when and where they were appropriate. The greatest potential for damage lies in the unrelenting pressure to move quickly or be left behind in the dust of the information age. Wiring the schools by the year 2000 will not save them. Education is a social project, not a technological one. We close with words from media guru Marshall McLuhan, "There is absolutely no inevitability as long as there is a willingness to contemplate what is happening."

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Marita Moll is Head of Research and Technology and Bernie Froese-Germain is Research Assistant with the Canadian Teachers' Federation.

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# RESOURCES

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## **Winter Games Education Resource Booklet**

The 1999 Canada Winter Games Host Society has developed an Education Resource Booklet for use in primary and elementary schools throughout Newfoundland and Labrador. This teaching supplement is provided free of charge and will be distributed to primary and elementary schools in the province. This resource is made possible through the support of Newfoundland Power. This 200 page booklet, available in both official languages, provides an opportunity for educators to integrate the 1999 Canada Winter Games into their instructional program. The activities are designed primarily for Grades Kindergarten to Grade Six but can be adapted for all grade levels. The Booklet consists of an introductory section with information on the Host Society, background information about the Canada Games, the Host Region, the sports, the venues, past Newfoundland and Labrador medal winners and interesting facts on the Canada Games. The instructional sections are primarily suggestions on how to link the 1999 Canada Winter Games' sports to classroom instruction in language arts, math, science and health, art, physical education and values. Teachers are our link in developing the "Spirit of the Games" within each of the Province's school communities. Join Team Newfoundland as we bring the 1999 Canada Winter Games into your classroom. We are certain it will be an exciting journey for all! For more information on the 1999 Canada Winter Games visit our web site at <http://www.cgames99.ca> or contact: Georgina Etheridge, Community Relations Coordinator at 709-637-1218 or by e-mail at [ethridge@newcomm.net](mailto:ethridge@newcomm.net).

## **Biotechnology magazine on the Internet**

The magazine Biotechnology/Youth's Future, a magazine for Canadian high school students and science teachers, is published in English and French on the Internet by the Acadian Institute of Biotechnology of Moncton, New Brunswick. A list of biotechnology pedagogical resources is included in the magazine. The web site address is: <http://biotech.acadie.net>. For further information contact Acadian Institute of Biotechnology, 299 Hennessey Road, Moncton, NB, E1A 5C7, Tel: 506-859-1900; Fax: 506-384-9635; e-mail: [rutangaj@brunnet.net](mailto:rutangaj@brunnet.net).

## **Ann Connor Brimer Award**

### **Call for Nominations**

The Nova Scotia Library Association is seeking nominations for the 9th annual Ann Connor Brimer Award, a \$1,000 prize for a children's book which makes an outstanding contribution to children's literature in Atlantic Canada. The purpose of this award is to recognize excellence in writing. The award will be presented in May 1999 at an event celebrating other major Atlantic book awards.

To be eligible authors must be alive and residing in Atlantic Canada at time of nomination; the book must be intended for children up to the age of 15 and published in Canada between April 30, 1998 and December 30, 1998; the book must be fiction or non-fiction (except textbooks), in print and readily available. The Steering Committee reserves the right to accept or reject nominations.

For nomination forms or for further information, contact: Mary Duffy, Spring Garden Road Memorial Public Library, Halifax Regional Library, 5381 Spring Garden Road, Halifax, NS, B3J 1E9, Tel: 902-490-5822. The completed nominations must be received no later than January 15, 1999.

## **Outfront's "Reality Check" on CBC Radio Welcomes All Teens Aged 13-18**

It's time for a Reality Check. It's time to give teens a chance to voice how they feel and what they are passionate about. What do Canadian teenagers really care about? To find out, get with the program and participate in this program Outfront on CBC Radio One.

Outfront is launching Reality Check, a national competition for kids aged 13 - 18. We're looking for written or recorded essays that deal with real events, experiences and dilemmas in the real lives of Canadian teens. Twelve finalists will be chosen and given the tools to make their own short radio documentaries based on their submissions.

