

by Ardith Shirley, NBTA Staff Officer - Professional Development

“Let him who would enjoy a good future waste none of his present.”

— Roger Babson

As the school year winds down, I must confess that my frenzied schedule hasn't left me much time for growing - unless you count the added inches around my middle as I attend yet another end-of-year event or retirement celebration! Yes, 'tis the season when it feels like I am living in my car and, as a result, any learning I do is usually from the CBC and my own reflective thoughts.

I realize that things are even more harried for classroom teachers this time of year. The end of year activities, combined with demands such as report cards, staffing, cum files, year-end meetings etc., leave very little time for basic needs like eating and sleeping let alone our professional learning.

Oh well, summer is just around the corner. (At least the calendar says so even if the weather doesn't appear to support the idea!) One of the findings from the New Brunswick PD Survey



that was conducted a number of years back is that our teachers identify summer as one of their favourite times to participate in some form of professional learning.

Keeping that in mind, there is no end to the opportunities that exist for NB Teachers. NBTA is sponsoring several PD opportunities this year including Developing Successful Schools (for school leaders), CONTACT (for any teacher K-12), POINT (for experienced teachers who

have an interest in helping teachers who are new to our profession), and the NBTA Branch Leadership Workshop (an opportunity to meet with NBTA representatives from around NB and set priorities for our organization with incoming NBTA President Heather Smith).

Our Department of Education has a number of opportunities planned including several for Teacher

Learning Week (August 15-19). Summer can be a great time to take a course at one of our local universities or from a more distant one - online.

And last but not least, how about curling up in the nearest hammock or lawn chair for some well deserved R & R and enjoying one of the following articles? Whichever mode you choose, I wish one and all a wonderful summer of growing, living and learning!

May I Recommend?

The April issue of *Kappan* includes a great article by Young-joo Kim titled, *"The Case Against Teaching as Delivery of Curriculum"*. In a mere 2 pages, Kim reminds all of us that while the curriculum is important, our first responsibility is to the individual learners that come to our classrooms. The article convinces us that failure to recognize this does damage by suppressing student voices, failure to develop critical thinking skills, and missing teachable moments.

Nancy Doda's article, *"The Power of Empowerment: Having Faith in Students"*, in April's *Middle Ground* is a great read for any one involved with education who needs to be reminded that children come to us as naturally curious and quite eager to learn. She suggests that any behavior that suggests otherwise is usually a result of environment and can be changed, controlled or minimized by increasing students' feelings of empowerment. Much of the premise of Doda's article is based on the work done by professor Sugata Mitra and his hole in the wall research with children in the poorest regions of New Delhi.

The June issue of *Kappan* contains a timely article called, *"Leading Through a Fiscal Nightmare"*. Although the content is specific to the budget cuts that the US is currently facing, the tips and strategies may certainly have relevance here. One idea that spoke loudly to me: "All cuts impact students and teachers. Anyone who suggests otherwise does not understand the interconnected culture of our schools and districts." The article goes on to suggest specific actions that leaders can take in order to minimize fears and repercussions for students and teachers.

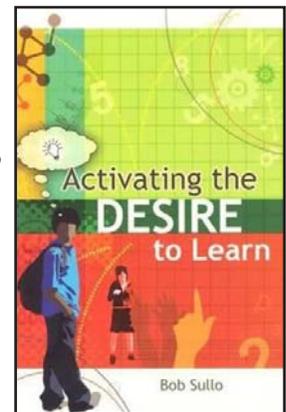
The final article I will suggest this month is found in the May issue of *Educational Leadership* is written by Rahima Wade and is titled *"Service for Learning"*. With the NB focus on our schools becoming centers of the commu-

nity, it would seem that service learning could be a great fit. Wade suggests that while some may view community service as a distraction from the curriculum, she suggests these experiences build academic skills as students become more involved in their communities. She goes on to suggest some Service Learning ideas that link nicely with Numeracy and Literacy outcomes that teachers may wish to consider.

Book Give-Away!

Congratulations to the winner of last months' book draw – **Patti Jo Cormier** from Superior Middle School in Bathurst. Patti Jo will receive a copy of *"Activating the Desire to Learn"* by Bob Sullo. Thanks to everyone who entered!

Check back in the fall for new opportunities to win!



Ardith



Website of the Month:

Check out the "Hole in the Wall" research project that inspired Nancy Doda's article. Go to

www.TED.com

and look for professor Sugata Mitra under speakers. His talk is thought provoking!