



Together We Stand

Professional Learning Through TESIC

by DAVID GILL

One of the primary goals of TESIC (Technology Education Special Interest Council) is to provide and facilitate professional development and learning for its members. Over the last year and a half and through the work of two consecutive executives, TESIC has developed a vision and strategy for implementing a wide range of sessions that touch almost every aspect of teaching and learning. With the current focus on 21st century learning, it is important for TESIC to share a role in the development of these skills for both teachers and students. District, school, university and industry partnerships, biennial meetings, online support and our upcoming Summer Institute of Technology Integration (SITI) all play a role in our mission to help each other engage in meaningful professional learning that can meet the ever changing needs of our students.

Since partnerships are critically important, one of the first steps in re-vitalizing our professional learning mandate was to partner with the Eastern School District of Newfoundland and Labrador (ESDNL) last year. Through this partnership we arranged to co-sponsor multiple technology integration sessions during the winter and spring of 2013. These sessions were facilitated by TESIC executive members and placed on the district's professional learning calendar. Teachers and district personnel gave very positive feedback from these initial sessions. As a result, TESIC was able to secure a continued partnership with the newly formed Newfoundland and Labrador English School District (NLESD) for the winter and spring of 2014. Between February and April of this year, TESIC has co-sponsored four professional learning sessions with NLESD. These sessions were facilitated by TESIC executives/members and included topics on Intermediate Technology Education, Inclusionary Technology Integration, Google Drive, and Cross-Curricular Technology Integration. Once again, these sessions were very well attended and

received. As TESIC and NLESD are both committed to identifying and delivering meaningful technology based professional learning, it is our hope to continue and cultivate this partnership as our term continues into the next two school years.



Pictured l-r: Chad Stokes, Stephanie Lawlor (participants) and Sonya Burden (facilitator) during TESIC's "Creating an Inclusive Classroom with Technology" PL session at Amalgamated Academy this winter.

In parallel with our independent district partnerships, we have also had the opportunity to develop ties with industry leaders. During the spring of 2013 and 2014, TESIC has partnered with Apple Canada to host events in conjunction with the Eastern and now Newfoundland and Labrador English School Districts. These events primarily focus on the integration and management of Apple's line of iPad products. As the integration of new devices into curriculum implementation is currently at a premium, our partnership with Apple Canada is significant. Apple Canada brings a great deal of understanding and expertise about the possible innovative uses of its products in the teaching and learning environment. Although TESIC has many connections to industry partners through our biennial meetings, Apple Canada has demonstrated its willingness to work with us during our regular executive term. With this example, TESIC has begun to actively seek out other industry partners that will be

able to share their expertise with our membership in a substantial and meaningful way through the course of the school year.

Another branch of our professional learning strategy has led us in an effort to consolidate our session offerings online. TESIC has moved forward with the creation of a working catalogue of available professional learning sessions that our executive and membership can facilitate at any given time during the year. This catalogue (<http://goo.gl/x8Bu7l>) has been the basis for TESIC to partner with several schools across the province in the delivery of school based professional learning sessions focusing on technology integration. With the help of the NLTA and the School Administrators' Council (SAC) our professional learning catalogue has been circulated throughout the province. During the 2013-14 school year this has resulted in TESIC delivering sessions for individual schools from the Eastern, Central and Western regions of our province. These sessions have been directly facilitated by TESIC executive members and are another area of growing interest. Any administrator looking for a unique professional learning experience on a wide variety of technology integration topics can easily browse our online listings and contact TESIC directly for the logistical details of booking a session for their staff. This is an exciting new venture as we move forward with our professional learning re-vitalization plan. We hope the utilization of our continually growing catalogue becomes a staple of our offerings during the years to come.

As a means of continuing to build our professional learning momentum, we have reached out to the Faculty of Education at Memorial University. Through this new partnership, we have been able to launch our latest professional learning endeavour, TESIC's Summer Institute of Technology Integration (SITI). This three day institute, to be held at the Faculty during the weekend of July 25-27, 2014 has already generated a great deal of interest. Sessions focusing on a wide variety of technology integration and education topics will be facilitated by teachers, faculty, industry experts, and department of education personnel. SITI will be an excellent opportunity for anyone involved in the Newfoundland and Labrador education system to network, share and learn in a relaxed professional setting. This summer will mark the first time our executive has offered an institute of this nature. It is our intention to make this an annual event that becomes one of our professional learning highlights.

Supported professional learning is one of the cornerstones of continued teacher success in any area of teaching and learning. This is especially true in the

areas of technology integration and education as the pace of change can be extremely quick. Feedback from our various professional learning activities has indicated demand for high quality guidance, and support in this area is overwhelming. TESIC has responded to this demand by expanding technology based professional learning offerings through the development of many different partnerships. It is only through these partnerships and a network of dedicated, hardworking TESIC members that we can offer rich and meaningful professional learning. Who are TESIC members? They are the energetic, motivated and intelligent people working every day to make a difference in the lives of their students across our province. Any NLTA member can become a part of TESIC. It's easy to join; just visit www.tesic.org and find the "create a new account" link. It's that simple. As a member you will have access to the most up-to-date information on our current and upcoming professional learning opportunities, and will be connected with your peers across the province. So, as we move forward, remember: we can make a difference, and we do – every day!

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