

bulletin

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April 2009



Education Week 2009
La semaine d'éducation



Up Front from the President



Dear Colleagues,
While I am pleased that we were able to conclude contract negotiations with a 93% ratification vote by teachers, we realize that we

were unable to obtain further gains in the areas of leaves and other workload issues which are so important to teachers. There was much effort, determination and strategy in the bargaining sessions but the additional gains could not be achieved. The economy turned against us at an inopportune time during negotiations which prevented us from making those additional gains. Our discussions with Treasury Board officials and the Minister of Finance were clear, frank and firm. In the final analysis, we delivered the best possible agreement that we could, given the fiscal realities of the day.

With the new collective agreement, a salary increase for teachers of 21.5% compounded over four years has been secured. Teachers will realize the salary gains within 30 months or 2.5 years, since the signing of the new agreement occurred six months after the expiry of the previous contract, and considering that the last increase will be applied in September of 2011. During a time when the global and Canadian economies are in a deep recession, the effects of which are being felt in an increasing way in our own province, the salary increase will continue to be significantly higher than any current or anticipated increase in teacher salaries and other public sector salaries in the country. The growth in real income over inflation will be unprecedented in the careers of most of our current teachers.

Since the conclusion of collective bargaining we have actively pursued improvements to teacher leaves and workload

through other avenues, including our appearance at the pre-budget consultation hearings and in meetings and correspondence with both the Ministers of Education and Finance. In our recent submission to the Department of Finance and in a letter to the Minister of Education, we argued for the necessary fiscal resources to be put into place to provide for those additional teaching units to address the critical areas of the teacher allocation model that still require attention. Financial and human resources were also sought to ensure that the recommendations of the Pathways report continue to be implemented thoroughly and expeditiously. We strongly urged government to allocate additional funds for the substitute teacher budget, specifically for the purpose of family leave and that such leave should be allocated totally separate from all other discretionary leave. We also concentrated on securing additional monies for the teacher leave budget, specifically for the purpose of teacher-selected and self-directed professional development.

While we face global economic realities and experience the subsequent effects in our own country and province, we will continue to present our case quite strongly for these budget modifications. As the collective bargaining process has concluded, the NLTA has and will continue to pursue improvements to leave provisions and related workload issues through other means, including the budget consultation review. As you read this issue of "Up Front", the government budget for 2009-10 would have likely been announced and we remain hopeful that the substitute teacher budget would have been modified to reflect the needs of our membership as a result of our lobbying efforts. We will continue to strongly advocate for these necessary improvements at every possible opportunity. Our message will consistently be well thought out, prepared and delivered.

On another topic, the Provincial Working Group on Supervision continues to meet and is comprised of representatives from the NLTA, the NLSBA (Newfoundland and Labrador School Boards Association) and the Department of Education. As part of their mandate, this group will fully explore the issue of student supervision, including the collection of relevant information from jurisdictions where supervision is carried out by non-teachers. This information should prove quite valuable relative to any recommendations concerning a possible course of action for teachers here in this province.

With the Easter season soon upon us, allow me to wish you all a happy and safe spring break. May the short time away from your classrooms afford you some rest and relaxation and offer you an opportunity to recharge and renew for the final term. Thank you for all that you do, each and every day with your students.

Sean

T H E

bulletin

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**Two Locations –
May 11, Corner Brook & May 13, St. John's**

9th Annual Provincial Fair Teacher Recruitment

**Are you looking for a job in education?
Are you an Education graduate?
Substitute teacher?
Or looking for a career change?**

**Monday, May 11, 2009
4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Food Court
Sir Wilfred Grenfell College
Corner Brook**

**Wednesday, May 13, 2009
2:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Atrium of the
Inco Innovation Centre
Memorial University
St. John's**

PROVINCIAL/NATIONAL/INTERNATIONAL
NEWS

VICTORIA

Special recognition for Harvest Run Winner

The Persalvic Panthers from Persalvic Elementary in Victoria had a successful year at the 2008 Harvest Run held in Carbonear. There were several individual and team awards that the school captured, including the Grade 9 boys team gold medal. But one runner's accomplishment deserves special recognition.

Shianne Emberley, a Grade 3 student, competed against more than 70 other competitors in her age group. When the race was complete she had finished ahead of everyone else and won the gold medal. This is a great feat for any young competitor, but Shianne's accomplishment is extra special. She was able to do what some would consider, unimaginable.

Shianne completed the run only two short years



Shianne Emberley is presented with a plaque to recognize her remarkable accomplishment.

after having major open heart surgery. "Shianne is an example for all of us," says Stephen King, a Grade 2 teacher at Persalvic Elementary. "Never underestimate your own ability, because you never know what you can do if you give it a try." During a recent assembly, Shianne was presented with a plaque from the school to recognize her remarkable accomplishment. The Persalvic Panther students and staff are very proud of Shianne.

SPANIARD'S BAY

Not all chickens are the same

On January 28, the Holy Redeemer School students in homerooms 4P and 4/5B were delighted once again to see some of the chickens that had hatched in their school in November come back for a surprise visit!

Tracey Smith, the mother of Harley Smith in homeroom 4P, who has a hobby farm in Bishop's Cove, was kind enough to bring into the school an incubator with 21 chicken eggs. The children quickly noted however that the eggs were not all the same size or colour. When asked, all Mrs. Smith would say is, "Not all chickens are the same. You'll see!"

Placed in Harley's homeroom, the eggs were carefully monitored for correct temperature and humidity for three weeks. During that time, the students researched how chickens are hatched and cared for. When the chickens did hatch over a two-day period, they were carefully transferred to a brooder (also provided by Mrs. Smith) after their feathers had dried somewhat. The children were in awe! To their delight, they discovered that Mrs. Smith had provided seven different breeds for them to enjoy; Rhode Island Red, Polish, Cochin, Plymouth Rock, Barred Rock, Cornish and Miniature Cornish.



Students in Homeroom 4P at Holy Redeemer School with newborn chicks.

All the classes from K to 9 were given the opportunity to view the newborns during the week that they stayed in school. The elementary corridor became very

popular! The students were also able to bring in food from home for their new classmates – whole wheat bread and oatmeal. The helpers watered the chicks each day and everyone was surprised as to how much food and water 21 baby chickens consumed.

Students graduate from D.A.R.E. Program

On February 13, the Grade 6 students, along with teachers Ms. Deering and Ms. Harrington, of Holy Redeemer School in Spaniard's Bay participated in their first ever D.A.R.E graduation. The D.A.R.E (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) program was implemented by Constable Vicki Chalker of the RCMP. The program teaches students valuable information that they can reflect on now as well as in the future.

“The program was very educational, interactive and a lot of fun for everyone involved,” says Ron Fagan, a teacher at Holy Redeemer School. “Thank you to Constable Chalker and the RCMP for bringing this wonderful program to our school.”



Students from Holy Redeemer School graduate from the D.A.R.E. program.

WHITBOURNE

BANDANZA inspires students

Learning Partners: Instrumental Music a.k.a BANDANZA took place on February 24 at Whitbourne Elementary. This event was organized by music teachers Robert Colbourne and Beth Reckling and was sponsored by the NLTA Music Special Interest Council. Beginning band students from six schools in the Western Region joined forces to receive specialized instruction from professional musicians. Participating schools included Acreman Elementary, Fatima Academy, Holy Family Elementary, St. Anne's Academy, St. Edward's Elementary, and Whitbourne Elementary.

In the afternoon, the students performed in a 140-piece concert band under the direction of Ms. Carla Roberts (music teacher at Crescent Collegiate). The day was met with much success and provided teachers and students with the opportunity to network as well as provided professional development for teachers throughout the district. Students were clearly inspired by this opportunity and it undoubtedly gave a boost to band programs in the Western Region which continue to grow.



Students perform during BANDANZA at Whitbourne Elementary.

ST. JOHN'S

Olympic medal winner brings important message to students

Olympic cross-country ski medal winner Beckie Scott presented her 'Olympic story' to students at Leary's Brook Junior High in St. John's. Posters and student-led greetings welcomed her to the enthusiastic assembly. Physical Education teacher, Colleen Hogan, thanked Beckie for bringing a 'very fitting and worthwhile message' to Leary's Brook.

Beckie's presentation included details of years of training and setting goals. This, along with family support, helped her achieve her goals. But when talking about a recent Olympic win, a highlight for her was the unselfish act of a Norwegian Olympic team member. A Canadian relay team member had broken a pole during the race thereby setting the Norwegian team up for an advanced placing (medal). But the Norwegian team handed off a spare pole to the Canadian skier. This unselfish act returned the Canadians ahead of the Norwegians. This story put fair play and the Olympic spirit front and center where it should be!



Olympic cross-country ski medal winner Beckie Scott poses with students from Leary's Brook Junior High.

Beckie also talked about "Right to Play" and her own personal visit to Ethiopia. This organization reaches out to countries who do not have the opportunities to enjoy and 'learn from sport' (setting goals, conflict resolution, quality of life enjoyment, socialization) as we do. This 'fitting message' to students was two-fold: set goals and work to succeed but also share your good fortune with others!

Beckie Scott also took time after her gym presentation to ski with students. "They will certainly remember skiing and spending time with this Olympic winner!" says Ms. Hogan.

I.J.'s Improv Team takes top prize

I.J. Samson Junior High's improvisational team, Fantastic Five x 2, was named provincial junior high champs at the Newfoundland Improv Games held on January 21 in St. John's.

The team competed against other schools in events that challenged students to think on their feet, perform original stories in improvised settings, and create and develop characters based on audience suggestion.