Submissions must be one written page or under two minutes recorded. You can send them by e-mail to: [outfront@toronto.cbc.ca](mailto:outfront@toronto.cbc.ca) or snail mail to: Outfront, CBC Radio, Box 500, Station A, Toronto, ON, M5W 1E6. **Deadline: January 31, 1999.**

You can hear Outfront weeknights at 9:15 p.m. on CBC Radio One. For any questions, contact Kirstie Smith, Tel: 416-205-7367; Fax: 416-205-8552; e-mail: [outfront2@toronto.cbc.ca](mailto:outfront2@toronto.cbc.ca).

### **Screening Volunteers in Sports and Recreation in Newfoundland and Labrador.**

This program provides the National Education Campaign on Screening Volunteers and Employees in Positions of Trust with Children and Other Vulnerable People training program to staff and volunteers in sports and recreation across the province of Newfoundland and Labrador and to provide support for the development and implementation of appropriate screening policies and procedures in those systems. This can be accomplished through information sessions, training of staff and volunteers, and/or assistance with policy and procedure development. Province wide, sports and recreation programs involve thousands of volunteers with children, the disabled and seniors. Careful screening will help protect program participants, volunteers, staff, and delivery organizations.

The partners in this project are the Newfoundland and Labrador High School Athletic Federation, the Newfoundland and Labrador Parks and Recreation Association, the Newfoundland and Labrador Sports Federation, and the Community Services Council, Volunteer Centre. For more information contact the Community Services Council, Volunteer Centre, Suite 201, Second Floor, Virginia Park Plaza, Newfoundland Drive, St. John's, NF, A1A 3E9, Tel: 709-753-9860; Fax: 709-753-6112.

### **What is Two Floors High, has Dinosaur Feet and is Crawling with Bugs?**

It's here --; Newfoundland Science Centre's (NSC) newest exhibit FUNdamentals! The NSC presents science the way it's meant to be hands-on! Walk like a dinosaur, race your reflexes, build a bubble wall and much more! The exhibit offers an opportunity for discovery learning and provides hands-on links to many aspects of the curriculum including life science, forces, light and reflection.

During your class visit, participate in a NSC dazzling demonstration choose from "Chemical Crazyiness", "What A Charge!" or "Air Force 101" and more. NSC demonstrations are available for various age groups and follow current science curriculum guidelines.

Can't take a field trip? That's okay! Invite NSC Science Buskers to your school. Lively NSC staff will bring hands-on science into your classroom --; even the most "science-shy" will enjoy this guest. Looking for something really different, inquire about our Overnights program.

The NSC is located in The Murray Premises, 5 Beck's Cove, St. John's, NF, Tel: 709-754-0823; Fax: 709-738-3276; e-mail: [ldsheppa@stemnet.nf.ca](mailto:ldsheppa@stemnet.nf.ca).

### **Cable Television Broadens Classroom Experience**

Cable in the Classroom is a non-profit educational initiative funded by Canadian cable companies and cable channels. It was developed in response to teacher's requests for access to television programs to use as educational tools in the classroom. Teachers are prohibited by copyright law from showing video to students in a classroom because it is considered a public viewing audience. CITC programs are copyright-cleared, commercial-free, and available in French or English to teachers in publicly funded elementary and

secondary schools across Canada. Teachers can record programs at school or in their homes, preview the material and use it to support parts of their curriculum. For more information contact Cable in the Classroom, Tel: 613-233-3033, 1-800-244-9049; Fax: 613-233-7650; web site: [www.cablededucation.ca](http://www.cablededucation.ca)

### **The Great Canadian Trivia Books**

The Great Canadian Trivia Book: A Collection of Compelling Curiosities from Alouette to Zed and The Great Canadian Trivia Book 2, were written by freelance writers Randy Ray of Ottawa, Ontario and Mark Kearney of London, Ontario.

The Great Canadian Trivia Book was published in October 1996 by Hounslow Press of Toronto and had sold more than 11,500 copies as of September 1, 1998. The Great Canadian Trivia Book 2, which had sold 5,300 copies as of September 1, 1998, deals with more than 140 Canadian conundrums, such as why Sir Isaac Brock was buried four times; whether Canadians have always voted on the same day in federal general elections; why Canada once had a blue \$2 bill; whether a goalie can take a face-off in a hockey game and the Canadian connection to the hold-up command "hands-up".

