

bulletin

Vol. 58/No. 2

November/December 2014

HAPPY HOLIDAYS



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T H E
bulletin

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The Bulletin is published five times a year during the school year by the Newfoundland & 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 Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @NLTeachersAssoc

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Subscription Rate: \$18 per year. For subscriptions and address changes contact Michelle Lamarche, Ext. 227 mlamarche@nlta.nl.ca

Deadlines for material are:
January/February Issue: January 5
March/April Issue: March 2

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

Up Front from the President



I am a part of all that I have met. ~ "Ulysses" Alfred, Lord Tennyson

At the time of writing this *Up Front* article I learned that I had been acclaimed NLTA President for a second term. Serving as your president is my greatest privilege, and it will be my honour to continue to serve you. I look forward to working with you over the next two and a half years.

From the beginning when I campaigned for Vice-President and, later, President, I made it my priority to visit as many schools as possible throughout the province. Since taking office in August 2013, I continued that commitment and visited schools I had not had the opportunity to visit before – schools in Labrador, the Port Aux Basques region, on the Avalon, Northern, and Port au Port Peninsulas... the list goes on. And there are schools still left to visit and schools to revisit.

I listened to what teachers told me so that when I spoke, I was confident I represented the perspective of all teachers. Most of all, I simply enjoyed talking to colleagues. Sometimes the conversation would be a question and answer format, sometimes formal, but mostly casual. Sometimes the whole staff was involved, and sometimes just a few. The conversations were always about what teachers wished to talk about and were as varied as the staffs I visited – everything from the challenges of raising a family, to the results of a hockey game, to restaurants and recipes, to the tough issues of workload and contract related matters.

Visiting so many schools deepened my respect for the geography and size of our province. More importantly, I gained a true appreciation of the subtle daily stresses we face which wear on us – stresses I dismissed as normal when I taught. Take lunch duty. For the most part, as President, I have a measure of control over my daily schedule, but for my entire 32-year career as a teacher, I lived by the bell.

As President, I have the chance to

observe teachers as they file into the staffroom at the bell and wolf down lunch if they are on duty. Sometimes a second bell sounds to end the first half of lunch, sometimes not. A final bell signals the end of lunch and the return to afternoon classes. A person wishing to see a demonstration of classical conditioning need only visit a school staffroom during lunch. With each bell it was as if a mild electrical shock had been administered.

Teachers return to afternoon classes and are expected to be on the top of their instructional game. For many of us, this is "normal." It's not until we are removed from the situation that we realize how relaxed and rejuvenating a lunch period can be. And it's not just lunch duty; it's the multitude of demands placed on us as we fulfill our first responsibility to the children in our care.

My wife retired from teaching this past June. She was a primary teacher and loved her job. Several weeks ago I commented on how relaxed she looked. And make no wonder! With the persistent deadlines and duty demands removed, she has time to breathe.

Having said that, many of my experiences as President are very gratifying. One of my most rewarding duties is to congratulate colleagues throughout the province for awards they receive in recognition of teaching excellence. My school visits also give me the opportunity to witness the incredible sense of collegiality, professionalism, and dedication of teachers to their students.

Great things happen daily in our schools as a result of the concern teachers have for their students. Recently, I listened to a news story on an incredible one-day workshop on mental health, organized by students and teachers for students at a local school. And I cannot begin to count the number of schools I visit with teacher-run breakfast programs for students. I have attended

poignant Remembrance Day Ceremonies arranged by teachers so that the act of remembrance as a sacred duty is instilled in students. In one school the administration had accumulated a collection of clothing and had installed a washer and dryer to provide clean clothing for students who were in need.

Whether it is a small rural or a large urban school, the teachers I meet take great pride and professional satisfaction in offering their students educational opportunities beyond the curriculum. Some opportunities are meant to raise social awareness in students. As proof, I need only consider the impressive number and quality of student submissions to our Words Hurt poster contest. Teachers and their students participate in Terry Fox runs, Janeway Day fundraising activities and food drives for local food banks.

As I write this article teachers across our province are preparing their students for

Christmas concerts. Intramural programs and school varsity teams are not possible without teachers dedicating their time and effort. Student Councils (so important in fostering student leadership) thrive because of a teacher moderator. Last year I attended one school's opening ceremonies for a week of Olympic games organized by a teacher. The elementary students were ecstatic. For the past few years I have been asked to judge student finalists in another school's public speaking competition. Before this year is finished high school teachers will be working with their students to plan Safe Grad activities and graduation ceremonies. We may get paid to teach, but our greatest reward and sense of professional satisfaction is rooted in our students.

I am privileged to have spoken with so many of you. My presidency has been enriched as a result. I count myself fortunate. Sometimes, it's easy to forget the realities (both the challenges and the joys)

of the classroom when removed from it. I like to believe my visits and conversations with you keep me grounded in your realities – in our shared reality.

I committed to being your voice and will continue to articulate – to the best of my ability – the experiences of teachers across our province. For this reason I will continue to visit schools and will continue the dialogue with teachers. I hope you will feel comfortable enough to share what's on your mind, whether it's a story about a success with a student, an insight into the challenges of balancing your work life and personal life, or a helpful critique of my performance. It will make me a better President.



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PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
NEWS

GRAND FALLS-WINDSOR

Exploits Valley Intermediate gives back to their community

Exploits Valley Intermediate (EVI) celebrated the Thanksgiving holiday by not only giving thanks for what they have, but by giving to others as well. As part of the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) program at EVI, all students and staff are divided into five separate Houses and throughout the year there are opportunities to win points for each House through fun and healthy competition.

The challenge this October was to be the House that brought in the most food donations for the local food bank. With the Hawk House bringing in 137 points, the Falcon House with 143 points, the Osprey House with 144 points, the Owls with 166 points and the Vultures with 186 points, the staff and students at EVI were able to donate a total of 776 items to the local food bank. During an assembly on October 8, students welcomed Mrs. Goulding to receive the donations on behalf of the food bank as well as Reverend Kim Waite who opened the assembly by leading the school in a blessing for thanksgiving.



Students at Exploits Valley Intermediate gather to present food donations to their local food bank.

Since the students so eagerly accepted this challenge and it was such a worthy cause, each item of food donated earned students a “Gotcha”. This little slip of paper enabled students to put their names in for prize draws and the PBS committee gave out 24 prizes during their assembly to students.

“The afternoon was a great show of school spirit and generosity,” says Krista Simms, Math/Science Teacher at Exploits Valley Intermediate. “Exploits Valley Intermediate would like to thank the students, the staff, Mrs. Goulding and Reverend Kim Waite for a wonderful afternoon as well as the local businesses that help donate to the PBS program and make it such a success.”

SPANIARD’S BAY

Holy Redeemer and the Gary Churchill Memorial Scholarship

For the past 35 years the family of Gary Churchill (a member of the military who died while still serving) has sponsored an essay competition at Holy Redeemer School in Spaniard’s Bay. Each year the grade 9 class visits Branch 9 (Corporal Matthew Brazil) where they are treated to lunch and various activities surrounding the theme of Remembrance. The focal point of the visit is when the students visit the Veteran’s Lounge and are given a history lesson on many of the artifacts and other items donated by the families of the veterans who served in some capacity. “It is indeed a great learning experience for the students who gain inspiration for their essays,” says Paul Sheppard, a teacher at Holy Redeemer School. According to Mr. Dan Churchill (father of Gary Churchill), “words cannot express the support and commitment that he is given by the administration and staff of Holy Redeemer School in making this scholarship a success.”

As part of the school’s Remembrance Day celebrations, the students of Holy Redeemer participate in a poster, poem and essay contest sponsored by the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 9 in Spaniard’s Bay. A

winner from each category is selected from each grade level (K-9) and displayed at the annual Remembrance Day dinner held at the Royal Canadian Legion, Branch 9. During the dinner on November 17, the first and second place essay winners from grade 9 (centered on the theme of Remembrance) read their winning essays. Along with monetary rewards the first and second place winners will have a plaque placed in the school and Legion that contains the previous winners of 35 years. The winning entries of the poster (Primary), poem and essay (Elementary and Intermediate) are sent to Provincial Command of the Royal Canadian Legion to be judged on a Provincial basis.



Grade 9 students from Holy Redeemer School visit Royal Canadian Legion Branch 9.

Holy Redeemer students attend Oceans 2014 Conference

On September 18, all 84 Holy Redeemer Intermediate students and staff attended the Ocean Innovation – Youth Forum 2014 at the Mile One Conference Centre in St. John's.

In the morning session students participated in experiential learning activities and viewed presentations and trivia. The afternoon session included a fantastic tour of all the displays from companies all



Intermediate students and staff of Holy Redeemer attend Ocean Innovation – Youth Forum 2014.

over the world at the Oceans 2014 conference held at Mile One Centre.

The students of Holy Redeemer Intermediate would like to thank the Marine Institute for inviting them to attend the Ocean Innovation – Youth Forum 2014 and for covering all of the costs to attend this wonderful event.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

NLTA Scholarship Winners

Six Newfoundland and Labrador students who completed high school last June have been awarded NLTA scholarships for 2013-14. They are: Allison Best (Fogo Island Central Academy), daughter of Kristine Howse-Best, Fogo; Emily Anne Chaisson (Corner Brook Regional High), daughter of William and Catherine Chaisson, Corner Brook; Allison Jacobs (Holy Spirit High School), daughter of Denise Jacobs, Paradise; Bradley Rogers (Jane Collins Academy), son of Trina Rogers, Trinity, B. Bay; Joshua Thomas (Ascension Collegiate), son of Paula Thomas, Coley's Point; and Lauren Winsor (O'Donel High School), daughter of Donna Howse Winsor, Mount Pearl.

The scholarships are awarded annually to dependents of active, retired, disabled or deceased members of the NLTA and are valued at \$1,000 each. Awards are based on the criteria used by the Department of Education for the selection of provincial scholarship recipients.