"I knew we would win!" said the team's co-captain Katy Warren after the competition. "We practice regularly three times a week, and since Christmas, we've practiced every day. We spend a lot of time together."

What pushed the team to the head of the class? Judges said it was the team's cohesiveness, the way they responded to each other on stage, and their ability to create and develop their scenes in a way that would be expected from senior high school competitors.

All teams performed three of five events designed to test their improvisation skills, and were scored by a panel of judges. I.J. Samson finished the night with well over 600 points, a score that put them into the number one spot.

"The kids really put so much time into this," said coach and teacher-sponsor John Battcock. "This is a big deal for them, and for me! I.J. used to be known for its improv teams, but we were absent for a while. We started up again last year and we came second, and now we are back in the saddle."

"I couldn't be more impressed with these students," said Principal Ed Connolly. "The students have been working so hard and I know this win means a lot to them. Having students involved in the Arts gives them another opportunity to build character."

"I don't know if some of the kids who performed this evening would have been able to get on stage at the beginning of the year," said Battcock. "This is really good for them."



I.J. Samson's improvisational team proudly displays their first place award at the Newfoundland Improv Games.

NL educator wins Parks Canada Award

On December 2, 2008, Brad Clarke, Manager of Curriculum and Learning Resources with the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education, was named the first Atlantic recipient of the Parks Canada Agency's Ambassador for Education award.

The award was presented to Mr. Clarke in recognition of his long-time support of Parks Canada's formal education program through partnerships, advice and promotion.



L-R: Rob Hingston, Heritage Presentation Specialist, Parks Canada; Denise Hansen, Atlantic Education Specialist Parks Canada-Atlantic Service Centre (Halifax); and Brad Clarke (Award Winner)

Brad Clarke helped pioneer a partnership between Parks Canada, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association and the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education that developed and promoted programs like the ONSITE Teacher's Institute in Western Newfoundland and Labrador and the corresponding Institute for education interns from Memorial University. The award also recognizes his role in including Parks Canada in the development of a new environmental science course for high school students.

This award program began in 2007 and so far, educators have been recognized in Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Quebec, and now Newfoundland and Labrador. Future plans will expand the program to other provinces. This award is one way Parks Canada is taking steps to recognize the contributions of formal educators in each province who support Parks Canada's education program.

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

2009 Christmas card contest winners announced

Maggie Skinner, a Grade 4 student at St. Peter's Elementary in Mount Pearl, has been chosen as winner of the 2009 NLTA Christmas Card Contest. Maggie receives a \$100 cash award and a framed copy of her winning entry. Her winning design will appear on the NLTA Christmas card that will be sent to schools, businesses and other groups in December 2009. The theme for the 2009 contest was *What Christmas Means to Me*, and this year the contest was open to all Grade 4 students in the province.

The second place cash prize of \$50 was awarded to Brady Clarke, a Grade 4 student at Goulds Elementary, and the third place cash prize of \$25 was awarded to Grade 4 student Bradley Young of All Saints All Grade School in Grey River.

Entries are judged on the basis of their creativity, colour and ability to reproduce well. This year, 595 entries were received from Grade 4 students throughout the province.



Maggie Skinner's winning design for the 2009 NLTA Christmas Card Contest.

Arts In Education Programs

The Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council (NLAC) operates three programs that support artists who bring their artistic practice into schools. Artists may work with teachers and students on art integration projects, present workshops to students, or offer performances or presentations of completed work to schools. The three programs are the School Touring Program, the Visiting Artist Program (VAP) and the ArtsSmarts Program. Each of the three programs are in partnership with the Cultural Connections Strategy of the Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education. The Visiting Artist Program is also in partnership with the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association.

The School Touring Program funds professional artists, groups and not-for-profit arts organizations in offering tours to schools throughout the province. Presentations/performances must be for students only (not for the general) public. They must be designed for school audiences, must be age appropriate in presentation and subject matter. The schools and individual students must not be charged a fee for the presentation/performance.

Applications from artists must include a script, video, or other document outlining the planned presentation/performance. All applications are assessed by a five-person committee made up of artists and teachers from across the province.

ArtsSmarts seeks to allow schools and their communities a chance to explore artistic activities that are linked to educational outcomes, to encourage students to develop their intellectual skills through active participation in the arts, and to engage Canadians, particularly young people, in artistic activity with a view to developing supporters and practitioners of the arts to nurturing creative thinkers. Schools and school boards can apply for funding to support an ArtsSmarts project. Individual artists, groups, and arts organizations wishing to apply must form a partnership with one or more schools and apply through the school or groups of schools. Applications are also reviewed by a five-person assessment committee comprised of professional artists and experienced arts educators.

Through the Visiting Artist Program schools can apply for funding from an artist, group of artists, or an arts organization to come to the school to present artists talks, conduct readings, offer performances, lead arts workshops, etc. The subject of the visit should be artistic in nature and should help students garner a greater understanding of the arts and its role and potential in our society. A teacher in any school

in the provincial K-12 system may apply. A school can apply for one VAP for each grade configuration (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) or for every 150 students in the school to a maximum of four VAP projects in a school in a school year. Teachers or classes with current ArtsSmarts or Learning Through the Arts projects are not eligible for the VAP funding.

For more information on any of the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council's Arts in Education programs check out www.nlac.nf.ca or email Ken Murphy, Program Manager with the Newfoundland and Labrador Arts Council, kmurphy@nfld.net or call 709-726-2212.

CANADA

Prime Minister's Awards deadline extended

The original deadline of March 31, 2009 has been extended to April 20, 2009. Nominators now have extra time to complete their packages and send them in. If you know a teacher who should be recognized with one of these prestigious awards, please encourage applications. The benefits for teachers, schools and boards are tremendous!

The 2009 Guidelines and Nomination Forms are going out to schools and school boards across the country and are also available in the following section: Nomination Guidelines file: www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/pmate-ppmee.nsf/eng/h_wz00010e.html. You can also obtain hard copies by calling 613-946-0651 or sending an email to pmate-ppmee@gc.ca.

Prix du Premier ministre – la date limite a été reportée

La date limite originale du 31 mars 2009 a été reportée au 20 avril 2009; ce qui vous donne plus de temps pour soumettre une candidature pour un enseignant ou une enseignante. Si vous connaissez un enseignant exceptionnel, n'hésitez pas à soumettre sa candidature. Les avantages pour les enseignants, les écoles et les conseils scolaires sont nombreux!

Les lignes directrices et le formulaire sortent aux écoles et conseils scolaire à travers le pays et sont aussi disponible dans la section Lignes directrices www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/pmate-ppmee.nsf/fra/h_wz00010f.html. De plus, vous pouvez obtenir une copie de ce document en téléphonant au 613-946-0651 ou par courriel à pmate-ppmee@gc.ca.

Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History

Canada's National History Society is now seeking nominations for the 14th Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. Candidates need only submit an original lesson plan or project description, supporting student work, evaluation and a statement of their teaching philosophy.

Six recipients will be awarded \$2,500, a medal and a trip to Ottawa for two, to attend the Awards ceremony and presentation by Her Excellency. An additional \$1,000 is awarded to the recipients' schools.

In addition to the cash awards and recognition, recipients enjoy two days of unforgettable experiences which have included Vice-regal ceremonies and luncheons with Her Excellency, receptions in the Senate, recognition in the House of Commons, as well as private tours of Parliament Hill, Rideau Hall, the Library and Archives Canada Preservation Centre, and the Mackenzie King Estate.

The History Society invites educators from elementary, middle, and senior levels to participate in the Awards, provided that their work features Canadian content with an historical dimension. Teachers can present themselves or a group, or be nominated by a student, parent or colleague.

Deadline for submissions is April 30, 2009. Here is how to apply:

Rules: www.historyociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=rul

Form: www.historyociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=nom

Information: prixggawards@historysociety.ca; Tel: 1-800-861-1008.

NLTA Scholarships

To obtain an application form visit the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca and click on "Forms Online" or contact the NLTA Professional Development Division,

Tel: 726-3223 or toll free at
1-800-563-3599.

**Application Deadline:
July 31, 2009**



ELDRED W. WARREN, 1919-2008

Eldred W. Warren of Heart's Delight-Islington passed peacefully away on July 16, 2008 at the Health Sciences Centre in the presence of his loving family.

A retired administrator, Eldred spent 39 years in the teaching profession and held positions in Isle Au Valen, St. Joseph's, Islington, Trinity, Bear Cove, Straits of Belle Isle, Heart's Delight and Heart's Content. He retired from the teaching profession in 1979.

Eldred was a dedicated volunteer for both community and church. He was a chartered member of the Town Council of Heart's Delight-Islington and served as an active member for 25 years both as mayor and councillor. He was also an honorary member of the Volunteer Fire Department and a past Master and Grand District Master of the SUF.

He served 64 years as lay reader of St. Matthew's Parish; was a member of the Parish Council; a representative for the Parish on the Diocese Education Committee; a member of vestry and served as both Parish and Church treasurer for a total of 25 years. He was awarded a certificate of merit for outstanding contribution in the Eastern Diocese of Newfoundland and Labrador and in 1992 he was a recipient of the commemorative medal for the 125th anniversary of the Confederation of Canada for significant contribution to compatriots, community and Canada.

Eldred was a member of Masonic Lodge, Heart's Content and a past Master of this Lodge as well as a member of Union Lodge. He became a Shriner in 1979 as a chartered member of Mazol and served in the capacity of ambassador. He had been a member of the Trinity-Conception Shrine Club since its inception and served as President and treasurer. He also served as Chaplain for the Trinity-Conception Club and was also a member of the Clarenville Shrine Club and one of the founding members of the R.V. Unit for which he was past secretary.