The books cover a variety of subjects, including sports, history, politics, money, entertainment, war, medicine, science and geography. They are the culmination of years of extensive research by the writers who have authored three syndicated trivia columns, Beaver Tales, It's A Fact and Canadian Fact File, which have appeared in several Canadian newspapers, including The Toronto Star, The Saskatoon Star-Phoenix, The Calgary Herald, The Winnipeg Sun and The Red Deer Advocate.

The Great Canadian Trivia Books are easy to read, entertaining and educational, and are popular with readers of all ages and interests. The books are available in bookstores across Canada for \$17.99 or at a discount from the authors. For more information contact Randy Ray,

Tel: 613-731-3873 or e-mail: [rocket@intranet.ca](mailto:rocket@intranet.ca) or Mark Kearney, Tel: 519-472-4509 or e-mail: [ptce99@julian.uwo.ca](mailto:ptce99@julian.uwo.ca). Please check out The Great Canadian Trivia Books on our web page: <http://ottawabureau.com/trivia>.

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# CALENDAR of Upcoming Events

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## **Math/Science**

November 19-20, 1998

Gander. Contact: Clar Brown,

Tel: 709-489-2168, Fax: 709-489-6585; or Earl Crowther, Tel: 709-944-7731,

Fax: 709-944-6834.

## **Resolving Difficult Discipline Problems**

November 30, 1998

Grand Falls-Windsor. Internationally renowned expert Dr. Michael R. Valentine will speak on the topic of Resolving Difficult Discipline Problems. This event is presented by School District #5 --; Baie Verte, Central, Connaigre. Registration deadline is November 23. For more information and registration kits contact Keith Adey, P.O. Box 70, Grand Falls-Windsor, NF, A2A 2J3. Tel: 709-489-5796; Fax: 709-489-1233.

## **Memorial University School of Social Work**

Winter 1999

St. John's. Continuing Education for Field Instructors --; January 21, 1999. Registration deadline: December 18, 1998; Working with Families and Children Who Witness Violence --; February 11, 1999. Registration deadline: January 8, 1999. Contact: Joan Roberts, Clinical Institute, School of Social Work, Memorial University of Newfoundland, St. John's, NF, A1C 5S7, Tel: 709-737-2553; Fax: 709-737-7026.

## **1999 Canada Winter Games**

February 20 - March 6, 1999

Corner Brook. Contact: Georgina Etheridge, Tel: 709-637-1999, Fax: 709-785-1999; e-mail: [ethridge@newcomm.net](mailto:ethridge@newcomm.net).

## **Humanities**

April 22-23, 1999

St. John's. Contact: Geoffrey Booth, Tel: 709-944-7628.

## **Technology Education**

April 30 - May 1, 1999 (tentative)

Battery Hotel, St. John's. Contact: Garland Jennings, Tel: 709-579-4107.

## **Canadian Vision Teachers Conference '99**

May 6-9, 1999

Halifax, Nova Scotia. Relevant topics will be of interest to itinerant, classroom and resource teachers. Contact: Sandra Sackett, APSEA, 5940 South Street, Halifax, NS, B3H 1S6, Tel: 902-424-8520, Fax: 902-424-0543; e-mail: [sacketts@apsea.ca](mailto:sacketts@apsea.ca).

## **School Administrators (in conjunction with CAP)**

May 19-21, 1999

St. John's. Contact: George Tucker, Tel: 709-726-3682 or Richard Harvey, Tel: 709-834-2081.

## **Program Specialists**

May 26-28, 1999 (tentative)

Gander. Contact: Pat Collins, Tel: 709-786-7182.

**Small Schools institute**

August 9-11, 1999

St. Anthony. Contact: Barbara House, Tel: 709-635-2337 (s); 709-634-2205 (h).

**Music**

October 15-16, 1999

St. John's. Contact: Mary Dinn, Tel: 709-754-1253.

**Primary**

October 20-22, 1999 (tentative)

Gander. Contact: Mary Keats, Tel: 709-679-2162.

**Learning Resources**

November 14-16, 1999 (tentative)

Contact: Kathy Rowsell, Tel: 709-634-6837.

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**Note:** Contact the [Professional Development Division](#) at the NLTA for any changes or additions to NLTA Special Interest Council workshops/conferences.