Allison Best



Emily Anne Chaisson



Allison Jacobs



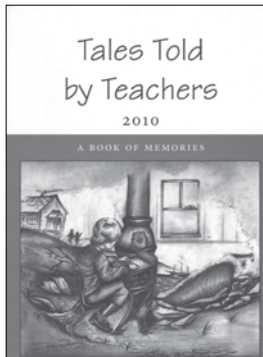
Bradley Rogers



Joshua Thomas



Lauren Winsor



Tales Told by Teachers Vols. I & II

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Order by phone, e-mail or post:

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Don White: don.white01@bellaliant.net; (709) 368-7269
RTANL, 3 Kenmount Road, St. John’s, NL A1B 1W1

NOTE: We have only a few copies of Volume I remaining. To avoid disappointment you may wish to purchase yours soon. No further printing is planned in the immediate future.

Kids Eat Smart update

Kids Eat Smart (KES) Foundation, with the help of generous donors and dedicated volunteers, operate 232 Kids Eat Smart Clubs province wide. Every school day KES serves over 22,000 meals to children in schools and community centres province wide.

Currently over 86% of schools in our province operate a Kids Eat Smart Club. While the majority of the Clubs serve breakfast, some serve snacks and lunch.

Kids Eat Smart Clubs are volunteer-operated and run. Volunteers shop for groceries, prepare the food and clean up after every meal. Without the help of over 6000 people who volunteer every year this program would be impossible to provide for our students.

Kids Eat Smart Foundation realizes the responsibility their volunteers have and the dedication it takes to offer these nutrition programs to students. They offer tools and assistance to help volunteers run their KES Clubs.

KES has a staff Registered Dietitian who reviews menus and works to ensure Clubs meet the School Food Guidelines and Canada Food Guide in developing meal preparation. They also have four Regional Coordinators who are in the field on a daily basis working directly with school staff and Kids Eat Smart Club volunteers. They provide menu review in consultation with the Registered Dietitian, trouble shooting when clubs may be experiencing challenges, provide food safety overview, volunteer recruitment support and encourage and provide fundraising support for KES Clubs.

Each Regional Coordinator is responsible for schools located in their general geographic area – Central, Western, Rural Avalon, Burin and Vista and Urban Avalon and Labrador. They are the voice of Kids Eat Smart in their regions. They work with KES Club volunteers and principals to ensure KES Clubs are being run properly, meals are planned according to guidelines and that the Clubs have the equipment and resources necessary to ensure children receive nutritious food through their KES Clubs.

NL Government launches Hotshots

On October 10, 2014, the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador’s Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and Office of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency launched a new initiative called “Hotshots” at C.C. Loughlin School in Corner Brook. Hotshots pro-

Attention New and Beginning Teachers



If you have not seen or received the following, please contact :

**Beverley Park • NLTA • bpark@nlta.nl.ca
726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 244**

vides energy saving student and teacher resources custom designed for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Hotshots initiative includes a number of exciting components – information packs, presentations, contests, and curriculum resources – which are all available in both English and French.

Information packs and posters are being sent to principals, grade 6, and grade 9 teachers across the province. The packs contain facts on where energy comes from in Newfoundland and Labrador, why it's important to save energy, and simple actions we can take to save energy.

Hotshots has partnered with the takeCHARGE program to double the number of K-6 public schools that can receive free classroom presentations about saving energy, and offer two contests through which students can win up to ten iPads for their school. The closing dates for the K-6 and 7-12 contests are December 19, 2014 and April 2, 2015 respectively.

Additionally, the Hotshots website has new supplementary teacher resources specifically developed to help meet curriculum outcomes in Science 6 and Science 9.

To access resources, book a classroom presentation, find out more about the contests, or learn more about the Hotshots initiative, visit www.hotshotnl.ca.

NL author releases *Temperance Street*

It's been four years since retired teacher and NL author Herb Hopkins released *The Book of Luke*. This May he launched his second novel, *Temperance Street*. Yes, Luke is back, but this time a much younger Luke – fourteen...

It's July 2nd, nineteen-ninety two, the Cod fishery and the Catholic Church are imploding under the weight of unfathomable abuse.

The young protagonist, Luke Delaney, a bookish boy, and his brazen best buddy, Mikey Ryan set out from the Outer Battery to climb the Salt Mountains. Things fall apart as twenty thousand fishermen are written off – point blank.

As one man said, "Everyone was so busy blaming everyone else that they forgot to look in the mirror."

To read the first five chapters of *Temperance Street* or to order a copy, visit Herb Hopkins' website at www.wordsandwood.ca or check out the Words and Wood Facebook page.

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Are you interested in pursuing a master of education degree?

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- September 15th for winter (January) admission
- February 1st for spring (May) and fall (September) admissions

For additional application and program information, please visit our website at: www.mun.ca/educ/grad/

NEW COHORTS FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS:

The Faculty of Education is offering two new cohorts for graduate students:

1. Language and Literacy Cohort in Curriculum, Teaching and Learning

This new approach recognizes that intentional learning communities nurture authentic relationships amongst peers and professors and deeper engagement with course content.

Location: Courses will be offered online.

Duration: This eight-semester program, designed for part-time students, will begin in spring 2015 and will be completed by the end of fall 2017.

Format: Students will follow a prescribed schedule of courses comprised of eight core courses and two electives. Course descriptions can be viewed at: www.mun.ca/educ/grad/Course_Descriptions.pdf

If you are interested in joining this cohort please send an email to gradeduc@mun.ca with the subject line "L&L cohort."

2. Qualitative Thesis-based Cohort

This new approach recognizes that intentional learning communities nurture authentic relationships amongst peers and professors and deeper engagement with course content.

Location: Two summers on the St. John's campus with options for completing the rest of the program online or on campus.

Duration: This eight-semester program will begin in summer 2015 and have proposals completed by end of summer 2016. The date of thesis completion is flexible.

Format: Cohort introductory meeting at beginning of program in which students meet each other and their cohort advisers, discuss interests, set goals and explore what a thesis involves. Cohort follow-up support meetings will be facilitated and scheduled as decided by the students until thesis completion. Online support will also be available.

Elective and Specialization Course Descriptions can be viewed at: www.mun.ca/educ/grad/Course_Descriptions.pdf

If you are interested in joining this cohort please send an email to gradeduc@mun.ca with the subject line "Qualitative Thesis Cohort."

For more information on these cohorts, please visit the Graduate Studies page at mun.ca/educ/grad/



Faculty of Education



For Grade 6 Teachers:

Sharing Our Cultures supports the delivery of various curriculum outcomes, primarily Grade 6 Social Studies outcomes. Your students can participate at The Rooms in St. John's FREE on March 23 or 24, 2015.

Register at: lloydetta@sharingourcultures.com

Your students:

- engage in intercultural learning
- interact with diverse school youth
- experience aspects of world cultures
- understand the value of diversity
- develop an appreciation for cultures
- learn to accept and respect others

For High School Teachers:

Sharing Our Cultures promotes cross-curricular learning and invites the participation of provincial high school students to showcase their diverse cultures to Grade 6 students.

***NEW* Virtual participation** involves intercultural classroom discussions across regions on living in a culturally diverse province.

Your students:

- gain cross-cultural competency
- learn leadership skills
- build self-confidence
- nurture friendships
- develop a sense of belonging
- acquire volunteer hours

Financial support for this program is provided by the Department of Education and the Office of Immigration and Multiculturalism

Contact:

Dr. Lloydetta Quaicoe

lloydetta@sharingourcultures.com

Telephone: (709) 726-1504

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IN MEMORIAM



EILEEN GIBBONS, 1960 - 2014

She made a difference; She was one of the great ones; The lessons of a great teacher remain etched in our souls... All quotes from former students wishing to pay their respects to an unforgettable teacher, Ms. Eileen Gibbons.

Eileen was born on October 23, 1960 in Flower's Cove. She graduated from St. Augustine's High in June 1977 and from Memorial University in 1982 with a Bachelor of Arts and Education. She began her 30-year teaching career in September 1982 at Templeton Collegiate in Gillams. In September 1989 Eileen moved to G.C. Rowe in Corner Brook and taught there until she retired in June 2012.

The majority of Eileen's teaching career was in the area she was most passionate about – English Language Arts. She believed in quality teaching and learning. Recognizing the strength and potential in each of her students, she set high standards for all who entered her classroom. Eileen believed that no less than your best was good enough, instilling this belief in her students. Those who knew her can attest that she went above and beyond for her students and colleagues, whether it was through chaperoning school dances or trips to South America and Europe, staying late and working on weekends to ensure her students' work was corrected, or planning a staff social. She made a difference.

Small and mighty and famous for her stylish shoes, her quick steps would be heard by students and staff who could immediately conclude that Eileen was on a mission to make something right in her school. From the spark in her eyes to the smirk in her smile, when she entered a room the big presence of a little lady expressed tremendous care and dedication. She will be remembered for her ever-present smile, her strong and generous spirit, and her unparalleled investment into the betterment of those she taught.

Just a few short months after the loss of her father Martin, Eileen passed away on April 29, 2014. She is forever loved, cherished and deeply missed by her mother Annie Gibbons, siblings Joy, Lillian, Mary Jane and Martin, her nieces and nephews, and her partner of 25 years, Vaughn Granter. She will be forever missed, remembered, and respected by her colleagues and students from Templeton Collegiate and G. C. Rowe.

I'll keep a part of you with me and everywhere I am, there you'll be.

You raise me so I can stand on mountains. You raise me up to walk on stormy seas. I am strong when I am on your shoulders. You raise me up to more than I can be.
(Submitted by Colleagues Helen Coleman and Jeff Noseworthy and Eileen's family)



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NLTA Operational Framework Revised

by DON ASH

The operational framework of the NLTA was recently revised with a focus on the NLTA mission statement and the goal of ensuring greatest opportunity for collaboration and teamwork among staff and ensuring a collaborative and consultative approach.