He was vice-president of the Retired Teachers' Association for Trinity-Conception and an active member of Island Harbour Seniors' Club right up to his passing.

Eldred is predeceased by his son Eldred Jr. and left with loving memories are his wife of 55 years, Ruby; children Valerie, Marilyn, Pauline, David, Renee and their families and daughter-in-law Sandra and family.

(Submitted by daughter Pauline Welsh)



Eldred W. Warren



Results of School Survey

Impact of the 'New' Teacher Allocation Model (TAM)

by DON ASH

As a result of recommendations from The Report of the Teacher Allocation Commission – May 2007, a new teacher allocation model was adopted by the Provincial Government beginning for the 2007-08 school year. The new model was based on the underlying concept of teacher allocation based on school needs identified at the local level and is a combination of 'numbers driven' and 'needs driven' principles. This was a fundamental shift in approach which the NLTA believed would lead to an improved system of allocation and improved educational opportunities for students. In attempting to ascertain whether the theory translated into reality at the school level, the NLTA's Provincial Executive was interested in obtaining feedback from schools in the first year of implementation of the new model. Consequently, the following motion was passed at the June 6, 2008 meeting of Provincial Executive:

That the NLTA survey school representatives and administrators by the end of September 2008 to gather data on the impact of the teacher allocation model on their schools.

The intent of this article is to share with teachers the results of this informal survey of NLTA school representatives and administrators conducted by the NLTA in the fall of 2008.

The survey was sent to all schools and 99 schools responded to the survey. The results were analyzed in aggregate; by school board; by schools with an increase in or same student enrolment; by schools with a decrease in student enrolment; by K-6 schools and by high schools.

The following are general observations emanating from the survey results:

1. The "new" teacher allocation model has been beneficial from a provincial perspective. Despite declining student enrolment, Teacher Payroll reported an additional 117 full time equivalent

teaching units were deployed in 2008-09 when compared to 2007-08.

2. As reported by schools, the new Teacher Allocation Model has had an impact on school allocations (73%) and 70% report that the impact has been positive or somewhat positive.
3. Areas which seem to have benefitted most from the new model are:

	Allocations	
	Increased	Increased or Same
Administration	64%	97%
Specialist Teachers	32%	85%
Learning Resource Teachers	34%	94%

4. Primary/Elementary schools – The reaction to the new model was overwhelmingly positive. As a result of the class size caps which have been introduced and the learning resources teacher allocation now being based on K-12 enrolments versus 7-12 enrolments in past years, K-6 schools benefitted considerably. All categories of teacher allocations increased or stayed the same despite declining enrolment in 50% of the schools.
5. High Schools – Even though class size caps were not established for high schools under the new model and despite a decrease in enrolment in the majority of high schools that responded, the allocation of administration, guidance counselors, specialist teachers, and learning resource teachers increased.

6. By Board, the Nova Central and Eastern School District schools report the most positive impact – 75% of schools report some positive impact in Nova Central compared with 72% in Eastern and 58% in Western. Only two schools from Labrador responded.
7. For a significant majority of schools whose student enrolment increased or remained the same, it is clear that allocations for all categories of teachers have improved under the new model, other than non-categorical teachers to whom the new model has not yet been applied.

	Allocations	
	Increased or Same	Decrease
Administration	94%	6%
Guidance	89%	11%
Classroom	74%	26%
Specialist	90%	10%
Non-Categorical	70%	30%
Categorical	82%	18%
LRT	93%	7%

While this survey and its results are by no means scientific in nature, it is clear that the overall result of the new teacher allocation model has been positive for schools. It is anticipated the positive result of the new Teacher Allocation Model will further be experienced by schools in the future with the establishment of class size maximums in Grades 5 and 8 in September 2009, Grades 6 and 9 in September 2010, changing the specialist allocation for Grades 7 - 9 in 2009-10 to 1:125 from 1:175, implementation of a small schools allocation, and further implementation of the needs based model.

The NLTA and the Department of Education have worked cooperatively and collaboratively in the implementation of the recommendations of the Commission and the Teacher Allocation Model. The Association continues to closely monitor the impact of the new model on schools and on the education of our students as the new model becomes fully implemented.

.....
 Don Ash is Assistant Executive Director of the NLTA.



The Redundancy/Reassignment and Layoff Process

by PERRY DOWNEY

As the May 7th deadline approaches (last day for teachers to be notified of layoff), teachers are reminded to review Article 9: Layoff in the Provincial Collective Agreement, especially the change that has been introduced in the new Provincial Collective Agreement, namely, Clause 9.03(c). Article 9 outlines the process that each School Board is required to follow as it prepares and finalizes its staffing plans for the 2009-10 school year.

During any year in which there is a reduction or a realignment of teaching units, a position(s) in a school may be designated as redundant and removed from the school. The actual removal of a position(s) can occur through one of two means: i) through the natural attrition process, created through teacher retirements or resignations and the School Board's decision not to refill the vacancies that have been created; or ii) through the redundancy-reassignment-layoff process, as outlined in Article 9. In certain instances, even when the number of retirements and resignations are equal to or greater than the number of teaching units that are scheduled to be removed because of redundancies, there still exists the possibility that further reductions of positions on staffs will be necessary in order to maintain or implement certain programs and/or services. As a result, several individual teachers on a staff and in neighbouring schools may be affected by this process and thus declared redundant and reassigned to another position within another school within the District, or declared redundant and not reassigned, but rather laid off once the process has been exhausted and no comparable position is available within the District that the individual is capable of filling.

Because this process can have significant implications on individual teachers, it is very important that all teachers become thoroughly familiar with the redundancy/reassignment and layoff processes and with their rights during these processes, as provided in the Provincial Collective Agreement. To briefly review the process that should occur when a position(s) is lost on a staff, i.e., a position(s) is

redundant, all teachers should be familiar with the following process:

Step I:

Clause 9.01: Teachers must ensure that their placement on the School Board's seniority list accurately reflects their entire teaching service in the Kindergarten to Level III public school system in the Province, i.e., every day should be recorded as seniority. Time taught outside the province or outside of the Kindergarten to Level III school system cannot be credited as seniority. If there are discrepancies between your calculation of seniority and the School Board records, it is the teacher's responsibility to notify their School Board official as soon as it is discovered.

Step II:

Clause 9.02: Senior teachers shall be reassigned to the remaining positions within the school that they are capable of filling. Subject to capability, the reassignment process shall be as follows:

- (a) tenured teachers;
- (b) teachers on a one-year probationary contract;
- (c) teachers on a two-year probationary contract;
- (d) teachers on probationary contracts in accordance with Clause 7.05.

Step III:

Clause 9.03(a): A teacher who is not reassigned in accordance with Clause 9.02, shall have priority, based upon seniority, subject to capability, to vacant teaching positions or positions held by junior teachers, in the following order of priority:

- (i) within the community;
- (ii) within the nearest community, within the school district, where such a position exists.

Step IV: NEW

Clause 9.03(c): notwithstanding Clause 9.09, any teacher who refuses reassignment in accordance with Clause 9.03(a) in any particular year shall

not be entitled to further consideration for reassignment in that year.

Note: A teacher who refuses reassignment in accordance with 9.03(c) can apply for transfer to vacant positions during the remainder of the school year and will be considered with all other teachers who have applied for transfer to the same position. If the individual is unsuccessful in obtaining a transfer before the end of the school year, the teacher will be placed in recall and subject to Clause 9.10. (See Step V below).

Note: With respect to Clauses 9.02 and 9.03, in determining capability to fulfill the requirements of the job function, the School Board shall consider the overall ability of the teacher to perform the functions of the position in accordance with the currently modern standards required for the position.

Step V:

Any teacher who is declared redundant and not reassigned, in accordance with Clauses 9.02 and/or 9.03, is deemed to have been “laid-off” and thus placed on recall. Any teacher placed on recall has rights to vacant comparable positions during the subsequent three (3) years following the layoff (Clause 9.10).

To paraphrase Clause 9.07(b), a teacher who is reassigned and notified in writing in accordance with Article 9, has ten (10) calendar days to notify the School Board of his/her acceptance or rejection of the reassignment. Also, as stated in Clause 9.09: “A School Board will not advertise any positions or hire any teachers until it has made every effort to place those teachers who have been laid off or who have been notified in writing that they are to be laid off.”

Any teacher who has been notified by his/her school administrator and/or School Board Office personnel that their position is redundant and that they will be reassigned or laid off for the following school year should consult with the designated Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division (BES) responsible for that Board. (The NLTA toll free number: 1-800-563-3599 or 726-3223.) The School Board designations for each Administrative Officer are as follows:

District 1	Labrador	Perry Downey	ext. 226
District 2	Western School District	Steve Brooks	ext. 230
District 3	Nova Central School District	Stefanie Tuff	ext. 232
District 4	Eastern School District		
	Burin Region	Perry Downey	ext. 226
	Vista Region	Don Ash	ext. 231
	Avalon West Region	Perry Downey	ext. 226
	Avalon East Region	Don Ash	ext. 231
District 5	Conseil Scolaire Francophone Provincial de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador	Stefanie Tuff	ext. 232

If you have any questions regarding this process, please contact an Administrative Officer in the BES Division.

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



Financing a Year of Deferred Salary Leave

by STEFANIE TUFF

The Deferred Salary Leave Plan (DSLPL) is available to any tenured teacher in a permanent position covered by the NLTA Collective Agreement. The terms of reference and other details of the DSLPL are set out in Article 51 of the provincial contract. Many teachers find the DSLPL an excellent means of financing a year of leave to pursue travel, family time, other employment, further studies, or any interest that an individual might have. Leave under the DSLPL is fully credited for purposes of pension, seniority, severance pay, salary increments, and sick leave. The plan is registered with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), which does not allow the year of leave to be taken as the last year before retirement. The deadline to apply for enrolment in the DSLPL beginning in September is April 30 of the previous school year.

While the DSLPL provides an excellent opportunity for personal and professional rejuvenation, there are economic realities which must be faced. The Administrative Officers in the Benefits and Economic Services Division are often asked what the “difference is” in take-home pay while on deferred salary. We are reluctant to provide specific financial advice to members because each individual’s situation is different and all financial matters, such as salary levels and income tax rates, are subject to change. Accordingly, the information provided herein contains rough estimates only.

The following comparisons of net salary for a teacher on full salary versus the various DSLPL options are rough calculations for illustrative purposes only. Each individual teacher’s situation will be different. The estimates are based on the salaries that will be in effect as of September 2009. Taxes deducted vary for each teacher and they are approximations only, based on information provided by Teacher Payroll. EI and CPP deductions are based on 2009 formulae. All estimated figures are rounded to the nearest dollar. Teachers participating in the DSLPL continue to pay pension premiums based on the full, unreduced salary. EI premiums are paid on the full salary, but are not paid during the year of leave. Therefore, teachers

may not be eligible for EI benefits in the year following the year of deferred salary leave, which may have implications for those wishing to take maternity leave in the year following a deferred salary leave.

Any further questions on the Deferred Salary Leave Plan should be directed to an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA at 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599.

Full Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	61,946	71,749	81,168
Estimated Tax	12,053	15,157	18,315
Estimated EI	732	732	732
Estimated CPP	2,119	2,119	2,119
NLTA Fees	774	897	1,015
Pension Deduction	5,792	6,709	7,589
Estimated Net*	40,476	46,135	51,398

* Estimated Net does not include an individual’s insurances and other deductions.

2/3 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	41,297	47,833	54,112
Estimated Tax	5,286	6,884	8,735
Estimated EI	732	732	732
Estimated CPP	1,871	2,119	2,119
NLTA Fees	524	598	676
Pension Deduction	5,792	6,709	7,589
Estimated Net*	27,092	30,791	34,261

* Estimated Net does not include an individual’s insurances and other deductions.

3/4 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	46,460	53,812	60,876
Estimated Tax	6,731	8,938	11,060
Estimated EI	732	732	732
Estimated CPP	2,119	2,119	2,119
NLTA Fees	581	673	761
Pension Deduction	5,792	6,709	7,589
Estimated Net*	30,505	34,641	38,615

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.

4/5 Deferred Salary			
	Top of V Salary Scale	Top of VI Salary Scale	Top of VII Salary Scale
Salary	49,557	57,399	64,934
Estimated Tax	7,795	10,490	12,454
Estimated EI	732	732	732
Estimated CPP	2,119	2,119	2,119
NLTA Fees	619	717	812
Pension Deduction	5,792	6,709	7,589
Estimated Net*	32,500	36,632	40,748

* Estimated Net does not include an individual's insurances and other deductions.

Stefanie Tuff is an Administrative Officer in the Benefits and Economic Services Division of the NLTA.



Celebrate Our Heroes
Education Week 2009
Opening Ceremonies

The Opening Ceremonies for Education Week 2009 took place on Monday, March 2 at St. Catherine's Academy in Mount Carmel.

The planning for the event began many weeks earlier and the chair of the school committee, Theresa Dawe, and her dedicated committee were thrilled to host this year's Opening Ceremonies at their school.

Many volunteer hours were spent putting together an outstanding program of local talent and entertainment. The ceremonies officially began with the singing of "O Canada" led by the St. Catherine's School Choir, a high school choir consisting of students from Grades 7-12. St. Catherine's Academy is the sponsoring body of 2895 Memorial Army Cadet Corps who proudly followed with the playing of the "Ode to Newfoundland".

The emcee for the Opening Ceremonies was Frances Santos, Special Education Teacher at St. Catherine's Academy, who welcomed all those in attendance and expertly guided everyone through the morning's events.



Audience members were treated to a presentation of the Education Week logo assembly and logo significance by Grade 1-4 students at St. Catherine's Academy. Other performances included the St. Catherine's Academy Accordion and Guitar Group

who played "Grey Foggy Day" and "Music and Friends" as well as a traditional danced called "The Tucker" by Grade 5 and 6 students.

A highlight of the program was a special guest appearance by Captain Bob Bartlett, the greatest ice caption of the 20th Century. Actor Steve O'Connell enthralled audience members with memories of Bartlett's days as a young boy in school and his dreams for the future. Captain Bartlett said he was a daydreamer who knew what he wanted to do from an early age. He never expected to be a hero.

Guests at the Opening Ceremonies included: Mr. Felix Collins, MHA for Placentia-St. Mary's; Mr. Sean Noah, President of the NLTA; Mr. Darrin Pike, Director of Education, Eastern School District; and Ms. Elaine Nash, St. Catherine's Academy School Council; all of whom brought greetings to audience members. Other guests included Senator Fabian Manning, members of the Eastern School District, community leaders from the St. Mary's area, as well as parents and family members of students.

Other highlights of the Opening Ceremonies included the singing of the Education Week song by the primary/elementary choirs in Grades K-6, the cutting of the Education Week cake, and the reading and signing of the Education proclamation by Mr. Felix Collins and Mr. Sean Noah. The proclamation was read in English by Captain Bob Bartlett and in French by student Saadia Azam.

Mr. Kyle King, a Level III student, spoke on behalf of St. Catherine's Academy Student Leadership and Rebecca Doody, a Level III student at St. Catherine's Academy, thanked all those who made the Opening Ceremonies possible.

A reception was held for all invited guests and students immediately following the event.

The NLTA has been sponsoring Education Week in Newfoundland and Labrador since 1936.





Feeding Your Inner Wolf

by JUDY BERANGER

There is a Cherokee parable about two wolves that live inside each of us. One takes energy while the other gives energy. The one that takes energy is called fear, jealousy, regret, rumor, gossip, arrogance, anger, sorrow, self-pity, and resentment. The one that gives energy is called caring, patience, respect, compassion, generosity, empathy, love, hope, faith and joy. The story goes that on a daily basis, there is a battle raging inside each of us between these two wolves. Which wolf wins the battle? The answer is determined by each of us in our decision as to which one we choose to feed. Do you feed it knowingly or does its nourishment come from something deeper inside? The beginning answer to these questions can be uncovered when life becomes challenging. Do we respond by “tightening” up and sinking into hostility and despair or by “lightening” up and moving forward to do the best we can in a difficult situation.

A recent study, *Discovering What Matters: Balancing Money, Medicine and Meaning*, reported that having purpose in one’s life is still considered most important by people, even during these difficult economic times. We want our lives to count! As teachers, we are well positioned to make a difference in the world by our potential to impact profoundly on the lives of our students and colleagues. We are at our best when we are mindful and deliberate in our actions and reactions. Many of us treasure fond memories involving a caring teacher or colleague who touched our lives in positive ways. Unfortunately, many of us can also identify teachers or colleagues whom we disliked with equal enthusiasm! Teachers are great role models for students for many reasons but especially for the truly important things like patience, dignity, respect and caring. For the most part they are love based, not fear based. It comes through no matter what subject is being taught. We never forget the ones who valued us. Have you ever heard anyone say they are sick and tired of feeling valued and appreciated?

At a very early age there is a sense, unconscious though it may be, that we can choose how we think most of the time. For example, two little boys were playing marbles together when a little girl walked by.

One little guy stopped and said to his pal, “Boy, when I stop hating girls, she’s the one I’m going to stop hating first!” The reality is that as teachers, working with hundreds of children on a daily basis, we are faced with very difficult situations where it seems that the only choice we have is how we choose to think and react. Our choice in that exact moment is the secret to choosing success and choosing life-giving patterns or choosing to go places that drain our vital energy. For many this is a natural gift; others develop it over years with patience and learning. It is easy to give our best when all is in good order; the real challenge is to do so when things are tough.

If you could change three things about your life, what would they be?

In deciding upon an answer, it is important to only give energy to setting goals that will help change something we are able and willing to change. It’s definitely a waste of energy to want change that depends on someone else or something else. The only person I can change is “me” – I can change how I think, how I act and how I react. I cannot change these things in someone else and, if I try, will only serve to feed the energy-draining wolf! It’s not so much that we’re afraid of change or so in love with the old ways, but it is that place in between where fear creeps. It’s Linus when his blanket is in the dryer – there’s nothing to hold on to when his sense of security is gone.

There are so many behaviors that can grow energy while other behaviors drain our life energy. Imagine how much energy it takes to keep things bottled up – hoping they will go away. The result of bottling things up rather than dealing with them, eventually displays itself as depression, anger, sadness – you know the drill. The anger wolf presents itself once again.

How can I grow my energy and heighten my quality of life?

A few of the many guiding principles that might help include:

- *Self Assessment* – Review your values, beliefs, interests, abilities, skills, esteem levels, personal characteristics, choice of career, transferable skills,

self-management skills, time management skills etc. Examine your lifestyle presently, determine if it is where you want it to be, and decide how you would like it to be in the future.

- *Attitude* – can be an infectious condition whether good or bad. Attitude can be the secret of feeling good. It not only supports healing in the body but also helps in maintaining a healthy brain and body while boosting self-esteem. Most outcomes are not determined by what happens to us but rather how we react to what happens to us.