The old operational framework involved four divisions – Benefits and Economic Services, Professional Development, Communications, and Finance and Administration – reporting to the Executive Director.



The new operational structure reflects a more modern approach to our organizational framework with an emphasis on teamwork and collaboration.

The framework recognizes a dual operational role: providing programs and services for teachers and fulfilling the business function of the NLTA, i.e. corporate services. Integral to all operations is effective communications. So, we have combined our former Professional Development Division and Benefits and Economic Services Division under our Programs and Services Team, led by the Assistant Executive Director, and placed Finance and Administration, Human Resources, IT, and building management under the Corporate Services Team, led by the Executive Director.

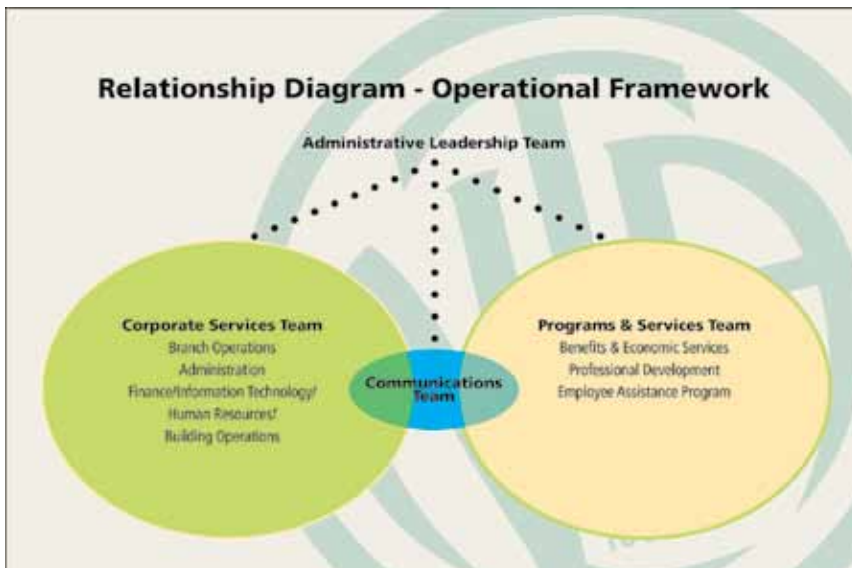
The Communications Team, led by the Communications Officer, is core to all that we do and integrated in the work of both teams. To ensure collaboration and teamwork throughout the operations, the Executive Director leads the Management Leadership Team consisting of: the Assistant Executive Director; the Senior Administrative Officer; the Manager of Finance, Administration, HR and IT; and the Communications Officer.

Together, the NLTA staff report to the Provincial Executive and are responsible for ensuring the policies and governance decisions of the President and Provincial Executive are carried out and fulfilled in the best interest of teachers.

The revision to the operational framework has been seamless and has not caused any disruption to services for teachers. Rather, we believe increased teamwork and collaboration has improved effectiveness and services for teachers.

As stated, our focus at the NLTA remains on our mission statement: *We dedicate ourselves to the professional excellence and personal well-being of teachers, through support, advocacy, educational leadership and the development and delivery of outstanding programs and services.*

Any questions or concerns can be directed to Don Ash, Executive Director of the NLTA.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS



NLTA AWARDS 2014-15

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD

ALLAN BISHOP AWARD

BANCROFT AWARD

BARNES AWARD

Each year your Association honours several of its members with four prestigious awards. If you feel that someone within your school qualifies for nomination for one of these awards for the 2014-15 school year, please contact

your school representative who will forward the name and information on this person to your branch president or the appropriate special interest council president.

All nominations for the above Association awards must be completed on the proper nomination form which can be obtained from your local branch president, the NLTA Office, or printed from www.nlta.nl.ca and must be submitted by January 15, 2015 in order to be considered.

Caring and Sharing for the Janeway

A project of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

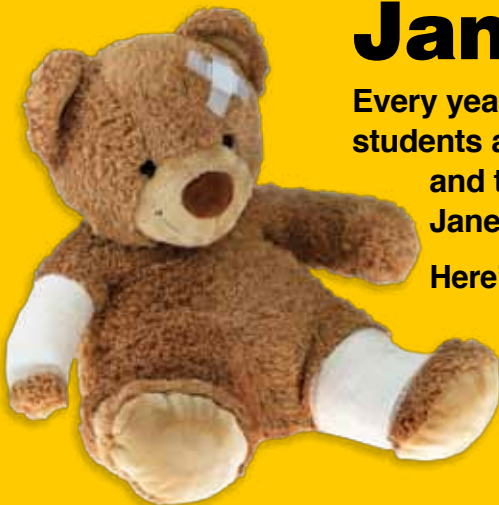
February 13, 2015

Janeway Day 2015

Every year, Janeway Day in the schools provides an opportunity for students and teachers to help other children. **Since 1986** students and teachers have donated more than **\$1,011,821** to the Janeway.

Here's how to participate in Janeway Day 2015: Ask students and teachers to forego the equivalent of recess monies for one day. That's their donation to the Janeway.

All monies will be forwarded to the Janeway to help the children of Newfoundland and Labrador.





Learning to Say “NO”: Tips for Work-Life Balance

by Gail M. Carroll

Half the troubles of this life can be traced to saying yes too quickly and not saying no soon enough.

~ Josh Billings, American Humorist 1818-1885

The most difficult word for most of us to say is “no”. Amazing that when we are two years old the word “no” comes so easily for just about everything as we test our boundaries! What happens to us as we grow and develop? We seem to lose that sense of clarity around our boundaries as the whirl of studies and work life sweep us up like the speed of light. For a variety of reasons we feel compelled to say yes to everything, making it tricky to maintain a healthy work-life balance. For educators, this balance can be even trickier. Why? In the early days of your teaching career there may be a sense of fear around saying no to work things because you are not yet tenured, so you often take it all on. When teachers reach tenure though they sometimes forget that they can say no. Whether you are a tenured or untenured teacher, there are little ways you can present to others that you are trying to achieve balance. It is not going to happen overnight, so you have to start small and grow from there. It is crucial to set good boundaries and to take care of yourself as these qualities will make you a better teacher and enhance the quality of your overall life. It is so easy, and many times also tempting, to just say yes. Learning how to say no is a critical part of learning how to manage your time effectively. Here are some things to think about to help get you started on practicing your “no”:

- Try to thoughtfully craft your choice of words, i.e., when someone asks you to do something that has not been part of your schedule and you are feeling that your schedule is already close to or at a breaking point, try phrasing such as, “I’d really love to do this, but my schedule is very full (or overfull) at this time. Is it possible for us to postpone another deadline so that I could give this the full attention it needs?”
- Think in terms of priorities. When someone asks you to do something, what is the priority? If the

response is urgent, then see the response above. If the request is not urgent then an appropriate response might be, “I’d love to do this for you right now. How urgent is this?” or “Perhaps we can negotiate a time that could work for both of us.” Or you could recommend a colleague (or other avenue) who might be able to assist with the request. If you’re unable to help, recommending a way for them to achieve their goal can also be very satisfactory. So even though you are saying no, you are still helping in some small way.

- We often feel under pressure from colleagues, family and friends to respond immediately to their requests. Some people may be offended or take it personally when we say no. Remember, the only person you have control over is you! To take the heat out of immediate responses and avoid automatically saying yes only to later try getting out of the request, you could respond by saying, “I’d really like to help. Let me check my schedule first and I will get back to you.” A statement like this puts you in the driver’s seat. Again, don’t feel bad if you really cannot accommodate the request or don’t feel up to it. If appropriate, you can always make another recommendation.
- Sometimes you just have to put you first. Some weeks are overfull with work, family and/or personal commitments. Saying “no” is often critical to your overall health, especially your mental health.
- It is important to find your own inner balance to help achieve your optimal health and happiness. Be kind to yourself, be your own best friend and remember to cut yourself some slack. You will not wake up tomorrow and say “Hurray for me! I now have boundaries!” Start with a few small things and build from there.

Strategies for Saying No

When saying “no” feels impossible, here are a few starters:

- Start by saying no to little things as a practice. You don’t want to be disrespectful or get into great trouble or be labelled a trouble maker. So choose

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little things to begin with that will allow you the practice and even lighten your schedule just a little. Being overscheduled in your work life will mean an overscheduling in your personal life and an imbalance all around.

- When saying no, keep your explanations brief and simple. No need for long detail.
- Always work from a list. It will help you to prioritize and you will be less likely to forget important details and deadlines.
- Always use “I” statements and remember to present assertively and not defensively. When we respond with statements such as, “I already have all of this to do and now you are asking me to do more?!” we may appear to be too defensive. Instead, try something like, “I think that sounds like a great idea. Just let me check my schedule and I’ll get back to you.”
- Sometimes a little tweak in your schedule can make all the difference. Getting up a little earlier can help ease the pressure. Even an extra half hour can make a big difference!
- When “no” doesn’t work, then little “yeses” with small achievable goals can also be helpful, i.e., you may not be able to accommodate all of it, but you may be able to do a small part and make recommendations.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help. Sometimes it is impossible to achieve everything by yourself. Even young kids at home can pitch in and help. You just have to cut yourself and everyone else some slack and accept that helping doesn’t mean having to do it to your standards, i.e., kids can help fold laundry, but it won’t look like the folding you do. As long as it gets done, that should be the main focus. It also helps build relationships, confidence and self-esteem for all.
- Keep your communication open, clear and assertive. (Use those “I” statements!)
- Last, but not least, reward yourself for saying no when you need to and helping to keep your work-life balance in check. It might be something as simple as buying a longed for novel, a piece of jewelry or some other tangible little treat.