- *Movement* – is very necessary for energy flow. Purposeful movement enables us to improve our physical and emotional sense of well-being. It can soften our resistance to change, provide grounding, manage pain, and enhance the performance of all body systems. Just stop for a moment to stretch or breathe or exercise – do it! Think about how it feels after a brisk walk or some other physical activity enhanced by a healthy diet. As Emerson so aptly put it, “the first wealth is health.”

- *Change* – Welcome change both professionally and personally. It is one definite and consistent occurrence in our lives and will always happen whether we choose to adapt to it or not.

- *Passion Assessment* – passion fuels energy. If we don't have it at the moment we can seek out models for passion in families, schools, communities, as well as ourselves in past times when we were energized about something. Research passion in your family history. My father had a severe, debilitating stroke two years ago – yet he feels very blessed to still have his mind, his voice, and the use of his left hand! This has taught me more about passion and attitude, and how beneficial it is, than any other single occurrence.

- *Humor* – humor as a developed skill is not the kind that pokes fun at another or makes them a target. It is the kind that helps us take ourselves and the situation lightly. When the going gets tough the tough hang loose. Research shows that children laugh 200 times a day and adults laugh 10 times a day. We can learn lots about humor and enthusiasm from children.

- *Feedback* – Get feedback from friends, family, colleagues, supervisors and non-verbal communication. The latter can be very powerful feedback and is readily available, if you stop to notice. Solicit feedback only if you are prepared to receive the answer in the spirit in which it was requested. We need to ask in

the way porcupines make love – very carefully – as sometimes we may not like what we hear.

- *Setting goals* – The best way to predict the future is to create it by setting realistic and achievable goals, visualizing them, giving them time lines, developing strategies to implement them, and evaluating them so the process continues. We all need a map to know where we are going.

The five-day challenge – when energy is low

Is your energy down a quart? Are you ready to make a change, to put into action a conscious, deliberate strategy that is guaranteed to have a positive impact on your energy level? Give the following a try!

Five-Day Challenge – Do your utmost to go five days without saying anything negative about another person. You may not be able to prevent negative thoughts from forming but if you are willing to make the personal commitment you can: 1) catch the thought; 2) stop the thought (deep breathing really helps with this); and, 3) replace the thought. You can refuse to put the thought into words. If you mess up just start again and keep restarting, stopping and starting over until the five straight days are complete. You will be amazed at how much energy this will free up to do other things. Doing it with others, at home and in school with other teachers, will go a long way in changing patterns, creating humor and laughter, and freeing energy flow.

There is an old parable that tells of how the spirit of the plague passed an old man sitting under a tree. The old man asked the spirit where he was going. The spirit answered that he was going to the nearest city to kill one hundred people. As time passed the old man heard that ten thousand people had died in that city. When the spirit of the plague passed again on its return journey the old man challenged him and told the spirit that it lied because it said it would only take one hundred victims. The spirit replied: “I killed one hundred, FEAR took the rest.”

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Judy Beranger is a wellness and employee assistance coordinator with the Employee Assistance Program for Teachers. For confidential assistance contact Judy Beranger (ext. 265) or Claudette Coombs (ext. 242). We would be very interested in hearing suggestions for future articles for this section.



Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy

by DARYL RIDEOUT

“It is not often that teachers get a pat on the back for a job well done, but during the final dinner and indeed, throughout the entire week, we were energized and motivated to continue to do the work that we do.”

There are many opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development programs at the local level as well as nationally and internationally. One of the most engaging professional development programs is the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy. This annual program is sponsored by the Library of Parliament, and five teachers from this province were fortunate to attend the event this year. The event is usually held each November, but with the election last fall, it was postponed until February.

Seventy teachers from across Canada converged on Ottawa on February 8 to take part in this program. It offered many opportunities throughout a busy week to learn about Canada's government and about the many facets of government and our parliamentarians.

The week began with an informal gathering in the Lord Elgin Hotel and a tour of the Center Block and the Library of Parliament on Parliament Hill. We were introduced to the heritage, structure and functions of our parliament and the buildings that house it. We also were given time to visit the Canadian War Museum so that we could better understand the cost of defending and preserving democracy in this great country.

As the week progressed, we attended sessions on the constitution, the role of the Governor General, the roles and responsibilities of the executive branch of government as well as the roles of members of cabinet. We took part in panel discussions on minority parliaments, elections, the perspectives of parliamentarians and the roles of lobbyists. We sat in the House of Commons and the Senate and listened to the speakers of both as they explained how each of these

work. We were fortunate to sit in on Question Period in the House of Commons – to see our government at work, first hand. We visited the Supreme Court of Canada, and we learned about the role of the judiciary in our democracy. We also visited Rideau Hall, the home of the Governor General.

We learned about how committees work, and we participated in a simulation exercise which allowed us to live the experience of a parliamentary standing committee deliberation – the first steps to passing a bill in government.

It was an extremely busy week as the agenda was quite heavy every day, but each participant got so much out of it. We came away with a much better understanding and appreciation for our government and those who work within it.

There were opportunities to meet with many Members of Parliament, as well as Senators, the other well-known people within government. Many of our sessions were moderated by the likes of Don Newman and Julie Van Dusen of the CBC, and we had a chance to listen to people such as John Ralston Saul, Perrin Beatty and William Young, the Parliamentary Librarian, among others.

There were formal dinners on Parliament Hill and at the Chateau Laurier, where we sat with our MPs and our Senators. We were able to chat with them informally and further learn about Parliament directly from them. We had an opportunity to meet one-on-one with an MP or Senator, where we could ask questions related to their roles and the issues facing this country.

The week ended with the Honours Banquet at the Parliamentary Restaurant. Each teacher was recog-

nized for excellence in teaching, and we have never felt more proud of our profession. It is not often that teachers get a pat on the back for a job well done, but during the final dinner and indeed, throughout the entire week, we were energized and motivated to continue to do the work that we do. All teachers should experience what we did this week. It really is one of the best professional development opportunities available, and we encourage you to apply.

It was an incredible week of learning, of getting to know colleagues from across the country and of getting to know some of the players in our parliament. Each of the participants had quite the experience and I am sure that the things we learned will be transferred to our students, to help them gain a much better understanding of our parliament.

We would like to thank the NLTA and the administrators of our schools for supporting this program. This was truly a worthwhile opportunity for us, and we were honored to be able to attend.



Pictured l-r: participants from Eastern School District: Daryl Rideout, Lindy Brophy, Norma Summers and Bob Hancott.

If you have any questions about the program, feel free to contact me. We encourage you to apply to attend the Teachers Institute on Canadian Parliamentary Democracy so that you too can be inspired when teaching your students about Canada and our democracy.

Daryl Rideout is a teacher at Vanier Elementary in St. John's. He can be reached at darylrideout@esdnl.ca. This article was written on behalf of all the Institute participants from Newfoundland and Labrador: Lindy Brophy, Newtown Elementary, Mount Pearl; Bob Hancott, Gonzaga High School, St. John's; Elizabeth Organ, Bay d'Espoir Academy, Milltown; Daryl Rideout, Vanier Elementary, St. John's; and Norma Summers, Virginia Park Elementary, St. John's.

Learn to Play, Play to Learn: Building a Better Educational Game

by MATTHEW JOHNSON

Educational games have had a troubled history. At their worst, they have been neither educational nor games; even at their best they have faced scepticism from educators, game designers and especially children. The standard response to being given an educational game – This is supposed to be fun? – might be compared to finding a Brussels sprout at the centre of a Tootsie Pop. Teachers, meanwhile, are rightly concerned that the educational content of these games might be outweighed by the entertainment value. Already loaded down with curriculum that has to be delivered, many educators feel they don't have the time to spare on anything but direct instruction.

Media Awareness Network's (MNet), Canada's leading media education organization, conducted research in 2005, that investigated children's use of new technologies. Young Canadians in a Wired World (YCWW)—the most comprehensive and wide-ranging study of its kind in Canada—convinced MNet that there was a need for a comprehensive Internet literacy resource that could be used in Elementary and Intermediate classrooms.

The research showed that young people are actively interested in learning more about their online environments. In focus groups, young people articulated that what they need from adults is more information about the kinds of content they find online so they can make informed choices about what they choose to see, as well as training in how to protect their online privacy and how to avoid undesirable content. The interest is highest among the children in Grades 4 to 6. This is a particularly important time to learn these skills because kids in these grades are playing on commercial game sites that actively seek to collect their personal information, and, by Grade 6, students are exploring edgier Web sites.

These were our concerns as we began the development of *Passport to the Internet to the Internet*, an

Internet literacy tutorial for Grades 4-8. As we listed the areas we hoped to cover—understanding safety, marketing and privacy issues, authenticating information found on the Web, managing online relationships and dealing with cyber bullying—it quickly became clear that *Passport to the Internet* would be a very ambitious project. Media Awareness Network had already produced several educational games, such as the award-winning CyberPigs series. Most of these, however, weren't games in the proper sense but rather animated stories, which were occasionally interrupted with quizzes. With the amount of content it would need to deliver *Passport to the Internet* had to be more interactive and enough like a game that students would play through each of the modules with little encouragement from their teacher. Could we achieve this without sacrificing its educational value? Was it even possible for a game to teach complex skills like these?

Given the relatively brief history of educational games, it might come as a surprise that the question is an old one. One of our oldest games, chess, was traditionally seen as a preparation for war, and in 1989 David Perkins and Gavriel Salomon designed a thought experiment to test whether or not it actually did so. They imagined that a small country, home to the world's greatest chess master, was invaded by its larger neighbour. The citizens of the invaded country immediately put the chess master in charge of their military, reasoning that his skill on the board would transfer to the battlefield. In designing this scenario, Perkins and Salomon raised the question of just how we learn: is it more important to develop skills with broad application, that might move back and forth between related fields (such as chess and war), or were the skills specific to each context more important? In his book *Schools For Thought*, John Bruer revisits this problem, applying recent advances in cognitive theory to show that neither answer is

entirely true: the chess master will not automatically be a great strategist in the real world—the two situations are too different—but some of his specific skills may transfer to the new context.

The word “transfer” is key to understanding why some educational games work and some don’t. In cognitive theory, it’s used to refer to the ability to apply skills acquired in one context to another. In general, the more similar two contexts are, the easier it is to transfer from one to the other. Learning Spanish grammar, for example, will help you learn Italian grammar, but not Russian grammar, because Spanish is similar in structure to Italian but not to Russian. The catch is that strategies which are applicable to the most contexts are also generally the least useful: cognitive scientists call these weak methods. Conversely, those skills most dependent on specific understanding of a particular context, called strong methods, are the most effective—but are also, for obvious reasons, the hardest to transfer.

“In focus groups, young people articulated that what they need from adults is more information about the kinds of content they find online so they can make informed choices about what they choose to see, as well as training in how to protect their online privacy and how to avoid undesirable content.”

Transfer is, of course, important in all educational situations. One of the greatest challenges facing any teacher is to get students to transfer what they learn in the classroom to other situations (the test being the world outside of the school). This is especially important in educational games, because by definition their worlds—like a chess board—are artificial; any similarity to real-world contexts has to be designed in. It’s entirely possible to acquire mastery of a game without learning any skills that can transfer to other contexts (except, perhaps, to other games).

Why use games for education at all, then? Because players do acquire mastery, often with amazing commitment and speed. Many writers, from game designers such as Will Wright (*Sim City*, *Spore*) and Scott Osterweil (*Labyrinth*) to academics such as Henry Jenkins and Constance Steinkuehler, have noted that computer game players learn how to succeed at games through an application of the scientific method. As Wright puts it, “Just watch a kid with a

new video game. The last thing they do is read the manual. Instead, they pick up the controller and start mashing buttons to see what happens. This isn’t a random process; it’s the essence of the scientific method. Through trial and error, they begin to master the game world. It’s a rapid cycle of hypothesis, experiment, and analysis.” Steinkuehler, in her paper “Scientific Habits of Mind in Virtual Worlds,” even suggests games may teach hypothesis-testing better than traditional science education: “Poincaré warned against the seduction of reducing science to a domain of seeming facts, stating, ‘Science is built up of facts, as a house is built of stones; but an accumulation of facts is no more science than a heap of stones is a house.’” As well, games are well-suited to independent learning because they can allow students to learn at their own pace: each student moves through the game separately, progressing at whatever speed best suits her.

In designing *Passport to the Internet*, then, we knew there were several major issues we would have to address for it to be successful. The most important was the question of transfer: could we really teach Internet literacy skills, or would users only learn how to succeed at the game? We decided for this reason that the core of the game would be simulation – the modules would reproduce genuine online environments as closely as possible. Our module teaching privacy management skills, for instance, is a simulated social networking site that combines elements of Facebook and MySpace. Because of this choice we were able to teach specific skills, or strong strategies, that would transfer directly to the actual Internet: a student could, for instance, use the exact same techniques used to analyze the game’s fictional Web sites to judge real ones.

To take advantage of the learning potential of games, we wanted *Passport to the Internet* to reward exploration and experimentation. Although we wanted there to be consequences to success and failure (it’s not really a game if you can’t fail), we decided that failing should be a fairly minor event. (It’s worth noting that in *World of Warcraft*, the most popular online multiplayer game, death itself is basically an inconvenience.) We therefore let users replay any module as many times as needed and as soon as they want to, but also always give the option of moving to another module and coming back later, so they can take a break if they become frustrated. For that same reason, the modules are designed to be done in any order (except in one case where skills learned in one module are necessary to complete another one) and we allow users to complete the game over multiple sessions.

(cont’d)

Because the teachers who will be administering *Passport to the Internet* in the classroom are not necessarily experts in the skills we hope to teach (though we offer a detailed Teacher's Guide to provide background), we provide as much of the educational content as possible on demand, to be accessed by the students when they want it rather than delivered beforehand. We created a Help tool that lets students get information on any active items on the screen; but only when they decide they need extra information.

There were, of course, many other factors influencing our design decisions. As always, two of the most important were money and time: both limited our options in terms of how much we could do and how we could do it. An early plan, for instance, to have an unlockable "bonus" module had to be dropped due to time constraints, and the fully functional search engine simulator had to be narrowed significantly in scope. We were also concerned with making the tutorial appropriate to students' cognitive development: because the age range – from as young as eight to as old as thirteen – covered so much cognitive growth, we knew we had to have two different age levels in the game. This was most important in the authentication module, where the older students analyze Web sites on a much more complex and subtle level. Older students also face more sophisticated tasks in other modules, such as being a witness to cyber-bullying instead of a victim.

Henry Jenkins, writing about successful educational games (or "serious games," a term many in the field prefer), identifies several characteristics they all have in common. First, they are made to fit specific learning contexts; in other words, they teach strong, specific strategies rather than weak, general ones. We made *Passport to the Internet* as specific as possible, identifying at the beginning of the design process the key skills we wanted students to learn and making the game as close as possible to the real-world context in which those skills would be used. Second, successful educational games supplement classroom teaching rather than replace it. Although *Passport to the Internet* can be played on its own, we created a comprehensive Teacher's Guide that allows educators to make the game part of a larger lesson series, with resources and activities from which teachers could pick and choose.

Jenkins' third characteristic of a successful serious game is its use of play as a learning strategy. We made each of the modules competitive (in addition to 'pass' and 'fail' each has a possible score of "best," bestowing bragging rights on those students who do especially well) while keeping the consequences of failure low to encourage experimentation. Fourth

on his list is that every element of the game design is meaningful, so that users spend their time learning the content and not the interface. To achieve this we made the interface both simple and as near as possible to environments with which students will already be familiar. We also provided a Help tool which gives both text and audio instructions when needed.

Fifth, Jenkins notes that successful serious games are social, rather than individual. Although time and budget constraints prevented us from creating a multiplayer version of *Passport to the Internet*, we've used the Teacher's Guide to provide opportunities for students to compare their experiences and share what they have learned. Finally, Jenkins observes that for any game to be successful it must be fun. We made the learning activities as entertaining and involved as possible—creating a social networking profile, carrying on a conversation with an online friend—to make sure that going through *Passport to the Internet* always felt like playing a game.

The landscape is littered with educational games that have failed for a variety of reasons: those that were insufficiently entertaining, those that had too little educational value, those where the match between the game and the content was too distant and arbitrary, and those where there simply wasn't enough time and money to make it work. Every designer has compromised on one or more of these, and we are no exception. We believe, though, that by being mindful of these concerns we have made *Passport to the Internet* a rich and powerful tool for teaching Internet literacy skills.

Passport to the Internet is available through a licensing arrangement as a stand-alone resource or as part of the MNet's professional development program Web Awareness Workshop Series. For more information, or to preview *Passport to the Internet to the Internet*, contact: licensing@media-awareness.ca.

Passport to the Internet partners are: Inukshuk Wireless Learning Plan Fund, TELUS, Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, Toronto Catholic District School Board, London Public Library, and Nortel LearnIT.

Matthew Johnson is a Media Education Specialist with the Media Awareness Network.

Welcome to myVTC.ca

by JIM MURPHY



Teaching is complex and challenging work. Teachers need in-depth knowledge of the subject areas they teach, how students learn that content and an understanding of classroom environments that optimise learning. They need access to ongoing, high quality professional learning opportunities to develop and enhance the necessary skills and understandings. Like the members of other professions, teachers need to be continuous learners who see their own learning as being fundamental to membership of the profession rather than something that is incidental or optional.

One manner of ensuring that your professional learning is sustained is to become involved with an online learning community. Online learning communities offer unique opportunities for you to digitally interact with peers and share ideas and resources. This type of professional learning is self-directed in nature, but offers valid opportunities for you to learn from your peers and through other services offered in the online community. The isolated nature of many of the schools in the province makes this a great fit for those of us who may not be able to benefit from the “teacher in the next classroom” who is teaching the same content. However, even educators in larger centres can benefit from involvement in a virtual learning community.

So, what do we offer?

MyVTC.ca is a collaborative network for educators where we provide opportunities to share ideas, find resources, and interact with colleagues. Here, you can become a member of an online community, browse the wikis, interact with the blogs and discussion forums, and share your teaching resources. We are currently re-deploying resources from the past iteration of the virtual teacher centre and are transforming them using Web 2.0 approaches to information storage and sharing. Web 2.0 simply means tools that are more humanistic in nature and require collaboration and interaction in order to be success-

ful. We also offer closed communities for educators working on projects or building resources that may require a secure “members only” space, where they can share their work collaboratively and securely.

So, how do I become a contributing member?

To become involved, simply go to www.myvtc.ca and click JOIN. Complete the short application and voila! Once we have acknowledged your membership, you are then free to join any of the existing public communities!

What if there isn't a community that interests me? What then?

If you are interested in championing a community, or becoming a blogger, then please contact us and we will provide you with the resources to do so. There are some generic open communities available, but if you would like to build a community around a theme or curriculum area, then we are very interested in hearing from you: jmurphy@nlta.nl.ca; bpittman@nlta.nl.ca.