Remember how important you are and how important your overall health is to your balance and happiness. Starting small and always having a plan will help you achieve an excellent status of self-care and work-life balance over time. Take good care of yourself and you will be the best “YOU” you can be!

Gail M. Carroll is a Coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Gail Carroll (ext. 242), gmc Carroll@nlta.nl.ca or Judy Beranger (ext. 265), jmberanger@nlta.nl.ca.



Developing Successful Schools (DSS) 2014

by GEORGE TUCKER

Once again this year, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association partnered with the teacher associations in the three Atlantic Provinces to sponsor the DSS 2014 Institute. The event took place at Mount Allison University in Sackville, New Brunswick on July 7-10, 2014 and some sixty participants were in attendance. The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association was represented by a delegation of 14 educators.

The focus for the institute was "Cognitive Coaching® for Educational Leaders".

John Clarke, DSS 2014 Institute facilitator, opined, "The mission of Cognitive CoachingSM is to produce self-directed persons with the cognitive capacity for excellence both independently and as members of a community. Research indicates that teaching is a complex intellectual activity and that teachers who think at higher levels produce students who are higher achieving, more cooperative and better problem solvers. It is the invisible skills of teaching, the thinking processes that underlie instructional decisions, which produce superior instruction. Cognitive CoachingSM is a research-based model that capitalizes upon and enhances teachers' cognitive processes."

During DSS 2014, participants learned how to:

- develop trust and rapport
- develop an identity as a mediator of thinking
- utilize conversation structures for planning, reflecting and problem resolving
- develop teachers' autonomy and sense of community
- develop higher levels of efficacy, consciousness, craftsmanship, flexibility and interdependence
- apply four support functions: coaching, evaluating, consulting, and collaborating

- utilize the coaching tools of pausing, paraphrasing, and posing questions
- distinguish among the five forms of feedback
- use data to mediate thinking

Feedback from the DSS 2014 Institute participants was once again very positive. A sampling of the feedback comments include:

- *The past few days have been an asset. I know the skills I have will continue to gleam from the coaching will serve me well. Thanks for three great days.*
- *Awesome sessions and topic! Not only do I feel better equipped in my professional career but also in my personal life. I've enjoyed John's sense of humour and his way of connecting with us/creating rapport. This is my second time at DSS and I have not been disappointed so far. Thanks to organizers and to John.*
- *A well planned conference that I know I can apply to many aspects of my work. Very valuable to the teaching/learning profession. Congrats to all who were in the preparation and planning process. A wonderful opportunity. Thank you. I am so grateful and humbled by this experience.*
- *I really enjoyed this week of learning. Having attended last year I felt that John had big shoes to fill. He stepped up to the task and did not disappoint. Thanks to all for providing us this opportunity.*

Developing Successful Schools (DSS) is an annual event made possible through a partnership between the four Atlantic Teacher Associations (NLTA, NBTA, PEITU and NSTU) and the New Brunswick Department of Education. DSS 2015 will be held at Mount Allison University on July 6-9. More detailed information on DSS 2015 will be available in the New Year. Contact George Tucker, Administrative Officer, Programs and Services with the NLTA at gtucker@nlta.nl.ca if you are interested in being a participant.



John Clarke



DSS 2014 delegates on the steps of Hesler Hall at Mount Allison University

Impact of 2012-2016 Collective Agreement Changes

*The 2012-2016 Provincial Collective Agreement was officially signed on November 3, 2014.
Unless otherwise indicated, changes to the Agreement are effective the date of signing.*

Purchase of Strike Time for Pension Purposes

Letter #3 – Pensionable Service During a Legal Work Stoppage

The renewal of this letter in the 2012-2016 Provincial Collective Agreement has created a **THREE-MONTH WINDOW FROM November 3, 2014 – February 3, 2015 FOR TEACHERS TO PURCHASE LOST PENSIONABLE SERVICE DUE TO A PAST LEGAL WORK STOPPAGE.**

Teachers who were contributing members of the Teachers' Pension Plan during either or both of the work stoppages in 1982-83 and 1993-94 would have lost one month of pensionable service (0.1 years) in each of these school years, unless arrangements were previously made to purchase the lost pensionable service.

As a result, many teachers who work 30 complete years have 29.8 worked pensionable years and use rounding to retire in June of a year under '30 and out'.

A teacher with 29.5 worked pensionable years can round for retirement purposes at the end of a school year (in June) only. A person with 29.3 or 29.4 worked pensionable years cannot retire in June, but must work an additional six or seven months in the following school year in order to be eligible to retire under 30 and out. (As well, rounding can occur in the same manner for teachers retiring under 29+1, and 25 and 55, but only in June.) For teachers who are short one or two months and wish to retire as early as possible, this window of opportunity to purchase strike time can be very important.

Purchasing pensionable service will also add 0.2% (0.22% for 1982-83 service) of pension accrual for each month purchased.

The cost to purchase pensionable service during a legal work stoppage is twice the normal contribution rates at the salary in effect at the time of the work stoppage plus interest.

For those teachers who are interested in purchasing this service, the procedure is to email a request to Heather Whitty at hwhitty@gov.nl.ca or to Lorelei Thomas at loreleithomas@gov.nl.ca, or requests can be submitted by fax to (709) 729-6790. You must provide your SIN and mailing address and ask for a contract to purchase pensionable service lost during a legal work stoppage(s). Pensions Division will send you a contract in the mail outlining the cost and options for payment. This must be done within the three-month window ending February 3, 2015.

Relatively few teachers have utilized previous windows of opportunity to purchase "strike time" because there is no employer contribution to the cost. However, this window may be very important for those teachers who require one or two months to be able to utilize the rounding option for pension eligibility in June of a year. Teachers should check their pension statement, which is mailed each October/November, to determine their pensionable service as of the end of a school year.

Any questions can be directed to an administrative officer in Programs and Services at the NLTA.

Article 5: School Board-Teacher Liaison Committee

For the Newfoundland and Labrador English School District, School Board-Teacher Liaison committees will now be established in the four regions of St. John's, Gander, Corner Brook and Happy Valley-Goose Bay. The committees will meet twice every school year to discuss non-collective agreement issues. Each committee will have four (4) representatives from the school district, including the Director of Education, or designate, an Assistant Director for Programs and two (2) school board members. Each committee will have five (5) representatives from the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, **one of whom is a member of provincial staff of the Association.** There will be a single provincial committee for the Conseil scolaire francophone.

Article 6: Employment of Teachers

Under the Collective Agreement, a school board has an obligation under Clause 6.11(a) when filling vacant positions to first make reasonable effort to accommodate requests from teachers already employed with the Board in a continuing contract. Under

Clause 6.11(b) the Board must also give consideration to applications from teachers who have served in replacement positions and/or substitute positions with the Board before applications from teachers with no previous experience with the Board can be considered. As per the new Clause 6.11(c) the Board is not required to consider teachers already employed in continuing contracts when filling term and replacement positions **that arise after July 15**. Therefore, for term/replacement vacancies which do not exist until after July 15, the Board is not obligated to accommodate requests from permanent teachers but can fill such positions as per Clause 6.11(b).

Article 8: Notification of Vacancies and Promotion

As per the changes negotiated to Article 8, the school boards are no longer required to advertise vacant positions in provincial newspapers. The boards must post all permanent positions on the employer's website for at least seven **(7) calendar days**. Substitute and replacement positions that are known one (1) month in advance and are of more than one (1) month's duration must also be posted on the employer's website for at least seven (7) days.

Article 9: Layoffs

The substantive change to Article 9 is to Clause 9.07(b). According to Clause 9.07(b) teachers will have five (5) working days following notification of a reassignment to inform the Board in writing of either acceptance or rejection of the position. As a result of the language – “five (5) working days following notification” – **teachers will effectively have eight (8) days to respond** since there will always be a weekend within this period. Response will be due to the board by 12:00 (noon) on the fifth working day following notification of reassignment.

Article 11: Teacher Certification

This article limits the retroactive period for receiving salary increases resulting from having obtained higher qualifications, for example, a teacher moving from Certificate 6 to Certificate 7. The onus of responsibility has been placed on the teacher to inform the Registrar of Teacher Certification within 90 days of having obtained the higher qualifications. If the teacher fails to inform the Registrar within this time limit, the retroactive application of certificate change is to the first day of the month in which the teacher notifies the Registrar.

New language under this article in Clause 11.03(c) **places a responsibility upon the Registrar to notify a teacher in writing** of the rules regarding retroactivity when a teacher seeks prior approval for a course of study for the purpose of certification upgrading. When pursuing studies for the purpose of upgrading, the NLTA strongly recommends that teachers contact the Teacher Certification Division of the Department of Education for pre-approval of the proposed course of study. The Registrar can be reached at (709) 729-3020 and via email at teachercertification@gov.nl.ca.

Article 12: Termination of Contracts

Under the new Collective Agreement, probationary teachers may terminate their contracts with a school board by giving two (2) months' notice. Similarly, the school board may terminate the contract of a probationary teacher by giving two (2) months' notice. New under the agreement is a requirement in Clause 11.03(b) that the employer must provide in writing its reason(s) for terminating a probationary contract. In addition, the school board must meet with the teacher to review and discuss the reason(s) for contract termination.

Article 15: Sick Leave

Changes to Clause 15.04 mean that a school board must accept a certificate from a health care provider, such as a registered nurse, or any other person designated by the school board in situations where it is not possible for a teacher to secure a certificate from a doctor. The caveat that the certificate be satisfactory to the school board means that, should a certificate be questioned by the employer, they would have to provide a rationale for that dissatisfaction.

Article 18: Leaves in General

As per the changes to Clause 18.03, teachers **shall be granted family leave with pay, not exceeding three (3) days in the aggregate in a school year**. References to teachers having to make application for this non-discretionary leave have been removed from the Collective Agreement. The criteria for accessing family leave under the agreement have not changed. Family leave is available for: the temporary care of a sick family member; needs related to the birth of the employee's child; medical or dental appointments for dependent family members; meetings with school authorities or adoption agencies; needs related to the adoption of a child; or home or family emergencies.

Article 20: Educational Leave

The minimum number of full-time equivalent teaching unit leaves that must be granted annually under this article has been changed from twenty-five (25) to twelve (12).

Article 21: Salaries

In computing years of service for salary purposes (steps on the salary scale), a teacher can be credited for periods of prior service – for example up to seven (7) years teaching in an educational institute outside the province or teaching at an approved private school, etc. (Clause 21.07 provides a list of eligible service).

This article limits the retroactive period for receiving salary increases resulting from credit for periods of prior service as described above. The onus of responsibility has been placed on the teacher to inform the Registrar of Teacher Certification of such prior service within 90 days of becoming employed as a teacher in the province. If the teacher fails to inform the Registrar within this time limit, the retroactive application of any salary increase is to the first day of the month in which the teacher notifies the Registrar.

New language under this article in Clause 11.03(c) **places a responsibility upon the school boards to notify a teacher in writing** of the rules regarding retroactivity when a teacher is either hired or accepted for placement on the substitute teacher list.

Article 22: Method of Payment

All teachers will **now be paid through direct deposit**. Teachers not currently on direct deposit will have 120 days from the date of receipt of direct deposit forms to return them to the school board. Teachers will continue to be paid every second Thursday. If a banking holiday falls on a Thursday, teachers will be paid on the last banking day prior to the holiday. This means that the practice of paying teachers in advance when a regular pay period occurs over either the Christmas or Easter breaks will end.

In addition, a joint committee of the Department of Education and the NLTA has been created to review the current method of payment for teachers and to make recommendations regarding **possible ways to eliminate the three-week pay gap** that occurs every five to six years in the summer for teachers.

Article 24: Isolation Allowance

For those teachers working in communities that are described in Clauses 24.01(a), (b) and (c) the isolation allowance tables have been revised to reflect the following increases:

- September 2014 – 2%
- September 2015 – 3%

Article 28: Length of the School Year

The NLTA has long advocated for professional development opportunities that are designed to meet the needs identified by teachers. Under the new language in Clause 28.01(a)(ii) at least one of the three mandatory professional development (in-service) days shall be reserved for professional development at the school level. In determining the topic(s) to be covered, in consultation with the school principal, **priority will be given to professional development needs identified by teachers at the school level**. Teachers and school administrators are encouraged to engage in a consultative process for the development of PD plans for one of the scheduled PD shutdown days.

Article 29: Workload

A significant change in language was agreed upon in Clause 29.01(c) with respect to the consultation that must occur between teachers and school principals regarding teaching assignments. Currently the collective agreement requires that consultation must occur each year between principals and teachers regarding the assignment of curricular and non-curricular duties. It is a collective agreement expectation that workload for teachers be distributed in a fair and equitable manner and that the process of consultation involve, but not be limited to, consideration of the number of students, number of course preparations, number of teacher preparation periods, nature of courses taught, characteristics of students taught, administrative duties required and multi-grade/course teaching situations.

As a result of the changes to Clause 29.03(c) **the school board must now make every effort to ensure that the consultation described above in relation to the assignment of workload for the coming school year above occurs no later than the first scheduled instructional day of that school year.** Two things have been accomplished with this language change: there is now a heightened responsibility to ensure consultation occurs at the school level; and, it will be far less likely that a teacher's teaching assignment will be changed after the school year begins.

Clause 29.06 now requires the school boards to review and/or develop and implement policies regarding school violence that deal with both students and parents who have exhibited violent and abusive behavior. In conducting this review and/or policy development the school boards must seek input from the NLTA.

Article 30: Class Size

The NLTA has heard repeated concerns from teachers that the government's Inclusive Schools Initiative is plagued with serious resourcing issues that are having a negative impact on students receiving special services as well as students in the regular classroom setting.

Clause 30.02 requires the establishment of a joint NLTA and Department of Education committee to **review the resourcing of the Inclusive Schools Initiative.** The committee must bring a report and recommendations forward no later than six (6) months prior to the expiry of this Collective Agreement.

Article 31: Grievance Procedure

There has been a major restructuring of the grievance process under Clauses 31.02, 31.03, 31.04, 31.05 31.06 and 31.07. Teachers will **now have fifteen (15) calendar days, as opposed to ten (10),** to file a grievance after the occurrence or discovery of the incident giving rise to the grievance. Grievances will now be heard first by the Assistant Director of Education and Stage II grievances will be submitted to the Director of Education.

Articles 15, 17, 19, 20, 44: Leaves

All leaves taken under Articles 15, 17, 19, 20, 44 will be subject to Article 29. This means that teachers returning from leave at the start of a new school year will be treated the same as all other teachers in the school and that consultation must occur in determining their teaching assignment for the coming school year.

Schedules B and C

Both the Teacher and Substitute Teacher pay scales have been adjusted to reflect the following increases:

- September 2012 - August 2013 – 0%
- September 2013 - August 2014 – 0% with \$1400 (prorated) signing bonus
- September 2014 - August 2015 – 2%
- September 2015 - August 2016 – 3%

These same increases are also being applied to Schedule C – Allowances. In addition, school principals will receive a \$1300 increase in their base portion of their allowance formula, effective September 2014, which results in an additional \$650 for vice-principals.



Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) A Promising Direction for Student Learning

by PATRICIA BRISCOE

Encouraging students to be more independent in their learning process is a difficult and ongoing task. In fact even better if students were not only independent, but also able to regulate their learning. In this sense, they would have the skill set to determine when they have learned; why or why not; and where to go next in their learning. Does this sound like a goal of every teacher for their students? At a recent conference, the concept of self-regulated learning (SRL) was addressed. It peaked my interest as it seemed to provide a spark of direction towards developing more independent student learners.

What is SRL?

Vasselo (2013) states that historically, SRL was situated in educational psychology where the focus was on a students' capacity to exercise control over their learning and support. According to Zimmerman (2002), who is considered a pioneer in SRL, he promotes individual learning to be learners who self-determine and independently assess, set goals to master and employ strategies to complete academic tasks. As Zimmerman suggests, few learners naturally do this well. SRL is a process that needs to be strategically and purposefully developed to assist students in managing their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions in order to successfully navigate their learning experiences. Zimmerman outlines this process in three phases: *Performance*, *Self-reflection* and *Forethought*. Each phase is explained in the attached diagram.

Achieving SRL

Subsequent to these phases, and most important, is the question: How do I encourage and support my students to be self-regulated learners? Zimmerman (2002) explains, learning must be interesting to students, which is not always an easy task, nor is this a revelation. In addition, SRL is a taught and learned behavior achieved through effective

instructional strategies that allow for scaffolding and gradual-release. Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011) offer four suggestions to encourage SRL: 1) Direct Instruction and Modeling; 2) Guided and Independent Practice; 3) Social Support and Feedback; and 4) Reflective Practice. Explanations of these suggestions can be found at www.self-regulation.ca/download/pdf_documents/Self_Regulated_Learning.pdf

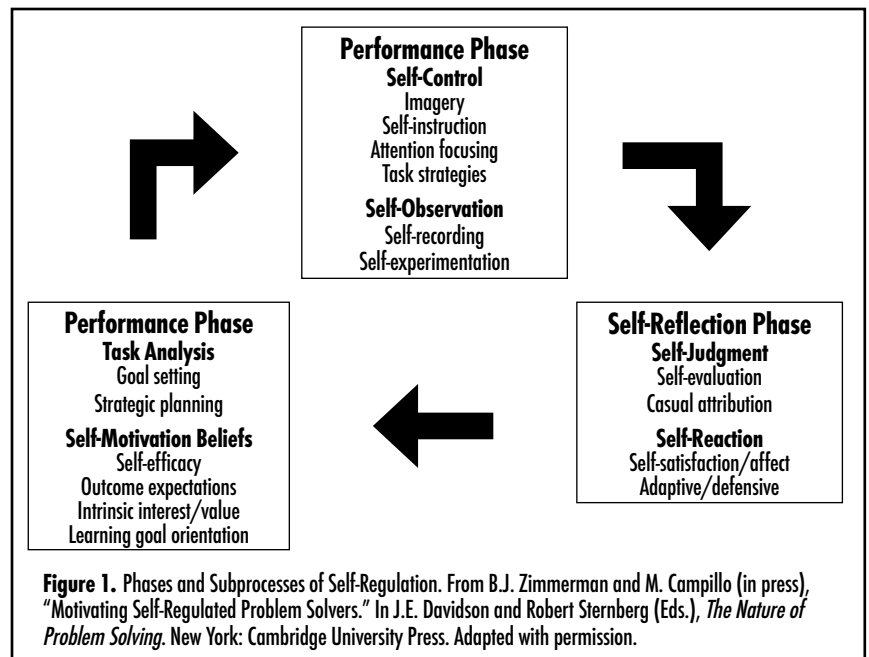
In summary, the outcome is that self-regulated learners monitor their behavior in terms of their goals and self-reflect on their effectiveness, which in turn, according to Zimmerman (2002), enhances their self-satisfaction and motivation to continue to improve their methods of learning. It is evident that SRL is not an easy process but provides a comprehensive framework and process to support students to be self-directed in their academic achievement, motivation, and promote life-long learning. As shared by Zumbrunn, Tadlock and Roberts (2011) "if our goal is to create successful life-long learners, then we must first ensure that we teach them the strategies necessary for that journey" (p.18). Is SRL an answer? If you decide to support and implement SRL with your students, I am interested in hearing the outcomes. Good luck.

References for this article can be found in the online version of the Nov/Dec issue of *The Bulletin*.