In the meantime, come join a community, share your resources and interact with colleagues.

For more on Professional Learning, please refer to:

- www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teach-learn/teacher/ProfLearningInEffectiveSchools.pdf
- <http://knowledgeloop.org/practices3.jsp?location=1&bpinterid=1034&spotlightid=1034&practicelsttype=1>

Jim Murphy is Coordinator of the Virtual Teacher Centre.



Mission Accomplished

by GEORGE TUCKER

While I had been travelling to Ottawa for years, circumstances and timing had never permitted me to experience the Remembrance Day Ceremony at the War Memorial near Parliament Hill. But this year, all the stars finally aligned in my favour and I found myself in the nation's capital on November 11, 2008. Alas, an item on my so-called bucket list was to be realized.

On a cold, cloudy day I walked from my hotel on Kent Street along Sparkes Street toward the War Memorial. Although it was approximately 9:30 am when I came in view of the Cenotaph, I could see that participants were already assembled 10-deep. Not wishing to spend the next two-and-a-half hours looking at the backs of heads, I ventured off for a better vantage point. As I strolled down Elgin Street, I saw a number of folks climbing upon a walled mound on the corner of Queen Street and Elgin Street. This meter plus platform, directly across from the National Arts Centre, was my viewing perch for the next few hours. Although I was some 100 meters from the Cenotaph, a sound system ensured that all was heard. My elevated position allowed me to see the proceedings. As a bonus, my like-minded companions and I soon realized that many of the bands and official participants would be marching directly in front of us as they entered the grounds of the War Memorial and took their assigned places. Among the groups were members of each branch of the Armed Forces, the Cadets, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, the Scouts, the Girl Guides, the dignitaries representing the different embassies, etc. Each group received a respective applause from the gathered crowd. Yet, the loudest and longest sustained acknowledgment was reserved for the War Veterans who numbered about 100 strong. These brave individuals marched in proud formation wearing uniforms, or parts thereof. Many were adorned with medals. Many walked slowly. Some were in wheelchairs. Some needed assistance. Whatever their modes of transport, all the veterans presented as being on a personal mission; indeed, I pondered whether some could have been thinking that it may be their last Remembrance Day Ceremony.

As the program commenced, several thousands of people encircled the Cenotaph including a number of dignitaries such as our Governor General, the Prime Minister, the Silver Cross Mother, etc. Yet, in spite of the throng of people assembled on a cold, overcast November day in our nation's capital, I was struck by the absolute solitude and the united focus of the assembled masses. The playing of *O Canada* commenced at 10:57 and at precisely 11:00 a.m. a bugler started playing "The Last Post"; not another sound was evident. Behind protective sunglasses I was able to scan the people encircling me. I could detect their serious countenance and the expression in their eyes. Then, without warning, four F16 Fighter Jets came screaming at low altitude across the sky. Precisely over the Cenotaph, one jet broke away in "The Missing Man" formation. It was a poignant moment – a cold shiver went down my spine! My neighbours looked skyward too. Many had tears in their eyes.

The somber ceremony proceeded for approximately 45 minutes. Wreaths were laid by Her Excellency, the Governor General, Michaëlle Jean, Mrs. Avril Stachnik (from Waskatenau, Alberta), the Silver Cross Mother, who had lost her son in Afghanistan when an 'improvised explosive devise' (IED) went off, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Stephen Harper, many embassy dignitaries as well as representatives of numerous associations, etc. As an educator, I felt pride, hope and self-worth as wreaths were placed at the foot of the spectacular monument by Emily Noble, President of the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Terry Young, President of the Canadian Association of Principals. Terry is a Newfoundlander and former member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association who has been working as an educator in Nunavut for a number of years.

As I was standing on my strategic perch absorbing the glorious spectacle unfolding in front of my eyes, I had an epiphany. It suddenly dawned on me that the vast majority of the thousands of individuals who had assembled at the Cenotaph in Ottawa, and indeed, throughout Canada and around the world, had never directly experienced war. Yet, masses of

people assemble each November 11th to remember and to show their respect to the thousands of military personnel who have served Canadians in past wars and conflicts and who, regrettably, are still required to serve in conflicts around the globe. While some of the gathered throng would have had relatives who served, or are serving in the armed forces, many would not. So, why then, do so many people take the time and make the effort to attend Remembrance Day Ceremonies throughout Canada and around the world? The answer I suspect is simple! Children learn about Remembrance Day and the sacrifices made by Canadian Armed Forces personnel from their teachers. Teachers are the conduit through which the past is conveyed to students (past, present and future). Teachers help their students to make sense of history as well as the current events that are so vividly piped into our homes via all types of media every day. Teachers have obviously taken their responsibilities vis-à-vis Remembrance Day very seriously as can be evidenced by the engagement of the masses who participate in ceremonies on November 11th each year.

So, to all the teachers of Newfoundland and Labrador, and to teachers throughout the world, who choose to help pass the torch of remembrance to their students, we collectively owe you all a great debt of gratitude. As I stood near the tomb of the Unknown Soldier watching individuals bowing, saying silent prayers and placing their poppies on the tomb, I felt a real calm come over me as I realized that I had in a small way completed my personal mission. I had been privileged to have been in Ottawa on November 11th, 2008 and I had been fortunate to have been afforded a wonderful location to witness and engage in a most touching and impressive ceremony. More importantly, however, I felt a calmness and contentment as I am confident that thousands of wonderfully caring and professional teachers, administrators and entire school communities will continue to discuss and help make sense of the past to ensure that those who served and those who made the ultimate sacrifice, are NEVER forgotten. As George Santayana stated, "Those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it". With teachers continuing to play their important roles in the lives of children and youth, hopefully our young people will learn from the tragic events of both the past and present, and choose not to repeat those same mistakes again.

George Tucker is an Administrative Officer in the Professional Development Division of the NLTA.



A Parable

by STEVE BROOKS

My wife, Janice, and I have five wonderful children. As would be parents, our major family planning decision had been that once we had escaped the baby years of night feedings, diapers and ear infections we would not reenter those years again. For those of you who have not yet experienced the joy of those baby years this meant that once our youngest child reached three years of age family expansion was no longer an option. We did not, however, anticipate that we would have a child a year for five years. Upon finding ourselves with five preschoolers we reevaluated our family planning plan and realized that we did not have a plan. This is not really the point of my story, it is simply meant to give context. It was during this period when we had five preschool age children that I learned one of the most valuable lessons of my life.

At this particular point in my career I was a school principal and actively involved in giving presentations at inservices and conferences. It was my return from one of these conferences that I want to share with you. As you can imagine I was very eager to get home, a week away from home, living in a hotel room, eating out every evening and filling empty hours with shopping and socializing can be very exhausting. I was about 10 minutes from home, pleasantly anticipating the homecoming that I was soon to receive, when I decided to call and check in. While I waited for the call to go through, I began thinking about how the evening would progress after the children were all tucked away for the night. It was my last pleasant thought of the day. My wife answered the phone and I identified myself with a "Hi Dear, it's me!"

She responded in a very gruff and highly uninviting tone, "Where are you and when will you be home!!"

As I slowly lifted my foot from the accelerator I replied, "About 20 minutes, is everything alright?" This was responded to with a very distinctive "Click."

As you can imagine, my mind went immediately to work trying to determine what the problem could be. After careful deliberation, I had to conclude whatever the problem was at home, it could not be my fault. My only supporting evidence in this conclusion was the fact that I had not been home. Having safely ruled myself out as having responsibility in the

matter I put my mind to work on other possibilities. I assured myself that if it had been anything of an emergency nature she would have called me first. So therefore it had to be something that I could handle once I got home.

It was in this frame of mind that I arrived home. As I approached the front door, Janice swung it open and greeted me with a very unflattering expression that had me questioning my conclusion around my own culpability. Without a word she directed me into the house with a jab of her fist with a lone extended index finger. I am sure if a brick wall had been placed in front of her at that moment her fist would have driven right through it.

Now I attempted to get more information. "What is the problem honey?" The only reply was another power jab in the direction of the stairs. I became ever more cautious as I paused at the foot of the stairs and once again attempted verbal communication. "Can you tell me..." Another jab, this time directing me up the steps.

As I ascended the stairs I began to take notice of an unusual indoor occurrence. At the top of the stair case there appeared to be a cloud. The only other time I had ever experienced a cloud inside my home was when I had attempted to plaster my rec room walls. I had used the old formula of applying two inches of plaster and sanding it down to an eighth of an inch. As I reached the top of the stairs I found that the cloud extended down the entire length of my upstairs hallway. With the exception of the light in the bathroom, the hallway was dark with all the doors closed. The bathroom light was on and this sent an eerie streak of light through the haze. As I approached the light through this haze I began to have concerns based on my recollections of the movie "Poltergeist." That at least would have explained my wife's near demonic attitude.

As I peaked into the bathroom I was greeted with a totally white canvas. I mean everything was white. The floor, the walls, the vanity, the shelves, everything on the shelves, the towels, the shower, everything. On the floor lay two empty baby powder shakers. One mystery solved. The cloud that enveloped the entire upstairs of my home was a baby powder cloud.

I turned to face my wife and as I watched the powder settle on her hair she jabbed the air again, directing me to one of the children's bedrooms.