Patricia Briscoe, EdD is Vice-Principal and Grade 6 teacher at Riverwod Academy in Wing's Point. She can be reached at patriciabriscoe@nlesd.ca.



Patricia Briscoe





2014 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence Recipients

Two teachers from Newfoundland and Labrador have been awarded 2014 Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence. Carol Roberts and Greg Woolgar were recently awarded Certificates of Achievement in recognition of their "creativity and commitment to Canadian students".

Carol Roberts, a teacher at Holy Trinity High School in Torbay, teaches Science, Biology and Chemistry in Grades 10-12. Learning "how to learn" is the foundation of Carol's teaching philosophy. She believes that learning is accomplished in a collaborative environment that encourages critical thinking. She achieves this unique environment by employing strategies for her students to share their learning with others, designing hands-on outdoor education lessons and providing opportunities for problem solving real issues.

Carol used her "each one – teach one" strategy to empower her students to deepen their understanding by sharing. Students at all levels help their peers and check with each other as they solve problems. She also provides opportunities for hands-on learning in scientific fields. Carol took several of her classes on Oceans Learning Partnership's field programs to speak to scientists about ocean science and use oceanographic equipment while supervised. She also volunteered with the research project "Student Perceptions on the Relevance of Science" with the University of Alberta to understand how students perceive science and promote strategies to increase student motivation and love of the subject.

Greg Woolgar, a teacher at St. Matthew's Elementary School in St. John's, teaches all subjects in Grade 5. Greg's goal is to "...make my students' five hours in the school the best five hours of their day." He accomplishes this mission by creating a stimulating learning environment where all subjects are linked to other disciplines. He connects all learning to the 'real world' and his innovative teaching style includes inviting guest speakers to share their experiences and using technology to challenge students to search for deeper answers.

Greg immersed his students in daily "tech time" (e.g., developed APP-ternoon class where students are given technology-focused projects such as creating a commercial to share with the class and posted questions on "Today's Meet" site where students engaged in debate in a speed round format online). He has promoted a caring school culture with the "Silly Squad", a monthly theme day where students and staff are encouraged to give spare change. Over the past five years the squad has a student participation rate of over 90% and has donated over \$15,000 to local, provincial and international charities. Greg has also presented creative lessons in life skills such as using hermit crabs, fish and plants as tools for teaching responsibility and teamwork with his students and facilitated an annual district-wide "Think Tank" where teachers convened to share best case studies on curriculum and technology matters.

The Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence honour outstanding and innovative elementary and secondary school teachers in all disciplines who instil in their students a love of learning and who utilize information and communications technologies to better equip their students with the knowledge and skills needed to excel in a 21st century society and economy. The Awards are offered at the regional and national levels and carry cash prizes of \$1,000 and \$5,000 respectively. All winning teachers receive a certificate, a PMA pin and a congratulatory letter signed by the Prime Minister. Each recipient's school also receives a certificate signed by the Prime Minister to recognize its support and contribution to the recipient's achievement.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association congratulates Carol and Greg on their outstanding achievements.



Carol Roberts



Greg Woolgar

NL Teacher Receives National Environmental Education Award

Helen Spencer, a teacher at the Brother Brennan Environmental Centre, has been chosen as the recipient of the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) 2014 Award in the category of Outstanding K-12 Teacher.

Helen was chosen for the award due to her going above and beyond the call of duty by developing and implementing innovative environmental education and communication programs that:

- foster a greater understanding of ecological principles and environmental issues;
- foster environmental ethics;
- develop skills;
- inspire environmental action.

EECOM will highlight Helen's work as a 2014 Award Recipient on the EECOM website at www.eecom.org.

EECOM's Canadian Awards of Excellence in Environmental Education and Communication recognize individuals and organizations who have collectively influenced hundreds of thousands of Canadian citizens, and helped implement one of EECOM's key goals – to advance environmental learning, ensuring Canadians are environmentally literate, engaging in environmental stewardship and contributing to a healthy future.

The EECOM Board congratulates Helen for her outstanding contributions to environmental education.



Helen Spencer

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I'm the Same as You ...Only Different

by KELLY MANNING & KELLIE BAKER

A lot of different flowers make a bouquet. (Muslim Origin)

As we celebrated Thanksgiving last month we took time to reflect on what we have to be thankful for. At St. Matthew's School we are of course thankful for many things, but the one we would like to highlight in this article is the Developmental Delayed Unit (affectionately called the DD unit). A part of our school community, the DD unit provides an environment where students are embraced with love and care.

This love and acceptance is shared throughout the school community. The Friendship Club, hosted by the DD unit, provides an opportunity for students from other classes to go to the DD unit during recess and lunch to share in arts and crafts activities, walks within the building, sensory stimulation activities, and celebrations with their DD classmates. As well, other classes make regularly scheduled visits to the DD unit classroom to meet the students, read

stories, interact with their peers, and play games. Everybody benefits from these experiences such as a meaningful understanding that we are all the same, but that we also have differences and those are what make us unique. This of course builds on curriculum outcomes such as demonstrating respect for individual differences, demonstrating socially responsive behaviour in the school and community, and demonstrating care and concern for self and others. For example, Chelsea is legally blind but laughs and giggles at the sound of her school mates as they clap their hands or make loud noises. Dakota's feeding tube, trach for breathing, Scoliosis, and Cerebral Palsy don't prevent students from sitting with him on his bed to read stories, talk to him, and provide him with some sensory stimulation like massaging his hands. Dean's love of constant movement and activity is equaled only by his love of the scent kit which is also a fan favourite of the students who visit the unit and share in this activity.

This sense of community is not confined to the DD room. Classes invite the students of the DD unit to share in songs, skits, stories, and art activities all the while meeting curriculum outcomes and meeting the needs of all students in multiple learning domains. These rewarding and enriching exchanges provide opportunities to develop an increased sense of care and compassion making those oh so valuable real-life connections with qualities that are encouraged and promoted not only within the school system, but within society in general.

What does the DD unit mean to the parents of the children who arrive there each and every day? Dean's mom, Debbie Parsons, says: "The DD unit has given my son the gift of education, routine, and dedicated staff who have given him the best quality of life I can ask for." Susan Cox, Dakota's mom, shares similar sentiments, "I know one thing, at the end of the day when my son is all smiles and so excited that he is about to come out of his chair, he had a great day at school! Kelly, Tammy and Michelle do all the things



Dakota's and Chelsea's grade 5 class celebrating Jersey Day as part of one of the many "Silly Squad" fundraisers at St. Matthew's School.

that are required for Dakota, which is a lot, and they do it with a smile on their faces. I know they care and love him just as much as I do.” Kim Hart, Chelsea’s mom, had difficulty putting it into words. “There is so much I could say...I should tell you about how I can drop my medically fragile child off at school and not have to worry whether or not she will be taken care of...the friendship club, who spend their lunch break with my daughter...how the staff feels like members of my family...how my nonverbal child giggles with excitement when she enters the classroom...what a blessing the unit has been to my daughter and our entire family. I only wish I knew the words”.



Pictured l-r: Program Assistant Tammy Bryne with Dakota Cox, Teacher Kelly Manning with Chelsea Hart, and Program Assistant Michelle Follett with Dean Parsons.

Simply stated, our school community is richer because of the opportunities that the DD unit provides its students and also because of the opportunities that the students of the DD unit provide the school community. The following words from O. Ivar Lovaas are painted on the wall of the DD unit: “If they can’t learn the way we teach, we teach the way they learn”. The students of the DD unit teach us something about ourselves each and every day.

Kelly Manning is a Special Education Teacher in the Developmental Delayed Unit at St. Matthew’s School in St. John’s. She has been a Teacher for the Deaf in Newfoundland & Labrador, Ontario and Yukon Territory. She has also worked as an Instructional Resource Teacher in both Newfoundland & Labrador and New Brunswick. Kelly has been teaching for the past 15 years.

Kellie Baker is a grade five teacher at St. Matthew’s School in St. John’s. She has been a teacher of physical education at the K-12 and university levels as well as a grade five and grade six classroom teacher for the past 19 years. Currently on the Board of Directors for Physical and Health Education Canada, Kellie has also served as President of the provincial physical education special interest council, PESIC (www.pesicnl.com/).

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Supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

by KENDRA LANE

Temple Grandin is one of the most famous self-advocates in the autism community. Despite significant challenges through her own childhood education, Temple became an international industry leader in the field of animal behaviour. Temple's insight has had a tremendous impact on the field of education for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and her message consistently states that educators must find interests and strengths to expand and build on. Incorporating interests, working with strengths, and creating independence can help educators create the most positive and meaningful learning experiences for their students with ASD.

Build on Strengths

All students have special interests but those with ASD may not be able to communicate or articulate their interests to others. It is crucial that parents and teachers expose students to as many subjects and activities as possible to discover what natural interests and strengths exist. Once identified, these can be powerful tools for creating motivation, teaching new or challenging curriculum, and transition planning for what happens beyond the school years.

For some students with ASD this may be obvious such as a savant skill for music composition or calculus. This was the case for Temple where her ability to understand the perspective of animals (cattle in particular) was unique and unprecedented. For others, however, it can require a little more exploration and creativity. Take the example of a young man who was severely impacted by both his autism diagnosis and intellectual disability. He was limited in what others may view as transferable or functional skills but he was passionate about "banging things". This seemed to make sense to him and provide a sense of calming and comfort. His educators focused on this interest and spent considerable time honing in on the skill of using a tool and aiming for a target. This young man became an efficient, enthusiastic "hammerer" and continued to work on a factory assembly

line where the items needed to be hammered. If not for the focus on his interest and ability, his options would have been limited and he may not have had such a meaningful and productive opportunity in adulthood.

Structure and Independence

So often we hear that students with autism need *structure*; that *structure* would help in this situation or we need to implement *structure* to improve his/her behaviour. But what exactly is *structure*? In its simplest definition structure is anything that promotes independence. Visual schedules, physical organization, work systems, and visual instructions are all examples of structure.

Individuals with ASD are generally operating with the following traits: strengths in visual processing and following a routine; challenges in executive functioning. Many students with autism experience difficulty focusing on cognitively appropriate curriculum because of barriers related to their autism. Most common barriers exist such as: not being able to understand expectations or communicate effectively; not having an established and comfortable routine for learning; and not being able to organize and integrate their materials and thoughts.

Structure in the learning environment is designed to align with these barriers and offset additional stressors allowing students to focus on the subject matter. Therefore, the purpose of structure should be to **support verbal communication with visual information, teach students to look for instructions** in structure, and **organize materials** effectively.

A simple and popular example is color coding school subjects. A student's visual schedule is color coded to match corresponding textbooks and workbooks. The student's materials can be organized ahead of time and the student can independently retrieve his/her materials as required. This, of course, is layered to suit the needs of the student. If a student has higher needs, s/he may be shown

one simple color at a time with the corresponding materials (only) within reach. If a student requires less support, the schedule could show a full day and the student can retrieve the appropriate materials independently throughout the day. The purpose of the color coding is to help provide *visual clarity* between the schedule and required action(s), create a consistent *routine of independence*, and have materials organized and visually coordinated to eliminate additional *stress* (in executive functioning).

Could the student complete all of this without structure? Perhaps. But with the extra energy required to navigate these challenges specific to the diagnosis would the student then be fully prepared for active engagement in learning curriculum? Perhaps not. Structure aims to relieve extra stressors as they relate to autism, leaving the student better prepared and regulated for learning.

It can be overwhelming to decide where to start with implementing structure. The simplest approach is to take just one regular occurrence in the day that requires the assistance of another person and assess: how can structure help this student complete this specific activity more independently? This is where being routine-oriented becomes a strength. The structure remains the constant, providing consistency and routine, allowing the student to become more flexible and comfortable accepting new challenges and learning new things.

Every student has a unique set of strengths, weaknesses, interests, and passions. For students with autism, we can build on their visual and routine strengths creating structure that helps balance their challenges and better prepare them for learning. We can help them discover their unique strengths and work to build those strengths to provide meaningful productivity and participation in the community. From Temple's own experience as a misunderstood child with autism, she reminds us all that there "needs to be more focus on what a child can do than what he or she cannot do" (Temple Grandin).

Kendra Lane is Manager, Programs & Services, with the Autism Society, Newfoundland & Labrador. She is a certified TEACCH Practitioner and is completing her graduate work in providing training and education around Autism Spectrum Disorders. Kendra can be contacted at 709-722-2803 or klane@autism.nf.net.

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TESIC Members Light the Path

by DAVID GILL

Teachers are the backbone of education. Hard working, diligent, honest, creative, collegial and compassionate teachers inspire and encourage their students to reach beyond their limits and to achieve the seemingly impossible on a daily basis. But too often this is not the view of our profession. Too often teachers can be criticized from within and without as being ineffective, non-conformists that block innovation. While recognizing that in any large organization opinions will vary and perspectives will differ, it is the collective opinion of the Technology Special Interest Council (TESIC) that the vast majority of our members, and teachers in general, affect a positive lasting influence in their classrooms, schools and through our extended province-wide educational community.

In an effort to highlight the good work that our members do and to help re-enforce the idea that teachers are competent educational leaders, TESIC has developed a new initiative. Out of TESIC's perceived need to recognize the large number of individuals implementing innovative and creative teaching practices through technology education and educational technology, we have developed TESIC's Technology Innovators Spotlight recognition program. Through this program of peer recognition teachers, administrators and other educational stakeholders are invited to nominate individuals that exemplify best practices and a commitment to improving student learning through the innovative use of technology. Whether this is through the use of emerging technologies or the creative use of established technologies, the focus remains on its positive effects on teaching and learning. Over the last year TESIC has recognized six teachers from across our province as meeting and exceeding the criteria for our humble award.

So who are these innovators? They're teachers like Brian Antle from Botwood Collegiate, who for the last 26 years has been inspiring students to

reach their full potential through innovative uses of technology and most recently through the development of a nationally contending high school robotics club. Patricia Edwards from C.C. Loughlin in Corner Brook is another fine example of a TESIC Technology Innovator. During Patricia's 22 years as a dedicated teacher she has always endeavoured to utilize technology to help her students become connected learners with an equal voice, and as Patricia's principal simply puts it: "Students in her class are motivated and engaged". When Tina Costello from Holy Family School in Paradise puts her mind to a task there is no doubt that students and teachers alike will benefit from her skill and leadership. From SmartBoard certification to online courses, over the last 17 years Tina has made it her mission to stay informed and has sharpened her technology integration skill set to the benefit of her entire school community. But these are just a fraction of the stories concerning the good work of our members and we have made it a priority to profile as many teachers as we can over our current mandate, finding candidates won't be an issue and this is where we all can collaborate.

Over the last year TESIC has worked to establish our Technology Innovators Spotlight initiative and we are now ready to expand even further. As of January 2015 we will be opening the nomination process to the entire membership of the NLTA. The TESIC website (www.tesic.org) outlines that the goal of this recognition is "to publicly acknowledge the skills, expertise, talent, dedication and hard work of



Brian Antle



Patricia Edwards



Tina Costello

individual's that stand out as technology innovators at the school level. Everyday countless individuals go above and beyond to make a positive difference for their school community by meaningfully integrating technology in their classrooms and leading the way for school wide innovation." If you know someone working in your school that fits the above description why not nominate them in the new year for a TESIC Technology Innovators Spotlight? The nomination criteria is simple. First, this recognition is for TESIC members by TESIC members. Not a member? Membership is free, easy and open to any NLTA member. Just create a new account on www.tesic.org to gain membership. As a member you will have access to our latest news releases, professional development offerings, online resources, and qualify to nominate or be nominated for a TESIC Technology Innovators Spotlight. After membership has been secured a simple nomination form, which will be posted on our Innovators Spotlight webpage <http://goo.gl/Jk81Pm>, will provide the details of the nomination process. Nominations will have to be supported by a small number of TESIC members and include a profile picture and executive summary that provides evidence that the nominee meets the Spotlight criteria. Our aim is to announce a new Spotlight for every month of the school year, and with your help we can make this a reality.

It is our belief that teachers are more than conduits of curriculum and policy; they are the primary change agents in education and affect a positive long lasting influence on their students and broader school community. We hope that the Technology Innovators Spotlight will become an important part of TESIC's strategy to advance our mandate of advocating on behalf of our members. We all have a voice in shaping our education system and this recognition can help shed light on the many good things happening in our schools. More than an individual award, this initiative also has the potential to cultivate a broader sense of community within our geographically challenged system. Technology easily overcomes this challenge and allows us to share and grow together regardless of the distance. We look forward and are excited about receiving your nominations in the coming New Year. Together we can make a difference.

For more information on TESIC's Technology Innovators Spotlight and our current recipients please visit: <http://goo.gl/Jk81Pm>. TESIC membership is open to any NLTA member and you can always join at www.tesic.org.

David Gill is Vice-President of the Technology Education Special Interest Council.

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David and Kirsty Collins

Insights into Teaching

How a Stroke at 38 Changed My Life

by DAVID COLLINS

“I want you to think what school was like for the other children that went to school with you.” This was the challenge issued by Dr. Paul Wilson, one of our professors, and coordinator of the education program at the Grenfell Campus of Memorial University. For me, school was always easy. I made friends easily. I was pretty good at sports. I could sit down and memorize a page of notes in a few minutes while watching television. But Dr. Wilson wanted us to realize school isn’t a positive experience for all children. He reminded us of the harsh reality that many teachers face each day when they step into the classroom. While every classroom has children that enjoy school and learn very easily, there are also children present who face untold hardship and learn with great difficulty.

In September 2012, five months after beginning the fast track program at Grenfell, I was given some insight into what these children face. My wife and I, along with our three children, were just finishing up a Sunday afternoon bike ride. She went into a convenience store to get a snack for our children. While I waited outside, straddling my bike, I found myself falling over. When my wife came out of the store I said to her, “I think I’m having a stroke”.

I was taken by ambulance to the emergency room in Grand Falls-Windsor. Doctors confirmed to my wife Kirsty that I did indeed suffer a stroke. I was critical for the next week and doctors were unsure of whether or not I would make it. When I did pull through, doctors were unsure of my long-term recovery. It would be two weeks before I would be awake for anymore than a few minutes at a time. When I did wake up, I was completely paralyzed on the right side of my body. Doctors informed me I had experienced a bleed in the basal ganglia region. Besides the paralysis, there were cognitive impairments as well. For example, reading was almost impossible. I realized this after picking up a *Sports Illustrated* my wife

had brought to the ICU. While I had no difficulty reading the words, I had almost no comprehension or retention of what I was reading. Doctors were unsure at that point how much recovery I would experience.

The doctors, nurses, and physiotherapists informed me that the best chance I had for recovery was at the Miller Centre in St. John’s. On the Tuesday after Thanksgiving, I was transferred there from the hospital in Grand Falls-Windsor. It was about 6:30 p.m. when I arrived. My wife had driven behind the ambulance to get me settled in. After supper, as my wife was getting ready to leave, the reality of the situation finally hit me. I remember embracing her, crying, and asking, “Why did this have to happen?”

The weeks ahead were about celebrating milestones. I started off in the Miller Centre with having to do everything with the assistance of a nurse or staff member. As I proved I could do things safely on my own to an occupational therapist or physiotherapist, the newly earned freedom was placed on my chart. Slowly but surely, I learned how to complete daily tasks independently. No longer was I focused on getting an “A” on an assignment, but my focus was on such things as going to the bathroom by myself, transferring from my bed to a wheelchair, and showering independently. These were just some of the milestones I celebrated with family and friends.