I opened the door and was greeted by two little ghosts. My two- and three-year-old boys were standing side by side on a bath towel. With the exception of a little bath towel wrapped around each of their waists, they were stark naked and totally white. Both victims of what must have been the most explosive baby powder fight every fought on the soil of this fair province. Now in hindsight, this would have been the appropriate time to laugh and take control of the situation by offering to clean everything up, including the boys. However, this was not what I did. My first thought was to the fact that the boys would need to be bathed. My second thought was that before the boys could be bathed the bathroom would need to be cleaned and the bath towels would need to be washed. With resentment I saw what was left of my anticipated homecoming evaporating under the work that stood before me, in the form of the two remorseful ghosts.

Like I pointed out earlier, living in a hotel, eating out at restaurants and having to spend empty hours shopping or socializing for an entire week is exhausting work. This was not a fair reception home from such a week, so I turned to my wife and said the first thing that came to mind. "Where were you when all of this was going on?!!"

As soon as I said it, as often is the case with me, my brain jumped into action. With the words out of my mouth already the only helpful duty left to my intelligent organ was to analyze the choice of words. The analysis was quick. "You have just made, in hurricane terms, a categorical 5 mistake. Advice – apologize quickly and try and act as if it didn't happen." Which I immediately did. I failed to escape the storm. Failure was guaranteed, my brain at that point in our relationship still hadn't figured out the only thing worse than creating a grievance with your wife is attempting to deny the grievance.

I have called this little story a parable because it is my hope the readers may find a valuable lesson. You see, I was destined to end up washing the bath towels, cleaning the bathroom and bathing the boys regardless of how this little story unfolded. The problem is, in the path that I chose to follow, I also ended up being a first class villain and totally scuttled any hopes of a merry and romantic evening. The potential was there for me to be a first class hero and have all my dreams come true. The lesson – never respond in haste and look before you leap.

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



CONTACT 2009

Theme:
Contemporary Classrooms

August 4-7, 2009
University of Prince Edward Island

Opening Plenary (Tuesday)

Dr. Tim Goddard

The Future of Schools: Education in a Post-technological Age

Plenary Session (Wednesday)

Raeanne Adams and Jackie Charchuk

Stretch and Flex ... Understanding UDL ... And How to Meet the Needs of All Learners

Concurrent Sessions

- High Tech/Low Tech Assessment
- Meaningful Activities to Generate Interesting Classrooms
- Cultural Diversity in the Contemporary Classroom
- Organizing for Success in Your Classroom

Plenary Session (Friday)

Michael Ketchum

Teacher Wellness and Successful Classrooms

CONTACT is sponsored by the teacher organizations of the Atlantic Region.



Guidelines for CONTACT 2009

1. Initial submission of names of delegates to CONTACT shall be the responsibility of the NLTA Branch. In addition to applications submitted by teachers to the Branch, nominations may be made at a Branch meeting.
2. a) Applications/nominations from Branches shall be completed **on or before May 15th** and submitted to the NLTA for final approval as per guidelines in number 5.
b) Final approval of nominees for CONTACT shall occur at the Professional Issues Committee's May meeting.
3. Where Branches do not submit nominations on time, the Branch may forfeit any right to have a representative at CONTACT. Decisions of the Professional Issues Committee shall be final.
4. A Branch is permitted to send up to three (3) nominees which shall be prioritized according to preference of delegate(s) to attend. Branches are asked to consider the following when prioritizing their nominees:
 - a) Branch nominees who have not already attended a CONTACT Conference.
 - b) Nominees that have been prioritized in previous years but have not attended.
 - c) Nominees for which the Conference will have the most relevance.
5. The Professional Issues Committee shall act as the Selection Committee for representatives to CONTACT and shall be governed by the following guidelines:
 - a) Branches which have not had a member attend a CONTACT Conference shall be given first priority.
 - b) Priority for Branches which already have had representation at CONTACT shall be based on the time lapse since previous attendance.
6. Teachers shall be notified of acceptance as soon as possible following the selection of representatives by the Professional Issues Committee.
7. a) Representatives, where possible, shall be informed of the expenses of CONTACT, how much NLTA will provide and how much will be the individual teacher's responsibility.
b) Transportation costs shall be based on the cheapest mode of transportation possible.
c) Selected delegates to CONTACT must submit a non-refundable \$25.00 deposit towards their registration. This will be submitted to the NLTA CONTACT Registrar within two weeks of notification of selection.

CONTACT APPLICATION FORM

TEACHERS MUST FORWARD APPLICATIONS TO THEIR BRANCH BY **MAY 4, 2009**
FOR SUBMISSION TO CONTACT SELECTION COMMITTEE.

APPLICATIONS THAT ARE NOT SUBMITTED THROUGH THEIR BRANCH WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

Branch

Name of Teacher

School Address

Postal Code

School Telephone

Email

Home Address

Postal Code

Home Telephone

Have you attended CONTACT before? No Yes Year

Description:
(qualifications, experience, interests and NLTA involvement)
.....
.....
.....

Date

Signature of Branch President

**BRANCHES MUST FORWARD NOMINEES TO THE NLTA OFFICE
NO LATER THAN MAY 15, 2009.**

Return to:
Beverley Park, Senior Administrative Officer, Professional Development
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
3 Kenmount Road, St. John's, NL A1B 1W1
Fax: 726-4302 or 1-877-711-6582 (toll-free)

This form can also be accessed on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca





PROVINCIAL SAC CONFERENCE

May 20-22, 2009

Terra Nova Golf Resort. The theme of the Conference, *Leadership That Matters*, will focus on the idea of authentic and significant leadership for administrators. Conference participants will take a closer look at the soft skills of leadership. There will be a pre-conference on May 20, with a focus on effective assessment and the role of administrators in this process. For more information check out the website at www.sac2009.ca. Registration on the website will not be considered complete until fees have been paid.

LEADERSHIP AND LEARNING SUMMER INSTITUTE

July 2-4, 2009

Corner Brook. The institute is designed for principals, vice-principals, department heads, lead teachers, aspiring teachers, etc. Explore the vital role of leadership in enhancing student learning along with colleagues from the district and across the province. Featured speakers: Dr. Kenneth Leithwood and Nicole Vagle. Registration deadline: April 30, 2009. Contact information and registration details available at www.wnlsd.ca. Direct inquiries to: George Keeping, Education Officer - Human Resources, Western School District, george.keeping@wnlsd.ca, Tel: 709-637-4032; or George Tucker, PD Division, NLTA, gtucker@nlta.nl.ca, Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245.

DEVELOPING SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL (DSS) 2009

July 20-23, 2009

Mount Allison University, Sackville, NB. Theme: *Learning Focused Conversation: Practical Strategies for Collaborative Inquiry*. DSS application and brochure available on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca. Click on "Professional Development Opportunities". Application deadline: May 15, 2009. For information contact George Tucker, PD Division, NLTA, Tel: 726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599, ext. 245; gtucker@nlta.nl.ca.

SUMMER INSTITUTE 2009

August 10-11, 2009

The Battery Hotel & Suites, St. John's. A two-day workshop based on the work of Dr. Jerome Sattler, covering the latest developments in the assessment of cognitive ability and behavior in children. To guarantee registration, you must register on or before May 29, 2009. For further information contact Trent Langdon, President, Newfoundland and Labrador Counsellors' and Psychologists' Association, trentlangdon@esdnl.ca; or George Tucker, PD Division, NLTA, gtucker@nlta.nl.ca, 709-726-3223 or 1-800-563-3599 (ext. 245).

2009 ASSESSMENT SUMMIT

August 20-21, 2009

Halifax, NS. Hear five of the most distinguished assessment experts in North America illustrate why the fundamental purpose of assessment is not to rate, rank and sort students, but rather to provide meaningful feedback that leads to improved student learning. Early bird price: \$499 + HST (before March 31, 2009); regular price: \$549.99 + HST (after March 31, 2009). Special group pricing for registration fees paid by boards, schools etc. Registration deadline: May 1, 2009. Register online at www.nselc.ednet.ns.ca or call 902-422-3270.

THE MOTIVATION BREAKTHROUGH: 6 SECRETS TO TURNING ON THE TUNED-OUT CHILD WORKSHOP

October 5, 2009

Delta Hotel, St. John's. The Council of Special Services proudly presents internationally acclaimed educator Richard Lavoie (producer of the F.A.T. City Workshops). The morning lecture is entitled *The Motivation Breakthrough: 6 Secrets to Turning On the Tuned Out Child* and the afternoon session is entitled *It's So Much Work to Be Your Friend: Helping the Child with Learning Disabilities Find Social Success*. For more information contact Keith Adey, keithadey@nf.sympatico.ca, Tel: 709-489-6481. Registration forms will be posted on the NLTA website at www.nlta.nl.ca

NLTA Branch Elections

May - June 2009

Would like to be more involved in decisions affecting your professional and personal future?

Do you have the skills or abilities which you can offer to your professional Association?

Would you like to be more informed about, and involved in, the internal operations of your Association?

Then consider becoming a member of your branch leadership team by offering yourself for a position on the branch executive when branch elections are held this spring. **Contact a member of your branch executive or your NLTA School Representative for more details.**

Dates to Remember

April 2009

- Apr 15 **Deadline:** Notice of postponement of Deferred Salary Leave or withdrawal from DSLP
- Apr 30 **Deadline:** Deferred Salary Leave Applications
- Apr 30 **Deadline:** Year-end resignation from contract

May 2009

- May 7 **Deadline:** Notification by Board of layoff
- May 10-16 Branch Election Week
- May 21 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications
- May 29-30 NLTA Executive Meeting

June 2009

- June 15 **Deadline:** Notification by board of acceptance/rejection of Deferred Salary Leave requests
- June 18 **Deadline:** Professional Development Fund applications