By the time the middle of December arrived, I had learned how to function in “my new normal”. There was considerable return of movement, I was learning to walk again, and cognitive functions returned to near previous levels. I was beginning to think about the future and wondering if I could still realize my desire to become a teacher. It was in the first half of December when Hayward Blake, a retired teacher now employed in the Faculty of Education, called me at the Miller Centre. We talked about my recovery and I expressed to him what I was feeling. I told him

how I felt my recent experiences gave me new insight into that which Paul Wilson asked us to reflect on. I now knew how “other” students felt. I was fortunate enough (I can’t believe I just wrote that) to gain insight into what a student with a learning disability has to face. I understood how the non-athletes felt walking into a gymnasium.

Four days before Christmas, I was released from the Miller Centre. My recovery was far from complete, but my wife and I, in consultation with my multi disciplinary team, felt that it was best for me and my family that my rehabilitation would continue from home. It was so good to finally get home. There were challenges however to moving home. For instance, when I was in the Miller Centre my wife managed to keep career, family, and myself in balance. The pace of my family when I returned home was beyond me. After realizing this and discussing it with her, she did what she could to slow down, and I did what I could to speed up. This is just one example of the things my wife and I had to adjust to.

Throughout that winter and summer, I continued to see improvements in all aspects of my recovery. By the time the summer rolled around, I was ready. In September 2013 I returned to Grenfell one year after having suffered a stroke. Walking into the classroom that first evening was very difficult for me. Before the stroke I could walk into any room and strike up a conversation with anyone. My wife jokes that I could have a decent conversation with a rock. When I first returned to school however, I was self-conscious. I didn’t want to walk in front of anyone because I didn’t want them to see that I was “different”. My new cohort however made me feel like I was a part of the group from the beginning. There is no doubt in my mind they will be a group of teachers welcoming of all students. They adopted me and accepted me as one of their own. Before I knew it, the fall semester was over and Christmas was upon us.

After enjoying the holidays with family and friends, I prepared for the next step in my educational journey – internship. Once again I was so nervous. I was worried over what the other teachers and students would think of me because of my disability. Much to my relief, Tenniel Vincent and her grade 3 class at Helen Tulk Elementary in Bishop’s Falls made me feel welcomed in their class. It was funny; I was in that class to learn something about teaching, but I think I learned just as much from the children as they did from me. In that class it became real to me that we all have our weaknesses. Mine might be physical. Someone else might be weak in math. Someone else is weak in writing. But we also have strengths. One person is a great organizer. Another is

very creative. Yet another is a great dancer. Together, as a learning community, one person’s strengths make up for another person’s weaknesses.

In May I headed back to Grenfell for my final semester in the education program. Talking to everyone about their internship experiences reminded me of something that I needed to hear once again. This is the greatest lesson I have learned in the last two years. Each one of us will face struggles from time to time. For me, it was a stroke at the age of 38. For someone else, it might be the death of a loved one. For another, a diagnosis that is certainly not welcome. The students within our classrooms are no different. They and their families face sickness, death, and terrible situations. My wish and desire is that every teacher and every student would be blessed with the same things I was blessed with – family and friends who loved me unconditionally, strengths and weaknesses included. People who told me, “It will get better” and “You can do it”.

“Each one of us will face struggles from time to time. For me, it was a stroke at the age of 38.”

If you had told me in September 2012 that I would walk across the stage at convocation, I would have laughed (but not a good laugh...those were hard to come by). But this past October in Corner Brook I did cross that stage (and I made the Dean’s list)! As I crossed it, I was thinking, “We did it!” You see, it wasn’t just me who crossed that stage. It was also my wife, children, family, friends, classmates, professors, and countless others who supported me.

Now as a teacher, I want to be a person that supports my students. I want to be an encourager to the student who faces every sort of obstacle imaginable. I want to show them that things can be better than what they are right now. I want to celebrate their milestones with them. In the end I will be one of the people that shake the hands of my students as they say, “We did it!”

David Collins is a substitute teacher living in Grand Falls-Windsor with his wife Kirsty and their three children; Aaron, Ashlyn, and Aidan. Since his convocation he has enjoyed teaching days all over Central Newfoundland.

Let's Talk Science

IdeaPark Summer Institutes Engage NL Educators

by LYNN FITZPATRICK

Let's Talk Science, an award-winning, national, charitable organization focused on education and outreach, facilitated two IdeaPark Summer Institutes in St. John's and Corner Brook during August 2014. These two-day sessions were attended by early years and Kindergarten to Grade 3 educators and featured school district and departmental representatives.

Participating educators were offered the opportunity to engage in meaningful discussions that support program planning in early science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The sessions challenged current thinking and discussed effective practices for developing students' inquiry, problem solving and 21st century thinking. The Summer Institutes were designed to build educators' confidence and proficiency in planning and assessing a hands-on/minds-on, curriculum-aligned program.



IdeaPark Summer Institute participants in Corner Brook discuss best practices and educator resources.

Response to the sessions was overwhelmingly positive. "Not only was the session a wealth of information, but the presentation was fun, interactive and engaging – a must for any lover of STEM and learning," said Roger Matthews, a Grade 2 teacher at Sacred Heart Elementary in Corner Brook.

Kathy Coffin, a Kindergarten teacher at St. Bonaventure's College in St. John's called the session she attended a "great opportunity for professional development. There are many ideas and resources that I will definitely use in my classroom."

IdeaPark is a dynamic, online place that supports early years, Kindergarten and primary grade educators with a suite of planning tools, skills-based resources and professional learning opportunities. IdeaPark's resources are based on current brain research and designed to support young children's development of language, problem solving, critical thinking, numeracy and teamwork skills, while building on their natural curiosity about the world around them.

Register for free to access the Let's Talk Science program, IdeaPark, and its online database, Webs of Wonder. To find out more about IdeaPark and educator opportunities in the coming year, visit explore-ideapark.org, follow @LetsTalkScience on Twitter or contact Lynn at lfitzpatrick@letstalkscience.ca.

Lynn FitzPatrick is a former science teacher and past Program Specialist and Senior Education Officer for the former Eastern School District. She is currently the K-6 Education Program Consultant for Let's Talk Science. Lynn delivers IdeaPark workshops and other professional learning sessions for educators around the province. She can be reached at lfitzpatrick@letstalkscience.ca.

Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association

WORDS HURT POSTER WINNERS

THE NLTA HELD A CONTEST THIS PAST FALL FOR A "WORDS HURT" POSTER. THE WINNERS ARE AS FOLLOWS. CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO ENTERED.



WINNER - GRADES K-1
MYA SPURREL
GRADE 1 • MAIN RIVER ACADEMY
POLLARD'S POINT



WINNER - GRADES 2-3
BREANNA KENNEDY
GRADE 2 • ST. GEORGE'S ELEMENTARY
CONCEPTION BAY SOUTH



WINNER - LEVEL I-III
JESSIE DOWNEY
LEVEL III • ASCENSION COLLEGIATE
BAY ROBERTS



WINNER - GRADES 7-9
MEGAN RANDALL
GRADE 9 • LEWISPORTE INTERMEDIATE
LEWISPORTE



WINNER - GRADES 4-6
CHLOE REID
GRADE 6 • C.C. LOUGHLIN ELEMENTARY
CORNER BROOK

PLEASE VISIT THE NLTA WEBSITE AT WWW.NLTA.NL.CA TO VIEW THE DESIGNS OF ALL WINNERS AND HONORABLE MENTIONS.



MATH SCIENCE SIC BGM & CONFERENCE

December 4-6, 2014
 Education Building, Memorial University,
 St. John's. For more information contact:
 Craig White at cwhite@letstalkscience.ca

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF PRINCIPALS (CAP) 2015

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 Angie Wilmott, NLCPA, angiewilmott@nlesd.ca.

Dates to Remember

December 2014

Dec 4-5 Pre-Retirement Seminar, St. John's
 Dec 18 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

January 2015

Jan 15 **Deadline:** 2015 Christmas Card
 Contest entries
 Jan 15 **Deadline:** Receipt of nominations
 for Barnes, Bancroft, Allan Bishop
 and Special Recognition Awards
 Jan 15 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications

Jan 15 **Deadline:** Receipt of nomina-
 tions for the Dr. Wayne Nesbit
 Outstanding Achievement Award
 Jan 16 **Deadline:** Educational Leave
 applications for 2015-16 must be
 submitted to NLESD or CSFP

February 2015

Feb 13 Janeway Day in the Schools
 Feb 19 **Deadline:** PD Fund applications
 Feb 19 Provincial Executive Meeting
 Feb 20-21 Joint Council Meeting

2015 Convention and Province-Wide Vote Deadlines

December 2, 2014

Province-wide vote for the election of
 Vice-President.

December 16, 2014

Run-off ballot for the election of
 Vice-President (if required).

January 8, 2015

Proposed changes, amendments or repeal of
 NLTA By-Laws to be actioned by Convention
 must be presented in writing to the NLTA.

February 8, 2015

- All nominations for Provincial Executive for publication in the Convention issue of *The Bulletin* must be postmarked or hand delivered to NLTA Office.
- Names of elected delegates and alternates to Convention should be forwarded to the NLTA Office for printing in the Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.
- Resolutions to Convention must be received at the NLTA Office.

March 8, 2015

Mailing of Convention issue of *The Bulletin*.

April 7-10, 2015

Biennial General Meeting.

April 9, 2015

Final deadline for receipt of nominations for
 Provincial Executive.



The staff of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association would like to wish all teachers a safe, happy and joyous Holiday Season.

NLTA Christmas Hours

Please be advised that the NLTA building will be CLOSED from

December 24th to January 1st (inclusive)

to allow staff to enjoy the holiday season.